Investment in Out of Home Care

24 May 2016

Today the Country Liberal Government committed an additional $10 million funding for the Department of Children and Families to address the growing demand for Out of Home Care services in the Northern Territory.

It is a harsh reality that the number of Territory children on Protection Orders has grown by an average of 11 percent per annum over the past five years and in 2015-16, the number of children on care and protection orders has reached over 1,000 for the very first time.

Minister for Children and Families, John Elferink said it is the experience of trauma and neglect that sadly results in children finding themselves in the Child Protection Out of Home Care system.

“As the parents of these children, the Department of Children and Families must ensure that each child receives services and support that optimises their outcomes and minimises the emotional effects of being separated from their parents and family”.

Research shows that stability of a loving foster or kinship home immensely improves social and emotional wellbeing and helps to provide these vulnerable young people with a bright future.”

Foster and kinship care is the preferred care arrangement as it is best placed to offer stable, long term and cost effective placements.

Budget 2016 directly addresses these increased costs in out of home care.

The additional funding will support the Department of Children and Families to continue to implement a clear strategy that aims to increase attraction, recruitment and retention of foster and kinship carers across the whole Northern Territory in both regional and remote areas.

The strategy will provide advertising through social media, traditional media with expansions into a range of Aboriginal languages, whilst continuing to support events such as Barnardos Mother of the Year and National Families Week.

In addition the Department of Children and Families will undertake a review of processes and policies to ensure the highest proportion of applications received are converted into carers.

The department will also focus on retaining existing carers through improved training and support, with ongoing recognition of the important role carers play in young people’s lives.

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