

CHILD PROTECTION — PRIORITY 1 CASES

**414. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Child Protection:**

I refer to the minister's response to question without notice 330, which stated that all 17 cases marked as priority 1 for March were commenced within 24 hours.

- (1) Would a caseworker opening a priority 1 file to review the contents without taking direct action to investigate the concern qualify as commencement?
- (2) If no to (1), what qualifies as commencement?
- (3) Who is responsible for investigating priority 1 cases?
- (4) What oversight regime is specifically in place for cases marked as priority 1?
- (5) Further to (4), who undertakes this oversight?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The primary focus of child protection workers when conducting an investigation is the immediate safety of the child.

- (1)–(2) The actions taken within the first 24 hours for priority 1 matters could include immediate safety planning, notifying the parents, and sighting or interviewing the child. Professional judgement is used in relation to how this occurs so as not to increase the risks to the child. Practice guidelines are also used to determine whether a child safety investigation requires a priority 1 or priority 2 response.
- (3) The child safety team at the relevant district office is responsible for investigating priority 1 cases. Some initial action may be commenced by the crisis care unit if the interaction occurs over a weekend.
- (4)–(5) The team leader overseeing the child safety team is responsible for allocating and ensuring that the priority 1 matter is investigated. These are flagged to the team leader through the Assist client system.