



# Estimates Committee F

## 2010

### REPORT TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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#### INTRODUCTION

1. On 20 May 2010, Estimates F was appointed by the Legislative Assembly to examine and report on the proposed expenditures in the Appropriation Bill 2010 for the organisational units within the ministerial portfolios of:
  - the Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
  - the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport; and
  - the Minister for Community Services and Housing & Minister for Women
2. The committee held a public hearing on 21 July 2010 at Parliament House to question the ministers about their portfolio budget. A transcript of the hearing is available from the Parliament's website at:  
<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/legislative/Assembly/hansard.asp>
3. Prior to the public hearing, the committee put questions on notice to each minister. Responses to all the questions were received.
4. The committee has considered the estimates referred to it by examining information contained in:
  - the Budget papers.
  - answers to pre-hearing questions on notice.
  - oral evidence taken at the hearing.
  - documents tabled at the hearing.
  - answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing.
5. Answers to pre-hearing questions on notice, questions taken on notice at the hearing and documents tabled at the hearing, together with minutes of the committee's meetings, are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.

6. This report summarises the estimates referred to the committee and highlights some of the issues the committee examined.
7. In 2009-10, the concepts of Outputs previously used in Service Delivery Statements were replaced with "Services".

#### MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS

##### Local Government

8. The Local Government service is being delivered by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning. The department has stated at SDS 2-79 that it is partnering with local governments to deliver sustainable and accountable local government services and infrastructure, providing services and advice in the areas of governance, monitoring and performance analysis, interventions and investigations, and targeted initiatives in support of Indigenous local governments, capacity building and funding.
9. The following table details the appropriation for the Local Government portion of the ministerial portfolio for 2010-11 compared to the previous financial year.

Local Government	Est Actual 2009-10 \$'000	Budget 2010-11 \$'000
Controlled Items		
<i>Departmental Services</i>	684,218	526,316
<i>Equity Adjustment</i>	-	-
Administered Items	390,671	398,540
<b>Vote</b>	<b>1,074,889</b>	<b>924,856</b>

Source: Department of Infrastructure and Planning

## Budget highlights

10. The Budget papers state that the key priorities for 2010-11 include:

- Developing new Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program to commence on 1 July 2011
- Assisting Councils on the new *Local Government Act 2009*
- Continuing Local Government Electorate Act development
- Providing ongoing support to Local Governments to develop Community Plans
- Delivering Financial Management and Sustainability Workshops for Local Governments
- Supporting the introduction of the *City of Brisbane Act 2010*
- Reviewing Statutes applying to Local Governments, including the *Local Government Aboriginal Land Act 1978*
- Enhancing the quality of show facilities at the Mackay Showgrounds
- Implementation of the National Frameworks for Local Government Sustainability

## Issues considered by the committee

11. The committee considered a range of issues including:

- Amalgamated councils
- Top-up assistance provided to amalgamated Councils
- Capacity building for non-amalgamated councils in Queensland
- Working in partnership with local government
- Support for councils in their development of local laws
- New legislative framework for local governments
- Harmonisation of state legislation and regulations impacting local governments
- Local Government Councils Sustainability and Reporting projects
- Debt Levels for local governments across Queensland

- Financial sustainability standards
- Financial management and sustainability workshops for Mayors, Councillors and CEO's
- Local councils Community Plans
- Information requests made to Queensland Councils
- Priority water infrastructure upgrades
- Sustainability and asset management
- Funding to Local councils
- Local Government Grants and subsidies
- Show Societies funding program
- Response to major natural disasters
- Funding for Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements
- Water and sewage systems
- Investment in Community Infrastructure for regional councils
- Indigenous Council Task Force
- Conferences, workshops and training events
- Microchipping cats and dogs
- Dangerous dogs

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

12. The SDS at 3-12 states that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services is part of the Department of Communities and includes working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to affirm their cultures and reduce the gap in life outcomes and assisting all Queenslanders to benefit from reconciliation.

