



Father Chris Riley's  
Youth Off The Streets®

**Submission to Justice Wood**

**The Special Commission of Inquiry in Child Protection**

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## Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection.

### Terms of reference:

1. *The system of reporting of child abuse and neglect, including mandatory reporting, reporting thresholds and feedback to reporters.*
2. *Management of reports, including the adequacy and efficiency of systems and processes for intake, assessment, prioritisation, investigation **and decision making.***
3. *Management of cases requiring ongoing work, including referrals for services and monitoring and supervision of families.*
4. *Recording of essential information and capacity to collate and utilize data about the child protection system to target resources efficiently.*
5. *Professional capacity and professional supervision of the casework and allied staff.*
6. *The adequacy of the current statutory framework for child protection including roles and responsibilities of mandatory reporters, DoCS, the courts and oversight agencies.*
7. *The adequacy of arrangements for inter-agency cooperation in child protection cases.*
8. *The adequacy of arrangements for children in out of home care.*
9. *The adequacy of resources in the child protection system.*

Your Honour,

I am aware of the terms of reference set by the Inquiry. I request you indulge me somewhat as I have spent the last 34 years working with marginalised, disadvantaged and abused young people. I spend my life working directly with young people and crossing the country encouraging and helping people deal more effectively with young people. While this Inquiry is focusing on DoCS intervention to keep young people and children safe; my message as I cross this country, is that if we are ever to stem the tide of child abuse, then **every adult must take responsibility for every child.** The Native American Indians

believe that *“the only reason we adults exist is to raise children,”* and *“it takes a village to raise a child.”*

Tragically, many in this country do not adhere to these mottos and in fact children in many communities have little rights and no voice.

**I will cite individual cases with the intention of leading to some suggestions to bring about improvements within the system. Youth Off the Streets will provide a thorough report to the Commission within one week.**

My message as I travel the country is that we as adults are disconnecting from our young people and we do it at our own peril. It is not the reality that young people are disconnecting from us. I believe young people are ‘hard-wired’ to please adults.

This Inquiry was brought about by a spate of horrendous and tragic loss of young lives. DoCS were the target for failing these young people. I believe strongly that if we go down the road of ‘scape-goating’ any one agency, then nothing will be resolved and in a few months time we will hear more tragic cases disclosed.

I note that on the 30 June, 2007, DoCS had received \$846.5 million from the reform package. This is a massive amount of money and I believe that money is not the greatest issue in dealing with this problem. The reality is that child abuse is escalating and some may say that more notifications are being made and the Minister acknowledges that his Department is under siege as it appears there has been an increase in the level of child abuse, both physical and sexual and of child neglect. Some in the field would acknowledge that probably one third of abuse is reported, leaving another significant number who go unreported and are given no help whatsoever.

On our current understanding: NSW is not alone in its experience of a steady and significant increase in the level of child abuse across Australia.

When dealing with abuse, neglect and deaths of children (420 in the past 4 years) we need to focus on many societal pressures that impact on this abuse.

While there is a great outcry against DoCS when a tragedy happens, the focus should be on the general exploitation of our young people. Throughout history it was agreed that children should be kept out of politics, economy/work and sexualisation. In this country we have broken with these accepted traditions, often in a pursuit of money. We are leaving our kids vulnerable.

I could talk about these pressures and forces extensively and in detail, but time doesn't allow.

These **marketing forces** need to be dealt with so that we can make this a safer country for young people to live in.

### **Advertising targeting our kids: sexualising our kids.**

- A major retailer has come under fire for selling a line of T-shirts targeting school age children with the following slogans emblazoned across them such as “Mr. Pimp,” “ Mr. Loser,” “Mr. Asshole,” “Miss Wasted,” “Mr. Drunk,” “Miss Floozy,” and the line of T-shirts is entitled “Little Losers.”

If the public is really serious about protecting our children, then there should be a major outcry against this type of marketing. It aligns young people with the sex-trade (pimp, floozy), with abuse of alcohol and drugs (Wasted, Drunk) and with the most insidious attack that they are ‘losers.’

Dr. Michael Carr-Gregg stated in relation to these items, “What we are doing is normalising and glamourising language that is not appropriate.”

