

Division 36: Child Protection and Family Support, \$579 754 000 —

Ms L.L. Baker, Chairman.

Ms A.R. Mitchell, Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Child Protection.

Ms E. White, Director General.

Mr P. Byrne, Executive Director, Community and Business Services.

Ms P. Beamish-Burton, Chief Finance Officer.

Ms K. Benham, Executive Director, Policy and Learning.

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day.

It is the intention of the Chair 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 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. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item program or amount in the current division. It will greatly assist Hansard if members can give these details in preface to their question.

The parliamentary secretary may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the parliamentary secretary to clearly indicate what supplementary information she agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the parliamentary secretary's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 19 June 2015. I caution members that if the parliamentary secretary 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.

I now ask the parliamentary secretary to introduce her advisers to the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Armadale.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer the parliamentary secretary to "Care Arrangements for Children in the CEO's Care" on page 425 of the *Budget Statements*. According to information that has been provided through questions on notice, there was a 22 per cent increase in the number of children in the CEO's care in the Armadale district from November 2011 to February 2015 and at the same time the number of caseworkers increased by only 1.6, so 1.5 positions are vacant. How is this increase in children in care without additional resources being managed by the office?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Because the question is specifically about the Armadale area, I will ask Ms White to respond.

Ms E. White: If I have understood the question correctly, the member is drawing our attention to the increase in the number of children in care in the Armadale district and the subsequent reduction in utilised FTE in the district at the same time.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am referring to the 22 per cent increase and the number of caseworkers increasing by only 1.6 per cent. How is the increase in the children in care without additional resources being managed by the office?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Ms White will continue with that response.

Ms E. White: The Armadale district, like all our service delivery offices, manages matters of workload through our workload management tools—an industrial order. Through a supervision process led by the senior management of the district, we look and relook at priorities whereby necessarily cases are reallocated in accordance with priority. We have been successful, particularly for children in care, looking at our special guardianship order process, in providing more permanent arrangements for children in care, where the intensity of case management and the department's legislative responsibility is much reduced. In those matters, we have other options in case allocation. Armadale is a busy district, as the member would well know. A number of matters from the Armadale district have been transferred to other geographical service delivery districts, mostly as a result of the child and/or family moving out of that area. We manage it at a district level but also through our monthly reports to our corporate executive, certainly with a view to the statewide situation because there are capabilities in other districts that are perhaps lacking in others.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am not sure whether that means they are coping with the 22 per cent increase, but anyway. What is the case load of each child protection worker in the Armadale office and what is their job title?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Ms White will respond.

Ms E. White: The average case load for child protection workers in the Armadale district is 13.7.

Dr A.D. BUTI: How does that compare with other metropolitan or regional offices?

Ms E. White: It is approximately average.

Dr A.D. BUTI: According to the department's 2014 annual report, the Armadale family support network was established as an innovation site in April 2012 and has supported 965 families, which amounts to 2 852 clients in its first two years. How many staff are currently employed at the Armadale office to run the Armadale family support network program?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I will make a quick statement about those family networks. They are very positive ways to work. We have been very happy with the outcomes of those networks. Ms White will continue with the specifics of Armadale, which are just coming forward. The family support networks have proven to be a very successful and great way to work and we are certainly looking forward to doing more of that work collectively with other agencies as well.

Ms E. White: The department has one allocated FTE who works in the Armadale family support network. A family support network assessment team is located in the network. That is a total of four. It is a single entry point model. That team of four has an alliance of agencies sitting behind it. When matters come in, that team's job is to assess the appropriate pathway for support for those particular families and, if needs be, provide some support in a holding pattern sense. Some referrals come back to the child protection department, whether they be child safety concerns. We are a team of four with an alliance of agencies.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I understand that there is a network behind the people. Four people are employed to manage 965 families. That is an incredible workload. Can we cut to the chase? We all know that the Armadale office is under incredible pressure and is not coping. Can we get some reality here? Does the parliamentary secretary think that the number of people working in the Armadale office, whether they are caseworkers or working in the Armadale family support network, are able to cope with the demands that have been placed on that office and that there is no waiting list or complaints at all?

