



MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday, 28 September 2016

New Government Child Protection Strategy: Robs Peter to Pay Paul.

Today's announcement from Minister Andrea Mitchell of a new early intervention child protection strategy is unreliable, with no funding or timeframe announced for the implementation.

CPSU/CSA members support investment in early intervention to prevent vulnerable children coming into care, but are distrustful of the government's plan - after recently seeing millions slashed from the Department of Child Protection and Family Support budget, directly impacting preventative services.

These include cuts to one of the most recognised Australian programs for preventing children coming into care, Best Beginnings (a program endorsed by PriceWaterhouseCoopers and the Telethon Institute for Children).

As an example of this government's incompetence; last month the closure of the Best Beginnings program led to seven job losses of DCPFS caseworkers and staff working in Kalgoorlie, an area with high intake of Aboriginal children.

The government's use of the terms "Realign existing funding" and "Redirect existing funding" highlights that this is not an additional investment in the community sector that complements successful early intervention programs run by government, but rather a case of privatization by stealth.

The Strategy advocates further outsourcing of child protection duties from the State Government and into the hands of private agencies, including increased sensitive child protection record sharing with the private sector.

This Strategy was developed alongside the State Government's Partnership Forum, a group which includes some of WA's largest private agency care providers.

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The department has also suggested there has been consultation over the past two years for this new approach, yet the Union and its members have had no input into the changes.

CPSU/CSA members call for an approach which is fully funded and resourced. They want to maintain successful publicly delivered programs such as Best Beginnings to make sure vulnerable young children and families get the care and support they need.

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