

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon. Verity Firth MP
Minister for Education and Training

The Hon. Linda Burney MP
Minister for Community Services



Thursday, 11 March 2010

IMPROVING EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN ENTERING CARE

Minister for Education and Training Verity Firth and Minister for Community Services Linda Burney today announced additional resources to support the education of children and young people coming into care.

Minister Firth said \$25 million funding over four years has been allocated to implement education initiatives under *Keeping the Safe*, the NSW Government's reforms in response to the Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW.

"These new education initiatives are about helping children entering care to improve their participation and performance at school," Ms Firth said.

"They are in addition to the extensive range of initiatives already in place to support students in schools across NSW."

Additional education initiatives include:

- the establishment of Child Wellbeing Units in the Education Department to support principals implement child protection measures,
- the recruitment of an out-of-home care coordinator for each of the 10 departmental regions to coordinate support for children entering care,
- the development of an education plan for each child and young person entering care that will be reviewed annually,
- the recruitment of an additional 25 home school liaison officers and 15 Aboriginal student liaison officers to reduce the number of children at risk of getting a poor education because of habitual non-attendance.

Ms Burney said these new resources are needed to help children coming into care keep up with their peers.

"Sadly, we know that children in care have poorer educational outcomes because of the neglect, abuse and upheaval they have experienced in their young lives," she said.

"To stem the tide of the number of children entering care, the Child Wellbeing Units set up in the Education Department will help to ensure that vulnerable children and families are offered support early, before problems escalate."

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