CLP FAILS CHILD PROTECTION

Leader of the Opposition Delia Lawrie has called on Chief Minister Adam Giles to urgently reinstate child protection and early intervention funding to address the child protection crisis.

“The number of child protection notifications falling through the cracks is at crisis levels, and on current trends will more than triple since the CLP were elected,” Ms Lawrie said.

“This follows savage CLP funding cuts that has seen massive job and capacity loss across the child protection system, critically at the important preventative end.”

“Latest figures indicate 1347 child protection notifications were not completed within the mandated 28 day timeframe in just the first six months of this financial year, up from 389 over the 12 months ending 30 June 2012.

“Every notification requires a response and it is not good enough for the Minister John Elferink to whitewash these numbers and suggest the problem is due to police over-reporting”

“The CLP have shown the have the wrong priorities. In just this year’s budget $8 million was cut from crucial prevention support services and the agency, while the Chief Minister added $30 million to his department and spends millions on self-promotion.

“The sector has seen significant funding cuts resulting in the loss of preventative programs.

“It has been reported 90 jobs have been lost from within the child protection system, and staff turn-over at 30 per cent, is creating a capacity crisis in the Children and Families Department.

“Caseload targets are 20 per worker, yet it was revealed in the Estimates process last year that under the CLP, some caseworkers had more than 50 cases to manage and no child protection office in the Territory met the target, a situation that has since likely worsened.

“The CLP have abandoned the recommendations of ‘Growing them Strong, Together’ report that focused on building child protection response capacity and early intervention and preventive programs, to prevent child abuse occurring and strengthen parenting support.
“Labor calls for an independent audit of child protection, including action on the ‘Growing them Strong, Together’ recommendations to address the current crisis.

“It is clear the Minister is not up to the job of protecting children when he states the core function of his agency is “the ambulance turning up at the crash scene.”” *

(*) John Elferink MLA, Parliamentary record, 10 June 2014

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