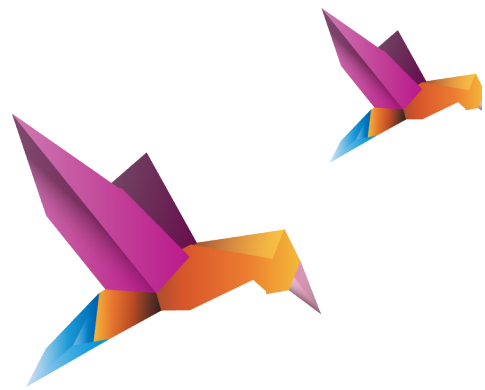




WINTER EDITION
May – July 2014



Force
NEWSLETTER



G-Force aims to share knowledge, practice, partnership opportunities and advice to all in the child protection sector. Participation of children, young people and workers in the child protection system is vital to ensuring that children and young people have a say in the decisions that affect their life.

G-Force is focused on achieving best practice regarding:

1. The active participation and inclusion of children and young people in out of home care in their community and in decisions that impact their safety and well-being.
2. Support processes and programs for young people in out of home care transitioning to independence.

The work of G-FORCE is grounded in the opinions of young people with an out-of-home care experience themselves, with **CREATE** Foundation Young Consultants participating directly and in-directly in the group.

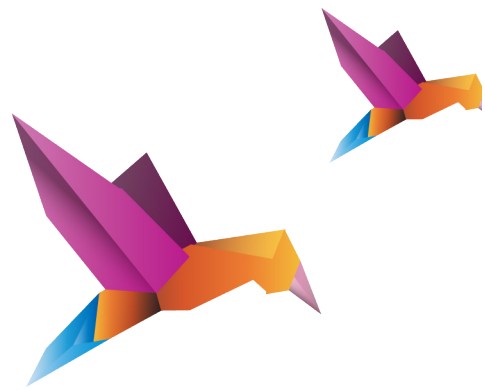
G-FORCE is comprised of government and non-government members including:

- **CREATE** Foundation
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Child Protection Development
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Child Safety NGO Programs
- Department of Housing and Public Works, Housing Delivery Support and Practice
- PeakCare Queensland
- Foster Care Queensland
- Non-Government service providers
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Ltd
- Queensland Council of Social Services.

G-FORCE seeks to support those working with young people in out of home care by sharing practical information, practice wisdom and useful resources. The group also provides stakeholders with an opportunity to provide feedback about systemic changes with the intent to ensure better outcomes for young people in out of home care.

This G-Force newsletter is prepared quarterly to inform individuals and organisations about news and initiatives pertaining to young people transitioning from care to independence as well as opportunities for children and young people's engagement in the child protection sector.

To join the distribution list of this resource please email kelly.bucknall@create.org.au



TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE (T2I) T2I MONTH – NOVEMBER 2014

T2I Month is November and the theme for 2014 is **T2I: My future, My dreams, My team.** Video clips loaded onto usb's with other relevant resources to assist workers, carers and young people will be in the promotional kit. This will be sent to over 800 services across Queensland. The launch of T2I month is November 5th at the Gold Coast.

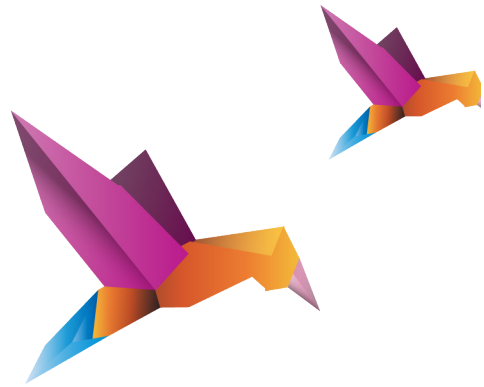
Now that the Campaign around T2I month is underway - It's ok to stay is a key message in order to let young people and their carers know that staying with carers is a possible transition from statutory care option when mutually agreeable. G-Force is currently focusing on supporting Foster and Kinship Carers and their young people in being supported in the on-going placement of young people post care when that is the mutually preferred option. Feedback received states that support for young people transitioning to independence often excludes kinship carers and carers who are interested in maintaining placements and relationships. Expanding information sharing to ensure that kinship carers and foster carers are aware of transition to independence options is necessary. Ensuring all involved in supporting and caring for young people have accurate information about transition processes is key to successful transitioning of young people from care to independence. Often this may mean young people stay with kinship/carers for a longer duration. Feedback demonstrates this is often a mutual desire but not always stated as the reasonable possibility it is. G-Force is promoting this message and looking into any policy and practice issues that may accidentally impede this positive outcome for those who would prefer to stay with foster carers when able to do so.

