

Division 68: Child Protection, \$265 389 000 -

Mrs D.J. Guise, Chairman.

Mr D.A. Templeman, Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Child Protection.

Dr R.E. Shean, Acting Director General.

Ms P. Bagdonavicius, Acting Executive Director, Policy and Planning.

Mr S. Dawson, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister for the Environment.

Ms J.A. Hogben, Acting Executive Director, Metropolitan Services.

Mr M.F. Intini, Executive Director, Corporate and Business Services.

Mr R.W. Salvage, Acting Director General, Department for Communities.

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow.

The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. This is the prime focus of the committee. While there is scope for members to examine many matters, questions need to be clearly related to a page number, item, program, or amount within the volumes. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators that are included in the budget statements while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates. It is the intention of the Chairperson to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. For the purpose of following up the provision of this information, I ask the minister to clearly indicate to the committee which supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk by 8 June 2007, so that members may read it before the report and third reading stages. If the supplementary information cannot be provided within that time, written advice is required of the day by which the information will be made available. Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to both members and advisers and, accordingly, I ask the minister to cooperate with those requirements.

I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office. Only supplementary information that the minister agrees to provide will be sought by 8 June 2007.

It will also greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the program statements volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount in preface to their question.

I now ask the minister to introduce his advisers to the committee.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Madam Chair, in the gallery there are other advisers specifically for the Department for Communities division, and I will introduce them when we deal with that division.

The CHAIRMAN: I will start with division 68, Child Protection.

Ms S.E. WALKER: My question concerns the increase in the number of child care protection orders. I cannot find the page.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I think it is the first dot point on page 1176.

Ms S.E. WALKER: I thank the minister. I see that he is on the ball this year.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of course.

Ms S.E. WALKER: It is estimated that new protection order applications will increase by 55 per cent compared with the previous year. The extent of this increase is placing stress on the capacity of services that support children and families. Can the minister tell me why there will be an increase of 55 per cent in protection order applications compared with last year? During last year's budget estimates hearing, I asked a question of the Attorney General but it is relevant to this area. Although the government brought in the new child protection act - I cannot remember what it was called - there were not enough magistrates or judicial staff to cope with the increase in protection orders, and now there will be a 55 per cent increase in child protection orders. First, why will there be an increase of 55 per cent? That is an enormous amount. Secondly, have more services been

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provided at the courts to assist with the protection orders, because obviously they will have to go to the Children's Court?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for the question. The first part of the member's question was why there has been a dramatic increase. We must understand that the increase is due to the implementation of the new act, which came into being on 1 March 2006 and also, of course, the new structure whereby there is now a Department for Child Protection. There is much more focus on the protection element. The increase has also occurred in metropolitan and country areas for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal clients. There were 542 new applications received in 2005-06 compared with 631 in just the first nine months of 2006-07. If we assume that the trend in that comparison will continue, it is likely that we will have up to 840-plus new applications, and that is the 55 per cent predicted increase.

In terms of resourcing, if I got that part of the member's question correct, that is a matter of the capacity of the courts to respond to that increase. However, an adviser may be able to add to that, but I think the member's question of the Attorney General last year was specific to the resourcing of the courts.

[7.10 pm]

Ms S.E. WALKER: The minister said that there has been an increase in metropolitan and country areas. What is the percentage for each area? I mentioned that the increase is placing stress on the capacity of services that support children and families. There is already stress, obviously. The minister is going to say that that stress will increase again without proper resourcing.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: These are children in care. I refer to the percentages. Of children in care, 2 609 were in the chief executive officer's care as of 30 April this year.

Ms S.E. WALKER: And how many were there last year?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is a good question. There is no doubt that the figures continue to escalate. I think we highlighted that in last year's estimates also. That figure of 2 609 children in the CEO's care at 30 April this year represented a total increase of 389, or 18.6 per cent, on the annual report total at 30 June last year. Therefore, compared with last year, we have had an increase of 389 children, which is equivalent to 18.6 per cent.

Ms S.E. WALKER: In metropolitan and country areas?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not have the figures for country areas versus the metropolitan area. However, I am happy to provide that detail for the member. Therefore, I commit to answering the question from the member for Nedlands by providing a breakdown of metropolitan children in care as compared with country children.

[*Supplementary Information No A22.*]

Ms S.E. WALKER: Can the minister tell us what is causing the increase?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will ask Ms Judy Hogben, who will be able to provide an answer to that question.

Ms J.A. Hogben: Under the new act there are four types of orders, which is different from the situation in the past. There is a protection order (supervision); there is a protection order (time-limited); there is a protection order (until 18); and there is a protection order (enduring parental responsibility). These new orders, as I said, were not in place before. Under the new act there is also a focus on ensuring that we go through the courts. Before the new act, there were more informal arrangements. Therefore, this has increased accountability and the court overview of what is happening. Also, there is a much tighter focus on child protection, and that is ensuring that more children are going through the courts.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: I refer to the second dot point under significant issues and trends on page 1175. In September last year, the minister promised 133 extra staff, of whom 87 would be caseworkers. How many new staff have been employed; how many new caseworkers have been employed; and how many caseworkers are actually new staff and not existing staff?

The CHAIRMAN: I am happy for members to pursue a line of questioning. However, I think it will be a lot easier if the member asks the substantive question first, and then I will come back for further questions.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Therefore, would the member go back to the first question.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: Yes. How many new staff have been employed?

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As of 11 May 2007, the total number of additional filled positions was 118, which were allocated in the 2006-07 budget. From the September 2006 allocation, the number of additional staff was 81.5 full-time equivalents, remembering that the 2006-07 budget had an allocation, which is the 154.5. Of course, after that there was the further allocation of 133 FTE filled positions.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: How many of these caseworkers are new staff and not existing staff who have been seconded or shifted to a new position?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I think the member is asking how many staff may have moved into a new position.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: Yes.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of those new positions?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: Of those caseworkers. Have any staff been taken from a different part of the department and been moved in and called new caseworkers, or have new people been taken on?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for the question. We may need to provide the member with some additional information. However, I am happy to ask the acting director general to respond.

