Stephen Dunham  
Shadow Minister for Business, Industry & Resource Development, and Essential Services

Estimates hearing reveals sharp rise in child abuse reports - call for enquiry

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The sharp rise in reported incidents of child abuse and the heavy demands it is placing on child protection services demands an independent, external enquiry CLP Member for Drysdale Stephen Dunham said today.

Mr Dunham told Estimates Hearings in Parliament that statistics provided by the Labor Government showed a burgeoning problem with child abuse and the ability of child protection services to cope with the extra demands put on it.

“We have a Labor Government under fire from the union officials and we have staff prepared to strike because Government isn't listening to them,” Mr Dunham said.

“There are serious concerns over Government's management of the growing problems and its refusal to have an external enquiry raises further concerns about the seriousness that it is treating the matter.”

“Statistics revealed by the Government to the Estimates hearing show notifications of child abuse are on the increase. The Minister is facing criticism from union officials and Labor's child protection advocate Charlie King has called for an independent inquiry into child abuse in the Territory, how can the Government claim it is doing better than ever before.

“Child protection staffs are over loaded which means that cases of reported child abuse may not be being investigated promptly.

“This raises major concerns that vulnerable children may suffer continuing abuse because the government cannot provide enough skilled staff to intervene.

“The children of the Territory need to be cared for and protected as best as we can. Week after week we hear of cases of children needing help; prostitution; petrol sniffing; abandonment; and other sad cases.

“The CLP when elected will initiate an independent enquiry, develop sound intervention strategies based on its findings, and take action.

“So far the Martin Government has been all talk with no action.”

Ends