



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-2022 Supplementary Questions

Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Legal Affairs

FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND DISABILITY SERVICES

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FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Questions from the Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC (on behalf of the Opposition)

Temporary Accommodation

1. Could the Minister please provide an exact figure for the number people in Temporary Accommodation:
 - (a) at its peak in 2021
 - (b) for each month during 2021

ANSWER

I am advised:

- (a) Number of households in Temporary Accommodation during 2021 peaked on 6 Sep 21 at 2034.
- (b) Average number of households in Temporary Accommodation for each month during 2021:

Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21
733	810	772	739	762	787	1274	1682	1949	1534

2. Could the Minister please provide the exact number of people in Temporary Accommodation who were previously sleeping rough during 2021?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The number of households in Temporary Accommodation from 1 Jan 2021 to 26 Sep 2021 that were previously sleeping rough was 3682. This count includes any household during the period that had an instance of sleeping rough.

3. Mr Vevers referred to an aggregate figure relating to people who have recently left Temporary Accommodation, could the Minister please provide a breakdown of people who have recently left Temporary Accommodation and any information held by DCJ on where they intended to go after leaving Temporary Accommodation?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Department of Communities and Justice has assisted 561 with private rental products and 550 were housed in social housing.

4. How many people accessed Temporary Accommodation in:

- (a) 2019
- (b) 2020
- (c) 2021

ANSWER

I am advised:

- (a) 2019 = 23,817 households
- (b) 2020 = 26,413 households
- (c) 2021 = 19,617 households up to 26 September 2021.

5. How many people exited Temporary Accommodation in 2020 and 2021 and entered

- (a) Social Housing
- (b) Together Home packages
- (c) Some form of rental assistance

ANSWER

I am advised:

- (a) 1 April 2020 – 20 December 2020 - 2,410 (includes Together Home Packages).
Between 21 December 2020 – 26 September 2021 – 2757 (includes Together Home Packages).
- (b) Between 1 July 2020 – 2 December 2020 - 350 clients.
Between 21 December 2020 – 26 September 2021 - 253 clients.
- (c) Between 1 April 2020 -20 December 2020 - 1975.
Between 21 December 2020 – 26 September 2021 - 2,499.

6. Could the Minister provide figures relating to the number of women who utilised Temporary Accommodation 2020-21?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The number of women who accessed Temporary Accommodation (as main applicant) from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 was 11,273.

Older Women and Homelessness

7. Older women (over 55) are the fastest growing group of homeless people in NSW:
- (a) What specific strategies are being put in place to address this?
 - (b) How many dedicated Specialist Homelessness Services or beds within Specialist Homelessness Services are provided for older women (over 55) who are homeless?

ANSWER

I am advised:

- a) Specialist housing for older women is being constructed by the NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) under the NSW Homelessness Strategy. In addition, under the \$1.1 billion Social and Affordable Housing Fund a total of 1,414 dwellings are expected to be delivered for tenants who are aged 55 and over and an additional 232 homes are targeted specifically for older women.
- b) SHS is available to all people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, including women of any age and provides a range of services to support people stay in their current home or help them secure other accommodation.

8. How many women over 55 are on the social housing waiting list?

- (a) How many are on the priority waiting list?

ANSWER

I am advised:

As at 30 June 2021, there were 49,928 applicants on the social housing waiting list, of which 7,459 (14.9%) were women over 55 (who were the main applicants).

As at 30 June 2021, there were 5,801 priority applicants on the social housing waiting list, of which 933 (16.1%) were women over 55 (who were the main applicants).

Social Housing Waiting List

9. When will the social housing waiting list be updated for 2021?

- (a) Why is this data not updated every month?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Data as at 30 June 2021 for applicants on the NSW social housing waiting list is expected to be available on the Expected Waiting Times Dashboard before the end of the year.

Data is updated annually because the changes are very minimal month to month.

10. Could the Minister please provide the number of people on the social housing waiting list for the following months in 2021:
- (a) January
 - (b) February
 - (c) March
 - (d) April
 - (e) May
 - (f) June
 - (g) July
 - (h) August
 - (i) September
 - (j) October

ANSWER

I am advised:

- a) January 2021 – 52,257
- (b) February 2021 – 51,282
- (c) March 2021 – 51,444
- (d) April 2021 – 50,546
- (e) May 2021 – 51,370
- (f) June 2021 – 49,928
- (g) July 2021 – 51,015
- (h) August 2021 – 51,903
- (i) September 2021 – 53,081
- (j) October 2021 – 53,490.

11. How many people on the social housing waiting list are currently experiencing homelessness?

ANSWER

I am advised:

As at 30 June 2021, there are 1,258 applicants on the social housing waiting list who are currently experiencing homelessness.