- Fashions of young people mimic adult fashions, even to the point where 3 year olds can now get padded bras to wear. Childhood should be a time of play and adventure, not a time spent fearful that someone may attack them because they are perceived to be dressed provocatively.
- All types of advertisements for all types of things are exploitive of young people. As you drive around Sydney at the moment, you may have seen an advertisement for the lemonade product “Sprite” with the slogan: “Be sexy drink sprite” with the image of a green bikini clad young girl holding the bottle down near her vagina (as though to insert).

### **Drugs and Alcohol:**

There is no doubt that sexual and physical assault of children revolves around alcohol use/abuse. While it is thought that most child abusers are 'dirty old men clad in raincoats,' this is simply not the case. In fact a large percentage of sexual assaults are committed by adolescents.

Rogue traders of the alcohol industry target young people, although they deny it. Binge drinking is at epidemic proportions. The age of young people experiencing alcohol has dropped to 12. A fifth of young people aged between 16-25 drink to intoxication most times that they drink and 42% of drinkers report memory loss after drinking.

The alcohol industry cannot be relied on to monitor inappropriate advertising. One of the guidelines of ABAC code indicates that alcohol advertising must not depict the consumption or presence of alcohol beverages as a cause of or contributing to the achievement of sexual or other success.

A recent James Boag's beer commercial featured a bikini clad woman climbing up on a Mercedes Benz's bonnet to drink beer after its male driver took her dress off via the car's electric aerial. However, the complaint against the Boag's commercial was rejected by the industry run Advertising Standard's Bureau (ASB). ASB chief executive, Fiona Jolly defended the decisions of the authority despite the study accusing the board of not doing an adequate job. Ms. Jolly said the advertisements were based on 'prevailing community attitudes and standards rather than those of any particular individual or group.'

Pick up any of the magazines targeting young people and we will see more marketing around the sexualisation of our young people and the sexual rewards being attached to alcohol use eg. *Zoo Magazine* January, 2008 page 22 which reads, "The Wright Stuff: it's not a mirage – just our top sand-loving stunner scorching it up in the Seppo desert" topless young females in suggestive positions and 'the winner' holding a bottle of beer.

***Recommendations:***

- We need to acknowledge that some alcohol companies target kids with their marketing campaigns. We as a society should ensure the milieu in which our children live is cleaned up.
- We need Governments to acknowledge the damage alcohol and its marketing does to young people and the part it plays in physical and sexual violence.
- Governments should ban products such as:
  - BOMB: its packaging reads: Herbal Energy Shot: The Bomb – contains caffeine (Tornado Shot). 20% alcohol content.
  - Cowboy: its packaging reads Original cowboy cream, smooth, “Mini udder” 15% alcohol/vol. Clearly targeting kids and even referring to ‘breast feeding” through its milk base.
  - Fairy bomb: genuine green fairy Absinth Energy Drink 8.2% alcohol/vol.

- (Definition of Absinthe from the Australian Absinthe promoter’s website:  
<http://www.absinth.com.au/html/absinth%20info.htm>

Absinthe is back, the mysterious liquor sometimes known as La Fée Verte or Green Fairy, which had long been illegal and caused quite a stir among European artists of the 19th century.

Numerous contemporary Hollywood movies (Dracula, Moulin Rouge, From Hell etc.) feature the hallucinogenic effect of the liquor via "dream sequences".

Absinthe is a bitter green highly aromatic liqueur flavoured with herbs and spices. Since ancient times it has been used for its healing properties and aphrodisiac effects.

Popular as a creativity enhancer among artists and writers, it became a symbol of Bohemian lifestyle both in Europe and America.

Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*) is the chief flavouring ingredient of absinthe. Other aromatic ingredients include star anise, coriander, mint, fennel, hyssop and angelica root which strengthen the aroma and flavour.

Thujone is the component of wormwood that arouses emotions and imparts the quality peculiar to absinthe. It has a similar molecular geometry with THC, the active chemical in cannabis.

Blamed for convulsions, hallucinations and psychoses caused by excessive drinking, absinthe became prohibited in many countries in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Since 1998 absinthe production is once again permitted in EU countries with a maximum quantity of 10 mg/kg thujone. The latest studies show that doses of thujone in absinthe do not cause any damage to the nervous system.)

