

The Hon Kate WASHINGTON MP

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES, AND DISABILITY INCLUSION

Question Number	Transcript Page #	Member	Question on Notice	Answer
1	3	The Chair	The CHAIR: I'd like to turn now to wheelchair-access taxis. After the last Government's deregulation, the number of wheelchair-accessible taxis dropped significantly, making it harder for people with disabilities to get around. In your press release you said: We're working hard to clean up the mess left by the former government - their decisions literally left people with disability stranded. Your party supported the total deregulation. Surely the Government is also responsible for the current problems. Can you advise what the actual drop in numbers has been since the last election? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Thanks, Chair. It's an important question in terms of the availability of wheelchair-accessible taxis, an issue that is particularly challenging in regional areas. I don't accept that there was support provided through us for the direction taken by the former Government. What they did was walk knowingly into a different way of operating which has seen wheelchair-accessible taxis coming out of the system. They knew that before they made the decision. They were meant to put things in place before they did do that, and they didn't. The consequence is many taxis coming out of the system. I can find out those details and provide them to you in terms of the sheer numbers. But what we've done in response—when	I am advised: Transport for NSW have indicated that the number of registered wheelchair accessible taxis in NSW has decreased from 700 in March 2023 to 579 at end of August 2025. This represents a reduction of approximately 81 vehicles in Sydney and 40 outside of Sydney. The \$15 million Emergency Funding Package that the NSW Government introduced to address the shortage includes an increase to the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Scheme payment which commenced on 31 March 2025, the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Interest Free Loans, and the new Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Operator grants. Applications for both the interest free loans and operator grants opened on 5 August 2025. Details on the grants and loans are available at https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/p2p-accessible-initiatives Further questions relating to wheelchair accessible taxi services should be directed to the Minister for Transport.

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			we came into government, we held round tables in Sydney and across regional areas with a lot of taxi operators and providers and people with disability to work out what we needed to do to get more wheelchair-accessible taxis back on the road. That's why we've now got a \$15 million emergency package, which we hope will provide the incentives to taxi operators to increase the numbers on the road	
2	4	The Chair	The CHAIR: Does that program apply to Uber drivers and their cars as well or is it just the taxi industry? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: As I understand, it's just the taxi industry. I might have to get some— The CHAIR: I just wonder whether rideshare services would be able to put their hand up. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: As I recall, with the Point to Point Transport Commissioner, it was more difficult to engage with the rideshare industry in terms of these conversations. The CHAIR: Do you want to take that on notice? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I can do.	I am advised: Only taxis are eligible for the current incentives and subsidies under the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme and Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Scheme. Further questions relating to wheelchair accessible ride share services should be directed to the Minister for Transport.
3	5	The Chair	The CHAIR: I'd just like to turn for a moment to address some of the problems at Kingsford Smith airport—another transport war zone, I'll call it that, created by the support for deregulation. Minister, can you explain your understanding of issues facing disabled travellers amid the ongoing conflict between taxis and Ubers and other rideshare services at Sydney airport? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Chair, I'm afraid that's not something I am across or have been briefed on. The CHAIR: It's certainly meant to be regulated by the Point to Point Transport Commissioner, especially if you look at the	I am advised: There are taxi ranks at airports throughout NSW which are accessible by WATs as well as other taxis At Sydney airport there are taxi ranks outside terminals T1, T2, and T3. In cases where a driver of a wheelchair accessible taxi is not prioritising wheelchair passengers, the NSW Point to Point Transport Commissioner investigates.

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			"handling yard", as they call it—or something along those lines. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: It's certainly outside my portfolio responsibilities. When issues are affecting people with disability, I'm happy to speak with my colleagues and get involved. But this is not something that has come to me, Chair. The CHAIR: Could I ask you to do that? I'd be interested to find out how disabled taxis get access to the airport to service the needs of the disabled coming off planes. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Certainly. Absolutely.	The Commissioner has cancelled taxi licences in the past for repeatedly failing to give preference to people travelling in wheelchairs. The Commissioner's compliance team undertakes regular joint operations with Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA), which runs the centralised wheelchair booking service for Sydney. These efforts have led to drivers being fined \$1,000 for offences such as starting the meter before a wheelchair passenger was safely ready for transport. Further questions relating to taxi and ride share regulation should be directed to the Minister for Transport.
4	6	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Sorry, I'll just go back to that question around the number of ROSH reports having increased. What hasn't increased, as I recall, is the number of children involved in those ROSH reports. Is that accurate? I think I've got a graph that demonstrates that the number of children involved in those ROSH reports hasn't increased and, in fact, the trajectory we're now on is lower than the trajectory under the former Government. By leave, I might just table that report. Document tabled. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: That's fine. I've been provided some data and, Ms Dean, you would be given accurate information, up to date for the financial year. It shows that the number of reports that have come in is 27,838. Does that sound about right for this financial year? LAUREN DEAN: I'd have to take that on notice, Ms Maclaren-Jones	I am advised: DCJ cannot validate the 27,838 reports, as this is data from an undisclosed time period. The number of Risk of Significant Harm reports was 242,846 in 2024/25, a decrease of 1.6% from 246,846 in 2023/24.

