

QCPCI

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Date: 7.2.2013

Exhibit number: 162



**QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**


Statement of Witness

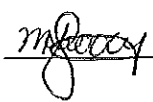
<i>Name of Witness</i>	Marissa Lee Joanna Sherry
<i>Date of Birth</i>	24 February 1978
<i>Address and contact details</i>	Cnr Mary Street and Camooweal Street Mount Isa QLD 4825 07 4740 1333
<i>Occupation</i>	Service Manager, Churches of Christ Care Pathways, Mount Isa
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Geoff Gunn
<i>Date taken</i>	5 February 2013

I, Marissa Lee Joanna Sherry, Service Manager, Churches of Christ Care Pathways, Mount Isa, Cnr Mary Street and Camooweal Street, Mount Isa in the State of Queensland state;

1. I am the Service Manager, Churches of Christ Care Pathways, Mount Isa. Pathways Mount Isa consists of four programs including a residential, semi independent living (SIL), fostering and intensive fostering program.
2. I've worked in the industry for 17 years.
3. Care Pathways has one residential program (4 young people), two semi independent living (SIL) programs (2 young people), an intensive fostering service (6 young people) and a fostering service (97 children)
4. If we had more resources I could confidently fill another 2 residential houses, at least (8 more beds).
5. As an agency we've approached the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (the Department) about this.
6. Last year there was some discussion around a female residential, an operations manager spoke to the Regional Director around the need for that service.
7. Making a fifth bed in Residential is an option providing the house is able to accommodate another young person.

House structure and personnel

8. The Mount Isa residential is located at 

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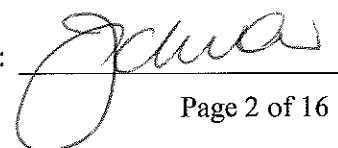
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9. It's a low set house on concrete stumps.
10. The house is owned by Churches of Christ in Queensland.
11. The neighbours are aware that the house is a residential facility. There have been two issues arise between the residential and neighbours, which have been addressed very promptly.
12. There are four (4) young people at the residential.
13. Two (2) of these young people have been placed at another residential facility prior to their placement at the Pathways residential. The periods of time were for 6 months and 2 months.
14. There are staff on the premises 24 hours, 7 days per week. There is a case manager and youth worker who work during the day during the week, and two youth workers rostered evenings and weekends.
15. Current staff have from certificate level to bachelor qualifications. There are currently two staff who do not have any qualifications, however, they have significant experience in working with young people. One of these two staff is a local Indigenous person who brings with him exceptional skills and knowledge in working with young people. Two staff are also engaged in studying Bachelor level courses.
16. We actively recruit Indigenous staff, and the Elders have been a great source of information around appropriate staff.
17. We have a number of local Indigenous staff who our kids have great relationships with; and they are very effective with the kids. They're a great resource when we're struggling around cultural issues – they're great to access for their information and knowledge, the Elders as well.
18. Staff are provided the opportunity to commence study through the organisation's performance mechanism, and access assistance through a study assistance scheme, which assists with the costs involved in studying.
19. All staff are appointed pending the receipt of a positive Blue Card notice or confirmation. Staff are also required to be issued with a suitable Licensed Care Service Check prior to commencement of any work including induction training. Applicants undergo a panel interview, and referee checks prior to licensed care service checks being completed.
20. Staff are rostered over a 24 hour, 7 day a week roster.
21. Whilst on shift staff have access to secure sleeping quarters.
22. Staff change each morning and in the afternoon. Staff work 8 hour shifts.
23. There has been no particular modifications needed to be made to the house.
24. All young people placed at the residential are aged 11-14 years.

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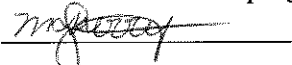
25. The young people placed at the residential identify as being Aboriginal from North Queensland communities (one is from Doomadgee, and the rest are from Mount Isa).
26. The young people placed at the residential at this time have been placed for the following periods of time: the shortest placement is currently 5 months (1 young person), 12 months (1 young person) and 2 years (2 young people).
27. Staff and young people prepare food and meals together. A menu planner is completed with young people on a weekly basis.
28. Young people are bought a takeaway meal once per fortnight.
29. The takeaway is purchased by staff. This is chosen by the young people and staff.
30. It is aimed to provide young people with a balanced diet with fresh fruit, vegetables and meat. Soft drinks and junk foods are not a regular item in the residential. Soft drinks are not provided to young people unless on an activity or outing. Limited processed foods are purchased for young people.

