



Speech by

**Hon. Phil Reeves**

**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

Hansard Wednesday, 28 October 2009

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Safe Houses**

**Hon. PG REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (10.10 am): Indigenous safe houses are on track to provide safe places to live for up to 66 abused and neglected Indigenous children in their remote communities. Seven safe houses are well underway, with some services starting to come on line from the end of this year. Consultation and planning has commenced with the remaining four communities. These houses will mean that vulnerable kids can leave a home where they are at risk of abuse and stay safe within their own community, stay in touch with their extended family and, more importantly, their culture. The most positive aspect of these houses is that they will all have family support workers to work with parents to address their issues.

Safe houses are just part of the package of measures that the Bligh government has in place to tackle Indigenous child protection issues, including a new task force with a brief to work on this issue. An experienced non-government organisation, ACT for Kids, will run the safe house at Doomadgee. Recently, I visited the Doomadgee safe house with the member for Mount Isa and the director-general, where the Doomadgee council was meeting with ACT for Kids. So I can announce today that ACT for Kids will receive nearly \$2.8 million over three years to run the safe house, which should be offering some services to children and families by the end of the year.

Tenders have closed for an NGO to run the completed safe house at Yarrabah. At Aurukun, Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw, construction of safe houses is underway and should be completed in the first quarter of 2010 and be available to local children by midyear. The family intervention workers should be on the job by the end of January.

All 11 safe houses will be providing safe places for local children by mid-2012. As well as at Doomadgee, Aurukun, Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw and Yarrabah, a safe house will be operating from a temporary facility at Napranum by the end of the year and at Palm Island by late 2010. Four more safe houses at Mornington Island, the northern peninsula, eastern Cape York and the Torres Strait are on target to be completed by early 2012. Keeping children safe is my top priority and safe houses are just part of that commitment to young Queenslanders.