

Estimates Committee 2011
Questions Taken On Notice

(14/06/2011 to 23/06/2011)

Date: 21/06/2011

Output:

Sub Output:

Subject: Indigenous Child Protection Employees

From: Ms Alison Anderson to Hon Kon Vatskalis
Department of Children and Families

6-11

Question:

How many child safety and lobbying teams are now operating in remote locations? In which locations are they operating? How many local Indigenous people are employed on these teams? Are any of these local Indigenous people qualified? Are any of these local Indigenous people pursuing qualifications? Would any of these local Indigenous employees be able to obtain employment in child protection elsewhere or are they employed in jobs that only occur in remote Indigenous communities? How are local Indigenous employees advised to deal with conflict of interest, for example, cases involving their own family members?

Answer:

Answered On: 02/08/2011

6.11

How many CCSWT are operating?

The Community Child Safety and Wellbeing Teams (CCSWT) are a structured approach to planning for and coordinating responses to child safety and wellbeing issues at a community and family level. A number of successful community initiatives are already operating in this way, such as in Galiwinku, Maningrida and a number of other communities.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) element of the initiative is to place a statutory child protection worker in each of the Territory Growth Towns to support and lead coordination and planning in relation to child safety and wellbeing. The rollout of the professional positions will commence from 1 August 2011.

How many Indigenous people are working in these teams?

DCF is currently recruiting to the first five statutory positions in the Territory Growth Towns, so the number of new Indigenous employees is not known at this time.

Existing Indigenous staff, such as Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers, safe place staff, Aboriginal Community Police Officers and others would participate as team members in CCSWT.

The composition of a CCSWT will vary from community to community depending on the community needs and concerns. Membership of the CCSWT could include local government, health, non-government organisations, education and housing.

Are these people qualified?

The CCSWT Practitioner needs to have formal qualifications which will enable membership into one of the following: Australian Association of Social Workers, Australian Psychologist Society or Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers.

Other team members may be qualified, however this will depend on the positions held and in what capacity they are participating in the team.

Could these Indigenous workers get work in child protection?

Employment as a statutory child protection officer is limited to those possessing the formal qualifications enabling membership in one of the organisations listed above. Indigenous staff with these qualifications can be employed as statutory officers. Indigenous workers without these qualifications may also be employed as Aboriginal Community Workers or Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers.

How do they deal with conflict of interest of reporting in communities?

The CCSWT Practitioner, once community based (from August 2011), would be trained in a number of areas including mandatory reporting obligations and Northern Territory Public Sector Code of Conduct and child protection practice. This will include the management of conflicts of interest in communities and in other settings. This provision will extend to all NT Government employees.

The terms of reference of the CCSWT will include guidelines on the management of conflicts of interests for all participants, including team members from the community.