



SPARK AND CANNON

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THE HONOURABLE TIMOTHY FRANCIS CARMODY SC, Commissioner

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IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSIONS INQUIRY ACT 1950

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ORDER (No. 1) 2012

QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

IPSWICH

..DATE 30/10/2012

Continued from 24/10/2012

..DAY 28

WARNING: The publication of information or details likely to lead to the identification of persons in some proceedings is a criminal offence. This is so particularly in relation to the identification of children who are involved in criminal proceedings or proceedings for their protection under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, and complaints in criminal sexual offences, but is not limited to those categories. You may wish to seek legal advice before giving others access to the details of any person named in these proceedings.

30102012 01/CES(IPSWICH) (Carmody CMR)

THE COMMISSION COMMENCED AT 10.06 AM

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COMMISSIONER: Good morning everyone.

MR SIMPSON: Good morning, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Appearances I will take, Mr Simpson, thanks.

MR SIMPSON: Yes, for the record, my name is Simpson, initials A.P., counsel assisting the commission.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR SELFRIDGE: Good morning, Mr Commissioner. My name is Selfridge, initial J. I appear on behalf of the State of Queensland instructed by Crown Law.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Selfridge.

MR SELFRIDGE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Capper?

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MR CAPPER: Thank you, Commissioner, Capper, C-a-p-p-e-r, initial C, for the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MS STEWART: Stewart, S-t-e-w-a-r-t, initial L, counsel for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Ms Stewart. Mr Simpson?

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MR SIMPSON: Yes, thank you. Mr Commissioner, in these Ipswich hearings of today and tomorrow the focus of the commission will turn to workforce issues. To that end three witnesses shall be called, two today and one tomorrow. The first witness today will be David Bradford. He's a consultant in his own training company. He's formerly the acting director of clinical and training at Queensland Health and formerly the director and training and special support branch of the Department of Child Safety. He's occupied a number of other roles in the Queensland government and private sector.

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After he is called Kenneth Dagley will be called. He's currently the director of workforce capability, human resources and ethical standards with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Tomorrow Mr Robert Ryan will be called. He's the state director of Key Assets Fostering Queensland and he's worked in the area of child protection for approximately 20 years.

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As I said before, the focus of the witnesses this week will be workforce issues in the child protection sector. There will be five key areas explored with each of these witnesses with differing approaches in some areas. The first issue will be qualifications of child safety officers and CSSOs. The second will be retention of staff, the third the training and development of that staff, four, the caseloads of CSOs and CSSOs and the last issue will be child protection workers in the non-government sector.

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Queensland has the second-largest number of full-time equivalent employees in the child protection system and that is behind New South Wales. Queensland is also the second largest on a per capita basis of employees in the child protection system and that's behind Tasmania. The workforce currently is made up of 72 per cent frontline workers and what are called support workers. Now, they make up 28 per cent.

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The basic qualifications of frontline workers have changed over the years, as you have already heard. Currently it's varied in the sectors that they come from, but the major sectors are these: psychology 20 per cent, social work 19 per cent, social science 14 per cent and human services 12 per cent. The inquiry have previously heard from the Australia Association of Social Workers who believe that there should be a standardised qualification required of a child safety officer and they submit that all professional staff should have professional qualifications and if they don't have them already, they should be qualified in a particular area that's standardised across the sector.

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Mr Bradford, our first witness, advocates a different approach. When he was the head of training of the Department of Child Safety, he proposed a model and it's a model he will advocate again today of a varied approach of intake into the child protection sector. One of the processes whereby a person could be qualified as a child safety officer would be through a method of diploma through TAFE and vocational and educational training.

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His model would include CSSOs in career progression which would allow for them to become a child safety officer over time through completing a diploma and training on the job. Now, this particular avenue of employing people in this sector has been criticised by Prof Healy and the Australian Association of Social Workers. They take a different approach to it. The idea of these hearings is to provide that balance here so you may be fully informed as to the different approached in employing the workforce in this sector.

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Mr Dagley will outline that in 2006 following the CMC report a period of 12 month probation and an induction period of 72 weeks was rolled out for child safety officers. As part of that program all new recruits would

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undergo a 10 week training program before commencing in the field. However, in recent times that 10 week training program has now been replaced by an abridged five to seven week program and of that five to seven week program only three weeks are on a face-to-face basis. So you can see from that that what was recommended by the CMC has been changed and perhaps minimised in some way.

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He will also speak about the challenges and deficiencies that may be evident in this particular training model. Mr Dagley will also give evidence that a child safety officer should not be given a caseload until the initial seven week training period is completed and yet, commissioner, you have heard evidence in other regions that suggests that this perhaps more in the breach than the observance.

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Robert Ryan, the last witness, has authored a paper entitled "Whoever You Are", an exploration of learning and development models for professional staff in statutory child protection across the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. He completed this paper as part of a Churchill Fellowship in 2009. He will bring to bear his experiences on what the workforce is like in other parts of the western world and the lessons we can learn from that and with the different methods of employment whether there are any outcomes in retention of staff and training and development.

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He does give some recommendations in that report which you will hear and that will include that there should be a general up-skilling of statutory staff, residential staff and foster carers beyond some basic child development education. He also sees the need to improve multidisciplinary learning models across all people working in the field of child protection.

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He also explores an interesting idea whereby you would train staff in mock courtroom hearings, also in mock residential houses, to see how they might respond to certain situations before they are give proper caseloads or deal directly with children. He also recommends that there should be a dedicated focus on the implementation of supervision models for staff and that will also be one of the focuses of the evidence you will hear the next two days, the supervision of staff in the sector. Mr Commissioner, I propose to call the first witness David James Bradford.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

BRADFORD, DAVID JAMES sworn:

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ASSOCIATE: For recording purposes, please state your full name, your occupation and your business address?---David Bradford, consultant, and business address is 725 Albany Creek Road, Albany Creek, Queensland.

Please be seated?---Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Good morning, Mr Bradford, welcome?
---Thank you, commissioner.

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MR SIMPSON: Mr Bradford, would you look at this statement and your attached curriculum vitae?---Thank you.

Is that your statement to the commission?---It is, yes.

Are there any alterations or amendments you wish to make to that statement?---No.

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Before I tender that statement, Mr Bradford, you'll note on the last page that you refer to a number of annexures or appendices. It appears we don't have all of them here today. Save for the curriculum vitae, appendices 2 to 5 aren't present with your statement currently. It's no criticism of you, just perhaps an administrative error? ---Mm'hm. 1

Mr Commissioner, those appendices will be provided to the commission in due course, but otherwise I seek to tender that statement. I have copies if others need any assistance with those. 10

Mr Bradford, can I start you off by - - -

COMMISSIONER: I'm just going to give that witness statement of Mr Bradford's a number. It's 100.

ADMITTED AND MARKED: "EXHIBIT 100"

MR SIMPSON: Yes, thank you, Mr Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: And it's okay to publish? 20

MR SIMPSON: Yes, it's okay to publish.

COMMISSIONER: Publish it.

MR SIMPSON: Mr Bradford, can I take you back through some of your experience in the child safety and child protection sector. You started off as a child safety officer, did you not?---I started off as an adolescent resource worker, which these days would be understood to be a child safety support officer, so I was a para-professional officer providing youth work and client support services in Toowoomba and Pine Rivers in 1995. 30

At some point you moved on to become a manager of a child safety service centre?---Yes. I was a child safety officer at (indistinct) in the mid-90s and then re-joined child protection in 2003 after the CMC inquiry. I was the principal training officer setting up the CSO training - the 10-week program which has been mentioned already this morning; and then I went out to be the acting manager of Ipswich child safety service centre in early 2005; and by mid-2005 I was the appointed manager at Redcliffe child safety service centre. 40

All right. You eventually moved on to - you had a career in corrections for a period of time?---Yes. Between 1997 and 2003 I was with corrective services.

Right. You eventually became the director of training and special support branch, Department of Child Safety, between June 2007 and May 2009. Is that right?---Yes.

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I want to focus on your work at that time and a model that you espoused at that time about the training of staff and how the department might seek to obtain and retain staff. To that end I'm going to show you some slides from a PowerPoint presentation and I'll get you to talk to those slides. Whilst I'm finding those, perhaps you can give the Commissioner some background on this model that you were proposing?---Sure. In 2007 the department embarked on a couple of programs. One was the frontline work analysis job redesign project, which was really designed to look at the workforce and look at a range of issues; not just training, but also look at staff turnover, how staff were remunerated, classifications of staff, also the job design - the profile of the job - in terms of dealing with some of the big issues we were having around being able to actually retain staff and make the work attractive, but also be able to fill vacancies. At that stage we were experiencing critical skills shortages and we were also experiencing unacceptable vacancy levels in the CSO - the statutory officer - cohort across the state. That project was designed to have a look at the education pathways, so what we could look at in terms of the who and how they might actually - who would come, with what qualifications, and how they might actually progress into child protection and through the system, but also looking at the work-designed element of that as well. The project ran the course of a couple of years and in the part that I had carriage of, which was the education pathways project, we consulted - very broadly we consulted with all of our staff, with the unions, with the TAFEs, with the universities; we also consulted with the NGO sector and had varying responses in terms of some of the things we were putting forward, but we really were in a situation where the high vacancy rate was a significant problem for us. I think the other contextual factor to remember, too, is at this time we still were experiencing boom times, I suppose, here in Queensland, and we were having the very real experiences of students would come to - or people would join the department, come to CSO training, and then halfway through the training the job they had applied to in the mines would come up and they would have psychologists and others leave the child safety officer training to go and drive a truck in the mine because they could earn twice as much. So we weren't competing, obviously, well in that environment. We had - the vacancy rates were quite phenomenal and the staff turnover was such that we were spending millions upon millions of dollars just fielding a team in terms of recruitment, selection and training, and running people through. In 2008, I believe - and I'm working from memory - when I was running the training centre, of the 860 CSOs that we actually had on the books, we put 400 people through training that year. So in that one year we turned over just under half that workforce. That has significant knock-on effects in terms of retention of skill, retention of experience. It has significant knock-on effects in terms of who's moving into supervisory roles. We started

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to observe what we called a compounding skill shortage. So a child safety officer would show up, work for us for a period of time - particularly in some of the more regional areas - had not acquired or mastered the foundation skills before they actually were put into a supervisory role, because they were moved into supervisory roles very, very quickly. And then once they were in a supervisory role they were in a situation where they had the responsibility to help others master the foundation skills. And we ended up with a diluting sort of skill shortage. 1

COMMISSIONER: Because the coach hadn't played the game? 10
---Correct.

MR SIMPSON: I put this up here on the screen?---Yes.

COMMISSIONER: What if you could work it - - -

MR SIMPSON: It shows here a slide from, I think, a presentation you gave at the time - - -

COMMISSIONER: I'm sorry, Mr Simpson.

How do you define frontline?---I would define frontline as having direct client contact services or managing the staff providing the direct client contact services; so actually exercising the statutory delegations, interacting with the clients or carers or children directly, or supervising the staff that are doing that. 20

What proportion of time would be required to qualify? You mean 100 per cent of the time or - I've heard varying definitions based on how much face-to-face contact - - -? ---Right.

- - - ranging from 40 to 70 per cent?---Right. I think - I guess my definition is about the designation or the role that - - - 30

The function rather than the time?---Yes. I think if you're in a child safety service centre then you're dealing with frontline work. Now, whilst the manager in a service centre might not be having direct client contact, and that's probably appropriate because they should be supervising the staff and having the systems in place and only having point of touch at the time when there's something critically needs their attention, otherwise they would not be managing. 40

MR SIMPSON: This slide here, does this demonstrate some of the drivers you were speaking about?---These were the motivators for the actual project work that we did. So the frontline work analysis job redesign project was predicated on the identification of these issues: the high staff turnover, especially in the first year; the sense that there were very restrictive entry requirements, that for

people even to get to the front door would have to go through a process to get to a certain range of qualifications; and that basically the number of people graduating for these qualifications didn't match the number of people we were turning over.

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Can I just stop you there. When you were looking at this project and you looked at statistics across the community as to graduates coming through universities in particular courses - that's right?---Yes.

And were you looking to see whether - were there going to be sufficient graduates to fill the spots in the department upon graduation?---Yes.

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What did you find?---That there were not sufficient graduates coming out to fill the spots within our department, let alone the whole sector.

And was that because of any fact to do with birth rates or population?---As we go on further in the slide, I mean, what we - to put that into context for you - and I'm sure the commission has already heard this - but for the longest time - and even back 20 years ago when I started working in child protection - there seemed to be this unease between the different professions as to who had the right to work or who was entitled to work in the child protection space. When we come to look at these issues, that really was a moot argument because fundamentally what was going on was far more serious, and that was that we actually didn't have enough people even coming to the front door, let along - or exiting the universities or actually coming into the sector. We were carrying significant vacancy rates. As we started to look deeper we started to look into, I suppose, a body of research that wasn't around the disciplinary or the professions that were involved with child protection, it was around workforce futures, I suppose. We started looking at issues related to working in each population; looking at the demographics, looking at the retirement rate. We started to notice some of the profile characteristics of our workforce, and that we had a high proportion of, you know, new graduates or young people, but predominantly young people coming into our workforce and then turning over, and we were getting to a situation where we could see that we were going to actually not have people coming into our workforce.

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If you look at - again, we'll talk about it as we go through, as you start to look at some of the demographic issues that are affecting us, unless we start looking quite strategically at how we get labour supply and qualified labour supply and how to actually get them and keep them, then we're actually going to be in quite a bit of trouble very, very quickly, but we're not alone in that. That's happening across all workforces.

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All right. What I propose to do, Mr Commissioner, is touch on some of the subjects out of these slides and then tender them as a bundle at the end for your consideration. So we've dealt with restrictive entrance qualifications and this is at a time when, correct me if I'm wrong, the idea was you had to have one central depository of knowledge to become a child safety officer. You're advocating a broader range of qualification?---Again, there was some - at this time generally the qualifications were limited to social work, social science, the human services, psychology, those type of qualifications. What we really went out and said was that we believe that child protection is a multi-disciplinary endeavour and in fact there are people from other disciplines who can make a contribution to child protection. We have SCAN teams which actually bring police, teachers, health professionals together to actually work together on child protection issues. So if that's the case and we believe these other professions have contact, experience, understanding of children and can make a contribution, then why wouldn't we explore looking at whether or not we can broaden the range of bachelor qualifications that would allow people to enter into child safety work. So that's why we start to look at that.

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COMMISSIONER: This was before the CMC?---No, this was 2007, commissioner, so this was after the CMC.

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So at that stage you had a stand-alone child safety department?---Yes.

MR SIMPSON: I've just got a few slides for presentation you gave. This one here, so at that time where you're proposing the model which you advocate again today, the current data identified the need for more workers in this industry because it was growing so fast?---Community services and health is actually one of the fastest growing workforces in the country, and that is largely around demographic issues. The Community Services and Health Industries Skills Council Environmental SCAN of 2007 actually produced this stat to say that there was 169,000 more workers required across the five years from 07 to 2012?

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Was that accurate?---It was, yes, certainly deemed to be accurate and it was actually - my understanding is - I don't have the figures to hand, but I understand that that's not necessarily been achieved, and that's across the

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whole sector. That's aged care, you know, youth justice, youth detention. 1

COMMISSIONER: So was that figure what it should have been rising to - - -?---Yes.

- - - over that period, that five-year period, to meet demand and the 3 per cent growth projection annually was what was needed rather than what was estimated to occur? ---The growth, yes, the 169,000 was what is needed in addition.

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Right?---What was predicted to be required in addition.

You don't have the figures but you don't think the 169,300 was achieved but you don't think it was an over-estimate of the workers that were needed to - - -?---Well, that's Australia-wide and that's across all sectors.

Yes?---And, no, I don't think it's an over-estimate. In fact, I would probably suspect it to be an under-estimate. The reasons these things are troublesome to achieve is that in some of these areas of work that might be low paid or unattractive it's not uncommon to lose people out the back door as quick as you get them through the front door. 20

So you're flat out meeting your natural attrition rates? ---Generally, yes.

MR SIMPSON: I might take you to the next slide then that I'll show you which seems to identify some of the risks in the area which may have been contributing to this idea that you weren't going to achieve the growth that you needed. Perhaps you could talk us through that slide?---So coming back to the comment I made before about the compounding skills shortage, keeping up with your attrition rate is one thing, but then once you've got people in how do you give them an experience that actually encourages them to stay where they actually feel confident and competent and actually receive development. There is no silver bullet in terms of training or even pre-service education through whichever course you might go through. Fundamentally we learn a great deal in the workplace and unless there's logical leaders and mentors and people there who can support that then you start to struggle, and so when we start looking at the issues of retaining your workforce, if we get them through a qualification, get them to the front door, train them and then put them out into service where sometimes the work is quite frenetic and there's no-one there to actually support or mentor them, that can lead to some serious issues. So labour supply is an issue and labour market growth is diminishing. We're actually seeing - we're heading to a point we will have more people exiting the labour market than entering it and that's actually certainly on tap for the next 10 years here in Queensland. It's currently happening in South Australia and Tasmania 30 40

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where you have more people leaving the workforce than joining it. You get to a situation where you can't attract or retain critical skills and those mentors, those logical leaders, the people we have had around for a long time, are all approaching retirement age and so being able to actually have people to shepherd, as it were, younger workers becomes a challenge. The increased attrition amongst younger workers, because there's higher competition, as you start to see more people exit the labour market than enter it you have higher competition for the available labour resource and therefore you get into wage wars and you get competition, which is what we're talking about at the next point there in terms of wage pressures. By the time you get down to unemployment round 2.7 per cent you're actually seeing it in service. You start to see the less attractive jobs and the lower end of the economy, or the lower paid jobs, just cease, because there's no-one to do them. So you start to challenge - you start to get difficulties there because people are looking for other work.

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COMMISSIONER: What about the idea of a profession? Like, if I'd spent time studying for a tertiary qualification and saw myself as professional, while wages would be an important consideration I'm not sure that I'd go and drive a truck instead just for the higher money?---Yes. It's the exception not the rule that people did that, but what we do find is because there is such growth throughout community services and health if you show up with a highly transferable qualification that is applicable across a range of different employers then it's very easy for you to move and very attractive for you to do so, and one of the difficulties we're experiencing at this point in time was even within state government, whilst we were paying on the PO2 scale there were other state government agencies paying PO3, and so there were people who were coming out of university spending 12 months with us and then actually moving very quickly to other agencies.

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So one of the solutions would be, wouldn't it, to make the qualification entirely appropriate but not transferable within the human services business - industry?---Yes, and that was actually where I was heading with the approach I was making. I didn't want to make a generic qualification, I wanted to make something very specific, but that was met with some opposition, because there were seen as some advantages to having that more transferable - I wanted a bachelor of child protection.

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Yes?---I actually spoke to a couple of universities about doing exactly that and I was quite unashamed to say if we're going to bring people through a pathway of, you know, cert IV to diploma, let's try and find a bachelor of child protection qualification that we can actually support them into to actually then, you know, keep them as our workforce, not be training somebody else's workforce.

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Do you think there would be tertiary institutions who would be able to offer that?---I think there's those who would be able to offer it. It's willingness to offer it and it's also the issue of costing it and actually whether or not it's economically viable for them, which is one of the things that was put forward. So the reason we went to a vocational graduate certificate was to find another pathway when that avenue didn't eventuate.

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Was that internal, that is - - -?---The vocational graduate certificate?

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Yes?---Yes.

Yes, so you - - -?---It was in league with a TAFE but it was internal training, yes.

Yes, okay.

MR SIMPSON: The problem at the moment - - -?---It was plan B.

I want to ask this, though, Mr Bradford. What would you imagine would be the core subject areas of a bachelor of child protection? What would a graduate need to have? ---Not to be clever, but I guess I would answer that in the context of what would be the actual policy position of the agencies. So depending on the scope of work of the employers and exactly what we're going to do in terms of how the model looks from a policy environment. I'd answer it based on that, but - - -

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But say the department is just tertiary?---Okay.

Not secondary, just tertiary. What would you need for that?---Okay.

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Not secondary, just tertiary. What would you need for that?---Okay, well, if it's just tertiary, and just the pointy end, if you were doing the qualification just for those staff and not for the whole sector then you would have to actually look at the investigative skills, problem solving skills, the ability to analyse, the ability to, I suppose, plan and manage interventions, the ability to actually broker out case services and create essential partnerships. You'd have to actually look at doing case planning work so that people could in fact create a plan, set some goals and then broker that out. You'd have to look at monitoring and evaluation type activities as well in terms of how they would actually monitor the provision of those services. There would have to be some skills around dealing with - and getting down to the very nitty-gritty, dealing with hostile and aggressive individuals, dealing with conflict, dealing with aggression. There would have to be some forensic skills, I suppose, in terms of analysis of evidence. There would

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have to be some legal skills in terms of being able to represent the department in court. 1

COMMISSIONER: Just looking then at the idea that you have got a child protection as a discipline, a specialty, within that discipline really there are some subspecialties, aren't there?---Yes.

