

Child wellbeing is much more than Protection

The Chair of CAFWAA, Lisa Hillan said today “CAFWAA and its members mark the beginning of child protection week by calling for a serious investment in reducing the shocking numbers of children and families coming into contact with the child protection system”

From 2002 to 2006, all major indicators in child welfare point to a significant decline in child safety and wellbeing, involving a 38% increase in substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect and a 35% rise in the number of Australian children and young people in Out of Home Care.

Children’s protection and well -being cannot be solved by our State and Territory child protection agencies alone. CAFWAA believes that a concerted effort is needed from all levels of government including our health and education authorities to meet the needs of Australia’s children and their families to live free from harm.

CAFWAA urges the Federal Government to extend their efforts at addressing the child protection crisis through a significant investment in early intervention strategies “This must start with a major new investment in family support services”. A failure to support vulnerable families will consign a greater number of Australian children to further abuse.” said Ms Hillan

If the current trend of notifications of child abuse and investigations is maintained, one in five Australian families will come into contact with a statutory child protection authority. This is no longer a problem for child welfare organisations but one that every Australian should be concerned about.

Ms Hillan states that “our current approach to Child Protection in Australia is unsustainable. But worse still, it is not working. We must be able to offer real hope and practical services that build families and these are sadly lacking for many children and families in need of help”.

CAFWAA sees the development of local responses, which incorporate the needs of children within adult services such as mental health and drug and alcohol as imperative to turning around our current Child Protection crisis.

Ms Hillan reiterated that “CAFWAA and our members believe that our future as a nation depends upon a response that goes beyond reactive responses to abuse to one that



The Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia (CAFWAA) is the national peak body representing community service organisations working with vulnerable children, young people and families, including those experiencing neglect and abuse and those living in an Out of Home Care environment.

strengthens families and communities to provide nurturing and consistent care.”

For information in relation to this release please contact Lisa Hillan Chairperson (0409 847284).