12. What is the average wait time to secure social housing for those on the social housing waiting list in 2021?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The average wait time to secure social housing from the wait list in 2020-21 was 39.8 months.

13. What is the average wait time for people to access social housing for those on the priority social housing waiting list in 2021?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Average waiting times for priority applicants to access social housing in 2020-21 was 6.7 months.

14. Why has information relating to the average social housing waiting list times not been updated since June 2020?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Please refer to question 9.

15. What is the median wait time, both priority and general, in 2021?

ANSWER

I am advised:

As at 30 June 2021, the median wait time for general applicants on the social housing wait list was 20.4 months.

As at 30 June 2021, the median wait time for priority applicants on the social housing wait list was 2.2 months. The 2020-21 result is the best in over ten years, compared to a high of 4.8 months in 2010-11.

16. How many social housing properties were sold in:

- (a) 2019/20
- (b) 2020/21
- (c) July 2021 – Nov 2021

ANSWER

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing.

17. How many applications on the waiting list (general and priority) were fulfilled during the last financial year?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2020-21, 5,635 priority applicants and 3,719 general applicants were newly allocated into social housing.

18. Could the Minister please provide an updated breakdown of the social housing waiting list by allocation zone?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Data as at 30 June 2021 is currently being remediated and not yet finalised. This data will only be available on the Expected Waiting Times Dashboard before the end of the year.

However, the June 2020 published data is available at:

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/expected-waiting-times>

Communities Plus

19. Why is there no Affordable Rental Housing for key workers required as part of the Communities Plus project?

ANSWER

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing.

20. Why is there a standard 30% social housing allocation rate across NSW as part of Communities Plus when surely some areas require more or less?

ANSWER

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing.

Social Housing in NSW

21. On Saturday 16 October 2021 the Minister attended an announcement regarding social housing, where will these projects be and how were these areas decided?
- (a) How will this recent announcement impact the government's overall commitment to social housing?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The announcement relevant to my portfolio of Families, Communities and Disability Services, related to the Community Housing Innovation Fund. A tender for the program was carried out earlier this year with the community housing sector. The additional \$50 million investment will help deliver 14 additional social and affordable housing projects throughout the state in partnership with Community Housing Providers.

a) The announcement is consistent with the government's commitment to providing a strong pipeline of social and affordable housing across NSW.

22. The NSW government has claimed that they have contributed a “record investment” to social housing this year, do you agree with this statement?

(a) Can you explain what “record” is involved in determining this is a “record investment”?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2021-22, the NSW Government is spending over \$1.19 billion (\$1,137 million recurrent and \$51.2 million capital) across social housing and homelessness programs in the Stronger Communities cluster.

(a) This is an increase of around \$162.7 million above the 2020-21 budget (\$119.3 million recurrent and \$43.4 million capital), or about 15.53 per cent.

Specialist & Domestic Violence Shelters in NSW

23. It was announced that there would be 200 new social housing dwellings available for people who have experienced DFV. Can you provide all available information on where will they be and when they will be available?

(a) Why there are only 200 when DVNSW have suggested 5000 per year are needed?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The announcement of new domestic and family violence and women-focused social housing projects on 19 October 2021 will contribute an additional \$52.2 million over four years for approximately 200 dwellings through the Community Housing Innovation Fund. These dwellings are in addition to the projects announced under the social housing recovery package on 16 October 2021 and other projects already underway.

Planning for delivery of the program is underway. The planning includes consideration of a range of factors to determine locations across the state. The department will co-design the approach with key local and state-wide domestic violence services and peaks, and continue to support community housing providers in fast-tracked delivery where there are existing sites and development approvals, or where the model relies upon purchases of existing builds.

The department will ensure a fair and robust allocation of resources. Further announcements on individual projects will be made as contracting arrangements are finalised by the department.

24. Can you provide information on the timeline and implementation process for the new Housing and Mental Health Agreement?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The new Housing and Mental Health Agreement remains under development. The NSW Government expects to make further announcements about the Agreement in the coming months.

25. How is the NSW Government addressing the shortfall in the provision of specialist domestic violence accommodation services (women's domestic violence refuges) to assist women with and without children escaping domestic violence?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In October 2021, the NSW Government announced a landmark investment of \$484.3 million to support women and children escaping domestic violence with housing and specialist services. This package includes:

- \$52.5 million over four years towards the Community Housing Innovation Fund (CHIF) partnership with the community housing sector, to provide approximately 200 sustainable, social and affordable housing dwellings for women experiencing domestic violence
- \$426.6 million over four years to expand Core and Cluster to deliver and operate around 75 extra women's refuges that support women and children escaping domestic violence
- \$5.2 million over four years to provide dedicated supports for accompanied children and young people impacted by domestic violence.

