

Monday 11 July 2011

DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN REQUIRE GREATER SUPPORT TO CURB MALTREATMENT

Children from low socio-economic backgrounds need to be provided with greater support services to break the sad reality that disadvantage increases the risk of child maltreatment, Jesuit Social Services said following their verbal submission into Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry today.

Jesuit Social Services' senior research consultant, Professor Tony Vinson, welcomed the opportunity to make a verbal submission to the Inquiry but stressed the importance of using this forum to agree upon and implement measures which will bring about positive change for disadvantaged children.

"There is an unmistakable link between inadequate education and training and unemployment, low income, poor health and making ends meet by criminal means which may result in high rates of convictions and imprisonments.

"Our research shows that in areas of high disadvantage, you will also find high levels of confirmed child maltreatment.

"A 2004 report revealed that 2.7 per cent of all Victorian postcodes accounted for 25 per cent of the total volume of child maltreatment cases; 8.3 per cent account for 50 per cent of them.

"It is extremely difficult for the disadvantaged to overcome a limitation, such as employment, because their attempts are often inhibited by related factors like limited funds, poor health, inadequate training or having a criminal record.

"Jesuit Social Services, through research and experience, have found that endeavours to restore lives after they are damaged are most effective when people are encouraged to achieve goals, the unconditional support of a change agent who helps them create a vision for the future and when the person is helped to break up tasks into manageable bites," Professor Vinson said.

Jesuit Social Services other policy submissions include;

- Support for children needs to continue to early 20's (not at an arbitrary point of 18 years)
- Continuity and quality of staff engagement (based on viable wages and management structures for those employed in sector)
- Support for organisations, access to infrastructure etc
- Let social workers do their job free from 'fear driven proceduralism' (Eileen Munro)
- Location based services targeting disadvantage

"We welcome the recent government funding for Victorian child protection workers which will see an increase in the minimum pay and conditions for front-line workers," Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards said.

Jesuit Social Services engages with young people in the youth justice and adult corrections systems – most of whom have had, or currently have, involvement with the child protection system. Jesuit Social Services works closely with these youths through the Jesuit Community College.

Media Opportunity

Jesuit Social Services' Senior research consultant, Professor Tony Vinson will be available for comment following their verbal submission to the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry.

When: Monday 11 July, approximately 3.30 pm

Where: Chisholm Institute of TAFE, Building W, Cleeland Street, Dandenong

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Stephanie De Campo (Media) 0432 828 004