If anyone reading this newsletter has any ideas or knows of examples where young people staying with their foster carers post transitioning from care to independence has worked; or policies or practices that demonstrate that young people staying with foster carers have inadvertently worked against them, please pass on this information via return email to G-Force colleagues to highlight the issue or email lucas.moore@create.org.au

We are aware that there are issues of financial impost for young people with a disability and being with a host family given that payments come through child safety and not disability services. This matter is being looked into to ensure the continuation of that financial support.

POSITIVE NEWS IN THE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE SPACE:

- The budget commitment of approximately \$2.5 million in the first year to \$3.2 million in following years is exciting news. This includes targeting young people aged from 15-21. It is understood that the new dollars are going to be dedicated to post care support (after a care experience and over the age of 15).
- The stakeholder advisory group noted that other work will also be required to improve outcomes for care leavers including priority access up to the age of 21. Some great advocacy with heads of departments across government is underway to improve access for care leavers.



TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE LIVING ALLOWANCE (TILA) CHANGES

A number of changes to TILA have occurred that impact both staff of Non-Government Organisations, staff of Child Safety Service Centres and young people transitioning to independence. Only the Department can make applications for TILA in line with transition plans. If you know young people looking for TILA, you can support them to go to their local child safety service centre. Young people up to age 25 are eligible. This includes any young person from Queensland or interstate. No applications from anyone other than the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services will be accepted. This process can be reviewed when post care support services are up and running.

CREATE has developed a resource about the TILA changes. This resource is attached to the G-Force newsletter or can be accessed at:

<http://www.create.org.au/files/file/QLD%20State%20Page/TILA.pdf>

A RESOURCE FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE WORKERS AS DEVELOPED BY YOUNG PEOPLE:

This resource: "It's a home, not a house" was developed by Julia, a **CREATE** Foundation young consultant and has been further expanded by G-Force as a resource for workers. Congratulations to Julia for the great work she's done on this project and for sharing it with G-Force.

For a copy please email kelly.bucknall@create.org.au

INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT DISABILITY PILOT:

Two million dollars each year for the next two years has been allocated to allow for clinical case management for young people with a disability exiting care. These funding dollars have gone to open minds. They will also work with adult disability and mental health services for intensive intervention with young people with a disability. The services will be officially up and running shortly. Recruitment processes will mean services will be running by August. Open minds will become a state wide organisation.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE OBTAINING DRIVERS LICENSES:

Supporting young people in residential services in obtaining driver's licence through 100 hours practice remains an issue. One organisation had trialled staff supporting this process but a change of staff led to a change of policy and this support is no longer available to young people. A couple of young people managed to go through the program. The organisation is now looking at working with a company around fleet leasing to alleviate some of the issues. Some organisations do this support on a case by case basis and have overcome the insurance and associated issues. There seems to be overall good will but the issue of ensuring support with driving hours becomes problematic on the minutia. The insurance problem appears to be solvable but it can impact premiums.

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES, CHILD SAFETY AND DISABILITY SERVICE'S T2I MODEL AND TRANSITION PROJECT:

A pilot T2I plan has been developed and piloted across three regions in six locations. Some of this has been driven by NGOs, or by CSOs in other



regions, to get a feeling for how each area leads this. Some really positive feedback has been received that it seems to be more grounding and relevant for young people. The hope eventually is to have a transition plan that can work for 15-21 year olds and cover a whole spectrum of placements from stable foster care placements to placement disruptions. The crucial part is how this process facilitates the relationship building, engagement and working with young people. The process is shifted to a future focus. Young people own the content and process – young people fill forms out themselves. This is aimed at being a user friendly and appealing process.

Context for training is from the framework and based on foundational research for core T2I practice. About 150 people across 3 regions from NGOs and government have done the trial training. This has led to great thinking about values and key stakeholders and interested parties in each region. These are test training sessions – the hope is to roll it out further across the regions.

