

Emergency task force 1013 days after closure vow

Genevieve Holding

The Tasmanian Legislative Council has voted in support of a motion to establish an emergency task force to remove children from Ashley Youth Detention Centre, 1013 days after the state government promised to close the centre.

Independent Member for Nelson Meg Webb tabled the motion in response to requests for a task force from the community and advocacy groups.

“I welcome the common-sense and compassionate vote of the upper house supporting an emergency Ashley task force as proposed by community sector and civil society organisations, and I am hopeful the Rockliff government will heed this call,” she said.

Part of the motion also included noting an open letter from social service organisations to Premier Jeremy Rockliff calling for the appointment of specialist forensic experts to assess all detained children and identify their treatment needs.

“The Custodial Inspector and the UN Committee against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment have both raised



Meg Webb calls for action on the Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

concerns about practices at AYDC, yet still the government drags its feet,” Ms Webb said.

“The upper house vote is a clear indication that patience is wearing very thin with the government and with Minister Jaensch, over the failure to act on the Commission of Inquiry’s clear recommendation to remove vulnerable children from the risk posed by AYDC.”

In support of the motion, Rumney MLC Sarah Lovell said there had been a “lack of any urgency” by the government to move on closing the detention centre.

“I truly hope the government sees this as an opportunity to get things done,” she said.