

**QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

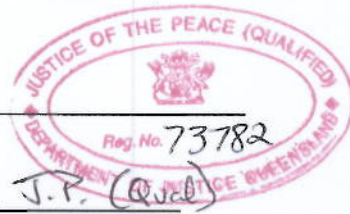
STATEMENT OF GLENN WILLIAM JOHN HORAN

I, **Glenn William John Horan**, of *cl- Cairns Police Station, Sheridan Street, Cairns* in the State of Queensland, *Officer in Charge, Cairns District Child Protection and Investigation Unit*, solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare:

1. I am a Detective Senior Sergeant, Officer in Charge in the Cairns District Child Protection and Investigation Unit, Queensland Police Service.
2. I have been appointed to this position since 7 February 2005. Prior to my appointment I relieved in the position for approximately twelve months.
3. When planning and reviewing my work and seeking approval for decisions, when required, I report to Inspector Peter Mansfield who is based in Cairns. My position is part of the Crime Services Portfolio within the Cairns Police District. Inspector Peter Mansfield reports to the Cairns District Officer, Superintendent Brian Connors.
4. Prior to this appointment I had been a Detective Sergeant, Senior Investigator within the Cairns District Child Protection and Investigation Unit (CPIU), formerly known as the Cairns District Juvenile Aid Bureau (JAB) for a period of ten years. Prior to that appointment I had been an investigator within the within the Cairns District JAB for a period of three years. Prior to my appointment to the JAB I had been a Constable, general duties officer at Burleigh Heads and Woodridge police Divisions.
5. I have almost 25 years policing experience with 20 of those years as an investigator within the Cairns District CPIU. I have performed investigative duties concerning children across the entire District including within indigenous communities in Cape York and the Torres Strait.
6. The purpose of my role, as the Officer in Charge, Cairns District CPIU, is to manage proactive activities for crime prevention and the supervision and conduct of criminal investigations and conduct of investigations in the areas of child protection and juvenile justice.

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7. Within the Cairns Police District there are two designated CPIU's. The Cairns District CPIU is in the District headquarters in the Cairns CBD, and the Thursday Island CPIU on Thursday Island. The Thursday Island CPIU has a designated staffing model of four investigators and provides a specialist policing response to children, both as victims and offenders across the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) and the Torres Strait. The Thursday Island CPIU is co-located with Child Safety Services. The area of responsibility is within the boundaries of Bamaga and Thursday Island Police Divisions. The Cairns District CPIU provides a specialist policing response across the remainder of the Cairns Police District including remote indigenous communities across Cape York.
8. The Cairns District CPIU has an approved strength of 28 officers. The Unit comprises the Officer in Charge, 5 Detective Sergeant – Senior Investigators, 20 investigators and 2 School Based Police Officers. When all positions are occupied there are 11 officers assigned to Youth Justice Investigations, 2 officers assigned to reportable child sex offender compliance and 12 officers assigned to Child Abuse investigation.
9. The Thursday Island CPIU has an approved strength of 4 officers. The Officer in Charge is a Detective Sergeant and the remaining 3 officers are investigators.
10. CPIU officers are provided specialist training in the investigation of child abuse, sex offences, youth justice and forensic interviewing of child witnesses. Officers appointed to the CPIU are provided an induction package outlining CPIU responsibilities, their work allocations are managed to ensure a matching of experience with investigative tasks and the officers are mentored by senior and experienced investigators to facilitate a transfer of skills and competency achievement. Refer to paragraphs 35 to 38 for a more comprehensive overview of formalised professional development of CPIU officers.
11. The responsibilities of CPIU investigators have increased significantly over the years. CPIU investigator responsibilities now include child protection investigations; historical sex offence investigation; youth justice investigation and diversion; reportable child sex offender database management, monitoring and compliance; blue card employment screening compliance; reportable child death investigations; delivering education, training, and community awareness; investigation of technology facilitated crimes against, or exploitation of, children.



