



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON PHILIP RUDDOCK MP**

NEWS RELEASE

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LABOR INACTION PUTS CHILDREN AT RISK

Attorney-General Philip Ruddock today expressed concern over the inaction of State and Territory authorities in investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect, particularly those raised in family law proceedings.

“It is unacceptable that allegations of child abuse are being ignored,” Mr Ruddock said. “Child protection agencies in the States and Territories have been shown time and again to be failing in their responsibilities”.

“When you consider the immense revenue windfall that the States have received from the GST, it is extraordinary that core services like child protection remain dysfunctional”.

While Mr Ruddock welcomed the commitment of the Western Australian Government to devote additional resources to child protection, he noted that allegations of abuse raised in family law proceedings seemed to receive little attention.

As part of the Government’s Family Law Violence Strategy, Mr Ruddock wrote to his State and Territory counterparts in February to raise his concern that claims of abuse made in family law proceedings were not being investigated.

“For the family law system to function effectively, allegations of family violence and child abuse must be investigated quickly, fairly and properly,” Mr Ruddock said. “The failure of the States and Territories to fulfil these responsibilities is leaving families in legal limbo and jeopardising the safety of Australian children”.

Under the Family Law Violence Strategy, the Australian Government has commissioned research from the Australian Institute of Family Studies to identify how allegations raised in family law proceedings are processed.

The Government will work with States and Territories to improve the handling of these allegations and give Australian children the protection they deserve.

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