

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon. Linda Burney MP
Minister for the State Plan
Minister for Community Services



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RURAL AND REMOTE FAMILIES LESS LIKELY TO SEEK HELP

Latest statistics from Parent Line, the NSW Government-funded parenting helpline operated by CatholicCare, show that parents in rural and remote areas of the state are three times less likely to seek help for their parenting issues than their urban counterparts.

At the launch of the Parent Line website today, Minister for Community Services Linda Burney said that in 2009, just 1,890 parents in rural and remote areas phoned Parent Line for advice about their children compared to 4,978 calls from parents in metro areas.

“There seems to be the perception among rural families that you should only access support services when things get really bad. I want to tell these parents that the most effective way to tackle their issues is to deal with them before things get really difficult,” Ms Burney said.

“When I talk to families in rural areas, they tell me that they are uncomfortable with seeking help in their own towns because they think everyone will know their business. This is when a service like Parent Line is perfect for families living in rural and remote areas – it’s totally anonymous and parents can talk freely about any parenting issues.

“Practical issues like distances and cost of travelling for services is also an issue for rural and remote families. That is why we are happy to support Parent Line, where parents can call up and get professional advice from highly trained counsellors.

“The new website will be a great additional resource. Anyone can jump online and get information on common parenting issues such as child development stages, teenagers running away, communicating and negotiating with your teenager and how to help children through their parents’ divorce.

“There are numerous tip sheets for parents, created by Parent Line’s counsellors that offer very practical advice. Parents can also read about other people’s experiences with raising their children.

“The website includes links to other parenting resources available around the state.”

Parent Line Manager Tarja Malone said that parents in rural and remote areas are also more likely to call about teenagers running away, and the violent behaviour of teenagers than their urban counterparts.

“Parents in rural and remote areas often call after a crisis has occurred or the problem has become overwhelming. It is really important to get the message to parents to seek help early on. No issue is too small to seek guidance about,” she said.

“Parenting is challenging and is even tougher when you do it on your own without support.”

Parents can call Parent Line on 1300 1300 52 or visit the new website www.parentline.org.au

Media contact: Anh Dang 9228 4455 / 0427 783 208