Financial arrangements

31. The residential is managed by Churches of Christ in Queensland.
32. Churches of Christ in Queensland is a not for profit organisation.
33. Funding is received from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services on a quarterly basis, however, the annual funding for the service is 1.126 million dollars, which is for 8.25 full time equivalent (FTE) staff positions on a 24 hour, 7 day roster. This funding also is utilised to meet all daily care needs for young people including activity, clothing, medical and cultural support. The service operates on a quarterly basis. There is allowance of a one month buffer being held in surplus. Any funds over this surplus (buffer) are not funded in the following quarterly payment.
34. Young people receive up to \$20 per week with \$5 compulsory savings and the remaining is attached to a rewards system and chores.
35. In the event that there are damages to property, the young person will have a payment system where they repay the damages. Whilst the full amount of the damages is not paid, it contributes towards the cost. In the event young people are charged for wilful damage or damage to property charges, they do not repay the damages. Charges are not brought about often, and only as a last resort.
36. The groceries are purchased by Pathways.

Transport arrangements

37. Staff transport the young people to school or if they wish and it is age appropriate they will ride or walk to school. The program that young people are engaged in at this time,

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pick up young people from the residential and take them to school. The program also returns them to the residential following school.

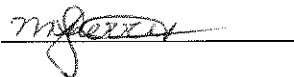
38. Staff transport young people to after school activities.
39. Staff on shift are required to transport young people. There is an ambulance service available when necessary in emergency situations.
40. There are no bus services that operate in Mount Isa.

Sleeping arrangements

41. There are 6 bedrooms in the house, with one being an office also.
42. Each young person has their own bedroom, and staff on shift have separate sleeping quarters.
43. Young people have a shared bathroom, staff have a separate bathroom.
44. There is a laundry at the house.
45. Young people are encouraged to wash their own clothing and bedding. Staff ensure that this is kept up and young people have access to clean clothing and linen.
46. Young people have spoken about having girlfriends occasionally; however, I am uncertain that they have girlfriends at this time.
47. Friends of the young people visit the residential, however, this is negotiated with staff who are on shift, to ensure that it is an appropriate time including that there is nothing occurring for other young people. In the event that behaviours become an issue at the residential visitors are asked to leave.
48. Young people do at times spend nights away at friends and family through a negotiated process which includes approval from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to ensure that these are appropriate people.
49. These young people are aged 11-14 years.
50. Young people spend nights with family and friends.

Entertainment arrangements

51. Young people are provided with activity opportunities. These activities are paid and non-paid activities. The service grant funding is utilised to pay for these activities.
52. Young people may go to the movies once per fortnight.
53. Young people attend a paid activity once per fortnight; this may include bowling or movies. There are no theme park type activities; however, there have been trips planned and negotiated with young people for a trip for 6 days. This was an end of year holiday and young people did visit the theme parks whilst there. This had been based on good behaviour and school attendance for the young people in the residential.

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54. The residential does have a recreation room, where they have access to a PlayStation. Access to this room is not allowed during school hours (excluding school holidays). Games young people play are appropriate to their age (according to ratings, etc). Access to the recreation room is negotiated with staff and based on appropriate behaviour.
55. There are 2 TV's at the residential. One in the lounge room and one in the recreation room.
56. Watching television is a negotiated process between young people, which has not presented as an issue, young people are willing to negotiate with one another.
57. There is no internet access at the residential.
58. In the event that young people want to access the internet they are taken to the library where they can get on the internet. This is not something that young people are generally interested in at the moment. Staff will supervise this access to ensure inappropriate access to material is not gained.
59. Activities include bowling, basketball and swimming, lake – fishing and swimming, BMX riding. Art and craft activities with young people include group activities and individual interests for young people.
60. One of our young people identified he was interested in doing jackaroo work / a horsemanship program. We accessed a program being delivered to Indigenous young people, Beyond Billabong. This cost was shared between Department of Communities and Pathways, and was approximately \$1500 (see apprenticeships and vocational training).
61. Cultural activities include Elders sessions on a fortnightly basis where they learn traditional cooking, bushcraft, and cultural connections (see cultural activities).
62. Staff aim to ensure young people are engaged in positive recreational activities to limit boredom and promote positive relationships with elders and positive role models in young people's lives.