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There is the investigation and assessment. That might be your forensic arm. If I wanted to be that - and let's call that a child safety officer rather than child protection officer because I'm just concerned with the safety issues at this point of the continuum. Why wouldn't I just need to be qualified in the forensic? Why would I need to know about place planning?--Again it comes down to the model. It's about what happens after the order has been issued. One of the difficulties - and this is a tension that exists between child protection staff and police at times - is that at the end of the policing process, particularly if there have been charges and other such things, that's the end of it, but in a child protection context we actually still have an obligation to work with the family because the principles of the act talk about reunification. So even if we are just the tertiary end, we actually have to hand on for some sort of - - -

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All right. So let's just say then the child safety officer then hand on the ongoing intervention case management to a child protection officer whose responsibilities are not tertiary but case management which would require a different set of skills?---Generally, yes.

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Even within that you might have a person whose specialty wasn't so much case management but transition for independence. So couldn't you structure it so that you don't have to have one CSO doing all these things? Couldn't you structure it so that you had all these different people doing all these different things?---Yes; yes, you could. If you look at a service centre - I mean, for having managed service centres you have some people who - their skill, the acumen or just their personal abilities probably lend themselves better to doing investigation and assessment work than they might do to doing the other and vice versa.

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So the person who would need to know across the board and be skilled across the board would be the manager, team leader or something like that?---You could certainly embark on an incremental training or development experience that actually brings that along for you so that incrementally they pick up the different pieces along the way.

MR SIMPSON: I will just now move to what's been called a dilemma that you found. I think we've covered on some of these issues here?---Yes.

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But perhaps just talk us through that slide there?---Well, it does speak for itself. We went out and actually spoke to our partners in the sector and spoke to the universities and others about this. Some folk actually got it and understood, yet the model is not sustainable. If we're talking about that spending that volume of money just to field a team and having that degree of turnover just to field a team, then that's - you've got to do something

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different. That's not sustainable. One of the things we found when we went out and - again I guess I sit here representing the opinions of the many insofar as we went out and consulted quite broadly and so we had a lot of feedback from our staff and from our managers and one of the fundamental issues, put training aside, is about resilience. If you are a new worker coming into a workplace regardless of your age and it's a little bit challenging, then it will take you some time to develop some resilience and you would hope that you actually have some coaches and mentors there who support you, look after you, don't actually throw you to the wolves straightaway, but maybe support you to develop that resilience over time, yourself and you're surrounded by a whole heap of new people who aren't resilient themselves either, then you just have - you don't have low levels of individual resilience. You have low levels of collective resilience and, as a result, when something difficult happens, not only does that individual fall over, they take the whole team with them and we were seeing a lot of that. Managers were really grappling with that where they had, you know, staff who were quite distressed and struggling because we didn't have that, I suppose, diversity of not just agent experience, et cetera, but also even just diversity of resilience, I suppose, in the work groups as well and so that was another factor in the turnover.

COMMISSIONER: So is the key issue for retention, as distinct from recruitment, morale and job satisfaction? ---Yes, I think so. Look, morale, job satisfaction, resilience; a sense of personal safety as well we shouldn't underestimate and I imagine the commission has already heard that it's not uncommon for child protection officers to be threatened, to be assaulted, to experience some, you know, very intimidating experiences without, I suppose, the ability to do much to actually back themselves up, support themselves or protect themselves.

How important is it to a workforce to feel that they are leaders who should be followed because of where they're going rather than out of a sense of curiosity?---It's critical; it's absolutely critical. I mean, if there's no confidence - I mean, in terms of workforce turnover the old saying is, "People don't leave agencies. They leave managers," and if they don't feel like their being led in a direction that is achievable, then people generally will - one of two things will happen. You will see aberrant behaviours where leaders will emerge from the pack, perhaps not always the way the agency would like - - -

So the cowboys who get the job done?---Correct, yes.

But not according to the rules?---Yes, the shooting from the hip scenario or you get people just basically say, "Well, I'm not getting what I need here. I'm out," yes.

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MR SIMPSON: Right. Now, when you say at the bottom of that slide, "The current model is unsustainable," that was the model back prior to 2007?---Correct.

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The model of a limited number of degrees such as social work and human services being the pathway to child safety officers?---Yes.

Now, part of the proposal you were advocating back then, and I take it you still advocate today, is this. I might try and zoom in some of that?---So the model that was put before the board of management was the potential for these pathways to be examined so the central column is - and obviously it was done - this was out of a consultation paper so it was done as an antagonism to say, "Right. Many bachelors degrees under the PO qualification." If we accept that people have gone through a university qualification, acquired a certain standard, we can put them CSO training and that results in a graduate certificate in community services, child protection, it's the graduate certificate that becomes the qualification allowing them to be a child safety officer. The future of our stream is then to say, "Let's look at graduate diplomas for team leaders," and, of course, going to for gold was to say, "Let's do management qualifications for managers and above," but we were just trying to get there at this stage. So we actually ended up with a range of bachelors qualifications that were actually analysed against the CSO role and put forward and they included occupational therapy, teaching, nursing, justice studies, et cetera, as a broader range. Then if you look to the certificate for community services, protective care column, this was the paraprofessional pathway. What we did have was we had a workforce that stayed with us and they were our child safety support officers. Generally they had been with us a very long time and they were a fairly diverse sort of group of characters as well. The expression I used at the time was they were probably more representative of the communities that we served.

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What was their age demographic at that time?---The child safety support officers?

Yes?---Look, we had everyone from, you know, people who were in their fifties and sixties through to, you know, people who were sort of 18, 19 potentially studying.

COMMISSIONER: You were one, weren't you?---I was one and so was Will Hayward sitting across the way from me. He was one of mine in my office whilst he was studying. So there was really quite a diverse range of people. Some foster carers who actually finished their time fostering became child safety support officers as well and so you had a bit of a diverse group of people who did have life experience and did have a bit of resilience and did have - you know, I suppose represented a broader spread of demographic but

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hadn't had the educational opportunities. 1

That's what they didn't have?---To acquire qualifications.

They had everything else except the professional qualification that was needed and that's argued for today. What do you say about that? Why couldn't a good CSSO become a CSO without going back to university or some tertiary institution part-time because they have got their own families to worry about and how would you do it?---What I would say about it is do this and that's what I did say and this is how I would do it. I would actually look at an internally sponsored program where they actually are supported to earn and learn because generally they're in situations where they're parenting, paying mortgages and doing other things. They don't have the ability - we've got to understand in terms of the university program - and, look, I speak as somebody who lectured at the university for six years. In terms of the university program we do have external study and other such things, but there's still quite a dedication to work your way through a program 10

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And certainly in terms of full-time attendants or even part-time attendance at lectures, that's really quite difficult for people when they're actually - when they're not first leaving high school and doing those sorts of things, as life gets more complicated. So what we said was, "Okay, well look, if they're given earning and learning pathway where they can still parent and pay their mortgages and still be working, then giving them an in-house program where they go from cert IV to diploma and then actually go to the vocational graduate certificate, and again, the vocational graduate certificate becomes the qualification to make you a CSO." Our original intent was that that middle bar there where all roads lead to it, obviously, was to make that an actual bachelor of child protection. That was our original desire, but that was fraught in terms of talking to the universities who were already offering the broader programs and wanted to continue to offer the broader programs; it was also fraught in terms of the concern about how many students would be coming through that and whether that would actually be viable. We had one university in particular who were quite amenable to the idea who we started to work with and we were advancing our conversations with, but when the machinery of government changes came in then a lot of those things were, I suppose, suspended for a period of time until we could review what was happening across the whole agency.

That's what happened with nursing. Eventually it got to be a degree - a bachelor course at QUT or somewhere, but it took a long time to move into that. All right, so this was the model you proposed?---Yes.

And it was under consideration but then suspended with the machinery changes?---It was under operation, so just to clarify, the other tranche there we talked about, enrolled nurses and police officers and people with other diplomas coming in, the board of management actually said, "Well, let's just leave that to the while. We won't go there. Let's see how we go with these first two columns." So what we did is we actually had the process running. We actually had several hundred CSSOs get through the cert IV and diploma. The other thing we were looking at is we were looking at workforce diversity. We were also looking at a pathway for a lot of our indigenous CSSOs to actually move into this work. In fact, at the point where we got to the end of the first round of vocational graduate certificates, we actually had two indigenous women in central Queensland who had gone through the whole process who were now at vocational graduate certificate and could be eligible to apply for a CSO job.

Do you propose or do you oppose a differential standard for indigenous CSOs to become a CSO?---I don't propose a differential standard, I propose a differential method.

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Right?---A different pathway or a different way of doing things. But I propose different - in a situation where labour supply is the issue and qualified labour supply is the issue, then I'd propose to any agency to actually look strategically and intelligently at a range of ways to actually acquire workforce.

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Wouldn't you need to take into account the community you're going to service? For example, if I was going to be an indigenous CSO on a closed community in Aurukun, the skills and other things that I might need may not be the same as I need in the Townsville region - - -?---Absolutely

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- - - or the Gold Coast?---Well, Commissioner, it was my very real hope that the 150-odd indigenous diploma graduates would actually become the vocational graduate certificate qualified workforce. It was my hope that we get, as I say, a bachelor of child protection. That didn't happen. But it was my hope that that 150 indigenous graduates would actually go on to become a significant indigenous child protection workforce in those communities. We had a group of 30 of them in Cairns who were actually working in Cairns and in the Torres Strait who went through this program.

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Could they be trade within the community, from the community; or would they have to go out of the community to be trained and then go back?---I guess - I probably propose a bit of a hybrid, you probably do a bit of all of that because I'm a big believer in workplace learning and actually the inductive element of finding yourself - well, learning in the workplace as well is having an academic side.

How long would it take for the mean student?---This program, through to the end of vocational graduate certificate, was probably about two and a half years from cert IV through diploma to vocational graduate certificate.

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And this is based on getting across-the-board learning in all the subcategories of - - -?---Child protection, yes.

Right. But do you think you could design it in a way so that if I was a retired policeman or an enrolled nurse, all I wanted to do was the forensic work - - -?---Yes.

- - - could you design it so it would take me a shorter period of time to get qualified as a cert IV as a child safety officer, something like that?---I believe you could, yes. You would have to obviously work with the agency and its desire to do that - - -

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Would have to be structured that way?---Yes.

So that it recognised each of these categories?---That was my intention. I had hoped to actually be able to bring in

police officers and enrolled nurses and others.

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See, if that was my background, I might be interested in doing the forensic work but not interested in a transitional planning?---Mm.

So what - - -?---The short answer is yes, there'd be a way of doing it.

Okay. And vice versa?---Yes. It's just about - but again, I have to come back to say - I'll temper that with saying you'd have to look at the HR policies, et cetera, at the agency; you'd have to also look at the temperament of the agency in terms of doing that and managing that; you'd also have to look at the scope of practice in terms of whether it supported that approach, but - - -

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We are?---Yes, I imagine.

MR SIMPSON: Does this model have advantages or disadvantages in such a decentralised state of Queensland? ---Well, I guess any model has disadvantages because we talk about the geographic issue of Queensland, but, I mean, a model where you're relying on a narrow range of bachelor qualifications, not getting enough of them actually applying for the jobs, and when we do get them they turn over very quickly, creates enormous issues too. We were having that problem geographically as well because what we are finding is that in South East Queensland jobs would be taken and the regional jobs would be spare, and so there was a point in time where I spoke to a manager of one of the regional offices and they said half of their CSO who cohort were vacant. So half the number of CSOs they had designated as their FTE were actually empty seats at that point in time.

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Looking at this model here, so what you're saying is you can still have a degree process and a broader qualification?---Yes.

But you're proposing a - - -?---An additional stream.

- - - and additional structure - - -?---Yes.

- - - to allow for the more mature person or person who has moved on in their career in a different way, to come in at to be part of the workforce, not in a secondary way but a properly qualified CSO over time through an internal structure?---Yes.

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Would that person, through that internal structure, have more or less contact hours in terms of their learning in the essential area than, say, a person who has graduated from a social science degree or a social work degree? ---Okay. If you go through a - for arguments sake, a social science qualification, so bachelor of social

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science, you're most likely to do an intro and advanced subject in child and family that aren't necessarily all just child protection, but, you know, in the area that actually touches on child protection. If you do that in a 13 week semester you will attend a two hour lecture every week and a one hour tute. And so for the sake of having done that exercise across the course of the two subjects you've probably done somewhere between 72 to 100 hours' worth; this process here through cert IV to diploma was 235 hours before we even look at the vocational graduate certificate.

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I turn to a different subject. If we had information or evidence that the turnover in staff in fact has decreased in the past couple of years - and I believe that's the evidence of Mr Swan - - -?---Mm.

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- - - does this model still have any relevance?---I think that yes, turnover has decreased, and I think that's largely due to economic factors. We actually started to see that towards the end of my time there with the child safety training grant. In terms of relevance, I guess the question really goes to - we started out on this path because we were haemorrhaging for labour supply, but in doing the analysis we realised some things about our composition, and they were about resilience, about retention; they were about staff skilling and capacity; they were about job role; they were about, you know, suitability and fit; they were about the sense of entitlement as to who is entitled to work. And in looking at that, we'd come to appreciate - and certainly it was the view of many of our managers - that there is some strength in a multi-disciplinary approach to child protection. We have SCAN teams to recognise that. The idea that we can actually have people from a diverse range of backgrounds actually making that contribution I think provides strength and it provides a strength of multiple perspectives in dealing with children and young people. In terms of the potential obsolescence of the model, I guess it comes down to vacancies over graduate numbers, and that is a moving feast at any one point in time, and whilst economic conditions are such that we don't see the turnover, the fundamental fact of the matter remains we're still seeing a significant change in the working age population. We're still heading towards more labour market exits over entrance; we are still heading towards a significant number of retirees, certainly in the next 5 to 10 years. And all of those things point towards more pressure on labour supply. The other thing, too, I mean, some people say to me, "Oh well, but you've got a lot of young people coming into your workforce." As people leave other parts of the economy and as people retire out of other parts of the economy, that creates vacancies in more senior positions and people move higher, faster, and so that causes almost a draw-up effect. So in terms of its relevance, look, I think it comes down to service quality, it comes down to

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scope of practice, it comes down to what skills you want and the diversity of those. It comes down to diversity of resilience, or the extent of resilience in terms of not just individual but team resilience, and I think it also comes down to the fact is that our current moment in time where turnover is reduced, it will be short lived.

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Now, this model was nominated for a premier's award for excellence and put into place in the Department of Child Safety whilst you were there?---Just to clarify, the work with the indigenous staff through the cert IV to diploma model was the part that was, yes, nominated for a premier's award, yes.

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Right, and you saw this pathway, being the centre column and the column on the right-hand side in place for some time?---Yes.

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But then with what's called a Machinery of Government - - -?---Change, yes.

- - - change - in other words, melding of departments, this process stopped or slowed down?---The cert IV and diploma process stopped because the mechanisms to - it was a - to make that process happen we had to actually go and get special assistance from the Department of Education in terms of funding. We also had to find a registered training organisation, which was the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE, and they were our partner in delivering this. In terms of getting that funding, that's something that you have to go back and get cohort by cohort, and with the Machinery of Government changes our ability to actually go back and get that funding I suppose was affected, in that obviously there's an available pool of funds but there's some approval and application processes you've got to go through to get it and we now - to deal with a different mechanism of doing that. We did get to a point where we actually were approached by the TAFE to say they had some funding to support us to do it and when we put the application forward it didn't go ahead. So, yes, that's what happened there, but it would be something that - I think it's a really vulnerable model whilst ever we're operating that way. The way to actually support it is to ensure that you've got your registered training organisation in-house and that you actually fund it in-house, but when we actually - through the Machinery of Government changes we actually did a review of education and training and Ken Dagley who is here today will talk to that, I imagine. When we did the review of educational training it was identified that the department didn't want to do the RTO thing so we had to look at other ways of going about that.

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One of the matters the commissioner needs to be satisfied of is obviously the cost to government of implementing different ideas. Does this method here cost government more than that method, because if you come through that method you've paid for your own degree through HECS?---Yes.

If you come through this process it's the government picking up the tab for your education?---Yes, it is, but I guess it's pay now or pay later with interest, fundamentally. If you think about the middle column and the previous slide, we talked about a significant turnover, 400 in one year. Yes, they're paying for their own education, but we're paying to actually recruit, select, train and lose them. If you've got a cohort that are actually staying with you would you not invest in them and would that actually not be a cheaper way of going about things than the continual churn.

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So if the government pays for it in this model here would you envisage a return of service obligation on them, so "If we train you, you must stay for five years," or something like that?---Look, you - well, yes, look, you certainly can. That's up to the agency, I suppose, but my experience has been that the people coming through that pathway generally are very responsive to the opportunity, they're very responsive to the fact there has been some opportunity for them to grow and advance and the development, and on that basis show a renewed level of commitment and so tend to actually stay and try to advance their career within the agency.

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I'll move on to a different subject.

COMMISSIONER: Just before - or while Mr Simpson is getting organised, it seems to me that working in human services, social science areas doesn't just require a qualification, experience and training and development, but it also requires a sense of dedication and commitment to that discipline as well as an aptitude for it?---Yes.

Would you agree with that?---I would.

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All right, and so of those which is the more important characteristic of a CSO, do you think?---I would say it would be the commitment and aptitude, because we can train you and put you through that process but you're not going to survive or last and you're not going to commit to stay unless you've actually got those things. There's emotional, intelligence, there's aptitude. I mean, I used to always say you can't teach nous, and some of the nous necessary to be effective in these environments I would actually say are probably implicit in people. We can't teach it in the training and I'd imagine that as good as some of the university programs are that the person still comes with a fundamental set of skills, abilities, talents, attitudes - - -

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Background?---Absolutely, and they apply themselves to an educational process. One of the difficulties, I suppose, in some of this discussion at times is that there's no silver bullet to, you know, build the perfect child protection worker or even, you know, build your workforce. Training is an input and it actually builds knowledge and understanding and gives people experiences to apply themselves to, but it comes back to what's inherent in the person. So hand in hand with anything relating to training I the recruitment and actually recruiting people based on some of that acumen and attitude and suitability.

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So who is the best trainer and developer for this concept of child safety, child protection officer, in the future? Is it the government directly or through NGO? And before you answer, I note that you're a board member of ACT For Kids, which is a service provider?---Yes.

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And that you're also chairman of their strategy committee. 1
So given that there's a little conflict there - - -?---Yes.

- - - could you still answer my question?---Well, thank you
for relieving me from having to cite the conflict, but yes,
look, I would actually say that there's probably a bit of a
partnership involved. I'd also talk about the educational
institutions in that as well. I mean, what we sought to
try and do with this model is actually go out and create
partnerships and create a way of actually doing something
end to end across the whole system, you know, in
partnership with others. The NGO sector are, I suppose, 10
the group that don't get a fair hearing when it comes to
talking about the training stuff, because there tends to be
a great deal of focus on the government workforce, but in
the NGO workforce we've got some really quite serious
issues in terms of skill development, training or even just
standards. You know, the Ford inquiry talks in 1999 about
the most vulnerable of our clients are actually with some
our least trained staff and in some areas that's still the
scenario. So I would actually far prefer to advocate a
model where in fact we actually have a training continuum
end to end across the Australian qualification framework 20
that maybe starts at the para-professional level of the
certificate IV area and goes, you know, all the way
through. You may even have some people who become
professorial practitioners in this area, but across that
you actually have a linked up network of providers that
include, you know, the workplace - whether it's NGO or
government, providing a learning experiencing in the
workplace, providing induction training. There's actually
an academic element that people experience.

So you could get a career path between government and
non-government sector?---Yes, and people can move 30
seamlessly between the two and you've also got a training
education pathway that actually follows alongside of it.
As I said, when we first embarked we tried to do this. The
child protection skills formation strategy was an attempt
to try and get to this.

Have you designed the model along the lines that you've
just mentioned?---Many times, in my sleep, yes.

Yes, okay. Well, why don't you put it on a piece of paper
then?---Look, I'm happy to, yes.

I'd be happy to consider it?---Good. 40

MR SIMPSON: When your associate returns, Mr Commissioner,
I'll tender the full copy of the slides that have been
referred to by the witness.

Now I'll just change tack a little bit. On training and
development I - - -

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 101, Mr Simpson, for the workforce futures slides. 1

ADMITTED AND MARKED: "EXHIBIT 101"

MR SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr Commissioner.

Can you see any benefit for including foster carers with some core training within the department before they take on the children with topics such as the impact of trauma or working with children generally and them to understand what CSOs are doing at the same time?---Yes, look, absolutely. 10
There is carer training provided by the department. I've never - it's never been my area so I've never conducted it. I attended carer training to actually speak to new carers in my role as a manager. So I can't speak to what's actually in that training, but certainly I'm a pretty strong advocate of anything we can do to actually skill carers is worthwhile and a couple of reasons for it is that in term of child protection that's the main game. Carers provide the safe place. They actually provide the place of safety. If we're removing a child from a place that's unsafe, then certainly we should be able to put our on heart and say that the place we're talking them to is a safe place. Whatever inputs or whatever contribution we make to strengthen that is worthwhile. It can be around a range of issues, even just how to actually interact and engage with the department and understanding some of the departmental processes and having some appreciation of or expectations around how the department will operate. 20

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Likewise, do you see an opportunity for, say, non-government staff involved in the program you have advocated? So if they're going to work in a residential care facility or in some other non-government field in child protection, should they be part of this program that the CSSOs were going through?---Well, that was in fact the program we constructed. When we did the cert IV diploma program, we actually did it with our REs so the recognised entities participated side by side with the CSSOs in that program. So we actually had non-government workers with our staff actually participating in the training and getting a qualification so, yes, it can happen and it has happened.

