



Department for **Child Protection**  
Government of **Western Australia**

## ***Media Response***

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June 4, 2008

### **Department addressing issue of multiple placements**

Department for Child Protection Director General Terry Murphy has rejected claims by Opposition spokesperson Robyn McSweeney that foster children were “being passed around like unwanted baggage”.

Mr Murphy said he accepted there was a real issue regarding the level of multiple placements of children in care, but the Department was working to address the situation.

“I agree that this issue is totally unacceptable,” he said.

“But to say we are treating children like baggage is self evidently wrong.”

Mr Murphy said the way the Department had counted “placements” needed attention as it did not give an accurate picture of a child’s placement history.

“For instance, the infant with 16 placements that Ms McSweeney raised in Parliament last week involved six carers,” he said.

“The baby moved from hospital to stay with her first carers for almost a year, had periods of respite care during that time, then an emergency placement shared by three carers, before moving to a stable placement with extended family.”

Mr Murphy said a major problem was a universal lack of carers.

“This is not only a problem for DCP, it’s a shortage being felt across Australia,” he said.

“But we are encouraged by a recent success in recruiting foster carers – 119 have been recruited since July 1, 2007, and a further 478 relative carers have been registered, with more currently being assessed.

“Importantly, we are also strengthening support for foster carers.”

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