

Senator Catryna Bilyk

Labor Senator for Tasmania

MEDIA RELEASE

REFORM OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

Tasmanian Senator Catryna Bilyk, previously a childcare worker for over a decade, has welcomed the passage of the *Crimes Amendment (Working With Children - Criminal History) Bill 2009*.

"I spoke in support of this legislation in the Senate on 9 March 2010 as children are precious and every adult has an obligation to protect them," said Senator Bilyk.

"The Rudd Government is committed to protecting all children and these reforms are one step in the process of ensuring our children are safe."

"This Bill will amend the Crimes Act to expand the range of criminal history information that can be exchanged between jurisdictions for the purpose of assessing the suitability of persons to work with children," stated Senator Bilyk.

The amendments will allow authorised screening units to receive a greater range of Commonwealth criminal history information in order to assess the risk a person poses in working with children.

The use and disclosure of the information will only be for this limited purpose, and will be subject to strict safeguards.

Screening units will be required to comply with applicable privacy, human rights and records management legislation and to reflect the principles of natural justice in their screening processes.

These amendments implement a November 2008 agreement by the Council of Australian Governments, with reviews to be conducted in 2011 and 2013.

/Ends 11 March 2010

Media Enquires: Phillip Dalwood 0428 522 415