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Was it successful?---Enormously so.

As you understand, is that currently being undertaken by the department now?---I'm not aware of it continuing at the moment, no.

The last thing I just want to cover off on is caseloads. Back when you were head of training, what would you say to the proposition that a child safety officer starting from day one in a regional area and because of lack access to training, they're given a caseload from day one. Are they ready?---No.

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Why aren't they ready? They've got a bachelor's degree. They've done some intelligent study on a particular area? ---Yes.

They've come in as a child safety officer. Why not ready? ---Fundamentally the statutory nature of the work. Whilst you might have done a bachelor's degree, an understanding of the level of delegation, statutory authority and risk that you're carrying is probably not clear in the minds of somebody who's coming in day one regardless of what qualification they've studied. I think that you've also got to look at, I suppose, the obligation that the employer has to induct people into - you know, you're coming from a variety of different backgrounds and even if we just talk about the previous qualifications, there's a great scope and variety in that and so we actually probably need to give you some inductive training in the legislation, the policy environment and how we actually do things here. There's a need for an inductive element to actually support people into the workplace. We know that a significant contributor to turnover is the failure to induct. If people actually don't feel like they know how to operate in the environment, they will struggle.

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So how much training would you need before you could take on your first case?---How long is a piece of string?

It's been put that 10 weeks was originally to the initial training?---Yes.

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And it's now decreased to, say, five to seven weeks?---Yes, 1
look, I was one of the architects of the 10 week training
program after the CMC 2003. We put together a 10 week
competency based training program and it had some of the
things that Rob Ryan was talking about you mentioned
before. It had actual mock experiences, a mock courtroom.
It actually had a simulated investigation in a house. I
mean, if you think about the nature of child protection
work, it's all very well and good to do some training and
education, but the first time you have to knock on
someone's door and talk to them about a notification of
abuse relative to their child, you know, it's a 10
breathtaking moment and it needs some - we need to provide
some support and we need to actually not set clients up or
our staff up to actually struggle in those environments and
unfortunately sometimes it does happen. In terms of the
length of training I guess it depends - again I'll come
back to the scope of the job, the actual requirements and
what we believe is necessary for them to acquire the
competence and confidence to be able to execute their
delegations, but I think when you think of the gravity of
the role and the sort of powers that we're asking child
protection officers to exercise, I think we have to do it 20
in a very sensible and, I suppose, incremental fashion as
they're able to actually acquire or deal with these things.

All right?---So in terms of length of time, look, I
couldn't put my hand on my heart. Certainly the 10 weeks
was a good length of time. By the end of the training
everyone was getting to the point where they were, you
know, information overload and their capacity to absorb was
affected. One of the reasons that - the shift to the
current model or the five-week model happened after I had
left but I understand it was to try and do more work based
stuff but it was also to try and manage organisational
pressures against the amount of time - you know, the amount 30
of time people were out for training was 10 weeks. That
was a significant strain on the service centres trying to
strike a balance between operational pressures and giving
them a learning experience that they could absorb but also
giving them a workplace learning experience where they
could get the information, go and apply it, come back and
review it.

Right. The last topic I'll cover with you is one which I
call "leadership". If a person is going on to become a
team leader or a senior practitioner or a manager in this
area, is there a specific course or set of skills they must 40
have before they reach that level?---Well, I think
naturally, yes, there's a particular set of skills that
people should have to be selected at that level. In terms
of training, then I think, yes, there's - one of the
difficulties we have - and this is sector-wide - is that
people will come in with a practitioner skill base and work
as a practitioner and then find themselves thrust into the
situation where they're managing practitioners without the

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managerial skills and it's a different set of skills from being the practitioner to being the manager and so actually having a support to traverse that gap from being the practitioner to actually providing supervision, management, skill development, monitoring and evaluation of practitioners requires some actual training and development to be there, but I would come back to the commissioner's remarks before about acumen, actually have some of the internal stuff that actually makes you effective in an environment and a good candidate for that training and for a leadership role.

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I guess what you're saying though is you can't necessarily teach leadership though. You can't send someone to an RMC or child safety officers and expect them to become a senior practitioner overnight?---No. I mean, again, as I say, there's no silver bullet. A training program is an exposure to content, theories. It's an opportunity for input. You might acquire knowledge and understanding, but in terms of the ability to actually implement that, test that, analyse that, synthesise that, get some feedback, you know, create your strategies and approaches that comes through - that comes in live fire, I suppose. That comes through testing that. So there are a couple of elements to it. One is actually the identification of the appropriate person and the appropriate attributes. The other is putting them through a training program that gives them the inputs that would support them to actually make the best opportunity of the learning environment, that is, the workplace, and the other is the actual mentoring support that comes in the workplace from the logical leaders and from managers and others who actually mentor you, bring you along, debrief, rebrief, recalibrate, redirect and support you to move along.

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Do you see those sorts of qualities, for example, say, in the Queensland Police Service where the collegiality is very strong?---It is, yes. Look, it is, but, I mean, the Queensland Police Service, with respect, is having its own issues in terms of turnover. It's losing a lot of - seems to be losing - has over time seemed to have lost a lot of people from the sergeant, senior constable rank and they are generally the mentors who actually provide the supervision to the younger constables and so we're now seeing constables come into the workplace and on some occasions maybe being supervised by other constables who've got some years of experience but they're not getting necessarily the degree of contact they might have previously had with sergeants and senior sergeants, and again it comes back to the workforce issues and child protection are not limited just to child protection.

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But no silver bullet?---Correct.

All right, thank you, Mr Commissioner. I have no further questions.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Simpson. Mr Selfridge?

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MR SELFRIDGE: Mr Bradford, at paragraph 15 of your statement you go back to 2010 when the Department of Child Safety was re-integrated by the Department of Communities at large and you say that a number of significant training initiatives were suspended pending review at that time. Can you elaborate in relation to that?---With the machinery of government we have to appreciate that the Department of Communities became massive. It was the amalgamation of child safety, youth detention, youth justice, disability services, housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy, and sport and rec. I hope I haven't let anybody out, but that was in Communities itself. And as a result of that there was an enormous amount of training activity going on across all the previous agencies and trying to actually get all of that into an intelligible state to understand, you know, the breadth of what was going on; to avoid repetition, to avoid rework, required a review. But because the department started with a range of other areas, looking at its HR and IT and finance systems and all those other systems first, the training area wasn't reviewed until probably last, and so whilst there was a business as usual approach, sort of, applied in the early days, when we got to the end of certain programs we weren't able to advance them or do much more with them until we actually got to review. So it led to, I suppose, a number of things actually finding themselves suspended because they weren't able to be advanced.

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Specific of?---The certificate IV and diploma program wasn't able to advance. The vocational graduate certificate qualification had been implemented, it was in train. And I understand - and I'm working from memory here - that there'd been an agreement in HR that that qualification was sufficient to make people eligible to become child safety officers, but I understand that then came up with some sort of re-evaluation, I suppose, and so that then became a bit of a matter that was, sort of, you know, unresolved for a period of time, and of course until we looked at things we weren't able to resolve it. The other thing was about being able to find the process to access a registered training organisation to issue the certificate IV and diploma qualifications. We tried to have a look at whether or not The Outlook at Boonah, which was a registered training organisation and part of the agency, could actually be retained to do that or whether we could go and do those things externally. But because we were in the process of just trying review to the whole envelope in terms of training - and you've got to understand at this time it wouldn't have been uncommon for trainers from three different parts of the agency to arrive in Rockhampton on the same day looking to train the same people in different things, and of course not being able to - you know, that not working very well. So I suppose - - -

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Sorry, I don't understand when you say that?---Well, I mean, if you've got different parts of the agency all looking to deliver training in the same place on the same day, you're not going to have high attendance at any of those training because - - -

You mean when everyone comes back under the same umbrella of Department of Communities you may have the same team is wanting to train the same thing?---And you end up bumping into each other and you're going to end up with re-work, so there was a real need to have a look at that stuff, and - - -

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So it was just a re-evaluation of how better resources could be utilised across the Department of Communities? ---That's right. And the consequence of trying to get all of that into the one sock is that you have to actually, you know, tools off certain things and focus on doing that. But it also meant that, I guess, certain things could continue on and certain things just would have to reach their logical end before you could reactivate them. You heard me talk about the certificate IV and diploma; that was based on a funding situation where we relied on Education to provide us funding to be able to do that. Well, there's an application process, there's timeframes involved and the agility of the agency to be able to do those things was affected by its sheer size and by the massive amount of work involved in actually bringing it all together.

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Sure. And given that you resigned in 2011, you're unsure as to what the current situation is in relation to those things that were up for review, the re-evaluation particular to the Department of Child Safety as it was then?---I moved off to the Premier's disaster relief fund in mid-2011, and then off to Health, and then left at the end of that year, so I'm not privy to wear those things are at now.

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Sure. And of course Ken Dagley might have some information in relation to - - -?---I expect so.

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Yes. All right, thank you. I've no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Do you think - you said before that, you know, who you recruit, how you train them and retain them depends largely on what the object of your system is, what you want them to do for you?---Mm.

If we look at the system, it does a number of things: it first of all intervenes on behalf of the state for the protection of a child who meets the statutory criteria for being unsafe and unprotected; and then what it does if it can't reunite that child safely at home with a family within the foreseeable future, it removes the child into some substitute family arrangement under the long-term guardianship of the chief executive or other; and then it looks after them as best it can through various ways, including by funding NGOs, essentially, to act as the state agent for providing residential care and meeting their developmental needs; and then from about 15 onwards the state has to get itself ready for the exiting of those children - get the children ready for independence - through transition planning. Now, what's happening is that childhood ends at 18 and all your rights and entitlements as a child cease and you actually might have less recognised rights as an adult then you do as a child and you certainly have less protection. But do you regard one of the functions of the state or the statutory system as socialising the child in care so that not only - at independence not only can they live independently, but they're a socialised and functioning adult?---Yes. I mean, if the state - if a child is on a long-term guardianship order, if a child is in the long-term care of the state in my view is they are the state's child.

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Yes?---And just as any parent ought to, they ought to actually bring that child to a place of functional independence where they can actually cope well within the community.

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So section 75 talks about independence, and you would see that as a term, not just meaning independence of the system, but an independent adult?---I think, yes, independence in terms of independence self-advocacy, the independent capacity to actually transact their needs and

interact with of society, yes.

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So meet all their needs at that stage of their development, including their protective needs?---Yes.

So who do you think is best placed to perform that socialisation role or function; the state as parent, or somebody on behalf of the state?---I think I'll probably answer that two ways: (1) I'll use the words of a young person I worked with, and that was he basically said, "I've got one chance at childhood. I've got one chance to be a kid. And I spend my time interacting with this agency and that agency and government and other such things." My observation, Commissioner, would be that abuse shrinks your world; that if you are a child or young person who finds yourself in contact with the child protection system, that instantly overnight your world changes, and in many cases the only thing that these children maintain is their school placement, and sometimes we struggle to maintain that for them. And so as we think about than what transpires for them moving forward and staying in our care, there's a great range of activities that need to go on in terms of actually broadening their horizons, giving them a community, giving them self-reliance, self-advocacy, these sorts of things. And in many cases the unintended consequence of actually being in care is the lack of normal childhood experiences and activities. The extent to which we can normalise the child in care's experience, I think, has a great impact upon the trajectory that they take. Where they can actually maintain a foster placement, maintain a sense of family and bond and connect with their carers and actually have a family-based placement and experience, we see better outcomes; where those places breakdown and we find them in residential care and in those other less typical or natural forms of care, I think we see worse outcomes. So I think I would agree with you, there's a diverse range of things going on here and I actually think there's a diverse range of people to provide these inputs, but actually provide - try to actually focus on maintaining - building the child's world around building for them a family experience or a nurturing environment, building for them a community that they can actually transact their needs in and learn to actually interact in and building for them self-advocacy and reliance that they actually have when they leave because at 17 and 364 days you're in care and you can't see your natural family and you've got all of these things operating and supporting you. At 18 years old, on your 18th birthday, all of that stops and your observation is you've probably got less protection and rights at that point than you did the day before. So I think it's incumbent upon us to actually, you know, do something quite deliberate and dedicated through the whole system to, as I say, build the nurturing environment, build their community and build their skills to be able to transact, but accept the realities that from 15 onwards unless we're actually doing work with them to

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help them, they have to be better skilled, better advocates, more capable of interacting with society than most kids because they're going to have to do it alone in many cases.

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And most kids are still at home these days?---Yes.

Or they're at university, they are on Abstudy or Austudy. They have got an income stream because they're at tertiary levels which you don't get if you're not and with kids in care the prospects are they probably aren't?---Generally.

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So, for example, how do you think you do this in a practical sense? You want to get a young person ready for independence. One of the best ways of becoming independent is to get your own motorcar, all right, so you can take yourself around to job applications; be independent of anybody else; not reliant on public transport; get yourself a motorcar. Before that's any good to you, you need a licence. To get a licence you have got to do 100 hours of practical driving. How does someone in care at 17 do that?---Either with a very patient, nervous foster parent - - -

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Who's a resident?---Well, that's an excellent question. I don't know. They would either have to pay an instructor to do it.

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Where do they get the money from?---Well, again have to try and find a job, wouldn't they?

They get \$2000. I was told - yesterday I met with CREATE - that the department will give them the \$2000 to buy a computer or get driving instruction eventually, but it comes off the money they get at their 18th birthday to become independent so they can spend it before they leave on things getting them ready for leaving but they haven't got anything left often?---Well, I would defy the most creative person to leave their current situation alone and set themselves up functionally in, you know, their own home and their own setting and acquire all of those things with the money provided.

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Right. So in the normative family situation very few young people at 18 are expected to get their own rental property, get themselves a job, become self-sufficient without a safety net?---That's right.

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But these children who have had the disadvantage of being in care for in some cases up to 17 years of their lives are expected to do all that?---Yes.

But we don't seem to have - nobody seems to be taking on the responsibility for actually getting them there in practical ways like getting them a driver's licence? ---These practical things are generally left to, you know, for their carers and you might have some CSOs who engage with young people and identify them as goals. They might be working with them, but the fundamental reality is, yes, that's a fairly keen and accurate summation of the experience. I think that where you see good transition from care work, where staff are working well, they've actually understood that unless this young person is actually linked up and has got a community and got, for instance, supports, then they're going to struggle. One of the things that I used to always focus on as a manager is saying, "What extra-curricular activities is this child doing?" for a couple of reasons: one, to give them a sense

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of normality. What are they doing that's normal? What are they doing that builds community for them and actually gives them a network of people because, you know, it's through participating in the local soccer club that they actually meet the parents of their friends who they have a respite place with or they get to go on holidays with or they get to - they might actually get somebody who - you know, in the course of expanding their community and developing relationships within their community may have other people who will make those contributions so, "You know what, I'll teach you to drive."

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The very first thing we have to do as an adult is build a relationship with people who they probably haven't been exposed to before like their butcher, their baker, their mechanic; have to get quotes for things; buy a fridge. Do they get taught to do this sort of stuff?---Again a lot of that - there's no dedicated program, as it were, to teach them that sort of stuff but a lot of that stuff would happen as a result of - I mean, think about where we all learnt that. We learnt that from being alongside our parents whilst they did it.

Yes?---We did that from actually exposure to pro-social role models who taught us that.

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So if I'm at the low maintenance end in a long-term foster placement and I have had one or two schools, I'm probably going to make it?---You're going to do better, yes.

But I heard from a young woman yesterday who had been in care for more than 10 years and had gone to 35 different schools. Her chances of doing that are lower because she was in a residential care facility and, as I understand it, those in charge of the residences don't have the authority to give you day-to-day - to take case-management decisions that's got to be referred to the CSO so if she wanted to get a part-time job at Brumby's, that would have to be something that she would have to get permission from the department for which may or may not come through very quickly?---Could be, yes, quite slow.

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And then it's all a question of who's going to carry the risk of that?---Well, I guess, first of all, we've got to sort of examine what's the risk of getting a part-time at Brumby's, but I guess to follow your line of thought, commissioner, my view is any step in the direction of normalising a young person's experience and allowing them to actually participate in their community the way any child who's not in care would is a step in the right direction.

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So do you think that the residentials, if they were properly staffed by properly qualified people, could and should have more of an involvement in what are currently case-management decisions about what the child - who the

child spends an overnight with at a pyjama party or whatever they call them these days, sleepovers?---Yes, I think that notwithstanding some of the difficulties that resi staff face - and we do experience some pretty extreme behaviours and other such things where some of that risk-averse behaviour comes in because we do have some very traumatised children - - -

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Some are there because of their highly complex needs in residential because they can't go to work?---Some because they can't find a foster placement.

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Others are there because they're transitioning out into independent living?---Yes.

Let's just focus on the latter category?---Yes. Look, I think there's a way of actually creating a case plan that gives latitude to those things and actually, you know, says, "Listen, for those decisions that are almost the indemnity-type decisions, the parental decisions, the guardian-type decisions, then absolutely they should sit with the department." For those decisions about everyday living and - you know, some sense and logic should have its day.

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It seems to me, as I have sort of sat and listened to things, that in some respects the department, the substitute parent, exercises more authority over children than their natural parents could or would?---Yes.

My 17-year-old isn't going to take too kindly to me telling them exactly what they can and can't do after school other than their homework?---Yes.

So they're sort of over-normalised in a way?---Yes.

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They're almost overly protected. I'm not sure who's being protected here by these decisions, whether it's them or the decision-maker?---Well, look, in every one of those - I mean, if you think about just how - if you think about the nature of the system, how much risk the agency is carrying, how much risk CSOs carry, the concern about media attention, the concern about being found to have done the wrong thing, then, yes, look, I think you would have to - it would be naïve to suggest that in some of these decisions there's not an extent to which the agency or the decision-maker is protecting themselves in trying to actually create a lower-risk profile, if possible, but I think we also have to understand that when we've got these highly contrived situations where they're overprotected and it's almost a little bit false, that almost trains young people to manipulate. It trains them, "I know what your agenda is. I know why you're going about it this way so I'm going to outmanoeuvre you," and we see a great deal of that go on as well, in fact where the approach almost coaches or almost teaches the young person - the unintended

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consequence, of course, but almost teaches the young person how to outsmart, outwit and outplay and outmanoeuvre it because they already appreciate how things are going to go. 1

Anything arising from that? Mr Capper?

MR CAPPER: Thank you. Craig Capper from the Commission for Children. In relation to your statement, I just want to start with that first, I guess, at paragraph 5 you say you observed a lack of developed skill and a lower level of individual resistance. What were the skills that you identified as lacking?---Sorry, just - lower level of individual resilience, perhaps. 10

That's what you say was the skill - - -?---Yes. Sorry, you just said "resistance", that's all. I was just clarifying it.

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Resilience, sorry?---Yes, no you're right. So in terms of the skill it was actually about - it's not suggesting that people were unskilled, it was actually about saying that they had acquired the skills that you could logically expect them to acquire given the length of time and training that they had had to acquire them, but in terms of developing some of those insights and I suppose higher order skills and some of the things that come with time and experience, then those were some of the things that were lacking. So when we think about just some of the practical wisdoms around, you know, networking, leveraging off of other services, even just, if you take a thread out of the discussion the commissioner and I have just had, we might have a goal with a young person in terms of something we think is going to be for their benefit, but sometimes we've got to be wise about who the messenger is, that, you know, the young person is going to actually resist the natural parent or resist the CSO but may actually respond better to the youth worker, and so let's be, you know, wise about how we go about these things. So I guess it was about some of those - some of the practical wisdom, nous, stuff that you get over the course of having some exposure and time in the work.

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So life experience as well?---Yes.

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That would obviously follow on to the resilience through life experience, exposure. You know, those sorts of skills would also build resilience. Would you agree with that? ---Yes, and can I just be really specific about that? I mean, some of that resilience is about - you know, some of us are naturally very resilient on the basis of our life experiences. There's also the need to actually develop a resilience to the work. It's confronting work. There's some tragic and heartbreaking stuff that you experience. You don't get to choose on any given day what's about to happen, and unless you actually acquire a resilience to the nature of the work then you're probably going to, you know, be extremely stressed and probably not last very long.

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It goes beyond resilience, though, doesn't it, in relation to that? Certainly that also comes down to support and appropriate leadership and the ability to engage, you know, meaningfully with your supervisors and those things?---The very stuff that builds the resilience, yes.

Thank you. So it certainly is not simply a matter of the personal resilience but the system has to have the resilience and be able to support people engaging in these very difficult activities?---Absolutely.

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And - - -?---Sorry, and actually be deliberate about building that resilience and setting apart structures around mentoring and support supervision and team building to actually build that resilience.