This investment is on top of an additional \$60 million over the next two years to boost frontline domestic and family violence services and an additional \$32.5 million over four years for the state-wide expansion of Staying Home Leaving Violence to support more women and children experiencing domestic violence to stay safe and secure in their homes.

26. In order to meet the housing requirements of people with disabilities, NSW requires 20,000 accessible and affordable homes over the next four years. Why is the government only providing 800 a year?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The majority of new public housing in NSW is built to the Liveable Housing Australia (LHA) silver standard. The Social and Affordable Housing Fund has delivered over 2,000 silver standard homes.

Older People and Homelessness

27. What is the NSW Government's standard definition of older people?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The NSW Government does not use a single definition of older people, recognising that age-related need manifests in different ways in different contexts. The NSW Government Seniors Card is available to permanent NSW residents aged 60 and over.

28. Why do different policy documents recognise older people as those over 55 years but the age of priority for social housing is 80 years?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Priority social housing eligibility recognises that there are some people whose need for social housing is especially acute.

29. What specific measures are in place to support older people over 55 to provide early intervention and prevention services and to help them navigate the housing system?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Living in age-friendly environments' is a focus area of the new Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021–2031. Under the strategy, NSW agencies are working towards increased housing options for older people that are age appropriate, affordable, accessible and close to transport, recreation and community services.

30. What proportion of the new social housing investment announced on 16 October 2021 will be dedicated to older people, particularly older women?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The new social housing investment will support a range of people in need of social housing assistance, depending on local need.

31. In 2020-2021, how many women over 55 accessed:

- (a) Private rental subsidy (RentChoice)
- (b) RentStart Bond Loan program

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2020-21:

- a) 185 clients were women aged over 55 assisted with Rent Choice;
- b) 562 clients were women aged over 55 assisted with Rentstart.

Audit Office Report – Responses to Homelessness in NSW

32. The 2021 NSW Audit Office report found that the construction of purpose-built accommodation for women and children escaping domestic and family violence, and for older women, is significantly behind schedule. Is this true that the projects are behind schedule?
- (a) How many homes have been delivered against forecasts to date under the program to construct purpose-built accommodation for women and children escaping domestic and family violence?
 - (b) How many homes are remaining to be delivered?
 - (c) When will the remaining homes be delivered?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The NSW Government committed approximately \$6 million to increase the capacity of women's refuges through a trial of the Core and Cluster model. The construction of two Core and Cluster residences has been completed – one in Griffith (completed in August 2020) and the other in Orange (completed in October 2020). Work is underway in regional locations for two of the remaining trial sites and work has commenced to identify a suitable location for the fifth trial site.

Together Home

33. Of the people allocated Together Home packages in 2020-21, how many were male and how many female?
- (a) What was the age distribution of those recipients?

ANSWER

I am advised:

For the period of 2020-21, 449 Together Home packages were allocated to males and 182 were allocated to females.

- (a) The age distribution across females as at end June 2021 is (noting the age range for females engaged in the program is 18 – 68 years):
- 41 women aged between 50 and 68 years
 - 98 aged between 30-50 years
 - 35 aged between 21-30 years
 - Eight aged between 18-21 years.

The age distribution across males as at end June 2021 is (noting the age range for males engaged in the program is 18 – 81 years):

- 38 are aged between 60 and 81 years
- 103 are aged between 50-60 years
- 253 are aged between 30-50 years
- 46 are aged between 21-30 years
- Nine are aged between 18-21 years.

34. Has a proportion of the Together Home packages been allocated for older women who were at risk of homelessness?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Together Home allocation methodology did not include a specific proportional package allocation to older women. Eligible clients are referred, assessed and accepted into the program via local decision making by Client Referral Assessment Groups.

35. How many people who accessed Together Home packages have transitioned into long-term housing solutions in:

- (a) 2020
- (b) 2021

ANSWER

I am advised:

This is a two year program for accommodation and support, and exits into long term housing solutions are expected from mid-2022.

Link2Home

36. Has the Government undertaken an evaluation of the effectiveness and reach of the Link2Home program?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Link2home is a telephone referral service and is part of a whole-of-government response to homelessness. Its purpose is to provide people that are homeless or at risk of homelessness with information and referrals to specialist services, including temporary accommodation.

I am advised that in the 2019-20 financial year, Link2home supported 29,835 people with referrals to specialist homelessness services (SHS).

I am further advised that the upcoming DCJ Annual Report identifies some of Link2home's most recent outcomes.

37. What are the age and gender profiles of people who interact with Link2Home?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Link2home assists people of all ages and genders.