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12. The management of monitoring and compliance of Reportable Child Sex Offenders in the Cairns District is the responsibility of the Cairns District CPIU. Though the District has similar numbers of reportable offenders as Districts within metropolitan areas the Cairns District is unique in that the reportable offenders are resident of various communities within the more than 200 000 square kilometres of the District. Some of the reportable sex offenders within the District reside in isolated communities that are only accessible by boat whereas others are in communities approximately a 1000 kilometres or 20 hours of driving time from Cairns, or two hours by aircraft. Travelling time alone has a significant impact on resourcing and cost to the service in both time and money. Complying with legislative requirements and the recommended monitoring and compliance regime for reportable child sex offenders, combined with the numbers and spread of reportable offenders across the District significantly impacts on the resources of the CPIU.
13. CPIU personnel provide a 24 hour response to children at risk and will prioritise a child's safety over any competing request for police assistance. CPIU investigate both intra-familial and extra-familial child abuse. The legislated child protection service system only engages in those matters that are intra-familial where a parent or care-giver is not willing and able to protect a child.
14. The specialist police response to child protection issues in Cape York communities is addressed by the current staffing model of having CPIU officers in Cairns and Thursday Island. Support is also received from Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB) Detectives stationed at Weipa and Cooktown. Although CIB officers are not specialist child protection investigators, they have received aspects of specialist training needed to conduct child protection investigations. For complex child protection investigations, the CIB officers from Weipa and Cooktown will provide the initial investigative response and Cairns CPIU will travel to the relevant community to continue investigations.
15. Investigators travel to remote areas of the District either by vehicle, police aircraft, commercial air travel, or in urgent matters via charter flight. During some parts of the year travel by road is often not possible. Child Safety Services personnel may travel to the location with CPIU personnel and share costs for travel if the incident occurs during business hours (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday) for matters where Child Safety Services engage, and there are no community based services available. In the majority of urgent child protection investigations where a child is a victim of a serious criminal offence the

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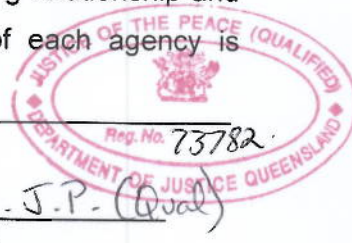
initial investigative response is conducted by QPS officers and Child Safety Services engage at a later time. In all cases QPS personnel are mindful that the safety of children is paramount and is the overriding principle when responding to matters involving children subject of harm or at risk of harm.

16. General uniform police officers in Indigenous communities are the first response to all calls for service for policing issues within the community. The first response officer makes a determination based on their knowledge and experience whether a specialist response is required. Specialist response is provided when requested by first response officers. General uniform police are integral to the early identification of child protection issues. Due to the broad nature of general uniform policing many first response officers do not have the capacity or skills to effectively investigate all child protection issues however are able to identify, assess and report criminal offences committed against children.
17. Child Safety Services provide a lead agency response across the Cairns Police District from Child Safety Service Centres in located in Cairns North, Cairns South, Thursday Island, Weipa, Cooktown, Cape North and Cape South (Both based in Cairns). Cairns North and South Service Centres provide holistic child protection services whereas the Cape North and South Service Centres provide the response for notifications from Indigenous Communities in Cape York. The remaining Child Safety Service Centres provide ongoing intervention with children who are deemed to be in need of protection, however may also respond to crisis situations where children are at immediate risk of harm.
18. Each CPIU office is fitted with a home look a like room where interviews with child victims are conducted. Each office is equipped with a portable video and audio recording device for conducting interviews with children in schools or locations other than the home look a like room. The Cairns District CPIU is also fitted with an interview room for the interview of suspects. The Thursday Island CPIU does not have an interview room suitable for suspect interviews. Officers attend Thursday Island Police Station if they wish to conduct interview of suspects.
19. Police in Indigenous communities are sometimes required to take action under the *Child Protection Act* in the absence of Child Safety workers. A good working relationship and an understanding of the differences and similarities in the roles of each agency is

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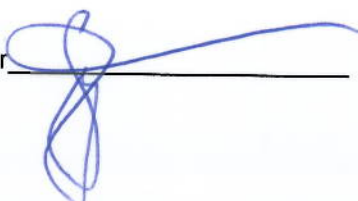
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essential to ensuring children at risk are identified and appropriate action taken. General uniform police seek verbal advice from specialist CPIU officers when faced with issues where the safety and welfare of a child is an issue.