Was that present in the department, in your opinion, whilst you were there?---I think we were certainly working that way. There was a reasonable degree in improving morale. There certainly was a willingness from the executive - and I'm talking about the Department of Child Safety when it existed, a willingness from the executive to actually engage very transparently with managers and with staff and actually hear their ideas and look to implement them and so the discourse and the level of interaction and discussion was actually fairly active and alive and as a result of that there was a sense of being supported, listened to, engaged, and that there was strategy to work that way. Now, you know, whilst things do move slowly at times, there were a number of things that were on the move and a number of circumstances where staff actually felt that they had given the feedback and that that had actually been implemented. Some of those things were around, some of the things relative to staff protection, you know, staff options but also responses in circumstances where they experienced aggression or threats or assaults and things, around progression, around training, around support. But there were some challenges as well, because you're in a situation where it would be great to have a mentoring scheme, but when your protégés dramatically outnumber the number of available potential mentors then you've got to build capacity before you can do these sorts of things.

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Certainly we had evidence in the last week or so that there was this notion of perhaps having more junior staff look after those who are in care or long-term guardianship and only put more experienced staff at the pointy end, as it were, in terms of the removals and the short-term orders sort of process. Would you agree with that and would that help in this regard?---Yes, to some extent. I mean, that practically sort of happened in any case, but it was also a bit of a decision about acumen and it was also a bit of a decision about - at times a decision about whether somebody needed a break or a change. I mean, sometimes I think we're given to thinking that the pointy end is the really hard stuff and the case management stuff isn't as hard. Well, there are some difficulties in the case management and there's some long term stuff and some seemingly intractable problems that can really wear people out. The nature of the work, the extremes of circumstances that some people are experiencing, can actually be quite challenging for the staff. So I think there has to be some - your managers and supervisors - and when I talk about acquiring those managerial skills, it's also about acquiring the wisdom to sort of know where your people are at and know the extent to which people might need a developmental opportunity, the extent to which a team might actually need support around its culture and functioning. If you've got a team that are all very experienced doing one thing, well, how do you ensure that you've actually got a succession plan there? It might be about taking someone and putting them in with an experienced group so they work off that and

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you might filter your inexperienced staff amongst your experienced staff to get - you know, to mitigate, I suppose, the risks, but also leverage off that collective resilience.

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In developing that resilience, in developing - you know, in having that process of ensuring we increase the knowledge, increase their experience, give them that mentoring, was there any feedback undertaken, or how do you go about getting feedback from staff in relation to their training needs in relation to areas where they required additional skills that they thought were lacking?---Yes. The front line work analysis job redesign project was a major project where in fact the HR division of the agency went out and did those workshops with the staff and actually spoke to that and staff - some of the key things that came out of that was some of the more forensic stuff, the more pointy end stuff. Another thing that the staff identified out of that and also through our own surveying with the training and post-course feedback was the stuff around working multiculturally. There has been a strong focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander training, but actually working multiculturally was becoming an issue that staff didn't feel confident with and were wanting to develop - and these are generalisations, I'm sure you can appreciate. The more forensic stuff, I suppose, too, was some of the stuff they identified, but there feedback loops in place to get that. The difficulty is time and money and time off and all those sorts of thing and the process you've got to go through to implement it.

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Well, that's the next question. Okay, so we've now gathered the information and we've identified some key areas, ie multicultural communication, dealing with multicultural environments, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. What was done to assist the staff, or how much implementation followed from that, if any?---Okay, in terms of the implementation, often the first port of call was to look to the child safety officer training program and look at, okay, what can we change, what can we fit, what can we put in there, and there was a constant pressure within the available time-frame to say, okay, how, well, are we tweak this, how can we deliver that, where can we fit these things in, because you've got to look at the competing demands. One is that there's a burn rate involved, obviously, in training, and every organisation experiences - when we've got people off on training they're not doing the operations and there's a cost involved in that we mind the cost. Also, there's always some pressure from the operations side of things to say, "We want our people back, because whilst they're off at training they're not here doing the work," and that puts extra pressure, you know, on the operations and actually meeting the demands. So I can say to you quite confidently that if every single piece of feedback we ever got - and we got suggestions from child death reviews, we got suggestions from the

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commission, we got suggestions from the different RE services, we had suggestions from commercial entities out there who wanted to actually be paid to deliver different training courses. If we had actually implemented every single thing that was ever suggested to us we'd have probably a 12 month training program, you know. So you've got to sort of draw the line somewhere and say, "Okay, where is the best way to acquire this and how do we implement those?" But that was always a fairly agile part of the review process under child safety because we had, you know, I suppose, a fairly agile system where we could actually do that and the delegations were - some of the delegations sat with myself and with my immediate executive director trying to actually get someone that worked under the Department of Communities when we had so much training going on and the initial excitement amongst the trainers was, "Excellent, we can use that," and we'd grab that and there was a lot of sharing in terms of the different training programs around. Trying to actually get that into something that works was challenging.

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Okay, but staff go through the initial training. Did you get any feedback as to whether they thought that was training?---Yes.

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Was it? Did they feel comfortable, that they were ready to go out into the world and do this work that we've already identified as quite challenging?---I think you have to be realistic about did they feel comfortable.

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Did they feel equipped? Did they feel that they had the skills or that they were ready to go out and do the work - - -?---I think in environments like this where there's an element of anticipation and perhaps even a bit of a respectful fearfulness of some of the activities that they have to undertake, I think there's always going to be an anxiety. I think there's always going to be a sense that, "Oh, you know, I'm not sure I'm ready."

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Yes?---I think that at the end of the 10-week program, as I suggested before, they actually felt quite equipped and ready and a buzz, but I think we have to temper that with understanding that for some of them they had information overload as well. They'd absorbed everything. They probably were beyond the point where they could absorb much more, and so they were just ready to get out. In terms of the more recent program, the big concern they had generally was who's going to mentor them, "Who's going to support me? Will I have time to actually do some of the workplace activities and will that be supported by my supervisors as I go out?" So I'd have to say that they probably all felt apprehensive. But the feedback generally - and, I mean, you can source it from the department because we kept reports on all this sort of stuff, we actually captured the feedback and recorded it - the feedback generally was, "You know, look, it was growth training." It was actually probably going to be just what they needed to get them started, but there was an appreciation that they probably would always need more. I'm a pretty strong advocate of, you know, saying: I think you always need more refresher and update sort of stuff when you're working in these environments.

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And is that provided, in your experience, adequately?---I think that, again, there can always be more, but you've got to draw the line somewhere. It is determined by scope of work. I think that - I mean, look, I'm on record on the issue in terms of the training; we actually were trying to campaign to get more time for training whilst I was with the department. We were actually trying to say that the CSO program probably needed to be a bit longer, because as we started to look at some of the things we wanted to include and we didn't have the space for it, we wanted to try and stretch that. And so we were actually advocating for at least an extra week to try and get a number of things in there. But again, that's not as simple as just sort of saying, "Well, let's do it." All those factors that I spoke about before have to be considered as well.

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Sure. And was any consideration given to perhaps, you know: you do your 10 weeks; you go out for a period, and come back for another short block? To be able to - okay, let's - "We've given you training; we've put you out into the world. How's it gone? What do you need? What are you doing? What can we help you with?" Anything like that? ---Yes. With the first 10 week program it was straight

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after this 2003 CMC inquiry and there was - it was one of the first recommendations to get acted upon. I think that probably it's fair to say that it was: let's get that program set up and let's get them going. I mean, the training team started in October; we delivered our first round of training in the third week of January. I mean, it was put together, you know, well, but very, very quickly. And we learnt on the run. And in that year we did 10, 10 week programs. So to give you an idea of volume, I think the focus was really on: let's deliver the 10-week program and then we can start to look at those sorts of things later on. So from an educational point of view we certainly were very conscious of wanting to do something follow-up, but I think you'd probably find that the original intent of the newer program, which is - can I just be really clear about that, the idea is it was 18 months and that you would do an initial three weeks, then you'd come back for a week, and then you'd actually do something subsequent to that; and there'd be workbooks and workplace learning and also visits from trainers during the time that you were back in the workplace to actually do live work with you, walk alongside you as you did things and actually mentor you in situations. So that's - - -

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That was the intention. Did that become a reality?---It did. It did become a reality.

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For how long?---Well, it's still the current model, I understand, but I think that perhaps the original intent of its intensity is perhaps not there. But again, I've been gone now for over 12 months, so I can't speak to its present - - -

Sure?---You'd have to direct that question to Ken.

No worries. Now, in relation to their skills and their training, you say that there was certainly follow-up with staff as to their needs and feedback and those things, and you provided those?---Yes.

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Was that in a structured way? Was it an ongoing requirement? Was there a survey? Was there performance planning? How were these reviews undertaken as to their needs and their ongoing training?---There was always the - I call them "happy sheets". There was always the post-training how did it go evaluation sheet.

Sure?---And so there was always an analysis of that.

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Yes?---There was, through other mechanisms, such as the other projects that were going on at the time, that broader consultation via HR with the staff - - -

Yes?--- - - - and with the team leaders to get that feedback, and so through, you know, that sort of work there was. I understand that there was also the staff survey

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that goes out every 12 months and there's some training elements in the staff survey that actually capture some of that data. Actually it's pretty - look, I'm trying to remember the questions, but I remember actually being quite satisfied that the questions were pretty direct about, you know: what do you get; what do you want; what do you need, sort of training. So there's that data captured as well. And the model where they attend training and then trainers actually go out into the workplace and work alongside people; well, the trainers are picking up that stuff all the time in terms of what people are wanting. And not just what people are telling them, but they're also identifying gaps. And so in staff meetings and meetings with the trainers we would actually say, you know, "What are we seeing?" "People are struggling to get to this, or they're struggling to actually appreciate that concept." That then became - the other method where we actually looked at it was the correspondence we received from the commission; from the REs; from various sources about the training they'd like to see, and also we also had links to the child death review and other such things. So I was on the child death review committee for five years as the director of training and my job was to actually represent training in that space and actually look for elements that came out of child death reviews that told us that: right, we have a training need here. On a couple of occasions there were dedicated training interventions as a result of things that had emerged out of child death reviews.

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And so you'd agree, though, that the child death review process was an important process?---Yes.

And it does provide leanings both for the department, for CSOs, and certainly it assists in developing the needs or answering issues in relation to - systemic issues in relation to the department, perhaps things that need to change?---Yes, I do. I think the child death review does all those things, but I think the thing we need to be conscious of with the child death review committee is that it is maintained as an environment for learning and for actually - to protect, I think, the opportunity to learn and to improve. Where some approaches have been taken to make it a bit punitive, what happens is the learning is lost because people shut down for fear and don't speak. We want an environment where people will speak freely about what's gone wrong so that it doesn't happen again and we actually have a functional and useful discourse around that.

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And that comes back again, does it not, to the way in which the recommendations of the child death review are communicated to staff and the support given to them in relation to that and the way the training is undertaken on those things. Isn't that correct?---Yes, it is. But I think it also comes to the expectations of - I suppose I speak of the external committee and the commission.

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Sure?---The expectations of the commission in terms of what child safety can do in terms of some of the recommendations that come back. I mean, there was a period of time there when we were all finding our feet with the child death review process where there was a recommendation a week and staff would never get to a situation where they knew what their job was because it was changing all the time. There was policy level change or there was changes to the methods of doing things of procedural change so frequently that staff were actually going, "Well, you know, we can't actually get to a stable state of being."

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Sure?---And so when we moved to a position of saying: well, listen, we'll take that feedback and we're actually going to do periodic reviews of our practice and implement them at a time when our staff can absorb; that then moved to, I suppose, a more functional way of doing things.

Sure. And as you say, that was certainly in that initial period, in that teething period, as it were, and certainly you would agree, though, the recommendations at that point clearly identified - particularly given that they were the first reviews - identified very clear deficiencies in process, and as the department grew and the recommendations grew, the recommendations slowed and progressively we're getting better practise. Wouldn't that be correct to say? ---I think that's probably a fair remark. I guess fundamentally - and to expand on my last comment, I would have to say for that process to work well and for that process to be functional and for the learnings to be captured and implemented there's a fundamental relationship that needs to exist between the commission and the department.

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Sure?---And it needs to be a respectful and collegial one and one that is actually mutually focused on the best interests of children and young people and mutually focussed on capturing the learnings and actually advancing those things and moving forward.

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It can't be one where any antipathy or antagonism starts to creep in, and it's a difficult relationship because you've got a situation where one party is reviewing the practice of another and, you know, making critiques and making recommendations and so I actually think that the relationship stuff is probably critical for that to remain a functional and useful process. 1

And you say that you were on the committee over the five years. You saw that sort of growth occurring, that collegiate approach, the fact that the recommendations were very clear, that there was less need for a lot of the recommendations or the recommendations were identifying matters that had previously been known. Would that be right?---I did start to see, and I was pleased to see, over time there was a recognition of - there seemed to be - for a period of time there was a failure to sort of recognise the changes in policy insofar as it seemed to be that cases were being judged by the previous existing policy. So what might have been the policy at one particular point in time changed and then a judgment was sort being made out of sync with the policy. I did see over time though that that did improve and I did have occasion as the director of training to actually participate in a training event where we actually got the external committee over to us and we actually sat down and actually had the opportunity to have that very open and transparent discussion which was an enormous step forward. 10 20

Yes?---So I think I would just I would encourage that sort of exchange and I think that it's also very, very important for the external committee for the commission to actually periodically from time to time have the opportunity to understand the experience of the child safety officers, the child safety staff and visit a Child Safety Service centre, actually walk alongside some child safety officers, sit down and actually talk to them and actually come over and get that context, that contextual induction. I think that's very, very helpful. 30

Sure. Now, you have said that that has informed your - it was one method of informing you of training needs and those things, the feedback from staff. In relation to operation performance reviews, were they part of that process? ---Operational performance reviews?

Yes. You have identified you were a manager of a Child Safety Service centre?---Yes. 40

The information contained in the statement of - in evidence last week from Ms Matebau indicates that the department was undertaking operational performance reviews. She had been in the position since 2009, but she certainly indicated she hadn't seen one for three or four years?---Yes.

Did you undertake any of those performance reviews as part

of your time as a manager?---Yes. When we were the Department of Child Safety, yes, we had regular operation performance reviews on Child Safety Service centres.

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The purpose of those reviews was?---Look, the purpose of those reviews was to actually analyse how we're trending across the state and how we're actually trending or performing relative to certain benchmarks. So there were HR benchmarks around, you know, staff retention, sick leave, length of service, all those sort of things. There were measures around case-plan data, you know, the number of current case plans, the number of investigations completed, those sorts of things. There was data around the types of matters coming to SCAN, you know, the actual - I suppose at the time it became more sophisticated and it gave us a much clearer picture of what it is we were dealing with. So, for instance, as the manager of Redcliffe, the data - when we looked across the operational performance review, we actually got a very good, clear picture of the types of matters we were dealing with, the types of matters coming to Health and to SCAN and to police, the cohort we were dealing with, and we came to appreciate and understand that in that environment - and it was because of the OPRs that we understood this. In the environment we were dealing with very high rates of domestic violence and substance abuse - about 75 per cent of all matters were in that realm - and that we had a high proportion of children involved who were aged zero to five. Now, from just a broad sweep of child protection that's a hugely risky situation to have. That says to you that your biggest risk is actually a very young child, you know, dying as a result of domestic violence and such.

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Of course?---So the OPRs were enormously helpful and actually helped managers get a very good helicopter view of what they were dealing with so they could see where to intervene. The frenetic nature of a service centre is such that you can be, you know, very, very busy and dragged into all the activity that's going along. For example, in that environment I think I had 230 children under orders. I had 55 investigations a month coming in and a team of four who were dealing with those 55 investigations a month. You do the math. It's pretty busy and so the opportunity to stop, see the big picture and then intervene strategically to actually improve service was excellent and the OPRs were very valuable.

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If we don't do that, obviously there's a risk, as you say, because we're trying to juggle 10 balls at a time that one of them will drop through the gaps?---Yes.

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The children and the children's needs will drop through the gaps. We place a child at risk as a result of failing to undertake that strategic assessment of how we're really going. Wouldn't you agree with that?---Well, I think it's incumbent upon the manager to be able to see the big

picture and if you can't, then, you know, you're really sort of doing it by experiment, not by, I suppose, intent.

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Did the OPRs inform your training programs at all and did they identify through the OPRs on a more systemic level either at a CSSC level, like, a Child Safety Service centre level, or at a state-wide level or a regional level? Did you analyse that to look for training opportunities or training needs?--No, the OPRs were really very focused on the service centre's functioning, so was it meeting its key performance indicators in the service centre? We were actually starting to work towards getting to doing OPRs with other elements of the business and it was about, "Okay. What are things that tell us something?" So we actually were moving towards developing an OPR for the training unit for HR and where the data, I imagine, would come from, you know, the sort of things you're looking for. I suppose we'd look at staff turnover. We'd look at staff retention. We'd start looking at some of things and I suppose the service system itself or the service centres would become a source of data for those central units but we didn't get there before Machinery of Government changes.

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Certainly in relation to that, that response came from Ms Matebau in questioning from the commissioner as to, "What do you do to measure performance in the risk-assessment process?" and she said, "We used to do OPRs but we don't any more." Did you see them as a valuable exercise enough that they should be reinstated - - -? ---Yes.

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- - - or that we should have something similar?---Well, I mean, yes, again looking at the scope of work, look what you're trying to prove, look at your KPIs and give your managers a dashboard that tells them something intelligent about how they're performing, yes, whether it's OPR or some such beast; yes.

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And certainly as a manager that would instruct you and educate you in relation to the needs of your own staff. Perhaps they were lacking or whether they needed assistance or further training or things that may be required on a local level or matters that you may need to bring to the attention of SCAN members or some of those things. Wouldn't that be correct?---Yes, I think you could probably say that there's useful data in there that actually appeals to a number of audiences and there are things that I often found I wanted to share with my staff or I wanted to share with my SCAN team or my partners because I felt it actually was information that was useful to all of us. I think you've got to choose your measures well, you know, for example, sick leave. Sick leave has long been given to be a measure of, you know, staff satisfaction and morale. If you've got high sick leave, you're above the average, then people are unhappy and they're pulling sickies, but you've also got to remember that we're working in an environment

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too where we're going into situations that are sometimes not particularly hygienic and so it's not uncommon for child protection officers before they actually build their essential immunity that's part of your first year of practice to actually, you know, experience higher than normal sick leave in their first year as well. So I guess you've got to choose your KPIs well in terms of what you're trying to measure, but also then interpret them accurately.

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Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

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I have just got another question for you. Thinking about the idea of having residentials that might be called "group residential" rather than being limited to four or six, maybe up to 15, 12-15, just to try to see whether or not there were any cost-efficient economies of scale with the idea that those group residences be monitored and supervised by house parents as opposed to carers who come in and leave after their eight hour shifts, there has been some concern expressed to me - not the only one about that model - that that would give rise to a lot of training and industry issues in terms of how much house parents would want to be paid these days for their 24 hours, seven days a week job. They're not real parents and that's their job to be house parents and they would want a lot more money than they used to want when BoysTown was in operation, for example. What do you say about that?---It's funny mention that. BoysTown was the example I was thinking of. What do I say about that?

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First of all, say, the industrial issues. Is that real or illusionary, do you think, that they will give rise to a lot of complex industry issues bringing back house parents?---I think it's real for those who want to present it as a barrier. I think that it is not beyond examination and I think you probably could find some people who would be willing to do that. I think you also have to look at there are some foster placements where there have been carers who have had quite a significant number of children. I think the other thing you've got to look at is: is it an orphanage by another name; and thus the social temperament to that. I think also we have to look at matching in terms of the group dynamic shifts every time a new child is introduced in that sort of environment. So that has to be well-managed. And so there has to be some significant training. But, I mean, you can train people to manage these situations and you can actually put things in place to make these things is successful.

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So would it be fair to say that in principle you don't see any serious conceptual or practical barrier - apart from the once you've mentioned, which are clear - but you could see some practical problems in implementing it unless it was done very carefully?---Well, it has to be done very carefully. I mean, Commissioner, one of the experiences that I've had some frustration over time working in the child protection system is that whenever one of these difficulties arises there tends to be an immediate polarisation of the issue.

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Yes?---There's those who are for it and those who are against it. And the analysis doesn't get to have its day, and that's not just for this sort of issue, but a range of issues. And so actually getting past the immediately presented barriers or the previously affected barriers, "You can't do that because of X; you can't do that because of Y - - - "

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Or getting blinded by the apparent cost advantages?---Yes. Once you've - it's actually about - I think to get anywhere with this, with what we're talking about in child protection, it's actually about not just accepting this position that, "Well, you know, we tried that in 1984 and that didn't work," I think it's about actually saying, "Well, let's actually grow up. We can see the two polarised views on the group home situation. We can see the two polarised views on qualifications on" - you know, pick your poison, there's a range of issues within child protection where that's the approach. It is about saying, "Well, let's actually get somewhere in the middle and analyse what could work. What actually can be achieved? What can be applied; and how would you actually go about it?"

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And how does it compare with what we've got at the moment? ---My view of what we've got at the moment, residentials aside, the other thing is commercial accommodation. I mean, the fundamental anatomy of this issue is that you have young people who are very traumatised who actually act out and have some pretty serious behaviours that are difficult to manage in a foster placements; difficult to keep other kids in those placements safe, but also difficult for the parents to manage and difficult for foster parents to manage, and often very difficult to get the adequate level of support in place to actually help them manage those behaviours. These young people go into these environments where the only consistent element in that environment is them. It's their environment. The youth workers cycle in and out.

