

Question on Notice

No. 1511

Asked on 31 August 2016

MR RYAN asked the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise the House how the Palaszczuk Government is supporting at risk families in the Caboolture region?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring the right services are available in local communities so that families can access the support they need, when they need it.

In the Moreton Bay area, which includes Caboolture, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) funds 29 organisations over \$29 million to provide 81 services to assist vulnerable families. These services include general information and referral, counselling services and family support services.

It is widely acknowledged that domestic and family violence is a major contributing factor to Child Safety involvement with vulnerable families. The DCCSDS provides \$2,900,229 for counselling and relevant support services in the Moreton Bay region, alongside targeted and secondary family support services. Overall funding of \$4,830,717 per annum is provided to support families, with the aim of reducing harm to children and young people.

In addition, there is funding of \$8,866,952 per annum for counselling and intervention services for vulnerable families, to build their capacity to adequately nurture, protect and keep their children safe. Placement services receive \$12,491,255 to assist children and young people with moderate to complex support needs, who are in or about to engage in out-of-home care. Disability service providers that cover Caboolture receive a further \$693,431 in funding, to provide services in support of families at risk.

What we are learning from the implementation of the Supporting Families Changing Futures reforms, as well as the domestic and family violence reforms following the *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* report, is that more needs to be done earlier to assist families experiencing vulnerability. That is why in this year's budget, the Queensland Government committed an additional \$198.2 million whole-of-government package over five years to address domestic and family violence, which includes \$89.5 million in new funding through my department.

At the beginning of Child Protection Week, I was pleased to announce investment of \$60 million for a family support package. This funding will be used to deliver support to the most vulnerable families across Queensland, to help them to better care for their children safely at home. The support will create 128 new frontline jobs, provide case management to respond to complex family circumstances, and practical assistance to deal with issues impacting on families' ability to care for children. Our package will also include new funding of \$500,000 to Bravehearts, so that it can provide counselling and other support services in the Moreton Bay Region to young people who are victims of sexual abuse and their families.

In the Moreton Bay region, Family and Child Connect receives \$1,140,992 per annum to deliver early intervention support to families. The service enables an assessment of a family's needs, provides information and advice, and refers families to appropriate support services and interventions. Additionally, the new Intensive Family Support service in

Moreton Bay receives funding of \$1,267,768 to build the capacity of families to adequately nurture, protect and keep their children safe. This service works with vulnerable families with more complex needs to ensure they receive the necessary individualised support, with the aim of preventing children from coming to the attention of statutory services.

The Caboolture Child Safety Service Centre also provides services to at risk families in the community. Since January this year additional frontline and frontline support staff have been deployed to the service centre. Most recently this has included 3 additional frontline staff.

The recent State Budget also announced the new Walking with Dads program, which will include the Caboolture Child Safety Service Centre. This program is aimed at working with fathers whose children are subject to child protection interventions due to their violence, and aims to make fathers accountable for their behaviour, while working to increase the safety and wellbeing of their children. The funding will enable a new specialist child safety position to work with these men and enhancements to local men's behaviour change programs by \$100,000 per annum, which will increase the number of programs offered in the Caboolture area.