

## **“Put Family First”**

Our starting point is that families come first – they are the building blocks of society and the nurturers and developers of the next generation. Family First supports policies and programs that strengthen the capacity of families to care for their children and contribute to their communities rather than promoting a reliance on government services. Policies include:

- Supporting and promoting important initiatives that enable families to become both socially and economically self-reliant. (eg homeownership / adult education / vocational training / employment / health)
- Encouraging the development of family support programs that seek to assist vulnerable families in their caring responsibilities.
- Affirming and supporting those who choose to be “stay at home” mums or dads – recognising the significant contribution they make to family and community life. We are committed to equal funding for all parents after the birth of their babies.
- Mothers who work in the home are \$2,000 worse off under the Government’s Paid Parental Leave scheme from 1 January 2011. Family First rejects the notion that mothers who work in the home should be treated less favourably than those in the workforce.
- Promoting relationship counselling to ensure that couples and their children have every opportunity to work through their problems and cement a strong foundation for the future.
- Supporting the establishment of family mediation services aimed at the constructive resolution of family problems particularly when it relates to disputes over children. Promoting a “mend it – don’t end it” approach.

## *Caring for Carers*

- Family members who care for their sick or disabled family members or friends (eg children, parents, partners) are the essence of what it means to be a caring community.
- Regrettably, despite the importance of carers in enabling those they care for to lead their lives with dignity and the enormous cost savings they make for the community through their efforts, they receive very little support and are often left to do the best they can in difficult circumstances.
- Family First is absolutely committed to the support of programs and initiatives that affirm the role of carers and assist them, both economically and emotionally, to fulfil their caring roles.
- At Family First we see the primary caring role of family and friends as the normal and appropriate response of a caring community. We believe that the role of government is to support carers in their caring responsibilities and to provide services that meet the needs of the sick, vulnerable and disabled when those needs are beyond the capacity of family members.