

**Question on Notice
No. 533
Asked on 19 May 2004**

MS K STRUTHERS asked the Minister for Child Safety (MR REYNOLDS)-

QUESTION:

What action will be taken in the implementation of the child safety blueprint to better respond to the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse families in my local area and statewide?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and for her keen interest in child safety matters in her role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for Multicultural Affairs and as the Member for Algeester. The Beattie Government is clearly aware of the need to provide a range of culturally appropriate responses.

The blueprint provides for an integrated service system underpinned by effective and enduring partnerships between the government and non-government sectors.

The blueprint suggests a two-tiered model comprising statewide and local partnership and planning networks and provides funding of \$1.46 million in 2004-5 to support these arrangements.

The statewide partnership network is starting to take shape, drawing on the expertise of peak non-government organisations and key government agencies involved in the child protection service system. This group will contribute to strategic priorities and direction and engage in policy development (including Indigenous policy) and high-level planning for service delivery. A multicultural organisation will be included in this statewide partnership network.

The local partnership networks will focus on local service system planning, as well as building collaborative service responses among providers and effective operational practice between the department and funded services. These local networks will operate within the seven new Department of Child Safety zones. Multicultural organisations will be included in these partnerships, depending on local needs, priorities and circumstances.

Additionally, the department continues to promote and implement strategies outlined in its Workplace Diversity and Equal Opportunity Strategy 2002-06, including a strategy for non-English speaking background staff. As at April 2003, the percentage of the department's staff from a non-English speaking background was 9.93%. It is anticipated that recruitment strategies outlined in the blueprint will boost this percentage by the end of 2004.

The Acting Director-General of the department has recently written to Local Area Multicultural Partnerships workers providing information and fact sheets on the Department of Child Safety's recruitment campaign seeking their assistance in informing people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds of the available employment opportunities. Applications for employment continue to be accepted by the Department of Child Safety even beyond the initial closing date of 31 May 2004.

The department will also implement cross-cultural awareness training in partnership with other organisations, ensuring that staff of the department are able to better understand, interact with and service the needs of not only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but people with a broad range of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Officers of the department are very interested in working with Multicultural Affairs Queensland, through the establishment of a working party, to identify and jointly progress initiatives to enhance the number and classification level of employees with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The department's area office and Crisis Care staff are able to access interpreter services to assist in working with families who do not speak or who have limited skills in English. The department also provides a number of Parenting Tip Sheets in other languages, including: Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Samoan, Serbian, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese. These Tip Sheets are available on the department's web site, as well as from the Child Protection Branch (telephone: 07 3224 8431).

We are determined to ensure that the services delivered by the Department of Child Safety are responsive to Queensland's multicultural society and that the staffing of the Department of Child Safety meets the multicultural profile of Queensland as a State.