

**A. The Hon R M Parker MLC – Child deaths – how many had cases closed prior to death (p 11)**

**CHAIR:** (p 11) *We are talking about the deaths of two children. There is no remarkable improvement in the number of children who died. Of those children who died in 2009 and who were known to the Department of Community Services, how many had their case files closed by the Department of Community Services prior to their deaths?*

**CHAIR:** *At the same time could you tell us how many reports of child neglect or harm to the Department of Community Services either were not followed up or were closed due to inadequate resources?*

**Answer:** The definition of 'known to Community Services' was used in legislation up to and including 2009. The definition was changed as a consequence of the recommendations of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Child Protection Services in NSW. The former definition included children who had been reported, or their siblings had been reported, to Community Services in the three years prior to their death. This definition was criticised by the Special Commission (at para 23.118) because it included child deaths where the case had not met the threshold for assessment, nor was Community Services involved with the family long-term.

In response to the situation in 2009, and using that former definition, further information was sought in order to answer these questions on notice. Community Services staff identified during that process two cases where reports were received outside of the three year period. I therefore revise my previous reported figure and confirm that 147 children who were known to Community Services died in 2009.

Information that is provided to Community Services is subject to continual revision as the agency relies on information from external sources such as the Coroner, NSW Ombudsman and the Child Death Review Team to establish a cause of death. Following the giving of evidence, on 16 September 2010, Community Services was informed that a person had been charged for the death of a second child who died in 2009 from physical assault, and was known to Community Services. I am therefore reporting that on the basis of new information, it now appears likely that two children who were known to Community Services were fatally assaulted in 2009, rather than the one child previously advised.

Of the children who died in 2009, 47 had open cases with Community Services. Of the remaining 100 cases at the time of the child's death:

- five cases did not require a further response because no information was held which established any need for intervention. These matters will not be classified as 'known to Community Services' post 2010 changes
- initial follow up work was completed in 33 cases (such as phone calls and requests for information) which failed to establish any need for intervention. These matters will not be classified as 'known to Community Services' post 2010 changes
- a secondary risk of harm assessment was completed in 43 cases, and
- 19 cases were closed without response even though it was not known whether intervention might have been required. Of these 19 cases:
  - six children died from natural causes, illness or disease
  - six children died as a result injuries sustained in motor vehicle accidents
  - three children died from SIDS
  - one young person died as a result of a suspected suicide, and
  - the cause of death is not known for three children as the final post mortem report has not yet been received.

**B. The Hon R M Parker MLC – Child deaths – how many reports were not followed up or closed due to inadequate resources or competing priorities (p 12)**

*CHAIR: (p 12) How many reports of child neglect or harm to the Department of Community Services either were not followed up or were closed due to inadequate resources or competing priorities?*

*CHAIR: We are talking about children who died who had their case files closed before they died. Those are the children we are talking about.*

**Answer:** Please refer to the answer to question 'A'.

**C. The Hon M A Ficarra MLC – Compensation for child victims of abuse – why not able to claim compensation when claim is less than \$7,500 (p 13)**

*The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: (p 13) Why should children who are the victims of abuse or neglect not be able to claim compensation when the damage is estimated to be less than the compensation threshold of \$7,500?*

**Answer:** Section 20(1)(a) of the *Victims Support and Rehabilitation Act 1996*, which is administered by the Attorney General, provides for a threshold amount of compensation and states that statutory compensation is not payable to a single person unless the total amount of compensation payable to that person, as compensation for compensable injuries, is at least \$7,500.

Community Services will not therefore file a claim unless the claim will result in compensation being paid. Where there is no evidence likely to establish a compensable injury attracting an amount of compensation exceeding the threshold of \$7,500 no claim is lodged. The compensable injuries of "domestic violence" and "sexual assault" both attract a range of compensation which exceeds the threshold.

**D. The Hon M A Ficarra MLC – Helpline – decline in risk of significant harm reports (p 13)**

*The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: Since the introduction of the new mandatory reporting threshold of risk of significant harm, what is the decline in actual numbers and percentages in risk of significant harm reports to the Community Services helpline from 24 January to 30 June this year? Basically, that represents half the year. Again, if you want to take that question on notice, you may.*

**Answer:** From 24 January 2010 to 30 June 2010, the impact of the new reporting threshold has resulted in:

- 24 per cent drop in the volume of calls to the Child Protection Helpline
- 33 per cent drop in child protection/child and young person concern reports
- 53 per cent drop in the volume of reports forwarded to Community Service Centres or Joint Investigation Response Teams (JIRT) for further investigation
- 3 per cent increase in the proportion of reports referred to a CSC or JIRT that fall into the highest risk category.

**E. The Hon I Cohen MLC – Funding – Breakdown of budget procuring services from NGOs (p 14)**

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Minister, in your June 2010 message in relation to the 2010-2011 New South Wales budget, it is stated:

About 62% or \$1,039.2 million of Community Services total budget is spent on supporting or procuring services from nongovernment organisations or other external providers.

