



commission for
children and young people
and child guardian

Friday 27 October 2006

Media release

Commissioner calls for more stability for children in out-of-home care

The Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian said children in out-of-home care need more stable placements to avoid long-term negative psychological, emotional and social outcomes.

Elizabeth Fraser has told a research forum that the Commission's recent survey of children in out-of-home care found that too many children and young people said they'd experienced more than 10 shifts while in the system.

Ms Fraser told 200 delegates at the Commission's *Early Years Forum: Seeking Stability* that the damaging impact of instability of primary relationships a deep concern and needs to be addressed by all organisations in the child safety system.

"We can't ignore the issues stemming from children being shifted through multiple placements or being repeatedly taken out of foster care to be reunited with their natural family, just to be taken back into care 12 months later," Ms Fraser said.

"Around 30% of all children in out-of-home care are under five, and shifting them from one carer to another prevents them from developing loving, trusting relationships.

"We know there's a relationship between instability of care and behavioural and emotional problems in children, so it's time we reduced the number of relationship changes as much as possible that these children experience to give them the best possible life opportunities."

The Forum has attracted a wide range of experts from the child safety sector, including Indigenous organisations, foster, residential care and support services, advocacy and support organisations, child care and Family Support Hub co-ordinators, the University sector and key Queensland Government representatives.

As well as the Commissioner, key note speakers include:

- Dr Virginia Slaughter, University of Queensland
- Dr Paul Delfabbro, University of Adelaide, and
- Dr Robin Sullivan, Director-General, Department of Child Safety

For more information please contact Samantha Keegan on 3247 5346

The Commissioner will be available for interviews between 1.00 and 2.30pm