

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

How many children are currently on a waiting list for places in the Brighter Futures program?

**ANSWER:**

The Brighter Futures program does not have a waiting list. Children and families are referred to the program and, as participation is voluntary, not all the children and families will choose to take part.



Kevin Greene MP

**Minister for Community Services**

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The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

Does the Department of Community Services have a complete staff structure ( for adoptions) and have affected workers been advised?

**ANSWER:**

Yes. DoCS has forwarded the complete staff structure detailing the new service delivery model for adoptions to the PSA and all affected adoption workers.



Kevin Greene MP

**Minister for Community Services**

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**BUDGET ESTIMATES**

The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –  
For the number of children in out-of-home care for more than 5 years.

**ANSWER:**

This information is available in the Annual Statistical Report on [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au).



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## QUESTION ON NOTICE

### BUDGET ESTIMATES

The Hon J Gardiner MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

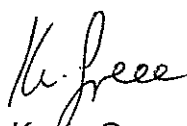
In relation to the Ombudsman's request for a progress report on previous recommendations by February 2008, please provide a list of progress that has been made on any of the nine items mentioned.

#### **ANSWER:**

A full report detailing considerable progress on each of these recommendations was sent to the Ombudsman on 28 February 2008.

Some points of note include

- consultation with Police on child protection issues relating to Police Standard Operating Procedures, monitoring of the standard fax form used by Police mandatory reporters and progression of a Memorandum of Understanding between Police and DoCS
- progress on the eighteen recommendations from the JIRT Review
- endorsement of policies and procedures for managing case plans that have been rejected by JIRT
- progress towards statewide rollout in 2008 of the parental drug testing policy, parent responsibility contracts and further training for staff in improving case planning and practice
- establishment of the Drug and Alcohol Expertise Unit in December 2007 to liaise with drug and alcohol services and provide a consultancy service to DoCS caseworkers, trials of drug and alcohol assessment tools, and introduction of an interim procedure on hair shaft testing
- finalisation of negotiations to allow implementation of the Intake Assessment Guidelines from July 2008
- progressing cross-agency strategies for implementation of a six month trial in four Community Services Centres of the pre-natal policy, and development of an evaluation framework
- progress towards implementation of various initiatives relating to the Aboriginal Strategic Commitment, including work towards a uniform consultation framework for staff in Community Services Centres and the launch of "Our Carers for Our Kids" and "Step by Step" training packages.



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The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

For information on Intensive Family Based Services targets including the number of places and children.

**ANSWER:**

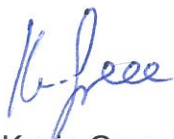
Aboriginal Intensive Family Based Support (IFBS) services provide an intensive, time-limited, home-based program for Aboriginal families (including extended family) whose children are at risk of entering out-of-home care due to protective concerns, or children in out-of-home care where a restoration plan is in place. These services aim to help reduce the number of Aboriginal children being placed in out-of-home care and to reunite children with their families.

In NSW the program operates in Bourke, Casino, Wollongong, Campbelltown and Redfern, with expansion planned to new sites in the Hunter/Central Coast and Mt Druitt in 2007/08.

During 2006/07 the five fully operational intensive family support services assisted 265 children.

The intensity, measured in the number of hours of service provision, varies between states and territories. In the NSW IFBS program, caseworkers spend a minimum of 14 hours per week (and often more time) with the family. Other jurisdictions offer less intensive support averaging 4 hours per week.

Comparing the number of children alone as per the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) publication Child Protection Australia 2006-07 is not adequate, as this does not take into account the intensity nor content and quality of services. The counting rule for Child Protection Australia is the count of children averaging at least 4 hours of service provision per week. This enables Victoria, for instance to count a lot more families, compared to NSW which has stricter criteria for inclusion in IFBS. In addition, NSW also has an additional 2000 or so families in the Brighter Futures Early Intervention Program, and many of these families would qualify under the AIHW counting rules.



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The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –  
For the volume of requests formally captured by the Department.

**ANSWER:**

For the six month period 1 July 2007 to 31 December 2007, 4261 matters were referred from the Minister's office to the Department for advice or action. The vast majority (over 87 percent) of those items were correspondence from members of the public, Parliamentary members, community organisations and others on matters relating to DoCS.



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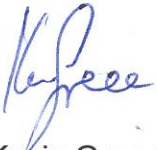
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The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –  
How many staff were in the centralised adoption model?

**ANSWER:**

43.



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**QUESTION ON NOTICE**


**BUDGET ESTIMATES**

The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

Confirmation that the number of local adoptions has halved from 23 to 12 in the past financial year.

**ANSWER:**

Yes and the total number of adoptions overall has increased around 10% to 164



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**BUDGET ESTIMATES**

The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

The attrition rate for first 12 months full time employment for caseworkers.

**ANSWER:**

DoCS does not track the attrition rate of caseworkers with their first 12 months, but rather follows the Public Sector measures that are gathered from the Workforce profile for an overall attrition rate.

In 2006/2007 the estimated separation rate for permanent caseworkers was 7.16% (preliminary date yet to be validated by Department of Premier and Cabinet) as compared to 9% for the Relevant Policy Sector grouping (Social Security and Welfare, 2005/06 separation rate, reported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet).



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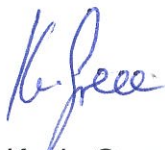
BUDGET ESTIMATES

The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

The average experience of managers casework before they are promoted, and/or the average number of years experience of managers casework.

**ANSWER:**

As indicated by the Director-General at the Estimates Hearing, an answer to the first question is not readily available. However, as at 24 January 2008, the average length of service of Casework Managers was between 9 and 10 years.



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**Minister for Community Services**

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The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –  
The number of caseworker manager vacancies.

**ANSWER:**

39 as at 5 February 2008.



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**BUDGET ESTIMATES**

The Hon Sylvia Hale MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

The number of caseworker manager positions as at 30 June 2008.

**ANSWER:**

The number of Casework Manager positions as at 30 June will be 406.



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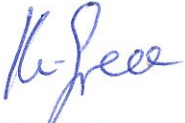
The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

The number of caseworkers in training as at 15 February 2008.

**ANSWER:**

The number of Caseworker Development Course participants currently in training as at 15 February 2008 is 235 ranging from groups which commenced in 2007 to groups which commenced in 2008.

The total number of caseworkers trained in 2002/03 financial year was 199. We plan to train up to 800 caseworkers in 40 courses during the 2008 calendar year.



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The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –

The number of caseworker vacancies as at 15 February 2008.

**ANSWER:**

434 which includes 282 new Enhanced Service Delivery positions.



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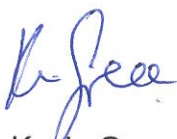
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The Hon Catherine Cusack MLC asked the Director-General for Community Services –  
What work bans are being threatened by the PSA at the moment.

**ANSWER:**

The PSA has a formal work ban on staff applying for flex leave on-line.

In addition PSA delegates have issued instructions to members with regard to matters such as those mentioned by the Director-General at the Estimates hearing.



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