- Alco-pops eg. Vodka Cruiser: its packaging reads “Passionfruit Drink” (large font) then small font “Genuine double distilled vodka. 5% alcohol/vol. Many studies maintained that this product is attractively coloured to catch the attention of young people and its flavouring masks the alcohol taste by making it taste like a soft drink.
- Marketing of alcohol products during sporting events should be banned before 9 p.m It is a serious anomaly that all advertising of alcohol on television must be after 9 p.m. except when a sporting event is involved.

### **What I am seeing?**

Our young people are in real trouble in this country. I travel the country advising communities on how to deal with young people. I hear horrendous stories about what is happening to young people and believe that abuse of our children is the greatest health risk our country faces. In the past couple of years I have established programs in some very trouble communities (Macquarie Fields, Airds, Walgett, Griffith) and these communities are reflective of all our communities across the country.

I travel to communities and hear:

- Of a father who sells his eight year old daughter to another man for sexual favours for the price of one can of beer;
- I travel to communities where I am told that there is a funeral on in the town and that while the community gets drunk over the next few days, the kids will be sexually assaulted and I am told it in such a way, that I should accept it;
- In some communities we place posters around begging people to be the eyes and ears of our kids and giving the message that “abuse of children is a crime and immoral.”

- We place the same posters at some truck stops, where young girls are sexually exploited for a few cigarettes or a bit of money;
- I see young girls between the age of 11 – 16 years of age being sexually exploited for cigarettes and alcohol and even a greater tragedy is that they feel so unloved and unwanted that this is the only affection they know of;
- I go into towns who book hotels out to provide sex services, many who are underage, after a sporting event;
- I know of a 70 year old retired doctor who goes into an Aboriginal community to pick up young girls on a weekly basis and the police say they can get no evidence;
- I see kids who are literally starved, of 8 year olds who wander the streets at 2 a.m. because their carers are out celebrating or home drugged or drunk;
- I've seen the results of putting cigarettes out on a child's flesh, I've witnessed the fear of being sexually abused and battered and I have heard of their belief that there is no way out for them.

I have dealt with well over 60,000 young people over the past 18 years through Youth Off The Streets.

The more I see, the more I know. I have come to a definite conclusion that the way forward to create a safe environment for our kids is not to scape-goat a department that has to pick up the mess of so many adults.

The figure:

- There have been 420 deaths of children over the past four years.
- Increase in child protection reports have risen from 159, 000 in 2002 to 286,000 in 2007 (that is 783 per week); although the Minister was reported to say that DoCS received 4000 notifications in a week (The Telegraph, 14/11/07).

- Not only are numbers up, but the type of notifications have changed – we are not just dealing with neglect, but dealing with childhood trauma, violence and more.

### **Who are the people who work for DoCS?**

While there may be some staff members in DOCS **who** operate by creating fear, believing that they have power over everyone and everything, who adapt a 'seige mentality', who will not share information – every agency has these cowboys who resist new and productive cultures (including my own).

But most are there for the right reasons; however they burn out very quickly. We could blame management perhaps; but, I believe it is more about what they see.

The Daily Telegraph described a day in the life of a DO on 16/11/07 which captures the pathos these workers endure.

*He knocks on the front door of the house, with unmown grass and the haunted look. He takes a deep breath because something tells him he'll need it.*

*His instincts are right. The door opens and the stench assaults him, almost hurling him back. Inside he finds a four year old girl wandering aimlessly, hair filled with lice, clothes infested with fleas.*

*She can barely speak. Years of chronic neglect have left her with a vocabulary of few words and a body failing from a constant diet of fast food.*

*Faeces litter the floors. In the kitchen, rotting meat festers on a bench amid piles of unwashed dishes, other scraps of weeks old food, bongs and poisons.*

The DoCS staff are condemned by everyone. The parents or so called carers of the kids are abusive and threatening. Some have weapons and threatened the DoCS staff that they will hurt them if they try to take their kids away.

If anything goes wrong, the public and the media are brutal in their assessment and the courts are often hostile and abusive towards them, calling them inept or incompetent and often impose orders that leave the Docs staff powerless.

**Court outcomes and positions are baffling and give the wrong message:**

The recent Aurukun case demonstrates that lack of understanding that some magistrates have about the outcomes and long term effects of abuse of children. We remember a 10 year old's case well, where six teenage attackers have no conviction made against them and three older people were given suspended sentences. The ten year old was removed from the community and it was suggested by the Magistrate that she probably gave consent.