13. The following table details the appropriation for the ATSIP portion of the ministerial portfolio for 2010-11 compared to the previous financial year.

ATSIP	Est Actual 2009-10 \$'000	Budget 2010-11 \$'000
Controlled Items		
<i>Departmental Services</i>	60,867	69,437
<i>Equity Adjustment</i>	-	8,000
Administered Items	-	-
<b>Vote</b>	<b>60,867</b>	<b>77,437</b>

Source: Department of Communities

## Budget highlights

14. The Budget papers state that the key priorities for 2010-11 include:

- Continuation of the implementation of the Cape York Welfare Reforms
- Closing the gap
- Deliver better housing and development opportunities for Indigenous communities
- Providing opportunities to access treatment services.
- Implement the Queensland Indigenous Urban and Regional Strategy
- Develop a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice strategy.

## Issues considered by the committee

15. The committee considered a range of issues including:

- Welcome to Country
- Preamble to the Queensland Constitution
- Families Responsibilities Commission
- Cultural protocols in Doomadgee
- Champion Program
- Regional Operations Centre in Aurukun
- Good Start Breakfast Club on Palm Island
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation
- Child Protection Orders
- Children in detention
- Conferences, workshops and training events
- Grants being administered through local governments
- Partnerships Queensland Program
- Community Development Employment program for a Torres Strait Islander region
- Voluntary income management
- Conditional income management
- Cost of freighting goods into retail stores based in remote communities
- Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program

- Mona Mona community
- Labour market in the Wide Bay-Bundaberg region
- Indigenous Environmental Health Infrastructure Program
- Cape York Welfare Reform and Partnerships Queensland
- Communities and Personal Histories branch
- Ministerial Indigenous Roundtable

## MINISTER FOR CHILD SAFETY AND MINISTER FOR SPORT

16. Child Safety and Sport are part of the Department of Communities and include services for children and young people at risk, services for young people in care, adoption services and sport and recreation services.

17. The following table details the appropriation for the Child Safety and Sport ministerial portfolio for 2010-11 compared to the previous financial year.

Child Safety and Sport	Est Actual 2009-10 \$'000	Budget 2010-11 \$'000
Controlled Items		
<i>Departmental Services</i>	746,853	849,806
<i>Equity Adjustment</i>	11,565	8,140
Administered Items	38,047	33,610
<b>Vote</b>	<b>796,465</b>	<b>891,556</b>

Source: Department of Communities

## Budget highlights

18. The Budget papers state that the key priorities for 2010-11 include:

### Child Safety

- New Early Intervention and prevention initiative "Helping out Families"
- Safe Houses in Indigenous communities
- Therapeutic residential care service in Morayfield

## **Sport and Recreation**

- Refurbishment of Dalby Aquatic Centre
- Improved public amenities for the Townsville 400 V8 Supercar event

## **Issues considered by the committee**

### **Child Safety**

19. The committee considered a range of issues including:

- Children's Commission
- Responding to reports of child abuse and neglect
- Children subject to protection orders
  - Case Plans
  - Health Passports
  - Education plans
- Early intervention and prevention services
- Staffing Levels
- Child Safety Officer Induction training
- Additional Frontline staff in high demand areas
- Non-Government sector Partnerships
- Foster and Kinship Carers
- Working with RSPCA
- Pyjama Foundation
- Triple P program
- Placement Options for children and young people in out of home care
- Improving outcomes for young people transitioning from care to adulthood and independence
- Youth Housing and Reintegration Service
- Children absconded from their placements
- Therapeutic residential care services
- DNA samples
- Research register
- Child Safety Service Centres
- Helping Out Families Pilot

