



**Centre for Excellence
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.**

Media release

Wednesday 11 May 2011 – for immediate release

Child protection inquiry comes to Geelong

Geelong is set to host the first regional public sitting of the Baillieu Government's Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry (PVVCI) when the Inquiry Panel sits at Geelong Arena next Wednesday 18 May from 10.00am.

Launched by the Premier on 31 January, the Inquiry will: "investigate systemic problems in Victoria's child protection system and make recommendations to strengthen and improve the protection and support of vulnerable young Victorians", according to the official Inquiry website, www.childprotectioninquiry.vic.gov.au/

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (the Centre) is calling for broad public engagement in the Inquiry from the Greater Geelong area to ensure the Panel has as much relevant information as possible on which to base its November recommendations to improve the system and outcomes for Victoria's vulnerable children and young people.

"The Centre and many of our member organisations have already made detailed written submissions. Starting with Geelong, the regional public sittings offer an added opportunity to speak, and especially to raise new issues in cases where a written submission has not been made," said Dr Lynette Buoy, chief executive of the Centre, today.

Dr Buoy said a number of member organisations from the Greater Geelong area would be involved with the Inquiry.

Two of Geelong's oldest and largest child and family welfare organisations, Bethany Community Support and Glastonbury Child and Family Services, have lodged a joint written submission to the Inquiry and will put their case first-hand to the Panel on the critical issues in protecting the region's vulnerable children next week.

In a joint statement, both organisations welcomed the additional investment in child protection and out-of-home care in the recent State Budget, but called on the Victorian Government to increase funding for prevention and early intervention programs to support vulnerable children and families early on to avoid more costly and intrusive child protection interventions when problems become acute.

MacKillop Family Services has also made a submission to the inquiry and will be attending to highlight the need to expand therapeutic responses for children in out-of-home care and improve education services for vulnerable children and young people.

The Geelong sitting is open to verbal submissions from individuals and organisations, but they must notify the Inquiry by no later than Monday 16 May if they wish to be allocated time to speak. This can be done by calling the Inquiry Secretariat on 03 9914 3629 or via email to childprotectioninquiry@cpi.vic.gov.au

The Centre has launched an Inquiry website for the community sector at www.theiroutcomesmatter.org, featuring news, media releases, views and submissions.

For interview:

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