

**Question on Notice
No. 817
Asked on Tuesday, 5 June 2007**

MR DEMPSEY asked the Minister for Child Safety (MS BOYLE) -

QUESTION:

With reference to her announcement of 4 June 2007 regarding a one-off extra payment of \$10,000 for Bundaberg Phoenix House:

- (1) Why has she only committed to providing short term assistance rather than the long term increase in recurrent funding the organisation needs to ensure its service can continue in the years to come?
- (2) Will she now direct her department to liaise with Phoenix House to maintain an appropriate level of funding to meet their identified needs and the high demand for the important services they provide?

ANSWER:

The only funding that was at risk of being cut was federal government funding. The Australian Government's website says the Federal Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs was providing funding of \$320,000 over three years to 'BumbleBees' Therapeutic Pre-School run by Phoenix House. That funding was due to cease on 30 June 2007, but I am advised that following community awareness of this issue the Commonwealth have recently extended funding for a further year.

I am pleased that the Commonwealth has responded in this way to fund a service response that can be complementary to the focus on statutory clients being funded by the Department of Child Safety. I would urge the Commonwealth to make a longer-term triennial commitment in respect of its funding.

My department has made a long term commitment to Phoenix House in Bundaberg beyond the \$10,000 I have approved in the form of short term assistance. Phoenix House receives grant funding from the Department of Child Safety that totals \$297,470 per annum and, on 20 March 2007, I approved a further three years of funding to the organisation. This will mean the continuation of the delivery of sexual abuse counselling services in Bundaberg, that is consistent with the policy framework developed by the department to support children and young people who have experienced the trauma of sexual abuse, and their non-offender family members or carers.

On top of this, Queensland Health provided recurrent funding of \$154,797 and non-recurrent funds of \$62,000 in 2006-07.

A further demonstration of my department's ongoing commitment to Phoenix House to meet their needs, and maintain an appropriate level of funding includes an overall 3.6% increase in their recurrent grant through an indexation payment available in 2007-08. This increase is designed specifically to offset rising costs associated with service delivery and to ensure the organisation remains viable in the years to come.

Phoenix House have now finalised the signing of a new service agreement for the three year period of funding. The service agreement sets out the essential service delivery requirements and outcomes associated with sexual abuse counselling services to children and young people, the purpose and guidelines for use of the recurrent funding, the number of children and young people to receive a service, and the geographical location of service delivery.

The provision of therapeutic services, particularly sexual abuse counselling services, was highlighted by the Crime and Misconduct Commission as being of particular importance in responding to the needs of children and young people in the statutory child protection system. In Bundaberg, this response is being maintained and supported by my department with a continuation of grant funding assistance. My department currently provides triennial funding of \$1,898,071 per annum to ten sexual abuse counselling services throughout the state.