- Health Home Visiting Program
- Cultural support plans
- Closing the Gap
- Family Support Services
- Child Protection services
- Safe Houses
- South West Queensland Indigenous Families and Youth Coaching and Mentoring Service
- Integrated Client Information system for Child Safety services
- Implementation of the Adoption Act 2009
- Post Adoption Support Queensland
- Advertising and Promotional campaigns
- Conferences, workshops and training events
- Linkages between Child Safety and Sport
- *Move Baby Move resource*

### **Sport and Recreation**

20. The committee considered a range of issues including:

- V8 motor racing
- Rogers Review
- Staffing
- Stadiums Queensland
- Contracts for Catering
- Carrara Stadium
- Access to Sport and recreational opportunities for disadvantaged Queenslanders
- Regional tennis facilities
- Funding for Sport and Recreation Infrastructure

**THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HOUSING AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN**

21. Community Services and Housing and Women are part of the Department of Communities and include community and youth justice services, housing and homelessness services and women’s services.

22. Community and Youth Justice Services provides:

- Support for communities and individuals
- Support for young people
- Support for seniors’ participation
- Services for increased volunteering and
- Services for community participation

23. Housing and Homelessness Services provides for services in:

- Housing; and
- Homelessness

24. Women services provides services to increase employment and leadership opportunities for women.

25. The following table details the appropriation for the Community Services and Housing and Women (CSHW) ministerial portfolio for 2010-11 compared to the previous financial year.

<b>CSHW</b>	<b>Est Actual 2009-10 \$'000</b>	<b>Budget 2010-11 \$'000</b>
Controlled Items		
<i>Departmental Services</i>	912,708	1,190,213
<i>Equity Adjustment</i>	587,911	575,874
Administered Items	236,808	257,243
<b>Vote</b>	<b>1,737,427</b>	<b>2,023,330</b>

Source: Department of Communities

**Budget highlights**

26. The Budget papers state that the key priorities for 2010-11 include:

**Community and Youth Justice Services**

- Construction of Moranbah Youth Centre
- Replacement of the Chinchilla Community Centre

- Expansion of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville
- Foodbank Queensland
- Youth Housing and Reintegration Services
- Finalisation of the review of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989*
- Implement the new Seniors’ Strategy and Action Plan
- Increase the level of volunteering

**Housing and Homelessness Services**

- Homelessness National Partnership Agreement
- Provision of Government-managed social housing
- Provision of community-managed social housing
- Indigenous community housing
- Maintaining the standard and amenity of social housing dwellings.
- Bond Loans
- Housing and development opportunities for Indigenous communities

**Women’s Services**

- Women in the workforce
- Promote opportunities for women’s leadership and participation in the community

**Issues considered by the committee**

**Community and Youth Justice Services**

27. The committee considered a range of issues including:

- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian
- Community Visitor Program
- Non Government sector
  - Salary award increases
  - Cutting red tape
  - Output based funding
  - Building strength and expertise
- Concessions, rebates and subsidies available to help low-income people
- Helping Out Families pilot

- Office for Seniors
  - Hippy Hippy Shake publication
  - Improving the lives of seniors
  - Elder abuse
- Youth Justice conferencing
- Completion rates for young people on community service orders
- Domestic violence services
- Cleveland Youth Detention Centre
- SAPH Vision Quest
- Completions of conditional bail programs
- Youth Week
- Multipurpose and neighbourhood community centres
- Volunteer numbers
- Natural disasters

### **Housing and Homelessness Services**

28. The committee considered a range of issues including:
- Nation building housing program
  - Social Housing
  - Trinity Park and Palm Cove housing
  - Indigenous Housing National Partnership
  - New housing and upgrades in remote indigenous communities
  - RentConnect service
  - New Housing and Homelessness services
  - Supportive housing project
  - Mount Isa Youth Shelter
  - Capital Grants to Non government organisations
  - Housing stress in Queensland
  - Social and Community housing construction

### **Women's Services**








29. The committee considered a range of issues including:
- Office for Women
  - Report on the Review of the Office of Women conducted by Carolyn Mason, Fiona Guthrie and Walter Robb

**Recommendation**

30. The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2010 for the organisational units in the portfolios referred to it, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.



