

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACTION ON CHILD PROTECTION WELCOME

The NSW Opposition's Out-of-Home Care policy brings into sharp focus the need for more investment in intensive family services that are targeted at keeping children safe, Ms Jane Woodruff, CEO of UnitingCare Burnside said today.

Ms Woodruff was speaking after it was announced a Coalition Government would work more closely with families to reduce the number of children needing to be placed in care.

"Removing children and placing them into the out of home care system is traumatic.

"We welcome an approach that aims to work closely with families to reduce the number of children in care.

"It is important, however, that policy changes do not provide any obstacles to removing those children in need of care and protection. Any child that needs to be removed from their home should be – that is not negotiable," Ms Woodruff said.

Ms Woodruff said it was pleasing the Coalition appeared to be committed to implementing many of the recommendations that came out of the Wood Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection in 2008.

"Justice Wood gave his considerable expertise to examining the child protection system.

"His final report made wide ranging recommendations that provide the framework for a better child protection system.

"We're delighted that the NSW Opposition are taking his work seriously and committing to implementing some of his important recommendations, such as the transfer of out of home care to the non government sector," Ms Woodruff said.

"Justice Wood identified, and we also know, that there are evidence based highly intensive family support programs that would keep children safe and well if the NSW Government was prepared to invest.

"If properly funded, these programs will support families, make children safer and see fewer children needing to be placed in care," Ms Woodruff said.

UnitingCare Burnside recently released an election platform, 20 Steps for safe children, strong families inclusive communities in a just society which can be viewed at www.burnside.org.au

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UnitingCare Burnside is a leading child and family organisation in New South Wales, with over 6,000 services users in metropolitan, regional and rural communities. Our purpose is to provide innovative and quality programs and advocacy to break the cycle of disadvantage that affects vulnerable children, young people and families. Burnside is a member of the Coalition for Children in Care.