

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE
COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

First Report — “Annual Report 2016–17” — Tabling

HON Dr SALLY TALBOT (South West) [10.09 am]: I am directed to present the first report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People entitled “Annual Report 2016–17”.

[See paper 831.]

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: The Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People is a parliamentary oversight committee, the task of which is to monitor, review and report on the exercise of the Commissioner for Children and Young People’s functions. This report reflects the committee’s activities from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, incorporating the joint standing committee from both the thirty-ninth and fortieth Parliaments. As a member who served on both committees, I would like to take this moment to thank the members of the previous committee for their advocacy during the thirty-ninth Parliament for children and young people in this state. In particular, I would like to credit their work during the inquiry into responses to child abuse and subsequent report entitled “Everybody’s Business: An examination into how the Commissioner for Children and Young People can enhance WA’s response to child abuse”.

The important issues raised through the committee’s detailed scrutiny of child abuse matters in this state continue to have lasting impacts. Emerging developments in the way agencies and organisations respond to child abuse, such as trauma-informed practice, were revealed during the inquiry process, and it is pleasing to note that several agencies in WA have indicated a commitment to pursue these practices. The children’s commissioner provided his support for the committee’s findings, and has informed the current committee that his work is still guided by them. I also expect these recommendations to be re-examined when the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is published in December. In my view, the lasting impacts of the inquiry highlight the important role the committee performs in improving the outcomes for children and young people in Western Australia, and I am very pleased to be able to continue this work into the fortieth Parliament in my role as committee Chair.

During this reporting period, the current committee had its inaugural meeting, at which members committed to informing themselves about the issues impacting children and young people in this state. This commitment will enable the committee to continue to assess the work of the commissioner and to have regard for the best interests of children and young people in WA—two of the very important tasks assigned to this committee within its statutory provisions.

I conclude by thanking current members for their interest and dedication, and I look forward to working with them over the term of this Parliament. I would also like to thank the committee’s principal research officer, Renee Gould, for her dedication to the committee’s work over this reporting period and for her ongoing facilitation of the committee’s operations. I commend this report to the house.