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Or people who share the same high and complex needs? ---Correct. In a commercial accommodation environment we see a young person who's in a commercial accommodation environment, they run the show, they make the rules; it's their environment. The youth workers are cycling in and

out and there were single source - - -

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They're the visitors?---They're the single source of truth. It does overtime incubate some fairly undesirable behaviours and patterns of interacting.

Yes, so what's the solution to that?---I can't say that I have the advantage of a solution. I was rather hoping that the commission would take us there. But I think it starts with actually having a - getting past the blockages, the polarised barriers, and actually saying, "Let's actually have a look at it. Let's take it out for a run and let's actually try and analyse how we would actually make that happen."

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See, the conceptual difficulty with the high and complex needs children and young people is this: that the state is just a substitute parent. But yet in respect of this cohort it's supposed to do better for them than their natural parents could because their parents are relinquishing their parental responsibility to the state because, although they're willing, so I've heard, they're not able. So while we talk about the state normalising and keeping children in as close to natural family structures as possible on the one hand, that might work for those who are in the foster care system or the kinship care system even more so, but for those - and the increasing number of them in residential care - especially those who are there because of the conflict and tension that their needs create - they're far from living in a normal environment because they have their own home, they have round-the-clock care, which at 18 is going to stop, and they need to be prepared to cope with that stopping at 18. How does that work?--- Generally not terribly well. Our observations are because they've lived in a fairly atypical and strange environment that's not going to continue unless they've actually - again, by their own efforts or by the support of consistent support of particular youth workers, which is not always consistent because of the turnover of staff, then generally we find that they struggle.

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Well, see, they've been supported at a lot of cost to the state and they're probably managing as best they can in that environment, but tomorrow they're going to have the same needs they had yesterday but they're not going to have the same level of support as they did yesterday?---Correct.

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So what does the state do? Given that under the legislation childhood ends on the eve of the 18th birthday, what is the role of government after 18 for these children who for one reason or another are not independent at that age of 18?---I guess the question is: what is the outcome government wants? Because if the outcome the government wants - and I'm not wanting to paint a glib picture here, but, I mean, we do see a higher representation of our young

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people in the criminal justice system in terms of adult
offending - - - 1

- - - the risk that they're from the protection system into
some other system; whether it is the homelessness system or
the criminal justice system - - -?---Mental-health system.

- - - it's still a cost to government. On the other hand,
it's not just about what the government wants, it's what
society will accept, what level of state intervention in
human life our current society will accept. What
justifications are there for government control in some
person's life after 18?---It's a fairly significant thing 10
the government does when it actually removes a child from
their natural parents. It is a fairly significant exercise
of power.

Which is why it's got to be justified?---Absolutely. I
think there are a few things - there are a few places that
- a few unmentionables in this place. One of them is a
child who is at risk at home when they're five may not be
as at risk - - -

At 15?--- - - - when they're 15 or 16. But the expert view 20
is: no, they should stay in care until they're 18 because
they're on long term guardianship.

But that's based on a best interests approach rather than
on a child in need of protection approach?---Or a capacity
to benefit approach.

Yes. Somebody invented that rule. It's not in the law?
---That's right. But again, I'm talking about when we come
to the polarised positions; this is one of those polarised
positions. Commissioner, when I first started as a child
safety officer, or an FSO back in those days, kinship care 30
was actually one of the unmentionables; the idea that a
young person could be removed from the natural family in
place with kin was very unattractive and it wasn't
necessarily common practice back then, but now we actually
recognise that that's probably a better situation - - -

Why was that, because the kin came from the same gene pool
is the parents?---Apple doesn't fall far from the tree, I
think, was some of the thinking. But also some of the
thinking was that family have a greater loyalty to one
another and therefore might collude to undermine the
intervention. So those were the sorts of things that were 40
said. In those days, too, it was if a child has
experienced harm themselves as a young person, they're
probably not a good candidate to be a worker in the child
protection system because they would have their own issues.
These are some of the sacred cows that I suppose have been
part system for a long time. And unfortunately around
these issues there's a polarity created. People set up
polarised positions would deny the actual debate or

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discussion. In terms of the issue of the young person being in residential care for - since 2003, and since I've been back - and I remember the discussion years ago, ever since I was back in the child protection system there was a discussion about a continuum of care and specialist foster carers and foster carers have who actually provide care for, you know, the younger kids and then maybe some of those pre-adolescents or some of those teenagers who are actually having some difficulties, and that would actually provide dedicated or differential support, training, even recruitment and selection, to create a pool of specialist carers. So that when we find ourselves in a situation where a young person is at risk of going into residential care we have some alternatives. Also, it was about providing a step-down service so that if somebody does - because they're experiencing a period of disruption, they go into a residential care situation, that there's an opportunity for them to step down back into a family based placement because we've got the specialist carers who can actually do that. My concern is that that at times, once they sort of enter into the residentials, they tend to stay there.

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But only for so long as the system has determined that they can, which is time based - - -?---18 - - - 1

- - - rather than needs based?---Yes.

So they're there for two years, not when they're - it's not when their needs are met but when the time runs out?---Yes. "Happy birthday and good luck," is what happens at 18, yes. Not ideal.

What about kinship caring and training for the kinship carers? Is there a differential training between them and the foster carers?---Look, I've had my concerns about the training stuff for kinship carers insofar as I think there actually probably needs to be - well, a lot more, and probably training that's not just around providing the care and working for the department and understanding the standards of care. In a kinship care situation it might be that they become - they're assessed and approved as a placement provider before they actually get to, you know, go off to training, because there's a clear and present need right now. It's an emergency, and that's the way things have to happen. The checks are done, they're assessed as being suitable, the child is placed, and in some cases they don't get off to training. Certainly they're encouraged to and they're supported to, but in many cases they don't actually get off and do fostering training. 10 20

Could it come to them, say if they were in Aurukun, instead of them going to it in Townsville?---No. Currently, no. It's run a couple of times a year in different places and people attend. I think multi-nodal approaches to it, flexible delivery approaches to it - but I think there's also something we have to recognise in kinship care training, and that is that fundamentally they're undertaking a supported intervention in their family and that requires a different set of skills and scripts and dialogues and methods of communicating than perhaps in a fostering situation, because they are going to see each other at Christmas, they are going to have those interactions. They have to appreciate that when there's family conflict that that actually has an effect on the child or the young person. 30

The other dynamic is that the child endowments follow the child into the aunt's household?---Yes. 40

Okay. Now, who were we up to? You, Ms Stewart.

MS STEWART: Good afternoon. I'm Lisa Stewart from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service. If I can just take you to paragraph 3 of your statement just where you state you've performed the role of manager at both the Ipswich and the Redcliffe child safety service centres. We've got particularly good feedback about some

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of the practices you implemented at your time there, particularly positive management and work culture. While at the Redcliffe child safety centre it's our understanding that you implemented the north coast indigenous child safety reference group. Can you talk to that initiative, beginning with who made the group up and what the role of the group was?---Sure. We had within that region - so the region stretched basically from the valley through to Maroochydore, and within that region we had a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who were in child safety support officer positions. As a regional management team we all undertook different portfolios, I suppose, where we committed to look after different things at different particular parts of our business that we felt were important. I took on the indigenous reference group that you're talking about. In terms of that group, it was mainly child safety support officers. There was one member of the group who was a child safety - or who was eligible to be a child safety officer but elected to remain as a child safety support officer, and the idea was to actually create, I suppose, a networking opportunity forum for them to actually be supported, to actually advance any issues or concerns that they might have had, but also to give them some advocacy and some voice in some of the decisions that were being made around the place, and gives the opportunity, I suppose, as a management group, to have a reference group for things we wanted to actually ask and consult about in relation to indigenous child placement principles, recruiting of indigenous carers, interactions with REs, but also give some staff development opportunities to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff so that they would be - I guess my goal was so they would be represented throughout the organisation, not just in the identified positions. It was also about, I suppose, doing some support activity to keep - to retain them.

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How did this support best practices?---Well, I think it was about when we provided a forum for the staff to actually come together and talk about the issues they had. When they were actually just - in many cases there was one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff member at any service centre in an identified position and that could be a bit of a lonely existence and they're probably experiencing issues or concerns and they'd think, "Well, is it just me?" and not feeling they can take that forward. What it did for them was they came together as a collective. They got to share that and actually find out common experiences, and then they had, I suppose, the clout of a manager supporting them and representing those issues forward to the managerial groups so that they actually got a forum for those issues and got the opportunity to resolve them but also speak up.

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MS STEWART: Okay.

COMMISSIONER: Ms Stewart, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I

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understand that Mr Bradford has a plane to catch and needs to leave at 12.30. Is that right?---Probably I've got until about 1 o'clock, commissioner.

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MS STEWART: Okay. I'll be - - -?---It all gets a bit frightening from then.

COMMISSIONER: Okay.

MS STEWART: I'll speak quickly?---Yes, very quickly.

So how did that result in a collective regional response? ---Sorry, how do you mean?

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Or did it? These issues and concerns that were raised and brought to you, did they result in a - how would you frame - a collective regional response?---Yes, look, I think that on a couple of areas they did. I think that a couple of wins, I suppose, we had across the region were relative to how we interacted with the recognised entities, about consultation with recognised entities prior to placing children, and I think that we were starting to head down the track - as we started to have some wins we started to get a bit more ambitious. We started heading central and looking at some of the recruitment and selection strategies for indigenous staff across the department, and so we actually were starting to work towards some representations as a group to HR. The group actually provided me with a very rich and fertile source of information that supported me in the later work I do as the director of training around the indigenous workforce strategy, around the certificate IV diploma type work. So those were some of the - talking about - thinking about outcomes, those were some of the outcomes.

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Can you articulate for our benefit the importance of this group in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional practices?---Yes. I think when we start to think about this group and the benefit of it, I mean, (1) there was the benefit of them actually having peer support and actually having other people to support them, leverage off of and in effect, as I say, raise issues with, where they can actually say, "Well, okay, it's not just me. I'm having the same issues and experiences." I think we've also got to appreciate that there are a lot of challenges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders working in the child protection system and some of those challenges relate to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in our system. Some of those challenges relate to the sense to which the indigenous, I suppose, voice or context can be understood at times by some decision-makers and actually feeling confident and capable of actually going forward with that and actually impacting on those decisions. So I think that's another important thing. In some cases, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who could make a really beneficial

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contribution to our work don't get the opportunity because of the fear of how that might be seen by their communities, or how it might be seen by their families. I'm aware of, both in my corrections experience and my child protection experience, of colleagues who have not told their families where they work because there is some fear and there's some shame about that, and whilst their desire is obviously to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in these systems, it's sometimes misrepresented or misunderstood by the families as working for, you know, the government or working for that particular entity. So creating a support mechanism that actually allows them to feel a sense of safety and a sense of collegial engagement but also feel that they have got the support of a senior manager I think is enormously important and does give them a big shot in the arm in terms of confronting and dealing with some of those issues every day.

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So the issues that this group brought to your attention - did that ever feed into and inform what would have been the then zonal management team?---Yes, they did. When we had the zonal management team meetings, each of us got to report on our portfolio areas and the things that we were doing and the sorts of things that - and, of course, I'm working from memory here. You'll have to forgive me. It's some ago, but I remember the things that were clear and present at the time were about child-placement principles, kinship care and particularly being much more vigilant about looking for family, not just accepting that when we're speaking to mum and dad about who might be a potential kinship carer. Mum and dad might not tell us the whole truth because they don't want the rest of the family to know what's going on so actually being vigilant about finding kin and family based placements was one of the big issues, and the other issue that we fed in I remember very clearly was the communication with REs around placement, that we actually have to ensure that we are communicating with the REs prior to actually placing an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child.

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Now, we're aware there are other reference groups that may not be as strongly supported or resourced. In ongoing child-protection practice, would you see the benefit of these structures being supported by a stronger corporate commitment filtering down from head office?---Yes, look, I would. I remember there was - I'm just trying to think of the name of it. Bin on Top was the group that was corporately supported early days under the old department - - -

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Sorry, what was it?---Bin on Top was the group that was corporately supported from the Department of Families to actually bring the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff together for different fora to do this sort of work. I think that where you've got - I think when you've got the reality that you've got - I think it's something around the vicinity - and don't quote me on the figures, but about 35 per cent of the children in care are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, then I would like to see the staff cohort representative - more representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and not just in identified positions but at all levels in the organisation and I think that there's got to be some centralised, corporate, dedicated strategy to actually achieve that and that's not just the Education Pathways work we did. That's around a whole range of things and some of the support mechanisms. That was a good example of one that worked really well, but some of the support mechanisms to actually attract, recruit, retain and not just have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders come in and actually survive but thrive is probably where the focus needs to be. There are ways to do it and you've evidenced one.

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During your time as a service centre manager, can you just talk about what you see as the importance of the role of the indigenous child safety support officer and the benefits that you see to the - - -?---To the role. 1

- - - parents, the children and the young people, yes?
---I'm conscious that - as I say, I'm conscious that one of my indigenous child safety support officers is actually sitting to your left, but the benefits of the actual - those officers were about cultural advice to the decision-makers and actually informing the decision so that, you know, sound, I suppose, sensitive but also culturally appropriate decisions were made. The benefits were around the engagement with not just the indigenous clients but also our carers and also our young people where in fact some really good group work and youth work actually transpired there. Some of the benefits were also it actually opened up a whole line of networks and resources in the non-government sector that we've not really had the opportunity to tap into in neighbourhood centres and other places by virtue of, you know, the networking that those offices provided and we also found that we were much more successful at finding family based placements because of the approach that those staff took in finding kin. That wasn't just with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. That was actually with all clients in terms of the - the particular frame or the attitude taken in terms of family and kin was very, very useful in terms of looking more broadly to finding family based placements and so it had a knock-on effect. The other benefit that we had particularly in that office was that we had a high contingent of Samoan and islander people actually living in Deception Bay and in some ways they were a little bit disconnected and some of the efforts of some of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on the inside actually gave us fora to engage with some of those communities as well; so broader community engagement, better engagement and recruitment and increasing the volume of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, finding kin and creating family based placements, but also the engagement with some of our disenfranchised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and particularly the assisted decision-making and the actual cultural advice to decision-makers surrounding the key statutory decisions were all very, very useful. 10 20 30

If I can just take you to paragraph 4 of your statement when you were director of the training and specialist support branch and further in paragraph 11 where you - and you've already spoken to some extent about this, the Education Pathways program. Now, we're aware that that program was held in very high regard by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-government and government workforce. Can you clarify the outcomes of that program particularly in terms of how it up-skilled and enhanced organisation knowledge?---Sure. I have to reach into my 40

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memory a little, but the first thing it did was it actually significantly improved some of the relationships between the department and the recognised entities in different areas and so we actually had staff of recognised entities participating with departmental staff and that was very helpful. We actually got the opportunity to - inasmuch as there was some teaching going on, there was also some re-examination or relitigation of processes and so that was enormously useful for us because we got feedback as well as being able to provide some instruction and direction. We actually got to a forum to teach across that cohort some of the departmental processes and policies and, you know, some of the non-negotiables that we have to actually work with and that increased understanding between the parties in terms of why we're operating. So it led to a reduction in some of the tension, the unuseful tension, that existed there. It led to better networking as a result and generally - and I guess I'm talking anecdotally now from hearing from different people who participated - it led to a more respectful and collegial approach and interaction between parties because with that group we did it with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified CSSOs. We did it with the other child safety support officers, the AO2 and 3 child safety support officer s, and with the recognised entities and we actually brought them all together as a group. So in many cases what actually happened is we had this almost enlivening of the collegial relationship and networking and actually working together happening at the paraprofessional level and we still had issues at the professional level because there wasn't that sort of cross-training going on. So in terms of outcomes I think we had 300 through the diploma or 300 through the cert IV, about 150 through the diploma and, as I say, the avenue for a vocational graduate certainly was available to departmental workers. The last time I heard - and that was 18 months ago - there were two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child safety support officers who had gone through, finished the vocational graduate certificate and were looking to be employed as CSOs, but, of course, there are more than 100 behind them that could also then come into that stream and the idea was to create not only an alternative pathway but the other benefit was to create an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to be represented throughout the department more broadly and at the various levels, not just in the identified positions.

Now, this might be testing your memory a bit too much, but can you recall what the level of uptake and commitment was?---Yes, it was paranormal. It was really quite high and the completion rates were somewhere in the 90 per cent mark so that's really, really very high, uncommonly high, to have that level of completion rate. So not only was the uptake high, we actually then had future cohorts knocking on the door saying, "Can we participate?"

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As a result of the program and we supported Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE, who were our delivery partner, to actually deliver the training in Cherbourg to a group of Elders who heard about the program, who had kin who participated in the program, and actually went and asked for the program themselves. Sunshine Coast did deliver that training and actually the Elders from that community did participate in that training. So it was quite successful and we've had a lot of people actually follow it up since, so high uptake, a fairly high degree of thirst for it still, and very high completion rates.

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A success then?--I would say so, yes. We were finalists at the Premier's awards, so.

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Would it be fair to say that in your role as director you identified a skills shortage and then implemented a capacity-building and training approach to meet that shortage, and that's, I suppose, directly up-skilled and benefited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child protection professionals?---Yes.

With that experience in mind, were you aware that there's been a number of, like, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child protection staff who have participated in that upgrade from child safety support officers to child safety officers? You may not be aware, but a number of witnesses have called for the Aboriginal workforce to transition to tertiary qualified. I'm not quite sure if you're aware of that, but that's come out through the inquiry. Can you elaborate for us on this beneficial process and highlight how this may be transferable to the non-government sector?---I think that with the project we're talking about and with what you've seen so far, we set in course, I suppose, or embark down a path that actually could up-skill the workforce and create a pathway for not just Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but anyone in the para-professional workforce and in the non-government workforce to actually come into the sector and actually move through a qualification pathway that advanced their qualifications as they went along. The original desire, as I say, was to try and get to a bachelor's qualification, but the idea was actually try and create over time a pathway that went from the certificate level qualifications and the para-professional roles and the vocational qualifications, through to, you know, a post-graduate tertiary qualifications and actually give people a number of joining points and a number of jump-off points based on what work they were doing. I think that the program that we develop there certainly could be applicable into the non-government sector, it could actually expand to create an intake mechanism, I suppose, for para-professionals to move through into the professional streams. It comes down to, I guess, where we hit difficulty is when we get into the AQF level 6-7 area where we are talking about bachelors and graduate

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certificates and such, about which is the appropriate qualification to pursue and whether we pursue a broader qualification that allows people transferability across the whole health and community services sector, or whether we actually focused on building the capacity of child protection and saying, "Well, we're going to go down something a bit more dedicated and a bit more child protection-specific at that point." And then I guess it's about if there are unis out there that are willing to play and actually create a bachelor course in child protection, happy days; if not, then we might have to look at, as I said, the vocational graduate certificate, vocational graduate diploma route. There is at least one university I'm aware of that does a work-based bachelor's degree; that is, they actually look at - and it's the University of Southern Queensland - they actually look at what you're doing in the workplace and - it's not quite recognition of prior learning, but it's actually academic supplementation of the analysis and the, I suppose, unpacking and evaluation of the work. And that's then used to create the bachelors qualification. They were a group that we were in some discussions with around whether or not that would be a really effective strategy to actually support people to move through cert IV diploma and beyond.

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Just give me a minute. I think some of these questions have already been addressed. Throughout this inquiry there's been some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including ATSILS, who have called for more self-determination with the child protection system. If we're looking at a future model, would you see the benefit to having non-Aboriginal tertiary qualified staff in senior practice positions in a reformed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-government organisation?---Sorry, can you have another run at that because I didn't quite absorbing.

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Sorry, yes, there is quite a few lengthy words?---Yes.

We are looking at self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?---Yes.

And looking at child protection practice ongoing?---Yes.

In a future model would you see it as a benefit to have non-Aboriginal tertiary qualified people sitting in the senior practice roles in perhaps a reformed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-government org?

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COMMISSIONER: So, what, managed or controlled by indigenous?

MS STEWART: Managed and controlled.

COMMISSIONER: Managed and controlled indigenous NGO staff at senior levels by non-indigenous practitioners?---I

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guess - - -

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Is that right?

