



## **Efforts to Strengthen Child Safety Bill Nice Try But Fall Short of Needed Reform**

The amendments announced today by the Deputy Premier and Minister Close to the Children and Young People Safety Bill today fall short of community sector expectations.

Chair of the Council for the Care of Children, Simon Schrapel, acknowledges that the Government has been prepared to make some changes to accommodate services' concerns about the Bill's capacity to better protect children and young people in South Australia.

'The inclusion of reference from the existing Children's Protection Act about the need for early intervention and support services to better help parents care for their children is certainly a welcome step' said Mr Schrapel.

'The most important thing we can do to improve the wellbeing and safety of children and young people in our state is to ensure parents and caregivers are given the best assistance possible, when needed, to care for their children. Unfortunately we continue to spend more time and money on situations of child abuse and neglect and the Bill reinforces this focus' said Mr Schrapel.

The Bill continues to place safety above the best interests and wellbeing of children and young people, perpetuating a system which makes the removal of more children and young people inevitable. This is unconscionable at a time when our State is struggling to provide adequate care for an increasing number of children and young people entering and remaining in out of home care' Mr Schrapel said.

In addition we need to re-engage Aboriginal Communities in a proper partnership to develop sustainable solutions to keeping Aboriginal children and young people living safely within family and community.

Mr Schrapel called on the Government to sit down with child protection experts and community leaders to jointly craft contemporary legislation which addresses problems faced by children, young people and families in South Australia today.”

‘The Government needs to publically announce its verbal commitment to the community sector to overhaul the Family and Community Services Act, to strengthen family support in legislation for South Australia’ said Mr Schrapel.

‘Whilst welcoming the announcement of a Select Committee to review existing programs and consider opportunities for proactive early intervention, it is legislative reform that is ultimately needed to drive a new culture and a approach to addressing South Australia’s current child protection woes’ Mr Schrapel said.