



SPECIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

PUBLIC FORUM

HEALTH AND DISABILITY

11 APRIL 2008

AGENDA

Health and disability services are an important element of the broader child protection system. They aim to reduce the need for statutory intervention by implementing a range of strategies and programs with families to identify and resolve problems early where possible. Specialist services to ameliorate the effects of abuse and neglect, particularly those involving developmental delay and failure to thrive, also form a critical part of the health system.

Currently the service system can be described as a tiered approach, with a universal tier of services available to whole populations, a secondary service tier for targeted populations at medium to high risk of entering the child protection system, and a tertiary specialist tier of services catering to those children and families identified as having child protection issues.

The Inquiry is interested in the following:

1. Are the mechanisms which should facilitate the provision of health and disability services to children and young people at risk of harm, adequate? Do they succeed in creating pathways to services rather than barriers?
These mechanisms include:
 - a. The provisions of *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* which are set out in the Facts Sheet
 - b. Interagency Memoranda of Understanding
 - c. Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection Intervention 2006
2. Is current service provision, and the mix of available services, working? Are there specific ways in which improvements could be achieved?
3. How can the health needs of particularly vulnerable populations be met more effectively, including:
 - a. Children in out-of-home-care
 - i. Are the recommendations made by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians sensible and workable?
 - b. Children with disabilities
 - i. Should the provisions in relation to voluntary out-of-home care be proclaimed in relation to children with a disability?
 - c. Indigenous children
 - d. Children and young people in regional and remote NSW?
4. What more can be achieved by way of ante-natal care and early childhood health services including sustained health home visiting for those disadvantaged families who are at risk of becoming subject to the statutory care and protection system?
5. Should the provisions of the Act concerned with orders for compulsory assistance be proclaimed?