

Question on Notice

No. 1537

Asked on 1 September 2016

MR MILLAR asked the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to the 1124 child safety cases where no investigation or outcome was recorded when closed in the March 2016 performance data—

Will the Minister provide a regional breakdown of these cases?

ANSWER

All notifications recorded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) are investigated and an assessment made as to whether the child is in need of protection. Once a notification is received, actions are taken to locate the child and their family.

Where there is insufficient information available or a family has moved, the department communicates with other professional organisations such as the Queensland Police Service, child care centres, hospitals and Centrelink, in order to find the child and their family.

There are always some instances, however, where despite best attempts by Child Safety Officers, the family cannot be identified and/or located. In these instances the investigation is closed with an outcome of 'no investigation and assessment outcome'.

While a large amount of data is recorded in the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' Integrated Client Management System (ICMS), the information requested is not part of standard reporting.

Queensland's Child Safety Services has one of the most open and comprehensive reporting systems across Australia. Approximately 80 measures are reported on a quarterly basis via the Our Performance website at www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/our-performance.

Since late last year, the department has been implementing actions to address demand and improve response times for investigations and assessments. This includes:

- allocating additional resources
- reviewing workflow processes
- streamlining information gathering
- providing additional guidance and supervision
- rescheduling training
- reviewing data entry and quality
- trialling integrated regional or area-level investigation and assessment hubs.

The department has also commenced work on related Child Protection Commission of Inquiry recommendations, including introducing alternatives to a child safety investigation, and specialist investigation roles to improve investigation and assessment work.