**Ms LINDA BURNEY:** It is well over \$200 million.

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I do not expect you to do so now—perhaps you could take the question on notice—but could you provide a breakdown of that amount, unless you have it here?

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** Perhaps you could take it on notice. I am interested in how much is allocated to direct service delivery and how much is allocated to non-client related services.

**Answer:** As outlined in the 2010-2011 Budget Papers, amounts set aside for grants and subsidies by service group are:

Community Services	\$224,142,000
Prevention and Early Intervention	\$233,442,000
Statutory Child Protection	\$68,640,000
Out of Home Care	<u>\$264,920,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$791,144,000</u></b>

In addition to the above an amount of \$240,310,000 is set aside in the out-of-home care service group for foster care allowances and associated expenses

#### **F. The Hon I Cohen MLC – KTS – cost of establishing Child Wellbeing Units (p 16)**

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** I will leave it at that, given the time constraints. Under Keep Them Safe, can you indicate the amount of funding allocated to referral and coordination services, including child wellbeing units, and family referral services, in comparison with the amount of funding allocated to direct service delivery? I guess I am asking what percentage of the Keep Them Safe budget is directed towards providing and funding direct services to children and families in New South Wales.

**Answer:** \$750 million over five years has been committed towards the implementation of KTS. The KTS reforms are in the following areas:

- Prevention and early intervention and placement prevention services
- Improving services for Aboriginal communities
- Changes to the child protection system
- Increasing investment in acute services
- Out-of-home care.

Of the \$107.4m allocated to KTS for 2010/11, Child Wellbeing Units and Family Referral Services will receive \$17.4m. Two of the three Family Referral Services currently being piloted provide direct services through shop front premises to vulnerable families.

#### **G. The Hon Dr G Moyes MLC – Staying Home Leaving Violence – summary of evaluation on website (pp 19-20)**

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** I refer to the Staying Home Leaving Violence program for women. Has there been any systematic data collected on clients to that program to enable an evaluation of its effectiveness?

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** *I want to know what data is available about the effectiveness of that program.*

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** *Would you tell the Committee in writing why it was so effective?*

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** *Will you give information about the Staying Home Leaving Violence program?*

**Answer:** A summary of the results of the Staying Home Leaving Violence pilot projects located in Bega and Eastern Sydney is available on the Community Services website at:  
[http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/assets/main/documents/shlv\\_evaluation.pdf](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/assets/main/documents/shlv_evaluation.pdf)

General information regarding the services provided by the Staying Home Leaving Violence program, along with project locations is also currently available on the Community Services website at:  
[http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents\\_carers\\_and\\_families/domestic\\_and\\_family\\_violence.html](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents_carers_and_families/domestic_and_family_violence.html)

#### **H. Community Services' website link to data on child protection reports in first three months of 2010**

**The Hon. MARIE FICARRA:** *(p 22-23) We looked but we cannot find it. Could you give us the website link?*

**Answer:** Quarterly data reports, including post proclamation quarterly data for the period January to March 2010, are available on the Community Services website.

The website is at [http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/about\\_us/docs\\_data.html](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/about_us/docs_data.html)

#### **I. Corporate Services staff – with breakdown by sections (p 25)**

**The Hon. MARIE FICARRA:** *(p 25) I refer to community services, corporate services. How many people are employed in that section?*

**Answer:** In the review of the 2010 Workforce Profile for Community Services performed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, an FTE of 212.51 was identified as employed in the traditional Corporate Service areas of Asset and Facilities Management, Finance, Human resources, Records and Information, Information Technology & Communications, Office Services & Procurement and General Service Functions.

This represents just over 5 per cent of the workforce and is well within the Corporate Service benchmark for agencies.

#### **J. Sutherland CSC – why increase of 70% caseworker positions promised by Premier lemma has not happened (p 25)**

**The Hon. MARIE FICARRA:** *In the years 2006 to 2010 inclusive, Sutherland Community Services Centre had 30 caseworker positions. When former Premier Morris lemma was "heading in the right direction" he promised to increase caseworker positions at Sutherland by 70 per cent. Why has that not happened?*

**Answer:** The promise was met. As a result of the Enhanced Service Delivery rollout in 2006, Sutherland Community Services Centre (CSC) Caseworker establishment increased by 67 per cent.

Prior to Enhanced Service Delivery rollout in 2006, Sutherland had 18 Caseworkers. As at 24 September 2010, Sutherland CSC has an establishment of 30 Caseworkers. This represents an increase of 67 per cent.

