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Media Release

Minister to open Barnardos Australia's new Family Referral Service

Minister for Family and Community Services Pru Goward will officially open Barnardos Australia's Illawarra Family Referral Service on Wednesday 28 September 2011.

Family Referral Services are a key component of the NSW Government's 'Keep Them Safe' strategy and links vulnerable families, parents and young people in need of assistance to government and community support services.

This service is a direct result of recommendations made by Justice James Wood in the 2008 Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW. Justice Wood found that families experiencing difficulties and workers, such as teachers, nurses and police who have child safety or wellbeing concerns should be better assisted in linking with the most appropriate local services to meet their needs.

Kerry Moore Senior Manager for Barnardos Australia's South Coast and Sydney Metro Children's Family Centres said the aim of the Family Referral Service is to provide appropriate referral to prevent difficult situations a child, young person or family may be experiencing from escalating to a crisis where a statutory response from the child protection system may be required.

"We are thrilled to be in partnership with the NSW Government to provide this essential service. Barnardos strives to ensure that services provided to disadvantaged children give them the best possible chance in life by involving ourselves in active partnerships with communities, governments and other agencies."

Minister for Family and Community Services Pru Goward said the Illawarra Family Referral Service is an early intervention referral service fundamental to protecting the safety of our most vulnerable.

"Services like the Illawarra Family Referral Service help protect children, young people and families in need by giving them access to immediate support with transport, food and housing.

"By delivering services like the Illawarra Family Referral Service, in partnership with Barnardos Australia, we are harnessing the strengths of both the non-government sector and government sectors," Ms Goward said.

The Illawarra Family Referral Service provides both telephone support for straightforward referrals and face-to-face support within the community. The Illawarra Family Referral Service is the 5th new service of this type to open in NSW in the past two years. The NSW Government is committed to have twelve such services in place across NSW by June 2014.

Official Launch – 2.00pm Wednesday 28, September 2011

Location – Barnardos South Coast Children's Family Centre at 13 Greene St, Warrawong

About Barnardos Australia

Barnardos is a non-government, non-denominational child welfare charity that has been helping children in need for over 120 years. Barnardos Australia is one of the largest children's charities in the country, caring for children and young people at risk of abuse and neglect. The work of Barnardos Australia focuses on the prevention of abuse, neglect and entry into care. Children of all backgrounds and cultural heritage are helped through a range of welfare programs including crisis care, family support, counselling, foster care and adoption. Our vision is that all children and young people will have caring families, in which they can grow up safely and reach their full potential supported by quality services and engaged communities. For more information visit: www.barnardos.org.au.



Illawarra Family Referral Service is operated by Barnardos Australia

Illawarra Family Referral Service

13 Greene Street
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About Illawarra Family Referral Service

The Illawarra Family Referral Service is based at Barnardos in Warrawong, with another two sites based in Nowra and Bowral and covers the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, and Wingecarribee regions. The service can be contacted on 1800 663 863 (8:00 am - 6:00pm Mon - Fri), or by visiting the Barnardos South Coast office at 13 Greene St, Warrawong.

About 'Keep Them Safe'

'Keep Them Safe: a shared approach to child well being' is a five year \$750 million NSW Government program that aims to re-shape the way family and community services are provided to support vulnerable children, young people and their families. 'Keep Them Safe' focuses on strengthening early intervention services that will help prevent abuse and neglect and work to prevent the need for children to enter the child protection system. This includes expansion of Family Referral Services from three trial services to seven in 2011-12 and twelve in 2013-14.

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