



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department for **Child Protection**

TOT Sub 4

Your ref:  
Our ref:  
Enquiries: 9489 3136



Dr David Worth  
Principal Research Officer  
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee  
Parliament House  
**PERTH WA 6000**

Dear Dr Worth

I write in response to the letter of 12 September 2011 from Mr O'Gorman, Chair of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee.

The Department for Child Protection is pleased to provide input into the **"Inquiry into the recognition and adequacy of the responses by State Government agencies to experience of trauma by workers and volunteers arising from disasters"**.

Accordingly I provide the following information in response.

**Terms of reference:**

- *whether existing agency responses adequately address the trauma experienced by staff and volunteers during and after declared natural disasters which have occurred since 2001;*
- *the barriers to those suffering trauma from accessing available assistance services;*
- *the measures to mitigate any health impacts from trauma to those State Government workers and volunteers who responded to a declared disaster.*

DCP considers it has developed adequate responses to address trauma experienced. Measures to address this are outlined below in response to the specific questions.

**Specific Questions**

**i) What pre-planning and training activities do you undertake with your staff and volunteers to deal with trauma before a disaster?**

Department for Child Protection (DCP) Staff receive induction into the department which includes areas of OH&S and information on Employee

Assistance Programs (EAP). The EAP is provided by DCP through three independent providers and is available to any DCP staff and family members.

The DCP Emergency Services Unit coordinates DCP's Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery activities to disasters. DCP District Emergency Services Officers (DESO's) received additional training and information in responses to disasters and trauma.

DCP Early Response Team (ERT) members are provided additional training and information regarding dealing with trauma (including the EAP), dealing with people affected by trauma, and services available for themselves and those community members affected by trauma. At least one Psychologist per ERT is available on a 24 hour, 7 day a week roster to respond to disasters with ERT members and DCP partner agencies.

Internal information is available on the DCP Intranet, brochures, information cards.

Externally, information regarding services is available on the DCP website under emergency services, including the brochure 'Dealing with the effects of a traumatic event'.

Volunteer partner agencies engaged by DCP in responding to disasters are provided joint information and training through the State Welfare Emergency Management Committee (SWEC), and have access to the EAP extended specifically for our partner agency volunteers who have assisted in responding to disasters (SWEC EAP). Information regarding these services is disseminated through the SWEC members.

**ii) What annual budget you spend on these pre-event activities;**

There is no current permanent budget allocation for this however pre event activities are provided as required. The expenditure in this area has not been calculated.

**iii) What programs do you undertake during a disaster to assist your staff and volunteers deal with trauma;**

As per i).

Additionally services are promoted through ongoing interaction between DCP Local Welfare Coordinators and onsite DCP/Volunteers. Local Welfare Coordinators have access to DESO and ERT members (including the ERT psychologist) to monitor the welfare of both staff and volunteers. Staff and Volunteers have access to EAP services (including via phone) if required.

**iv) What post activities do you undertake with your staff and volunteers to deal with trauma arising from a disaster; and**

As per Q1 and ii which is ongoing through the Recovery stage of a disaster.

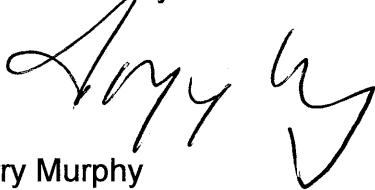
In significant events a post event debrief is conducted. Additionally, a Post Event Report is required to be submitted by DCP DESO's and/or Local Welfare Coordinator to the Manager Emergency Services Unit. Member agencies of SWEC also provide individual reports to SWEC which may lead to further debriefing meetings and follow up services being provided where identified being required by the Manager Emergency Services.

**v) What annual budget you spend on these post event activities.**

There is no current permanent budget allocation for this, however, post event activities are provided as required. The expenditure in this area has not been calculated.

Should you require further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Murphy', written in a cursive style.

Terry Murphy  
DIRECTOR GENERAL

5 October 2011