MS STEWART: And what would you see as the benefits to that?---Okay. I guess maybe I can answer it this way: so I'll give you an answer and if it doesn't quite meet your needs, come back to me. My fundamental view is this, that the workforce, when you're dealing with the issues we are dealing with, we are dealing with a human services endeavour, child protection, we are dealing with families, we are dealing with child rearing, we are dealing with a whole range of issues. In this sort of scenario then I'm a big supporter of the workforce being representative of the community it's serving. That is that we actually have a diversity in our workforce that is reflective of the diversity of the client group or diversity of the community, because I think then we're probably going to have a more satisfactory alignment of values and beliefs and outlooks and we're probably going to have something that's a little bit more reflective of the needs of the community. I think that if you have an over-representation of one group within the client cohort and a massive under-representation within the staffing cohort then I think you're always going to have - you're always going to struggle. In terms of diversity, I suppose - the diverse cohorts - I suppose my personal views are really a bit more controversial. I mean, in my view the child protection - - -

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- - - more likely would like to hear - - -?---Yes, in my view in the child protection space - I mean, I've always said I would love - when I was a child protection manager I would have loved for my child protection service centre to have been an all-singing all-dancing answer to vulnerable children. I would have loved to have had staff who were trained in child protection and investigation and case management, but come from a diverse range of backgrounds, not just qualification background, but also, you know, walks of life. And I actually tried to acquire that. I'd like to have a former police officer, a nurse, a teacher, you know, a sexual assault counsellor, cultural advisers, you know, people from a broad range of different discipline backgrounds actually working to that endeavour. I take the view that a healthy child from nought to 18 interact with a whole range of different people and professionals and has a whole range of different inputs, even if they're experiencing a "normal" child rearing experience. When that gone through complex trauma and abuse and other such things, then so much more diverse are the range of interventions and inputs that they might benefit from. And, you know, culture is another one of them. So I guess my response to say is that if the agency that you're composing has a focus on a particular cohort with a particular need, and that the staffing of that agency is skilled and qualified and well composed and representative

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of the client cohort that it serving, then yes, happy days. 1
Does that get close to answering your question?

I believe so. Can I just take 10 seconds, Commissioner,
and we might just cut down a few questions.

COMMISSIONER: Sure.

MS STEWART: Would you accept and agree that there needs
to be significant reform to ensure best practices across
governance, management and leadership and front-line 10
service delivery within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander sector, particularly in order for children to
benefit from an enduring institution?---Significant reform?
I think there are parts that probably need to be reformed.
I mean, I think the current models we have, recognised
entities, and there's a consultation-type model and the
decision-making is with the statutory officers. And whilst
I think there is potentially some use a facility to that, I
think there are - it's probably due a re-examination.

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I think that until we actually have a representative volume of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people actually working in the system then I think we're probably going to, you know, continue to struggle. I think that in terms of support for managerial skill and capacity and developing, I suppose, the managerial acumen to actually lead, you know, particularly in the NGO sector, I think that's probably an issue not just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, I think it's probably an issue across the board. But if we come back to the remark I made earlier, where people are moved into managerial roles very quickly in this sector, partly because of the turnover, then I think that management and leadership probably is something that needs to be a key focus across the whole sector, NGO and government.

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Just in relation to what you said about the recognised entity, and you've just stated that that needs to be re-examined, how would you like that role to look?---I think maybe it's not so much about the role, but my concern is that there's a risk in some places where the recognised entity has its conduit into the service centre with the child safety support officer who is comparatively low ranked to the decision-makers and so then at times may not necessarily enjoy forum with managers and team leaders, not because the managers and team leaders don't want to but because just the frenetic nature of it, the busyness of it and that that's a sound liaison. I think that actually creating processes that support a more collegial, I suppose, function there, or support more interaction at a higher level, I think is probably what's necessary. Certainly there's participation in the SCAN team and that's also very important, but I think there are risks in some service centres, and not all, that it's RE to child safety support officer and then up through the service centre, and I think that's fraught.

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Would you accept that if a transfer or a delegation of statutory responsibility was to occur, then the Aboriginal children would benefit and it wouldn't be a multiplication of case work?---I guess where - so you're saying the statutory delegation sits with the recognised entity rather than with the child safety service centre?

As a proposal?---Yes, I suppose there - I'm just trying to think through the legislative - how that would work, because I know with Helping Out Families, the program, there was the initial - the original idea was to actually have a delegated officer, but the delegation sits with the statutory officer who is delegated through the director-general as a public servant, so for the delegation to sit with them, or the statutory authority to sit with them, I guess - - -

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Not just in terms of say recognised entity but an organisation?---Okay.

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That perhaps had capacity to provide a number of - - -?
---Yes, well, notwithstanding the mechanism of such, then
certainly an agency that actually has some statutory clout
to be able to provide services and intervention, look, I
think there could be some merit in that, but I'm not sure
about the machinery of it.

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Last question. Now, in light of your extensive experience
it might not be a short answer, though - - -?---Well,
history teaches us I don't give short answers.

Hypothetically, if there was a new service delivery
standard for recognised entity and this included a role in
the family group meetings as a convenor, if you were still
the director and this landed on your desk what would - can
you just talk to us about how you would develop that
training practice or package?---So just take me through it
again. What has just landed on my desk that we're talking
about? The RE having a role in the FGM?

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We've got a new proposal that the RE has capacity to
convene family group meetings. What training do you
identify needs to take place in order for that to occur and
who would be the other stakeholders that would need to be
included in this?---I think that if we think about FGMS and
their facility or their utility then obviously there's
stuff around court and court processes, evidence, there is
training around actually getting to consensus and the
mediation element of that. There's also training around
appreciating the dilemmas of Family Court and the
interaction between the child protection system and the
Family Court system which is at times a challenge. I think
there is also probably some training around the case
planning process around intervention and reunification and,
you know, those sorts of things, but I think there also has
to be some work with the parties involved to actually get
some alignment of perspective around what needs to happen,
and I guess it comes back to acceptable risk, risk and
need, safe versus unsafe and probably willingness and
ability in terms of the - well, you know, we talk about
whether parents are willing and able to provide care. So I
think just generally and on the hop I'd say those are
probably the first things that I would be thinking of.

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Do you identify any hurdle in the transfer of the
organisational knowledge that the department would have
around the FGM process to new - - -?---No, only just - only
the willingness to provide the training and actually - I
think we just have to mind any statutory delegations are
exercised in that, but I think, no, again, I mean, it comes
down to what is the outcome I want, who are you going to do
it with and how are you actually going to - how are you
going to train them and, more importantly, assess and
monitor.

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I have nothing further, commissioner.

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COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Ms Stewart. Mr Simpson? **1**

MR SIMPSON: I have no re-examination. May the witness be excused?

COMMISSIONER: He may. Thanks very much for your attendance today, Mr Bradford, and the evidence that you've given. It's most helpful?---Thank you.

WITNESS WITHDREW

COMMISSIONER: What would you like to do now, Mr Simpson? **10**

MR SIMPSON: Well, I need about 10 or 15 minutes with the State of Queensland to deal with some limits for the next witness so perhaps we should adjourn for lunch now, commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: All right, and what time would it be in order to resume? 2.00, quarter past?

MR SIMPSON: Well, I'm in your hands. There's only one witness for the remaining part of the day. **20**

COMMISSIONER: We'll make it 2.00 then.

MR SIMPSON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER: If there's a problem with that, if you just let us know we'll sort that out.

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 12.54 PM UNTIL 2 PM

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SIMPSON, MR

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THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 2.07 PM

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COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, Mr Simpson.

MR SIMPSON: Yes, Mr Commissioner, I call Kenneth James Dagley.

DAGLEY, KENNETH JAMES affirmed:

ASSOCIATE: For recording purposes, please state your full name, your occupation and your business address?---Kenneth James Dagley, public servant, 111 George Street, Brisbane.

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Please be seated.

COMMISSIONER: Good afternoon, Mr Dagley, welcome?
---Commissioner, thank you.

Mr Simpson?

MR SIMPSON: Yes, I have three statements dated 17 October, 19 October and 25 October. Could they be shown to the witness?

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Are each of those your statement given to this Child Protection Commission?---Yes, they are.

Now, you have made an amendment to the statement of 25 October. I think it might be on the third page you have made a handwritten amendment. Paragraph 11 I think it is. Did you make a handwritten change there?---Yes.

Yes, just tell us what that change is?---That change said that the attachment was in Brad Swan's statement to the summons 2017771.

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Yes, so there was just an omission there. It indicated it was in your statement but in fact it was Mr Swan's statement?

---That's actually incorrect. It actually is in my statement.

Is in your statement, right?---That's right.

All right. Now, also in those statements given to the commission you make a number of references to documents being not for public release?---Yes.

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Do you understand now that those documents can be released to the public?---I do.

Yes, all right. Commissioner, I tender those statements. There are five folders that contain the attachments to those statements. Those instructing the Crown are just

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checking those folders off again, but they will be provided to you shortly. They contain the exhibits to the statements and they all can be released for the public. COMMISSIONER: Thank you. The three statements made by Mr Dagley on those dates you have mentioned together with the five folders of annexures will be exhibit 102. 1

ADMITTED AND MARKED: "EXHIBIT 102"

MR SIMPSON: Now, Mr Dagley, you were present in court this morning whilst Mr Bradford was giving his evidence, were you not?---I was. 10

And he was giving evidence about a training model which the Department of Child Safety was implementing for some time which provided for CSSOs to undertake a diploma course to upgrade their skills?---Yes.

Now, is that course still in place in the Department of Communities and Child Safety and Disability Services?---No, currently it is not. There was funding that was available from the Department of Education for that program which is now currently not available, although for a sector-wide response there was funding provided to the community services skilling plan for which the sector has access to that same qualification. 20

All right, but does that mean that CSSO in the department currently can become a CSO through that training model?---No, not at the moment. They're two different things. So the CSSO to CSO pilot program that was conducted was - the pilot has been completed and reviewed. It is our intention under the current review that we're doing - it sounds like too many reviews, but in this new department and the way the training is set up we're just looking at the package. Our intention would be to continue with a CSSO-to-CSO program. 30

Let's just go back then. So there is currently a CSSO-to-CSO program which has been part of a pilot program in the department?---Correct.

Now, is that different to what Mr Bradford was speaking about?---No, he did speak about both things. One is the certificate IV.

The certificate IV, yes?---A certificate which was receiving funding from the Department of Education. That funding isn't currently available and that part of the process isn't happening at the moment. 40

All right. So under the current system that's been piloted and it's looking like being rolled out, what qualification does a CSSO get before becoming a CSO?---They would get the vocational graduate certificate in child protection.

Will that achieve the same goal to what Mr Bradford was espousing?---Yes. 1

And how many CSSOs are taking up that program at the moment, do you think?---Well, the pilot program had 23 participants, of which 18 graduated and I think 12 of those are currently working as CSOs and some have resigned and some have - a couple have gone back to their CSSO role.

Right. Did that pilot program have any impact on indigenous people coming into the system and qualifying up of CSOs?---Yes, it did, but I'm not sure of the exact numbers at the moment. 10

All right. Now, I understand that the turnover rate of staff in the Deputy President is lower now than it has been in the past?---That is my understanding, yes.

Yes, and do you think that whether the turnover is high or low that should have any bearing on the training model employed for a CSO?---Not necessarily on the model; obviously on the amount of resources we put to the model would have impact, but, no, I don't believe that should impact on the model. When we look at training, we need to look at it as a whole of workforce component so we need to look at what is our labour market supplying in terms of what pre-education are we able to, you know, recruit into the department, what skill-sets do we need, you know, what is the service model for the business and what skills are required to operate that? So we need to make it part of that whole package and so training from my view is informed by those things and takes it lead from, you know, the workforce planning side from the child development side, child protection development side, where they do the practice managers and so on and then we formulate up the training around that input. 20 30

Now, Mr Dagley, there have been some people been critical of the idea that there is a broadening of the base of academic qualifications to becoming a child safety or child protection officer. What's your take on that?---I think we have to have - the system needs need to be met and, as Mr Bradford highlighted, the market in terms of the education sector are not able to provide in the narrow disciplined fields that were originally used to fulfil CSO jobs are not able to meet those needs. So we need to come up with a different strategy and my understanding is that it's still the case that the department's need for child safety officers on an annual basis is greater than what the education sector can supply in terms of graduates. 40

So the education system, effectively universities?---That's right.

So again does that lend weight to the idea that we should be encouraging, say, the former foster parent or the retired police officer to undertake a vocational education training course to fill those roles?---I believe, yes. It is about attitude, aptitude and values. There are people who have significant desire to work in the sector and they make very good officers. The other thing that I hear that we've found - and I'm only going on discussions that I've had with other parties - is that in some cases those that are trained in the pure social work and psychology have a great desire to work in the intervention phase of the sector but struggle when it comes to the statutory side. So in fact while we recruit those in, some of those do struggle to work in our current system.

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You might have heard the Commissioner earlier talking about: do you have CSOs who are qualified in certain streams? Do you have a forensic CSO and then you have a CSO who's more in the helping out of families line? Do you see merit in that idea?---I do see merit, but I think again the workforce planning needs to look at just what is the workloads around those things? Obviously we need to be able to manage a system that, you know, if they're not getting a great call for particular skill sets, to have people just dedicated to one and not be able to cross over to others would obviously not give us enough flexibility in our work centres. So, you know, planning for those things needs to be done on a fairly detailed basis.

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All right. I'll just turn to an issue of caseloads. I understand the program that was put in place after the CMC review was a 72 week program for a CSO, of which a 10 week program was the initial training. Is that right?---I believe there was a 10 week program.

Right?---The 72 week program is the current program.

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Right, the current program?---Yes.

But the initial training that a CSO does now can be between five and seven weeks before they get their first case. Is that right?---Yes and no. Basically we run the training as five phases. The first phase is an orientation phase which is conducted in the service centre; I mean, it's structured. There's local induction, as Mr Bradford spoke about, but then there's what we call part B where they do observations, and that can be four to five weeks for that particular period.

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Yes?---Then we have the phase 2 training, which is a three-week workshop scenario, and that would be - that's the end of phase 2. Currently the work practice is that at the end of phase 2 a CSO would be allocated a caseload. And then over the next period of time up to about five months is the phase 3 training, which is done in the service centre and includes our trainers working with them,

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you know, shadowing and supporting and coaching and mentoring, having competency conversations and so on. And then they come back for what we call phase 4, which is another one-week program where there's particular emphasis on the more advanced skills and so on. And then the fifth phase is again in the service centre location and that sort of contains some of the academic components for them to be able to qualify for the vocational graduate certificate.

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All right. It is the department's policy, I understand it, that a CSO - and new recruit - will not be given a caseload until they've completed phases 1 and 2. Is that right? ---That's practice. We actually don't have a formal policy on that at the moment.

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Okay. So when you say practice, what do you mean by that? ---It's recognised as those of guideline and that - but there are obviously exemptions because as child safety officers sort of rotates in and out of the service, some have experience, some have been through the training before, so there is an exemption process for that. But in the main we would expect people to finished phase 2 before they're given a caseload.

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Okay. So there might be some who have been in the service before, they might be exempt?---Yes.

Others have not been in the service or have been child protection officers would not be exempt and would need to complete the two phases - - - ?---That's right.

- - - before getting a case load. So would you be surprised, then, if you knew that the inquiry has heard evidence in, for example Rockhampton, that less than 50 per cent of the CSOs had completed the child safety entry-level training and they had a caseload?---No, I would be surprised, because in fact the child - and it's probably the way the naming convention has been, but the entry-level training program is the full 72 weeks.

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Right?---So yes, there would be quite a few officers that would have caseloads - in fact, the caseloads after phase 2, but phase 5 would be the end of the ELTP, as we call it.

Yes?---So they would have a caseload, you know, well before they finish that. They should have a caseload after phase 2. So we might need to just clarify what that evidence meant.

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Sure?---Because the actual program - the ELTP - is 72 weeks and we would expect a caseload - - -

I believe there was other evidence given to the inquiry whereby CSOs will turn up on day one and - I think it was in Mount Isa - and be given a caseload without having any

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training. Would that surprise you?---It would surprise me, 1
yes.

Okay. Do you recognise that those who are perhaps in regional areas, say Mount Isa or working in a remote community, are going to find it harder to get that training done than those, say, living on the coast?---I guess the definition of "harder"; in our current review we're looking to provide that phase 2 training in more local or regional locations than we have. The current arrangement is that we will fly the CSOs at the department's cost down to Brisbane to conduct their phase 2 training. Phase 1 training is 10
done in the service centre by team leaders, so that shouldn't be an issue, but the phase 2, they do fly you to Brisbane currently for that training, but the department foots the bill for that.

Now, what extra training does a team leader get above a regular CSO?---Currently they have access to modules that are put out by the child protection development unit and we also run corporate leadership supervision training that is, you know, for any leader or team manager in the department, and that includes a whole range of different types of 20
programs from managing change, providing feedback, all sorts of things that are appropriate to management.

Okay. The inquiry has also heard evidence that some of the team leaders at Kingaroy have not undertaken any team leader training. That surprise you?---It would be hard to comment without, you know, seeing the note. And sometimes I think that what we consider training in the profession may not be considered training by those in the field. And I put that that unless people sit down in a classroom, sometimes they feel that they haven't had training; whereas in fact that practice forums that are run, the research and the projects and things that they work on are all part of 30
their development process.

Yes?---The fact that they haven't been on a five-day management program doesn't mean that they're not getting management development. So I'm just aware of that. At this stage we have a solid plan to increase the team leader training that is specifically related to child safety in 2013. We'll continue, of course, with the general leadership and management training for supervisors and managers, but specific elements of their statutory role, we believe it would be helpful to instigate a new program 40
around that.

Now, team leader is - correct me if I'm wrong - is effectively just one step above the CSO?---Mm'hm.

And then you have a manager of that or a senior practitioner?---No, a senior prac.

Senior practitioner, then your manager, okay. And how long

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would normally take for a CSO to progress to a team leader? 1
---That would be hard to say, depending on their own life
experience and other things that they've done. I think
most people in the work they do have more skills than we
actually - you know, more skills and life experience than
we - you know, sort of put them in a box around that job.

Yes?---So it would depend on the individual, but we expect
people to be, you know, skilled. I mean, they're recruited
or promoted into a position, they're meant to have the
skills in that position when they're promoted to it. 10

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Is there any specific training given to team leaders as to how to make an assessment to remove a child from a mother at birth?---I can't comment. I don't know whether that is specifically to team leaders. I would have thought that that would be information available to - you know, in terms of child safety practice across the board, not just targeted at team leaders.

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No, but a child safety officer doesn't, in your experience, make the decision alone to remove a child from its mother at birth, that's right, they usually go and consult with somebody else?---Sorry, that is not my - sorry, I don't have relevant experience in that space. I'm not a child safety officer.

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Okay?---I've been only director of this position that included child safety training since July this year.

All right. Well, do you appreciate that of all the decisions, though, that a child safety officer might make, that might be one of the more difficult decisions to make? ---Yes.

And might require an extra level of training or experience before they could make it?---Yes, I would assume that is the case.

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So that takes me back to the question whether there in fact is a specific module of training that is implemented by the department to team leaders or to CSOs about how to assess taking children from their mother at work?---There would be, and now I can refer to my notes if you'd like to identify that, but there are specialist skills modules available, 92 of those, and also the child protection development unit provides, you know, those sort of more advanced and supervision type skills, case supervision skills, to child safety officers and to team leaders.

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COMMISSIONER: The only thing that looks like it qualifies for that is the back to basics primary module in the specialist skills module on table 3 on page 8 of your second statement which - sorry, page 9, second-last item called "Making judgments in child protection," which seems more general than specific to newborns, doesn't it?---Yes, that's right. No, that wouldn't be where I would be looking for that to be provided from.

No. I couldn't see any specialist module where it may - it clearly is, although there are some things that you might need some technical knowledge to interpret, like what 13 is and White Oleander module is. Do you know what they are? ---Sorry?

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The module called White Oleander, do you know what that is? ---No, sorry, I'm not aware of that.

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It doesn't really tell you what's involved in that, and the one above it on page 7 is just called 13. I don't know if that relates to the age or the number of children?---Yes, I'm not sure. We can find out for you.

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MR SIMPSON: Look, if you would undertake to find out and identify the particular training model that's given to staff on this sensitive area?---Yes.

Because it has been the subject of some evidence in the last couple of regional hearings?---Okay.

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COMMISSIONER: There might be other areas, like, for example, there doesn't seem to be anything either in the basic 72-hour training program or the specialist skills modules that deal specifically with the risk assessment, emotional harm, reunification or transitional plans. I'm assuming - or I know they're in the manual?---Yes.

But so are a lot of the other things that are in the specialist skills modules and the training program, and these sorts of areas seem to me, anyway, to perhaps require a little bit more intensive explanation than what be in the manual?---We do a risk assessment workshop as part of phase 4 training.

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Yes. That's in the basic training of 72 hours. That's the second-last - - -?---72 weeks, yes.

72 weeks. That's the second-last phase?---It's the middle phase, yes.

Is it?---Yes.

Okay. What about emotional harm? How would someone who wanted to be or was a child safety officer know what that looked like?---That's certainly covered in great detail throughout their training. It's probably the most important, or one of the most important, components.

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Where would I find it to see what they're actually taught about it?---To see what they thought of it?

No, what they were taught about it?---I guess it's one of those concepts that sort of flows through a lot of the phase training. Certainly in phase 4, you know, we're sort of trying to work through a lot of the processes and the concepts behind - or, you know, deeper into the way our system impacts and also - and how harm impacts on children.

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Are they written down somewhere on a - do we have copies of these things, text books or something?---We have provided CD-ROMs full of all the training materials.

Can I see - - -

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MR SIMPSON: We have all those. They're part of the five folders that are - - - 1

COMMISSIONER: I'm still waiting for them, am I?

MR SIMPSON: Mr Haberman is just checking a few documents there before we hand them over, but they will come to you.

COMMISSIONER: Right.

