



Speech by

Hon. JUDY SPENCE

MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT

Hansard 12 December 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Youth and Family Support Service

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services) (10.00 a.m.), by leave: Tomorrow an innovative new service funded by the Beattie government will be officially launched here in Brisbane. The Youth and Family Support Service is a \$1.2 million initiative designed to support families and young people through early intervention and diversion. The service has 10 staff and operates from Department of Families offices in the city between 10 a.m. and midnight, seven days a week, including public holidays.

The service provides immediate and planned visits to youth at risk and their families within the Brisbane city region. Casework commenced on Monday, 30 July this year and the service is already operating at near full capacity with more than 120 families having received support, and referrals are increasing. People can self-refer or referrals come from agencies including Department of Families area offices, Kids Help Line, Parentline, schools and police. Workers help families and young people respond to conflict or crisis; ensure that young people at risk of harm get an appropriate and quick response; and divert young people at risk of offending from further involvement in the statutory youth justice system.

A memorandum of understanding has been approved with the Queensland Police Service. A wide range of community agencies and the Brisbane City Council have offered great support for the service, and I acknowledge and welcome that support.

This government is committed to putting families and young people first. This new service is already recognised within and outside the Department of Families as a desirable workplace and a positive model for early intervention and youth diversionary service delivery. Client feedback records high levels of satisfaction and identifies effective, practical, youth-centred and timely systems. The focus is to help families support themselves and remain connected. I commend the workers and managers at the service and commend their achievements to the House.
