

Question on Notice

No. 1070

Asked on 17 June 2011

MS DAVIS asked the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport (MR REEVES)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister detail all services in Indigenous communities (including proposed locations) that were budgeted for but not completed in the 2008–09 and 2009–10 capital works for Child Safety that account for the respective 66 per cent and 28 per cent capital underspends?

ANSWER

The Bligh Government is committed to providing services and facilities in Indigenous communities and we continue to invest in capital infrastructure to deliver on this commitment.

The Member for Aspley's recent media release relating to this Question on Notice was released without the Member bothering to check her facts.

This untrue and misleading media release compared figures that were not comparable. In misrepresenting the facts relating to Bligh Government expenditure in this important area, the Member has again demonstrated a lack of understanding of the Child Safety portfolio.

Reporting in budget paper 3—Capital Statement relates only to 'live' projects or those projects that are continuing into 2011–12 and onwards.

The Member claimed in her media release only 66 per cent of the budget was spent on Services for Indigenous Communities in 2010–11, when in reality 94 percent of the total budget was spent. This is yet another example of the Member getting her facts wrong because she hasn't done her homework.

The Bligh Government is investing \$45 million over a number of years to construct 11 Safe Houses in remote Indigenous communities. These are new services which are providing for the first time in Queensland, indeed throughout Australia, community-based residential care and family support services for remote Indigenous children and families subject to statutory child protection intervention which enable the child or young person to remain on their local community.

The below table details all services in Indigenous Communities that were budgeted for in 2008–09 and 2009–10.

Project	Budget details	Status	Total capital expenditure to date (\$000)
Child Safe House—Aurukun	Project budgeted in 2008–09	Completed	1506
Child Safe House—Doomadgee	Project budgeted in 2008–09.	Completed	673
Child Safe House—Kowanyama	Project budgeted in 2008–09.	Completed	1357
Child Safe House—Pormpuraaw	Project budgeted in 2008–09.	Completed	1494
Child Safe House—Yarrabah	Project moved from capital works to capital grants	Completed	75
Child Safe House—Weipa/Napranum	Project budgeted in 2008–09.	Operating out of a temporary facility. Construction of permanent facility nearing completion.	1273
Child Safe House—Palm Island	Project budgeted in 2008–09.	Completed	1465

Child Safe House—Eastern Cape/Lockhart River	Project budgeted in 2009–10.	Operating out of a temporary facility.	18
Child Safe House—Mornington Island	Project budgeted in 2009–10.	Construction underway.	865
		Total	8726

Safe House facilities are completed in the communities of Aurukun, Pormpuraaw, Kowanyama, Doomadgee, Palm Island and Yarrabah, with the Napranum, Lockhart River and Northern Peninsula Area services operating from interim facilities.

The construction of the permanent Safe House in Napranum is well underway and expected to be completed by mid 2011.

Capital works programs are of a rolling nature. It typically takes several years to have infrastructure planned, established and operational. It is common for capital projects to span across a number of years for reasons including but not limited to the following:

- weather conditions including the annual ‘wet season’ of monsoonal rains and cyclones in northern and far northern Queensland where the Safe Houses are located or planned and other environmental considerations may delay the project commencement and/or completion date
- the process to develop land in remote Indigenous communities requires the department to be cognisant of the need to comprehensively consult with the relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure the site for the planned Safe House is appropriate to the needs of the particular community and attracts community support, ownership and endorsement of the safe house service
- the requirements associated with Native Title and Cultural Heritage need to be addressed before any building development can commence. This complex process requires considerable amounts of time to be successfully concluded.

The Bligh Government investment in Indigenous communities is a clear demonstration of the commitment to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

The Bligh Government is ensuring Queensland’s most vulnerable children and young people have every opportunity to reach their full potential. In 2011–12, we are investing \$733 million to support Queensland’s child protection system. We invest above the national average in Child Protection Services to help keep our children safe.