

Media release  
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## **Labor should budget for our kids' survival**

As child and family services agencies wait for desperately needed support in next week's State Budget, Paul Austin's analysis ("Labor budgets for survival", 29/4) offers little hope of adequate spending to help our troubled families and their children.

If Austin is correct, the Government is locked in a law-and-order spending duel with the State Opposition, denying vital funds to address the social ills we know ultimately contribute to crime.

"With one highly critical report by the Ombudsman on the State care system, and another report anticipated, what will it take for the Government to realise that prevention and well funded family services are far preferable to the removal of children through struggling protection measures," said Dr Lynette Buoy, CEO of the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Services, today.

On Tuesday (27/4) the Government issued a media release flagging a \$34 million funding boost for kinship care, where removed children are placed with relatives rather than in residential or foster care.

"While additional money for kinship care is most welcome, this funding is not new. It appears to draw on previous budget allocations and the \$77 million child protection funds announced in September last year in the lead-up to the first Ombudsman's report.

"While that money will help those children whose cases have already escalated to the need for protection measures such as removal, it won't help the children and families whose problems are less serious but may well worsen without earlier assistance from family services.

"In the area of health, we would surely fund only so many respirators for intensive care before asking how patients are getting there and how that can be avoided. Family services can offer the prevention that stops children reaching and overwhelming the intensive care of our State's child protection measures.

"The headline for Paul Austin's piece has Labor budgeting for its survival. Instead the Government should be budgeting for our kids' survival, and a substantial boost for family services is a big part of that," Dr Buoy concluded.



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