FOSTER CARE CHANGES NEED EXPLANATION

March 05th, 2012

The decision to hand responsibility for management of foster care assessments in Alice Springs to the Life Without Barriers NGO requires an explanation from Government.

Shadow Minister for Child Protection, Robyn Lambley, said there had been no notification of the management change and there were real concerns surrounding confidentiality and privacy as a result of the transfer.

“I met with a foster carer last week who was deeply concerned at the change,” Ms Lambley said.

“No warning was provided to foster carers and Life Without Barriers staff have just turned up on their doorstep unannounced wanting to interview families.

“Foster care files were handed over to Life Without Barriers and there are serious concerns about privacy and confidentiality.

“The carer I spoke with said the re-interview took three hours and the assessment was more involved and far more intrusive than the previous Department of Children and Families assessment.

“Even her children were asked about Mum and Dad’s parenting style.

“After the interview the family was given no details on what would happen next and within what time frames. This family had wanted to foster a child over the Christmas holiday period but their communications with the Department were not answered.

“These are further example of the Government’s ongoing poor treatment of foster carers.

“With the release of the Board of Inquiry report into child protection in the Northern Territory just 18 months ago, it’s deeply concerning to hear more
reports of foster carers getting a raw deal from the Department.

“For every foster carer in the Northern Territory there is, on average, 2.4 children requiring care. The on-going poor treatment of carers by the Department will only serve to deter existing and prospective carers.”

Further comment: Robyn Lambley 0428 040 693