



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

Media release  
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### **Department's failure calls for vision on protecting kids**

Reports of another potential failure by the Department of Human Services to protect vulnerable children should send an urgent signal to all parties that we need a vision for State care geared to the needs of children, not just an exchange of fire across the political battlefield.

"If we look at these three young children of a mother with a drug-addiction problem, it's clear the Department's lapse has resulted from the pressure flowing through the system," said Dr Lynette Buoy, chief executive of the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, today.

"A court order ends without follow-up due to a 'clerical error' driven by workload; no child protection worker would have been available anyway – these are the signs of a system under so much pressure that timely decision-making in the best interests of our vulnerable children is being compromised," Dr Buoy said.

Beyond particular cases, however, lies the need for appropriate resourcing of workers on the front line, for the prevention and early intervention that catches kids before the need to remove them, and for better ways of ensuring sustained quality of care.

"There is sadly no shortage of distressing testimonies of kids at risk. But political point-scoring is not the answer – what we need now are solutions from all sides of politics, and a bi-partisan commitment to funding children's needs first, and looking after the budget second," Dr Buoy said.

The Centre's 2010 Victorian State Election Forum on Wednesday 27 October will offer an opportunity for new solutions to be heard, with presentations by the Minister for Community Services, Lisa Neville, Opposition Spokesperson for Community Services, Mary Wooldridge, and Colleen Hartland, Community Services Spokesperson for the Victorian Greens.

"With a vision and resources, interventions to protect our vulnerable kids will flow from sound decision-making, not from media stories and political opportunism," Dr Buoy said.

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