

COUNTRY LIBERALS	
	MEDIA RELEASE
	WEAVING A TIGHTER SAFETY NET FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN
	Robyn Lambley
	Date 26th October 2010
	<p>A week after the release of the Growing Them Strong, Together report the Country Liberals have announced legislation to implement key recommendations of the Board of Inquiry into Child Protection relating to the role of the office of the Children’s Commissioner.</p> <p>“The Inquiry recommends that the Children’s Commissioner monitor the implementation of Government decisions relating to the Inquiry’s proposals,” says the Shadow Child Protection Minister, Robyn Lambley.</p> <p>“The legislation will create a watchdog with real teeth to make sure the recommendations of the Inquiry are implemented.</p> <p>“This is particularly important given that critical recommendations from report after to report into child protection were not implemented.</p> <p>“The Labor Government has a long history of commissioning reports and then ignoring the recommendations.</p> <p>“In a system as chaotic and dysfunctional of Child Protection Services in the Northern Territory there must be vigilant oversight of the reform process.</p> <p>“The Country Liberals legislation will also expand the role of the Children’s Commissioner to include the power to self-refer cases for investigation.</p> <p>“Self-referral is a power the Ombudsman has and is necessary if we are going to weave a tighter safety net around children at risk in the Territory.</p> <p>“A closely associated reform is the extension of the Children Commissioner’s powers to all children, not just those in the care of Child Protection Services.</p> <p>“This legislative provision actually goes further than the Inquiry recommended but has support from the Ombudsman and is a sensible extension of the Children Commissioner’s powers.</p> <p>“The Children’s Commissioner would need to use the power selectively but it would ensure children at risk aren’t neglected merely because they haven’t come to the attention of Child Protection Services.</p> <p>“Specific powers to obtain documents, examine persons and carry out investigations are another component of the strengthened powers of</p>

the Children's Commissioner contained in this legislation.

"The Children's Commissioner needs the power to ensure no relevant information is concealed during investigations.

"The Growing Them Strong report was handed down last Monday.

"Implementation should be well underway and it's critical that the implementation phase is subject to thorough and ongoing scrutiny.

"The Country Liberals believe that failure to strengthen the role of the Children's Commissioner immediately sends the wrong message about how serious the subject of child neglect is taken in the Territory."

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