

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 217**  
**Asked on Wednesday, 27 February 2008.**

MR JASON O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women (MRS KEECH) -

QUESTION:

Will she advise on the progress to roll out the Child Safety Service Hubs in Cooktown, Weipa and Thursday Island?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question, and commend him on his strong advocacy on child safety matters on behalf of his constituents.

The Department recognises the challenges in providing child protection services to remote Indigenous communities.

Issues faced by staff on a daily basis include the distance they are required to travel, the lack of safe and appropriate accommodation on site and practical issues of climatic conditions and physical access to areas. In addition, staff must always remain respectful of the fact that they are working in remote and Indigenous communities and respect traditional protocols.

For the Cape and Torres Child Safety Service Centre, the allocation of staffing resources has been revised on the basis of workload analyses and the service centre is actively recruiting qualified staff to the revised staffing structure.

The current structure has been designed to enhance direct service delivery and includes four geographic teams servicing clusters of communities, an Intake and Assessment Team, a Cairns-based team working with children under child protection orders from the Cape and Torres Strait communities who are living in Cairns and a range of Cairns-based specialist support services.

Three of the geographic teams provide services from branch offices located in Cooktown, Weipa and on Thursday Island. Professional and administrative staff are permanently based in these branch offices, with management and specialist support being provided from the Cairns-based office on a regular basis. The branch offices at Cooktown, Weipa and the Thursday Island have commenced operations and are now functioning.

The Community Support Team, which is based in the Far Northern Zonal Office, continues to work on establishing Recognised Entities in communities in Cape York and Torres Strait with interim services operational in Thursday Island, the Northern Peninsular Area, Pomppuraaw and Weipa / Napranum.

The Department of Child Safety is working with the Department of Public Works to establish multi-agency offices in Cooktown and on Thursday Island.

The Department of Public Works advises it has secured a location on Thursday Island and is currently assessing development submissions for Cooktown.