Dr R.E. Shean: At the time of recruitment, anybody is able to apply for a position. Of course, many people who are employed with us on short-term contracts look for permanent employment with us. Therefore, in many cases our first pool of recruitment is indeed staff who have been employed in some other capacity. However, since the new funding for the 2006-07 budget, the funding that we had in September 2006 and other additional funding that has come through, we have been consistently increasing the recruitment in the department overall.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I refer to page 1175 and to the net amount appropriated to deliver services. There is a differential between the 2005-06 budget and the current budget estimate of \$68 million. From last year to this year, there is a differential of \$26 million. I am making the point that I still do not see a lot of services in my electorate. In the town of Northam alone, we think there are 150 children at risk of going the wrong way. Can the minister let me know what services I can expect out of this budget for my electorate?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for Avon for the question, and I will defer to the advisers shortly. First of all, I will answer the question generally. As the member knows, I am well aware, having been the previous minister -

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The minister is mentioned regularly in Northam.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Am I indeed? Hopefully it is in a reasonable perspective.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: The minister is well liked. He is a good Northam boy.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: When the new positions were advertised, obviously the department, like other agencies, had difficulties filling a number of positions for a variety of reasons, including, of course, the fact that there is great demand in other agencies, and the department has also had to compete with job opportunities in the private sector. During my time as minister, we have wanted to make sure that we focused on ensuring that new positions went into the regions, in particular, because when I have toured the regions during my time as minister, a whole range of issues have been raised, including the ones the member mentioned for the wheatbelt or for Northam. We have endeavoured through a variety of ways, including a very extensive advertising campaign, to attract people who have left the department to come back to the department. The other issue, of course, has been training. It was an issue that the union raised with me early in my term as minister. The union said that we needed to look very closely at the type of training we were offering to particularly new employees of the department. Certainly, the 2006-07 budget and this year's budget deliver on training. We want to make sure that we are not throwing new employees into very complex situations in their first few weeks, because that is a danger. I think the department has, in its restructure and certainly in its sharpened focus on child protection, looked very closely at what it does with those new positions. That said, there are still some vacancies in some parts of Western Australia that are harder to fill than others. The acting director general may be able to give the member some indication of allocation and could perhaps specifically focus on the office in Northam and perhaps any other office in the wheatbelt.

[7.20 pm]

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Northam will suffice. Narrogin is another place, unfortunately, but if the minister refers to the central wheatbelt, that will be of use.

Dr R.E. Shean: I have attended both offices recently. Their total growth in allocations is 15.6 full-time equivalents and so far they have recruited 6.1. There are therefore another 9.5 positions to go in the wheatbelt, which will make a considerable difference to the teams.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I have tried to go easy on those employees in my own electorate, as I know they are under enormous pressure. However, three new cases have come to my attention in recent times; therefore, there is pressure on them. However, I can ask my electorate to be patient only for a limited time. In fact, I am now running a radio advertisement to ask people in the central wheatbelt to register with me when they have serious problems so that I can bring to the attention of the minister the numbers that are coming to me. I am very appreciative of hearing about the number of FTEs. I thought the number was about eight, so 15 is very good news. If I could have a briefing at some time in the future when someone is in my town, I would like to know which services those 15 individuals are likely to deliver.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for the question. I will ask the acting director general to speak shortly. Another important aspect to consider is the funded non-government services in the member for Avon's electorate that the department also funds. As he well knows, the Share and Care Community Service Group is a very successful operation in Northam.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: It is an excellent group of people.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That operation received extra funding in this budget for an additional service, which I think is very welcome. I met with that group of people last year when I was in Northam on a couple of occasions and they highlighted some of the gaps that exist, particularly in the non-government sector. I agree with the member for Avon that we must fill those extra positions in Northam; they are essential to the department. However, it is also timely to acknowledge the additional funding to some of the non-government services that are also providing important services. The acting director general might like to add to that.

Dr R.E. Shean: I just point out that in the structure of the Department for Child Protection, 50 per cent of the senior leadership in the corporate executive is for service delivery and one position is dedicated to focusing on country services. The executive director of country services is making a point of getting out as much as possible; he is in Geraldton today. I would be very happy for the minister's office to arrange for him when he is in Northam to catch up with the member formally.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: That would be excellent; thank you.

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: My question relates to the first dot point on page 1175, which refers to the number of children that are in care and the fact that there is a six per cent increase on the previous year. What is the length of time in general that children are in care; and does that length of time mean that, given the rate of increase in new cases, the department is building up an even larger body of children that are in care?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for her question. The sad trend, which is a trend across Australia, is that more children are coming into care and are staying longer in care. That is an unfortunate trend that is being experienced throughout the country. As I mentioned in my answer to the first question from the member for Nedlands, that upward trend is a real concern to all of us and to the community. The member for Maylands asked about the length of time that children stay in care and I have given a general answer that they are staying longer. I will ask Ms Hogben whether we can give a more specific answer. It is varied, of course. There is a range of reasons a child may come into care, but the trend is, unfortunately, for much longer and for extended periods.

