

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILD PROTECTION — CHILD FATALITY

4. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Child Protection:

I draw the minister's attention to media reports that a 15-year-old boy in the care of the Department for Child Protection became lost in bushland on the Dampier Peninsula and died alone in horrific circumstances last month.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the child was in the care of the chief executive officer?
- (2) What level of inquiry has the minister instigated into this tragedy?
- (3) When will the minister be in a position to offer this child's community and family an explanation of the events leading up to the child's death?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(3) It is actually fortuitous that I was also aware of this child through my ministerial portfolio as Minister for Disability Services and had the opportunity to meet the young man when I was in his home town some time in the middle of last year. Of course hearing about the tragic events related to his death affected me both as the Minister for Disability Services as well as the Minister for Child Protection. This young man composed a song for me when I was up there. He sang this song to me and strummed his guitar while we sat together on a lounge chair. I know him quite well through that process. It was very difficult to realise that this was the same young man who had that tragic end to his life. I have been fully briefed around the circumstances relating to his death; they are indeed tragic. That information is well known to people both in the community already and to people in my ministerial office.