



## MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday, 3 August 2016

### Child Protection and Family Support gutted.

The ongoing attack on Child Protection and Family Support is morally bankrupt and makes no economic sense.

Despite a glowing report as to the effectiveness of the Responsible Parenting Program by Price Waterhouse Coopers in 2014, and the damning *Red Flags, White Flag Response?* report released in 2016, the government is cutting more programs than ever and significantly under-resourcing the department.

The union echoes predictions made in the PWC report that “Cessation of RPS services...would be anticipated to lead to a deterioration of client outcomes in areas including family functions, child development, child and adult health and child education, with attendant increases in costs to both the public and the families involved.”

In addition to the Responsible Parenting cuts, funding for placements in the Specialised Fostering Program have been dropped, as well as a \$790,000 cut to domestic violence services.

Meanwhile 1,800 women and children were unable to access a refuge place between July and December 2015 and pre-birth planning meetings increased from 169 in 2013/14 to 597 2015/16.

These numbers sit in stark contrast to \$2.3million overspend on the refurbishment of head office.

“Royalties for Regions funding was only ever meant to fund an expansion of the Responsible Parenting Program. Staffing cuts and the threat to this Program and others is heartless and fiscally irresponsible,” says Ms Walkington.

“The numbers speak for themselves. The demand and the savings are real.

“The Responsible Parenting program alone has saved the state \$18million by reducing the number of children in care, \$1.1million in costs associated with justice

supervision orders, with \$11.07 saved for every dollar spent.

“These programs do work. Of the 400 at-risk mums that participated in the Best Beginnings program last year, less than 10 were referred to child protection upon completion.

“The former Minister acknowledged that Responsible Parenting programs are directly related to a sixty-one percent reduction in children going into care.

“The Barnett Government cannot deny that they know these programs make moral and economic sense.

“If this Government is claiming downturns and economic hardship, surely any program that helps at-risk children, saves money and reduces demand on services is a benefit to everyone?”

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**FOR COMMENT:**

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