This horrendous rape will stay with the victim for the rest of their life. Already this young girl has demonstrated anti-social and violent behavior and in a few years time, when she is 16 or 17 and does some terrible crime, the weight of public condemnation will come down hard on her, forgetting how betrayed she was by the legal system and having lost respect for the society that let her down.

***Let's look at what happened in the NSW courts over the past twelve months:***

- In the past decade, 104 children have been murdered and almost all of their killers will be reintegrated back into the community. Despite many not having been rehabilitated.
- Paedophilia has reached epidemic proportions with some experts calling it Australia's biggest health crisis – yet it is rarely spoken about. Statistics shows 2277 attacks by paedophiles were reported to NSW police last year.
- Last year the average gaol sentence given to 120 paedophiles was less than three years, while 48 were let off without a gaol sentence.

Child protection advocate Dr. Freda Briggs is a renowned expert on the abuse of children and she makes the following points:

- This abuse of children is underestimated with terrible consequences.

- She commented in relation to Lewthwaite being released and stated he is not as safe as authorities expected him to be.
- She states that when it reaches court, offenders are rewarded and given confidence by a legal system which makes it all about them. She has seen a paedophile claim a three-year-old girl asked to be assaulted because she reached up and touched his side.

***The recent case of sex predator, Raymond Barry Cornwall exemplifies my point well.***

He refused treatment and yet was let out. He was recaptured on a beach watching a group of young people.

**What is needed:**

***The Premier, Morris lemma has made some attempts to address this:***

- The Premier of NSW, over the past twelve months has requested that victims of crime be treated with more respect and that children not be badgered by over zealous lawyers and barristers,
- He has also requested longer sentences be looked at.

**Recommendations:**

***But we need to go further:***

- Unless an offender has demonstrated beyond doubt that they will not reoffend, then they should not be released from gaol. They will reoffend and will affect numerous number of kids
- Serious consideration should be given to indeterminate sentencing of people who abuse children. Only released if they have participated in therapy and dealt with their issues.
- For repeated offenders, they should be given a life sentence – never to be released.
- Recently a group of 11 men were charged with having almost 800,000 images of child pornography. When this news broke, it received very

little coverage. It was at the time of Andrew Johns opening up on his battle with mental issues and abuse of drugs. He is hardly public enemy number one and we should have highlighted these men who were caught with so many images. Child pornography is not a victimless crime, it is real kids who are being abuse and the demand for such material ensures the practice of child abuse continuing. Lengthy sentences must be given to those people as though they have key responsibility for the production of the material.

- Our present legal system gives little consideration to the victims. In our present system the 'victim' is the State (the Prosecutor). Restorative justice takes a very different approach and gives power back to the victim. We need to look at the restorative justice process as a way of balancing the needs of the victim against the needs of the perpetrator.

***The case of Shellay recently highlighted some areas that need addressing:***

- I call on every adult to take responsibility for every child. In this case, this was exemplified as a neighbour made notifications to DoCS and even as the family was about to move she took down the removalist details and handed them to DoCS – no action was taken and this is a case where DoCS clearly got it wrong and should have acted.
- Certain media campaigns have demonstrated we can tap into the Australian psyche to change attitudes e.g.; Wearing self belts, not driving intoxicated, smoking. We need to run ongoing campaigns highlighting that each child is the responsibility of every adult. Not only challenging people to be the 'eyes and ears' of our children, but an educational package highlighting indicators of behavior which 'red flag' abuse of children.

***Needing to be addressed:***

It is our experience that the DoCS *Helpline* is effective. Where to from the Helpline, is where things fall down.

The Helpline forwards the notification to the local office. What happens here is crucial and this is where things often break down.

- Staffing is a real issue. In the case of Shallow, in her area there were 68 staff vacancies, 39 of them were caseworkers. Staffing is at crisis right across the sector. DoCS pays much higher wages than not for profit and is able to recruit more effectively. With the low unemployment rates, it is impossible to fill positions.
- The local office receives the computer report from the Helpline and decisions are often made from computer material.
- Initial follow up, and at times, the only follow up, is a phone call to the household where the kids have been notified at risk.
- Before the local office will take on a new case, they have to unallocate one of the present cases being dealt with.
- If a case is not followed up by the local office, it is closed and lost to the system.
- A dual case management system has been set up. Some would say to cover their backs; I would agree that the decisions the department makes are grave and need consultation.
- When concerned people ring or contact DoCS, they are simply told that the case is being assessed.
- From a theoretical point of view, DoCS believe that they should find the 'strengths' of family and try to rebuild. There is some fear that in the future there will be accusations of a new 'stolen generation' claim from whatever community kids are taken from.
- The bunker mentality and the accountability of the Minister often forces DoCS to go into damage control.

