

MEDIA STATEMENT



Hon Colin Barnett MLA
Leader of the Opposition
Barbara Scott MLC
Shadow Minister for Children

23/10/04

Labor urged to help Kidsafe WA

Kidsafe WA will be forced to lay off staff before Christmas and could be forced to close its doors next year unless the State Labor Government provides it with financial support, Opposition Leader Colin Barnett said today.

Mr Barnett said the organisation, which aims to protect children from unnecessary and preventable injuries, was facing a funding crisis that threatened to put a stop to its vital work protecting our children.

“In Western Australia alone up to 50 children die each year as a result of injuries, which are the leading cause of death in Australian children between the ages of one and 14,” he said.

“Kidsafe WA aims to reduce the number of childhood injuries and preventable accidents by educating the public about injury risks and what can be done to avoid them.

“It is a valuable organisation that provides vital assistance to families and other organisations about how to make areas like homes and playgrounds safer for children.”

Mr Barnett said Government assistance to Kidsafe WA would be more than justified if it saved just one family the heartache of having a child seriously injured or worse.

“About 10,000 children are treated for injuries at Princess Margaret Hospital each year and another 7,500 are admitted to hospitals around the State,” he said.

“As a parent there can be nothing worse than losing a child, or seeing them sick or seriously injured and if Kidsafe WA programs save just one life a year then the investment is worthwhile.”

Shadow Children’s Minister Barbara Scott said childhood injuries cost the Western Australian health system an estimated \$66 million per year.

“Kidsafe WA deserves support from the State Government and it is disappointing that the lack of funding from the current regime has led to such a serious situation developing,” she said.

“The Coalition is committed to the protection of our children from all forms of harm, including injuries around the home and in the community, and that is why we are supporting Kidsafe WA.”

Mrs Scott called on Labor to follow the Coalition’s lead.

“If elected, a Coalition Government will provide Kidsafe WA with a \$750,000 funding lifeline over four years to ensure the organisation can continue to promote children’s safety issues,” she said.

“Tomorrow is the start of Children’s Week and what a fantastic gesture it would be for the Government to kick off the week by matching our commitment and keeping Kidsafe WA afloat.”