38. How many calls to Link2Home in:

(a) 2020

(b) 2021

ANSWER

I am advised:

(a) 2020: 154,902

(b) 2021: 114,178 (as of 13 October 2021)

39. How many calls on link2home were disconnected or discontinued?

(a) How many, if any, calls went unanswered?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Link2home does not terminate or disconnect a caller.

DCJ cannot tell if a call is discontinued, drops out or is ended for other reasons. All calls are answered.

Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF)

40. How much total funding is allocated for programs addressing social and affordable housing and homelessness in 2021-22?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2021-22, the NSW Government is spending over \$1.19 billion, \$1.142 billion recurrent (including \$10.4 million for the Home Purchase Assistance fund (HPAF) and \$51.2 million in Capital Expenditure across Social Housing and Homelessness Programs in the Stronger Communities Cluster.

41. Considering that SAHF is the second-best performing fund returning 8.2% yield since its inception in 2017, are there any plans in place to expand this program?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The SAHF is a Treasury-managed fund. The Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services oversees the delivery of social and affordable housing projects funded under SAHF.

Youth Services

42. The HYAP (Homeless Persons Assistance Program) program was developed in response to Going Home Staying Home not making effective provision for under 16's and this early intervention program has been working well. During the COVID period, additional funds called FOCAS Brokerage model have been made available to help these young people in accessing education. Seeing the success of this initiative why is it not being continued beyond June 2022?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Homeless Youth Assistance Program (HYAP) provides support and accommodation to unaccompanied children and young people aged 12-15 years who are experiencing, or at risk of homelessness. HYAP aims to reunify children and young people with their families and broader support networks where appropriate. Alternatively, it supports them to transition to appropriate longer term supported accommodation.

The NSW Government is investing \$11 million in HYAP services in 2021-22.

Additional funds of \$1.45 million in 2020-21 and \$1.2 in 2021-22 were directed to provide a brokerage model. In 2020-21, these funds were aimed at better utilising opportunities arising from the pandemic to reconnect unaccompanied children with their families.

43. Is additional funding being secured for the HYAP?
- (a) why/why not?
 - (b) how much additional funding is available for HYAP?

ANSWER

I am advised:

\$11 million will be invested in 2021-22 in the Homeless Youth Assistance Program (HYAP), which works to support unaccompanied young people aged 12-15 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

An evaluation of HYAP was published in October 2020. Reconfiguration of the HYAP model is currently in progress, informed by the evaluation findings and stakeholder consultation. From 2022, the Department of Communities and Justice will commence work with service providers to begin transitioning to the new model.

44. The Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Program for young people aged 16 to 18 requires more medium-term supported accommodation services, especially in country and regional Australia. Does the Minister consider SHS a high-priority area?
- (a) What is being done to meet the needs of young people requiring medium term accommodation?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2021-22, the NSW Government is allocating \$52.3 million to 50 youth specific Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) across NSW which provide responses to young people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

In addition, the NSW Government has allocated \$17.2 million in 2021-22 to 30 SHS under the Youth Crisis Accommodation Enhancement to ensure 24/7 access to crisis accommodation and effective support for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and \$11 million in 2021-22 to the Premier's Youth Initiative which seeks to support young people, who are at risk of homelessness and exiting care, in order to divert them from the homelessness service system.

Foyers

45. Why has NSW stalled the progression of introducing more Foyers?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The youth foyer model provides a package of accommodation and support to young people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, based on participation in education, training and/or employment as a supported transition to independent living.

Foyer Central in Chippendale is being delivered under the NSW Homelessness Strategy through a social impact investment. It is modelled on best practice and delivered at a critical development age, giving young people the chance to live an independent future. Foyer Central welcomed its first intake of residents in March 2021.

I am advised that the Department of Communities and Justice is evaluating the program for future expansion across NSW.

Community Services Sector

46. Will the NSW Government make a commitment to longer term contracts of 5-7 years for the community services sector?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Longer term contracts for the community services sector are supported where appropriate.

The provision of three or five year contracts allows service providers to engage in longer-term planning and also aligns with NSW Government budget allocations.

The Department of Communities and Justice may apply shorter or longer contract terms depending on the project or program. For example, for one-off specific initiatives or for trial and pilot programs which require review within a shorter specified timeframe, a shorter term contract may be applied. For complex programs and initiatives where financial and social outcomes are expected to be achieved over a longer timeframe, a longer term contract may be more feasible.

47. What will the NSW Government do to assist the community services sector to access funding by reducing the amount of paperwork involved with accreditation, regulation and compliance?

ANSWER

I am advised:

While reporting and compliance by funded services is essential to demonstrate accountability for the use of funds, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) recognises the importance of reducing the reporting and compliance burden.

