



Media release
21 October 2010 – for immediate release

Broader solutions will help child protection staffing

The high turnover of Victoria's child protection staff points to issues in State care that need broader solutions to a pressured system than are now being offered by media reports in a highly charged political environment.

"There is a high turnover of staff, and children's needs are not being met, but we need to pull back and look at our pressured system, rather than focus on a narrow view of particular controversial cases," said Dr Lynette Buoy, chief executive of the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, today.

"An antiquated system is trying to cope with today's needs, and it's not working.

"Workers are over-stretched in very challenging roles, and it's no wonder there are high attrition rates, and consequently children who are not allocated case workers in situations of risk. Child protection as a stand-alone response is failing nationally and internationally.

"The failure to grasp the role of prevention and early intervention that could stop many children reaching the 'intensive care', child protection end of the system needs to be seriously addressed," Dr Buoy said.

"We need to be looking not only at how workers are supported, and the nature of their roles and workloads, but remove the sheer pressure flowing through to them from the system itself. In the end it doesn't matter how competent the staff may be in an intensive care ward if you keep doubling the patients arriving there," Dr Buoy said.

An integrated approach drawing on expertise from community-based organisations and a wider range of government departments are needed to deal with today's issues that impact on vulnerable families, Dr Buoy noted.

On Wednesday 27 October, the Centre will hold a State election forum with Community Services Minister, Lisa Neville, Shadow Minister Mary Wooldridge, and Colleen Hartland, Community Services spokesperson for the Victorian Greens.

For media enquiries:

Dr Lynette Buoy, Chief Executive Officer
Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
Phone 0407 702 975