[9.20 pm]

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I think it is also important to realise that the traditional way of working in the child protection and family support area is more about how we can be more effective and achieve better outcomes for families and children. The member mentioned the family support network. I think he will find that the Department for Child Protection and Family Support is constantly looking at ways to get better outcomes for families. What I have learnt in this role is that collaboration with other agencies in most areas has proved far more effective. That is perhaps not as quantifiable as much as we would like it to be at this time. I will ask Ms White whether she wishes to express an opinion on the question the member has asked, rather than it being about a specific budget item.

Ms E. White: I will just make a point about the family support network to clarify the four staff. They do not hold those cases and work them to that degree; they are an assessment and triage model. As I have already pointed out, they work in partnership with an alliance of a number of other agencies to mobilise that support for families. The Armadale district office is a busy district office, as are all child protection district offices. We do not have an unusual level of or a spike in complaints, if I have understood the member's question correctly, that would not be in keeping with those in previous years et cetera. We monitor the workload and complaints management per district on a monthly basis, and the corporate executive looks at those figures on a monthly and quarterly basis to pick up trends and pressure points across our system so that we can then mobilise other supports and, if necessary, deploy additional staff from our case practice unit—that is a central specialist child protection unit in head office—to those pressure points to relieve. I will leave it at that.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I refer to the line item for the discontinuation of financial counselling services on page 418 of the *Budget Statements*. I heard an interview with the CEO of Anglicare WA, Ian Carter, in which he described the government's decision to cut funding to financial counselling services as the worst decision he had seen in his 25 years of involvement in the community sector. In response to the government's argument that it was directing money to the department's highest priority—that is, protecting children—he said in that interview that the removal of funding to financial counselling services would lead to greater incidences of family break-up, homelessness and even domestic violence, all of which we know impact very badly on children. Was Mr Carter wrong in thinking that this decision will lead to an increase in family break-ups, homelessness and domestic violence, all of which will have a negative impact on children?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I just clarify that all financial counselling services have not been removed.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am just talking about the decision that the government has made to cut the services it has.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Financial counselling services are still available in the metropolitan area. In fact, the telephone service line will be enhanced to support that. The services will remain in regional areas. The commonwealth is also involved in financial counselling, so services are still available. The impression that all financial counselling services have been cut perhaps is not the best image to get across because it is not so. However, it is not taken lightly, but it does need to be considered. Today Lifeline WA offered financial counselling for those in need. Many organisations provide financial counselling; they choose to provide financial counselling. Financial counselling is still available, and we need to make sure that we get the right message out there that there may be some reduction in financial counselling services in the metropolitan area, but the government is increasing other services, such as the telephone network, which is sometimes a lot easier for people to access than attending meetings. Yes, it is very important and it has to be done well. What I have learnt from looking at the child protection and family support portfolio is that everyone thinks it is just about that, but the department is so stretched in the work that it gets caught up in—I will get Ms White to talk a little about the reform of the organisation—that the focus needs to be on child protection and looking after children. There are many things that support making sure that that occurs. There are still opportunities for people to access financial counselling in the metropolitan area. Because the department has a focus on child protection, I ask Ms White about the reform process that the department is going through but is not yet complete to help the member understand the process that has been occurring.

Ms E. White: The department has established an organisational review and structural realignment program that really is the result of a changed fiscal environment, so we are looking at every resource spent both internally and externally to establish both effectiveness and efficiency and also to ensure that our resources are lined up right behind both the public's expectation and our statutory obligations of protecting children and supporting the most vulnerable in our community. The financial counselling decision has been very difficult in a more challenging time and is not without impact.

