

## **TIER 3 CHILD PROTECTION**

**28 February 2008**

**The Hon. A.L. EVANS:** Tier 3 cases are regarded as minor cases of abuse or neglect, such as a child being sent to school hungry. The 2003 Layton report into child welfare recommended that these cases be investigated more thoroughly as they are often warning signs of more serious abuse. The report noted: The current minimal response (to tier 3 cases), that of a letter requesting the family to attend a meeting and stating that the allegations will not be investigated, has serious implications for the agency.

Unlike Queensland, South Australia does not have legislation requiring an investigation into these sorts of concerns. All that Families SA does is invite—not require—the parent to attend a parenting meeting, following a tier 3 abuse finding. There is no usual follow-up if the parent ignores the request.

Freedom of Information data obtained by Family First indicates that 5,178 complaints of child abuse or neglect were classified as tier 3 in 2006-07. The FOI document confirmed that tier 3 does not require an investigation—that is, there has been no change in procedures for dealing with tier 3 complaints since the Layton report. The 5,178 tier 3 complaints is the highest number ever, up from 4,225 in 2005-06 and 2,533 in 2000-01.

My questions to the minister are:

1. In the four years since handing down the Layton report, what steps has the minister taken to treat tier 3 complaints more seriously, given that, as the report notes, they are often a warning sign of other abuse or neglect?
2. Given the ever-increasing number of notifications of abuse being made to Families SA, when will the government tie Families SA's funding to the number of complaints in a given year?

3. Alternatively, given their lack of resources, has Families SA decided at any level to transfer some responsibility for investigation of complaints to SAPOL?

**The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Road Safety, Minister Assisting the Minister for Multicultural Affairs):** I thank the honourable member for his question in relation to tier 3 child protection case investigations. I will undertake to refer his questions to the Minister for Families and Communities in another place and ensure that he has a response.