Shadow Child Protection Minister, Robyn Lambley, has condemned the placement of an article about the search for alternative causes of Chlamydia in minors published in the Department of Children and Families annual report.

Ms Lambley said the article creates an impression that the Government is seeking scientific evidence that sheets responsibility for the high incidence of Chlamydia in children away from child abuse.

“What we know, and this is cited in the article contained in the annual report, is that the primary cause of transmission of Chlamydia among minors is through sexual intercourse ‘which by definition is child abuse’.

“On that basis, it seemed highly irregular that, in an annual report dealing with child protection issues, the department would highlight research aimed at trying to find an alternative non-sexual cause for Chlamydia in minors.

“Over the past few years, there have been a number of reports dealing with child sexual abuse in the Territory, including Little Children Are Sacred and Growing Them Strong, Together.

“Conducting expensive research into alternative causes raises questions about the Government’s priorities when it comes to child protection.”

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