

QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION  
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

STATEMENT OF DAVID GOODINSON

I, **DAVID GOODINSON**, of 277 Mulgrave Road, Westcourt, Cairns in the State of Queensland, Regional Director, Youth Justice Services, Far North and North Queensland Region solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare:

1. I am a Regional Director in the Youth Justice Services, Department of Justice and Attorney-General.
2. I have been appointed to this position since June 2012.
3. When planning and reviewing my work and seeking approval for decisions, when required, I report to Mr Steve Armitage, Assistant Director-General, Youth Justice Services, Department of Justice and Attorney-General who is based in Brisbane, State Law Building. My position is part of the senior management team of Youth Justice Services in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.
4. Prior to this appointment I was the Director, Cape York South, Child Safety Service Centre (CSSC), Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (the department) from 2009 to 2012. Prior to that I was the Network Manager, Cape York & Torres Strait Islands CSSC, the department from 2007 to 2009. Prior to this I was the Manager for Urban Area Health Services, Cairns Health Service District, Queensland Health from 2004 to 2007.
5. I hold:
  - a Diploma in Industrial Relations and Economics, University of Wales
  - a Masters degree in Industrial Sociology, University of Aberdeen, Scotland
  - a post graduate Diploma of Social Work, Robert Gordon's University, Scotland.

**ROLE**

6. The purpose of my role as the Regional Director, Youth Justice Services is to work as part of a state-wide senior management team with specific responsibilities for youth justice services provided in the North and Far North Queensland regions.
7. My duties and activities include:
  - leading the implementation of the departments strategic plan for Youth Justice Services
  - leading and developing regional business planning
  - leading and facilitating a whole of government and non-government sector approach to addressing youth justice issues
  - leading and managing the regional management team
  - leading the implementation of new initiatives such as the boot camp trial in Far North Queensland
  - ensuring staff training and development needs are met
  - ensuring best practice is delivered meeting all statutory and regulatory requirements
  - being accountable for human resources and the regions financial performance.

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## OTHER ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

### Service delivery – how well is child protection functioning?

8. I began working as the Network Manager for the Cape York & Torres Strait Islands CSSC in September 2007. Mr Michael Bond, Director of the Complaints and Review Unit had produced a report titled *Delivering Child Protection Services to Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Far North Queensland*. The report provided the basis for the resourcing and development of the CSSC including:
- developing a network of branch offices in Cooktown, Weipa and Thursday Island to deliver localised ongoing care services and foster care recruitment and support
  - recruiting and stabilising staffing across the CSSC
  - establishing projects to remedy a backlog of investigation and assessment work and promote the development of a foster carer capacity on the Cape
  - developing a highly functioning Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) team and the start of delivering community education to communities about "good enough parenting" and the role of the department
  - developing joint Child Safety Services/Queensland Police Service protocols to establish procedures to ensure clarity around roles and decision making
  - establishing the Recognised Entities
  - providing a high level of support from key partners in assisting in carrying out child protection work and providing services.
9. In 2009 the department split the CSSC to establish the Cape York South and Cape York North & Torres Strait Islands CSSC. My position became the Director, Cape York South CSSC. Communities covered in this area included Cooktown, Wujal Wujal, Laura, Hopevale, Lockhart River, Coen, Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama. From this time to my departure from the department in June 2012 the following has occurred:
- The Cape South CSSC has been better resourced with additional CSO positions being funded. Staff turnover significantly reduced and a greater knowledge and skill base developed.
  - A large, but smaller, geography facilitated a better focus, same face service provision and an opportunity to increase community education and integrated service delivery with all key partners.
  - The Family Responsibility Commission provided a broader focus on issues impacting upon parenting and young people in the Welfare Reform Communities allowing a better understanding of contemporary issues affecting communities and families.
  - The development of safe houses allowed planned community and family contact and options at the investigation stage to be able to place children in care in their local community.
  - A residential facility was opened in Cooktown to help keep children requiring out of home care in the local area.
  - Gains have been made in the availability of foster care provision in the South Cape area.
  - Improvements were made on the inconsistency of the provision of recognised entity service, family support service and family intervention service.
10. Current data drawn from the July 2012 Regional Director Contextual Report for the Cape South CSSC would indicate that the CSSC is performing well within the current context of child protection services. Data indicates that:

- workload stable at 19 cases per worker

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- staffing stable with 1.2 vacancies out of an establishment of 30.5 staff
- all children have a current health passport 100 percent
- a current case plan completion rate of 74 percent.

**Key regional examples of service delivery and the identification of any other key persons able to speak to the initiatives**

- Safe houses have been established in the communities of Pomppuraaw and Kowanyama. This has allowed the CSSC to provide a short term in community out of home care option when needed for children. During the investigation and assessment (I&A) stage this allows children to remain in community whilst the investigation is occurring and also allows for the identification and follow up of potential kin carers when needed. If not needed, a safety plan and return of children to their parents can occur. The safe houses have also facilitated children returning to their community for community and family contact visits and to participate in other significant events such as "sorry business". Safe houses have also recruited their staff locally which will have an impact in improving community capacity in understanding the care needs of children and the work of the department. Key contact: Keiran Smith, Director Safe Kids Program, ACT for Kids. Contact details can be provided on request.
- The Cooktown residential service, like the safe house, also provides a short term care option for children who originate from Cooktown, Hopevale, Laura and Wujal, Wujal, thus allowing children to remain in their locality if not community as with the safe houses. This assists the Cooktown based ongoing care team to be able to work with families and children and ensure family and community contact occurs as is desirable. It also allows for the CSSC to identify potential kin carers and other out of home care provision if so needed. The residential service is also able to work with children as per the child's case plan. Key contact: Peter Marino, Managing Director, Alternate Care. Contact details can be provided on request.
- Foster care recruitment and support is a vital component in offering children out of home care options in communities and some gains have been made. The recruitment and retention of foster carers has always been problematic but some capacity has been achieved. Data provided by the Placement Support Unit as of the 3 September 2012 states that 53 children are currently placed in foster placements in the Cape South Area. This represents a significant improvement in foster carer capacity but also leaves a significant deficit of placements given the number of children in care.

