



Speech by

Hon. Mike Reynolds

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Hansard Thursday, 17 June 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Children's Hostel, Cherbourg

Hon. M.F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (10.09 a.m.): The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, Liddy Clark, and I recently announced that construction will begin this month on a new \$1.2 million children's hostel for the Cherbourg community near Murgon. It will be completed and ready for use by the end of November this year. The state government approved this brand new facility to replace Beemar-Yumba's existing residential children's hostel. The new facility off Barambah Road at Cherbourg will retain the name Beemar-Yumba and will incorporate a new 12-bed children's hostel, carers' residence and administrative offices.

The Beemar-Yumba Aboriginal Corporation currently receives \$185,000 a year from the Department of Child Safety to provide a residential care service for Aboriginal children in need. That funding will be reviewed over the coming months following assessment of the organisation's submission to the department under the current alternative care placement funding round.

Last month an additional \$77,493 was approved to help children and young people in the Cherbourg community who have been victims of sexual abuse. The government recognises the need for a counselling service and is providing funding for the Wide Bay Sexual Assault Association Inc. for the Kids' Intervention and Prevention Program, known as KIPP.

That special allocation funding will provide a sexual abuse counselling service, which is a very important one for Cherbourg. The money will cover salary, operating funds and some set-up funds for a counsellor position to provide sexual abuse counselling to children and young people in the Cherbourg community. One-off funds of more than \$56,000 will also be provided to Beemar-Yumba Aboriginal Corporation to employ an additional support worker for a further 12 months. This will assist the Aboriginal children's hostel Beemar-Yumba to offer better support to abused and neglected children in the Cherbourg area.

The building project and funding boosts are further evidence that the Beattie government is meeting the needs of indigenous communities and will continue to work hard in that regard. I made a commitment to the people of Cherbourg to assist with child protection, as did the Premier and Minister Liddy Clark when we visited the community earlier this year, and we intend to keep those promises. I look forward to continuing to work with my ministerial colleague Liddy Clark to decrease the massive overrepresentation of indigenous children in the child protection system. We are not just making token gestures but taking real strides towards ensuring that Cherbourg is a safer place for Aboriginal children and young people to live.