

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Carmel Tebbutt
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health

Linda Burney
Minister for Community
Services



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Keep Them Safe: Family Referral Services

NSW Minister for Health, Carmel Tebbutt, and Minister for Community Services, Linda Burney, today announced the plans for piloting three Family Referral Services as part of the Government's Keep Them Safe action plan to improve the safety and wellbeing of children in NSW.

The Keep Them Safe initiative highlights the new unified approach towards child and family wellbeing, as advocated by Hon. James Wood AO QC in his Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection in NSW.

Ms Tebbutt said the new service will direct families in need to Commonwealth, State or local departments or agencies so they receive the appropriate help for their circumstances.

"The NSW Government has committed \$38 million over the next five years to the Family Referral Services project," she said.

"Those services are expected to include case management, home visiting, intensive family support, quality child care, housing, parenting education, supported playgroup, drug and alcohol treatment programs, mental health services, youth support services and respite care."

Family Referral Services will be piloted in Dubbo, Mt Druitt and Newcastle and surrounding areas during the first 12 months before these services are implemented statewide.

Ms Burney noted the Wood Inquiry had highlighted the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system.

"With this in mind, the pilot based in Dubbo will have a specific focus on working with Aboriginal communities," she said.

"The key component of Keep Them Safe is its recognition of the importance families and communities, government and non-government agencies working together to support children, young people and families.

"The Family Referral Service is an example of how agencies and services can work together to improve the outcomes for children, families and our communities."

Organisations interested in providing the services can apply for funding via a tender process. For more information go to www.tenders.nsw.gov.au/health.