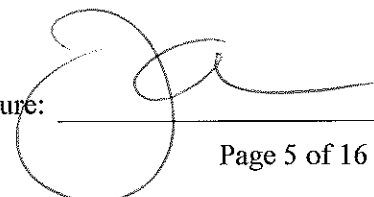
Cultural activities

63. Over the last 18 months we've made some real inroads connecting young people with Elders. This provides a cultural connection for the young people.
64. We needed Indigenous advice and input in to the way we were working with young people.
65. We sought out and made connection with one of the Elders engaged by Education Queensland to do some cultural programming.

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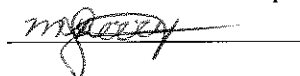


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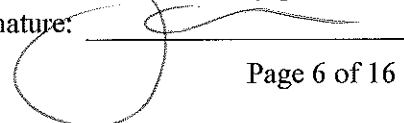


66. We met with the Elder (Kalkadoon Elder Nana J), her husband (Kalkadoon Elder Pop A), and Elder C. We explained to them we weren't knowledgeable in what our kids needed, but we wanted to work with them around meeting our kids' cultural needs.
67. We spoke with CSOs, Team Leaders and Departmental Managers around what that might look like.
68. Three of the kids are Kalkadoon. They knew of the Elders, but didn't have relationships with them.
69. In the initial stages the kids were very resistant. I think some of the resistance was around the unknown, and our kids don't trust very easily.
70. To introduce the Elders to the kids we had some afternoon teas with the Elders at the residential, there was nothing formal – no planned activity.
71. Before the afternoon tea we told the kids the three Elders would be coming around. The kids were pretty flippant; it was a really normal response.
72. The Elders worked very hard, they were very respectful of the boys' space. As a service we were very conscious of having as normal an afternoon as possible.
73. We had another afternoon tea probably a week later. Nana J gave the kids some history around Kalkadoon people. Pop A talked to them about young men's business, and suggested to the kids about going out bush. The Elders said to them 'we want to spend some time with you; we've got a really proud history.'
74. The kids haven't had a strong connection to culture or land. The boys have witnessed public intoxication and fighting. My belief is that they believed that's what being Aboriginal is about; they lacked the knowledge of bushcraft and bush skills, and positive role models.
75. On a fortnightly basis the boys go out with the Elders. At the moment they're building a bush hut with the Elders out of things they locate out bush – tree branches, twigs, etc.
76. Mid-November we had a series of significant bush fires in Mount Isa; unfortunately one of those bushfires was in the area where the bush hut was being constructed.
77. I wasn't sure how the boys would respond to that because they were extremely proud of the work they were achieving with the Elders.
78. Whilst they were really sad about their loss, they were also very focussed on re-building. They approached Pop M and Uncle C, who have led the bushcraft, and said 'we want to rebuild.'
79. The hut rebuilding is continuing and will provide a place for them to have place and time with the Elders.
80. Nana J also does some traditional cooking with the boys. They have done cabbage stew, a very popular food for Kalkadoon people, and finding bush tucker – witchetty grubs, etc.

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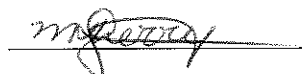
Improvements in behaviour

81. We've seen a major decline in the occurrence of critical incidents and damage to our property.
82. Prior to the engagement with the Elders, the police were at the residential about once per fortnight for violence, aggression towards staff, property damage – smashing windows, smashing a stove top, punching walls, etc.
83. In last 6 months we've had the police attend the service 3 times.
84. Non-critical incidents have also reduced.
85. For the two young people who have been at the residential for about 2 years, their school attendance has improved significantly. I would relate that to the cultural program, and the routine and structure they have at the residential.

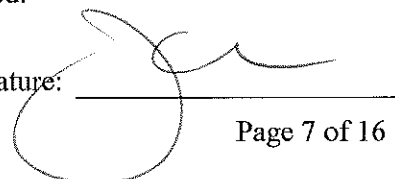
The Sanctuary model

86. We've implemented the Sanctuary model as an organisation, working in a way that is trauma informed. All of our kids come from a harmed or neglected background.
87. The most important aspect of the Sanctuary model is being aware of impact of trauma. It's not about what's wrong with the kid, it's what's happened for that young person.
88. Teaching us as an organisation, staff, and young people how we can communicate our needs. We've been really open about what the model's based on.
89. One of our kids would escalate very quickly. He's a bigger kid, and he's pretty scary when he escalates; he's very loud, bangs, kicks, etc. He said 'I'm not carrying a safety plan, but I'm happy for staff to show me my safety plan if they think I need it.' One of his steps on his safety plan was to have a cup of tea. Staff printed out photos of a cup of tea. When we could see he was starting to escalate, we tried it a couple of times, and it was really effective.
90. The Sanctuary program has helped our staff in how they work with young people, and how they respond to young people. Sanctuary is focused on staff wellbeing also, if staff are okay, they can work with our kids well also. Staff are a lot more resilient to the behaviours and challenges that you experience in working with young people.
91. The staff are supervised in a different way, surveys conducted across Pathways services, staff are feeling a lot more supported, we're acknowledging the grief and loss that occurs in the work we do. Staff are feeling a lot more supported.

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92. The model tightens the framework and our approach, and puts the focus back on to staff self-care.

Education and schooling

93. All of the young people are currently attend a schooling program. This is an alternative schooling program.
94. The young people currently placed are in grades 7-10.
95. Young people are currently not performing overly well. All four young people are performing below average in core subjects including reading and writing.
96. The school program that the young people attend is approximately 10 minutes from the residential.
97. Young people are picked up by the program that they are attending. If they are not picked up, they are transported to school by staff on shift.
98. Young people return to the residential after school. They are dropped off by the program they are attending. If not they are picked up by Pathways staff.
99. If young people do not return or their whereabouts is unknown, attempts would be made to locate them i.e. attending places frequented. Staff on shift assist young people with their homework as soon as young people get home.
100. I am not aware of any stigmatisation issues for young people placed with us. I am aware that in previous residential I have worked at that this has been a significant issue; however, it does not appear to be of concern for the boys currently placed.
101. We have just started a new semester and school year. Our kids have just reengaged in school with three of them attending today.
102. All of our discussions with kids around attending school, and if age appropriate if they're not interested in school, talking to them about other vocational opportunities, and presenting what's available. If a young person says 'I want to work at Kmart,' presenting them with that information about how they do it.
103. We're kids are identifying 'I want to do this,' we will continue to look for opportunities.

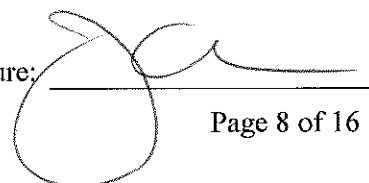
Apprenticeships and vocational training

104. Our current boys are 11-14; they're not at the age.
105. In the past we've worked with young people who've identified they want a part time job; we've assisted and supported them through that process.
106. Applying through Xstrata's Indigenous employment apprenticeship program, supporting young people through that application process.

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107. One of our kids identified he was interested in a horsemanship / jackarooing type career, we located the Beyond Billabong program run by Indigenous brothers. He attended that program with the consent of the Department. Unfortunately the program was cut through funding cuts of the Newman Government (see entertainment).

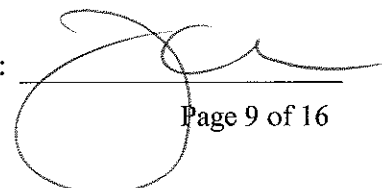
Transitional arrangements

108. Planning for transition commences with young people as soon as practical. Experience thus far has been to commence transition planning with young people around the age of 15 (dependent on the young person's ability), this can look like the young person completing living skills assessments to establish what areas of development is needed for the young person to successfully transition.
109. Young people are engaged in the transition planning process from the commencement of the process, as is any stakeholder that has any involvement with the young person.
110. The transition plan is developed with the young person and other stakeholders; therefore, this could include the Child Safety Officer (CSO), Team Leader and Pathways staff. Family and other agency staff can also be included in this process.
111. Pathways staff that are involved in the transition planning process possess case planning experience and varied human services qualifications. The current case manager is currently completing a Bachelor of Social Science, possesses a number diploma level qualifications and has 10 years experience in working with young people in residential settings.
112. Pathways Mount Isa has a number of successful transition plans I can recall. The most recent young person was placed when he was 12 at the residential and is now 17 years. He transitioned to our semi-independent living (SIL) program commencing in July with youth worker support. The transition planning for him commenced at 14 due to his needs and his request to commence the process at this time. He completed a living skills assessment and further SIL modules in preparation for independent living. He is currently living independently and doing very well. He is attending school regularly. He continues to be supported by staff around his living skill development and eventual transition to independence.
113. The second young person who also transitioned from the residential to the SIL program was placed at the residential when he was 16, and transitioned to SIL when he was 17. This young person then transitioned to a Department of Housing house. When he was turning 19 he commenced a private rental, was working full time and was doing extremely well. This young person was fully involved in his transition planning and the decisions around his transition.