20. Child Protection Investigations are reported to the CPIU through a number of means which include the following:
- QPS policy for child protection reporting
 - Reporting from Department of Health, Education Queensland, and Child Safety Services
 - Direct contact with the CPIU in person or via phone from members of the public, Government and non-Government agencies.
 - Information forwarded by other Law Enforcement Agencies
21. Child Safety Services Regional Intake Service (RIS) is based in Cairns. RIS receives information from members of the public, Government and non-Government agencies relating to suspected child harm. Child Safety Officers within the RIS assess the information received and if it is considered that there is a criminal offence the information is forwarded to the Cairns District CPIU for further assessment or response under the provisions of 14(2) of the *Child Protection Act 1999*. The information is forwarded to police regardless of whether Child Safety Services are providing a response.
22. Child protection investigations within the Cairns District, (apart from the Northern Peninsula Area) are predominantly coordinated by the Cairns District CPIU. The majority of calls for service are within the greater Cairns area where the population is more concentrated. The majority of Child Protection support services are also based in or around Cairns, with very few based in remote areas of the District.
23. The Cairns District CPIU receives advice of suspected child abuse from agencies who are mandated to report and non-government agencies involved with children and families. Since 1 January 2012 the Cairns District CPIU has received almost 1000 reports of suspected child harm. All reports referred to the Cairns District CPIU are assessed by the Officer in Charge or a senior officer within the CPIU and a decision made regarding what police intervention is required. Assessment may include reviewing historical information on QPS databases, reviewing particulars provided, and assessment of caregivers and contact with notifiers, if known. The time taken for each assessment

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varies due to complexity. Assessment of reports of suspected child abuse focus on the criminality of the alleged actions of a perpetrator and consideration of Section 9 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*. Subsequent to assessment a substantial number of reports are assessed as not requiring a police response, though some matters are referred to support agencies via Supportlink.

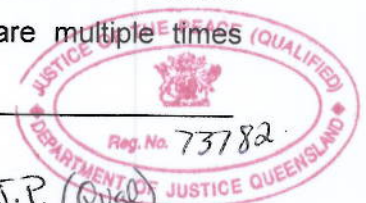
24. When it is assessed that an investigative response is required less complex child protection investigations may take on average 4 to 5 hours to complete. As there are a range of complexities involved in each investigation some child protection investigations may continue for weeks or even months.
25. The quantity of reports of suspected child harm has increased exponentially since the introduction of a reporting policy introduced by Education Queensland. I believe that reporting has increased the expectation of the reporting agencies that a child protection intervention will take place. Limited understanding of child protection intervention thresholds has led to inconsequential matters being reported as suspected harm, or a lowering of critical standards. I have observed that recent changes by Education Queensland have led to slight improvement in the quality of information being received.
26. Investigations of intra-familial child protection matters are, where possible, investigated jointly. However, due to the disparate service centres it is very difficult to coordinate joint responses to multiple simultaneous investigations. In many cases investigations are conducted independently with information shared between agencies. The majority of joint responses are conducted within the greater Cairns area where services are concentrated.
27. Children who are involved in the tertiary Child Protection system who reside in remote areas within the District may be brought to Cairns to access support services and suitable carers. The children who are brought to Cairns often have complex family and social issues affecting their lives and have been removed from their community on child protection or youth justice orders or agreements. The children are placed with carers or in residential care facilities which are vast distances from family support.
28. Children placed in residential care facilities often have high needs or risk factors which preclude them from entering foster placements. Calls for service to the residential care facilities include assaults of carers, damage to property, drug/alcohol possession, sexual assault and absconding children. Children also abscond from care multiple times

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requiring a missing person report to be initiated by QPS on each occasion. Children who often have limited youth justice history commence offending with peers and enter the youth justice system.