Ms J.A. Hogben: The reasons children come into care now are more complex and varied than before. Also the circumstances with their families are such that it is not safe for them to return home until circumstances have changed. Obviously, the need is to make sure that children are safe at all times, and that is why they are staying in care until the family can address the issues that brought the child or children into care. If that means that they need to stay until those issues are addressed, that is what happens. While I have been working for the department, the issues have totally changed. The combination of alcohol, drugs, mental health issues and family violence all create a scenario where a lot more intense work is required and the plans for the child and for the family need to be extremely intense.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Following on that and as the member for Maylands would be aware, another aspect is that the Ford review made 70 recommendations, a number of which focused on the importance of addressing issues related to children in care. One unfortunate issue, which is a real challenge for the system and for the community, is the breakdown for a variety of reasons of the placement with foster carers of some very damaged children. A number of children have had a number of placements, which unfortunately can damage them even further. Unfortunately, a number of these children, particularly those in the teenage years, have found themselves in residential care; that is, in the care of the state. One very important recommendation of the Ford report was for an overhaul of residential care placements. I visited a number of residential care facilities and I must acknowledge that many of the children and young people in those places are very damaged people. They need us - the community and the government - to support them in whichever way we possibly can. Therefore, a

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major overhaul was recommended in the Ford report. Substantial funding in last year's and this year's budgets will go a long way towards supporting those children who are right at the hard edge of the spectrum. For example, I visited a locked facility in Melbourne and I noted that one important element of those sorts of facilities is the need to also provide therapeutic services, so that a child has not only secure accommodation but also therapeutic services to go along with it. I am pleased to say that the budget has recognised that need and that therapeutic services will also be provided.

The CHAIRMAN: I will come back to the member for Maylands, who obviously has a further question, as does the member for Avon. Before I do that, I say to members that there are designated places for their water glasses and they are there for a reason. I do not wish to see a glass placed on top of a bench which might inadvertently tip over and interfere with the electrics. If the member for Avon would remove his glass from its current position, I would be much appreciative.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: I always do as I am told, Madam Chair!

The CHAIRMAN: I will go back to the member for Maylands' further question.

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: I will follow on from my first question. The minister started to answer it. The second item on page 1178, under outcomes and key effectiveness indicators, is new and relates to the average number of placements per child in the CEO's care per year. I intended to ask exactly what was meant by that, but I think the minister has explained it. As it appears statistically, one child can have a number of placements in a year while the child is under the CEO's care. Is there a range to that statistic? Obviously, children do not have one and a half placements.

[7.30 pm]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Ms Hogben will be able to answer that question.

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: Further, given what has just been said about the new residential facility, will some of the more difficult cases that need further placement be managed in the residential facility, which would help that performance indicator improve over time?

Ms J.A. Hogben: There is no upper limit. Placements are made in accordance with the circumstances of a child. They vary depending on the intensity of the behavioural needs of a child. It might well be that a child comes into care immediately by taking an emergency placement. After the child's needs have been ascertained, a stable placement will be determined. Hence, the 1.5 placements. The preference in terms of a stable placement is meeting a child's needs. The department has moved towards seeing placement as a continuum of placements. We have looked at what is required, depending on a child's needs. If extensive therapeutic intervention is needed, it is delivered in a therapeutic setting. If foster placement meets a child's needs, it is delivered. Before, we had more of a divided view. Now we are looking at the continuum. A child might move in and out of different sorts of placement depending on his or her needs.

Ms S.E. WALKER: I refer to service 2, "Protecting Children and Young People From Abuse", on page 1181 of the *Budget Statements*. How much funding is being provided to SafeCare? Is SafeCare still managed by Christabel Chamarette? What is this year's funding allocation?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The answer to the first question is yes. Three services are operated by SafeCare. The one in Bunbury has been provided with \$40 862. The SafeCare families program has been given \$84 163 and the SafeCare young people's program has been allocated \$121 843.

Ms S.E. WALKER: That is in the metropolitan area?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Those are the three services. There is one in Bunbury and the other two services I just mentioned.

Ms S.E. WALKER: Are children who are being sexually abused by their fathers still being sent back home to live with their fathers while they are in the program?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: SafeCare's priority focus is the protection of children. There is a central referral point for all cases referred to SafeCare by the department. Cases must remain open with a designated officer while there is an active referral to SafeCare. The department receives regular progress reports from SafeCare. Part of SafeCare's treatment contract with perpetrators includes no unsupervised contact with children. Contract breaches are reported to the department.

Ms S.E. WALKER: Are children who are sexually abused by their fathers still being sent back home to live with their fathers? That is what was happening under the SafeCare program when I last asked this question during the last estimates committees. The minister's answer does not answer my question. Are children who have been sexually abused by their fathers being sent home to live with them while in the SafeCare program?

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will direct the executive officer to answer that question.

Ms S.E. WALKER: It is either yes or no.

Ms P. Bagdonavicius: My understanding is that under SafeCare, the perpetrators receive treatment away from the home in the first instance. After a period of treatment, they can return to the home. That is my understanding. As the minister has highlighted, we have put in place more active case management for families that are receiving service from SafeCare. Our staff should know what is happening in a family situation.

Ms S.E. WALKER: The answer is yes. Perpetrators remain in the home while the child is there. The last time this issue came up, I asked whether there was a 24-hour monitoring service. Is there a 24-hour monitoring service of children when they are sent back to live with fathers who have sexually abused them? How are they monitored?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: My reading of this is that contact cannot be unsupervised.

Ms S.E. WALKER: How can those children be supervised 24 hours a day?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am happy to take the question on notice and provide a more substantial answer if that is what the member would like.

Ms S.E. WALKER: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the minister to indicate what information he will provide.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We will clarify the supervision of children when there are perpetrators in the home.

[*Supplementary Information No A23.*]

Ms S.E. WALKER: A report by Cant and Penter in 2005 suggested that SafeCare's budget was \$85 000. Has the budget tripled?

Ms P. Bagdonavicius: There has been no increase to the SafeCare program. The funding has been in place for some years. We can clarify how many years it has been in place. The last service that the department funded was the Bunbury child sexual abuse treatment service, which was some years ago. The other two services have been in place for a long time.

Ms S.E. WALKER: Can I have that information by way of supplementary information?

The CHAIRMAN: What information will the minister provide the member for Nedlands?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The funding level back to 2001.

[*Supplementary Information No A24.*]

Mr P.B. WATSON: I refer to service 3 on page 1117 of the *Budget Statements*, which deals with supporting individuals and families at risk or in crisis. How is the government handling this issue? Does it have any future initiatives?

[7.40 pm]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member has referred to service 3. Is the interest specifically in response to emergencies?