DCJ works with peak organisations and meets regularly with a service provider working group to achieve efficiency improvements to existing contract administration, reporting and compliance processes.

Accreditation is required for out-of-home care (OOHC) services. The Office of the Children's Guardian is responsible for accreditation of the OOHC sector. Community housing providers are required to be registered and homelessness providers are also required to be accredited. These measures ensure a quality standard of service provision. DCJ provides some funding and/or support to providers to reduce the impact of accreditation.

Managed Alcohol Program

48. Is the Minister aware of the Managed Alcohol Program proposed by St Vincent's Health Network and St Vincent de Paul to assist people experiencing chronic homelessness and severe alcohol dependence?

(a) Is the Minister willing to provide funding to the program to ensure it is able to proceed?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is reviewing the Managed Alcohol Program trial funding request in consultation with the Ministry of Health. DCJ will continue to work closely with St Vincent's in identifying emerging client needs.

Homelessness

49. Will the new Premier continue with the Premier's Priority regarding halving street homelessness by 2025?

ANSWER

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Premier.

50. Does the new Premier intend to develop any new priorities in relation to homelessness?

ANSWER

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Premier.

51. How much funding is allocated for specialist homelessness services in 2021-2022?

(a) How much of this is allocated for services in regional NSW?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2021-22, the NSW Government will invest over \$1 billion in a range of homelessness and social and affordable housing programs. This includes \$295.9 million in 2021-22 to continue a range of specialist homelessness services across NSW, referral services such as Link2home, enhancements for youth refuges and after hours domestic and family violence services, and Homelessness Strategy initiatives.

(a) This funding includes local and state-wide services. A breakdown of funding for regional NSW is not available.

Questions from Mr David Shoebridge MLC

Budget allocations

52. What proportion of the NSW child protection and out of home care budget was allocated to the provision of Aboriginal community-controlled child and family supports?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2021-22, it is estimated that funding to Aboriginal community controlled organisations for the delivery of child and family support will be more than 11 per cent of the total paid to service providers in the child protection and out-of-home care areas.

Over the last six years the number of funded Aboriginal community controlled organisations has increased by 23 per cent.

53. What proportion of targeted early intervention service funding is provided to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations?

(a) Why is this not equal to the proportion of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care as recommended in the Family is Culture Review?

ANSWER

I am advised:

\$10,163,889 is provided to Aboriginal organisations under the Targeted Earlier Intervention program.

This represents 6.6 per cent of all Targeted Earlier Intervention program funding.

(a) In addition to Targeted Earlier Intervention Services, the Department of Communities and Justice has other programs focussed on supporting Aboriginal clients in child protection and out of home care.

Refer to questions 52 and 55.

54. How much money has the NSW Government allocated to the implementation of the 125 recommendations of the landmark 2019 Family Is Culture Review recommendations report aimed at reducing the disproportionate and increasing number of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care in NSW?

(a) How much of this has been allocated internally at the Department of Communities and Justice and how much externally to Aboriginal organisations?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Implementation of many of the Family is Culture recommendations are being managed through existing resources within the Department of Communities and Justice. This includes reprioritising projects and realigning resources to support implementation.

A new Deputy Secretary role has also been established to oversee Aboriginal outcomes at the Department of Communities and Justice. Mr Brendan Thomas, a Wiradjuri man, has been appointed to this role.

\$1.2 million of funding is provided over three years for AbSec to support the implementation of Aboriginal Case Management Policy (\$600,000 in 2019-20, \$300,000 in 2020-21 and \$300,000 in 2021-22).

\$10,163,889 of funding is provided to Aboriginal organisations under the Targeted Earlier Intervention program.

DCJ also funds the Aboriginal Knowledge Circle (\$180,000 total per annum) to advise the NSW Government on strategies to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families that come into contact with the child protection system. This amount covers annual remuneration for the four non-government Aboriginal Knowledge Circle members, as well as associated costs and ongoing meetings. The Aboriginal Deputy Children's Guardian is the fifth member of the Aboriginal Knowledge Circle.

55. How much funding has the NSW Government allocated to the implementation of the Aboriginal Case Management Policy (ACMP), Rules and Practice Guidance, including to the establishment of Aboriginal Community Controlled Mechanisms, Community Facilitators and Aboriginal Family Led Decision-Making?

(a) How much of this has been allocated internally at the Department of Communities and Justice and how much externally to Aboriginal organisations?

ANSWER

I am advised:

\$1.2 million over three years has also been allocated for AbSec to support implementation of the Aboriginal Case Management Policy (\$600,000 in 2019-20 and \$300,000 in 2020-21 and \$300,000 in 2021-22).

Internal resources from within existing allocations have also been prioritised to support implementation.