Data for Commission of Inquiry

as at  
03/0  
9/20  
12

Cape  
York  
South  
CSSC

Community	Current Approved Carers			
	AFC	KIN	LTG	TOTAL
Coen	2	2	0	4
Cooktown	5	3	0	8
Hopevale	8	3	0	11
Kowanyama	4	6	1	11

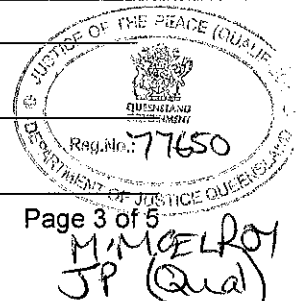
Current Placements			
Approved Foster Carer	Approved KIN Carer	Residentials/Safe House	TOTAL
4	3	0	7
1	2	5	8
8	8	0	16
2	7	2	11

Potential New Carer Numbers		
Expression of Interest	Applications In progress	TOTAL
4	8	12
3	9	12
5	7	12
5	6	11

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Lockhart River	1	2	0	3
Pompur aaw	3	6	0	9
Rossville	2	0	0	2
Wujal Wujal	1	0	0	1

26 22 1 49

5	1	0	6
1	6	1	8
1	2	0	3
2	0	0	2

24 29 8 61

5	3	8
2	8	10
1	0	1
6	1	7

31 42 73

Key contact: Pauline Carlton, Director Placement Support Unit. Contact details can be provided on request.

14. The Family Responsibility Commission works in two communities in the South Cape area, Hopevale and Coen. The Commission has worked to address dysfunction and address key issues in these communities. They have proven to be a strong key partner in attempting to work with families needing assistance, in identifying service gaps and in challenging families and communities when needed. The Commission has also been instrumental in bringing service providers together and in perusing and advocating for the needs of vulnerable families and children to ensure that they receive the services that they require. Key contact: David Glasgow, Commissioner Family Responsibilities Commission. Contact details can be provided on request.
15. Wellbeing centres have been developed in the welfare reform communities and provide a range of social services to assist bring about positive change in individual and family functioning.
16. Family support and family intervention services have been funded to provide assistance to families in respect of early intervention and ongoing support towards reunification of children to families.
17. Recognised Entities are in place in all communities to provide cultural advice and community knowledge in decision making around children and families.
18. The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYP&CG), Community Visitors (CV) program is well established and provides any concerns to the CSSC for follow up action.

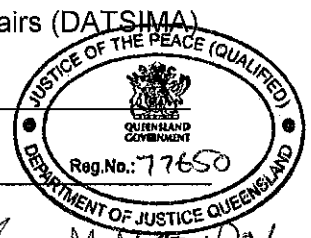
**Agencies, (government and non-government) that partner with the Department of Communities in providing child protection services or related support services**

19. Key partners include:
  - Queensland Police Service
  - Queensland Health
  - Education Queensland
  - Youth Justice Services
  - Recognised Entity (Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care - RAATSIC)
  - Family Responsibility Commission
  - Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, Community Visitors Program
  - Courts
  - Department of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander & Multi Cultural Affairs (DATSIMA)

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20. Related support services include:

- ACT for Kids safe house program
- Housing
- Family Support Service (RAATSIC)
- Family Intervention Services (ACT For Kids)
- Alternate Care
- Queensland Family Violence Legal Service
- Cape York Partnerships Parenting programs (welfare Reform Communities)
- Residential Schools
- Well Being Centres (Royal Flying Doctors)
- General Practice
- Foster Care Queensland
- Apunipima Primary Health Care
- Local Government.

**Current challenges – What needs to be fixed and what if any policies and procedures may be negatively impacting on the way business is conducted?**

21. Sector wide:

- Work needs to be continued in order to address disadvantage across all areas affecting Indigenous communities.
- Welfare reform type initiatives need to be employed across all Indigenous communities in an attempt to increase the capacity of communities to address their own issues.
- Careful consideration should be afforded to easing any alcohol restrictions.
- Models of service delivery that promote same face service delivery need to be fostered and a keen eye kept on service models that fragment the delivery of services.
- Service systems need to be economically sustainable.
- Funded services need to perform and ensure service delivery.
- Services should be reviewed across all sectors and any duplication eliminated.

22. Child Safety Services specific:

- Models of service delivery that promote same face service should be promoted and careful consideration given to any models of service delivery that fragment service provision.
- A formula for staffing and performance monitoring needs to be developed to take into account additional work load factors in servicing remote Indigenous communities such as travel and meeting protocol requirements for working in Indigenous communities.
- Qualified Indigenous staff remain scarce and numbers need to be increased.
- Staff accommodation remains in short supply and of limited quality which can impact on delivering services.
- Blue card requirements remain a major issue in excluding Indigenous people from being carers.

Declared before me at Cairns this 5<sup>th</sup> day of September 2012.

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*M. McELROY  
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