



**Joint Standing Committee on the
Commissioner for Children and Young People**

2012-2013 Annual Report

**Report No. 1
November 2013**

Parliament of Western Australia

Committee Members

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Deputy Chairman	Hon R.M. McSweeney, MLC Member for South West Region
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Presented by

Ms L. L. Baker, MLA (Chair)

Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly on 21 November 2013

Chair's Foreword

As Chair of the Joint Standing Committee of the Commissioner for Children and Young People of the thirty-ninth parliament, I am pleased to present the Committee's 2012 - 2013 annual report.

As the WA state election was held in March 2013, this annual report spans the work of two parliaments, the thirty eighth and thirty ninth. This report acknowledges the work of the committee of the thirty-eighth parliament and covers the first 5 weeks of the operations of the current committee.

The Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People of the thirty–eighth parliament referred the important issue of the sexualisation of children to the Commissioner. The Committee asked the Commissioner to consider the issue and make recommendations that could inform the work of the WA Parliament. The Commissioner's report has been received and is being considered by the present Joint Standing Committee for Children and Young People.

In the five weeks covered by this annual report, the JSCCCYP of the thirty-ninth parliament received a briefing from the Commissioner. This briefing updated Committee members on the work of the Commission and indicated the key areas of work to be undertaken by the Commissioner's office during 2013.

With the benefit of this knowledge and the combined experience of JSCCCYP members, the JSCCCYP has designed a program of briefings to further inform its future work program.

As a new committee, we look forward to a busy and productive year.

I would like to formally thank my fellow members for their commitment to the work of the Committee. I would also like to express the Committee's appreciation of the work performed by the Committee's secretariat, Dr Loraine Abernethie (Principal Research Officer).

MS L. L. BAKER, MLA
CHAIR

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Chapter 1

Committee Activities

Introduction

The 2012–2013 financial year encompasses two parliamentary sessions. The 38th Parliament was dissolved by the Governor on 30 January 2013. This dissolution terminated the parliament and its committees. The Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People (the Committee) of the 39th Parliament was established on 22 May 2013. This report details the activities of the Committee in the 39th Parliament, from 22 May 2013 to 30 June 2013.

During the reporting period, the Committee:

- Held four deliberative meetings; and
- Took evidence from or was briefed by 1 person.

Table 1.1: Summary of Committee activities, 22 May 2013–30 June 2013

Description	Activity
Briefings	1
Deliberative meetings	4
Witnesses appearing at briefings	1

Briefings

The Committee received a briefing from Ms Michelle Scott, Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, on 19 June 2013.

Work in Progress

During 2012-2013, the Committee continued to monitor and review the exercise of the functions of the Commissioner.

Section 64 of the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006* (the Act) requires the Minister to review the operation and effectiveness of the Act as soon as practicable after five years of operation. The Public Sector Commissioner, on behalf of the Attorney General, announced the statutory review of the Act in January 2013. The Committee has followed the progress of the review and has sought the advice of the Attorney General as to when the outcome of the review will be available. The

Committee looks forward to examining the outcome of the review when it is made public.

The Committee is currently undertaking a program of briefings with experts to inform itself on some of key contemporary issues faced by Western Australian children and youth. These issues include, among others, drug and alcohol use and trends, bullying and cyber bullying.

Work of the Previous Committee

The Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People of the 38th Parliament referred the issue of the sexualisation of children and young people to the Commissioner under section 19(l) of the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006*. The Committee referred the Commissioner to a range of documents 'insofar as they may be relevant to the sexualisation of children, for consideration, and requests that [the Commissioner] makes recommendations as to any specific actions required to be taken by the Government of Western Australia in relation to these matters in order to better secure the wellbeing of children and young people in Western Australia.'¹

The Commissioner provided a response in January 2013 to the Committee of the 38th Parliament, and subsequently agreed to make that response available to the JSCCCYP of the 39th Parliament. The current Committee is in the process of examining the Commissioner's report.

¹ Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Western Australia, *Hansard*, 25 October 2012, p. 7735.

Chapter 2

Financial Statement

Committee Expenditure

The Committee does not have its own formal budget and is funded out of the budget of the Legislative Assembly. Approval for major expenditures is required on a case-by-case basis and is entirely at the discretion of the Speaker.

Table 2.1 includes all expenditure for the financial year and therefore includes that of the former and current committee.

Table 2.1: Committee Expenditure 2012–2013

Expenditure Item	\$
Protocol	309
Printing	560
Total	\$ 869

Ms L. L. BAKER, MLA
CHAIR

Appendix One

Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People - functions and powers

On 22 May 2013, the Joint Standing Committee of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (the Committee) of the 39th Parliament was established pursuant to Section 51 of the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006* (the Act). In accordance with the Act, the Committee's functions and powers were agreed to between the Houses.

It is the function of the Joint Standing Committee to:

- (i) monitor, review and report to Parliament on the exercise of the functions of the Commissioner for Children and Young People;
- (ii) to examine Annual and other Reports of the Commissioner; and
- (iii) to consult regularly with the Commissioner.

A report of the Joint Standing Committee will be presented to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council by members of the Joint Standing Committee nominated by it for that purpose.

The Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly relating to Standing and Select Committees will be followed as far as they can be applied.