On the correlation that the member mentioned regarding family and domestic violence, I would add and underline that the responsibility for acts and threats of violence lie solely with the individual perpetrating it.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Seriously?

Ms E. White: I will add that the perpetration of the act of violence or the threat of violence remains the responsibility of the individual who chooses to act in that way. We have learnt a lot about family and domestic violence over many, many years. There is a strong research base around victim and adult safety and perpetrator accountability. Financial matters within a family are without doubt a pressure.

In the context of violence, it is often an adult perpetrator of violence who withholds money or places conditions on the spending of money in a family, which can be an added complication for the adult victim or survivor of violence. However, the responsibility for the act or threat of violence is with the person who is choosing to act in that way.

[9.30 pm]

Mr D.J. KELLY: My question related to the fact that the CEO of Anglicare, who is a very experienced and well-respected person in this field, is of the view that the decision the government has made to cut funding to its state-funded financial counselling services will lead to an increase in family break-up, homelessness and domestic violence, and that this will have a negative impact on children. Does the parliamentary secretary accept that that is a consequence of the decision that has been made?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: The CEO of Anglicare is entitled to have an opinion. He is allowed to profess that.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Before the decision was made to cut funding to state-funded financial counselling services, was a review done of the impact that the withdrawal of those services could have on children through areas such as increased family break-up, homelessness and domestic violence? Was a review done to consider the impact of this decision in those areas; and, if so, will the parliamentary secretary provide a copy of that review?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I cannot give the member a specific answer to that. I will ask Ms White whether she can make a contribution. I think the answer is that there has not been a formal review, and there certainly will not be anything released if there has not been a formal review. Ms White, do you wish to add anything?

Ms E. White: Only to add, as I stated earlier, that we are reviewing every dollar we spend in both the services that we procure and the moneys spent internally on our service delivery through the lens of meeting the public expectation and our statutory responsibility of child safety and of helping the families that are most vulnerable in the Western Australian community. For example, we would be looking at family domestic violence services, forensic child interviewing of sexual abuse and other more tertiary-oriented services in the light of that lens and in the mix of services that we fund.

Mr D.J. KELLY: My question was: before the decision was made to cut the financial counselling funded by the state government, was an assessment done of how that decision may impact upon things such as family break-up, homelessness and domestic violence; and, if so, can a copy of that report be released?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Sorry, I just lost my train of thought. Can the member start his question again?

Mr D.J. KELLY: Before the decision was made to cut funding, was an assessment done?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I am right now; the member got me back on track. I repeat: there are still financial counselling services available.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I understand that.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: So it has not been cut.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The parliamentary secretary lost track of my question; I appreciate that. My question was: before the decision was made to cut the funding to the state government-funded financial counselling services, was an assessment made of what the impact of that would be on things such as family break-up, homelessness and domestic violence; and, if it was, can the parliamentary secretary provide a copy of that review?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: There is still state government funding for financial counselling services.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I understand that.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: The member said that we have cut state government funding. No; there is still state government funding for financial counselling services.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I have a further question. This is a very serious issue and I would ask the parliamentary secretary not to play semantic games. The government has made a decision to cut funding to financial counselling services that had previously been funded by the state government. Yes, there will still be a helpline and there will still be some commonwealth-funded services, but in respect of those services that the government has defunded in this budget, was a review done to gauge the impact that this decision may have on other policy areas such as homelessness, family break-up and domestic violence, especially as they relate to children? Did the government do that review before it made the decision; and, if it did, can the parliamentary secretary provide us with a copy of that review?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I have said that there was no formal review; therefore, there is no formal copy of a report.

