

Coalition for Children in Care

Media Release

Thursday 1 July 2010

Yet another reason to fix the out of home care system in NSW.

In his report to Parliament yesterday on *The need to better support children and young people in statutory care who have been victims of crime*, the NSW Ombudsman has identified yet again that the out of home care system in NSW is not working for the thousands of children for whom the Minister has parental responsibility. Not only has the Ombudsman found that many of the state's most traumatised children are missing out on victims compensation they are entitled to, but he has identified that many Community Services Centres have difficulty identifying these children, do not know about their legal obligation to seek the compensation, do not have the time to activate proper procedures even if they do understand them and finally, that hundreds of children in the state's care have no allocated caseworker at all.

"The Ombudsman's Report provides further evidence, if it were needed, that the sheer size of the out of home care system in NSW continues to hamper the proper exercise of Ministerial parental responsibility. Lack of continuity, administrative complexity, and the lack of casework support to children in the care of Community Services, all indicate that there is an urgent need to follow Justice Woods' 2008 recommendations about fixing the out of home care system.

"The main message about out of home care from the Wood Report was the high priority to be given to placing children with the non-government agencies which have the capacity to focus on the needs of the child rather than the needs of the system, and in which the response to children in care is not crisis driven."

"The Coalition for Children in Care represents a large group of non-government service providers who have come together to push for the implementation of the recommendations on children in care made by the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW, the "Wood Report". " said Ms Woodruff.

"We can't let another generation of children in care miss out while Community Services tries to work out how to implement Wood without it costing the Government anything."

"Placing children in care with non-government agencies will enhance their life chances, ensure that they are visited and listened to, that they receive the support any child is entitled to expect, and provide greater security and stability. This will allow Community Services to focus on its child protection work and to do it better."

You have to ask, "What else are these children missing out on?"

Media comment:

Jane Woodruff, CEO UnitingCare Burnside for the Coalition for Children in Care,
Telephone: 0402 891 325 or

Karen Bevan, Director Social Justice, UnitingCare Burnside for the Coalition for Children in Care, Telephone: 0400 379 656

For all other inquires:

Linda Frow, Co-ordinator for the Coalition for Children in Care, Telephone: 0400 516 093