



Media Release
Hon Sarah Game MLC
Wednesday 3rd August 2022

Premier Malinauskas “worries” about vulnerable children but won’t increase funding

Following reports of a further investigation into the tragic death of a child earlier this year, Mr Malinauskas is quoted in The Advertiser today saying his main concern was for other vulnerable children the state government may not be aware of.

“That’s the thing that worries me most, is there a child out there right now that could be subjected to criminal neglect that the government should have known of?” the Premier said.

If that is the Premier’s *main* concern, why did the government refuse to even *consider* increasing funding to ensure that the Child and Young Person’s Visitor would be able to adequately do their job?

The Premier is being hypocritical. He claims he is concerned child neglect may unknowingly be occurring in the community. But he flatly refused to even consider increasing the paltry \$1.87 million over four years for the Visitor role. This role is crucial to properly check in on these vulnerable children.

The tragic case of 13-year-old Zhane Chilcott, who died by suicide in state care in 2016 after being rotated through 18 different placements over his short life, is a clear case in point for why the Child and Young Person’s Visitor needs to be adequately funded. Zhane only received an average of *one visit per year* from the Department of Child Protection between 2005 and 2011, despite repeated red flags being raised.

If Zhane’s death didn’t prompt changes to the number of visits by the Child and Young Person’s Visitor, what will it take for this Labor government to take action to address this?

Because the government rejected Sarah Game MLC’s question on 16 June 2022 about whether they would consider increasing the totally inadequate funding provided to the Child and Young Person’s Visitor, she will instead be bringing an amendment bill to parliament when it returns next month.

Ms Game’s proposed amendment to the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* is simple: it seeks to ensure that the Visitor is properly resourced to meet the minimum recommended number of four visits to vulnerable children in state care per year. This was the absolute minimum recommended number suggested by independent review and supported by former Guardian for Children and Young People, Penny Wright.

Ms Game is a passionate advocate for vulnerable South Australian children, putting them at the centre of every decision. Having now met with the Chief Executive of the Department of Child Protection, Cathy Taylor, as well as all Guardians and Commissioners of children and young people, she is now working with child protection advocates to ensure that protecting vulnerable children is given much higher priority by this government.



Quotes from Ms Game:

"Like all South Australians, I am sick and tired of governments saying one thing and doing another. I'm calling out the Premier for his hypocrisy, where on one hand he says that vulnerable children are his main concern, but on the other he refuses to even consider ensuring that the Child and Young Person's Visitor is adequately funded."

"Premier, we already know that there are vulnerable children in the South Australian community and in state care right now who are subjected to criminal neglect. Given our shared concern, I look forward to your support of my amendment bill that ensures basic minimum funding levels for the Child and Young Person's Visitor."

"I've read The Advertiser article today about the tragic death of Makai and I am angry. I hear more about a car race from this government than I do about what their plan is to put vulnerable children at the centre of every decision made by this state Labor government."

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