

THE HON WAYNE SWAN MP

TREASURER

***** MEDIA RELEASE *****

NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION WEEK LAUNCH

Today I joined with Brisbane Broncos coach Wayne Bennett to launch a national campaign to combat child abuse at Suncorp Stadium.

As two proud Queensland fathers we used Fathers' Day for a common goal – to raise national awareness and change adults' behaviour – to better protect children from abuse and neglect.

The “Children See, Children Do” campaign aims to ensure adults lead by example – demonstrating good behaviour so that children follow.

The importance of this campaign to change adult behaviour as the principal driver in protecting children from abuse and neglect cannot be underestimated.

Wayne and I have known each other for a long time and we both thought it was fitting to use Fathers' Day to work with Teresa Scott, National President of the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) to launch this campaign.

The campaign will focus attention on an issue that in 2007 was estimated to involve more than 50,000 cases of abuse and neglect.

Children are very impressionable and they are also very perceptive, so they pick up abusive, violent and aggressive behaviour from the role models in their lives.

It really is very simple – as we all know – ‘Children See, Children Do’. They copy the actions of their parents and other adult role models.

During National Child Protection Week we want parents and other adults to set a good example for children so they will be far less likely to become violent, aggressive or abusive themselves.

NAPCAN has cited Productivity Commission figures which estimate the financial costs associated with child protection and care at \$1.7 billion.

This does not take into account the economic impacts of lost productivity, impacts on the labour market, the criminal justice system or the health system.

While this is first and foremost an ethical and moral issue it's also an economic issue and that's why initiatives like the one we marked today are so important.

The one very simple message for parents is that if they treasure children and want them to grow up safe and free from abuse and neglect, it all starts with setting the right example.

By changing their own behaviour parents and adults across Australia can change a child's life.

7 September 2008

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