

Media Release



ACT Children & Young People
Death Review Committee

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A step up is a step forward: vulnerable children seen sooner

The ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee (the committee) supports changes to the system that will ensure there is a greater focus on assessing the needs of children who may be at risk.

Dr Penny Gregory, Chair of the committee believes that it is the intention of the ACT Children and Young People Amendment Bill 2015 (No. 3), as part of the broader package of reforms relating to the ACT Government initiative: A Step Up for Our Kids, is to ensure that children don't get lost in the system.

"The changes are a step closer to ensuring that the most vulnerable members of our society—children—are seen sooner and more often.

"By engaging an earlier trigger for these children and families, the circumstances which might lead to irreversible harm for the child can be ameliorated; this is a sensible step forward" Dr Gregory said.

"Vulnerability of children and young people as a result of neglect or abuse is a continuing concern for the committee," Dr Gregory said, "The whole community has a role to play in supporting families in crisis where children are particularly vulnerable.

"Bringing forward the review of cases does not mean that a child will necessarily be permanently removed from a family, it does mean that the family will receive the attention and support that it needs sooner to ensure that the child is safe and free from harm.

"It means that the rights of the child will be paramount.

"I hope to see a smooth transition into this program for families who are already working with and connected to agencies in the ACT. Service collaboration and cooperation will be key in supporting these families as so often in the cases that we see, communication and sharing between agencies can be a real challenge.

The ACT Children and | Young People Death Review Committee Annual Report is due to be released in the coming month. On release it can be found at
childdeathcommittee@act.gov.au.

Dr Gregory is available for Interview after 4pm Thursday 29 October, 2015, 0418 454 924

Committee members also available for interview:

Professor Alison Kent, Department of Neonatology, Canberra Hospital, 0414 443 263

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