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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **GOVERNMENT BATTLES FAMILIES SA SCANDAL: SHOW US THE MONEY, MR RANN!**

For the past two weeks the government has failed to satisfy the public that Families SA is able to provide appropriate protection and care for some children and their families, Independent MLC Ann Bressington said today.

The Mulligan Inquiry was commissioned because of claims of abuse of children in State Care and Mr Mulligan QC has now stated that there should be a separate coronial inquiry into the deaths of over 700 children in State care.

“This is an astounding figure and represents the level of dysfunction that has existed in this particular Government department for over 30 years,” Ms Bressington said.

In the past week, Ms Bressington has received a vast number of telephone calls from people who have been exposed to the wrath of a highly dysfunctional and destructive organisation while Minister Jay Weatherill still claims that he supports his workers, because of their “difficult” jobs.

“Meanwhile, he has failed to address the lack of Duty of Care of the State to both children and their families,” Ms Bressington said.

Ms Bressington was told that since the Layton Inquiry, the number of notifications has increased exponentially while the number of investigations has decreased, despite enormous additional resources being poured into what the Government claims as “on-the-ground” staff.

Ms Bressington is calling for the Minister to give a full public explanation of how this could happen.

“Did we get the right workers at the right place, with the right training, and experience and were those workers specifically trained in the area of child abuse and neglect,” Ms Bressington said.

Professor Freda Briggs has stated publicly that the public’s values and attitudes are definitely not reflected in the practices of Families SA. She has called for training to be re-evaluated and a new model delivered. The State Government has still not approached her – our own Professor and expert on child abuse and Order of Australia recipient.

“If the Government is going to treat the mismanagement of the removal of children/ or failure to do so, with the intensity that it deserves then perhaps it could assist Freda Briggs to establish a non-government organisation that could train workers in the field, provide support for families in a variety of ways and take some of the pressure off Families SA.

“Increasing the age of state wards to 25 is not as Ted Mulligan suggested is not the answer when children in care and their parents are the victims of wrongful decision made by the Department.”