Mary-Anne O'Neill  
Chair  
August 2010

<b>Estimates Committee F 2010</b>	
<b>Membership</b>	
Ms Mary-Anne O'Neill, <b>Chair</b> Member for Kallangur (ALP)	
Mr Howard Hobbs MP, <b>Deputy Chair</b> Member for Warrego (LNP)	
Mr Jack Dempsey MP Member for Bundaberg (LNP)	
Mrs Betty Kiernan MP Member for Mt. Isa (ALP)	
Mrs Rosemary Menkens MP Member for Burdekin (LNP)	
Mrs Christine Smith MP Member for Burleigh (ALP)	
Mr Stephen Wettenhall MP Member for Barron River (ALP)	
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Mrs Helen Bogiatzis (Research Director) Mrs Marilyn Freeman (Executive Assitant)	

# **Estimates Committee F**

## **2010**

### **Statements of Reservation**

**from**

**Mrs Rosemary Menkens**

Member for Burdekin

Shadow Minister for Community Services and Housing and  
Shadow Minister for Women

**Mr Howard Hobbs MP**

Member for Warrego

Shadow Minister for Local Government and  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

And

**Mr Jack Dempsey MP**

Member for Bundaberg

Shadow Minister for Child Safety and  
Shadow Minister for Sport



# STATEMENT OF RESERVATION

## Community Services and Housing, and Women

### Secretary of Committee F

I refer to the draft report for Estimates Committee F and submit a statement of reservations on the report in relation to the Community Services and Housing portfolios and some general comments on the process of Estimates Committees hearings.

#### General comments on the Estimates Process

The Estimates Committee process is intended to be an effective scrutiny of the Government's expenditure, but once again this year has shown major deficiencies in the process.

There are a number of general reservations that need to be made in relation to the Queensland Estimates Committee process:

- The structure of the Budget Papers, and in particular the Service Delivery Statements, do not provide sufficient detailed information to enable proper scrutiny of activities and expenditures undertaken by Government
- Insufficient time is allocated for hearings by Estimates Committees when considering particular portfolios
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for hearings by Estimates Committees throughout the year
- Opposition Members are provided with insufficient time during Estimates Committees Hearings to pursue issues
- There is a continued failure by Government Ministers to allow Public Servants and Statutory Officials who exercise direct responsibility for the conduct of activities to directly answer questions posed by Members
- No mechanism exists to require full, direct and honest answers to Questions on Notice
- No mechanism exists to require Ministers to fully, directly and honestly answer questions posed during Hearings

The result of this is a process that fails to allow any real analysis and scrutiny, curtailing any benefit and effectiveness.

With respect to the portfolio scrutinized by the Committee, the following reservations are made:

In relation to Housing and Homelessness, the Minister failed to justify controversial, overpriced and unnecessary developments in Palm Cove and Trinity Park, both in the Cairns region. Her only argument appeared to be that because social housing existed, and the Department had to find places to spend Federal money, community concerns and tenant wellbeing were secondary considerations. This is offensive both to the tenants who will have to endure isolated and ill-facilitated projects and the communities which have been blamed at every juncture by the Minister. The Committee proceedings highlighted the intent of the Government to lose the impact of the projects on tenant safety and community concerns by being pedantic and jumping to immediate justifications that ignore the bigger picture.

The Minister was unable to answer why the projects proceeded against the advice of local departmental representatives, and even against the advice of the Director-General and Assistant Director-General. She was unable to prove the existence of any waiting list for the facilities, or any need for their construction in the chosen sites. She claimed "robust debate" was usual in choosing

developments, however a differentiation must be made between “robust debate” and overriding departmental advice.

