8 December 2022

## MEDIA RELEASE

# Improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people involved in family law matters

The Joint Committee on Children and Young People has tabled its report into the child protection and social services system.

The Committee's report focuses on areas where the NSW child protection system intersects with the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, and the harm that cross-jurisdictional conflicts can cause to children and young people.

Committee Chair, Mr Peter Sidgreaves MP, said the report's recommendations aim to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people involved in family law matters by addressing the misalignment between the state child protection and federal family law jurisdictions.

"Keeping children safe from harm is of paramount importance. We must ensure that systems designed to protect children work effectively and consistently, so that no child falls through the cracks," Mr Sidgreaves said.

"Witnesses told us about cases where a parent, often a child's father, may have abused a child or committed family violence.

"But due to inconsistencies and poor communication between the federal family law system and the state child protection system, an abusive parent may end up with custody or access to these children.

"These outcomes are unacceptable, and create serious risk of further abuse."

Mr Sidgreaves said the report contains two findings and 15 recommendations.

"Our recommendations are focused on reviewing information sharing mechanisms to ensure they're fit for purpose; improving training for legal professionals who work with children who have experienced or are experiencing abuse; and providing financial, health and emotional supports for children and protective parents engaged in family law matters.

"We also want to ensure NSW is ready to act on reforms taking place at a federal level.

"This has been an important inquiry and I thank all the stakeholders who made a submission, as well as those who gave evidence at our public hearing in August," Mr Sidgreaves said.

The report is available on the [Committee's webpage](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2620#tab-reportsandgovernmentresponses).

**Media contact: Peter Sidgreaves MP, Committee Chair, (02) 4655 3333**