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MORE RESOURCES TO PROTECT CHILDREN

The ACT Government has provided an extra \$250,000 per annum to ensure adequate representation of the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support in urgent and complex applications to the Court for orders to protect children in need of care. It also provides an additional Deputy Registrar in the Magistrates Court Conferencing Unit to meet a significant increase in applications for child protection.

Attorney General Simon Corbell said the additional funding was an exceptionally important initiative that would help to deliver improved outcomes in protecting children in need of care.

“The additional funding will ensure that the interests of the child, which are paramount, are properly regarded in the court processes. Without this initiative, there is increasing potential for the interests of the child to be compromised because of the pressure arising from the number and complexity of the applications presently before the Courts.”

Mr Corbell said the number of cases had increased substantially. “In 2001-3 there were approximately 260 care conferences, with this increasing to 1,461 care conferences in 2004-05, and a similar number expected in this financial year,” he said.

“In 2003-04 there were 196 applications in relation to children in need of care, which increased to 305 in the 2004-05 financial year, and again a similar number are expected in this financial year. The complexity, timeliness, sensitivity and work required for a number of these matters over the last 18 months has increased significantly.”

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