Indigenous housing programs failed to deliver on time, initiating a \$3.1 million penalty for Queensland. Despite Queensland being the only state to incur this size of penalty, the Minister said the department should be commended for the delivery of the program. Other states including Western Australia, and the Northern Territory, both managed to exceed their targets, but the Minister would not take responsibility for the failure to deliver and the loss of funds.

Domestic violence funding was another area in which the Minister showed a failure to understand the impact of funding decisions, claiming \$10 000 should have been adequate for the “three or four hours” of court support offered weekly by the Bayside Domestic Violence Initiative. Like so many other services across the state, this service offers valuable support for people in traumatic situations, but the Minister failed to recognise the need to support such organisations.

Non-Government organisations were left without answers too, with the Minister rejecting the notion of corporatization, but praising amalgamations of smaller NGOs. Urging NGOs to find “efficiencies” and supplement wages by cutting other areas of expenditure, the Minister set her sights on sustainability at the expense of smaller organisations. These organisations are the backbone of our communities across the state, relying on volunteers, and keeping our community spirit alive.

Underspends in neighbourhood centres and youth justice were dismissed without answering why communities and projects were promised money the Department was unable to deliver. Again, non-government organisations vying for funding for preventative and early intervention programs were given no comfort by the Minister’s responses, which were simply that NGOs could not expect funding. The Minister also dismissed the 38 per cent failure to complete conditional bail for youth as “reasonably successful”.

The Minister, like her staff, was unable to locate the “Office for Seniors”, naming George Street as the location. She could not answer the question asked, nor could she provide a budget line item to prove the existence of the office.

The Office for Women questioning also raised a number of concerns, including the failure of the Minister to guarantee the separate entity of the Women’s Infolink service, the failure of the Minister to provide any examples of successful programs or collaboration from the new hub and spoke model, or any justification of scrapping stakeholder satisfaction measures in favour of cross-government satisfaction measures.

The amount of time that could be spent analysing Community Services (1 hour and 15 minutes) was grossly inadequate, and did not pay due attention to each of the components. To divide this time among Youth Justice, Community Organisations and support, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, and Seniors issues did nothing but ensure that none of these important areas could be explored adequately.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosemary Menkens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Rosemary Menkens  
Member for Burdekin  
Shadow Minister for Community Services and Housing

## Estimates 2010 – Committee F

# Statement of Reservations

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**Ms. Mary-Anne O’Neill**

**Chair – Estimates Committee F**

Dear Ms. O’Neill,

There are a number of general reservations that need to be made in relation to the Queensland Estimates Committee process:

- The structure of the Budget Papers, and in particular the Service Delivery Statements, do not provide sufficient detailed information to enable proper scrutiny of activities and expenditures undertaken by Government
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The following are statements of reservation relate to the business of Committee F, as per the Hearing held on Wednesday July 21, 2010.

### **Local Government Debt**

- The Minister was unable to provide the Committee with the current and projected debt levels of Queensland Local Governments.
- The Minister also made it clear that her Department keeps no such records showed little interest and that those “who might be concerned about councils and their financial sustainability to look beyond the level of debt at any point in time”.
- This lack of administration and understanding is unsatisfactory for the Minister of the Crown charged with the responsibility of representing Local Government at the Executive Government level.
- For the record, the estimated Local Government debt is approximately \$2bn this year and expected to grow to \$6bn in 2012.

### **Post-amalgamation Scenario**

- The Minister was asked to confront the fact that council rates have increased by an average 25%, that council-owned debt has doubled, and that the total council workforce has grown by 2000 employees: all since the Beattie/Bligh Government implemented forced amalgamation of councils.
- The Ministers extraordinary claim that “much of that is indeed is a good record and a record that I absolutely support”, and a “really hard time for the mayors, the councillors and the staff of councils”, showed empathy but little motivation to address these issues in partnership with Local Government.

