

MEDIA RELEASE

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WELCOME MOVE BY RUDD GOVERNMENT ON NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

The release today of the Rudd Government's public discussion paper *Australia's children: safe and well* has been welcomed by Families Australia and the Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children.

Families Australia Chief Executive Officer, Brian Babington, said, "The Rudd Government's paper is a significant step forward in devising an effective, coordinated national response to Australia's appalling levels of child abuse and neglect."

Also speaking on behalf of the Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children (a coalition formed in November 2007 of 51 of Australia's largest NGOs, as well as key researchers, working in the field of child protection and wellbeing), Mr Babington said, "the crisis in child protection has long demanded a truly concerted national response. The Rudd Government has responded to this issue and has made a commitment to developing Australia's first national framework on child protection by the end of 2008."

"The discussion paper is important because it now triggers an extensive public consultation process which should help to get the framework right", he said.

"Amongst many ideas in the paper is a suggested greater role for the Commonwealth in early prevention measures, improved assistance for young people leaving care, a national workforce strategy, improved national standards and more support for foster carers.

A national plan of action is urgently needed in light of the alarming increase in the number of occasions where authorities found that a child either was or was likely to be harmed, abused or neglected – a massive 45% increase from 40,416 in 2002-03 to 58,563 in 2006-07."

For further comment, contact Brian Babington on 0417 550 149.

For further information, including about the Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children, go to www.familiesaustralia.org.au or contact Families Australia on 02 6273 4885 or email: admin@familiesaustralia.org.au

**Families Australia is the national, independent, non-government organisation
dedicated to promoting the interests of families**