

MEDIA RELEASE

Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children

BETTER DEAL DEMANDED NOW TO TACKLE CHILD ABUSE

63 of Australia's largest not-for-profit organisations have demanded that Federal, State and Territory politicians pledge major new funding to combat child abuse and neglect.

In a letter sent this week to the Prime Minister, Premiers and key Ministers, the Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children called upon all Governments to announce the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children as a matter of national urgency.

"After a delay in the scheduled announcement of the Framework in December last year, the Coalition calls on all Governments to announce Australia's first national child protection plan as a priority **AND** for the plan to contain substantial resources aimed at enhancing child wellbeing and safety," Coalition spokesperson Brian Babington said.

"We need massive additional investment in targeted programs that help families and children before problems occur. We also need more support for Indigenous families and communities, as well as for children and young people who have been removed from home".

"Australia's appalling record on child protection – typified by the alarming national figure of 309,000 child protection notifications and 58,000 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in 2006/07 - demands a bold, fresh vision and a major national plan of attack. The time is now; children cannot wait," he said.

"We are calling on Federal and State/Territory leaders to announce a substantial initial three-year package which should also include major new resources to: develop effective local community-based responses; better support Indigenous families and communities; enhance support for children and young people in care and leaving care; and keep the needs of children and young people in front of the nation, such as by creating an office of the National Commissioner for Children and Young People. An initial three year package of at least \$500 million is required."

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