13 December 2012

More Pressure on Child Protection under the CLP

The CLP Government’s cuts to child protection are putting Territory children at risk.

Shadow Minister for Children and Families Natasha Fyles said the CLP has cut jobs, scrapped important funding and removed scrutiny of government practices in child protection.

“The CLP Government have made cuts to staffing and services that will put Territory children at risk,” Ms Fyles said.

“The Minister Robyn Lambley has decided to ignore the experts, dismiss independent reports and remove scrutiny and assessment.

“Child protection is too important and experts should be listened to and scrutiny encouraged.

“This is ignoring the Growing Them Strong, Together report and putting Territory children at risk - the Minister needs to take responsibility for the consequences of her actions.”

Since the CLP won government, the following changes have occurred that impact the areas of Children and Families:

- The Department of Children and Families has been downgraded to an office;
- 47 staff have lost their jobs between 24 August and 31 October, but staff are reporting more jobs have gone and more will disappear at the end of this month;
- Independent scrutiny of the CLP Government’s work in child protection has been removed with the disbanding of the Children and Families Advisory Board, and the Child Protection External Monitoring and Reporting Committee;
- Funding cuts to key Non Government Organisations that were supporting Territory families and child protection. This includes the NT Council of Social Services, the Red Cross, Mission Australia and the NT Youth Action Network;
- No funding for Youth Justice reforms to support children at risk of entering the Youth Justice and policing system;
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Natasha Fyles
Shadow Minister for Children and Families

- Cuts to the Strong Aboriginal Families, Together (SAF,T) organisation will directly affect advocacy and frontline services in Aboriginal communities;
- Scrapping Banned Drinkers Register letting thousands more problem drinkers have easy access to alcohol at the expense of families and communities;
- Scrapping Night Patrols in Darwin, Return to Home and transport services will impact on the wellbeing of individuals and welfare of families; and
- Abolishing the SMART Court and Alcohol and Other Drugs Tribunal.

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