

CHILDREN IN CARE — WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

1238. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the minister representing the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the minister's answer on 13 September 2023 to my question without notice 1042.

- (1) Have all four children recorded in the placement type “unaccounted for—not in contact” been found?
- (2) Were any of these children reported to the Western Australia Police Force as a missing person?
- (3) For how many days was the whereabouts of each child unknown?
- (4) How many children who are in the care of the CEO have their whereabouts currently recorded as —
 - (a) unaccounted for—in contact;
 - (b) unaccounted for—not in contact; and
 - (c) missing?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide the following answer on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture and Food who represents the Minister for Child Protection.

The Department of Communities advises the following.

- (1) Yes, all four were located.
- (2) Yes, one child.
- (3) The number of days the whereabouts of each child was unknown was: two days; three days; 10 days before further absconding, currently recorded as unaccounted for—not in contact; and five days before further absconding, currently recorded as missing.
- (4) Children and young people may move between living arrangements, which are recorded by case management in the child or young person's placement type. Many of these children are teenagers. Every child still has access to the same supports that would be made available to them if they were residing in their approved placement. Communities and the WA Police Force work to contact and locate the young person and ensure their safety. Communities and the WA Police Force have aligned nomenclature regarding missing children that includes updating the previous placement type of unknown, in contact and missing children, with the following placement types: unaccounted for—in contact; unaccounted for—not in contact; and missing. As at 10 October 2023 —
 - (a) seven children are unaccounted for—in contact;
 - (b) two children are unaccounted for—not in contact; and
 - (c) two children are missing.