

Division 8: Commissioner for Children and Young People, \$3 115 000 —

Ms A.E. Kent, Chair.

Mr J.R. Quigley, Attorney General.

Ms J. McGowan-Jones, Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Ms N. Hall, Director, Policy, Monitoring and Research.

Mr J. Lee, Principal Policy Adviser.

Mr D. Emerson, Senior Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: Good morning. The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow for as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with these details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by close of business Friday, 3 June 2022. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system.

I call the Leader of the Opposition.

[10.40 am]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am on page 109, budget paper No 2, volume 1, and point 2.5 wherein it refers to the commissioner's focus, which is listed here as —

continued engagement and consultation with children and young people through online platforms and in person visits across Western Australia

I understand that this refers to engagement. Can the Attorney General tell me whether the commissioner has a role in interacting with young people in custody at Banksia Hill Detention Centre?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I have an answer, but I would like to defer to the commissioner herself to answer that.

Ms J. McGowan-Jones: Thank you, Attorney. Yes, we do engage with the young people at Banksia Hill. I have visited twice since I commenced in January, and I am meeting with the newly established youth leadership group at Banksia Hill again tomorrow. I am also doing a joint visit to Banksia Hill with the National Children's Commissioner in June, and I meet regularly with the Deputy Commissioner, Women and Young People.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Commissioner, when you go to the facilities, do you engage with the young people, or do you just engage with the staff and hierarchy that manage Banksia Hill?

The CHAIR: Attorney General.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Through the Attorney General.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Obviously, I defer again to the commissioner, because it is a direct question to her.

Ms J. McGowan-Jones: I do engage directly with the children and young people on each visit. That has included direct engagement with young people in the intensive support unit, and that is one to one. If the young person agrees, I will often enter their cell in the ISU and we have a confidential discussion.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: As a result of those visits, how is that then reflected in the work that the commissioner does? What is the expectation from the Attorney General, as the government, in terms of the work that the commission is doing in reflecting those discussions? Is there a formal report? Is it reported back to the Attorney General directly via meetings? How is that information used or is it an oversight role?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Obviously, I defer to commissioner again.

Ms J. McGowan-Jones: Although we do not have a formal oversight role in terms of corrections—that sits with the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services—we do report back through to the director general of the Department of Justice and to the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services with whom we have collaborated on a number of visits as well. When we believe it might be necessary, we would escalate issues through to the Attorney General and to the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 109 and paragraph 2.1, which is in relation to the implementation of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Of the 289 recommendations that the WA government accepted in June 2018, how many have been implemented?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I will wait for the commissioner, if I may. Let us take a moment to dig up the actual numbers for the member.

Ms J. McGowan-Jones: Although this is not our area of responsibility, the government has updated us that its progress on meeting the recommendations of the report has been significant. We have questioned the completeness of this progress—for example, on matters connected to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle and how complete that is when it is really an ongoing piece of work. The matter of oversight does not sit with my office at this point, so we cannot give the member the full answer. That question would be better addressed to the Department of Communities.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: In relation to the question that the member for Roe just asked, could the Attorney General elaborate a little on point 2.1, on page 109, around the formal role that the commission and the commissioner play in the establishment of those oversight mechanisms?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I will defer to the commissioner.

Ms J. McGowan-Jones: Thank you, Attorney. As I understand it, the matter for oversight is currently sitting with cabinet, and the independent oversight mechanisms have been through a range of mechanisms across government, led primarily by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Communities on how this may go forward. At this point, a decision, as I understand it, has not yet been formally made or announced on who will take on the role of oversight. The legislation enables the oversight to be done through our office.

The appropriation was recommended.