56. How much money has the NSW Government directed to research, in particular, Aboriginal-initiated and led research, to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is currently providing in kind support (access to data, clients and/or staff) for three projects that meet the definition of Aboriginal-initiated and led research related to child protection and out-of-home care:

- Dr BJ Newtown (UNSW) Bring them Home Keep them Home: Charting the experiences, successful pathways, and outcomes of Aboriginal families whose children have been restored from Out-of-Home Care
- Skye Trugett (UNSW) Youth At-Risk Research Network (YARRN): Integrating research in regional, rural and remote communities project
- Debbie Haynes (University of Newcastle) The efficacy of trauma-based therapies for Aboriginal children and young people in Out of Home Care.

Further, Ngaramanala (Aboriginal Knowledge Program), has incorporated the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance into the External Research Strategy, the NSW Data Strategy, the Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study, the Evidence Bank Implementation Program and the upcoming release of the Aboriginal Impact Statement. The incorporation of IDS and IDG across these specific areas will ensure that Aboriginal initiated and led research is prioritised and considered as a part of:

- all new external and internal research projects;
- all project scoping, in regards to practice, policy and program design; and
- all phases of designing new evidence bases and outcome frameworks.

This approach to embedding IDS and IDG will ensure that all programs, policies, research projects, evidence bases and outcome frameworks that impact upon Aboriginal Children in and/or at risk of entering child protection or out of home care are working towards being Aboriginal initiated and led.

Family is Culture

57. Regarding the implementation of the Family is Culture Report recommendations, have there been improvements against relevant indicators, including:

- (a) Fewer police contacts with young First Nations people?
- (b) Fewer child removals?
- (c) Fewer newborn removals?
- (d) Fewer “poor removal“ events (e.g. police involved)?
- (e) Increased numbers of cases maintaining contact with family and kin?
- (f) Increased numbers of restoration?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Questions about police contact with First Nations people should be directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Data on 2019-20 performance measures for child protection are available in the Annual Statistical Report 2019-20: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/resources/statistics/statistical-report-2019-20>. Data for 2020-21 will be published in early 2022.

A new Deputy Secretary Transforming Aboriginal Outcomes has been established within the Department of Communities and Justice. Brendan Thomas, a Wiradjuri man, commenced in the role on 8 November 2021.

A governance structure has been created to review and support the implementation of Family is Culture recommendations. This includes quarterly progress updates, an Aboriginal Outcomes Taskforce which reviews recommendation responses and associated activity and the Aboriginal Knowledge Circle which provides general oversight and advice to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services.

Child removals, Guardianship orders

58. How many Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care were adopted in the past financial year?

(a) How many of those were adopted by non-Aboriginal carers?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) publishes annual data on Adoptions in Australia each December. The AIHW data can be accessed at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/health-welfare-services/adoptions/overview>.

58 (a). This information is not publicly available.

59. How many Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care were moved onto guardianship orders in the past financial year?

(a) How many Aboriginal children and young people are on guardianship orders in total?

(b) How many Aboriginal children and young people who were moved onto guardianship orders have since returned into out of home care?

(c) With the rollout of the Aboriginal Guardianship Support Model, co-designed by AbSec and local communities, beginning in the trial sites of South West Sydney and the Hunter, when is this support planned to be rolled out state-wide?

(d) What is being done in the period until then to support Aboriginal children and families moved onto guardianship orders seeing as there has been such a marked increase?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2020-21, there were 179 Aboriginal children who exited out-of-home care (OOHC) to guardianship.

(a) As at 30 June 2021, there were 1,210 Aboriginal children on guardianship orders.

(b) No Aboriginal children who exited to guardianship in 2019-20 returned to OOHC in 2020-21.

- (c) The Aboriginal Guardianship Support model is a pilot that will be evaluated over a 24 month period. The evaluation will inform the future of the program.
- (d) All children on a guardianship order are entitled to a financial plan with a range of support including culture, Life Story work, family time, medical, dental, child care, education and professional therapies.

60. How many individual Aboriginal children experienced removal out of Culture, even if only for one night?

ANSWER

I am advised:

This data is not available.

61. In the past year, how many guardianship orders were made by consent?
- (a) How many of those relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children?
 - (b) Of those guardianship orders in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, how many were for non-Aboriginal carers?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2020-21, there were 451 children who exited out of home care (OOHC) to a Guardianship Order.

- (a) In 2020-21, there were 179 Aboriginal children who exited OOHC to Guardianship.
 - (b) Of the 179 Aboriginal children who exited OOHC to Guardianship, 16 (or 8.9 per cent) were placed with non-Aboriginal carers. Placement with non-Aboriginal carers is only made if the court considers the guardians will facilitate ongoing cultural connection.
62. Of the case reviews that were undertaken of kids in out-of-home care in the past year, how many considered the potential for successful restoration?
- (a) Can you provide the relative data comparing Aboriginal kids in care as against non-Aboriginal kids in care and the proportion that get restored?