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member may be aware that the department plays an important role in responding to emergency situations or circumstances, particularly in the recovery aspect of responding to an emergency. An example would be the Dwellingup fires earlier this year. Various authorities responded to fire emergencies, and the department responded to, for example, the accommodation needs of people who needed to be evacuated or who sought refuge from the circumstances they were in. In the case of Dwellingup, a number of people were housed at Fairbridge Farm in Pinjarra or just outside Pinjarra. The department's role was to coordinate food, clothing etc for those people who were evacuated from the localities of Dwellingup and Coolup. The funding in this budget and into the future includes \$6.9 million from 2005-06 to 2007-08. That equates to an expansion of the emergency services unit within the department from one full-time equivalent to five full-time equivalents. It also saw the creation of district emergency services officer positions across the state. That occurred in seven country areas and three metropolitan areas. In a number of our regional centres and offices there is a designated full-time equivalent who is responsible for the emergency management requirements of legislation.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Who do they work with? Is it the police or the Fire and Emergency Services Authority?

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It depends on the emergency. In the case of a flood, for example, there is a local emergency management committee - a LEMC - which has representation from the department on it. There is also a district emergency management committee - known as a DEMC - which is a more regionally structured response organisation. The level of the emergency will determine which of those groups is triggered. If it is a very localised emergency, it is usually only the LEMC that will be triggered or established. The department will have a representative on that. The person from the department would, by and large, be one of the people delegated with emergency response responsibilities. In the case of a DEMC, it is quite often the same person in a region. For example, in Avon the person from the Department for Community Development - now the Department for Communities - would be on both committees. The person would coordinate the department's response to the emergency. We need to be aware that this structure was established under the Emergency Management Act 2005, which was passed in 2004 and which established these responsibilities. At a statewide level the department was involved in assisting 1 200 evacuees from Lebanon; this occurred late last year. There was an evacuation of Australian citizens from Lebanon. A number of those people were Western Australian citizens or were transferred elsewhere through Perth Airport. The department was actively engaged in responding to their needs, such as by providing accommodation, food and counselling, if necessary. The Australind storms involved another more localised example of an emergency services response from the department. I mentioned the Dwellingup fires earlier. Obviously, the department has a key role and responsibility in responding to emergencies at a local, regional and state level if required and if necessary.

Mr P.B. WATSON: How long does the department look after someone involved in an emergency situation? What is the time span for looking after people in an emergency or crisis?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Clearly, it depends on the situation and the circumstances. For example, with the Dwellingup fires in the Peel region, the department's involvement was over a number of weeks. Initially, it was to establish the immediate needs of people affected by the fires. Over 14 families lost their houses in the fires. They were the immediate concern of the department in the recovery phase. The department's officers and the officers of other service departments responded to address individual families' needs. Some needs were addressed immediately; that is, their accommodation was met by friends or family. As I said, others were housed or accommodated at Fairbridge Farm overnight. Ongoing services were also provided at Dwellingup through financial counselling and assistance. The Dwellingup fires are a very good example of where all the agencies across government came together to respond to that particular emergency. It was probably one of the first real tests of the emergency management legislation in many respects. Nevertheless, it varies upon the circumstances.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I refer to page 1176 and the significant issue and trend of an increasing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children having contact with the child protection system. I also refer to page 1180 and a major achievement for 2006-07 of developing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander committee consultation and placement model. Was that model developed specifically to deal with the trend that the department has identified?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: There is no doubt that the needs of Indigenous children and families are overrepresented in the department's work. From memory, 40 per cent of the children in care are Indigenous children. Clearly, in the new arrangements with the department and the new structure and the establishment of the Department for Child Protection and the focus on child protection as a key focus of the department, we have seen and recognised that Indigenous families, and children in particular, need to have their needs focused on very closely and carefully. For that reason, within the structure there is a network of senior officers of Aboriginal services - SOAS - who are linked to the executive so that ongoing issues that impact on Indigenous families, and Indigenous children in particular, are addressed at the highest levels of the department's executive. As was identified and recommended in the Ford report, we have seen the establishment of the Aboriginal reference group, which ensures that culturally appropriate training and resourcing needs are focused and addressed when the department is dealing with Indigenous families.

As Ms Hogben mentioned earlier, the reason more Indigenous children are coming into the care of the department is the increasing problems associated with drug, alcohol and substance abuse by parents or guardians. There are also associated mental health issues. It is a trend that I am concerned about. We should all be mindful of foetal alcohol syndrome. Evidence is increasingly showing the impacts of foetal alcohol syndrome on unborn children. Their negative effects on children can be lasting on children's development - their physical, intellectual and mental development. People in the department are looking very closely at that phenomenon, and there is increasing research to show that it leaves a lasting legacy on the babies and children affected by it. I hope that has given the member some indication.

The other item was the \$21 million allocated to major initiatives in Halls Creek. This is a response by the government to address a number of child protection issues that were highlighted in that area. It will include two

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residential care facilities located on department land. The first, for children aged zero to six years old, will be operating by August this year, and the other, for children aged from six to 15 years, will be operating by January next year. Work is also being done to provide additional foster care services, and the responsible parenting program will be extended into that area. A number of the child protection issues that impact on that community need to be addressed, and \$21 million has been allocated for that.

[7.50 pm]

Mr B.S. WYATT: Is the community consultation placement model referred to on page 1180 something different, or is it part of that initiative?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will ask the executive director to answer that.

Ms J.A. Hogben: Section 81(1) and (2) of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 specify that there must be consultation with Indigenous staff members and the Indigenous community in the placement of Aboriginal children. That is what that dot point specifically refers to. That is prior to the placement of a child. The approved agencies currently are Yorganup and the Armadale Noongar Corporation. They are the organisations we are consulting with as approved organisations. The department is keen to expand the number and range of organisations and to expand the program beyond the metropolitan area. We are looking at expanding the number of approved agencies, hopefully up to six by December 2008. It is a specific reference to section 81(1) and (2) in the act that refers to the consultation.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: I refer to the first dot point under “Significant Issues and Trends” on page 1175, which reads, in part -

... there is increased pressure on the Department to maintain a range of flexible, high quality placements and support for children in care, many of whom are vulnerable and at-risk due to their past experiences.

