MEDIA RELEASE

Lauren Moss
SHADOW MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION

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ADDRESS THE CAUSE OF YOUTH ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Shadow Minister for Child Protection, Lauren Moss, today welcomed the announcement of a holistic approach to youth at risk initiated by the NT Police, however condemned the comments in recent days by Minister Elferink, using a fear based campaign around child removal.

"It is simply outrageous that the Chief Minister and Minister for Children and Families, John Elferink, are leaping to the removal of children from their families in response to increased anti-social behaviour by children and young people. A fear campaign threatening removal of children does not get to the heart of these issues," Ms Moss said.

"The Minister has previously attributed an increase in child protection notifications to overzealous reporting by Police and yet now wants to use child removal as a threat.

"The care and protection of children should always be first and foremost about the welfare of children.

"If children are at risk, our Police and child protection workers should be attending to that as a part of their normal work; not as part of a political law and order campaign.

"Alice Springs social workers have been calling on the government to support and maintain youth outreach services that help identify children at risk. Instead of a measured and well informed plan all we have seen from the government is a knee jerk reaction to a known problem, threatening to take children into state care.

"Under this CLP government child protection is under increasing pressure with an $8m budget cut and a rapidly growing number of unresolved cases already in the system."

Ms Moss said the CLP Government cut funding for youth and community services, including youth outreach services operating at night.

"The CLP Government’s cuts to youth services, cut support for school holiday programs, and policy decisions that put front line police officers in front of bottle shops, have contributed and exacerbated this issue," Ms Moss said.

"It is time for the Minister to stop his grand standing, to take his responsibilities seriously and to address the increasingly slow follow up of real child protection notifications and act on the ‘Growing Them Strong, Together’ recommendations."

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