ANSWER

I am advised:

- a) Children in out-of-home care are required to have a placement review at least annually in accordance with section 150 of the *Children and Young Persons Care and Protection) Act 1998*. This review includes an assessment of whether the goals to achieve permanency are still being met, or whether the child's safety, welfare and well-being would be better met by another permanency goal including restoration. DCJ does not formally collect data on which permanency goals were considered or discussed as part of case planning.

b) In 2020-21, 181 Aboriginal children were restored to their families from OOHC.

Aboriginality	In OOHC as at 30 June 2021	Restored in 2020-21	Proportion restored (%)
Aboriginal	6,829	181	2.7
Non-Aboriginal	9,066	307	3.4
Total	15,985	488	3.1

63. How many—and if you can, what proportion—of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care are placed in relative or kinship care?

- (a) Of those children, how many and what proportion are placed in relative or kinship care with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of their family?
- (b) How many and what proportion are placed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander foster carers?
- (c) How many and what proportion are managed by an Aboriginal community controlled organisation?

ANSWER

I am advised:

2019-20 information on placements of Aboriginal children in OOHC can be found within the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) report: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Indicators.

As at 30 June 2021, there are 6,829 Aboriginal children in out-of-home care (OOHC), with 6,646 children specifically living with carers. Of these 4,814 (or 72.4 per cent) Aboriginal children were placed with a relative or an Aboriginal carer.

- (a) Of the 4,814 Aboriginal children, 2,312 (or 48 per cent) were placed with Aboriginal relative/kin.
- (b) Of the 4,814 Aboriginal children, 937 (or 19.5 per cent) were placed with Aboriginal foster carers.

There are 14 Aboriginal providers that provide OOHC services. Of the 6,829 Aboriginal children in OOHC, 1,440 (or 21.1 per cent) were placed with an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Children in juvenile detention

64. Regarding children between the age of 10-13 in juvenile detention, how many are Aboriginal and what percentage do they make up?

ANSWER

I am advised:

50 per cent of the 122 individual children aged between 10 and 13 years in youth detention during the period 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2021 identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

65. Has any funding been allocated to activities related to raising the age of criminal responsibility to 14?

ANSWER

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Attorney General and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence, as the minister responsible for the statutory age of criminal responsibility.

66. Without raising the age of criminal responsibility to 14, how would NSW meet Closing the Gap target 11, reducing the rate of Aboriginal children in detention by 30%?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Since 2015, there has been a steady decline in the number of Aboriginal young people in custody in NSW. As at June 2021, there were 73 Aboriginal young people in custody, down from 149 Aboriginal young people in custody in June 2018.

The first NSW Implementation Plan under the Closing the Gap National Agreement outlines initiatives currently underway to reduce the rate and number of Aboriginal young people in detention. These include initiatives and programs such as the Youth Koori Court, Youth on Track, the Youth Justice Program My Journey, My Life, and the Ngudjoong Billa Aboriginal Reintegration and Transition program.

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is working alongside the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT (ALS), its Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO) partner, to progress further initiatives to address Target 11 for consideration in the next iteration of the NSW Implementation Plan. DCJ and ALS, in consultation with other CAPO members, are also proposing to develop an action plan on the Justice targets, including Target 11, with medium to longer term reform initiatives to support the lifespan of the National Agreement.

67. What are the reporting mechanisms for non-Aboriginal organisations that receive allocated Aboriginal funding?

- (a) Are there plans to make information on this available to increase the accountability of organisations that are receiving funding?
- (b) With significant funding going to non-Aboriginal organisations for Aboriginal initiatives and little transparency, does this not go against Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2 (building the Aboriginal community-controlled sector)?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Service providers which receive funding through the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) are required to report back on the use of that funding, regardless of whether they are Aboriginal or

non-Aboriginal organisations. For service providers receiving ongoing funding, annual reporting on income and expenditure is required. This is in addition to program specific reporting requirements.

Funding allocated to non-government organisations is reported in the DCJ Annual Report.

DCJ supports both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations to deliver services to Aboriginal people.

As per answers to Q 52, 53 and 55, DCJ provides a range of funding to Aboriginal organisations. This approach is not contrary to Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2.

68. How much funding has the Department of Communities and Justice set aside to increase the cultural capability of its staff?