How many allegations of sexual abuse by staff upon children in state facilities or foster care have been reported in the past year?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I can provide the following information. The member wished to know the number of children harmed in care. Is that correct?

Dr G.G. JACOBS: Yes - by staff at state care facilities.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: My understanding is that we do not have the figures on the breakdown. There is a general number for children in care who are reported to have been abused. They may have been in foster care or in residential care. For 2006-07 the number I have is eight substantiated cases of abuse by caregivers of children in the care of the CEO.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: Is that in foster care, or are we talking about an overall number of children in care facilities?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It refers to children whose abuse is by caregivers. The total number of children in care subject to substantiated abuse by caregivers is eight for 2006-07.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: How many of these allegations have been investigated?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Any report of alleged abuse is investigated.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: How many of these allegations have been substantiated?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The figure of eight refers to substantiated cases. There may be a number of reported allegations, and they are all investigated. The figure of eight refers to substantiated abuse by caregivers.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: If they were substantiated, to return to my original question, how many allegations were there?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am happy to provide the answer by way of supplementary information. The question is: how many allegations of abuse in care were reported in 2006-07?

[*Supplementary Information No A25.*]

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: I refer to page 1181, service 2, “Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse”. How much funding has been allocated to the Child Death Review Committee?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member is seeking to know the amount of money allocated to the Child Death Review Committee. My understanding is that the amount is around \$380 000, but I believe that I need to provide the exact figure by way of supplementary information.

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Mr A.J. SIMPSON: Can I also have a figure for the funding for the previous year?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We will provide both of those figures by way of supplementary information.

[Supplementary Information No A26.]

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Further to the question of the member for Maylands about children at risk, it concerns me that there does not seem to be enough coordination between mental health and child protection. It seems blatantly obvious to a lay person like me that there is a linkage between substance abuse, mental health and child protection. Is there any program to attempt to achieve substantial cross-agency activity, particularly in places such as my electorate, where localised agency cross-pollination would be very useful?

[8.00 pm]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I know the member has not referred to a line item, but I share his concern.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure it is the second dot point on page 1175.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of course. One of the recommendations of the Ford review related specifically to cross-agency understanding and responsibility. One of the things the department has had difficulty with over a number of years has been the delineation of responsibilities across agencies. In many respects, it was my experience that the Department for Community Development had to be the department for everything. One of the important recommendations made by the Ford review, recommendation 60 - the government has accepted this recommendation - is for the creation of child protection officers in all key agencies. Somebody who is of a high level - it is not a junior officer position - is actually the agency's child protection services officer. In the health department, for example, as part of the rollout of the recommendations, there will be a designated officer responsible for child protection and responsible for reporting on that agency's responses. There are some very good partnerships within some of our public hospitals and protocols for recording child sexual abuse and reporting concerns to the department about individual children or, indeed, family situations that may present in the health department. However, I think that we will need to continue to work on this area, because I agree that there have been a range of difficulties between agencies about who is responsible. At the end of the day, because we are now focusing on child protection, the department is responsible for child protection, but there are also clear responsibilities for other agencies, including the health department, the police and even juvenile justice and other agencies. I think this will help.

Mr M.W. TRENORDEN: Some of the difficulties can be alleviated with better information. In some cases, agencies have resources that other agencies do not have. I find in my local area that if those people can meet every two months, there is significant benefit to be gained. If the police and other agencies are included, gains can be made at a local level without having to go further up the tree.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I agree with the member. As I say, recommendation 60 is a particularly clear example of the way in which cross-agency responsibility will be mandated. We are creating specific high-level officers in those agencies who are to be responsible for that agency's response to child protection. I think it is a very big step forward.

Ms S.E. WALKER: I refer to page 1181, service 2, "Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse". I refer again to SafeCare and the July 2006 report by Rosemary Cant and Colin Penter on the SafeCare families program. The target group for the SafeCare families program is men who have perpetrated sexual abuse against children in their families. When I was shadow Minister for Community Development, the WA Police Service advised me that it had never received a referral from the Department for Community Development about any of the offenders who had been referred to the SafeCare program. How many, if any, intra-familial paedophiles were reported to the police by the Department for Community Development during 2006-07? If none, will the minister agree to undertake this as a matter of policy? If not, does SafeCare prevent the minister from implementing the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member has asked a detailed question. The third part of her question is a policy question, which -

Ms S.E. WALKER: I am saying that the minister's department has consistently failed to report to the police paedophiles who are having sexual intercourse or engaging in other sexual practices with their children. I ask the minister whether he will agree to undertake, as a matter of policy, to ensure that paedophiles who are referred by his department to SafeCare are reported to the police. If not, is SafeCare preventing the minister from implementing mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member refers to my department; it is no longer my department and no longer under my jurisdiction.

Ms S.E. WALKER: I did not realise that.

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I highlight to the member that the portfolio has changed. However, the member has asked a detailed question in four parts, and I will have to take the question on notice. The member has asked me about a policy-related issue. I am not the minister for the department, and therefore I cannot answer the question on behalf of the minister. However, I am sure the minister will be able to respond, so I will take the question on notice.

The CHAIRMAN: If the member places the question on notice, we will be able to deal with it.

Ms S.E. WALKER: Does the minister know whether any cases that have been referred by the Department for Community Development to SafeCare have been reported to the police?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: If the member is asking me the question directly, the answer is no, I am not aware; however, if the member wants an answer, again, I am happy to take the question on notice.

Ms S.E. WALKER: Will the minister agree to undertake to speak to the minister on this issue as a matter of policy?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Even though I am no longer the Minister for Community Development, Child Protection and/or Communities, I can assure the member that I maintain a very strong interest in the area, and I certainly continue to talk to the new minister on regular occasions. I am sure that those sorts of discussions will continue.

