

Media Release

For immediate release: 5 August, 2016

Child Protection Systems Royal Commission “Not just a matter for Government!”

Leading child services provider Junction Australia has sounded a note of warning ahead of the public release of the final report of the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission.

Justice Margaret Nyland’s report was delivered to the Governor today (Friday August 5th) ahead of its public release by the State Government.

Junction Australia Chief Executive Officer **Graham Brown** said that, whatever the findings of the Royal Commission, the entire sector had a responsibility to embrace necessary change.

“Whilst we are yet to see the Commission’s findings, it is critical that everyone in the sector takes responsibility for what needs to be done.

“Following expressions of community concern over the tragic loss of young lives in recent years, it is not realistic to expect the State government to fix everything. We will all have to work together as a sector to fix the problems and get the system right.

“We owe that much to the most vulnerable members of our community who rely on us, our children,” Mr Brown said.

“While the Royal Commission has been an important and necessary process, I am confident the outcome won’t diminish the incredibly important work undertaken by organisations that contribute positively to the safety, health and welfare of children and young people.

“Quality organisations, like Junction Australia, take our responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children incredibly seriously. We recognise that the effectiveness of services for children must be founded on a foundation of mutual trust.”

Junction Australia runs programs such as Therapeutic Support Services (TSS) which provides homes for children and young people between 5 and 17 who are under the guardianship of the Minister. This approach is a ‘trauma-informed’ response with a focus on clarifying expectations and demonstrating respect and has achieved remarkable results.

“We are now seeing a significant drop in the number of behaviour-related incidents and a dramatic increase in the level of positive engagement of the children and young people in the education system and healthy external activities,” Mr Brown said.

Junction Australia also runs a highly successful ‘Point of Engagement’ program that supports pregnant women and new parents to overcome drug and alcohol problems and learn to keep their children safe and healthy.

During October, Junction Australia will host a visit by Nigel Richardson, a world-renowned leader in Child Protection from Leeds in the UK. Nigel will speak at ‘Every Chance for Every Child in SA’ conferences in the Northern and Southern Adelaide regions. Mr Richardson will share an inspirational story of what it took to change a system from consistently failing its children and young people to become the highest rated local authority in the UK. Nigel will also be meeting with SA’s key policy makers and leading Child Protection practitioners.

“It is anticipated that the insights gained from this timely visit will be influential in guiding SA’s response to the Royal Commission’s recommendations. SA can be encouraged by the fact that the City of Leeds (UK) dramatically ‘turned the curve’ on child protection over a period of 5 years,” Mr Brown said.

“We all share responsibility for determining what needs to be done and then taking purposeful steps over the months and years ahead to ensure that every child in SA has every chance of a great life.”

Junction Australia is a trusted provider of a wide range of community support services and high quality, affordable housing that currently manages 1,700 homes across South Australia. We support over 6,500 people every year including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness or who have experienced domestic violence. We firmly believe that by working together we can take steps that enable people to navigate their way from ‘Crisis to Connectedness’. Our clients are supported to overcome barriers, access opportunities and pursue their hopes and dreams.

Media contact: Caroline Plant, Michels Warren, 0431 287 093