

Politicians Commit to Making Their Influence Positive

Yesterday 54 members and Senators took the time to attend a special meeting of the (bi-partisan) Parliamentarians Against Child Abuse.

The meeting, which was jointly hosted by Melissa Park MP, the Hon Pat Farmer MP and The National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) focused on the need to break the appalling cycle of abuse engulfing Australia's children and prevent the abuse and neglect before it starts.

Politicians viewed the hard hitting ad **Children See Children Do.....make your influence positive** (www.napcan.org.au/children_see.htm) and acknowledged that...

Children watch and copy what they see adults do, yet right now

Australia's children see:

25% of adults being 'reckless and aggressive' drivers¹

2.86 million of adults smoking every day²

2 million of adults drinking at levels of high risk

and tragically Australia's children see over 450,000 women being abused by their partners³ every year

Child abuse and neglect is the most critical social problem in Australia.

In 2007, almost 35,000 children were found to have been abused or neglected in that one year and the number is growing every year.

For many of these children the impact of their abuse lasts a lifetime.....

The long term personal and social burden of child abuse is horrific – there is clear evidence that abuse as a child is a significant factor in poor educational performance, physical ill-health and later drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, domestic violence and other forms of criminality.⁴

It is estimated that for every \$300 spent on protection only \$1 is spent on prevention⁵;

Early intervention and prevention programs will return significant social, health and economic gains to the Australian community – we have no data in Australia but international studies indicate a return on investment of at least \$17:\$1⁶

¹ AAMI http://www.webwombat.com.au/motoring/news_reports/road-rage-australia.htm

² <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4831.0.55.001>

³ http://www.ofw.facs.gov.au/statistics/nationaldata_dv.htm

⁴ Richardson, N. (2005). Social costs: *The effects of Child Maltreatment*. Resource Sheet 9, AIFS

⁵ Keatsdale. *Report into the cost of child abuse and neglect in Australia*. Kids First Foundation

⁶ Perry Pre-school Project, US

Prevention of child abuse and neglect is possible but it requires long term commitment and investment and action across all levels of society – government, the community, including business and of every individual adult.

National Child Protection Week 2008 which starts on Sunday 7 September is focused on this individual responsibility –

Children See Children Do –.

If we are to prevent child abuse and neglect adult behaviour must change

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