

# Appendix 4: Mandatory reporting requirements

## New South Wales

Since 1977 medical practitioners have been required by law to report physical and sexual abuse. Under the *Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987* the professions, vocations and callings of teaching, counselling, social work and early childhood teaching (at a government or registered non-government school—within the meaning of the *Education Reform 1990*) are prescribed notifiers of suspected sexual assault. The offices of principal and deputy principal are required to report suspected cases of child sexual abuse. In accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy and procedures, teachers, school social workers and school counsellors are required to report suspected physical, emotional abuse and neglect to the principal, who is turn responsible to notify the Department of Community Services. Staff of the Police Service, Department of Health, Department of Education and Training, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department Corrective Services, Department of Sport and Recreation and Department of Community Services have also been directed by the Chief Executive Officer of their agencies to notify the Department of Community services if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is in danger of being abused. In addition, New South Wales has Interagency Guidelines detailing each agency's role, responsibilities and actions required in all aspects of child protection intervention

## Victoria

In 1993 the Victorian Government proposed legislative changes to the *Children and Young Persons Act 1989* which would mandate specific professional groups to notify suspected cases of child physical and sexual abuse. Doctors, nurses and police were mandated on 4 November 1993 to report child physical and sexual abuse. Primary and secondary school teachers and principals were mandated on 18 July 1994.

## Queensland

Under the *Health Act 1937*, medical practitioners are required by law to all cases of suspected maltreatment of a child. Education Queensland policy requires school principals to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities and requires teachers to report through principals; however, this is not legislated. The *Child Protection Act 1999* requires that officers of Families, Youth and Community Care Queensland and employees of licensed care services report when they suspect harm to children placed in residential care.

## Western Australia

In Western Australia, referrals about possible harm to children are facilitated by a series of reciprocal protocols that have been negotiated with key government and non-government agencies, rather than by mandatory reporting. Community awareness programs and education of professional groups also contribute to identification of possible maltreatment, and action to prevent further harm from occurring.

### **South Australia**

Under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*, the following persons are required to notify the Department of Human Services (Family and Youth Services) when they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is being abused or neglected: medical practitioners, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, psychologists, police, probation officers, social workers, teachers, family day care providers, and employees of, or volunteers in, government departments, agencies or local government or non-government agencies that provide health, welfare, education, childcare or residential services wholly or partly for children.

### **Tasmania**

In Tasmania it is mandatory for the following professionals to report suspected cases of child abuse to the Child Protection Board: medical practitioners, registered nurses, probation officers, child welfare officers, school principals, kindergarten teachers, welfare officers appointed under the *Alcohol and Drug Dependency Act 1968*, guidance officers and psychologists.

### **Australian Capital Territory**

Mandatory reporting was introduced on 1 June 1997. The groups mandated are doctors, dentists, nurses, police officers, teachers, school counsellors, public servants working in the child welfare field and licensed childcare providers.

### **Northern Territory**

It is mandatory for any person who believes a child is being, or has been, abused or neglected to notify a Family and Children's Services office or police station.