

Tuesday, 19 April 2011

SA CALLS FOR NATIONAL PROTOCOLS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS

Minister for Disability, Jennifer Rankine was today successful in gaining agreement on the development of a set of joint protocols to respond to large numbers of displaced persons who move into other jurisdictions and require emergency assistance.

Ms Rankine called for the set of joint protocols at the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference, held in Perth today.

"A joint protocol between States, Territories and the Commonwealth will provide a strategy for displaced people leaving a community, requiring help and support in another jurisdiction," she said.

"In September 2010, 90 people fled the Northern Territory and came to South Australia amid fears of violence in their community.

"In that situation South Australia had limited time to prepare the necessary response to address the complex needs of those people.

"The proposed joint protocols aim to clearly establish the various roles and responsibilities of all jurisdictions when incidents like this, or other emergencies, occur.

"It would also ensure effective and timely communication between all parties."

Ms Rankine said that the situation in South Australia last year had identified a range of issues that would have benefited from being embedded in a national protocol. These issues included:

- What responses could be applied in an incident of that nature;
- Who would support the displaced persons in returning to their community;
- Which jurisdiction would provide for the ongoing management of the situation; and
- Arrangements with the non-government sector in how to respond to such a situation.

South Australia will lead an inter-jurisdictional working group to establish these protocols.

"While the South Australian Government made every effort to help the people fleeing violence last year, we would like to see the protocols established so in the event this happens again the Government can be more adequately prepared.

"South Australia has learnt from this experience and will bring this knowledge to its role in leading the inter-jurisdictional working group to establish the protocols," Ms Rankine said.