

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS — NEGATIVE NOTICES

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

I refer to the Minister’s media statement “Landmark changes to strengthen working with children law” on 17 August, 2022, and I ask:

- (a) how many negative notices have been issued as a direct result of the expanded number of criminal offences that automatically trigger a negative notice;
- (b) how many entry warrants to investigate suspected offences under the Act have been executed;
- (c) how many working with children check applications were received in 2022–2023; and
- (d) how many employees, volunteers, or organisations who have breached their obligations under the *Working with Children Act* have been prosecuted?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

(a)–(d) The Department of Communities advises:

Amendments to the Western Australian (WA) Working with Children (WWC) legislation, now known as the *Working with Children (Screening) Act 2004*, came into effect on 1 July 2023. These changes make it harder for people who have committed certain offences, or engaged in certain conduct, to obtain a Working with Children Card.

Between 1 July 2023 and 23 October 2023, eight negative notices were issued. Investigations officers determine the investigative strategies of an investigation and the most appropriate and effective means of obtaining information. An entry warrant is not necessary for investigations undertaken by the Working with Children Screening Unit. There were 157,048 applications in 2022–23. Since 2008, 32 matters have been prosecuted before the courts.