

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY****WRITTEN QUESTION**

Ms J Carney

to Minister for Family and Community Services

**Carpentaria Disability Services**

1. Minister what went wrong with Carpentaria Disability Services. (IDA advise: service agreement should have been monitored and followed up? This doesn't happen – same happens with other NGOs).
2. What are you going to change to prevent a reoccurrence of this problem?

**ANSWER**

On 29 September 2004, Carpentaria Disability Services (CDS) held its Annual General Meeting. At this meeting, concerns were raised by some CDS members regarding CDS' governance, financial accountability, service quality and the sale of property.

Subsequent to this meeting, various CDS members raised concerns with the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. In response to these concerns, the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs authorised an investigation under the *Associations Act* on 18 October 2004. The investigation subsequently found several issues of concern regarding the Association's governance and financial affairs. The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs appointed a Statutory Manager, Mr Iain Summers on 6 December 2004 for an initial period of three months. A new Board of CDS was elected by Members on 20 April 2005 and Statutory Management ceased on 27 April 2005.

In response to other complaints, the Department of Health and Community Services (DHCS) advised CDS on 22 October 2004 that a separate independent service review would occur.

In November 2004, DHCS employed a consultant to undertake an independent review with CDS regarding service quality and communication issues.

DHCS is providing ongoing support to CDS to improve service quality and financial management.

DHCS has made arrangements to assist CDS to service its accrued debt by approving a loan to be secured against the organisation's property at Tiwi. This loan may be converted to a grant some time after twelve months, if CDS is performing satisfactorily.

DHCS, NT Treasury and CDS have set up a Monitoring Group to monitor CDS' service and financial performance.

DHCS regularly monitors the performance of all funded organisations via annual Audited Financial Statements, half-yearly Performance Reports and Financial Reports and through meetings between Departmental staff and the funded-organisations.

Issues of governance and broader financial accountability are matters for the respective Boards or governing bodies of organisations to oversee.