### **Local Government grants/subsidies**

- Pre-Estimates Question on Notice No.3 made a clear reference to a cut of \$60m to Queensland Government grants to local government from 2009/10 to 2010/11.
- In pursuing the matter, the Ministers deferral to the Associate Director-General made it obvious that the Department’s tack was to re-allocate natural disaster funding in an attempt to ‘top up’ programmes that had been cut. This is unacceptable and important that the Parliamentary Hearing brought to the local government community’s (and a broader audience’s) attention.
- The Minister was asked to address the scenario local governments face considering the State Government’s abolition of subsidies for the provision of water, sewerage and roads, and that there would be an inevitable transferral of this liability to residents. This did not receive an adequate answer and the Minister claimed to have no knowledge of a subsidy cut.

### **ATSIP Programs and inter-departmental co-operation**

- In 2008-09 only half the Partnerships Program \$4.2 million budget allocation was spent, in 2009-10 to January this year only a third of the overall \$8.2 million budget was spent.
- For the Cape York Welfare Reform Program in 2009-10 only half the allocated budget of \$6.6 million has been spent.
- The Indigenous Environmental Health Infrastructure Program has again been underspent, in 2009-10 by a massive \$58 million. The Bligh Labor government is all talk and no action for ATSI people and it is clear the ‘Closing the Gap’ and other programs are in delay mode.
- The Opposition is not satisfied that the Minister conducts an adequate level of co-operation with her colleagues on matters pertaining to ATSI people throughout Queensland; or that she takes any sort of ‘leader’s’ role in Executive Government. In correspondence from the CEO of an esteemed Indigenous Development Corporation addressed to the Treasurer concerning funding eligibility; and the Minister or Department had not received the article via transferral (or even knew of its existence).

I submit this Statement of Reservations for the purposes of the committee.

Yours faithfully



Howard Hobbs MP  
Member for Warrego  
Shadow Minister Local Government and ATSI Partnerships

# Estimates Committee F- Statement of Reservations

## Estimates Committee F

### STATEMENTS OF RESERVATIONS

#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

There are a number of general reservations that need to be made in relation to the Queensland Estimates Committee process:

- The structure of the Budget Papers, and in particular the Service Delivery Statements, do not provide sufficient detailed information to enable proper scrutiny of activities and expenditures undertaken by Government
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#### Observations specific to the portfolio of the Child Safety and Sport

##### Investigation delays in Child Safety

This years Budget Estimates process raised some serious questions about the level of response times by the Bligh Labor Government to investigate complaints of child abuse. Despite a record budget in 2009/10 more than 40 percent of matters were not finalised within the 2 month time frames set down by the Department.

## Estimates Committee F- Statement of Reservations

### **Re-substantiation rates among Indigenous children**

Despite year on year record budgets for Child Safety Services this years budget estimates has again highlighted the fact the Indigenous children are grossly over represented in the Child Protection system and the Government has no real strategy for reducing this except for throwing more money at the problem. During questioning it was put to the Minister that there had been a 59 percent increase in the level of re-abuse of Indigenous children between 2004 and 2008, despite the budget for the Department almost tripling in the same period.

### **Responding to Notifications**

This years budget is claimed to be a record budget, but, as with last years budget which the Government claimed was a record as well produced some very worrying trends that saw 80 percent of notifications which require a response within ten days were not meet, 73 percent of notifications requiring a response in 5 days were not met and 18 percent of crisis notifications requiring a response within 24 hours were not met.

### **Child deaths known to the Department**

The budget papers indicate that the Commission for Children reviewed 79 Child Deaths yet the Minister claimed in the Committee stage that this figure was only 64. Either figure is extremely concerning, but most concerning is that in more than 50 percent of cases where the child was under care and protection orders they either didn't have a health passport or case plan.

### **Capital Works Underspend in Indigenous communities**

This Government claims to be committed to closing the gap for indigenous children in abusive situations. However it under spent on services to Indigenous communities by \$2.766 million in 2009/10 and this estimates examination raises the question whether these communities can have any faith in the delivery of services when this gross under spend has become a regular feature of this Government year in year out for the past four years.