**K. The Hon M A Ficarra MLC – Albury CSC – non-allocated children in OOHC, and how many of 4 additional staff have been tasked to work with those children (p 26)**

*The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: Albury Community Services Centre has around 120 children in out-of-home care who are known as resubmits. We believe these children do not have an allocated caseworker. Albury DOCS has a waiting list of potential caseworkers who could be employed for these non-allocated children. Albury has recently allocated four additional staff members. How many of those four have been tasked to work with children in the out of home care section?*

**Answer:** There are currently 162 unallocated cases for children and young people in OOHC who are in the 'resubmit' system at Albury CSC. The resubmit system is managed by one fully trained OOHC Caseworker. The current appointed caseworker has been employed in this role for approximately 6 months. The role rotates throughout the OOHC team every 6 months.

Albury CSC does not have a waiting list of potential caseworkers. It has had four caseworkers commence since August 2010. Three of the four caseworkers are new to the agency and currently undertaking the Caseworker Development Program. None of these caseworkers has direct involvement with cases that are part of the resubmit system. One of the new caseworkers has commenced in the OOHC team. Three are currently working in the Child Protection team.

Albury CSC has 28 caseworker positions. The OOHC team has 8 caseworkers, which includes the caseworker responsible for managing unallocated cases.

**L. The Hon I Cohen MLC – KTS – how much as been spent on consultants as part of KTS implementation plan (p 27)**

*The Hon. IAN COHEN: In talking about that, is it reasonable to ask how much has been spent on consultants as part of the Keep Them Safe implementation plan? Are you referring to that as well, or separately?*

**Answer:** To date, around \$5.3 million have been spent on various consultancies including program evaluations and training development and implementation.

**M. OOHC – Breakdown of OOHC and early intervention/Brighter Futures of administration & coordination compared to direct services delivery**

*The Hon. IAN COHEN: (p 28) You might want to take this on notice. Will you provide a breakdown of the expenses allocated to administration and coordination in both cases in comparison with the expenses allocated to direct services delivery?*

*The Hon. IAN COHEN: Perhaps you can comment on whether those amounts of funding are allocated to prevention and early primary intervention to support families before they reach crisis point? Is that a separate structure?*

**Answer:** As per the 2010-2011 Budget Papers expenditure for OOHC and Prevention & Early Intervention service groups is as follows:

	2010-11 Budget	
	\$'000	
	OOHC	P&E
Employee related costs	124,536	70,783
Other operating expenses	42,583	24,751
Grants & subsidies	264,920	233,442
Other expenses	248,147	8,695
Total Expenses	680,186	337,671

#### N. OOHC Payments for respite carers – government vs non-government

**Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES:** (p 30) *Is the payment equal overall for both government operated services and non-government organisations?*

**Answer:** Non-government organisations set their own allowances and arrangements for respite care. In many instances these allowances will be different to those paid by Community Services.

Where Community Services provides respite care via an authorised carer, that carer is paid the relevant care allowance for the period of time that the child or young person is in their care. The fortnightly rate of the allowance is based on the age of the child and the level of care required.

#### O. OOHC – Allocation of money for assessing foster carers

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** (p 37) *In the process of assessing foster care there is an allowance for non-statutory support care arrangements. How much money is allocated to the process of assessing carers, including staff requirements and staff allocations?*

**Answer:** \$3.8 million has been allocated for 2010/2011 towards the assessment and approval of non-statutory supported care arrangements, including \$2.1 million for staff related costs.

\$1.8 million is allocated for 2010/2011 towards the assessment and authorisation of Community Services foster carers. In addition, staff related costs associated with assessing carers are absorbed within existing Community Services Regional resources.

#### P. OOHC – Costs of longitudinal study into children in OOHC (p 37)

**The Hon. IAN COHEN:** (p 37) *Could you provide figures for the cumulative costs of this project for each year since 2005?*

**Answer:** The costs of the longitudinal study to date for each financial year since 2005 are as follows:

2005/06	Nil
2006/07	Nil
2007/08	Nil
2008/09	\$139,739
2009/10	\$412,597
2010/11	to date \$51,087

These figures do not include staff costs within the Policy and Planning Division of Community Services.

**Q. OOHC – What resources have been allocated in this year’s budget for longitudinal study?**

*The Hon. IAN COHEN: (p 38) What resources have been allocated in this year's budget for that longitudinal study? I appreciate that it will travel across many budgets, but you must have had an allocation at this stage?*

**Answer:** In 2010/2011, \$2.5 million has been allocated for the longitudinal study. Again this does not include staff costs within the Policy and Planning Division of Community Services.

**R. KTS – Evaluation of family referral services – approximate timeline for evaluation**

*The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: (p 41) Do you have an approximate time line for the evaluation and when you expect it?*

**Answer:** The final report on the independent evaluation is due in April 2011.

**S. Number and salary of Community Program Officers**

*a. The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: (pp 41-42) Approximately how much is this position expected to earn per annum?*

**Answer:** The salary range for Community Program Officers is \$78,142 to \$86,498 pa.

*b. The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: And how many community program officers are employed by Community Services?*

**Answer:** Community Services has 126 CPO positions, 70 of which are based in regional NSW and 56 of which are based in metropolitan Sydney.



Linda Burney MP  
**Minister for Community Services**  
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