Mr D.J. KELLY: All right. I thank the parliamentary secretary. I have a further question.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Can I finish? The member asked some questions and I would like to respond. Of course, before anyone makes any decision about budgets, expenditure and things like that, one looks to see that services that need to be available are available, where they are available, and what the range of options of services might be. There are 47 financial counselling organisations that may have received some support through a state government funding program, but that does not necessarily mean that that is the only way in which services can be provided. When we are looking to get the best outcome for the portfolio, of course we are going to look at what is available, how something may impact and how the outcomes can be managed, but what we are looking for all the time is to make sure that we have an effective, efficient program that provides better service across Western Australia.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I have a further question. Does the department know how many people accessed those financial counselling services that have now been defunded? Once they are defunded, where are those clients going to be referred for financial advice?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I am just checking to see whether the department has that information. The answer to the second part is that there are services still available. I am sure that the current financial counsellors will do the right thing and inform people where they can go for that service. The information we have may not be specific to the question the member asked.

Ms E. White: Approximately 6 000 people access financial services across the state. That ranges from a phone call to more involved time and intervention with a financial counsellor, which can go for a couple of days, a week or several weeks. So there is quite a range of interventions, I suppose, in terms of financial counselling. Families that are open cases with the Department for Child Protection and Family Support can, of course, continue to access financial counselling and support through our department. We can get some more specific figures, but there are about 6 000 at any one time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I would be happy to get supplementary information on more precise numbers, if that is what is being offered.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I think the member is looking for the specific number of people who access financial counselling.

Mr D.J. KELLY: From services previously funded by the state over the last 12 months.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: That may be a range of services. Ms White has indicated it might be a telephone call.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Sorry, I want the number for the services that are being defunded and not for the services that will continue to be funded. What is the department's understanding of the number of clients who, in the last 12 months, accessed the services that have been defunded?

[*Supplementary Information No B71.*]

Mr D.J. KELLY: I have a further question on that issue. My understanding is that the number of clients who accessed those services in the last 12 months runs into the many thousands, which seems to be consistent with the information that has already been given. Before the department made this decision, was any assessment done of the capacity of the other financial counselling services, such as the commonwealth service or the phone line, to take on the demand that will be created by the closure of this service?

I am being told that existing services are turning away new clients every day. I spoke to two services in my electorate today that are at their wit's end about what will happen to the hundreds of clients that they currently deal with every day and the people that they turn away. The government's expectation is that people who are currently being serviced by the department will now be referred to the commonwealth or to a phone line. Before a decision was made, was there any assessment about whether those commonwealth services or the phone line service would have the capacity to deal with the clients who will now be displaced?

[9.40 pm]

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I think I answered previously that before any decisions are ever made, of course one has a good look at what is available and how other services can be upgraded to support it. Of course one goes through that sort of thing.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Did the department come to the conclusion that the commonwealth service and the telephone service have the capacity to deal with the thousands of people who will now be displaced?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I am not going to answer that question with the bit on the end about thousands being displaced. I have made the comment that of course we looked to see what is available, what is required and how it can be done. As I have already said, Lifeline is instigating a financial counselling service. Yes, we did look at every option to see how effective we could be. At the same time we made sure that the Department for Child Protection and Family Support follows its legislative requirements and statutory regulations.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am asking whether the department looked around before the decision was made. Did the department reach the conclusion that the other available services could meet the demand?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Madam Chair, I think I have responded to that question a couple of times.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I think you have.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer the parliamentary secretary to item 5, "Family and Domestic Violence Services" under "Service Summary" on page 420. I make the comment that of course the perpetrator is always responsible but what government should be doing is trying to reduce the possibility of the person doing it. Of course the perpetrator always remains responsible, but I do not think that abrogates the government's responsibilities either.

What is the reason for the underspend in the 2014–15 budget allocation in regard to family and domestic violence services when looking at the increase in domestic and family violence, and what programs are underspent?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I will get Ms White to respond.

Ms E. White: The underspend is primarily a result of the new development at Ellenbrook still coming online. Although the work is well advanced, we are not looking at being able to activate the service until next year. Some of the underspend is for the forward estimates in terms of that particular service.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The total reason for the underspend is the delay in the Ellenbrook operation. If that is the case, why has there been a delay and when will it be operational?

