MEDIA RELEASE

Meredith Hunter MLA, ACT Greens Parliamentary Leader, Children and Young People spokesperson

5 June 2012

Care and Protection Services - reform needed with new funding

ACT Greens spokesperson for Children and Young People, Meredith Hunter, has welcomed the additional money in today's budget for Care and Protection, but is disappointed that it has taken years to address the most basic recommendations of multiple reports.

"It appears the Government has finally understood that denying the truth about the state of our care and protection services will not make the problems go away", Ms Hunter said.

"It is quite clear from the Public Advocates that frontline workers need better support and supervision, and that the Community Services Directorate needs to improve its culture, systems and approach to what is admittedly a very complex area.

"The money in today's budget is welcome, and goes some way to recognising that business as usual is not good enough for the most vulnerable children in our community.

"It remains to be seen if this Minister can match the funding with leadership, and implement lasting reforms that will address the issues highlighted in the Public Advocates report.
"There have been some examples of change within her Directorate, such has the creation of a new Senior Director position in the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support.

"The ACT Greens supported a motion of censure against Minister Burch last year on the basis of the interim Public Advocate reports' damning findings. We have seen a more positive response from the Minister to the final report, and there is an opportunity with this new funding to make the necessary changes.

“The ACT Greens will continue to put pressure on Minister Burch to act on the recommendations of the Public Advocates report. We want to see vastly improved for workers, carers and children as well as real and lasting change to the system,” Ms Hunter said.