FUNDING INCREASE FOR OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

December 4th, 2012

The Mills Government will commit an additional $10 million to child protection in 2012-13 and $5 million ongoing from 2013-14.

Children and Families Minister, Robyn Lambley, said the additional funding is needed to meet demand pressures in child protection and out-of-home care services.

“The additional funding contained in this Mini Budget and extending throughout the remainder of the forward estimates period is an indication of the strength of the Country Liberals Government’s commitment to child protection in the Northern Territory,” Mrs Lambley said.

“The Mini Budget also provides an opportunity for this Government to set a new direction for child protection, with a focus on the delivery of front-line services.

“The previous Government recruited more than 90 additional staff to Children and Families and incurred substantial increases in operational costs, resulting in a ‘black hole’ of $35 million in the 2012-13 budget.”

Agency savings of an additional $14.2 million in 2012-13 and $25.1 million ongoing from 2013-14 will be redirected into frontline services for families and children.

“The Government wants to ensure programs are targeted to meet the needs of vulnerable Territory children and families,” she said.

“As a result, the Government has undertaken a review of all funding and funding commitments for non government services provided by the Office of Children and Families and determined that $4.8 million in 2012-13 will be redirected to meeting greater demand pressures for services to children and families,” Mrs Lambley said.

“The refocus of funding to non-government organisations will be based on value for money and the delivery of real outcomes for our most vulnerable children and families.

“We are in the process of notifying affected NGOs and peak bodies and will announce details in coming days.

“The number of executive contract staff will be reduced and recruitment to non frontline positions will be frozen.

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The Mini-Budget provides funding to meet three election commitments:

- $700,000 in 2013-14 and $200,000 ongoing from 2014-15 to expand the capacity of existing family support service providers in the Tennant Creek region
- $150,000 ongoing from 2012-13 to establish a toy and equipment grant program for long day-care services
- A $2 million grant in 2012-13 to support the expansion of Somerville’s Palmerston Community Centre

“This government is taking a strong stance to ensure Territorians receive the services necessary to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families,” Mrs Lambley said.

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