

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Community Services
The Hon. Linda Burney MP



Wednesday, 15 July 2009

YOUNG PEOPLE HELP SHAPE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

More than 30 young people who have been, or are currently, in the child protection system today attended a special forum to have their say on how the NSW Government can improve the system for them.

Minister for Community Services Linda Burney, who led the Keep Us Safe Young People's Opinion Forum, said she was pleased to have the opportunity to hear from young people.

"The forum brought together young people from rural, regional and city areas who are service users, such as children who are or have been in care, experienced child protection issues, homelessness or have used a disability service," Ms Burney said.

"It is an opportunity for us to get meaningful feedback from young people about their personal experiences and hear their suggestions for changes.

"This forum is part of the Government's ongoing and extensive consultation with its stakeholders on the *Keep Them Safe* action plan to reform the child protection system.

"Their input will be invaluable to helping us strengthen the system. So often we tell young people what is best for them; this was a chance for them to speak and for us to listen."

Ms Burney said that the forum was organised in conjunction with CREATE and Youth Action & Policy Association NSW Inc (YAPA).

CREATE Foundation Chief Executive Officer Jacqui Reed said the forum highlighted the inclusive approach of the NSW Government's *Keep Them Safe*.

"Children and young people have responded positively to this forum – many have said that this event gave them a say on their future and help the next generation of children in care have a more positive experience," Ms Reed said.

"CREATE will continue working closely with the Government to consider and implement recommendations that result from the forum."

YAPA Executive Officer Reynato Reodica said that the *Keep Them Safe* plan will drastically change the way that youth and community services are provided to young people.

"This forum will ensure that young people's needs, desires and views are properly considered in this significant reshaping of the youth and community services that support them," Ms Reodica said.

YAPA is the peak community group working in the interests of young people in NSW.

The CREATE Foundation provides an independent voice for children and young people in out-of-home care.

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