



Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women  
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Our reference: CSYW 02893-2020

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17/06/2020

Mr Neil Laurie  
Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to e-petition 3334-20 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 19 May 2020 regarding the location of a home rented by Integrated Family and Youth Services (IFYS) with the intention of providing a home environment and support to children and youth in need.

I acknowledge the concerns raised by the petitioners and the impact they feel this home may have on them and the wider community.

The *Child Protection Act 1999* (the Act) provides for intervention to children in need of protection. A child is in need of protection if they have suffered, are suffering, or are at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm and do not have a parent able and willing to protect them from the harm. The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW) must take action considered necessary when it is reasonably suspected a child may be in need of protection.

When intervention with a child or young person and their family involves placing the child or young person away from their parents' care, DCSYW works diligently to ensure the environment where a child is placed meets the immediate safety needs of the child. DCSYW make sure the living conditions are suitable for their individual circumstances by providing a stable home in which they are well supported. These homes are provided by foster carers, kinship carers and residential care providers.

Since 2015, the number of children and young people requiring care away from their parents has increased by approximately 15 per cent (LA6, Children Living Away From Home, by Region [www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/our-performance/ongoing-intervention-phase/living-away-home](http://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/our-performance/ongoing-intervention-phase/living-away-home)). As these young people are some of the most vulnerable children in Queensland, often having experienced significant and complex traumas in their young lives, a wide variety of placement options is needed to ensure individualised planning can take place.

Unlike Supervised Community Accommodation or a 'bail house', residential care is not an alternative to youth detention and referrals are made for children and young people who are subject to child safety intervention only. Using a range of trauma intervention and case management strategies, this placement option strives to support young people and provide them with a place to call home.

Residential care is a child-centric system with a clear focus on creating nurturing and healing care for traumatised young people. It provides access to therapeutic supports delivered by skilled, trained and supportive care staff and ensures appropriate levels of supervision and guidance for the young people who live there. Evidence provides that for children and young people in care who have painful histories of trauma and attachment disruption, homes such as these can play a significant part in providing a caring and healing pathway that can make a lasting difference.

Residential care services spend significant time and effort working together with DCSYW and many other support services to address worries and concerns about the behaviour of young people who live in residential care. This means engaging in ongoing community consultation, face-to-face meetings with neighbours, organising and participating in community events, enlisting community mentors, engaging with media and maintaining strong connections within the areas in which they are situated.

IFYS is an organisation experienced in creating and providing homes for children in need, ensuring they feel safe and nurtured within their community. They understand and appreciate the importance of being well connected to the community, and are committed to having and maintaining consistent positive interactions with neighbours.

In respect of the home at Anamari Court, Bushland Beach, IFYS has advised a community engagement strategy is already in place to manage and address concerns raised by neighbours. This strategy includes meeting and talking with neighbours, providing information and guidance around the IFYS program and discussing the impact quality care and a real home can have in the life of a child or young person.

To further assist, IFYS Chief Executive Officer has agreed to remain in close contact with Mr Nick Dametto MP, Member for Hinchinbrook, and will provide Mr Dametto with regular updates in respect of the home and concerns raised upon request (noting confidentiality limitations imposed by the Act).

In addition to the provisions described above, DCSYW will work closely with IFYS to ensure stability and certainty in the neighbourhood. To achieve this, DCYSW has committed to the following:-

- Ensuring young people are not placed in the home on a transient or short term basis;
- Ensuring young people placed at the home are from locals;
- Regularly reviewing operations, in collaboration with IFYS, to identify changes that may be required;
- Supporting IFYS to remain engaged with residents in the nearby streets;
- Assisting IFYS to implement an easy access communication system for neighbours to ask questions, provide feedback and receive prompt responses, and resolve problems;
- Continuing to assess and monitor the location of the home for suitability.

Senior management from IFYS have made themselves available for discussion on all issues and welcome ideas and feedback from neighbours. Contact with IFYS may be made directly to Mr DeeJay Wagner, Executive Manager, IFYS on 0434 693 078.

This petition response will also be provided to local residents to help ensure they are aware of the Government's response to issues made, and commitments given.

I trust the information provided here will be of assistance to the petitioners. If you require any further information in relation to this matter, please contact Ms Arna Brosnan, Regional Executive Director, Northern Queensland Region, Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women on 4255 7020.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Di Farmer", with a large, stylized circular flourish on the left side.

**Di Farmer MP**  
**Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and**  
**Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence**