

**QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION  
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

**STATEMENT OF ANTOINE PAYET**

I, **ANTOINE PAYET**, of c/- 100 George Street, Beenleigh in the State of Queensland, Acting Regional Director, South East Region, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare:

**ROLE**

1. I am the acting Regional Director South East Region, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.
2. I have been appointed to this position since April 2012.
3. When planning and reviewing my work and seeking approval for decisions, when required, I report to Pamela Steele-Wareham, Regional Executive Director, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (the department).
4. Prior to this appointment, I was the Assistant Regional Director for the South East region from December 2010. Prior to this I was the manager of the Nerang child safety service centre (CSSC) and was in this position for three years.
5. I hold a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Social Work and a Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management.
6. The purpose of my role, as Regional Director is to oversee the provision of child protection services in the South East region.
7. My duties and activities include:
  - oversee the operations of 12 work units - ten CSSCs, a regional intake unit and a placement services unit
  - participate in overall leadership of the South East region
  - engage with government and non-government stakeholders in the provision of child protection services within the region.

**OTHER ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED**

**Notifications**

8. The information in relation to notifications has been provided in the statement of Michelle Susan Oliver, manager of the Regional Intake Service, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, dated 26 September 2012.

**Service delivery – how well is the child protection system functioning?**

9. The South East region comprises of ten CSSCs, a regional intake service (RIS), and a placement services unit (PSU).
10. CSSCs assess and investigate notifications where children are reported to be in need of protection. CSSCs are also responsible for ongoing intervention with children and their families where children have been assessed to be in need of protection. This intervention

Signature of witness to Inquiry \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person witnessing statement \_\_\_\_\_

Request No. 2006046



can be in the form of family support and monitoring in the home or where a child is subject to a custodial or guardianship Child Protection Order (CPO) through the Childrens Court, the child may be placed in an alternative placement.

11. For the year ending 31 March 2012, the South East region recorded 3,638 notifications (CPNs).
12. For this same period, the region provided case management services to 2,069 children subject to ongoing intervention, including children subject to a CPO and children subject to intervention with parental agreement (IPA). The breakdown is as follows:
  - 1,796 children were subject to CPOs
  - 1,722 children were living away from home
  - 273 children were subject to an IPA.
13. The RIS is responsible for receiving, assessing and processing intakes received for the South East region as well as making referrals to the Helping Out Families (HOF) programme where appropriate.
14. The PSU is responsible for coordinating, negotiating and supporting out-of-home placements for children in the South East region. Details are provided below:
  - The department provides approximately \$41.1 million in funds for placement services in the South East region. This funding includes 1073 foster and kinship care placements, 98 residential and semi-independent living placements and 181 intensive foster care placements.
  - The overarching intent of Child Safety Services staff is to meet the physical, social and psychological needs of individual children and young people through a stable placement, with a preference for family based placement options.
  - At times, limitations in the funded system such as the capacity to recruit kinship and foster carers, the level of staff skill within non-government organisations and at times, models of service delivery available, make this difficult to achieve for all children and young people in care.

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

15. **Helping out Families (HOF)** - HOF is a \$55 million initiative (over four years) and a key component of Queensland's response to the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* and of Queensland's reform to the child protection system.
16. HOF aims to reduce demand for tertiary child protection services, prevent re-notification to Child Safety Services and provide an enhanced and community based secondary response with better outcomes for children and families.
17. HOF is based on local partnerships between government and non-government sectors. HOF has five elements – RIS, Family Support Alliance (FSA), Intensive Family Support, increased domestic and family violence services and Health Home Visiting – operating in three trial sites, Logan, Beenleigh/Eagleby/Nerang and Gold Coast.
18. Since commencement in October 2010, HOF has had in excess of 4,500 referrals and is indicating positive outcomes. Ms Tracey Ryan, Director, Placement and Services Support, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, is available to speak to this initiative.

Signature of witness to Inquiry \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person witnessing statement \_\_\_\_\_

