

**Question on Notice
Number: 544
Asked on Wednesday 19 May 2004**

MR C WALLACE asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (**MR PITT**)-

QUESTION:

Will he provide details relating to how many North Queensland youths have been referred to the Youth Justice Conferencing Service based in Townsville?

Were participants in conferences, both victims and perpetrators of crimes, satisfied with the conference outcomes?

ANSWER:

The North Queensland Youth Justice Conferencing Service commenced operations in January 2003 and provides coverage to Townsville, Thuringowa and other communities within the North Queensland region. The service is located in the Townsville Central Business District.

Since operations commenced in 2003, the service has received 314 referrals. Police have referred 71% of matters, with the remaining 29% being referred by the courts.

Satisfaction ratings for conferences conducted by the North Queensland Youth Justice Conferencing Service have remained consistently high, with both offenders and victims reporting 98% satisfaction. Satisfaction ratings are determined on the basis of evaluative surveys completed by conference participants at the end of each conference.

Youth Justice Conferencing is a restorative justice approach to juvenile offending, which has the advantage of bringing together the people most affected by a crime – the victim, the young offender and their family, police and community members. Police and the courts make referrals to Youth Justice Conferencing.

The purpose of a Youth Justice Conference is to reach an agreement about how a young person can repair the harm caused by the crime. An agreement may include an apology, restitution, voluntary work or involvement in support programs to help prevent further offending. The agreement is determined by those attending the conference and is therefore specific to the crime and meaningful to all involved in the process.