***What needs to be looked at seriously is:***

***Recommendations:***

- We must unpack the concept of generating another 'stolen generation' for what it really is. The aboriginal stolen generation was not about

removing kids from dangerous and abusive environments. Some of those kids needed to be removed from abusive homes and environments. The evil of the aboriginal stolen generation was that it was Government policy, through Legislation, to remove all half caste aboriginal kids and was an act of genocide. Their homes and environment were not assessed and kids were removed from good and caring families. No one would argue against kids being removed from abusive homes.

- Interagency guidelines are largely not followed and there is little cooperation between agencies. A lack of sharing of knowledge. A team approach with an open sharing of information needs to be followed. If all the individual pieces were put together, we would get a clear picture to underpin our action or inaction.
- When investigating the notifications, often the only people questioned are the parents or direct carers of the children. 'Family conferencing' needs to be utilised when investigating. Sometimes the grandmother has information that is relevant. Checking with the child's school, doctor and other interested parties need to be put in place to get the real picture.
- 'Border issues' (across state lines) are of great concern and a national approach needs to be taken. People can relocate states and lose all the history that may be accumulated from their home state.
- In relation to the abuse of Aboriginal kids (the Aboriginal community comprises 4% of the population and yet comprises 16% of the notifications). The draft template is not adhered to and often the people the notification goes to are members of the same family and the notification goes no further. This happened in our work where we notified kids who were at risk, but no action was taken on the notification.
- I would like to see a 'rapid response group' established. Where a group goes through every notification every day and actions the ones that seem to present a 'red flag.' This group would need resources that they

can instantly move a young person to. One of the greatest drawbacks for DoCS staff is a lack of resources to interact with immediately and this disadvantages them. I would willingly put my hand up to develop this group and to develop a highly qualified staff who can be given powers to act immediately when there are concerns;

This may involve:

- If the feeling was strong enough, that the child who is at the centre of the notification is immediately removed from the household while the investigation is going on. Often death occurs before the investigation is actioned or while the investigation is occurring.
- From Helpline to local office to the 'rapid response team' and also directly from the Helpline directly to the 'rapid response team.'
- The 'rapid response team' would be contacted by DoCS and would work in close cooperation with DoCS. This shared responsibility takes the full onus off DoCS who are bearing the whole brunt of the abuse.
- The purchase of a suitable accommodation unit would be essential e.g.; A hotel with full facilities to care for kids in crisis.
- By economy of scales this would not be an expensive operation as we are talking about millions and millions of dollars going into the present system.
- The team would need to be made up of experienced professionals, psychologists, youth workers, social workers and police.
- The response would err on the side of caution to protect children; however, I would rather have 'egg on my face' than the death of a child on my conscience.
- It would need to comprise an Advisory Committee to work closely with it e.g.; People like Barbara Holborow, Rod Blackmore, Jock Crawford; experienced psychologists, doctors and nurses.

### ***The recent case of "Missy,"***

Another horrendous recent case. Although there had been several notifications that this baby was at risk, on the 4<sup>th</sup> notification a ten month old baby was bashed by her parents receiving left brain damage, loss of her spleen and gall bladder. She now has a shunt in her stomach. The parents claimed that she had been dropped.

When Missy was 6 a court had ordered Missy's biological mother be given unsupervised access to her daughter.

While doctors and psychologist said this should not happen, Missy was given to her mother with unsupervised visits.

After the visits, Missy complained of being locked out of the house, being threatened by her mother's male friend to be put in the washing machine and she was once concussed by hitting her head on a table.

She is currently living happily with a foster mother but suffers brain damage from her beatings and needs special care due to the shunt in her stomach.

***Recommendations:***

The high profile cases of Shellay, Missy and Dean are representative of many other cases.