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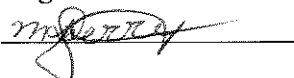
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114. I have not found that other young adversely impact upon the transition of young people to independent living, however, I can see how this may occur in a residential environment.
115. I have not experienced young people left to transition themselves form care.
116. My experience in Mount Isa is that young people know that the residential is a good place for them to be. In another residential I have worked at, young people have self placed, staying somewhere that is not approved by the Department of Communities. The service and the Department of Communities worked very hard at attempting to engage with the young person at the time on a daily basis, and encourage them to return to their placement. This continued until it was evident that the young person was not going to return to their placement.
117. The young people I have seen transition have moved to housing commission homes, or private rental.

Access to therapeutic services / medical services

118. All young people are referred in negotiation with the Department of Communities to services that they require. This can include the Child Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS), and Centacare – counselling from psychologists and social workers.
119. Allied health services can be included and play an active role in the case planning of young people. As an example, one young person we are working with is currently engaged with a psychologist from CYMHS. We consult with the psychologist and discuss significant events for this young person prior to case planning and Family Group Meetings with the Department of Communities, and also in the event we observe an escalation in this young person’s behaviours.
120. Access to medical professionals is through the public health system. Appointments are made through medical centres or alternatively through the hospital where necessary. In the event that a young person is required to see a specialist, this is done through a referral to the relevant specialist.
121. If there are any costs associated with this it is paid from grant funding. There has been one occasion where a young person did need to see a specialist in Brisbane; this was paid for from grant funding.
122. Young people have not needed to seek psychiatric assistance, however, I believe the appropriate referral would be sought, and arrangements would be made for the young person to attend. Department of Communities staff would be involved in the discussions for this to occur.
123. Pathways’ role is to ensure that young people’s wishes are being considered in the decisions being made. This occurs around family contact, case planning, schooling,

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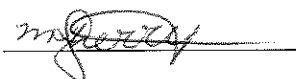
education and medical. Young people at the residential are also provided the opportunity to see the Community Visitor on a monthly basis to identify concerns that they have with both the department and / or Pathways services.

124. Young people are provided the opportunity to see three Indigenous Elders on a fortnightly basis. This process is about providing opportunity to allow young people to reconnect or remain connected to their culture. This time is focused on bushcraft skills, connection to country and culture, story telling and traditional cooking. Camps have also occurred with Elders to promote the relationship with young people (see cultural activities).

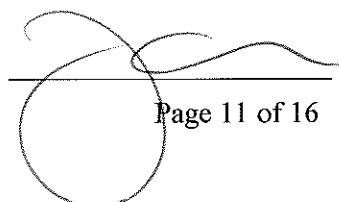
Interaction with the Queensland Police Service (QPS), and other first response assistance

125. On occasion QPS have been called to the service to assist in the management of destructive behaviours including severe property damage, or staff assault. Over the last six months, there have been three occurrences that police have had to be contacted to assist staff on shift. These were after staff had attempted to de-escalate young people. One of these occurrences was for a young person identifying that he was wanting to hurt himself, and it was believed that he was an immediate threat to himself, therefore, an ambulance was phoned, who were accompanied by the police.
126. The police are contacted by staff in the event that young people are at risk of being hurt or hurting other people through their actions, or in the event of an emergency situation. There have definitely been times that staff have inappropriately contacted police for the purposes of behaviour guidance and support. This has decreased over the last 12-18 months through re-training staff. This can be attributed to the implementation of 'Sanctuary' across Pathways services, and staff working in a more therapeutic approach with young people. Further to Sanctuary, for the young people currently placed, the ongoing cultural group sessions can be attributed to the reduction in the involvement of police. Young people generally have a greater respect for themselves and identity.
127. I support the decisions that have been made by staff to contact the police over the last 6 months. The occurrence of the use of the police has reduced significantly.
128. In the event that a decision is made to get police assistance, there is generally an incident in progress; therefore, the contact of police would be recorded in a Critical Incident Report, which is forwarded to the Team Leader, Service Manager and relevant departmental staff.
129. There has not been concern identified by neighbours in regard to police attendance during my time in Mount Isa.

