



RACHEL NOLAN MP

Member for Ipswich

Booval Professional Centre
125 Brisbane Rd BOOVAL

PO Box 98
BOOVAL Q 4304

Ph: 3202 3452
Fax: 3202 4778

Email:
ipswich@parliament.qld.gov.au

14 September 2004

ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN IPSWICH

An additional 13 new alternative care places will be provided for children and young people in Ipswich and surrounding areas whose needs are so complex or extreme that they do not fit into traditional foster families.

The Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan today announced that Mercy Family Services, Lifeline Community Care and Life Without Barriers would receive more than \$1.23 million in State Government funding annually to provide out-of-home care options for children and young people in need.

Mercy Family Services will receive \$400,742 annually to provide specialist foster care for six children aged 0 to 14 years with complex needs in Ipswich and the adjoining shires, *Lifeline Community Care* will receive \$178,991 annually to provide a therapeutic counselling and support service, inclusive of assessment, case planning and on call support, and *Life Without Barriers* will receive \$651,768 annually to provide seven specialist foster care places and in-home support for two young people aged 12 to 18 years with complex to extreme support needs.

Ms Nolan said the funding was part of \$12.8 million shared between 29 services throughout Queensland.

She said this funding was the first in a series of alternative care funding recommended in the Blueprint and was part of a \$58.4 million package over three years to provide additional care places for more than 360 young people.

“Funding will also provide assessment and intervention services for an additional 32 children and young people to achieve more appropriate placements.

“This ensures better matches between the child’s needs and the type of placements available, and also enhances the stability of the placement for the child.”

Ms Nolan said in addition, the funding would provide outreach support for a further 32 children and young people.

“This type of support is aimed at increasing placement stability for children and young people who have moved out of more intensive forms of care,” she said.

“The State Government knows foster care isn’t the answer to every vulnerable child’s needs - some young people and in particular some adolescents need an alternative and the Department of Child Safety is helping to make that a reality,” Ms Nolan said.

“This funding will assist existing and prospective service providers help find suitable care for children in protective care who need intensive support, either with a specially supported family or through other options such as small group homes,” she said.

“Currently, only about eight per cent of these children are cared for outside the conventional foster family setting, whereas the foster care audit conducted by Gwenn Murray late last year recommended this figure be lifted to 17 per cent.

“Regrettably, Queensland has had a low level of alternative care when compared to other parts of Australia, but this is changing because the Beattie Government is committed to addressing the issue.”

The Minister for Child Safety Mike Reynolds said that as well as providing alternative care places, this funding will provide improved coordination across a network of providers, and an extension of services currently available to care providers by easing resource limitations.

Approximately 24 per cent of the total new placements are specifically designed for children and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent less than 3% of all Australians, however 24 per cent of all children in protective care in Queensland are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent,” Mr Reynolds said.

“The Alternative Care funding package is the first of several initiatives which will occur both within the new Department of Child Safety and in conjunction with our community sector partners to build the best child protection system in Australia.

“I look forward to working in collaboration with funded services to deliver alternative care services for young Queenslanders.”