MR SIMPSON: Can I just go to your statement on 25 October? It says there were no - - - 10

COMMISSIONER: No pressure, Mr Haberman.

MR SIMPSON: There were no participants in the leadership capabilities training program in 2011-2012 and that that last program was run in October 2010. So the leadership capabilities training program, was that a program for team leaders and senior practitioners?---Yes. Those programs were completed. There was a special project and project funding available for those programs that ran out at the end of 2011 and at this stage, you know, that project hasn't continued. 20

What was the purpose of the project? What particular skills was a team leader or a senior practitioner going to get from a leadership capabilities training program?---Well, one of the reasons why that training was ceased was because in what is provided generally across the department in terms of leadership training it was a duplication of what was happening. So what we need to determine in the future is what are the child specific elements that we need to sort of bring back in, in terms of extra modules on top of the general leadership and management training that's available across the department. 30

So if you're - leadership and management training across the Department of Communities and disability services and child safety?---Yes.

So you might, if you go to a leadership course in the department, be getting as generic one for disability services or communities or - - -?---It's still related to the human services sector, but yes, it would be - it wouldn't have particular elements, unless they come up in discussion, around, you know, the statutory responsibilities of a child safety officer or of a team leader or so on. 40

But surely this important role of filling a statutory role removing children from their families requires specific elements taught to leaders in the field about how to do that very sensitive and sometimes dangerous role?---Yes.

So where is it filled now?---Well, at the moment they're in

individual specialist modules and in the forums and discussions that are held with the support of the child practice development unit, but as I said, we plan in 2013 to sort of pull those together into a package.

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Into a leadership package?---Correct.

So leaders now, or potential leaders now, are getting sort of a disparate model and hopefully in 2013 there will be a more centred or conjoined model of leadership training?--- Focused, yes.

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All right. Do you think that team leaders and senior practitioners ought have an extra accreditation before they can fulfil those particular roles rather than just simply participating in a course?---Not particularly. I think what's important is that they feel confident and ready and able to do the job, if that can be mapped to a qualification, but, you know, we've gone down that track in the past, you know, diplomas of management and cert IV in front line management and so on. I don't know that we gained anything - you know, we don't gain anything particularly from that.

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But, of course, as an individual career development aspect that can be useful to individuals, but from a department I think it's important that our staff are competent and ready to do the job and sometimes adding the academic component is a cost we don't need to bear.

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Now, there's evidence to suggest that 60 per cent of a child safety officer's time is devoted to court work and Mr Ryan analysed there are other jurisdictions where they do mock trials or mock court work and Mr Bradford said that that program had been in place in the past. Is that still currently being rolled out for training?---Yes, I guess there are two elements in their entry-level training. They certainly look at that and work through that, but the ICARE training model which is run in conjunction with the Queensland Police Service is about the recording of evidence and, you know, that is a very structured and advanced skills program that is run four times a year at least.

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That's for the recording of evidence. What about participating in a mock trial and putting the CSO under the grill to see how they might perform as a witness and the investigation skills they bring to a trial?---Look, I would assume that's there. I would need to get back to you to find the specifics of where it is in the program.

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What about the mock houses that also Mr Ryan has looked into where you set up a mock residential facility or a house where you take the workers in and train them to seek out things that are required to fulfil their role?---We certainly work through those types of scenarios. I don't believe we set up a mock house or paint it in such a physical way as that, but we certainly have them work through the scenarios that look at all the types of things that have gone on or could go on in a house situation.

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So working through the scenarios might be sitting down with another practitioner to work through it off a table or a form. Is that what it is?---No, in the training they would be given a particular case, a brief, that says, you know, "You're about to arrive at this location. This is the background to it. This is the setup that you find yourself about to enter. What are the things that you would consider?" and they work through - you know, in a training situation they work through how they would then operate in that environment and, of course, then there's feedback and role-playing and so on.

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So role-playing that people would play the parents, people would play the children and that sort of thing?---Yes.

So it's as close as you can get to a mock house where you're going in and you're seeing children running amuck; parents doing whatever they're doing?---Yes, and the CSOs also go on observation visits. They visit NGOs and so on

and registered entities during the training.

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Now, just back on the court work, what training is given to CSOs with respect to the preparation of affidavits and exhibits for the taking out of a temporary assessment order and a court assessment order?---I can't specifically answer that question. My understanding is that those are undertaken but I have not seen that training delivered so I can't answer that.

All right. Perhaps you could undertake to indicate to the commissioner in a future statement where those modules are. You have got all the modules there?---That's right.

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So he can identify what they are as well. All right. Do you see any merit in the implementation of a training academy-type system such as what the Queensland Police Service have had for potential CSOs to come through? ---That's certainly one of the models that's been, you know, offered in the past and is currently not off the table in terms of the future.

What are the advantages to such a system?---The advantage are that we obviously have those recruits into an environment where they don't have a caseload. They are able to run through the training. Obviously we would have placements and practicums and so on to make it as real as possible. The disadvantages are that they don't get connected into their local service centre as quickly. They don't actually get to feel real things happening around them to be part of, you know, that environment and so the current arrangements try to do the best of both by having that sort of first 30 days where they have their orientation, bring them offsite to then work through more of the theory and the statutes and so on and then put them back into the workplace again under supervision.

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Now, according to department data collected in 2009, psychology graduates which make up 20 per cent of the frontline workforce tend to want to go on and get their clinical qualifications and therefore leave the system to the disadvantage of the department. How is the department going about trying to rectify that situation?---There's currently a project running through human resources and ethical standards to look at how we support people becoming registered with the Psychology Board. I'm not sure exactly where that work is up to, but it is a recognised issue; not just for child safety but also in disability services.

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Apart from the ICARE training that's done, do you have any thoughts on what extra cross-disciplinary training could be undertaken by the department with people such as Legal Aid, Queensland Police, Health, Education and NGOs to enhance qualifications and training for CSOs?---Not at this stage. I think the fact that we have those networks and that they are introduced to those networks and that they work in

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partnership with those agencies is extremely important that they foster and that we help them foster good relationships there. In terms of cross-training, you know, the department has been always open to share training positions on our courses with others and I know that that same - we have an MOU with the Department of Health in North Queensland to run some joint training together of which our training officers with their training officers. So there certainly is cooperation and cross-fertilisation in that sense.

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Now, Mr Bradford said there's no silver bullet or magic bullet to fix training, but no doubt you have turned your mind to this?---Mm'hm.

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What changes would you make? If the department came to you sand said, "Look, Mr Dagley, give us your thoughts. What are other areas we can explore?" what would you say back to the department?---Thank you. I think that is my role. I think that's my role as - you know, I'm not the direct manager to the child safety training unit. That manager reports to me so I have been asked to take a strategic view and allow that thinking to sort of come into that group. I think we have to be careful that training isn't the tail that wags the dog. We need to be responsive to - you know, understand the recruitment environment, as we said before, but we also need to follow the policy, follow the child safety manual, you know, take on board and support the training and education that needs to come from changes in that space. I think we have to look at ways to do things better and our current view is that the staff that were located in Brisbane - the training staff that were located in Brisbane will be better placed in each of the regions so we've started to move towards that. We're hoping that that will allow us a number of things: firstly, to be more responsive to local needs and to be able to coach and mentor more closely in the service centres with the CSOs as they're undergoing their entry-level training, but also be able to take on other development needs - you know, other child safety development needs as they arise and support the specialist modules and so on and also to be able to then offer the entry-level training in more locations than we currently do.

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So I think, you know, that's something that we're hoping will work well. I think the other thing is to try and take some of the bureaucracy out of the training. I don't necessarily mean in terms of what we train, but in terms of, you know, the process around the running and the delivery of training, to try and pare that they could bit and allow less administrative time. Part of that is our move to make the vocational graduate certificate not mandatory. The director-general signed off on that early in the year. So while we'll teach the same skills, we won't necessarily require that phase 5, the academic component, to be compulsorily acquired, so that people could still choose to do that if they want, and to - you know, we'll certainly teach them up to those competencies. But this will allow not only our staff, but the team leaders in the service centres, which - we've tended to tie them up a bit in knots with, you know, having to do a whole lot of things for literature reviews, et cetera, which don't necessarily improve their work readiness.

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There's been some criticism of the idea that since the broadening of the qualification there's been a de-professionalisation of the workforce in CSOs. Are you familiar with that criticism?--Yes, I have seen that.

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All right. Can I posit this idea with you - or question: is it necessary that a CSO have a bachelor's degree to be a properly functioning and informed child safety officer? ---It's probably not necessary. I certainly think by having an undergraduate degree, I guess where there's some evidence to show that this person is able to take conceptual thinking, to thinking certain ways, and that, you know, they've had a base level of training that we can take as a benchmark or as a baseline and that we can move from there. I'm sure that there are people who are, you know, extremely capable because of their own life experience and skills and other things they've been through that can do the job, and as we talked about, the CSSO to CSO program, we believe is an important career option and a career path and makes use of a very valuable workforce and recognises their commitment and knowledge in our system and able to move them forward.

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In the hypothetical, say, the Commissioner was to accept the proposal that the entry degrees to CSO work be rolled back and limited to, say, social work and social science and human services, could you see any advantages or disadvantages in standardising the qualification back to those few degrees?--Well, in our current service delivery model I think you would find in a very short period of time the department unable to meet its commitments; that we wouldn't be able to get the workforce we need. There are just not enough social workers and psychologists and so on coming through academic training who want to work in a system to fill the jobs that we've got.

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COMMISSIONER: When you say - you mean the system needs - does that include NGOs, or you're only talking about the department?---No, I was just thinking about the department.

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All right?---But the sector makes it even more difficult.

Because they compete with each other?---Yes.

And they poach from the department; one is the department has train them up the NGOs poach them?---Yes, but we don't call it poaching because, you know, I think - - -

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What do you call it?--- - - - we believe in the sector, not necessarily just to the department.

What do you call it?---Sorry?

What do you call it if you don't call it poaching?---I think we're sharing, growing - - -

Sharing. But the more they have of yours, the less you have?---True.

All right. So when you're making predictions and planning for the size of your workforce, you're doing that based on the current workload, aren't you?---The workload, the current turnover rate, the number of qualified graduates coming out of the universities, and so on.

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Okay. And you're talking about the services the department provides rather than the ones it buys, aren't you? ---Correct.

So then that's limited to investigation and assessment? ---Mm'hm.

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Ongoing case management?---Yes.

What else? The court work, I suppose?---Correct, yes.

So those three categories are your main - - -? ---Particularly, yes.

All right. And what, your wages bill would be your highest expenditure?---Yes.

So if they have less work to do, you would require less to do it and wouldn't have to pay them as much?---Correct.

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So if the proper caseload for the department was having 4000 children in care rather than 8300, then everything would correspondingly go down, wouldn't it?---Correct.

If that was the case - I'm obviously just theorising about a number - but on that process of reasoning would there be enough if you put downward pressure on demand for services

- that is, for the department's services?---Yes.

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MR SIMPSON: Commissioner, do you mean and at graduate from university?

COMMISSIONER: Yes?---That's how I took the question.

Yes?---I'm not sure. It obviously would be a lot closer to meeting our needs and is currently possible.

What do you say about the - do you see it as a problem, the competition for dwindling number of the workforce - and dwindling workforce numbers and the competition for their services between the department and the vendors of the services you pay for to be done by the people who you used to employ?---No, I don't see that as a particular problem. I think it is a sector-wide problem, not necessarily a - - -

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I know, but at the moment my sense of it is that the NGOs are solving their problem in part by recruiting from you? ---Yes.

And using the money you pay them for their services to provide higher incentives for them to change from the public to the private sector, so that is a problem for the department, isn't it?---Well, I guess it is a service model we're current working within, so therefore, you know, it is how the system is currently.

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Yes, I know, but it's a bit incoherent, isn't it? Essentially they're using your money to pay your people not to do your work?---Look, this is true in other industries as well where, you know, government bodies, local government and so on, provide the base training and the skills and recruit people in and then they go out. You know, it happens in sporting, it happens right across the board.

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They're not bonded any more?---No, that's right.

Is that an option?---The discussions I've had and discussions with our legal people and so on is that bonding people to the agency is not particularly viable. We certainly look at that from where we provided, you know, significant postgraduate degrees to people, whether we can bond them. The advice I've been given is that not particular possible.

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What's your recruiting pool, say, if your need is in Townsville do you try to recruit from locally and educate locally; all you do it the best you can with what you've got?---We do currently try and to recruit locally.

Yes?---We don't - at this stage up until now we haven't educated locally for CSOs, that been brought to Brisbane.

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For the 72 weeks?---No, for the three-week component and a one week component. **1**

Right?---Which is why that model is still viable in that - you know, because most of their training is actually done in the service centre locally with support from their team leaders and from our trainers. But even some people find that the three week and the one week is still an imposition.

What do you think would be the most cost-efficient for recruiting - I don't think privatising recruiting would be all that cost-efficient, actually, so forget that. But what about training and in-service training, would it be more cost efficient to outsource that, do you think?---I guess to some degree we have a mix of both. We do outsource - you know, we buy in contractors to provide training, which is to some degree the same as outsourcing it. **10**

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So you subcontract your training really?---In some cases particular modules. We send people to conferences and forums. All of that is, I guess, contracting out some components of their development. Sometimes it's about the level of control and flexibility that you need. By running your training inside an agency of an organisation you obviously are able to control the content, the speed at which you can deliver the content and change the content and also sometimes then share those resources into - you know, those training resources to other activities. By doing it outside the organisation you're not carrying that overhead the whole time, but you tend to find that your course fees are more expensive and if that market fails, if that training provider or training providers can no longer support your business, then you end up with having to have it internalised again.

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Anyway, and I suppose you have got to quality control anyway to make sure standards are met?---That's right.

Do you know off the top of your head in ballpark figures how much the department spend on training basic, plus the up-skilling last financial year?---For the CSO component?

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Yes?---No, not off the top of my head. I know the broader figure across the department.

What is that one?---The broader figure across the department, I think, in the budget estimates was 9.7 million, but there would be other development that's done for individuals.

That wouldn't be reflected in that figure?---Correct, yes, because it's part of their personal development.

I suppose you're fresh from budget estimates, aren't you? ---That's right.

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So that's why you have got it there.

MR SIMPSON: Can I return to this idea of the particular degrees that are required? All things being equal this theory: you had sufficient graduates from a bachelor of psychology, a bachelor of social work and a bachelor of human services, the former core degrees that were there prior to the CMC review. If you had sufficient graduates from that, would it be desirable to still take graduates from other degrees to become CSOs?---I believe it would be. I believe - and I think Mr Bradford put this forward as well - that having a broader mix of experience and of different practice frameworks and - because obviously children have various different needs and they're in different situations, I think working in a multidisciplinary approach provides a lot more richness in the decision-making and the options and the solutions. I think to some degree a couple of years back the department

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had the no-wrong-door approach where we were encouraging our Child Safety and our housing and our Youth Justice and so on to find the complex cases and to sort of bust through some of the barriers and the myths and the things that they thought held them working together or stopped them, you know, working as one for the interests of the child. I think that approach was highly successful and I think that also then argues that taking multidisciplinary approaches to these types of things is very useful.

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So to say that the base level of qualification was broadened simply because there weren't enough graduates out of the three previous core degrees is not an entirely accurate statement then, is it?---It was one of the drivers. It was probably, you know, the primary driver but certainly not the only benefit from doing it?

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It was the primary drive back then, but looking at it, you have had the broadened base since that time and with all the knowledge you have of the various talents that people bring from law, nursing, teaching and other areas that are included now, would you confine the degrees back to the former three core or four core degrees?---Personally I wouldn't, no.

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No, okay. Thank you, Mr Commissioner. I have no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Mr Selfridge?

MR SELFRIDGE: Mr Dagley, you were asked some questions by the counsel assisting Mr Simpson earlier in the piece in relation to the programs currently on offer or not, as the case may be, in relation to CSSOs and training programs to CSO?---Mm'hm.

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As I understood your evidence, you said that that CSSO to CSO program leading to a vocational graduate certificate in child protection is still in existence to the extent that it's currently planned for 2013 to move forward on that basis?---Yes, that's right.

You tried to clearly distinguish that program, that pilot program, and the continuation of the same from a certificate IV diploma. Is that the one we're talking about at the Sunshine Coast TAFE that Mr Bradford makes reference to in his statement?---Yes, I believe it is.

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Can you expand upon that as to what your knowledge is as it currently is?---Yes. So before a CSSO was able to undertake the component that led to them becoming a CSO which is the vocational graduate certificate they needed the underlying cert IV and we had funding for that up until the end of 2010, I think it was, from the Department of Education to be able to do that. Over that time the

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department also provided money to the community services
skilling plan which is an industry or sector-wide fund and
that cert IV was available as a package within that
available not just to the department but to all of the NGO
sector. That funding finishes in 31 December this year and
then it's up for review.

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Yes?---So what we will need to do in 2013 to continue a CSO
to CSO pathway is to renegotiate and RTO to be able to
deliver that component for us.

What do you mean by "RTO"?---A registered training
organisation, whether that be Sunshine Coast Institute of
TAFE or one of the others.

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Sure. So I take from that then that there's no plans or
immediate plans as such to shelve that other than the
program only runs up to 31 December this year, but from an
operational perspective or training perspective there are
plans to renegotiate the same for a continuation of the
same in the future?---Yes, but just for the department
rather than for the whole sector.

Just what, sorry?---Just for the department.

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Yes, okay; and that's clearly distinguishable from that
other pilot program that has been made mention of earlier?
---Yes.

Now, you were present this morning when Mr Bradford gave
his evidence?---Yes, I was.

There were some questions put to him by Mr Capper on behalf
of the Commission for Children and Young People in relation
to operational performance reviews. Do you recall that?
---Yes, I do.

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My understanding of it at that time was those questions
were predicated on operational performance reviews or OPRs
being past tense. That was my understanding of the
questions that were put. Is that your understanding? Are
OPRs indeed something of the past or are they still
operational? Pardon the pun, are they still operational?
---That certainly seemed to be the indication from what was
being said, but, no, operational perform reviews have been
in place right through the various forms of the department
and they certainly will continue into next year. They're
part of a framework which has just been redeveloped for the
new department, but operational performance reviews have
been undertaken for the last three years and will continue
to be undertaken.

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By OPRs, we're talking about measures of staffing, SCAN
involvement, case plans and that sort of thing. Is that
what we're talking about?---Well, each region has their own
set of performance measures based on the demographic and

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so, yes, the OPRs look at how they're tracking against their performance plans, their operational performance plans and so on. Also available to all managers is workforce data so they can look at absenteeism and turnover and, you know, the various ratios of staffing. So they're available on a quarterly basis.

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Does that include things like staff morale and different things?---No, staff morale is measured in our employee opinion survey.

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That has been run sort of - the plan is that that's run every two years and the state government has run its own state of the service survey once in 2010.

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Yes?---That also picks up morale for departments.

Have there been any recent - well, I take it there have been, but what's the most recent internal or in-house review of feedback from the staff within the Department of Communities, as it's now known?---The last employee opinion survey was - or the results were released in August, September last year. The data was collected in May.

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Yes?---The plan was - you know, that's run on a biennial basis as well.

Do you have access to information in terms of the feedback from the employees in relation to that?---Yes, my area at the time conducted that project on behalf of the department for the whole department and we broke the reporting down to obviously department wide but then by area, by work group, by, you know, all sorts of different cuts and those reports were made available to staff and there were feedback sessions run and action planning sessions run as a result of that and quarterly reporting put in around the action plans.

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Coming back again then, do you have at your disposal or your access at this moment in time, ie here now, a copy of that?---Yes, I did bring a copy. Yes, I did bring a copy of that.

Do you have it there in the witness box with you?---Yes, I do.

Can you access it, please?---Sure.

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I ask these questions on the basis that there's been quite a few - there's been a bit of discussion in relation to most recently where the department is going in its current entity in relation to - sorry, the feedback seems to be on a generalised basis that morale is better than it previously was. Is that a fair analysis, that morale within the Department of Communities had suffered an all-time low in approximately 2007, about that time, but there's currently an upward trend. Is that correct or incorrect? Is that a fair analysis?---Well, the data collected in 2011 would certainly show that on a range of scales that both the department and the child services component of the department were committed to their job, believed in the value of what they did, believed they were supported in what they did, and so on. There's, you know, a whole range of data, obviously, which I have here.

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Do you have the actual feedback there before you?---I do - well, this is the child safety, youth and families

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component of what was then called RSDO, regional service delivery operations. 1

Okay, can I see a copy of that, please?

COMMISSIONER: Was that an anonymous survey?---Yes, it was.

Was it conducted by the department?---It was conducted by an external consultancy on behalf of the department.

Okay?---I believe we've made some reference to it in previous statements to the commission. 10

MR SELFRIDGE: Sorry, Mr Commissioner, if you could just bear with me for one second, please.

Now, this is broken down - the numbers on the first page of this document - the second page, but the first descriptive page, is broken down into regions, gender, response rates, et cetera. If I give you a bit of feedback of relation to it - the document will speak for itself, but in essence there was a response rate of over 52 per cent, so just over half in relation to those surveyed. Is that correct?--- That's right. 20

Is that your understanding? Of those 52 per cent - and specifically, numbers-wise, we're talking about 352, so we're talking approximately 700 employees and approximately 350 - or obviously the math will work itself out?---Yes.

