

CHILDREN IN CARE — WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Question without Notice 72 — Answer

HON JACKIE JARVIS (South West — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [5.04 pm]: Hon Nick Goiran asked question without notice 72 on the last sitting day on 29 February to which the minister advised answers to parts (3) and (4) were not available on the day. I would like to provide the honourable member with an answer to parts (3) and (4) and seek leave to have them incorporated into *Hansard*.

[Leave denied.]

Hon JACKIE JARVIS: The following response has been provided by the Minister for Child Protection.

- (3)–(4) In 2023, a total of 66 children in the care of the CEO were recorded as missing. From 1 January to 31 May 2023, 35 children were missing on 55 occasions. From 1 June to 31 December 2023, 36 children were missing on 53 occasions. From 1 June 2023, the Department of Communities and the WA Police Force aligned nomenclature regarding missing children in a memorandum of understanding. The data is not comparable over the 2023 calendar year due to changes in the terminology and definitions. Five children appear in both datasets, prior and post the MOU. Since the MOU was implemented on 1 June 2023, Communities referred a child to WA Police Force as a missing person on 47 out of the 53 occasions. Referrals to the WA Police Force were not completed on six occasions due to varying circumstances; for example, when the carer had already reported the child missing to the WA Police Force.