Request No. 2006046





19. **South East Region Kinship Project** - commenced in September 2011 with ten (five from the Cleveland CSSC and five from the Nerang CSSC) kinship carer applicants. The applicants receive six targeted support, education and information sessions from a specialist service provider as part of their assessment and approval process. The purpose of the project is to equip kinship carers with a greater understanding of departmental expectations, the needs of particular children and their role as approved departmental carers, thereby reducing the number of matters of concern and improve retention rate.
20. Thus far, nine families have been through the program and have reported a greater understanding of their roles vis a vis the needs of children in their care and the requirements of the department. I am advised that there have been no matters of concern reported for this cohort of carers and they continue to be carers with the department. The project will be formally reviewed at the end of this calendar year and recommendations will be made as to its ongoing viability and usefulness.
21. **Project Booyah** - is a joint project between the Coomera District Queensland Police Service (QPS), the Nerang CSSC and the Nerang Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC). The partnership has combined several different agencies to work together to encourage young people between the ages of 13 to 17 years to reach their full potential and encourage them to change behaviours and hopefully divert them from the judicial system.
22. The project has three phases - a wilderness adventure therapy phase, an education phase and a training phase culminating in a graduation ceremony linking the participants with career information and exploration of prospects. The project had an initial intake of 23 young people with 15 finishing with a qualification. The project recently won the Youth Participation award at the recent Child Protection Week with an award to Detective Senior Sergeant Ian Frame, Officer In Charge of the Child Protection Investigation Unit (CPIU), Coomera District

**Agencies, government and non-government who partner with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in providing child protection services or support services**

23. The South East region works closely with a number of key government and non-government agencies within the region, including:
  - Government agencies:
    - Evolve Interagency Services (Evolve) - provides therapeutic and behaviour support services to children and young people in the custody or guardianship of the department and who have severe and complex psychological problems
    - Suspected Child abuse And Neglect (SCAN) core members - the purpose of the SCAN team is to enable a coordinated, multi-agency response to children where statutory intervention is required to assess and meet their protective needs
    - Queensland Health (QH)
    - QPS
    - Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYP&CG)
    - Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE)
    - Youth Justice (YJ) services
    - Centrelink.
  - Non-government, grant funded agencies:

Signature of witness to Inquiry \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person witnessing statement \_\_\_\_\_

Request No. 2006046





- Indigenous child protection agencies - Recognised Entities (REs) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Support Services (ATSIFSS)
- Placement services - foster and kinship care, specialist foster care, residential care, supported independent living services
- Support services - counselling and intervention services, sexual abuse counselling services (SACS), transition from care services
- Peak bodies
- Family Support Alliance (FSA) including:
  - ACT for Kids
  - Lifeline Community Care
  - Benevolent Society.

**Current challenges – what needs to be fixed and what if any policies and procedures may be negatively impacting on the way services are delivered?**

24. The South East region is faced with a number of challenges with regards to placement options for children and young people. The rise in the number of children entering the child protection system and the inability of the department to recruit and retain foster carers has arguably placed a considerable strain on the traditional placement options. This has, at times, necessitated the purchase of expensive placement options or obtaining placements for children and young people outside of their community. There is a fundamental need for a paradigm shift in how our society protects its children. We must now invest in a more robust prevention system to support families and children at home thereby obviating the need for ongoing growth in the out-of-home care system.
25. Changes in fiscal and social landscapes requiring parents to be gainfully employed demands a different approach to remunerating foster carers - one possibility is to 'professionalise' foster care creating an incentive for qualified and motivated persons to become foster carers.
26. The South East region, Gold Coast CSSCs share a border and other social utilities with New South Wales including the Tweed Heads Hospital. For example, Tweed Heads Hospital is where a number of pregnant mothers-to-be on the southern end of the Gold Coast are required to attend to give birth. This has posed a challenge for the local CSSCs where child protection issues are identified. The differences in legislative frameworks between the states have impacted negatively on timely statutory service delivery to children and families as Queensland officers have no authority to exercise statutory powers outside of the state without the execution of a warrant. An option to remedy this problem would be to recruit a cohort of special officers with authority to intervene in both jurisdictions as part of a review of the *Child Protection Act 1999*.
27. Lastly, the Logan catchment is one of most culturally diverse communities in Queensland with over 25 percent of the population born overseas. This poses special challenges for child protection intervention, including access to pertinent cultural information and local professional interpreters. There is therefore a need for the creation of a comprehensive, multicultural/multilingual based hub in the area. The purpose of which would be to facilitate and enhance the development of communities in ensuring effective protection of children.
28. The South East region has been very mindful of the diverse cultural landscape of the Logan catchment and over the past 12 months has been involved in a number of cultural activities including:

Signature of witness to Inquiry \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person witnessing statement \_\_\_\_\_

Request No. 2006046



- Facilitation of a workshop on child protection in conjunction with Griffith University for the Samoan community
- Guest at one the African communities council meetings and facilitation of a session on child protection which was well received by the group and has forged a positive working relationship between the African community and CSSC staff in the area.

Declared before me at Beenleigh this 26<sup>th</sup> day of September 2012.

*BSIvatan*  
JP (QUAL) 108588

Signature of witness to Inquiry \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person witnessing statement \_\_\_\_\_

Request No. 2006046

