



LIA FINOCCHIARO
DEPUTY OPPOSITION LEADER

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For immediate circulation

Statistics reinforce the magnitude of the crisis

Questions from the Territory Opposition in Estimates this morning revealed terrible statistics in relation to child protection notifications and caseloads for front line staff, reinforcing the magnitude of the child protection crisis in the Northern Territory.

In response to questions from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Lia Finocchiaro, the Estimates Hearings were told, for the period of 1 July 2017 to 31 March 2018, there had been a shocking 41 substantiated cases of sexual exploitation of children, approximately one reported case a week.

Of the 18,442 unsubstantiated child protection notifications made (1 July 2017 to 31 March 2018), 9,865 children were the subject of the following notifications:

- 1,230 notifications received of sexual exploitation
- 3,680 notifications received of physical abuse
- 5,020 notifications received of emotional abuse
- 8,512 notifications received of neglect

Of the 9,865 children, 3,983 were subject to multiple notifications.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Lia Finocchiaro said that these statistics painted a very sad picture of some of the Territory's most vulnerable.

"While these statistics are terrible, what we must not lose sight of, is that these are not simply numbers, but Territory children who are suffering.

"The safety and protection of children must be at the centre of all decision making and a clear priority must be made to ensure that all frontline services and child protection staff are given the training, equipment and resources to curb these horrible statistics.

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Further questioning by Ms Finocchiaro unearthed the following caseload figures (as at 31 March 2018):

REGION	AMOUNT OF STAFF	CASES	AVERAGE CASE LOAD
Alice Springs	40 staff	1193	30 cases / staff member
Barkly Office	11 staff	368	33 cases / staff member
Greater Darwin	76 staff	2,268	30 cases / staff member
Katherine	23 staff	783	34 cases / staff member
Nhulunbuy	12 staff	176	15 cases / staff member
Remote	23 staff	560	23 cases / staff member

“Of note, we were advised that 12 staff have more than 80 cases to manage each.

“I am also concerned to hear that out of approximately 1000 children in the care of the CEO of Territory Families, 860 are school aged and the CEO has no way of knowing if the children are attending or not due to deficiencies in IT infrastructure.

“What is crystal clear is that the Territory’s child protection crisis is still unfolding, and these notification figures and caseload statistics reinforce the need for swift reform.

“I reinstate my previous calls for the Territory government to focus its attention on this crisis as a priority,” said Ms Finocchiaro.

ENDS

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