

Thursday 30 July 2009

VIC COALITION WIN TO INCREASE SCRUTINY OF CHILD DEATHS

The Brumby Government has finally capitulated to calls from the Coalition and community sector to extend the timeframe to review deaths of children known to Victorian child protection services.

In June this year, the Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition announced that it would seek to amend the *Children's Legislation Amendment Bill* to extend the current three-month timeframe.

Last night the Brumby Government relented and announced that it would support an extension to the period of review of children known to child protection services from within three months to within twelve months of a child's death.

Labor has spent years rejecting calls for increased transparency in the review of child deaths because the government is afraid of scrutiny and accountability.

The Coalition welcomes Labor's belated backflip and we believe our knowledge about how we can more effectively protect abused Victorian children will be improved as a result.

The Victorian Coalition in government will strengthen child protection by appointing an independent Children's Commissioner who could investigate and make recommendations to protect vulnerable Victorian children without waiting for direction from government.

Despite recently admitting that Victoria's child protection system has failed, John Brumby refuses to adopt the Coalition's positive approach which would enable genuine independent review.

Time after time, Labor refuses to act until vital services are on the brink of collapse, and as a result we now have a child protection system that is increasingly complex, crisis-driven and riddled with widespread failures.

There is something wrong with a government that is more interested in covering up its failures than protecting the interests of our most vulnerable children.