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: My question relates to the first dot point on page 1180, under “Major Achievements For 2006-07”, which in turn comes under service 1, “Supporting Children and Young People in the CEO’s Care”. The dot point states in part that a new service model has been developed in partnership with the not-for-profit sector. Will the minister explain precisely which organisations within the not-for-profit sector this model has been developed with, and explain a bit more about the model?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member refers to page 1180?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: Yes, the first dot point at the top of the page.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The item the member has highlighted refers to the development of a service model for 20 new specialist placements. The lead agency is Anglicare, which of course is a well-known and well-respected non-government organisation that has been involved in a range of services over a long period. It is my understanding that the department meets regularly with Anglicare and that draft service specifications have been developed. The model to which the member refers will provide that all children referred to the service will be resident in the Doubleview therapeutic group home, where they will be assessed and a therapeutic treatment plan developed. I highlighted in response to an earlier question the importance of providing therapeutic service alongside the accommodation element. The most appropriate foster placement and a range of integrated support and therapeutic services are then identified by the lead agency coordinator in consultation with the department. The therapeutic services are tailored to the individual needs of the particular child or young person. One of the important parts of this model is that the children will be involved in the decision-making process, according to their age and level of understanding, and that their views and feelings will be taken into account. My understanding is that negotiations with Anglicare are being finalised and that the new service agreement will be signed this month. We expect that that signing will take place imminently and the model and service will be operational soon after.

[8.10 pm]

Mr B.S. WYATT: I refer to the second bullet point under “Major Initiatives For 2007-08” on page 1182, which has partly been covered. It states -

Initiate the development of a model for mandatory reporting of sexual abuse.

In light of the significant impacts that this model will have on government - I think this is a very good policy decision - how is the government placed now for this policy to come into effect?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for his question and for his lobbying on the issue of mandatory reporting. The issue has been debated widely over a long period. The government has introduced a range of initiatives in its term of government since 2001. The first initiative was to completely update 60-year-old legislation. The old Child Welfare Act had been in operation for 60-plus years. In fact, it was the Gallop government, through Minister McHale, that oversaw the new Children and Community Services Act 2004. This legislation included a range of changes to how government responds to the increasing needs of children and vulnerable families. Of course, last year’s Ford report and the subsequent creation of two departments - that is, the Department for Child Protection and the Department for Communities - saw a reinvigorated focus on child protection; hence the creation of a separate department. This was quite clearly done because children and protecting children are priorities of the Carpenter government. We also saw a review of the government’s

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position on mandatory reporting. As we know, in March 2007 the Premier announced that the government would develop legislation for the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse by key service providers; that is, doctors, nurses, teachers and police. It is understood clearly that doctors and nurses, for example, have the clinical skills to make assessments of sexual abuse, and teachers and police officers are important points of initial contact and support for children who may disclose sexual abuse. Under this proposed legislation, these professionals will be required to report when there is evidence that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring. We anticipate that the mandatory reporting of sexual abuse legislation will be tabled in Parliament in the second half of this year. It is expected that the legislation will be supported and passed in 2008. The State Solicitor's Office has already commenced consultation with government agencies in the drafting of that legislation. Of course, the Department for Child Protection is working actively with the State Solicitor's Office on that drafting, along with other government agencies that will be directly impacted on by the new legislation.

Training was one of the issues that I was very keen to highlight and that was highlighted to me in talking to various parties who have very different and wide-ranging views on the issue of mandatory reporting. I can remember speaking to a very strong Western Australian advocate of the mandatory reporting regime about the issue of training. It is absolutely critical that when this legislation is introduced, we have in place a very strong education and training regime for those people who will be required to mandatorily report sexual abuse. That is a critical part of this focus. Those people need to be well trained in recognising various behaviours, symptoms etc that children and young people may present. An interagency working group will be formed shortly and will comprise representatives from those key agencies - that is, police, education, child protection etc - to oversee the introduction of the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. It is an important initiative and I am sure that it will be supported in the Parliament when it is introduced later this year.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: I refer to the second dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" on page 1180. Essentially, it refers to the Halls Creek hostel. How will the Halls Creek hostel work, how much will it cost and how many children will it house?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As I mentioned in a previous answer, the Halls Creek response is focused on a number of areas, including capital works investment, full-time equivalent investment and the support of the other services that will be provided. The total cost will be \$21 million and that will include the following: the hostel will be located on the department's property at Halls Creek; and there will be two separate residential care buildings, one of which will be for children aged zero to six years and the other will be for children aged six to 15 years. We expect that once fully implemented, the hostel will be able to support up to 18 children. The facility for the children aged zero to six years will be operated and managed by the Department for Child Protection and is expected to be operational in August 2007. The facility for children aged six to 15 years will initially be operated by the department, but I understand that we are seeking a non-government organisation to eventually operate the facility. The proposal has the support of the Halls Creek community. In addition, there will be an expansion of the foster care service in Halls Creek. Currently, there are 12 children in foster care in Halls Creek. It is expected that a total of 20 children will be accommodated in foster care. An additional senior worker will also be provided for a 12-month period to assess and train relative carers. That person's role will be to work with relative carers in Halls Creek. The responsible parenting program, which was supported by members opposite in this house but of which elements were not supported in the upper house, will be rolled out as well. That program works with families to address parenting issues and behaviour and also focuses on skilling parents to respond more effectively in relation to the safety and protection of their children. Of course, it also focuses on children's antisocial behaviour, truancy, family violence and alcohol and drug abuse-related issues. They are programs in addition to the capital works for the hostel. The final one is the school truancy program. A range of programs will be delivered after school and before school, and also there will be homework classes. Of the \$21 million I mentioned, \$11.856 million will be delivered through the Department for Child Protection, and the balance of that money will be delivered through the Department of Housing and Works.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: I have a supplementary question. What contact will the children have with their parents, and can the minister explain in detail how the children will interact with the community, given that they have been taken from their parents?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Obviously, when a child is taken from his or her parents or guardians, that decision is and will always be made in the best interests of the child. The programs that I mentioned in my answer to the member previously highlight some of the work that the department will do with families to hopefully prevent those children being potentially taken from their parents. Of course, at the end of the day, if a child is at risk, and is deemed to be at risk by the department and is assessed as being at risk, and if that child is not safe with his or her parent or guardian, that child will need to be removed from the parent or guardian. That is why we have the hostel system that was highlighted in my previous answer. However, in addition to that, there are those other