(a) How will this be achieved? Through what programs/training

ANSWER

I am advised:

The NSW Government has committed \$3.6 million from 2018-2024 to fund the three days mandatory 'Connecting with Aboriginal Communities Training' which is delivered by the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Since the launch of the training in June 2018, 2284 DCJ staff have completed the training. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program was suspended in April 2020 and recommenced on 11 November 2021. In the next two years it is expected a total of 96 training sessions will be delivered for DCJ staff across NSW.

Aging out of care

69. How many young people left out-of-home care because they turned 18 last year?

(a) Of those children last year who left care because they turned 18, how many of them received financial support?

(b) What was the average financial contribution made to support those children?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2020-21, there were 857 young people who exited out-of-home care by aging out. In 2020-21, \$8 million was provided as direct financial assistance by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) for 2,086 care leavers aged 18 and over.

In addition, \$3.1 million was provided to specialist aftercare services to assist care leavers with more complex needs and was delivered as a mix of casework and brokerage. A total of \$11.1 million was therefore provided at an average of \$5,321 per person. DCJ also administered the provision of \$796,500 from the Commonwealth Government Transition to Independent Living Allowance to 531 young people.

70. How many children in out-of-home care were able to remain in their out-of-home care after turning 18?

(a) How many carers received financial support to allow them to do so?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Any young person is able to remain with their carer/s after the age of 18 if both the young person and their carer agree. Placements may also be extended beyond 18 while the young person completes their Higher School Certificate or equivalent. I am advised that in the financial year 2020-21, more than \$1.6 million was paid to the former carers of 196 young people who remained with them while completing Year 12 studies.

71. In the last financial year, how many children leaving out-of-home care at age 18 were instead referred to homelessness support services within 12 months of leaving care?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Department of Communities and Justice does not maintain ongoing contact with all young people after they leave care. There is no automatic right to access their contact details because there are no court orders in place and care leavers may not want to engage with services. Young people who are at risk of homelessness are able to access a range of supports, including the Homeless Youth Assistance Program (HYAP), the Premiers Youth Initiative (PYI) and Rent Choice Youth (RCY).

As at 30 June 2019, PYI had supported a total of 545 young people since the program's commencement in 2016, of which 104 were new referrals made in the 2019-20 financial year). In 2019-20, 1,123 young people accessed Rent Choice Youth, noting some of the young people may have also accessed temporary accommodation, depending on their needs and level of engagement with services.

In 2019-20, of the 70,372 clients assisted by specialist homelessness services, 0.4 percent identified their reason for seeking assistance as 'Transition from foster care and child safety residential placements'. The age of these clients is not published.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) specialist homelessness services annual report 2019-20, Data tables; Table CLIENTS.20: Clients, by reasons for seeking assistance, 2019–20.

Risk of Serious Harm Reports

72. How many children have been reported at risk of serious harm in the most current 12-month period?

(a) Of these, how many were First Nations children?

ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2020-21, there were 126,818 children reported at risk of significant harm.

a) Of these, 26,657 were Aboriginal/First Nations children (21 per cent).

73. Of those children reported at risk of serious harm, how many children were not seen by a caseworker?

(a) Of these, how many were First Nations children?

(b) Of these, how many cases were closed because of competing priorities?

ANSWER

I am advised:

There were 126,818 children reported as at risk of significant harm in 2020-21. Of these, 36,524 children were seen by a DCJ caseworker. This is an increase of 3.6 per cent and the most children ever seen. 90,294 of these children were not seen by a DCJ caseworker.

(a) Of the 90,294 children not seen by a DCJ caseworker, 15,121 (or 16.7 per cent) were Aboriginal.

(b) It should be noted that where DCJ caseworkers are not able to see children, referrals to NGO services ensure that many of these children receive a response.

Miyay Birray Youth Service

74. Has funding been reinstated to the Miyay Birray Youth Service's "Street Beat" program?

(a) If not, why not?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Miyay Birray Youth Service received funding from the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) from 2017 to December 2019. Miyay Birray Youth Service (MBYS) has received \$321,522 in funding from the former Department of Justice, from August 2017 to 31 December 2019.

In February 2017, MBYS received funding of \$243,522, over two years, from DCJ's Community Safety Fund (CSF). MBYS was funded to deliver a Night Culture Program and Moree Street Beat program. Their funding under the CSF came to an end in 2018. In December 2018, DCJ approved an additional one-off non-recurrent funding payment of \$78,000 to MBYS to extend their Street Beat Program from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Miyay Birray have now been encouraged to apply for the Safe Aboriginal Youth program funding expected to commence in February 2022.

A Place to Go

75. Has there been an evaluation conducted of the "A place to go" program?

- (a) If so, are the findings available publicly?
- (b) If not, when will the evaluation be completed?

ANSWER

I am advised:

A Place to Go has been subject to an external evaluation. I am advised the evaluation findings are not currently available publicly.