



Speech by

Hon. Mike Reynolds

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Hansard Wednesday, 6 October 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Interviewing Children and Recording Evidence Program

Hon. M.F. REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (10.11 a.m.): I was delighted by the very positive response recently to a Queensland training program that enhances the skills of investigators gathering evidence in child protection matters. This very remarkable program that has been in place for just 15 months attracted intense interest and received glowing reports from world child protection experts at the congress in Brisbane organised by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. The Interviewing Children and Recording Evidence training program, or ICARE as it is called, is a joint initiative between the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Child Safety and trains officers to minimise the trauma caused to children by evidence gathering interviews. Susan Wilson from the Department of Child Safety and Marlene Prenzler from the Queensland Police Service received very complimentary feedback when discussing this best practice interviewing model with delegates at that international congress.

This important training package provides our practitioners with the practical skills that they need to ensure information obtained during interviews with our most vulnerable children and young people meets evidentiary requirements while still considering the paramount needs of the child. It is the only program of its kind in Australia to be accredited by a registered training organisation and recently the ICARE program was a finalist in the Queensland Public Sector Best Learning and Development Initiative Awards, a category of the 2004 Queensland Training Awards. The ICARE program is a crucial component of the specialist training undertaken by child safety officers and police child protection investigators. It includes vital information that is tremendously helpful for interviewing children with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children or youngsters from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Since July 2003, more than 100 child safety officers and 100 police officers have been trained in the ICARE program. Being invited to share programs like this one with international experts reinforces the very high standard and quality of innovative programs being developed by child protection professionals in Queensland. The development of this enhanced training package for our practitioners is greatly assisting with the provision of improved support for vulnerable children and vulnerable young people and of course their families as well.