

CHILDREN IN CARE — SECURE CARE PLACEMENT

588. Hon ALISON XAMON to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the report on the front page of *The West Australian* today of a 10-year-old child in the care of the chief executive officer of the Department of Communities.

- (1) How long has the child been in care?
- (2) Is it usual for a 10-year-old to be placed in a hostel rather than with a foster family?
- (3) What accommodation options had been explored for this child?
- (4) Why was the child not placed in secure care?
- (5) What therapeutic behavioural support has been provided to the child and/or his carers?
- (6) If none to (5), why?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(6) I do not comment on individual cases as this risks the identification of individuals. In alignment with the Department of Communities' placement principles, Communities prioritises the placement of children with their extended family or a similar home environment such as foster care before considering a residential care facility. Residential care facilities are for children with very complex, high-care and trauma needs. In situations in which a child is in care, Communities assesses potential family and carer placements. When a young person has complex and high-care needs, carers will require specialised skills and any potential placement will take time to locate, assess and support prior to commencement. For the chief executive officer to place a child in a secure care facility, the legislative threshold for a secure care arrangement under section 88C of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 must be met. Communities offers psychological supports as well as referrals to external supports to address care needs.