

MEDIA RELEASE

**Minister for Community Services
Minister for Women
The Hon. Linda Burney MP**



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THOUSANDS GEARING UP FOR NEW CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

The first of 550 state-wide information sessions will be held today to introduce doctors, nurses, community workers, police officers and teachers to the new child protection system, Minister for Community Services Linda Burney announced.

“TAFE NSW is running sessions across NSW until the end of the year, by which time we will have reached more than 27,000 mandatory reporters from government and non-government agencies that work with children and young people,” Ms Burney said.

At these information sessions, mandatory reporters (someone who works in the delivery of health care, welfare, education or law enforcement to children or young persons) will be informed how the Government’s *Keep Them Safe* reforms to child protection will affect them, particularly the new mandatory reporting threshold that comes into effect at the end of January 2010.

“This new threshold means that only children at risk of significant harm will be reported to Community Services. Where children fall below the new threshold, NGOs and other government agencies such as Health, Police, Housing and Education will work together to support vulnerable children and families.

“This implements Commissioner Wood’s recommendation for vulnerable children and families to receive early support and to share responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children.

“Face-to-face sessions will be complemented by the distribution of information and training packages to more than 200,000 people who work with children and young people. The packages include written materials, a DVD, e-learning materials and tailored agency training.

“The new information will also be included in ongoing training curriculums across the relevant professions and we will be rolling out further training in 2010.”

Ms Burney said that in addition to covering the raised mandatory reporting threshold, the sessions will also inform reporters about new legislation enabling information to be shared among agencies when a child is at risk. They will also hear about the Child Wellbeing Units that are being established in Health, Police, Education and Human Services.

“These sessions will get workers and organisations thinking and planning for when the new system and reporting processes begin next year. I want to see everyone prepared and ready to work together as integral components of an effective child protection system,” she said.

“There have already been registrations from more than 10,000 mandatory reporters from government agencies and NGO services including childcare services, non-government schools, child, youth and family services. It’s a great sign that many sessions are already full.”

More information is available at <http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au/home>.

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