

Our reference: ADM/1704p05

Your reference: D13/16240

Contact: Tom Millett

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Dr Abigail Groves
Director, Committees
Committee on the Ombudsman, Police Integrity Commission
and Crime Commission
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000



Dear Dr Groves,

Budget and staffing of the Child Death Review Team (CDRT)

I am writing in response to a request from the Committee for additional information relating to the CDRT's budget and staffing. This response should be read in conjunction with my earlier correspondence on this issue, dated 27 June 2013.

I thought it may be useful to provide some background information. In his report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW, the Hon Justice James Wood recommended that:

... relevant legislation be amended to make the NSW Ombudsman the Convenor of the Child Death Review Team and the Commissioner for Children and Young People a member of that Team rather than its convenor. The secretariat and research functions associated with the Team should also be transferred from the Commission for Children and Young People to the NSW Ombudsman.

The government accepted this recommendation, and moved to transfer the convenor responsibility and secretariat and research functions associated with the CDRT to my office. In March 2010, the government confirmed funding of \$421,000, \$118,000 less than I had requested. Following representations, a further \$118,000 was provided. The funding of \$539,000 met the estimated minimum level I had consistently indicated was necessary to undertake CDRT functions. This amount has formed part of my overall budget and is not a separate allocation to support CDRT activities.

The budget papers for 2013-2014 refer to \$580,000 to develop a reviewable death database. This is a capital appropriation, and will assist us in overcoming the challenges I have spoken of relating to the database in evidence before the Committee.

One of the main reasons why support for the CDRT was transferred to my office was the similarity across functions. As I noted in my earlier correspondence, the support my office provides to the CDRT is coordinated and provided by staff from within the systemic reviews unit of our Human Services Branch. These staff are also tasked with our other statutory child

and disability deaths review work. Placing the support for the CDRT within this unit provides a breadth of understanding and additional relevant experience, which I believe is of great benefit to the CDRT. It has also meant we are able to allocate additional resources when required. The following positions in the systemic reviews unit are involved with supporting the CDRT:

- Director, Systemic Reviews – Director SO1
- Principal Review Officer – Clerk grade 11/12
- Principal Analyst – Clerk grade 11/12
- Senior Data Analyst – Clerk grade 9/10
- 2 x Senior Review Officer (Child Deaths) – Clerk grade 9/10
- 4 x Review Officer (Child Deaths) – Clerk grade 7/8
- Administration and Liaison Officer – Clerk grade 3/4
- Administrative Officer – Administrative Officer 1/2

When my office collects certain information about our staff, including information about aboriginality and disability, it is provided voluntarily. This information is collected for the explicit purpose of reporting in our office-wide equal employment opportunity (EEO) statistics. I have not made a separate request of these staff in order to meet your request, as this information is included in the broader office statistics, provided with my 27 June correspondence.

I understand staff from my office have stressed the importance of ensuring it is clear that these staff work within my office and perform other duties in addition to their work with the CDRT.

Yours sincerely



Bruce Barbour
Ombudsman

17/7/13