



Speech by

Hon. Mike Reynolds

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Hansard Thursday, 13 May 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Department of Child Safety; Department of Communities

Hon. M.F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (10.04 a.m.): Staff from the former Department of Families are undergoing a major transition into two new departments, the Department of Child Safety and the Department of Communities. I want to thank them all for their cooperation. Coming to terms with change is often difficult, but as we enter a new era in child protection in Queensland change has become necessary.

Staff members have been working patiently in the lead-up to the transition and have now begun workshops to learn the new culture, ethos and practice behaviours that will be embraced by the new departments. The transition workshops and awareness sessions were outlined in the Peter Forster blueprint, and are the first vital stage of developing and promoting an entirely new culture as specified in the 2003 Crime and Misconduct Commission report.

The transition workshops, being presented by Peter Forster and a dedicated team of trained child protection professionals, are providing current staff with a range of information designed to gear them up for working in the new department. These workshops are a very important part of the reform process and we value our staff and the contribution that they are making in the reformation of Queensland's child protection system. I am determined to see each staff member supported during this phase of the transition which could be quite stressful for some people and I have ensured that adequate counselling and support is available.

For staff transitioning to the Department of Child Safety, child-centred workshops will ensure a comprehensive understanding of new regulatory requirements and provide staff with the necessary tools so they are equipped with the necessary skills and capabilities to meet these expectations. We are on track to transition staff to the new departments by August, and until then it is business as usual. Utilising back-up staff, we are continuing to provide high-quality services to children, families and communities across the state while staff members in regional and area offices are participating in transitioning activities. This transition process, along with the targeted national recruitment campaign now under way to engage committed child safety staff, signals a new start for child protection in Queensland.

The transition workshops began on the Gold Coast and will continue next week in Brisbane, Ipswich and Mackay, with around 600 staff and will continue across the state until July when all staff will have participated. I am told the feedback so far has been very positive and we are well on our way to providing what I believe will be the best child safety services in Australia.