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## Social Workers welcome measures to reduce child abuse and neglect

Marking the release of the report by ARACY (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth), the AASW (Australian Association of Social Workers) today supported ARACY's calls for collaboration, early intervention and prevention. These calls echo the recommendations put forward by the AASW in its policy responses to child abuse and neglect.

The AASW called for a renewed commitment from all Governments to collaboration, prevention and early intervention programs as ways to reduce the number of children being abused and neglected. The Association also calls for an increased investment in the programs that intervene when children are abused or neglected.

Notifications of alleged child abuse and neglect have tripled between 1999-2000 and 2006-07. Across States and Territories, the systems are groaning under the weight of massive caseloads.

No other professional discipline is so immersed in the areas of knowledge that are essential for quality relationship based child protection and well-being practice. As a result, Social Workers are recognised throughout the world as the core professional group in child protection and well-being policy, management and practice.

AASW National President Professor Bob Lonne said, "Social Workers work to support and protect children, and to strengthen their families and communities. Social Workers strongly endorse the ARACY report, which corresponds to long held views by the profession. The AASW calls on all Australian Governments to heed the calls in this important report."

The AASW supports the calls for inter-agency collaboration. The AASW will shortly release *Social Work Curriculum Standards on Child Wellbeing and Protection*, which will ensure that all graduating social workers have skills and knowledge to identify and respond to child abuse and neglect. This will enable them, wherever they work, to better protect children.

The AASW supports the calls for a greater emphasis on universal and targeted interventions – the public health model. It is crucial that measures are put in place to support vulnerable families and communities to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect. This will better protect vulnerable children and it will allow agencies to better focus on those children who have suffered abuse and neglect.

The Association looks forward to working collaboratively with ARACY, Governments and not-for-profit agencies to ensure that the child protection and well-being systems deliver the best possible support to vulnerable Australian children and their families.