



Speech by

Hon. Mike Reynolds

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Hansard Tuesday, 15 June 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

SCAN System

Hon. M.F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (10.14 a.m.): The Beattie government is reinforcing its commitment to tackling child abuse and neglect by allocating an extra \$24.4 million over the next three years for an improved suspected child abuse and neglect system, which we know as the SCAN team. These funds will ensure that each government department involved in the improved SCAN process has high-level staff dedicated full time to child abuse cases and is represented on the SCAN teams. It means that we will have high-powered teams able to identify neglect and abuse at the very earliest possible stage and to intervene quickly to help children at risk.

This extra money will cover wages of additional people to be hired, the costs of retraining, regular training sessions and other costs. For example, as announced already by my colleague the Minister for Police, Judy Spence, the Queensland Police Service is planning to place an additional 16 detective senior sergeants in the SCAN system; Education Queensland will employ extra senior guidance officers; and Queensland Health is planning to dedicate additional administrative staff to the SCAN system. \$3 million will be spent by the Child Safety Department and \$3.5 million by other departments.

The Premier and I have made it clear that child protection is a major priority of this government and I am determined to see each of the 110 recommendations of the CMC implemented as soon as possible. The implementation of the rejuvenated SCAN system is a major part of those reforms, with 20 full-time SCAN coordinators appointed at a cost of \$3 million. The new process involves teams of experts coordinated by a full-time Department of Child Safety officer and will include senior representatives from Education Queensland and the Queensland Police Service. Expert medical advice will be provided through a Queensland Health professional with training in paediatrics. In cases where the child is from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander family, a representative of that community will form a very important part of the team.

The new system will be tested in the Townsville and Logan regions from September and will be introduced into other areas from December this year. The core agencies of Health, Police and Education have begun selection and recruitment processes to provide their additional full-time contribution to these teams as part of the \$3.5 million boost to these agencies. Negotiations are under way with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to identify suitable community representation as part of a \$4.7 million provision to give this community much better access to the system.

I am certain the extra staff and procedural changes will create a vastly improved and more integrated SCAN system that will make Queensland a safer place for children and, in particular, a safer place for our most vulnerable children.