29. The Far Northern Region has a population of approximately 254 295. Approximately 25% of persons within the Region are under the age of 18 years which is consistent with the State profile. Of the regional population approximately 15% or 38680 people identify as indigenous, whereas across the state only 3.6% or 155 827 identify as indigenous. Of the persons who identify as indigenous within the region approximately 42% or 16 527 are under the age of 18 years. ¹
30. From 2009/2010 to 2011/2012 the Cairns District has experienced a significant increase in offences being committed by young offenders, primarily for property offences. The offences committed by the young offenders are predominantly for the crimes of robbery, unlawful entry, unlawful use of motor vehicles and unlawful entry of motor vehicles. In the Cairns, Smithfield and Edmonton Police Divisions the increase in young offenders committing property crime is even more statistically significant.
31. In my experience I am aware that young offenders are responsible for approximately half of solved robbery offences, the vast majority of solved unlawful entry offences, unlawful use of motor vehicle offences, and unlawful entry of motor vehicle offences. Indigenous youth account for approximately 15% of all youths aged between 10 and 18 within the District however are over-represented in the youth justice system. In my experience some crime categories are predominantly committed by indigenous males aged between 10 and 19 years of age.
32. Anecdotal evidence is that a significant proportion of the families of young offenders have had contact with Child Safety Services. Child protection concerns include neglect, alcohol and/or drug abuse, Domestic and Family Violence, poor supervision, inadequate housing/overcrowding, excessive physical discipline and sexual abuse. Many families are receiving support from various government and non-government agencies for a range of social issues however there is only limited coordination of services provided and no assessment of effectiveness or impact on families or young people.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2011, Indigenous Profile* – 103



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Partnerships

33. Child Protection agencies in the Cairns District are involved in various partnerships to coordinate agency responses. The partnerships include:

- ***Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Teams***

There are two Detective Senior Sergeant, SCAN coordinators, based in Cairns Station. The SCAN coordinators are core members of SCAN teams that cover the entire Far Northern Police Region. SCAN meetings are geographically separated into Cairns North, Cairns South, Innisfail (Innisfail Police District), Cape York and Torres Strait, and Atherton Tablelands (Mareeba Police District) with a unique meeting for each. Core agencies include Child Safety Services, QPS, Education Queensland, Queensland Health and the Recognised Entity, currently Wuchopperen Health Service. Invited stakeholders attend SCAN meetings when their service has involvement and/or expertise in a particular case. Invited stakeholders are only present for the matter which they have input. The effectiveness of SCAN is vastly improved by having input and participation of relevant identified stakeholders who can assist in a multi-agency response.

Invited stakeholders include:

Government Agencies

Adult Mental Health Services, Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATODS), Cairns West State School, Cairns Sexual Health Clinic, Child & Youth Mental Health Services, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Disability Services Queensland, EVOLVE Therapeutic Services, Families Responsibilities Commission Mossman, Flexible Learning Centre, Housing and Homelessness Services, Queensland Corrective Services, Smithfield Community Mental Health, and Yarrabah Health Clinic

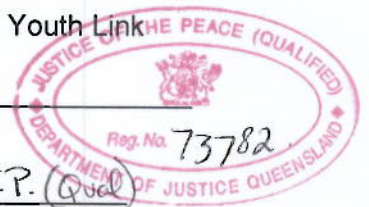
Non Government Agencies

ACT for Kids, ACT for Kids Youth Opportunity Programme, Alternate Care, ARC Disability Service, Cairns Substance Misuse Service, MAMU Health Clinic, The Family Intervention Service, Wuchopperen Social Health Family, Support Service, Youth Empowered Towards Independence, Youth Link

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- ***Coordinated Care for Vulnerable Young People Panel***

Each agency will commit to collaboration with other agencies to promote an integrated system of care which will enable effective and efficient service delivery. The panel brings together Government and the community sector to work together strategically and operationally to address multiple issues affecting young people. A whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach is developed to ensure that vulnerable young people receive a range of support services.

The panel reviews cases of young people with complex issues including involvement in youth justice and child protections systems, accommodation issues, substance abuse/misuse, employment, education, and mental health issues but particularly those children who have had repeated unsuccessful outcomes.