- We need to make an assessment of a family and individuals who should not be responsible for the raising of children ever again. While re-establishing families is a good position for us to take; we must also make an assessment that some people should never have their children returned. This should not only apply to the present children who have been abused, but also for any unborn children that individuals may have.
- Foster families need to be sought, trained and supported so that there are places for children who are at risk to be placed safely. Foster families will only work if they are given 'wrap around' support services to help them. Some of the kids going into foster care are severely traumatised and present major behavioural problems. Often when things go wrong, the foster family is blamed and the child is taken away. In reality, these foster parents need support to deal with these troubled kids.

- Adoption: it is constantly stated that there are no kids to adopt in this country. This is true only because our fundamental premise is that all children belong with their natural parents. While this is the best option, it is not an option if the natural parents are abusive. Kids removed from their home need security and need to know that there are people who will commit to them.

### ***Care Courts:***

I am aware that my good friend and great advocate for children, Barbara Holborow, has presented to the Inquiry.

Many years ago Barbara set up the Care Court that dealt with cases involving children who had been abused. Her passion and commitment went a long way to ensuring kids were kept safe. At that time, we had committed Children Court's magistrates such as Justice Rod Blackmore and Justice Jock Crawford. It appears, from what Barbara has told me, that many of the Magistrates dealing with 'care matters' or 'juvenile crime' are there because they have little choice. While there are some very committed Children's Court Magistrates, many are waiting to move on to 'bigger and better things.'

### **Recommendations:**

- That Magistrates for 'Care matters' be selected from the very best of our Judges and select the ones who have a real commitment to the care of young people.
- That these Magistrates be trained to deal with 'care matters' – understanding the impact of abuse, the risks of leaving young people in dangerous situations and family dynamics.

### ***Developing new strategies of investigation:***

Youth Off the Streets is often notified of children and young people being at risk. However, very often we are not given enough information to be able to move the notification forward. People are too frightened to come forward, believe that if they identify the victim that they will be

kept out of the young person's life or they don't have enough evidence. In one case recently, we engaged the services of a reputable Private Investigator to gather the evidence to move the case forward or to demonstrate that the person reporting was or was not reliable.

***Mandatory reporting:***

3 out of 4 cases of recorded cases of abuse are as a result of Mandatory reporting. This further supports my recommendation that the wider community be educated in how to identify young people and children who are at risk and how you go about reporting it.

There is a concern that doctors are loathe to report cases of abuse and again an education program should be targeted towards them, particularly G.P.s

***The direction of Youth Off the Streets:***

Youth Off the Streets has now been in operation for around 18 years. Over a very short span we have become one of the largest youth care providers in this State. We have a reputation from the public view to respond quickly and effectively to crisis situations. When Macquarie Fields' riots took place, we were in that community within weeks; when the 17 year old young man was killed on New Year's Day in Griffith, we were there within one day. We even made, and continue to make, an impact on the recovery of children in tsunami struck Aceh.

There has been a significant change in our target group and mode of operation over the years. Initially beginning as an outreach service for streets kids in the Kings' Cross area and then accommodation to hard core street kids. We have also developed further residential options and schools. In the last 6 years, while maintaining our residential and educational services, we have moved to assist troubled communities. These are communities who have been 'beaten up' for too long and who need to develop strategies to empower them and to keep their kids safe.

Shortly, you will see our Youth Centres spring up in troubled communities. These will be significant and unique. They will be opened at hours when the

kids need us. They will be opened all night and into the late hours of the morning. We aim to provide a safe place for kids to come to when they are threatened as well as a shelter for women who are victims of domestic violence. In troubled communities we need to create an oasis of safety. We will develop trust and confidence with the young people to gain disclosures of abuse in an endeavour to have the perpetrators charged and removed from the communities.

We must stop making the victims suffer; we must stop removing them as this gives them the message that they are at fault.

### **Conclusion:**

Thank you Justice Woods for giving me the opportunity to make this presentation to you. Thank you, once again, for your commitment to pursue justice for our most vulnerable community members.

DoCS certainly have their job to do and need to take responsibility for their successes and failures. But no matter how many case-workers they put on, no matter how much money we throw at it – they will achieve little unless every responsible adult works in partnership with them.

### **Crucial to remember: much abuse is not reported, so will never be brought to DoCS attention. Who will come to the aid of these silently abused?**

This inquiry must not be a “DoCS bashing” but a reality check for the community to develop partnerships with DoCS, who far too often are the lone watch dog for the most vulnerable.

I believe we have a State Government that cares about kids, and the most kid-friendly Premier I have ever encountered.

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