

CHILD PROTECTION — REGISTERED CARERS

**829. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Child Protection:**

I refer to question without notice 852 asked in October 2021 by Hon Nick Goiran and an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 31 August 2022 relating to the Victorian state government using hotels and motels to house vulnerable children, known as “contingency placements”.

- (1) As at 20 September, how many Western Australian children in state care currently reside in —
  - (a) hotels or motels;
  - (b) serviced apartments; and
  - (c) state government-owned properties?
- (2) Are these children supervised by departmental staff; and, if yes, is this 24/7 supervision?
- (3) What is the longest continuous amount of time that a child in state care has been kept in such accommodation?
- (4) Is the minister aware of any instance in which a worker who is not a registered carer has been left with no other option but to take a child home or to look after them in a hotel or in similar accommodation?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

On behalf of the Leader of the House, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer is provided on behalf of the Minister for Child Protection.

- (1)–(3) The accommodation referred to in the question is considered emergency accommodation arrangements, not care arrangements by the Department of Communities. Details on the matters that lead to such emergency accommodation arrangements are recorded in individual case notes on each case file; therefore, the number of children in these arrangements and the details of these arrangements are not readily available from the Department of Communities client information system. There are rare occasions when children in the chief executive officer’s care and their carers may require emergency accommodation at a hotel or other type of short-term accommodation for reasons including when children and their carers need to travel to a location for medical treatment or to maintain connection with family; property damage at the carer’s home; or another unforeseen crisis.

Supervision is dependent on the type of emergency accommodation arrangement and may be provided by a family carer, carer or Department of Communities worker. When a child is brought into the CEO’s care in an urgent situation, particularly after hours, a hotel or other short-stay accommodation may be used to enable the child to remain with a suitable family member or carer in a safe environment until stable accommodation is arranged.
- (4) All child protection workers who take children home are screened to work with vulnerable children via the Department of Communities screening processes and in addition to holding a working with children check.