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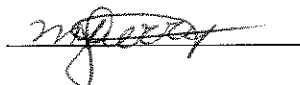
Discipline, drug and alcohol management

130. In the framework that we work within young people are provided with positive behaviour guidance, rather than discipline. As an agency we do not discipline children. We provide young people with choices that they can make, being positive and negative choices, but ultimately that choice is theirs. From their actions there are natural and logical consequences. For example if a young person causes property damage, a natural and logical consequence may be criminal charges.
131. Staff who are employed in Pathways' residential recognise that most the young people we work with have been exposed to levels of neglect, harm and trauma, therefore, punitive measures are not necessarily effective. Staff are trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, which focuses on triggers of behaviours and working with young people to understand their emotions and assist them to change their behaviours. This approach also assists staff and young people repairing relationships following an incident.
132. We will generally see other young people's behaviours escalate if one young person's behaviours escalate. This can include young people targeting one another. Based on this occurring, our residential has a facility behaviour guidance plan, which focuses on the regular behaviours and triggers that are observed by young people in the residential, and staff can respond to these behaviours in a therapeutic and a consistent manner.
133. Young people are not excluded or 'thrown out' of the residential at any time.
134. Staff do not restrict young people leaving the residential, however, in the event that concern is held in regard to a young person's safety or that of another person, contact with necessary authorities would be made, and staff would follow young people when they leave the house.
135. Young people are never physically and forcibly returned.
136. I am unclear in terms of what secure care facility models look like and, therefore, would need to know more about these prior to having a view on this type of model of care.

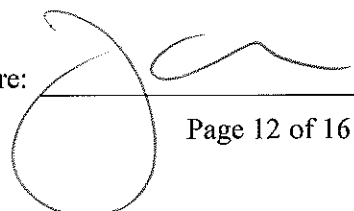
Secure care

137. The residential is the boys' house; the staff are on a rotating roster.
138. At the moment the kids are at home most of the time, and if they're not we know where they are – they're with family, etc.
139. But there's times that we have young people who don't return when they should.
140. I can see the merit in secure care for kids that are in detention. I would support a home environment over a detention environment.
141. My question is where do kids get nurturing?

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142. I don't know enough around secure care to have a view on how this would meet the needs of children, I have a general understanding, however, I would need more information on how one would operate.
143. I have experience in supported accommodation assistance program services (SAAP) for young people who are homeless, they are more shelter based. They're not secure, it's short term – overnight up to 3 months – If you leave you lose your bed.

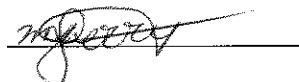
Interaction with parents and family members

144. All young people currently placed have contact with their families; this includes their parents and siblings.
145. For one young person this is supervised contact. For two other young people it is as they wish for contact to happen. For the fourth young person, there is limited contact with his family due to his family not living in Mount Isa.
146. The contact with natural parents ranges from daily for one young person to quite irregularly for another due to the whereabouts of his parent not always being known.
147. For the first example provided under the heading 'transitional arrangements,' the support of his family was of significant benefit to the success for his transition. All people involved with the young person provided him with a great level of encouragement around his transition.
148. Pathways attempts to regularly ensure that the family are aware of the case plan for young people.
149. Preference around visitation to the residential is that it is a negotiated process to ensure that visits occur at an appropriate time. We have not had parents approach to visit the residential; however, appropriate support and approvals would need to occur with the Department of Communities, and as with all visitors, this would need to occur at an appropriate time, based on all young people at the residential.
150. All young people currently placed live at the residential. There is one young person who visits his parents and stays at his parents' (approximately once per fortnight). In the event that this occurs, this is reported to the Department of Communities as per an agreement with them.

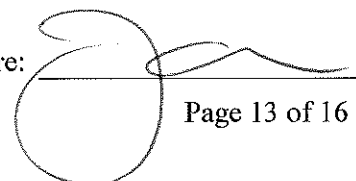
Intersection with foster care

151. I'm a supporter of residential care, I've seen it work, and I've seen amazing outcomes for kids. I don't believe we invest enough in prevention programs.

Witness signature:



Officer signature:



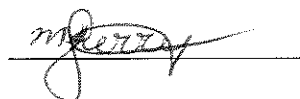
152. In my experience the problem in Mount Isa, if kids are 10-12 and they're reunified, and for whatever reason they come back into care, that's when we have difficulty placing them – that's generally when we also see them displaying significant, antisocial behaviours.

