

Commissioner for Children and Young People calls for greater focus on early intervention in child protection

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The Commissioner for Children and Young People Leanne McLean said the release today of the annual Report on Government Services focusing on Community Services highlights the need for a greater emphasis on early intervention and family support to keep children out of the child safety system.

“While I acknowledge the good work undertaken by the Tasmanian Government in implementing a redesign of our child safety system, the Productivity Commission’s data clearly shows that we need to do much more and earlier,” Ms McLean said.

“There has been more than a 20 percent increase in out-of-home care and intensive family support services expenditure compared to the previous year. At the same time, there has only been a five percent increase in expenditures made in earliest intervention family support services.

“The number of children in out-of-home care is increasing and more funds are being channeled towards the end of the child safety funnel. Clearly, we must invest more, earlier and for longer to support families and children if we are to keep children safe at home.”

Ms McLean said it was of particular concern that only 64.8 percent of children and young people in out-of-home care have a care plan.

“These plans are crucial to allowing children and young people to be involved in decision-making relating to their care and wellbeing – something which young people have emphasized to me time and time again.

“The Productivity Report data, while sobering, does provide us with a way forward.

“We must provide a greater focus on earlier intervention and addressing problems before they become entrenched if we are to ensure that every Tasmanian child and young person remains connected to their families and communities.”

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