

Ms Helen Minnican
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

22 December 2020

Dear Ms Minnican,

Re: Response to 2020 Review of the annual reports and other matters of the Advocate for Children and Young People.

Many thanks for your letter dated 22 June 2020, file reference: D20/25093 regarding ACYP respond to standing order 303A of the Legislative Assembly. We apologise for the delay in getting a response to you.

Please find below our response to the recommendations contained within the report of the Committee on Children and Young People titled: 2020 Review of the annual reports and other matters of the Advocate for Children and Young People, dated June 2020.

Recommendation 1: The Committee recommends that the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services prioritise the evaluation of the NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2016-2019 and the development of a new Strategic Plan.

The Review of the Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2016-2019 has been an ongoing project for the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People.

At the conclusion of the Plan, ACYP conducted a desktop analysis to find publicly available data that measured each indicator. Following this, ACYP identified an individual within each responsible agency and requested they check the available data, add any missing or additional data and make any amendments. We then requested, this information obtain the necessary approvals from the required executive to be made public. Overall, ACYP received an engaged response from each organisation. Where communication was not forthcoming, after several follow ups, ACYP has relied solely on publicly available data.

When the Plan was endorsed in Cabinet, the Minute noted that 'the Advocate will provide the reports to the Minister and furnish copies to Parliament, as provided under the Act (Sections 33 and 34).' These sections of our Act stipulate that the Advocate is to provide the Minister with a draft copy of these reports at least one month before it is furnished to the Presiding Officers for comment and consideration. ACYP has finished a draft Review of the Plan, with the intention of sending this to the Minister's Office for comment in early January 2021.

Noting, the required times within section 33 and 34 of the Act, it is the Advocate's intention to furnish the final Review of the Plan to the presiding Officers in late-February 2021.

Regarding the next Strategic Plan, the Advocate made the intentional decision to not progress this while there was an Advocate acting in the chair. Following her appointment to the ongoing role of Advocate for Children and Young People, the Advocate will now begin the process of collaborating with the Minister, children and young people, government and non-government organisations in the preparation of the next Strategic Plan. Consequently, we have placed this item as a forward agenda in the Cabinet/ Committee forward agenda planning for 2021 and it will be a priority for the Office when we return in January 2021.

Recommendation 2: The Committee recommends that the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services report to the Committee on the work done by other Government Sector agencies that are given responsibility for implementing the new Strategic Plan.

Under the functions of our Act, the Advocate has the responsibility to 'work co-operatively with other organisations that provide services to or represent the interests of children and young people.'

Throughout the Review of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan, the Advocate reached out to each agency responsible for an indicator to ensure that the data collected was measurable and accurate. In this process, we had a number of agencies reach out with interest to participate in the development of the next Strategic Plan.

The Advocate looks forward to working with agencies across Government, and the non-Government Sector to develop a Plan for the benefit of children and young people in NSW. The Advocate would be happy to keep the Committee apprised of these developments through our annual report and oversight hearing.

If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me on [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Zoë Robinson
Advocate for Children and Young People (Acting)