

CHILD PROTECTION — CHILD DEATHS

758. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the deaths of children in the care of the Department of Communities or children known to the department, and I ask:

- (a) For each of the children who died and who were known to the department, how many were on the monitored list in the following periods:
  - (i) 2017–2018;
  - (ii) 2018–2019;
  - (iii) 2019–2020;
  - (iv) 2020–2021;
  - (v) 2021–2022; and
  - (vi) July 2022 to 30 April 2023; and
- (b) For each of the children who died and who were known to the department in the following periods, were any of the children waiting on finalisation of a safety and wellbeing assessment:
  - (i) 2017–2018;
  - (ii) 2018–2019;
  - (iii) 2019–2020;
  - (iv) 2020–2021;
  - (v) 2021–2022; and
  - (vi) July 2022 to 30 April 2023?

**Ms S.E. Winton replied:**

The Department of Communities (Communities) advises:

- (a)–(b) The safety and wellbeing of children is of paramount concern, and Communities will always respond to the immediate safety of the child where concerns are received.

Information about investigable child deaths is contained on individual client files, with aggregated data not available, as such Communities would need to conduct a manual search of individual personal case files which would take significant time and effort and is not considered reasonable.

Investigable deaths are defined in the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971* and occur when a child dies and the following circumstances exist:

- (a) the 2 years before the date of the child’s death, the CEO had received information that raised concerns about the wellbeing of the child or a child relative of the child;
- (b) the 2 years before the date of the child’s death, the CEO, under section 32(1) of the CCS Act, had determined that action should be taken to safeguard or promote the wellbeing of the child or a child relative of the child;
- (c) in the 2 years before the date of the child’s death, any of the actions listed in section 32(1) of the CCS Act was done in respect of the child or a child relative of the child;
- (d) protection proceedings are pending in respect of the child or a child relative of the child;
- (e) the child or a child relative of the child is in the CEO’s care.