

## Question on Notice

No. 1859

Asked on Tuesday 24 November 2009

**MR CRANDON** asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations (Mr C R Dick) -

### QUESTION:

With reference to child protection —

- (1) How many child protection matters (State) has Legal Aid Queensland represented with regard to affected families in 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10 to date (reported separately by each year)?
- (2) What was the total cost per matter for Legal Aid involvement in child protection matters in 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10?

### ANSWER:

The following data details Legal Aid Queensland's total expenditure on child protection files, the number of child protection files opened and the average cost per file for 2007-08, 2008-09 and the current financial year to 31 October 2009. The data refers to child protection files rather than child protection matters because it is possible for a child protection matter to include more than one file (e.g. a file for a child, their parents and their grandparents). Legal Aid Queensland's data tracks spending on individual files, rather than matters.

It is not possible to accurately calculate the average cost per file because the total expenditure also includes spending on files that were opened in previous financial years but are still active.

#### Cost and number of child protection files funded by Legal Aid Queensland

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10YTD
Total expenditure*	\$3,812,432.63	\$4,783,092.97	\$1,432,720.84
Number of files	2,022	2,081	613

I am advised that the total expenditure on child protection matters has increased over the last three years due to the increasing number of separate representatives appointed by the court to represent the best interests of children. Matters where the court appoints a separate representative are usually the most complex and challenging, and as a result, cost Legal Aid Queensland more to fund. I am further advised that there were also more grants of aid per file for the different stages in the child protection process, particularly relating to family group meetings, which contributed to higher costs.

#### Note

\* Information is based on a cost analysis using a cost-of-outputs methodology that excludes overheads and has been approved by Queensland Treasury.