

# Keep Them Safe

A shared approach to child wellbeing

## Media Release

Minister for Community Services, Minister for Women  
Hon. Linda Burney MP

Thursday 29 October 2009

### GOVERNMENT REMOVES BARRIERS TO INFORMATION-SHARING

New laws that allow and encourage government and community agencies to share vital information about vulnerable children will be proclaimed tomorrow, 30 October, Minister for Community Services Linda Burney announced today.

Ms Burney said the changes to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* are another milestone in the implementation of *Keep Them Safe*, the Government's action plan to reform the child protection system.

"These amendments will clear away blockages to allow the sharing of child safety information across government and non-government agencies," Ms Burney said.

"It will now be easier for agencies working with children to get services to families in need, without having to invoke statutory intervention."

"This change represents a new era of partnership between government agencies and with community organisations. It was a priority addressed by both Special Commissioner James Wood in his report into child protection last year and the NSW Ombudsman in a report earlier this month."

The information-sharing legislation has been proclaimed in advance of the new child reporting system, to be implemented on 27 January, to facilitate the sharing of information between the newly established Child Wellbeing Units and for the Family Case Management project.

"For the new system to be effective, it must be accompanied by significant cultural change. While this is being driven by the heads of human service agencies, only so much can be done from the top down.

"To ensure buy-in at every level the NSW Government is running 550 information sessions, part of a broad education campaign for the 200,000 people who work with children and young people."

Yesterday Ms Burney attended an information session at Petersham TAFE, where she joined 50 local teachers, childcare workers, psychologists, nurses and social workers to learn more about the changes and new guidelines to identify children at risk of significant harm.

"It is critical that each person uses the same guidelines. Our guidelines are the first of their kind in the world, developed with the assistance of the Chicago-based Children's Research Center, international experts in this field," she said.

"We have also just completed a successful regional engagement tour with over 1,500 senior members in the field participating in 11 forums around the State. At the forums we had the opportunity to explain the new system and answer questions from those who will be part of *Keep Them Safe*."

For further information visit [www.KeepThemSafe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.KeepThemSafe.nsw.gov.au).

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