The Government's decision to delay the implementation of changes that would see the Ombudsman's powers to investigate child protection issues removed, reaffirms the importance of the office to the welfare of children in care.

Children's and Families Minister, Kon Vatskalis, was today forced to admit the Government had delayed the implementation of amendments to the Care and Protection of Children Act so the Ombudsman could complete her review of children services in the Territory.

Shadow Child Protection Minister, Robyn Lambley, said this backdown does not go far enough because once the report is tabled, the Ombudsman will be gagged from speaking to the Government's response.

"While the Opposition welcomes the additional time granted to allow the Ombudsman to complete her report, it's nowhere near enough," Ms Lambley said.

"The Ombudsman should be allowed to investigate complaints made against the child protection system or specific instances of child abuse.

"The Government's backdown shows it knows the Ombudsman should be allowed to investigate reports of failings within the child protection system.

"It's appalling that the Government has removed this additional capacity to protect Territory children in care.

"The Government only made this concession because of sustained pressure was applied by the Ombudsman, the community and the Opposition.

"The Government has affectively admitted it was wrong to try and close the Ombudsman’s inquiry early through the Amendments contained in the Act.

"It’s a shame it didn’t have similar judgement and allow the Ombudsman to retain the capacity to investigate child protection.”

The Opposition opposed the amendments.

Further comment: Robyn Lambley 0428 040 693