

FOSTER CARE — SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

**556. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Minister for Child Protection:**

I refer to the revelation in today's article in *The Australian* written by Victoria Laurie titled "Foster couple's threat over sex abuse claims".

- (1) Can the minister confirm the statement in the article that the 13-year-old girl has been moved to a new foster family?
- (2) Can the minister confirm the statement in the article that a restraining order has been served on the 13-year-old's former foster carers after they turned up to the workplace of two adults they believed responsible for taking allegations to authorities?
- (3) Are any children still in the care of those two foster carers; and, if so, what emergency steps has the minister taken to address the situation?

**Ms S.F. McGURK replied:**

- (1)–(3) I have no intention of going into the detail of a particular child protection matter or investigation going on in Newman. Victoria Laurie has raised questions in *The Australian* previously about some allegations that were made about foster carers and the care of an individual child. I have given publicly, and to her and anyone else who has asked about that particular case, the assurance that both child protection staff and police take those allegations very seriously and have investigated them, and to date have found no instances of harm. However, we will continue to take any allegations seriously, whether it is in Newman or anywhere else in the state, and investigate them. We do not accept that if there has been an allegation and an investigation that we investigate it once and, if there is no instance of harm, we leave it at that. That can often mean that we continue to monitor the situation and that is the case in Newman.