

# NSW Child Protection and Wellbeing: Ombudsman perspectives

Steve Kinmond

**Deputy Ombudsman**

**Community and Disability Services Commissioner**



# Pre-Inquiry system capacity

Data provided to the Wood Inquiry (2006/07)

	Reports		Children	
	No.	%	No.	%
Reports that received a comprehensive assessment (face-to-face contact)	46,757	23	18,140	18
Reports closed after limited additional inquiries	76,884	38	49,589	49
Reports closed without any assessment due to 'competing priorities'	77,386	38	34,000	33
Reports closed because no further assessment required	181	1	369	1
Total referred to a CSC/JIRT for action	201,208	100	102,098	100

# Post-Inquiry system capacity

Community Services' data (24/1/10 – 31/12/10)

	Reports		Children	
	No.	%	No.	%
Reports that received a comprehensive assessment (face-to-face contact)	19,826	21	12,743	21
Reports closed after limited additional inquiries	49,746	52	31,864	54
Reports closed without any assessment due to 'competing priorities'	24,268	25	14,525	24
Reports closed because no further assessment required	1651	2	426	1
Total referred to a CSC/JIRT for action	95,491	100	59,558	100

## Measures to increase the capacity of the statutory child protection system

Community Services' *Action Plan to Improve Capacity in Child Protection* includes key productivity initiatives:

- increased recruitment, aiming to fill all vacancies by January 2012.
  - streamlining entry training so that new caseworkers can conduct unsupervised field work sooner
  - changes to Brighter Futures, with Community Services' early intervention caseworkers working with families the subject of ROSH reports.
  - rollout of streamlined intake procedures and structured assessment tools
  - improvements to Community Services' database (KiDS)
  - in consultation with the Children's Court, changes to court processes
-

## Workforce initiatives

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Streamlining training
- Filling rural and remote positions

AND...

- setting average caseload targets and case completion targets
  - enhancing caseworker supervision and support
  - lifting staff morale
-

# The development of intelligence driven child protection practice

An effective intelligence system would require key agencies to work together in systematically:

- identifying;
- making readily available (through IT solutions and/or other strategies);
- analysing;
- prioritising; and
- acting on;

the information that is held by these agencies which best identifies potentially extreme levels of child protection risk

---

## Shared responsibility – efficient and effective interagency practice

- Generating action, not just reports
  - Challenges and opportunities in high needs locations
  - Response to vulnerable older children and adolescents
  - Responses to educational neglect
-

## Broad conclusions

- Not just about resourcing, but also about improving productivity
  - Responding to ROSH reports is not the only challenge
    - delivering on the commitment to the transfer of OOHC services to the non-government sector
    - meeting Court ordered obligations
    - designing and implementing early intervention programs that are effective
    - Strengthening service delivery to vulnerable Aboriginal families
-



## Addressing Aboriginal disadvantage – what needs to change

- The importance of Aboriginal leadership in bringing about change
  - Improving the capacity to respond to vulnerable Aboriginal children and adolescents
  - Investing in education
  - Building economic capacity in Aboriginal communities
  - A new accountability framework for addressing Aboriginal disadvantage
-