

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 5 July 2019

Barnardos backs NSW early investment in vulnerable children

Barnardos Australia welcomes the Minister for Families, Communities, and Disability Services, Gareth Ward's commitment to further investment in early intervention to improve the outcomes of vulnerable children and families as part of the NSW Government's Their Futures Matter reform, following today's release of the Forecasting Future Outcomes report.

Barnardos are supportive of a whole-of-government approach to caring for children and families at risk which will be reflected in the establishment of the NSW Stronger Communities Investment Unit.

CEO Deirdre Cheers explains "Since our inception, Barnardos has placed the needs of children at the centre of all we do. We are heartened to hear that Minister Ward and the NSW Government will be adopting a needs-based approach to replace the current program-based model. By placing children, young people and families at the centre of decision-making will mean services will be specific and targeted to their needs."

Barnardos pioneered this holistic approach over 40 years ago through the establishment of our Children's Family Centres which offer a one-stop shop of wrap-around services for vulnerable children, young people and families in areas of greatest need. Last year, Barnardos supported 7,567 children and young people to remain safely at home with their families through our Children's Family Centres programs.

Barnardos believes investment in evidence-based early intervention and prevention services is the key to breaking the cycle of disadvantage and create safe, stable and nurturing homes. We applaud Minister Ward for this move to improve the lives of current and future generations of families and acknowledge the enormous cost savings that will occur with further investment.

"Our extensive experience and research into the needs of vulnerable children in NSW and ACT has provided us with the evidence to support these reforms – we know what works for children. We therefore welcome the Government's move to focus on children under five years old, as we strongly believe a nurturing early childhood and permanency are crucial for a child's future wellbeing in order for them to fulfil their potential" Ms Cheers said.

Barnardos also supported the Government's reforms to the Care and Protection Act of late last year and believe that this has been the right decision for children in NSW in order to achieve the permanency all children deserve. As pioneers of open adoption for non-Aboriginal children in Australia, Barnardos experience and research shows open adoption provides these children with stability, belonging and a family for life.

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About Barnardos Australia

Barnardos Australia is a leading non-government, non-denominational, child safety and family care organisation providing services for vulnerable children, young people and their families. Barnardos Australia believes all children and young people deserve caring families in which they can grow safely and fulfil their potential. We work together with children, young people and families to break the cycle of disadvantage, creating safe, nurturing and stable homes, connected to family and community.

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