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measures that have been introduced for families who are vulnerable and when there is the potential for a child to be at risk. I believe that is important.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: My question relates to service 2, “Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse”, on page 1181. In May 2006, a tender for \$100 000 was awarded to a third party organisation to undertake case reviews on behalf of the Child Death Review Committee. Will this arrangement be extended past its 31 May expiry date?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will ask the acting director general to respond to the member for Serpentine-Jarrahdale’s question.

Dr R.E. Shean: I believe this expenditure relates to contract staff who were put on to assist the Child Death Review Committee. Given that as of the new financial year the responsibility for the Child Death Review Committee is transitioning to the office of the Ombudsman, it will be up to the office of the Ombudsman as to how best to staff that particular role. My understanding from preliminary talks with Chris Field, the Ombudsman, is that the preference is not to use contract staff but to involve the staff of the Ombudsman’s office instead. Indeed, prior to the recommendation being made by Prudence Ford, my understanding is that Denzil McCotter, the chair of the Child Death Review Committee, was of the view that, wherever possible, it would be better to use permanent staff rather than contract staff. Therefore, that was the intent. However, what is finally done by the Ombudsman’s office will be up to it.

Ms S.E. WALKER: I refer to service 2, “Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse”, on page 1181. Before I ask my question, minister, I just say that I am delighted and over the moon that the minister will bring in mandatory reporting. It is a policy that I pushed through my party room in 2004, I think. It has taken the minister only three years, but we have got there.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: So the member and I agree.

Ms S.E. WALKER: A member can do some things in opposition. I even made sure that I got the minutes of the meeting in my party room that day. I felt very strongly about mandatory reporting. I met with considerable resistance, but never mind. I am glad it is coming in. I just convey that to the minister.

I refer to SafeCare. I have looked through the Cant and Penter report. It says that the male offender who was sexually abusing his child has to acknowledge some responsibility in the program, and he must stay out of the family home for at least 12 months or to have supervised access. The report says that this all depends -

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am sorry; did the member say “in order to”?

Ms S.E. WALKER: “Or to have” supervised access. I can give the minister the page. However, this all depends on the mother’s protectiveness. Cant and Penter’s report on SafeCare clearly outlined cases in which there were clear breaches of SafeCare’s contractual agreement with a child rapist, which potentially placed children at risk, yet SafeCare did not act on the breach and report the offender as required. I know from my work as a prosecutor that mothers often are not protective. They put themselves and their relationship before the child. How can the department have any confidence that the SafeCare program is performing, with the children’s safety as its focus, if breaches are not being reported? Does the minister understand what I am saying?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do. The member is quoting from the Cant report; is that correct?

Ms S.E. WALKER: Yes. What I am saying is that a contract is made between the offender and SafeCare that the offender must stay out of the home for 12 months or have supervised access. That depends on the mother’s protectiveness. Cant and Penter even cite one case in which the mother is not protective. I know from my personal experience of doing these cases that the mother is often not protective because she puts her own relationship first. It is clear from the Cant and Penter report that when there were breaches of SafeCare’s contractual agreement with the offender in this regard, SafeCare did not act on it. It did not say, “Okay; you’re out of the program.”

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I do not deny that the member’s line of questioning is appropriate and that this is a genuine concern of the member. I cannot respond to the question at this stage. I will need to take it on notice. I understand that the minister, Hon Sue Ellery, is very happy to take this question on notice.

Ms S.E. WALKER: Can I tell the minister what I want the supplementary information to be, please?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, the member may.

Ms S.E. WALKER: How many breaches of SafeCare’s contractual agreements with offenders occurred between 2006 and 2007; and how many resulted in SafeCare dismissing the offender from the program, or what actions were taken?

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Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am happy to take that question on notice and to certainly make an attempt to have that question answered.

[*Supplementary Information No A27.*]

Ms S.E. WALKER: I have a supplementary question. Given that I have outlined tonight the SafeCare scenario that the child is not protected and cannot possibly be protected 24 hours a day, will the department reconsider the use of SafeCare?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Again, I am very happy to take that question on notice.

The CHAIRMAN: Could the member for Nedlands, for the sake of *Hansard*, repeat the supplementary information she requires?

Ms S.E. WALKER: Will the department consider the use of SafeCare in light of the fact that I have demonstrated in my questions tonight that the child had not been adequately protected while in the program?

The CHAIRMAN: Is that the minister's understanding?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, indeed, that is my understanding of the question.

[*Supplementary Information No A28.*]

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: My question relates to the service for supporting individuals and families at risk or in crisis referred to under "Major Achievements For 2006-07". The eighth dot point on page 1184 states -

Through the Commonwealth-State SAAP V Multilateral Agreement, commenced operation of
10 Innovation and Investment Fund pilot projects operating from 17 locations across Western Australia.