Each partner agency refers young people to the panel. QPS referrals mostly relate to children in the youth justice system that have dysfunctional home situations.

A Local Partnership Agreement includes the following agencies:

Government Agencies

Centacare, Child Safety Services, Youth Justice Services, Queensland Health, Education Queensland, Queensland Police (Represented by OIC CPIU)

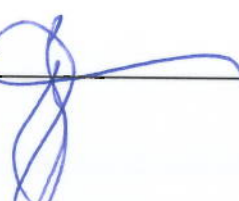
Non Government Agencies

ACT for Kids, Anglicare, Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI), Youth Link, and Wuchopperen.


- ***Cairns Sexual Assault Service***

Interagency meetings held monthly to review operational issues, discuss coordination of services, plan education/community awareness sessions, review and discussion around local sexual assault protocols, information sharing, and review of forensic medical procedures. Stakeholders include

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Officers in charge of CPIU and Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB), Regional Crime Coordinator, Forensic Medical Officer, Forensic Nurses, Child Sexual Assault counsellors, and Sexual Assault Service representatives.

Queensland Police represented by OIC CPIU also in partnership with Sexual Assault Service to chair the steering committee for the Yarrabah Sexual Assault Project. The Project objectives are to enhance community response to victims/survivors of sexual abuse and sexual assault, to enhance Cairns Sexual Assault Service response to members of the Yarrabah community and to clarify and raise community awareness of sexual assault prevention and support services.

- **Youth Crime Advisory Group**

In May of 2011 an advisory/working group of key Government agencies was established to proactively address the youth crime issues and level of crime within the community. Key issues included an increase in the level of violence, the young age of offenders, little or no parental support or supervision of young offenders, and the over representation of indigenous offenders in the Youth Justice system. It was also highlighted that many young offenders were exposed to a violent and dysfunctional family/home life which effectively desensitised young persons to violence.

The group resolved that it would be prudent to divert very young offenders from the Justice system before they became entrenched in criminal behaviour.

The group meets bi-monthly and includes the following Government Agencies:

Youth Justice Services, Child Safety Services, Youth Justice Conferencing, Cairns City Council, and Queensland Police

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34. Policy changes to the SCAN system had the consequence of restricting matters that were accepted as referrals only if assessed by Child Safety Services as requiring investigation and assessment. My understanding is that the policy changes were made due to workload management within Child Safety Services. Complex family issues that do not meet the threshold for investigation are no longer accepted by the SCAN team, despite being likely to benefit from a multi-agency response.

Training

35. Upon appointment to a full time CPIU position officers are required to register on and complete the Detective Training Program as a qualification for appointment to Detective status. Officers who successfully complete the program receive an Advanced Diploma of Public Safety (Police Investigations). The program requires an officer to attend three residential phases at the Queensland Police Academy in combination with workplace assessment and competency achievement. The average time for a Cairns District CPIU officer to complete the program and receive appointment to Detective status is four to five years.
36. Various units of compulsory training are required of all members of the QPS including CPIU officers. Compulsory training includes operations skills and tactics, and training on legislative and policy amendments such as Domestic and Family Violence Legislation and QPS pursuit policy.
37. Though not compulsory for CPIU officers the following training and education is strongly recommended to provide CPIU investigators with the broad range of skills required to successfully investigate child protection matters. Recommended training includes:
- Interviewing Children and Recording Evidence (ICARE) training
 - CPIU workshop
 - Competency Acquisition Program (CAP) units including Child Protection: Law and Procedures, Child Protection: Investigation and Issues, and Sexual Offences: Investigation
 - Blue Card Workshop
 - Child Protection Offender Reporting Workshop
 - Child Protection Offender Reporting – Online learning
 - Investigative Interviewing

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- Workshops and training for use of technology to assist investigations including System Preview and Data Acquisition (SPADA), Categorisation for Pictures (C4P), Categorisation for All (C4all), Cellebrite Universal Forensic Extraction Device (UFED), and Voicebox training.

38. Additionally for officers to progress to higher rank within the organisation are required to complete Management Development Programs which are conducted via distance education with some residential component.

