MEDIA HANDOUT: 31 MARCH 2019 CHILD AND FAMILY PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

- The data released today is for the 12 months to 31 March 2019. The data can be found here: https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/our-performance

KEY IMPROVEMENTS

- The number of investigations commenced by Child Safety in the last year is up by 8 per cent (23,075 in total). This is 1,700 more investigations commenced by Child Safety when compared to the same period last year. This included 4,199 notifications with a 24 hour priority, almost 20 per cent more than this time last year.
- We continue to prioritise our most urgent cases. For investigations with a 24 hour priority – 100 per cent had an investigation commenced and of these, 92 per cent commenced within that timeframe. This is 621 more investigations commenced within that timeframe compared to this time last year.
- These improvements have been achieved despite the devastating North and Far North Queensland floods earlier this year. Many Child Safety staff were personally affected by flooding, with some staff sleeping in the Townsville Child Safety Service Centre so they could continue working to protect children while their own homes were uninhabitable. The Thuringowa Child Safety Service Centre was comprehensively flooded, and repair work is continuing so the centre can be re-opened.
- As part of the child and family reforms, Child Safety Officers are working more intensively during investigations to work with families and de-escalate risk to children. Although this means investigations can take longer, this de-escalation is working, with fewer children (3,776) in need of protection at the end of investigations, (compared to 4,328 at 30 June 2014).
- The number of children requiring ongoing intervention by Child Safety is stabilising. 12,121 children were subject to either a child protection order or intervention with parental agreement as at 31 March 2019, a decrease compared to this time last year and similar to 30 June 2017.
- This is the fifth consecutive quarter where the proportion of children in care who are Indigenous has remained relatively stable.
- Child safety officer caseloads continue below 17 (16.7). This is a decrease of 0.7 compared to the same period last year (17.4) and is the best result since reporting on this measure began in June 2012.
- When a family is unable to care for their children safely at home, Queenslanders are continuing to step up to become foster and kinship carers. As at 31 March 2019 there were 5,256 carer families, up from 5,218 a year ago.
- We are always looking for more foster carers. Anyone interested in becoming a foster carer should call the Foster Care Recruitment Line on 1300 550 877, visit www.fcq.com.au or www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/foster-kinship-care/ or contact one of Queensland's many foster care support agencies direct
COMPLEXITY

- The child protection system is dealing with increasingly complex families who are presenting with multiple needs, which in turn is increasing the demand for child protection services.
- ICE continues to impact the child protection system. More than 1 in 3 children (36 per cent or 810 children) who came into the care of the department during the 12 months to March 2019 had a parent with current or previous methamphetamine use recorded, up from 30 per cent a year ago and 34 per cent last quarter.
- In the majority of cases (68 per cent or 548 children), the type of methamphetamine was ICE.
- There has been an increase in the prevalence of risk factors within households where a child experienced significant harm and/or was at risk of significant harm:
  - 66 per cent of parents had a current or past drug/alcohol problem (60 per cent in 2013-14)
  - 53 per cent had a current or previously diagnosed mental illness (42 per cent in 2013-14)
  - 52 per cent of parents had a criminal history (45 per cent in 2013-14)
  - 50 per cent had experienced domestic and family violence within the last year (43 per cent in 2013-14)
  - 42 per cent of parents had been abused as a child (42 per cent in 2013-14)
- Nearly three out of every four households (74 per cent) had more than one of these risk factors, compared to 69 per cent in 2013-14.

SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES

- The Government continues to review, learn and improve, with significant initiatives underway:
  - reviewing the new dual gateway and current intake process;
  - working with the Queensland Family and Child Commission to strengthen investigation, assessment and family intervention processes;
  - continuing to improve children’s court litigation processes;
  - developing a new integrated information management and sharing platform.
BUDGET OUTCOMES

- In total, the Queensland Government will invest $1.3 billion in 2019-20 to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect and reform the family support and child protection system, with a focus on early intervention.

- With that funding comes an additional 116 frontline child safety staff who will hit the ground in the next three years. This is on top of more than 450 new staff funded since 2015, including 93 this year.

- Other budget highlights include:
  - $196.5 million over three years for Intensive Family Support services to continue early intervention for families and parents;
  - $45.5 million over three years for Family and Child Connect services that help connect families to the right help at the right time;
  - $24.7 million over three years to support foster and kinship carer through non-government organisations;
  - $14.6 million over four years to implement new and enhanced initiatives under Our Way which aims to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by 2037;
  - $2.5 million over three years to continue and enhance the Next Step After Care program, supporting young people during and after transition to adulthood;
  - $9.6 million in 2019-20 to continue services provided by the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor to provide early, independent legal advice to child safety workers about child protection matters.

INFOGRAPHICS

Parent use of ICE and other methamphetamines

36%

30%

MARCH 2018

MARCH 2019

36 per cent of children who came into the care of the Child Safety department had a parent with current or previous methamphetamine use, up from 30 per cent a year ago.
Increased family complexity

Prevalence of family risk factors in substantiated households

More investigations commenced

Involves an investigation of the alleged harm or risk of harm and an assessment of the child’s protective and safety needs

In the last year, the number of investigations needing a 24 hour response has increased 19.5% from 3518 to 4204
100% commenced
Investigations with a 24 hour response
92.3% within timeframe

Child Safety Officers are working more intensively with families during investigations to de-escalate risks to the child.

Fewer children are being assessed as in need of protection at the end of the investigation.

No. of children in need of ongoing intervention by Child Safety

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<tr>
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<th>March 2018</th>
<th>March 2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>12,145</td>
<td>12,121</td>
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The number of children requiring intervention is stabilising.