

**Division 68: Community Development -**

*Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked the following: Youth policy development - BP2, v3, p1165. Given the recommendations of the community drug summit, which included a number of recommendations regarding policy and program coordination, and noting the comments on p1181, how is this to be achieved given the reduction in funding for output 7 from the estimated actual of \$8,010,000 to \$6,875,00, a reduction in real terms of \$1,135,000?*

*Answer:* The Department for Community Development, Youth Affairs, will continue to provide and coordinate the development of youth policies, initiatives and programs within current budget allocations. The amalgamation of the former Office of Youth Affairs into the new Department for Community Development provides a unique opportunity for policy coordination and collaboration to occur in a social policy context, with a community development focus, across government. The engagement and inclusion of the community, including young people, will be a policy priority. By working with young people to develop appropriate policies, we will be building their capacity and resolve, and delivering practical responses. Along with increased coordination there will be an end to the duplication which will free up resources and allow the Government to expand service delivery. When the Government announces its response to the recommendations to the Community Drug Summit it will be in a position to announce a number of new initiatives and programs.

*Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked: Output 2 - child and family safety - BP2, v3, p1169. With respect to the statement in revenue estimates of "increase reflects funding for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program has increased", and noting the statement on p1171 under 'Major Initiatives for 2001-02', "Enhance services to young people who are homeless through increased crisis accommodation services to homeless young people" -*

- (a) What was the previous level of SAAP and by how much has the funding increased?*
- (b) Is this increase greater than CPI?*
- (c) If this increase is greater than CPI, to what purpose is it to be applied in specific terms?*
- (d) If the funding increase is to be greater than CPI, how are the priorities assessed?*

*Answer:*

- (a)* The agreed Commonwealth-State base funding for SAAP for 2000-01 was \$25,673,000. The 2001-02 base funding is \$26,593,000, an increase of \$920,000.
- (b)* This increase is predominantly the result of an indexation increase of 2.9 percent. This rate of indexation is as agreed in the SAAP IV State and Commonwealth Bilateral Agreement and for 2001-02 totalled \$745,000. The remaining \$175,000 represents additional agreed parity funds.
- (c)* The indexation rate of 2.9 percent, is in accordance with agreed rate in the Commonwealth-State Bilateral agreement. The additional parity funding will be used to assist services to meet the cost of the Crisis Assistance Supported Housing Award (CASH Award). Additional to the agreed \$26,593,000, and included in the figures on page 1169, a number of government election commitments will fund new SAAP related services as follows: \$2 million over four years - \$250,000 in 2001-02 - for additional supported accommodation to homeless youth. \$1 million over four years - \$150,000 in 2001-02 - to support women escaping domestic violence in need of safe accommodation. \$1 million over four years - \$150,000 in 2001-02 - to enhance follow-up services to women leaving refugees to help them re-establish themselves
- (d)* The assessment of priorities for the new election commitment funding will be informed by the Department for Community Development planning processes and consultation with relevant stakeholders.

*Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked the following: Noting the above, in Output Measures at p1170 it states that the average cost per supported accommodation case equivalent is to be \$1836. This represents an increase on the 2000-01 estimate of \$1762, but a decrease from the 1999-00 Actual of \$1939 -*

- (a) What is the reason for the increase from the estimate, from \$1762 to \$1836?*
- (b) What is the reason for the decrease from the 1999-00 Actual, from \$1939 to \$1836?*

*Answer:*

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- (a) The 2001-02 target includes additional costs associated with the capital user charge - \$329,000, the youth accommodation election commitment - \$250,000 - and increased general costs, such as workers compensation, motor vehicles and accommodation - \$361,000.
  - (b) The higher unit cost in 1999-00 of \$1,939 is attributable to higher one-off arrears payments to non-government organisations for the CASH - crisis assistance, supported housing - award. Also, the 2001-02 target - \$1836 - includes a greater number of instances of support, an increase of 1,000 cases, to people seeking accommodation within the same number of funded services.

*Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked the following: Output 3 - care for children - BP2, v3, p1172. Given the statement on p1171 under 'Major achievements for 2000-01', "Commenced refurbishment of the Adolescent Child Support Services Emergency Accommodation hostel in Bedford, due for completion in September 2001", and the statement on p1174 "planning for two new facilities in the metropolitan area to replace facilities in Bedford and Mount Lawley" -*

- (a) *What preparatory work has been done for the location of these facilities?*
- (b) *Will these facilities represent an increase in capacity?*
- (c) *What criteria are being used for assessing location and building requirements for these facilities?*
- (d) *Is one of the new facilities replacing the Bedford facility described above?*
- (e) *Why has the Bedford facility been refurbished when it appears it is to be moved?*
- (f) *Given perceived community concerns with these facilities, what processes of community consultation are to be used to determine community attitudes and acceptance of the new facilities, in line with the statement on p1174 "establishment of a community reference committee..."?*
- (g) *Are these facilities in line with the recommendations of the Community Drug Summit?*

*Answer:*

- (a) A vigorous search for possible locations to put the new facilities is under way.
- (b) No.
- (c) The criteria are: size of land, cost per square metre, access to utilities, nature of surrounding properties, access to support facilities, within 25kms of Perth CBD.
- (d) Yes.
- (e) The previous Government approved the refurbishment of the Bedford facility for the Emergency Accommodation Service. It will continue to be used for this purpose until a new facility is built. The department will use the facility for other purposes upon vacation by the Emergency Accommodation Service.
- (f) Consultation and discussion with local authority; consultation and discussion with local residents; formation of a community reference committee prior to the opening of the facilities
- (g) Not applicable.

*Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked the following: Noting the above, and noting the funds described under the heading Works Program - BP2, v3, p1183 - new works, 2001-02 program, and hostel refurbishment -*

- (a) *To what purpose are the funds to be applied?*
- (b) *Noting the above, what is the Bedford facility to be used for once new premises have been located/established?*

*Answer:*

- (a) For the refurbishment of existing hostels, predominantly in the country.
- (b) The department will continue to use the facility but the specific service is yet to be determined.

*Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked the following: Output 2 - child and family safety, BP2, v3, p1169. With reference to the statement under 'Major initiatives for 2001-02' on p1171, "Contribute to the development of a state homelessness strategy . . . " -*

- (a) *What is this strategy?*
- (b) *What is the time-line for development and implementation?*
- (c) *What, if any, progress has been made on this strategy?*

- (d) *What, if any, of the recommendations of the Community Drug Summit are being considered in the preparation of this strategy, and how are they being considered for implementation?*
- (e) *What is the envisaged expenditure for this strategy, and when is it expected to commence?*

*Answer:*

- (a) The Government included the development of a state homelessness strategy as a part of its election commitments. a task force of government and community members has been appointed to develop the state homelessness strategy with the following terms of reference -
- (i) Through meaningful consultation with stakeholders, develop a plan of action, for the whole-of-government and community, incorporating practical responses to the prevention of homelessness, the provision of effective support for those who are homeless and to support people in maintaining their accommodation after an incidence of homelessness.
  - (ii) Provide advice on identifying the causes of homelessness in Western Australia, including an understanding of homelessness in the regions, and appropriate responses for preventing homelessness.
  - (iii) Contribute to a better understanding of pathways through homelessness in Western Australia and identify gaps in provision.
  - (iv) With regard to the development of the Government's community and social indicators benchmarking exercise, provide advice on benchmarks and social indicators relating to homelessness.
  - (v) Make recommendations for action to the Cabinet Standing Committee on Social Policy by 31 January 2002, together with an implementation plan and monitoring strategy.
- (b) Recommendations for action to the Cabinet Standing Committee on Social Policy will be finalised by 31 January 2002, together with an implementation plan and monitoring strategy.
- (c) To date, there has been communication and consultation with service providers, community organisations and peak bodies with the task force. Over 47 written submissions have been received and the task force is drafting a report to government to be released for public comment during November. Information is available on the task force website at [www.homeless.dhw.wa.gov.au](http://www.homeless.dhw.wa.gov.au)
- (d) The recommendations of the Community Drug Summit are being considered where relevant.
- (e) Until a state homelessness strategy has been developed, the envisaged expenditure cannot be calculated.

*Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked the following: Is there additional funding for the Bunbury youth outreach program?*

*Answer:* The Bunbury youth outreach program will receive an additional \$2,358 in 2001-02 through annual indexation.

*Question: Hon Derrick Tomlinson asked the following: Output 2, child and family safety, and output 3, care for children, consume about 57 per cent of the department's budget. The Auditor General's recently released report containing some recommendations for improving aspects of those programs. How is the department responding to those recommendation?*

*Answer:* In November 1998 the Office of the Auditor General tabled the Performance Management Report – Accommodation and Support Services Provided to Young People Unable to Live at Home - and made a number of recommendations to improve the across-government service delivery to this group of young people.

In February 2001 a follow-up analysis was commenced by the office of the Auditor General to examine whether improvements had been achieved in the period November 1998 to July 2001. The report was tabled in Parliament on the 19 September 2001. From the findings, four recommendations were made by the office of the Auditor General. The management plan for the four recommendations will include the following strategies -

**Recommendation 1:** Develop and implement strategies to improve the stability of appropriate placements for young people in care.

