



## ***Media Release***

***For Immediate Release***

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### **UnitingCare NSW.ACT sends strong message to NSW Government about child protection on World Social Justice Day**

As World Social Justice Day debuts Friday 20 February 2009 UnitingCare NSW.ACT is urging the public to pay attention to social justice issues closer to home. In less than one week, the NSW Cabinet will consider the recommendations of Justice Wood's Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW and everyone should be voicing their support.

Presently there are more than 14,000 children and young people deemed at risk of harm who have been placed in short or long term foster or residential care. There have been notable increases in this figure each year with a 26% increase from 2006 to 2008.

The NSW Government will submit its response to Cabinet on Monday 23 February and UnitingCare NSW.ACT, led by UnitingCare Burnside, is advocating full endorsement of the recommendations from Justice Wood which include expanding early intervention programs, creating new referral pathways and establishing Regional Intake and Referral Services.

Every child and young person deserves to have the best possible chance at having a safe and secure childhood, and as stated in Justice Wood's report, "Child protection is the collective responsibility of the whole of government and the community" (Executive Summary, page v).

Rev. Harry Herbert, Executive Director of UnitingCare NSW.ACT said, "World Social Justice Day is a wonderful opportunity to advocate better conditions for vulnerable people.

“We must not forget though that even though Australia is a lucky country for many, not everyone is blessed to the same degree.

“Children and young people are particularly vulnerable as they are dependent on those around them for every aspect of well being. It is horrifying to think that even today children and young people in Australia have no guarantee of a safe and happy upbringing where all of their basic needs are met.

“We need to nurture and better protect our future generations and are urging the NSW Government to fully resource and implement Justice Wood’s findings”, Rev Herbert said.

UnitingCare Burnside is a member of the UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families Service Group of UnitingCare NSW.ACT. UnitingCare NSW.ACT is the Board of the NSW and ACT Synod of the Uniting Church responsible for the work of community services, chaplaincy and social justice advocacy. All our work is inspired and guided by the principles of justice and compassion.

The Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW began in response to the death of two children in 2007 and increasing concerns over the welfare of children and young people in the state.

**For more information or to arrange an interview with Rev. Harry Herbert, Executive Director, UnitingCare NSW.ACT please contact Ingrid Hoff, PR Assistant, UnitingCare NSW.ACT on 02 8267 4374 or email [ingridh@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:ingridh@nsw.uca.org.au)**