



TO: NEWS ROOMS

FROM: Albert Barelds – Executive Director

SUBJECT: MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: 22 July 2014

Alleged child sexual abuse by a Families SA employee

Horrific allegations being published today about alleged child sexual abuse by a government-employed carer involving a number of preschool-age children need an urgent and deliberate response. Although this appears to have happened in a Families SA managed residential care facility, the child protection sector – both Government and Non-Government Organisations should be asked to answer questions how such sickening behaviour can occur by agencies working with children under the Guardianship of the Minister.

The Premier expects a Royal Commission to be set up and the Child and Family Welfare Association of South Australia [CAFWA SA] fully supports such an initiative and suggests some of the questions to be answered. CAFWA SA is the peak body in South Australia representing non-government, not for profit community organisations providing services for children, young people and families – especially in relation to various forms of care for children in State care, including foster care, residential care and various family support and reunification services.

A Royal Commission investigating sexual abuse involving children in State care should, among others, consider questions such as:

1. What screening is in place for applicants seeking employment, or seek to provide voluntary service, as carers and what screening is in place to regularly monitor staff / volunteers working with children in State care;
2. How are staff and volunteers selected, trained and supervised when working with children;
3. What are the reasons for preschool children to be in residential care rather than in family based care;
4. What safeguards are in place to prevent such unimaginable acts of crime in residential care facilities;
5. What processes are in place to ensure that Families SA and Government funded services can provide a child safe environment?

These are some of the questions for a Royal Commission and CAFWA SA is happy to assist and support the SA Government to seek answers to these questions.

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