Ms E. White: The delays relate to the build. I can get some more information about that. There have been unexpected delays; not extensive delays, but certainly delays that have resulted in the underspend. It has mostly been about the building.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is the total reason for the underspend?

Ms E. White: Correct.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am being a little bit cheeky here. My next question relates to family and domestic violence services so it is probably appropriate. I refer to “Family and Domestic Violence Services” on page 424. In the department’s 2013–14 annual report, there is an extract that states —

- Over 45,000 family and domestic violence incidents were attended by WA Police, with incident reports provided to the Department for joint responses, including assessments of child safety.
- ...
- Family and Domestic Violence Response Teams operated in 17 locations across the State to provide coordinated responses to families experiencing family and domestic violence.

Why are Department for Child Protection and Family Support field officers in the East Kimberley, the Pilbara and wheatbelt regions not co-located with Western Australia Police?

Ms E. White: In the East Kimberley, the service runs out of Kununurra; it is an accommodation issue. The redevelopment of the police station, which will include some IT developments to facilitate that co-location, is really still in train. There have been periods of time in the East Kimberley when we were co-located, but police are building new premises. For the Pilbara, it is again an accommodation shortage. The member will note in the estimates the development of a new child protection office in Port Hedland. When that build is complete, co-location will be possible. The third one was the wheatbelt. My understanding is that it is again an accommodation issue, both from the police side of things and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support. We are considering how we “operationalise” those services in those circumstances. We are actually across the road from each other in all three locations. Being able to work very closely is still quite adequate.

Dr A.D. BUTI: In regards to the East Kimberley, when was the decision made to no longer co-locate?

Ms E. White: I could not say the exact date, but it was certainly 12 months ago when we relinquished the premises where the co-location was established and police commenced the redevelopment of their facility. So we always knew that we would have at least an 18-month lag period.

Mr R.H. COOK: I have a fairly straightforward question. It might be easier to answer it through supplementary information. I refer to “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 419. The first dot point relates to the Signs of Safety program. I am interested in the 2014–15 spend on the Signs of Safety program. I am also interested in a breakdown of that expenditure for things such as licensing, travel to conferences and educational expenses. I am interested in the breakdown for 2014–15 and the projected expenditure and breakdown of expenditure for 2015–16, please.

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: We will take that as supplementary. We certainly have the information but we will get that for the member. That was for 2014–15 and anticipated for?

Mr R.H. COOK: And 2015–16 expenditure under the Signs of Safety program and the breakdown of that expenditure.

[*Supplementary Information No B72.*]

Dr A.D. BUTI: I also refer to “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 419. The first dot point commences, “Demand for child protection, children in care and family support services continues to rise”. Is the parliamentary secretary able to provide, even if it is via supplementary information, the number of children taken into care as a result of ice?

[9.50 pm]

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I am sure it is not quite that simple.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But does it have a part to play?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Ms White will provide some information on that.

Ms E. White: The department has been doing a bit of work on this. The figures we can bring to bear are really not very certain. It is very unusual for a family to present with a single issue; there are generally a number at play. The recording of that level of detail is held on individual case files and it is not readily available and we cannot land on that data with any certainty.

Dr A.D. BUTI: There are usually multiple factors at play, but is the department collating statistics on the impact the use of ice has on the demand for the department’s services, particularly children being put into care?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Ms White has some further information.

Ms E. White: We have done some tracking of that information in the way that the member has suggested. I can say, however, that there has certainly been a spike in those incidences in the last three months. We have some data that confirms that. Anecdotally we have heard that from case workers who are presenting, managing and working with the families, so there has been that increase particularly in the last three months.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It appears that there is a linkage between the increased use of ice and children in care, so will the department decide to undertake more sophisticated statistical collation of information into the impact that ice use has on the demand for the department's services?