Service Delivery within the Cairns District

39. Child Protection Service Delivery within the Cairns Police District is difficult to coordinate due to the disparate locations and numbers of Child Safety Service Centres. Often there are competing priorities over a large geographical area. In many cases crisis management processes are implemented to ensure children are not at risk, and then investigations are conducted within a manageable timeframe. General uniform police or investigators from a Criminal Investigation Branch are tasked to provide an initial response and ensure a child's safety, when workloads prevent CPIU officers from responding and in remote areas where no CPIU is readily available.
40. Reports of suspected child harm that are assessed by Child Safety Services Regional Intake Service (RIS) as requiring investigation and assessment are forwarded to the Cairns District CPIU if there is a criminal offence associated with the suspected harm. RIS officers utilise assessment tools to determine the level of risk and response required. The assessment tools allow for an element of professional judgement to be used to inform assessment. RIS also forward the notification for investigation and assessment to the Child Safety Service Centre responsible for the area where the alleged incident has occurred. RIS allocates a priority response time depending on the risk to a child. CPIU respond to all criminal matters where a child is at risk or where there is potential for loss of evidence as a priority. The CPIU response is often not consistent with Child Safety Services allocated priority.
41. For those matters which do not reach the threshold for intervention advice of available support services is provided to the notifier or in some cases the information is referred to a non-Government organisation (NGO), most likely Act for Kids and the matter is closed. Until recently, once referred and the matter is closed no follow up was conducted to

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establish if a family engaged with the NGO. Due to a review of a local matter new procedures have been established whereby the NGO advises the RIS if a family has not engaged. The matter is then re-assessed by Child Safety Services.

42. Despite information sharing provisions within the *Child Protection Act 1999*, it has been determined by Child Safety Services that the provisions do not extend to disclosing notifiers to police, except in specific limited circumstances. Investigations of suspected criminal offences against children can be onerous and the inability to test the veracity of the notifier can lead to the investigation of matters reported maliciously.
43. Consultation takes place between representatives from Child Safety Services and the CPIU to determine if a joint response is practicable. If not practicable each service responds independently and share information at the conclusion of the investigation.
44. The bulk of joint responses to intra-familial child protection investigations take place in the greater Cairns area where both Child Safety Services and CPIU resources are greatest. Coordination of joint responses in geographically isolated areas is challenging and infrequent. Periodically, planned joint investigative responses to specific geographic areas are conducted when resources are able to be coordinated.
45. During the years I have been investigating Child Protection the prevalence of joint investigations has significantly reduced. I believe that the reduction in joint investigations is due to a number of factors including the proliferation of Child Safety Service Centres, the significant increase in core responsibilities of CPIU's which affects resourcing, the considerable increase in reports of suspected child abuse – mainly via mandatory reporting, increased reporting/recording processes, reduced capacity of Child Safety Services, the intake system through RIS affecting quality and timeliness of notifications and a difference in investigative response times.
46. The joint investigation of child protection matters results in improved information sharing and a more robust and timely assessment of children at risk. Benefits include the reduced contact with a child and family during the investigation, addressing statutory responsibilities and the protective needs of children, and cross pollination of skills between police child protection investigators and Child Safety Officers.



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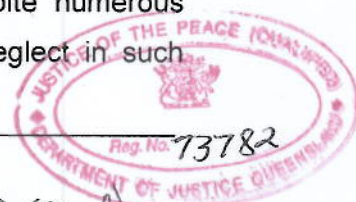
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47. In my early experience in Child Protection Investigations within the Cairns District almost all child protection investigations were conducted collaboratively. At that time there was one Child Safety Service Centre responsible for Child Protection intervention across the entire District. Child Safety Officers from that era learned interviewing and investigative practices from police and police investigators learned to assess protective needs of children and statutory responsibilities for Child Protection under the relevant Act. A considerable number of the Child Safety Officers from that era have continued their career in Child Safety Services and hold senior management positions. Each of the officers contends that the experience gained whilst conducting joint investigations with police assisted their professional development. In my experience the skills learned from the Child Safety Officers has likewise enhanced my professional development.
48. Though there has been a change in the qualifications required to become a Child Safety Officer, the majority of officers still have a social work or psychology qualification. Child Safety Service Centres within the Cairns area have a team allocated for investigation and assessment of child protection notifications. Investigation and assessment teams work collaboratively with CPIU investigators to jointly investigate reports of children at risk of harm. Child Safety Officers receive very limited, if any, training in investigative practices.
49. Management at Child Safety Services have identified that there is a significant disparity in the percentages of substantiated cases of harm across the various Child Safety Service Centres within the Region. Child Safety Services are commencing a new initiative with the intention to improve the collaborative response to child protection investigations and to improve consistency of assessment. An intake and assessment (I & A) unit is due to commence from October 2012. The unit will be based in an office adjacent to the Cairns Police Station. The unit will be responsible for the investigation of all notifications across the Region, apart from the Atherton Tablelands. It is expected that planned collaborative responses will be prioritised in consultation with the Cairns District CPIU. Having a centralised investigative response is also expected to provide equity in the caseload maintained by each Child Safety Officer. It is further expected that competing priorities will be considered when determining a response to notifications in both the greater Cairns area and remote communities in Cape York and the Torres Strait.
50. The most significant challenge within the Cairns District is the identification and investigation of child abuse in remote or isolated communities. Despite numerous studies and reports which report the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in such

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communities the reports received are well below the anecdotal information known. Child Protection advocates such as Dr. Lara Wieland and Dr. Richard Heazlewood have attempted to highlight the issue in various public forums. Members of the Cairns CPIU acknowledged that there were various barriers to reporting child abuse and neglect, particularly in small communities. Significant barriers included a lack of understanding of interventions and investigation of child abuse, possibility of family breakdown and the symptoms of trauma, language and cultural differences, poor response from adults and professionals, and a lack of trust or prior negative experience with Government agencies such as police or Child Safety Services. Other identified barriers to reporting of child abuse and neglect was that professionals providing government services within the communities were unsure of the reporting procedure or process, inability to effectively identify risk factors, lack of training in responding to identified child abuse, a lack of confidence in the investigative process and a fear of reprisal from community members. Reporting issues are made more complicated by isolation from support services, geographic isolation, and linguistic and cultural disadvantage.

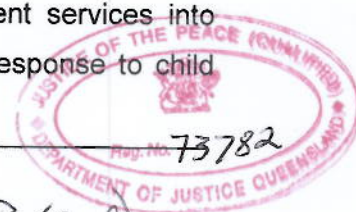
51. A joint State and Federally funded project called Be Strong Be Heard was developed within the Cairns CPIU to improve individual and community confidence and the capacity to report, to build relationships between police, communities and other professionals, and to identify and report child abuse so that the reports were a closer indication of the real situation.
52. Members of the Cairns District CPIU regularly attend remote communities and conduct presentations and information sessions to professionals including police, child safety services, health services and education employees. The information sessions provided information on the identification of child abuse, reporting processes and the investigative process. CPIU members also present to children, community groups and others within the community.
53. During the period the CPIU were able to maintain their commitment to the program there was a statistically significant increase in reported child abuse from remote communities. Unfortunately due to resourcing issues the Cairns District CPIU were not able to maintain their capacity to continue the program.
54. Continual rotation of police, health professionals and other government services into remote communities causes some difficulty in providing a consistent response to child

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protection. General uniform police have a limited knowledge of Child Protection Legislation and Investigation and also have little experience in identifying and investigating offences against children. Child Protection matters are often reported incorrectly or overlooked during investigation of other matters such as Domestic Violence.

55. I have noticed a substantial decline in reports of child abuse and neglect from remote communities. Though the cessation of the "Be Strong Be Heard" project may have impacted on the reporting of abuse additional factors such as the commencement of the Regional Intake Service may have also contributed to the reduction in reports. A dearth of reports most likely restricts the opportunity to intervene early to prevent more complex Child Protection issues developing.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the *Oaths Act 1867*.

Signed.....

Glenn William John Horan

Declared before me at Cairns this 5th day of September 2012.

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