Major Child Protection Reforms Passed In Parliament

The Northern Territory Children’s Commissioner will have more comprehensive investigative powers following the passing of key child protection reform legislation in Parliament this afternoon.

This includes the power to conduct own motion investigations and gives the Children’s Commissioner broader powers to investigate complaints relating to vulnerable children in the Territory.

These amendments are a direct recommendation from the most comprehensive inquiry ever held into child protection in the Territory.

“The Henderson Labor Government promised widespread and comprehensive reform in the child protection system, and we committed $130 million additional over five years to support these major reforms,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“The amendments passed today to the Care and Protection of Children Act are an important step in the legislative reforms from these recommendations.”

Mr Vatskalis said the Children’s Commissioner has an extensive background in child protection and dealing with vulnerable children.

“He is an expert in this area and has a wealth of experience. The Opposition today showed disregard by questioning his independence.

“The Solicitor General has himself advised that Children’s Commissioner is completely independent and that both he and the Ombudsman will be able to confer with each other when undertaking investigations.

“These amendments will give the Children’s Commissioner a more proactive advocacy role and will better enable that position to help keep Territorian children safe.”

Last month Mr Vatskalis launched Safe Children, Bright Futures – the strategic framework that will guide the reform of the child protection system in the Northern Territory for the next five years.

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