

Question on Notice
No. 634
Asked on Tuesday 29 April 2008

MRS JANN STUCKEY asked the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women (MRS KEECH) -

QUESTION:

How many notifications made to the Department of Child Safety (reported separately by zone) have not yet been allocated a case worker as at 29 April 2008?

ANSWER:

Protecting children is a priority for the Queensland Government.

That's why the Government established the stand-alone Department of Child Safety in 2004.

Since then the Government has trebled the budget and almost doubled the number of frontline staff working to protect children and young people.

The Bligh Government is continuing this commitment with work to better support staff and practice improvements, all of which are aimed at better outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

The Department of Child Safety received 64,266 reports of suspected harm, or risk of harm, to children and young people in 2006-2007 – that's about 175 reports of alleged child abuse or neglect every day of the year.

Each day, the Department receives reports from a variety of sources, including parents, friends, relatives, neighbours, health care workers, police medical practitioners, social workers and school staff.

Reports of child abuse have increased by 60 per cent since 2002-2003. The reports range from allegations of shocking sexual and physical abuse of innocent young children, to emotional abuse, to reports of less serious neglect.

The Department assesses all reports before determining the appropriate response. Like other government agencies, responses are determined on a priority basis, based on the risk of harm to the child and the need for protection.

Cases with the highest level of concern are allocated a case worker within 24 hours.