Relationship with the Department

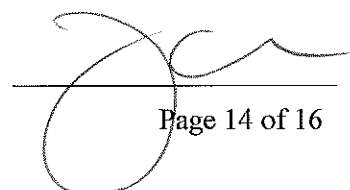
153. I believe we have an excellent working relationship with the Department and the CSOs responsible for our kids in the residential.
154. There is some frustration around decisions made without consultation. For example, a young person from Doomadgee had a family member pass away, and wanted to return to Doomadgee for the funeral. His CSO and Team Leader didn't approve him going because in the past he had not got on the plane to return back to Mount Isa.
155. In the past I've been hesitant to complain to the Department, but the current Manager is excellent, and committed to working in partnership.
156. I have also experienced Service Centre managers who are not willing to engage in a relationship or work in partnership.
157. CSOs see the children about once a month. This is not enough; particularly given our kids are generally assessed as high to complex, and have significant incidents. The kids need to see Pathways working with the Department – a consistent approach.
158. One child would have had four CSOs in two years. At the moment his CSO is doing some backfill, and will leave again once her tenure's up, which I believe is in February. There's been a range of reasons – his order changed, but the turnover in staff coming and going from Mount Isa is pretty significant as well.
159. Long term case planning is really important. When I think about our transition plans, one of the things that's been really successful is kids knowing when things are going to happen, and delivering on those things, for example, if they know at 16 they're going to start doing sleepovers at their SIL program, that's when it happens, and there's no surprises. Case planning is lacking at the moment.
160. We've had an excellent response from the Department and haven't received pressures around accepting certain kids we've identified we can't place.
161. None of the CSOs or Team Leaders in Mount Isa are Indigenous to the best of my knowledge. We had a family group meeting (FGM) Convenor who was Indigenous who was very supportive of the cultural activities with the Elders.

Engagement with the Recognised Entity (RE)

Witness signature:



Officer signature:



162. We haven't had much involvement with the RE on a residential level. Attempts to engage them in care plan meetings with the Department; they haven't been available to attend. That's over the 4 ½ years I've been here in my position.
163. Their office is in Mount Isa.
164. Recently there has been a change of auspicing body.
165. The RE has been involved in discussions around granting long term guardianship (LTG) to others.
166. The Department will consult with the RE around whether they support fostering placements.
167. We've had some smoking ceremonies at residential, they have been involved in that.

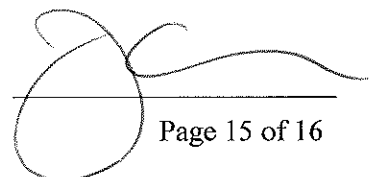
Success in residential care

168. My concern is Residential care is viewed negatively. I believe there's a view in the sector that residential care is ineffective and expensive, and I appreciate the expensive model that it is.
169. Thinking about some of the successes we've had, over my time being here we've seen some young people transition. One particular young person came to the residential when he was 12; his fostering placements had broken down because of aggression and violence. He has a significant brain injury from abuse he experienced in the family home. He had been placed at the residential for 3 ½ years. This young person went from 1-2 critical incidents (usually a staff assault, physical aggression, or property damage) a day in the first year of his placement. In July last year we commenced his transition to the SIL program, it was a staggered, planned process. We started with sleepovers at the SIL unit (a unit he moved in to with a youth worker), acknowledging he'd gone from a 24 hour youth worker model, and eventually he would be by himself. We had a range of concerns – that he would disengage from school, and that he wouldn't be able to manage living independently. In October he moved to his unit, and he's completely independent. He still has youth worker support, about 20 hours a week we're with him doing living skill programs, Centrelink / doctors appointments, etc. He will transition at the end of next year as a very functional young person. He's a great example of how the system can work. He's still engaged in and attending school, and doing great things.
170. Some of the things that have worked for him – the routine, structure, the consistency (long term planning and case planning). He has had staff who have hung around, and have been a part of his transition the whole time, and that includes a foster carer who was

Witness signature:




Officer signature:




not willing to care for him full time, but did provide him respite weekends. He continues to have contact with her; he has a great support network.

Declaration

This written statement by me dated 7.2.13 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 16 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

 Signature
Signed at BRISBANE this 7TH day of FEBRUARY 20 13

Witnessed:

 Signature
Name JASON SUBJECT Rank _____ Reg. No. _____

Witness signature: _____

Officer signature: _____