



commission for
children and young people
and child guardian

31 Mar 2008

Media Release

Bribie child death report calls for better cross-agency links

A report into cross-agency responsibilities relating to a child's rape and murder at Bribie Island on New Year's Eve - allegedly by her father - has been delivered to Premier, Anna Bligh.

It recommends better assessment and communication of foreseeable risks to children where parents have mental health issues.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People today delivered her final report into the 10-year-old girl's death, amid reports it occurred 10 days after her father's release from being held on an involuntary treatment order for mental illness.

The Commission's investigation examined the legal and policy framework which guided the actions of Queensland Health, the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Child Safety in relation to the family's case.

Commissioner Elizabeth Fraser said there is no current framework in Queensland for establishing multi-agency responses which specifically address the safety and wellbeing of children of parents with mental health issues.

"This is particularly true if a parent is the main focus of a service," Ms Fraser said.

The Commissioner noted there are broad statutory and policy requirements in place for reporting harm or likely harm to a child, but they do not require proactive assessments of the risks to children from parents with mental health issues.

The report makes a number of recommendations for improving cross-agency services to children of parents with mental health issues, including:

- a multi-agency working party to develop a framework which promotes the safety and wellbeing of children of parents with mental health issues
- the immediate development of a multi-agency action plan to establish interim education and policy measures to address the safety and wellbeing of children of parents with mental health issues
- a review of the *Health Services Act 1991* to see if a specific statutory exception should apply to the confidentiality of a person's health information where the best interests of a child is at stake, and
- Queensland Health to promote the need to meet responsibilities to children of parents with a mental illness, in line with recognised national standards.