



**Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Community Services
Minister for Disability Services and Reform**

EMAIL RCVD PAEC 18/07/2013

Hon Mary Wooldridge MP

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Mr David Morris MP
Chair
Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Mr Morris

**2013-14 BUDGET ESTIMATES FURTHER INFORMATION – COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
DISABILITY SERVICES AND REFORM**

Thank you for your letter seeking further information in regard to the questions taken on notice at the 2013-14 Budget estimates for Community Services and Disability Services and Reform.

Please find enclosed my response. I trust the information provided addresses the Committee's needs.

Should you or your staff require any further information, please contact Mr James MacIsaac, Director, Strategic Planning on 9096 1093.

Yours sincerely

**Hon Mary Wooldridge MP
Minister for Community Services
Minister for Disability Services and Reform**

Encl.

**ATTACHMENT: QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AND
FURTHER INFORMATION AGREED TO
BE SUPPLIED AT THE HEARINGS**

COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO

1. Please advise the number of unfilled staff positions for each region.

(Page 10 of the Community Services portfolio transcript)

DHS response:

The new DHS structure commenced in 2012, replacing regions with local area service delivery, overseen by 17 areas arranged by four divisions. Data are no longer available by the old regions.

The Victorian Government has made significant investments in child protection, totalling \$650 million over the past three Budgets.

As part of this investment, the total number of child protection worker positions funded by government has grown significantly in recent years:

- June 2010: 1177.5 FTE
- June 2013: 1289.5 FTE

The Coalition Government has also implemented a new child protection operating model, which has increased case carrying capacity across the senior grades. The operating model has also changed the classification structures, so that grades CPP3 and CPP4 are now the key case-carrying grades.

At the end of June 2013, there were approximately 59.1 FTE vacant CPP3 and CPP4 positions across the state. Many positions had acting arrangements in place. These staff numbers vary over time with recruitment and turnover.

The Department is currently actively recruiting to Child Protection practitioner positions.

2. Please advise the contribution the Community Services portfolio makes to the savings targets for 2013-14 as set out in the Department's response to Question 12 of the Committee's 2013-14 Budget Estimates Questionnaire.

(Page 16 of the Community Services portfolio transcript)

DHS response:

Please see the table from the PAEC Questionnaire. A nominal approach would see the Community Services contribution at approximately three quarters of the total, but as noted in evidence to the committee, the department is now working across all portfolio areas in the new structure and any such allocation by portfolio would be nominal at best.

DISABILITY SERVICES AND REFORM PORTFOLIO

3. Regarding the \$7.9 million investment for new supported accommodation for the residents of Sandhurst, please advise:
 - a. how it aligns with the Government's reform agenda; and
 - b. how it will improve the lives of people with a disability living in Sandhurst.

(Page 6 of the Disability Services portfolio transcript)

DHS Response:

In the 2013-14 state budget the Victorian Government allocated \$7.9 million over three years to enable the closure of Sandhurst Residential Services (Sandhurst).

Rationale for the closure

The current service model is outmoded. The closure of Sandhurst is consistent with the Victorian Government's commitment to provide people with a disability with modern supported accommodation options that support them to live as independently as possible, exercise choice and participate in the community.

New, modern homes with improved support arrangements will be developed in the Bendigo community for the 29 residents of Sandhurst. The residents themselves and their families and carers will participate in the design of the new services. As a result of the change, many residents will also be eligible for increased day services.

Next steps

Planning with residents and their families will determine the location of the new services, what they will be like, and who will share accommodation. It is expected that most new services will be in Bendigo, but this will depend on people's preferences.

We will start working with residents, their families and Sandhurst staff from July 2013 to plan and design the new services. It is expected that it will take approximately three years for the new services to be completed. During this time residents living at Sandhurst will continue to receive the care and support they need.

We will also work closely with residents, their families and Sandhurst staff to manage the logistics of moving into the new homes when they are ready.

The new accommodation will be managed by local community service providers.

Once planning with residents has been undertaken, and we understand their needs and preferences, the new service provider(s) will be chosen through a competitive process. We will work with the provider(s) to design and develop the new homes.

The government is committed to enhancing communities' capacity to support people with a disability and supporting this through the development of new services in the community sector.

The Victorian Government will continue to communicate with the residents of Sandhurst, their families and carers as work to progress the plan for Sandhurst continues.

New services will progressively be put in place concluding in June 2016.