

# Supplementary questions

Parliamentary joint committee

4 April 2024

- 1. Page 7 of the 2022-2023 annual report states that the Office's Strategic Plan had expired at the end of 2023 and that a new Strategic Plan will be developed this year. Can you provide an update on the progress of this.**

The OCG's Executive Leadership Team commenced work on a three-year strategic plan in early 2024. On Tuesday 26 March 2024, we held a whole of office strategic planning day, to enable staff from across all levels and areas of the organisation to contribute their ideas to the development of the strategic plan, including in relation to vision, purpose and priorities. The strategic plan will be finalised in the coming weeks and will be uploaded on our website. The strategic plan will be supported by an implementation process which is transparent, flexible, and facilitates regular staff input and collaboration. The development of the strategic plan and its implementation has been supported by external consultants Social Ventures Australia.

- 2. Can you please comment on the decline in favourable responses over both 2022 and 2023 People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) results for questions relating to 'Recruitment' and 'Senior Managers'.**

- a. Generally, what is the Office of the children's Guardian doing to address the results of the People Matter Employee Survey?**

The PMES is an important tool for gauging staff experience and engagement, and the OCG's executive team welcome and take seriously the feedback provided via the PMES.

Between 2022 and 2023, the OCG's favourable response rate for 'Recruitment' decreased from 66% to 56%, and the favourable response rate for 'Senior Managers' decreased from 61% to 58%. Notwithstanding the reduction in favourable responses in these two areas, these figures sit higher than the NSW public sector average (which in 2023 was 45% for 'Recruitment', and 52% for 'Senior Managers').

The Executive Leadership Team has taken a number of actions to better understand and respond to the results of the People Matters survey (including the responses relating to recruitment and leadership). These actions include discussion of the PMES results at the executive level; a session held with all staff where PMES results were presented and discussed; and the development of PMES Action Plans at Directorate level, informed by and led by staff within each Directorate. We have also engaged a people and culture consultant, to work with us to help us to focus on our culture, and to identify what we do well, and what issues and pain points we can address together. This consultant has so far interviewed over 70 staff members to understand their

experiences working at the OCG. Recruitment for a new position of Director, People and Culture, is underway. This role will lead our People and Culture strategy.

The results of the PMES were an important consideration in the development of the draft strategic plan. "Supporting our People" is one of the six key strategic priorities identified in the draft plan, and will involve a focus on ensuring the OCG is a great place to work, a magnet for talent, and a supportive place for all staff.

### **3. Can you advise on any changes in staffing at senior executive levels during the two reporting periods?**

We have had a number of movements at the senior executive level over the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years:

- Liz McGee, Director of Corporate Services left the OCG in March 2022, taking long service leave until July 2022. Peter Eaton commenced as Director Corporate Services in March 2022, and finished in this role on 29 December 2023.
- In October 2022, Janet Schorer completed her appointment as Children's Guardian, after a 5-year term. Richard Weston, Deputy Guardian, acted as Children's Guardian for the remainder of the 2022 calendar year.
- In January 2023, Richard Weston, Deputy Guardian, left the OCG, taking leave until early February 2023.
- In January 2023, Steve Kinmond commenced his 5-year term as Children's Guardian.

In the 2023-24 financial year, the Director Child Safe Organisations Louise Coe left the OCG (finishing in December 2023, before taking a period of leave until January 2024). Hardik Patel joined the OCG in January 2024 as acting Director Corporate Services.

### **4. During the public hearing, you mentioned that you will be hiring five more Directors in the next 12 months. Will a full external recruitment process be conducted for these new positions?**

A recruitment process was conducted for five Director Strategic Projects roles within the Child Safe Directorate in early 2024. The roles were externally advertised, and the recruitment process was carried out through a comparative assessment process, pursuant to relevant public service recruitment rules. The five successful candidates come from roles in organisations outside of the OCG, with commencement dates between March and July 2024.

#### **a. Are these positions permanent positions or fixed-term contracts (and if so, for how long)?**

The five successful applicants were all appointed temporarily on 12-month contracts. Four of the positions are temporary 12-month positions, and one is an existing ongoing position. Over the next twelve months, we will be seeking to evaluate whether a number of these Director roles should be retained and converted into ongoing positions.

#### **b. Are the additional positions being funded from the Office's current operating budget, or will you seek additional funding to finance the positions?**

Of the five Director Strategic Projects roles recruited to, four are funded through a one-off funding model (which we will be seeking to roll over from the 2022-23 financial year to the 2023-24 financial year due to an unavoidable delay in recruiting to these roles), and one position is funded through our existing establishment.