

COMMUNITY SERVICES — GRANDPARENTS REARING GRANDCHILDREN

1192. Hon Tjorn Sibma to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Community Services:
- (1) How many grandparents are presently rearing grandchildren in Western Australia in either formal or informal arrangements?
 - (2) Regarding both formal custodial arrangements and informal arrangements, how many grandparents are rearing:
 - (a) one child;
 - (b) two children;
 - (c) three children; and
 - (d) four or more children?
 - (3) What financial support is provided by the State Government to those grandparents rearing grandchildren in formal custodial arrangements?
 - (4) What financial support is provided by the State Government to those grandparents rearing grandchildren in informal arrangements?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

- (1) The Department of Communities does not systematically capture the relationship of the carer to the children in care therefore the number of grandparents rearing grandchildren in a formal arrangement is not available.

The Department of Communities is not usually involved in situations where families make their own family care arrangements unless there is a concern for a child's safety and wellbeing. Therefore, Communities is not able to provide data in relation to such informal arrangements.

- (2) As per (1) above, the Department of Communities does not record this data in its client information system. The Department of Communities provides funding to Wanslea Family Services Incorporated for the Grandcarer Support Scheme and the Grandcare service. These services provide support to grandcarer families as follows:

For the Grandcarer Support Scheme in 2017–18:

318 caring for one child;
283 caring for two children;
99 caring for three children; and
78 caring for four or more children.

For the Grandcare service:

214 caring for one child;
110 caring for two children;
57 caring for three children; and
32 caring for four or more children.

- (3) If approved as a family carer (a formal arrangement) grandparents receive a fortnightly subsidy (the same allowance as for foster carers) to cover the ongoing costs of looking after the child. Additional financial support is provided where children have special needs.
- (4) Communities can provide an Establishment Payment of \$1000 per child that may be paid to grandparents or other relatives. This money is only paid where Communities has been involved with a family due to concerns for a child's wellbeing but sufficient safety has been established for the child to reside with relatives. In these circumstances, a safety and wellbeing assessment has been undertaken and a safety plan has been developed for the child to reside with their relatives.

The Grandcarer Support Scheme provides financial assistance to grandcarers who have informal, full-time care of a grandchild or grandchildren. The annual payment is \$400 per year for the first child in their care, and \$250 for other children in their care. In 2017–18 to date, 778 grandcarers have received this payment.