## Estimates Committee F- Statement of Reservations

In the last financial year the Government budgeted to spend \$9.856 million in 2009/10 but actually spent \$7.090 million

NOTES-2007/08 under spend \$5.435 million 2008/09 under spend \$5.2 million 2009/10 under spend \$2.8 million.

### **Staffing levels within Child Safety**

Despite claiming to be investing an additional \$3 million for additional frontline staff in high demand areas the budget figures show that staffing in the area will only increase by 35 staff from the estimated actual as at June 30 2010 or a 1.4 percent increase, yet intakes for the coming year are expected to increase by at least 10.5 percent or more than 100,000 in the same period. This indicates a real lack of investment in staffing increases to address growing demand.

The estimates process also raised serious issues as to why despite increases in staffing levels from child safety between June 2007 and March 2009, average case loads in every zone bar two increased over that same period, when according to the Governments own figures notifications and substantiations have fallen significantly in the same periods.

### **Health Passports**

This years record budget has failed to address the very real fact that around 49 percent or almost half of the children in child safety services care had not seen a health professional for a baseline health assessment or that the child was not engaged in ongoing management and monitoring. This raises the question where all this money is going if basic health needs of children in care are not meet.

### **The following reservations are held in relation to the Sport portfolio:-**

#### 1. Addressing perceptions of Corruption within the funding programs

Public confidence in the Government and administration of public monies is of the utmost importance. Public confidence can be undermined by proven examples of corruption, but also, as is with the case within the department at present, where perceptions of corruption exist and remain unaddressed by the Executive. This is the

## Estimates Committee F- Statement of Reservations

case within the Office of Sport and Recreation. While I did not refer to the current investigations by the Crime and Misconduct Commission, I used both questions on notice and the public hearing, to ask the Minister to outline what steps he had taken to address the guidelines and operations within his office to address these perceptions of corruption. The responses from the Minister fail to instil any confidence that he had dealt with the issues surrounding the inappropriate direction of public servants to funnel funding where the Minister or Ministerial staff instruct that might be in contradiction of the guidelines of the program. Minister Reeves' answer in the public hearing that he had accepted the Department's suggestions "lock, stock and barrel" does not address the issue that the Previous Minister also allegedly accepted all recommendations put to her after they had been "instructed" by her Ministerial Staff. The committee should be aware that the Minister's answer to question on notice number nine discloses no reference to amending internal guidelines or practices that would address this issue. Accordingly, I have the reservation that, despite the doubtless good intentions by the Minister, he has failed to comprehensively explain how he has addressed the issues of perceptions of corruption within his department.

### 2. Oversight of Stadiums Queensland

The opportunity to scrutinise the operations of Stadiums Queensland was not afforded to the Committee. According to the 2008-09 annual report, Stadiums Queensland manages over \$1.3 billion worth of State assets. It is unacceptable that the business operations and the way in which these assets are managed are not properly scrutinised. I recognise the necessity of maintaining commercially confidential arrangements, and do not wish to put Queensland at a competitive disadvantage as against the other States. However, the sheer quantum of the assets under management by this organisation demand that more scrutiny be applied. Accordingly, I have the reservation that the scrutiny of the budget has been impeded by the Minister not wishing to disclose details of this organisation.

### **Concluding remarks-**

In conclusion the Opposition hold serious reservations on how the expenditure for child safety services is actually helping children in need. There are serious issues about response times to investigations and ongoing failures to properly address early issues of



## Estimates Committee F- Statement of Reservations

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abuse and neglect. The estimates process showed that the Minister was not fully across the issues and that money was being spent at record levels with no foreseeable benefit. The estimates process also revealed a government that was more interested in protecting itself than actually protecting the children in its care.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. M. Dempsey".

Jack DEMPSEY MP  
Member for Bundaberg  
Shadow Minister for Child Safety and Sport