



Rachel Nolan MP

Member for Ipswich

**Electorate Office**

125 Brisbane Road

Telephone

07 3202 3452

Email

ipswich@parliament.qld.gov.au

Postal Address

PO Box 98, Booval Q 4304

Facsimile

07 3202 4778

Web

www.rachelnolanmp.com

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Ipswich and Goodna open their hearts to kids in care

The Bligh Government's \$15 million foster and kinship carer recruitment campaign has delivered over 150 new foster and kinship carers, who are now helping protect Queensland's at risk children.

Child Safety Minister Margaret Keech announced yesterday the campaign is on target to reach its goal of 500 new carers, with 156 new carers approved as at 11 February.

Since the recruitment campaign started early last year, eight new carers from Ipswich and Goodna have been approved and currently 123 are in training or going through the approvals process.

Mrs Keech congratulated the Goodna and Ipswich communities for opening their hearts and homes to Queensland's most vulnerable children.

"The response from these areas has been encouraging but we still need more people to consider becoming a foster or kinship carer," Mrs Keech said.

"Sadly, there are approximately 589 children in the Ipswich and Goodna area who cannot live safely at home because one or both of their parents abuse or neglect them.

"Ipswich and Goodna have about 287 foster and kinship carers, but more are always needed, even if it's just to provide a couple of hours support for fulltime carers."

More than 350 people from Ipswich and Goodna have indicated their interest in becoming carers since the intensive recruitment campaign began in May 2008. Statewide almost 6000 people have responded to the campaign, " Mrs Keech said.

"My Department of Child Safety now has more than 700 people having commenced or completed training across Queensland.

Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan said the Bligh Government's *Toward Q2* strategy includes a goal to increase the number of volunteers in Queensland by 50 per cent.

"The Government's \$15 million foster and kinship carer recruitment campaign is delivering on this commitment and I'm urging the people of Ipswich to continue supporting this campaign," Ms Nolan said.

"Q2 requires the support of the community. Together we will create a fairer Queensland.

"I congratulate our new carers and thank everyone who has expressed an interest in helping our regions children in need."

Mrs Keech said campaign funding is being used to streamline the approval process, reduce red tape and improve support networks and services for carers.

"It also funded a three-month campaign of television, radio, web, newspaper and magazine advertising, along with ads on national Indigenous radio and television targeting Indigenous carers for Indigenous children.

"State wide there are currently more than 3,700 foster and kinship carers, and the campaign aims to recruit 500 more."

For more information on becoming a foster or kinship carer, call 1300 550 877 or visit www.childsafety.qld.gov.au.