Matthew Armstrong is leading this process and has reviewed the pilot training and taken feedback. Overall it was very well liked and positively responded to. It is now a full day program broken into 4 modules. It can be delivered by government and NGOs. It may be run as a full day program or individual modules:

1. Development and neurobiology
2. Experiences of young people and their journey in care
3. Practice skills and resources
4. Collaboration and service development

Self-paced learning resources will also be available. This work is all in draft format at this stage. Matthew is due to finish this project at the end of June. It will be at a point where the roll out won't be too arduous. The intent is that rolling out after care support services will come with a training strategy which will be this – so it's an integrated reform to this area of practice.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING CHANGES:

There are a number of changes to the way the Department of Housing works that may impact young people and their transition from care experience. Two of the key documents outlining these changes are:

Homelessness to housing strategy:

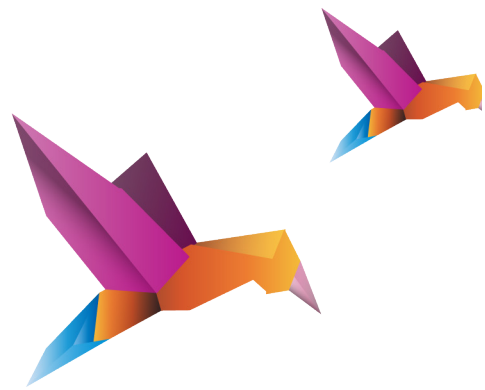
<http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/HomelessnesstoHousingStrategy2020.pdf>

Housing 2020 Strategy:

<http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Housing2020Strategy.pdf>

By 2020 it is intended that departmental properties will be managed by non-government organisations. The first two Housing Service Centres to transfer their property management functions will be Logan and Robina. Transition arrangements are still being planned and more information on how these changes will impact on NGOs and CSOs will be circulated when available.

Current housing stock doesn't meet need as more one bedroom dwellings are required. The Department of Housing is currently identifying old stock that is expensive to maintain and transferring people into more suitable accommodation. These renewal processes will



vary across the state depending on local needs.

Housing's Regional Directors are working closely with child safety to progress some of the Carmody recommendations. Early notification from Department of CCSDS and also from workers of young people transitioning to independence is vital. This should occur when a young person is at least 16.

The Department of Housing and Public Works already provides priority access to housing assistance for young people transitioning from care up to 19 years (this will be reviewed to see whether priority access can be provided up to 21 years). Depending on the type of property and location required, it may take many months or years to get a social housing property (even if it is a priority) so it may not be the best housing option for some younger people who need immediate accommodation. Bond loans, rental grants and a Rent Connect Service are available to help people to quickly find a private rental. Assisting young people to retain a social housing tenancy is an issue for the department, especially if they don't have the right type of support or refuse support. The three strikes Anti-social Behaviour Management policy was introduced on 1 July 2013 so it's important for the sector to consider how to support young people post 18 to keep their tenancies given that 3 strikes means eviction.

The Department of Housing needs to apply to QCAT to get approval for eviction post 3 strikes within a 12 month period. The Department of Housing offers a private rental service to help families navigate private rental, real estates and getting off TICA.

Some relevant sections of the Housing and Public Works website include:

Bond Loans

<http://www.qld.gov.au/housing/renting/bond-loan/>

Rental Grants

<http://www.qld.gov.au/housing/renting/rental-grants/>

Rent Connect

<http://www.qld.gov.au/housing/renting/rentconnect/>

National Rental Affordability Scheme

<http://www.qld.gov.au/housing/renting/nras/>

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT

Young people's participation strategy:

The youth participation strategy remains an important resource for workers and young people and needs to be re-shared across the sector to remind all those working with young people of the merit of this strategy. This document is available here:

<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/childsafety/foster-care/youth/cyp-participation-strategy.pdf>

Young People and complaints:

G-Force is currently working on complaints form for workers/carers to support young people who don't have access to technology and want to use a form rather than other options available. This has been considered and a form drafted. On the back of the complaints flyer previously devised and circulated will be a section where a young person can make a complaint. **CREATE** and the Departmental complaints team are liaising to



ensure that this form is available to young people. This form will include current systemic changes of relevance such as changes to the CV program as well as the ability of a young person to request a CV.

The Office of Public Guardian:

There will be three physical hubs in Brisbane, Ipswich and Townsville operational from 1 July and other virtual hubs across Queensland. The Office of Public Guardian is recruiting new staff at present and training Community Visitors. A legal advisory stakeholder group has been set up. The community visitor program will run from the hubs. The Public Guardian is currently working on a series of Fact sheets that can be accessed at: http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/262415/The-new-Office-of-the-Public-Guardian-fact-sheet.pdf

For more information on G-Force please contact lucas.moore@create.org.au