



Hon Ann Bressington MLC

Parliament House
North Terrace
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Phone: 08 8237 9541
Fax: 08 8237 9534

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GOVERNMENT NEGLECTS DUTY OF CARE TO THE VULNERABLE

Independent MLC Ann Bressington is asking that the Government give more consideration to her *Monitored Treatment Programs Bill* after the revelations of the child protection report released to parliament last week.

The Bill targets individuals who have been brought to the attention of the welfare system for abuse and or neglect of their children because of substance abuse.

The Bill requires welfare workers to refer these matters to the court where an order can be placed for them to attend long-term recovery based programs that require abstinence.

Recovery based programs are the most effective approach to assist them to stop using drugs and deal with the underlying issues that cause substance abuse.

“Coerced treatment has been proven in overseas research from the United States, Canada and Sweden to be more effective than voluntary treatment in most cases,” Ms Bressington said.

“The effects that drugs have on both users and their children are devastating but a real fact of life. We have to start taking proactive measures to break the cycle.”

Research conducted by The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) states that “For a single mother, it may be the thought of losing custody of her children; others may respond to a spouse’s threat to leave unless the problem is addressed. In such cases, personal choice remains part of the process.”

Ms Bressington says she is disappointed that the Government rejected this Bill before it was introduced to Parliament and was told by Minister Gail Gago that there was no validity to the 15 month term stipulated in the Monitored Treatment Program Bill.

Research shows that the longer a person is engaged the more effective the treatment is and the better chance for the addict to recover.

**ADDICTS SAY THE ONLY WAY TO RECOVER FROM DRUG ABUSE IS
TO STOP USING.**