But does that sound familiar to you?---That's right, yes.

Okay. Excuse me, please. Mr Commissioner, I seek to tender this document as described, an independent survey from an external consultancy. The document speaks for itself in terms of any questions that may arise in relation to it. I've spoken to counsel assisting. Perhaps we could get some copies made. 30

COMMISSIONER: Could I just have a look at it before I accept the tender?

MR SELFRIDGE: Absolutely, sure.

COMMISSIONER: Has it got its methodology in it?

MR SELFRIDGE: Not that I saw. 40

COMMISSIONER: I want to have a look at that.

MR SELFRIDGE: Sure?---Commissioner, I have the full departmental report which has all of that in it in my briefcase with me which you're welcome to, of course.

COMMISSIONER: Gratefully accepted?---This is a subset of

the data, which is more specific - - -

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Yes, well, I'll certainly take the full one. That would be helpful. I wonder why only half of them surveyed responded?---It was an Internet survey in most cases for the child safety staff. It was done over a period of time. You know, I think it was four weeks, so there would be a number on leave and unavailable and there would be those who chose not to respond, no doubt, but in terms of staff surveys that's a good sample.

Is that about - that's a good sample, is it?---Yes.

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All right. I'll accept the tender of the full document, Mr Selfridge.

MR SELFRIDGE: Yes, I understand, thank you, and I'll make that available.

COMMISSIONER: How are those other five folders going?

MR SELFRIDGE: Just bear with me for one minute, please.

COMMISSIONER: Yes.

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MR SELFRIDGE: I've just been instructed that they're done, they've been marked off and they're available now.

COMMISSIONER: Lucky I asked.

MR SELFRIDGE: Yes. Hot off the press.

COMMISSIONER: Yes. I think it's been cooling on the baking tray out there. Okay.

MR SELFRIDGE: Might it be appropriate just to have a short adjournment.

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COMMISSIONER: Yes. Do you want me to stand down?

MR SELFRIDGE: Yes. I can provide the full copy of this, because I'm sure your counsel assisting might have some questions to ask later in relation to this.

COMMISSIONER: All right. I'll stand down for a couple of minutes.

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 3.14 PM

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THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 3.19 PM

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COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Selfridge?

MR SELFRIDGE: Yes, thank you for that indulgence, Mr Commissioner. I have spoken with Mr Dagley and he's kindly provided me with the document entitled "Department of Communities Employees' Opinion Survey 2011". When one comes to number 2 under the orders, in chronological order number 2 is an introduction to that document and outlines a brief methodology and makes reference to appendix B which part of that amplifies on that methodology. I don't know that it's a detailed methodology as such but it does offer the reader some insight. I seek to tender that document on that basis.

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COMMISSIONER: I will accept that and mark it exhibit 103.

ADMITTED AND MARKED: "EXHIBIT 103"

MR SELFRIDGE: Yes, thank you. Sorry, I have no further questions for the witness thereafter.

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COMMISSIONER: What about my folders?

MR SELFRIDGE: The folders are here. I have got them there, Mr Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: I just want to count them.

MR SELFRIDGE: On that basis I don't think I have anything further I can add.

COMMISSIONER: All right, thanks, Mr Selfridge.

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MR SELFRIDGE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Capper?

MR CAPPER: Thank you.

Craig Capper for the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. In relation to your statement, I refer to your statement of 25 October 2012. At paragraph 10 you say that in 2009 practice skills workshops were delivered. You refer later on that they are still available at paragraph 22. How often are these practice skills development workshops actually delivered to staff? ---They're delivered on a request basis so the service centre will determine that there's some specialist module required for whatever reason and then that is organised fairly quickly to be conducted onsite.

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So how frequently does that occur?---There are multiple of those run every month across the state.

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In relation to the ones in 2009-2010, say, cumulative harm, trauma and attachment, transition from care, domestic violence, would you not think that in relation to those areas they're certainly some of the key areas that are coming out as part of this inquiry as needing ongoing concern - demonstrating ongoing concern? Would you not think that they were certainly workshops that would need to be conducted continually rather than simply at request?
---Well - - -

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Particularly given the high turnover in staff that we've seen over the years and certainly, you know, people coming and going, as we have identified, you don't see any value in that?---Well, there is value in it and they are delivered on a needs basis but not necessarily a sort of a sheep dip across the state.

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In paragraph 13 you say that the delivery is three hours in duration by senior practitioners as required. As required from the manager of the safety service centre, is that right, as they identify it?---It may be from that. It may be child protection development have requested - it may be as a result of a review. Yes, it depends. There would be a number of ways in which that would be instigated.

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In relation to your statement, there are a number of occasions, as I have identified already, it talks about at paragraph 22. At paragraph 35 it talks about teleconferences. Paragraph 43 talks about online training materials being distributed. It says it's available to staff?---Mm'hm.

So are we heavily reliant on staff having the insight to go there and find time and look for it themselves?---To some degree, but our trainers work in the service centres so they would be having competency conversations and mentoring sessions and so on and as they get to particular aspects and also as part of their case management and case reviews, you know, some of those things will be identified and then they will be directed or appointed towards those resources.

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Are there monthly training sessions with Child Safety Service centres, for example, monthly training days, quarterly training days?---That would be dependent on each training centre, but I certainly know that I training staff are constantly in demand to deliver sessions across the state.

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But we're heavily reliant upon the Child Safety Service centre manager of management team identifying a need for training and going and asking for it. There's no structured ongoing educational programs being undertaken in relation to ensuring that we have a workshop once a month or once a quarter that says, "Well, here's the key things that have been coming up through things such as a child death review, through things such as the commission's reports,

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any other research or literature that's coming out around child safety." We don't have that?--Each service centre would have a version of that, but they're conducted around their own program of works and how they put that together. So you have senior practitioners in place, of course. The team leaders and the service centre managers work together and, you know, some have a more formalised program, some have a less formalised one, but it is happening.

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So how is your consistency and decision-making get a consistency of response across the state for children's issues if we don't have a consistent approach to knowledge and the development and passing on of that knowledge and learnings to practitioners across the board?--Well, there's a whole series of formal channels that make that occur. What I'm saying is from our training officer perspective we're not necessarily structuring that ourselves, but it is the responsibility of the service centre manager to make sure that their staff are competent, capable and confident to deliver the services and to deliver on the skills and the needs that they have. So it's their responsibility. We're there to support them deliver that when it's asked. So, for instance, there are fortnightly teleconferences that are run with all the RDs where there are needs met that. We do that in participation with the child protection unit and with the child safety programs area. So across the board there's a whole range of formalised processes that get there, of which we then provide some input and respond to what we're requested to do.

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Now, at paragraph 18 of your statement of 17 October you indicate, "The feedback from the consultations identified a need to review the current approaches to training across all Child Safety Service roles." What was the feedback that you received?--The feedback - I think we answered that in another one of the statements, but the feedback was that the 72 weeks seemed to be too long. The academic component seemed to many to be unnecessary and that the team leaders were spending a lot of time trying to fulfil the academic components of the training rather than necessarily the work-ready components of the training and so I guess we were creating some pressure in the system.

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But you would agree, would you not, that the academic learnings and particularly in relation to issues affecting children, particularly psychological issues, children suffering trauma, children suffering abuse, and the research resulting from those is extremely important to the child safety officers' work certainly more so than the procedural requirements?--And we're not taking - we're not stopping any of that so it's the literature reviews and the competency conversations that - and where we try to gather all the RPL evidence to produce the graduate vocational certificate that we're saying is probably, you know, not the way that we're going to go but certainly all of the

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academic, all the research, all the concepts, all the theories, all the processes, are to remain part of their training.

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That's the intention?---That's right.

And that is certainly identified at paragraph 56 of your statement, I take it, of 25 October. Would that be the information you're referring to?---Yes.

In relation to paragraph 49 of that same statement, you also referred to a policy position on baseline training for frontline staff is currently before EMT. In relation to that, is that referred to elsewhere as to what that frontline baseline training is going to be?---No, what the position put to EMT was that there should be a compulsory component or a mandatory component of training before a caseload is taken on so that has been agreed to yesterday.

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Sorry, that was yesterday you said?---That's right.

Okay?---What we then need to do is then define what is in that box and that's still - that consultation is undergoing at the moment.

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Now, you were asked in relation to operational performance reviews and you've clarified that they still get undertaken. What's the format? How are they undertaken? How do they physically get undertaken?---Sorry, that's not within my realm of knowledge.

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Okay. I mean, the reason I'm asking is that you say that they're continuing to be performed and that they have been for the last three years. Now, as referred to with Mr Bradford, there was a - the transcript at the Rockhampton hearings, and page 19 of that transcript, for anybody wishing to look at it, says - the question was posed by the commissioner to Ms Matebau who identified that she had been the manager of the Bundaberg Child Safety Service Centre from 2009 till present date. The question posed to her was, "What do you do to measure performance in the risk assessment process?" Her response was, "Over the years it has varied. There was a time where we would come together for an OPR, performance review. I can't recall. I think we haven't - I haven't personally participated in one - in those for three years, maybe four, so I don't personally know how my office is reviewed." Now, if the ongoing OPRs are being undertaken how is it that the manager of the child safety service centre doesn't know how her office is being reviewed?---My understanding is that the OPRs are conducted with the regional executive director and their team. So that would be the senior executive officers, which would be the regional directors. How each region then, you know, sort of gains input and then puts out the outcome from those, I'm not sure we would need to ask a regional executive director that question.

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But clearly from that statement from Ms Matebau there's certainly an obvious communication problem. In three years she doesn't know how she's being reviewed?---I can't - sorry, I can't comment.

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Thank you. I have nothing further.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Capper. Ms Stewart?

MS STEWART: I'm Lisa Stewart from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service. If I can just take you to your statement dated - the latest one dated 25 October 2010, particularly paragraph 32 where you speak about some training. I'll also be referring to attachment 7 which I understand is probably in that box of documents?---Okay.

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It's a slide that was presented at that training entitled Shared Responsibility. Particularly when you're developing and implementing this training who were the relevant key holders that you consulted with?---Unfortunately that was prior to my time with the directorship of this unit so I can't answer that, but I can find out for you.

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Just to clarify your previous role, how does that fit alongside the role that you do now? I think previously you were appointed as the director of organisation and workforce development?---Yes, so that role had responsibility for, if you like, the HR components of training, so leadership, code of conduct, achievement planning, those sorts of things.

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So workforce development doesn't mean training as such?
---No.

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With that training that you developed do you know how many training sessions were delivered?---I'm hoping that that's in our stats as an attachment. That's an answer I'll need to get for you.

Also, what locations and how many attendees, can you provide that information?---I'll get that for you too.

And what the mix of roles were regionally and within the local child safety service centres. From your knowledge were there any training materials provided to the attendees?---I'm not sure if there were. I assume there were, but again, I - - -

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Can you check and provide that information? Also, did the attendees receive copies of the initial report that's referred to? Can you provide that information?---Sure. Of course.

Given that the PowerPoint is just a presentation tool, how comprehensively did the training group work through the blueprint and the targets that it identified?---I can get that information for you.

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And provide it to the commission?---Yes, of course.

In the implementation of this particular training were there targets or regional and local outcomes set? Do you have that information?---No, I don't.

Who would be the appropriate person who has responsibility for this that could answer these questions?---It will - let me just look at the date. Probably the manager of the child safety training unit would have this information.

But do you have the ultimate responsibility?---Not at that time I didn't, no.

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Not at that time. This is in your statement so, sorry, I'm assuming that you'd have some knowledge of it, but if you can undertake to provide that information to the commission?---Sure.

Further, on page 7 of the PowerPoint that I refer to of the

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training schedule you speak about a series of questions regarding kin. To your knowledge were those responses recorded and how did this responses inform the development of local responses?---Yes, I'm not sure. I would think they were not recorded, but I can find out.

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And provide that to the commission. Further on that training slide on page 7 there's one slide titled Consultation and it goes on to, "At what points in the child protection continuum does consultation with a recognised entity occur." I just wanted to know the rationale of including that considering there had been a comprehensive amount of work already done in completing a training manual some time prior to this?---I assume that's the discussion piece, you know, to get some discussion going, but again, I can find that out.

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If you can undertake to provide those responses. Because the training specifically sought to implement and address processes to reduce over-representation can that be provided to ATSILS and the commission?---Can it be provided to?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service and the commission. Even if it's provided to the commission I'm sure it will be forwarded?---I assume what we provide will be a public document.

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Nothing further, commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Ms Stewart. Just one I have also from paragraph 52 of - I think it's your second statement. It's a statement of 18 pages and I'm looking at page 12 of 18. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability program, I'm just trying to - it's got five phases. Is that right?---That's a two-day program.

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Yes, that's what I wanted to find out. Is it a two-day program with five phases?---That's right.

Okay, and in the two days the aims of the framework are to make the - what is it supposed to do, make people culturally capable?---Yes, so we currently have a two-pronged model to cultural capability. The first one is an awareness level and that's - - -

That's phase 1, is it, awareness and respect level?---Yes, and then phase 2 is meant to provide a more detailed look at culture, indigenous culture, and then where - - -

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That's for communication reasons, yes?---Yes, and that's mainly aimed at service-delivery staff. 1

Right?---Then we're currently in the development of a third approach and that is where we're looking to have something which is for people who actually work in indigenous communities or have to deal with indigenous communities. That program is still in development.

Now, the cultural competence or capability program - is that delivered by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander?---The mandate is there must be one indigenous trainer at least, if not two, and we have just run a training program up in far North Queensland with indigenous staff to be able to help deliver that as well. 10

When we say "indigenous", we tend to lump Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in together as the one culture which they aren't?---That's right.

When you say "indigenous", do you mean someone who is from one or other of those cultures?---I do. Currently they're from the Aboriginal culture, but the training in far North Queensland was to broaden that into Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal cultures - Aboriginal trainers so that we've got a broader mandate particularly for that region. 20

Of course in every discrete community there are subcultures?---That's right.

You may not be able to help me with this, but I was curious - I have been curious for some time - about what is and how CSOs recognise the Aboriginal tradition - sorry, a person who is regarded as a parent under Aboriginal tradition and islander custom in section 11. Do you know if anything that they are taught helps them to identify those people of that status, parents of that kind?---My understanding is that that is in the training, but I can get a more specific answer for you, if you would like. 30

Yes, because the way it's worded in the act it seems to suggest that there is a person or there will be a person for a child who under Aboriginal tradition is regarded as that child's parent who seems to be referred to as distinct from the natural parent of that child, if they are different people, so I would be interested to see what concept the modules came up with to give that some practical expression anyway?---Okay. 40

So that will be good if you could at least save me wading through everything. If you could just identify where it is, that would be great?---Okay.

Maybe by letter - yes, that would be best. By letter through Mr Selfridge might be good, thanks?---Yes.

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Anything arising from that, Mr Simpson? 1

MR SIMPSON: No. Perhaps, commissioner, the witness could be given until next Friday, 9 November to comply with the undertakings given.

COMMISSIONER: Sure.

MR SIMPSON: The transcript will be available tomorrow. He can review the transcript with his legal team and then by 4 pm, 9 November 2012 provide the information given by way of undertaking. 10

COMMISSIONER: All right. That seems a reasonable enough time to me?---It does.

If it is a problem, just let us know?---Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Selfridge?

MR SELFRIDGE: It seems a reasonable timeframe to me to. Mr Commissioner, there is just one thing related to issues within tender 103, the one in relation to the survey conducted of employees within the department. 20

COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR SELFRIDGE: There are two identifying features which I have shown to counsel assisting, one of which is a personal email and another being a personal phone number.

COMMISSIONER: Have they got page numbers?

MR SELFRIDGE: They don't have page numbers unfortunately, that's the thing. One is under a letter of the hand of Linda Apelt dated 3 May 2011. Down the bottom it has those features and in the following page "Please return this by email" to a particular person. I'm asking if those can be de-identified, if you like, those features taken out. 30

COMMISSIONER: Mr Blumke can do that or you can do that and give it back to us, whichever. I will leave it to you to work out.

MR SELFRIDGE: I will get Mr Blumke to do that, Mr Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: All right. 40

MR SIMPSON: Can I just close off with one question in re-examination on one area?

COMMISSIONER: Yes, of course.

MR SIMPSON: Mr Capper asked you some questions about ongoing training for CSOs?---Mm'hm. 1

All right. I just want to clarify this issue. So CSOs are given an initial set of training?---Yes.

It's been over 72 weeks for the entire phase previously. That's right?---That's right.

There was some complaint about the extent of time and that may be reviewed in time to come?---Yes. 10

But after that initial phase of training, is it true to say, looking at paragraph 15 of your three-page statement of 17 October, any ongoing training is self-directed learning opportunities?---No, that's not the only way of ongoing training activities.

Is one way of putting it this: there is no mandatory training after the initial training?---Correct.

So if a service centre manager thought all things were going along just fine with particular CSOs, they could go for a year, two, three years without any further training being required of them?---From a formal child safety point of view that might be possible, but everyone would have an achievement and capability plan which identified development - ongoing development commitments to that officer from the department or from the manager and that individual staff member and there would be commitments around development, whether that be - and it would be a mix no doubt of, you know, projects, peer learning, forums or conferences, et cetera, et cetera. 20

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So there would be career and development plans for every individual staff member as well as, you know, what the department deems as necessary formal education, whether that be, you know change to legislative arrangements or whatever that would be mandated, but they would all have an individual development plan.

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But it might be the case that none of that features on the particular aspects of child safety?---It would be whatever is appropriate for that officer and the way the manager deems it.

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Okay, well - - -?---But it could be possible.

It could be possible - - -?---It could be possible.

- - - that they might undertake a course in looking after three staff versus two?---Yes, correct.

Or they might undertake a course on, you know, bullying and harassment in the workplace?---Progress management or something, yes.

But nothing to do with how to relate to children or foster carers or that sort of thing?---That's possible, if it was not deemed to be a development need that they had.

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All right, but leaving aside development needs, do you recognise that in professionals there is some benefit in the idea of being reminded of the core skills, the reason why we're there, what we're all about, and there would be merit, perhaps, in requiring CSOs to be reminded of those core skills on a mandatory basis?---If there was - if in the absence of anything being done in the service centres around professional development on a regular basis I guess the department might deem that there's, you know, a need to sort of legislate training at particular levels, but the fact is that there is a quantum of training and development and professional practice that is put forward to staff. I mean, you will see from the survey that staff development wasn't a particular issue for them and I think - you know, I guess industrially the unions would require that if they didn't think it was already happening to a level that was satisfactory. So, you know, I think our staff are professional, are training staff are very professional, and where a need is identified - I mean, these people are passionate about their work. They want to do a great job and they're hungry for the skills and the knowledge to help them do it and the department does whatever it can to make that possible.

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Now, in terms of the plans you spoke of, so the development plans, a personal professional development plan, does every worker have one?---Yes. That's the idea, yes.

Okay, the idea?---Well, there is a policy that states that

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every officer must have an active achievement and capability plan. They're meant to have that within the first two months of them commencing. Certainly as part of their entry level training it's - you know, we formalise that in the program and so on, but whether they're in that program or not it is a requirement that every staff member has regular feedback and that they have an active development plan.

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All right, let me take you to the last step of this idea. If a staff member dealing with children and foster parents and all the intricacies of being a child protection officer doesn't have a case plan and has managed to slip through the cracks of not doing training courses because it's not mandatory, is it the - would they be removed from that role? Would they be sacked, in other words?---I would not - I would doubt that. I mean, it wouldn't seem to be a disciplinary action on their behalf. It might be a disciplinary action on behalf of their manager, but - - -

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But clearly if they have no training, they've got nothing past the first initial phase, then they slip through the cracks and they manage to avoid training and case plans, surely that can't be good for front line staff dealing with kids?---I doubt whether there's any examples of that hypothetical question.

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Okay, well, just accept there was?---Okay.

Accept that there was. Would you see that as being such a deficiency that you would want to remove that person from the front line?---If they weren't performing to the level - you know, to the level that was expected, then I would expect that there would be remedial action taken.

Okay?---And that may be removing them from the front line until they've been trained, but - - -

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Okay, they're performing just fine but they're not doing any more training, they're not doing case plans. Would that qualify them to be removed from the front line?---No.

No?---No, because they're performing fine.

I have no further questions. May the witness be excused?

COMMISSIONER: Yes, absolutely. Thanks very much for the evidence that you've given and your willingness to supply that other material by, what, next Friday, was it, we decided on? Friday. All right, excellent. Thanks very much for your help, Mr Dagley.

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WITNESS WITHDREW

COMMISSIONER: Now, have we got any more business today?

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30102012 28/RMO(IPSWICH) (Carmody CMR)

MR SIMPSON: No, there's no other witnesses today. The commission may adjourn until tomorrow. Mr Robert Ryan will be called tomorrow.

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COMMISSIONER: All right.

MR SIMPSON: Mr Haddrick of counsel assisting will be taking him as a witness.

COMMISSIONER: Okay, so what, we'll adjourn until 10.00? We'll adjourn until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Thank you.

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THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 3.51 PM
UNTIL WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2012

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