

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE
COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

*Eighth Report — Report Review 2023: Examination of selected reports by the
Commissioner for Children and Young People — Tabling*

HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral) [10.08 am]: I am directed to present the eighth report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People, *Report Review 2023: Examination of selected reports by the Commissioner for Children and Young People*.

[See paper 3085.]

Hon NEIL THOMSON: This report summarises the work of the Commissioner for Children and Young People over the period June 2022 to December 2023. The committee's key functions include the monitoring of the exercise of the functions of the commissioner, as well as the examination of her annual report and other research reports.

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This report by the committee is, in part, fulfilment of that role.

The commissioner has released a broad range of reports over the relevant period. I draw members' attention to several of these, as they are important contributions to our understanding of the wellbeing of children and young people in WA. The first of these is the *Speaking out about girls' wellbeing* report. This report continues the investigation into girls' wellbeing that the commissioner's office has carried out since the first Speaking Out Survey in 2019. SOS19 revealed a disturbing gender gap, between male and female students, with female students consistently rating their wellbeing considerably lower than male students. The current report provides a set of recommendations designed to improve girls' wellbeing. These recommendations are directed to young people, families, other adults and schools. It emphasises that the wellbeing of children and young people is an issue for the whole community.

Another important research report released by the commissioner during the year was '*I just want to feel equal to others': Hearing from trans and gender diverse children and young people in WA*', which relayed the results of consultations with trans and gender-diverse children and young people. The report focuses on the experiences and perspectives of trans and gender-diverse children and young people, and identifies ways to improve their wellbeing. The commissioner's office received funding to extend the Speaking Out Survey to several groups of children and young people outside the mainstream schooling system. Two reports resulted from these extensions: *The health and wellbeing of children and young people with disability and complex needs* and *The views of home educated children and young people on their wellbeing*. Both reports provide important insights into the wellbeing of these groups of children, and I commend the commissioner and her office on their efforts to reach them.

Finally, the talking about vaping survey and report gives voice to the 3 303 participants aged from 12 to 18 years who gave their opinions on vaping. This is valuable research that I hope will inform policy as we move forward with managing the impact of vapes and vaping on the health and wellbeing of children and young people in Western Australia.

I commend the report to the house.