Ms E. White: It is certainly an issue on which we are closely collaborating with the Mental Health Commission and the Drug and Alcohol Office. There are some cross-agency and government investigations into this issue that we are fully participating in.

Mr I.M. BRITZA: Member for Armadale, I want to tell you that on the weekend my seven-year-old son told me that he is no longer going to eat ice from the fridge because it will kill him. The advertising on TV is very appropriate.

Parliamentary secretary, I refer you to page 419 and the Armadale family support network, and also to the one in Fremantle. Could you briefly explain how family support networks prevent families entering the child protection system and divert notification from the department?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I will be very quick. We have not touched on the family support networks tonight, but the work that is done within family support network agencies has certainly helped effectively target families to help them collectively in the whole approach rather than just a specific approach. I hope that is enough information for now. I will provide the member with more detail later. I know the Chair wants to move on.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I refer to page 418 "Spending Changes" and the national partnership agreement on pay equity. I understand a payment of \$5 million is going to the private sector for pay equity for non-government staff. What monitoring is going to be in place to ensure that that funding goes to employees who are currently being underpaid?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: I am going to ask Ms White to answer that question.

Ms E. White: The payment of component 1 and 2 moneys as a result of that platform is well monitored. The department does a 12-monthly recce on new or additional moneys to keep up with where that wage increase should be; in fact, we do a back-pay system.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Are those reconciliations, or recces as the director general has described them, available? Can the reconciliations that have been done for payments 1 and 2 be provided by way of supplementary information?

Ms E. White: Some of those moneys are commonwealth moneys, so we would not have those financials to that level.

Mr D.J. KELLY: But is there reconciliation for state money, and can it be provided?

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: Yes, we do have that information and, yes, it can be provided. That would be supplementary. Can I ask the member exactly what he is asking for?

Mr D.J. KELLY: The director general talked about payments that have already been made—I think she called them parts 1 and 2.

Ms E. White: Components 1 and 2.

Mr D.J. KELLY: It would be useful if those reconciliations could be provided.

[*Supplementary Information No B73.*]

Mr R.H. COOK: I refer to page 421, "Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators" and to the statement that 68 per cent of Aboriginal children in the chief executive officer's care are allocated a placement under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle versus the targeted rate of 80 per cent. That is obviously a disappointing outcome. I presume it reflects the increase in the number of kids coming into the CEO's care. What is the number that we are talking about here? What measures have been taken for those kids who are not accommodated under those principles to make sure that they maintain a level of cultural awareness, attachment and so on?

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Thursday, 11 June 2015]

p602b-609a

Chairman; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Andrea Mitchell; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Ian Britza

Ms A.R. MITCHELL: The department and government are concerned that the number of Aboriginal children in Western Australia is not large; however, the percentage of Aboriginal children in care is certainly far greater than we would like it to be. The department is cognisant of meeting the needs of Aboriginal children such as, as the member mentioned, keeping cultural connectivity, kinship and families. The department will look at a range of things first of all to try to keep that connection before it looks at other options. I am not sure whether Ms White would like to speak on that.

Ms E. White: I would be happy to. Fifty-two per cent of children in state care are Aboriginal children. The demand, or the increase, of children coming into care is primarily from the Aboriginal community. Seventy per cent of all Aboriginal children in care live with direct relatives, which is the most effective and meaningful way to keep connection to country, kin and family. A care planning system is legislated for and we have a formal care planning process every year for every child in care. For Aboriginal children there is quite an extensive cultural planning process. We have Aboriginal practice leaders in every service delivery unit in the state and their role is to provide advice to, support and guide the case manager to support both Aboriginal children in care and their families. We have an Aboriginal engagement coordination unit within the department that works to build the capabilities of the department and staff to meet the needs of Aboriginal children and families, and also to broker really important relationships and strategic relationships across the sector, because of course the department alone cannot slow down the rate, or support or remedy all the factors that bring Aboriginal children into care.

The appropriation was recommended.

Committee adjourned at 10.00 pm
