



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

21st February 2017

“No voice, no opinion, nothing....”

Ground breaking research reveals experiences of parents who have children in foster care

A parent and family inclusive approach to child protection and foster care is urgently needed in Australia, a report to be launched today will recommend.

The research, conducted by the University of Newcastle, in partnership with the largest non-government provider of foster care services in Australia – Life Without Barriers, explored the views and perspectives of parents with children in care.

Lead researcher, Dr Nicola Ross of the University of Newcastle Law School, said there was strong evidence that children in care had better outcomes when they had good relationships with their parents.

“This research explored whether or not parents were supported by legal and support services to improve their parenting and remain part of their children’s lives,” Dr Ross said

The research found that parents in these situations experienced the removal of their children as very difficult. They reported feeling excluded from their children’s lives, even before the legal decision was made to permanently remove their children. Parents found the legal processes distressing and felt their voices were not heard. Some parents reported they did not know what was going on and had little say over the legal outcomes for their children.

One parent said, “Kids need their parents in their lives...one way or the other”.

Parents also reported not knowing what to do to have their children returned to their care and many expressed they had received little or no help to make changes.

Dr Ross said the research findings identified an urgent need for a parent and family inclusive approach to child protection and foster care within Australia.

“The overwhelming message from this research is that we need to respect, listen to, hear and include parents and families in our work if we want to ensure optimal outcomes for vulnerable children. Family inclusion increases the chance that children can be restored to their families and ensures, even when children don’t return home, that beneficial relationships with their parents and families are maintained.”

Life Without Barriers Chief Executive Claire Robbs said, “Parents of children in care need to be central to our work. This research has highlighted the importance of working in respectful partnerships with parents and in ensuring that all children leave care with strong family relationships in place.”

Download the full report by clicking on link below:

[‘No voice, no opinion, nothing’: Parent perspectives when children are removed and placed in care.](#)

REPORT LAUNCH

Date: Tues 21st Feb, 2017
Location: Room 4.16, University House, Cnr of Auckland and King Street, Newcastle
Time: 3:30pm – 6pm

All welcome!

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About Life Without Barriers: Life Without Barriers (LWB) is one of Australia’s largest leading social purpose organisations, working in more than 300 communities across all states and territories. Its major areas of operations include family support and out-of-home care, mental health services, youth justice, disability services, community based aged care, homelessness services, support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and support to refugees and asylum seekers. www.lwb.org.au

About the University of Newcastle: UON is a global leader distinguished by a commitment to equity and excellence and to creating a better future for its regions through a focus on innovation and impact.

Newcastle Law School has one of the leading clinical law programs in Australia. This is complemented by its Priority Research Initiative in Evidence-Based Law and Practice that conducts research in such areas as health, justice and social affairs. The evidence-based movement in law is concerned with improving research and evaluation in all legal sectors, including legal practice, law-making and judging and legal education.

www.newcastle.edu.au/research-and-innovation/centre/business-law/evidence-based-law/about-us

Media Enquiries & Interviews

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