

CHILD PROTECTION — INTERNAL REPORT

160. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the article in *The West Australian* entitled “Department of Communities in crisis: Children in care being shuffled between different case workers”, which reported on —

... a Department of Communities internal report “Profile and Pathways of Children Who Enter Care” which tracked ... 327 children in care from 2019 to 2021.

- (1) Is the minister aware that this report found that the majority of those children had been on the monitored list?
- (2) Is the minister aware that this report found that children were frequently shifted between caseworkers?
- (3) Is the minister aware that this report found that homelessness was a contributing factor for 37 per cent of Indigenous children entering the system?
- (4) Will the minister table the report?
- (5) If no to (4), why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)–(5) The Department of Communities continues to utilise operational data to provide analytics for opportunities to continue to improve its services to vulnerable young people and families. This is an internal report, part of ongoing service improvement activities and is not part of routine briefings to the minister or Parliament; I have not been briefed previously on this report.

These types of reports contain sensitive, often individualised information that is not designed for public release. Interpretation is undertaken by expert practitioners to look for operational changes and practice improvements.

Homelessness on its own is not a sufficient reason to bring a child into care, but it may be accompanied by other forms of abuse and/or neglect. Communities acts in accordance with the Children and Community Services Act 2004 and will complete child safety investigations to assess concerns about the likelihood of abuse and/or neglect.

When a family with children presents as homeless, Communities will assess their circumstance and provide all available assistance to mitigate any risk of significant harm to the children if assistance were not provided.