As acknowledged in the Auditor General's report, the department has implemented several initiatives to increase, retain and utilise the number of placements for young people. Some of these initiatives include -

- the extension of kinship care
- the establishment of the Foster Carer Recruitment Service
- the establishment of the Aboriginal Child Placement Service

the establishment of the Adolescent Child Support Service  
the expanded training opportunities for foster carers  
the establishment of the centralised agency placement officer position  
the creation of specialist Care for Children teams, and  
the introduction of Spectrum of Care, a classification system for non government agencies.

To progress this recommendation further, a group consisting of government and non-government representatives will be formed to develop and implement appropriate strategies. The group will be formed following executive's endorsement of the management plan.

**Recommendation 2:** Develop and implement strategies to improve the stability of assignment of caseworker to young people in care.

The Director Human Resources will be coordinating a strategy to address the response required regarding this recommendation. This response will commence immediately following executive's endorsement of the management plan.

**Recommendation 3:** Ensure that the implementation of the Looking After Children system is adequately evaluated, with particular focus on whether the experience of young people in care and planning for leaving care has improved.

The Looking After Children (LAC) system was designed in the United Kingdom to ensure that from the moment a child or young person enters care, assessment and planning is immediately undertaken and remains ongoing, together with the provision of appropriate services. Since 1993 the department, in conjunction with the non-government sector, has been developing and piloting a locally adapted model of the LAC system prior to state-wide implementation commencing in October 2001.

The LAC system requires the comprehensive gathering of information regarding a young person's circumstances and care needs from the initial point of entry into care. For young people remaining in long-term care, assessment and action records will be completed on an annual basis and will track the young person's progress across seven developmental dimensions of wellbeing, that is, health, education, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, emotional and behavioural development and self care. Within each dimension age specific objectives are identified and the young person's experiences and progress are measured against these to inform planning in respect of the young person's developmental and other needs whilst in care.

LAC also provides the basis for comprehensive preparation for young people leaving care and moving towards independent living through the assessment and action record. The plans arising from the assessment and action record require achievable objectives to be set for all the dimensions of the young person's development and for each action to make clear who is responsible for what and by when. Young people, agencies providing care, foster carers, families and significant others are all involved in the process of developing these plans.

The intention of this system is to actively work towards better outcomes for young people in the care system and for young people leaving care by ensuring the early identification and ongoing review of support needs and the active monitoring of service plans to address identified needs.

A LAC evaluation and research committee has been operating for the past four months, though much exploratory work was undertaken prior to the commencement of the evaluation committee. The evaluation committee is chaired by the director of provider support and is examining three tiers of work -

evaluation of compliance:

researching the impact of new practices occurring with the introduction of LAC, for example, keeping care plans for children; and

longer-term research looking at the impact of children in care and children leaving care.

**Recommendation 4:** Ensure a timely implementation of the Interagency Policy for Working with Young People in Care.

Whilst the Interagency Policy for Working with Young People in Care was previously signed by all CEOs, many obstacles were encountered when attempting to progress the protocols, including a lack of information at senior management level across each agency and a lack of understanding by those senior managers of the importance of the document.

To reactivate the development of the protocols, the department will be seeking endorsement from the Cabinet Standing Committee on Social Policy on the widespread ownership and commitment to the issue. A paper will be forwarded to the minister within the next week regarding this strategy.

The office of Auditor General will undertake a further examination in 2003-04 of the progress made in relation to the above recommendations. To ensure the implementation of these recommendations, the Department for Community Development is developing a management plan overseen by the Executive Director, Metropolitan Service Delivery. The department's executive will endorse the management plan.

*Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked the following: On page 1170, one of the output measures under Cost is the average cost per supported accommodation case equivalent, which is \$1,836. This represents an increase on the estimate for this year of \$1,726 but a decrease in the actual cost of \$1,939 for 2001. What is the reason for the increase from the estimates and what is the reason for the decrease from the actual expenditure?*

*Answer:* The 2001-02 target (\$1836) includes additional costs associated with the capital user charge (\$329,000). The youth accommodation election commitment (\$250,000) and increased general costs (such as workers compensation, motor vehicles and accommodation) (\$361,000).

The higher unit cost in 1999-00 of \$1,939 is attributable to higher one-off arrears payments to non-government organisations for the CASH (Crisis Assistance, Supported Housing) Award. Also, the 2001-02 target (\$1836) includes a greater number of instances of support, an increase of 1,000 cases, to people seeking accommodation within the same number of funded services.