In the suburb of Morley in my electorate there was a very difficult scenario of two homeless women living on the street who created absolute havoc. They were the subject of a move-on order that was not terribly successful and more recently the subject of a long-term restraining order. The department that the minister represents was very helpful in working with other government agencies in trying to find a resolution. However, in looking at the medium and long-term resolutions, given that there is a short-term resolution with a restraining order, we did not want to shift the problem of the two homeless women to some other suburb. I heard about an intensive project to support street-present people that I gather operates in Perth and Fremantle and is one of those innovation and investment fund pilot projects. I suppose my cheeky plea is: could we have one in Morley? Secondly, is it possible to get some more information about how that program is running? I gather it has been in place for about six months. Is the innovation and investment fund pilot project the same across those 17 locations or are there 10 different pilot projects? Could I get some more information either now or by way of supplementary information?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for Maylands. First of all, generally it is clear that funded services are important services and provide important supports. The case that the member highlighted, unfortunately, is not uncommon in other parts of the state. Again, for a variety of reasons, there are families and single parents with children who face a range of complex problems, starting quite often with inadequate accommodation or a lack of accommodation; there are then compounding financial problems etc that impact on them as well. What happens, of course, is that the problems or challenges for some of these people compound and they then find themselves almost in a spiral and seemingly unable to find any light at the end of the tunnel. That is, of course, of even more concern when children are involved. The department supports a number of services, and the member has mentioned this particular example. Ms Bagdonavicius will be able to give some detail specifically about where those programs are delivered and whether they are similar, which I think was the member's query.

Ms P. Bagdonavicius: I will just add to the minister's comments. The innovation and investment fund pilots have been a really important initiative from the commonwealth-state SAAP V agreement. It has actually been a redirection of commonwealth dollars for some innovation around some strategic directions of SAAP V, which is about increasing and improving supports to people before they become homeless; helping people who are in the homelessness system; having systems of help to enable people to work better together; and giving better help to people after they leave supported accommodation assistance program - SAAP - services. There is therefore a range of initiatives - 10 projects across 17 locations, as the member identified - undertaken in WA. We were the first state to have our innovation and investment fund pilot signed off by the commonwealth minister. The pilots are all underway now and we are evaluating them. Because the fund has short-term money and the projects are clearly pilots, we hope the evaluation may lead to recurrent funding for some of the services. We also hope that it may lead to additional funding for the pilots, which have been demonstrated to work really well, as there are other needs emerging.

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Dr J.M. EDWARDS: I have a further question. The pilot project I am aware of concludes on 30 June 2008. I ask the minister or the relevant officer whether all of them end on 30 June 2008. From what has been said, it sounds as though the evaluation has started already. Is it possible that the money can flow from 1 July 2008 for those pilots that are successful, and will that be enough time to renegotiate with the commonwealth?

Ms P. Bagdonavicius: Yes, they will end on 30 June. The evaluations are action-focused and are happening now. The senior officers group is having ongoing discussions with the commonwealth as we go through the pilot process, and we will be in a better position to know the outcome prior to the end of June next year. We are not in a position to give categorical assurances around things continuing or not continuing at this stage; it will depend on further consideration by the commonwealth.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I take the minister back to the fourth dot point on page 1180, which reads -

Expanded the Department's Duty of Care Unit to provide more centralised and effective investigations into allegations of abuse in care.

Will the minister provide me with details on the expansion of that unit?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member. A director, a senior lawyer and three senior investigating officers have been appointed to the duty of care unit. The processes for the centralisation of investigations concerning employees have been developed and are under operation. Investigations are expected to commence June/July 2007 following staff training. The duty of care unit, of course, is an important element of the department's structure. As the member can see, the importance of that is reflected in the fact that we have a director's position, a senior lawyer and resourcing for three senior investigating officers. Hopefully, that answers the member's question.

Mr B.S. WYATT: It does, thank you.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: My question relates to page 1181 under "Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse" and to the relocation of the Child Death Review Committee from the Department for Community Development to the Ombudsman. Are any amendments to legislation required to make that move happen?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is a very good question and I will defer to the acting director general for the answer.

Dr R.E. Shean: I will give the member a slight preamble. The Child Death Review Committee is mentioned in the current act, the Children and Community Services Act 2004. My understanding from our advice is that although the Ombudsman does not need additional legislation to take on that responsibility, it simply would not be possible to transition the committee from one agency to another. Therefore, under our act the committee will need to cease its function. The Ombudsman may wish - I understand that he probably will - to seek to have this task enshrined in his own act. Nevertheless, the powers of the Ombudsman for investigation are so wide-ranging that the task could be picked up seamlessly without further legislation. In answer to the member's question, it does not need to be, but it probably will be.

[8.40 pm]

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: We had a discussion earlier about high-need, high-risk children in the department's care. The minister mentioned the secure therapeutic facility, which, I gather, is a new facility in which other agencies will be involved. Where will that facility be located and what funding has been provided?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That service will be operated through the Kath French Centre, which is located in Darlington. The capital figure for the intensive therapeutic unit is \$1.2 million in 2007-08. The ongoing recurrent funding is \$275 000 for the coming financial year, which extends to \$530 000 in 2008-09, \$900 000 in 2009-10 and \$930 000 in 2010-11.

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: I refer to the seventh dot point under "Major Achievements for 2006-07" on page 1184 of the *Budget Statements*, which states that the government selected a service provider to establish a new refuge for women and children escaping domestic violence in the northern suburbs. I noticed today that the minister - the real minister - put out a media release about a new women's refuge in the northern suburbs. No insult was intended! Is that what the seventh dot point is referring to, or is it something different?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes. It is important to note that during the past 10 years there has been no new recurrent funding for a women's refuge in the metropolitan area. Given the growth in the northern suburbs, an allocation was made for a new women's refuge. An interim service will be located in the Joondalup region and operated by the Pat Giles Centre. Construction of a new purpose-built facility is expected to commence later this financial year. The Department of Housing and Works is responsible for the construction of that facility. It is an important facility and, as I said, it is the first new women's refuge in the metropolitan area for the past 10 years.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 22 May 2007]

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I would like to thank the staff from the Department for Child Protection. I also particularly thank the acting director general, who concludes as the acting director general this evening to take up a new position as the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards. I thank Dr Shean, particularly for her assistance when I was the Minister for Community Development. I also thank the other executive members. I thank the men and women who are the staff of the former Department for Community Development and new Departments for Communities and Child Protection. They do a tremendous job. I have great respect for those staff. They do a difficult and challenging job and deserve our respect and acknowledgment.

The appropriation was recommended.

Meeting suspended from 8.46 to 8.50 pm