

Question on Notice

No. 812

Asked on Thursday, 24 May 2007

MRS CUNNINGHAM MP asked the Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Seniors and Youth (**MR PITT**)—

With reference to child counselling services for the Gladstone region and as there is a demonstrated need for a Child Specialist Counsellor – Will he fund a new position for the Gladstone region to support and assist our young children?

ANSWER:

In 2004-05, the Department of Communities allocated \$1.5 million to the non-government sector to establish nine specialist counselling services across the state. These funds aimed to address an identified gap in the availability of family and specialist counselling services.

Allocation of funds was based on the Department of Communities needs based planning and resource allocation framework to ensure allocation of resources to those locations and populations most in need in Queensland. Funding was focussed towards North and Far North Queensland regions.

Should further funds become available for child counselling services, allocation would be based on priorities identified using the department's needs based planning and resource allocation framework.

Specialist Child Counselling services play a significant role in implementing community-based prevention and early intervention strategies and represent initiatives to begin to address the gap in services for families with specific and/or complex needs who are at a high risk of child abuse and neglect.

The Department of Communities currently funds two services in Gladstone to provide generalist family support services, Roseberry Community Services Inc and Gladstone Neighbourhood Centre.

Roseberry Community Services Inc is funded by the Department of Communities to provide a family support service for young people aged 13-17 and their families who are experiencing difficulties with an adolescent who is at risk of becoming homeless. The goal of the service is to provide a sensitive, confidential support service to families in Gladstone and surrounding districts of a practical, appropriate and non-discriminatory nature to work towards the prevention of youth homelessness.

The Gladstone Neighbourhood Centre Program, coordinated out of two sites within Gladstone, is staffed by two workers, the Coordinator (Community Development Officer) and Family Support Worker (Counsellor). The neighbourhood centre provides a range of services which respond to the identified needs of families and individuals within the local area which includes free face to face counselling and mediation services.