*Question: Hon M.J. Criddle asked the following - I refer to page 1181 of the Budget Statements and the programs for youth, under output 7. Some programs mentioned will not be continued and, since youth is such a vital part of our society, what are the projected outcomes over the next four years for that funding?*

*Answer:* A number of youth programs and initiatives previously provided by Youth Affairs will continue in 2001-02. These include the -

- staging of the Centenary of Federation Youth Festivals and National Youth Conference centrepiece event;
- revision and implementation of "Action: A State Government Plan for Young People, 2000-2003";
- promotion of the positive achievements of young people through the WA Youth Awards Showcase and by supporting National Youth Week activities;
- consolidation of youth consultative mechanisms, including Youth Advisory Councils;
- consolidation and expansion of youth development opportunities, including Cadets WA;
- improved dissemination of information to young people and those with an interest in youth matters through the further development of the 'U' web site and the production of a range of resources including the Youth Suicide Prevention Information Kit (currently being revised), Youth Facts WA and the maintenance and updating of the Youth Services Directory;
- continued management of service agreements with community based organisations, which provide youth development services; and
- continued support of coordinating and networking mechanisms, including Youth Coordinating Networks.

Strategies implemented to minimise the impact of the reduction in appropriations include -

- reducing the administrative component of programs and initiatives to ensure the impact on services to young people and community groups is minimised;
- review of the Youth Training Scheme to ensure the focus remains on efficiency and high delivery standards;
- addressing young people's needs for public space through the development of appropriate youth orientated cultural venues and public open spaces in rural and regional areas, in place of the Skate Facilities Grants program;
- negotiating with the Office of Road Safety to assume responsibility for the Roadsmart program when it concludes in 2001;
- negotiating with the Department of Health about ongoing funding for the pilot Community and Peer Support Programs; and
- negotiating with the Cities of Kwinana and Cockburn and the Cities of Wanneroo and Joondalup to continue the Telstra Rally Australia Youth Program post 31 December 2001.

In addition, the Government, over the next four years is committed to implementing the following -

- strengthening young people's representative voice by supporting the Youth Affairs Council of WA (YACWA);

- a register of young people for boards and committees;
- a youth summit to discuss issues that young people face;
- development of appropriate youth orientated cultural venues and public open spaces in rural and regional areas;
- engagement of youth advocates to help young people in their dealings with government;
- support and development of the Youth Parliament; and
- introduction of a youth budget impact statement.

These will be developed into programs and initiatives through consultation with young people, the non-government sector and other key stakeholders. Implementation over the four-year period will be dependent on the 2002-03 budget allocation. The desired outcome of all Youth Affairs' activities is that young people are enabled to make more considered decisions about matters that affect and influence their lives and development.

*Question: Hon Kate Doust asked the following: In the budget papers, on page 1164, dot point 3, the department acknowledges the need to support parents in caring for their children as they seek to balance work and family responsibilities. How does the department do this?*

*Answer:* Currently, under the Community Services Act 1972, the Department for Community Development has a mandatory responsibility for the licensing of child care services for children 0 – six years. The Community Services (Child Care) Regulations 1988 describe the minimum standards of care for this age group and the Child Care Licensing Unit monitors compliance with these regulations.

The department has been working on the development of regulations for outside school hours child care services as a result of parent and community concern over the standards in this sector. The drafting process will commence in the near future and it is envisaged implementation will take around 12 months from the date of gazetting. A project officer is working closely with services to support them reach the required standards and the outcome will be that parents will be much more confident about the standards they can expect when they use outside school hours care services.

The Department for Community Development is represented on the Western Australian Child Care Planning Advisory Committee which is chaired by the Commonwealth. This enables the State to provide input into planning for the location of new child care services as well as providing an opportunity to ensure a State perspective is presented during decision making processes.

A new initiative in 2000 was the Community Services Industry Association Award for family friendly work practices. The inaugural award went to Ms Megan Wynne, Managing Director of the Perth based company Advanced Personnel Management.

The Department for Community Development also conducts an annual survey to ascertain community perceptions of family friendliness of workplace practices and customer services. The analysis of this data is published in the annual publication, Research News.

FamilyOne ambassadors are appointed for twelve months to promote family friendly work practices within their own sphere of activity – in business, government or community. This strategy highlights the value of children and families and reinforces the valuable contribution that individuals and organisations can make towards improving family and community wellbeing. It is also proposed to develop a FamilyOne accreditation scheme to enable organisations to be recognised for their commitment to initiatives including workplace practices which support and strengthen family life.