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5	7	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: How many young people in the last financial year did not get a face-to-face response? LAUREN DEAN: If you give me a moment, we can find that number for you. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Whilst Ms Dean is finding that number, I might add that what we are doing is trying to address the crisis in the system that we inherited where there were not—	I am advised: There were 114,160 children and young people involved in ROSH reports in 2024/25, of which 91,896 were not seen by a caseworker. However, as you are aware, a face-to-face assessment is not the only response provided to children, young people and families reported to the Helpline.
6	14	The Chair	The CHAIR: Minister, just thinking about communities and clubs that are going through doing these modifications, is your department liaising or building partnerships with clubs and councils to ensure inclusive fishing events are funded and prioritised for the disabled? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I did just mention the Fish for Life program. That's specifically targeted at people with disability to ensure that, and all clubs across the State, as I understand, could participate in that. But I'd actually have to check how broad that was.	I am advised: The Recreational Fishing Trust provides funds for Accessible Fishing Platforms and an interactive map so that people with disability can look online and find accessible fishing locations across NSW, as well as fishing workshops for people with disabilities through the Fish for Life program. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has also: • Delivered 27 disability fishing days in 2024/25 across NSW with support from Fishcare Volunteers • extended its partnerships and collaboration with NDIS and disability support groups to champion fishing workshop initiatives that encourage fishing access for all community members • recently approved 16 new recreational fishing infrastructure projects for funding totalling \$758,000, which will contribute to making fishing more accessible to people with a disability.

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				More information from DPIRD can be found at https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/resources/accessible-recreational-fishing-for-everyone Further questions relating to inclusive fishing events should be directed to the Minister for Agriculture and Regional NSW.
7	17	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: How many of those section 90s have been rejected by the courts in the last 12 months? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I would have to come back to you on that	I am advised: The Court does not 'reject' applications. The Court can make any care order on an application filed under section 90 that it considers is in the best interests of the child, even if such an order is not what was originally sought.
8	17	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Minister, what is the youngest age of a person in an IPA at the moment? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I will try to find that information for you in a moment. I will say that we are relieved that ACAs and the non-accredited element of the emergency care arrangements are no longer part of the system. That has been an enormous amount of work that the department has done to get us to a place where there are no longer any kids in alternative care arrangements like hotels, motels and caravan parks. We have driven down those numbers. I think we inherited about 139 kids in those arrangements, and now there are none. In terms of all other high-cost emergency arrangements, we are doing everything we can to drive down that number. I think at its peak there were about 503 kids in high-cost emergency arrangements. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Thank you, Minister. I think they may have the figure for currently the youngest	I am advised: As at 13 August 2025, the youngest child in an IPA was one year old.

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			person in an IPA at the moment. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I would say that's now only 336 kids in high-cost emergency arrangements. In terms of the age in an IPA, I think we might have to come back to you on that.	
9	18	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Minister, I'll ask again: How many for-profits are delivering IPAs? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Our first priority was to get all kids out of hotels, motels and caravan parks in their unaccredited alternative care arrangements that you established, and now there are none. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: But, Minister, I might— Ms KATE WASHINGTON: In terms of the next tranche, we are trying to ensure that there are no longer any for-profit providers in the system. I'll have to take on notice whether there still remains any. But that is our next priority in terms of turning the crisis around— The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Minister, that's fine, you've taken on notice the number. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: —where kids were going into high-cost emergency arrangements, paying a million dollars a year for the worst outcomes possible.	I am advised: As at 13 August 2025, six of the 19 providers delivering Individual Placement Arrangements (IPAs) were for-profit organisations. As the former Minister responsible for skyrocketing numbers of high-cost emergency arrangements, you would be aware that this is a significant improvement compared to the former government's track record.
10	18	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Minister, how many children have absconded from Sherwood in the last financial year? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I will have to take that on notice.	I am advised: There have been ten instances when a child has absconded from and returned to the Sherwood Program in FY 24/25.
11	19	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: How will the Government-run residential care cottages or homes be staffed, given there's no award provision for DCJ to be able to pay their residential staff directly?	I am advised:

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			Ms KATE WASHINGTON: As part of the measures that we have put into place to address the crisis we inherited, alongside recruiting foster carers, supporting caseworkers, we are now stepping into the game of standing up our own residential care places. They are called the Waratah Care Cottages. We have stood up four of five of those. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I'm asking about staffing. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: And we are— The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Are they contracted? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: We have got in place DCJ house managers. Then under them we have got contracted arrangements in place for these staff, whilst we work out an award— The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Sorry, Minister, just to clarify, you just said you do have contracted staff? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Yes, we do. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: And what are their qualifications? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Whilst we work out an award arrangement that is specific for residential care workers, because the Government hasn't done residential care for 20 years. So we've stepped back in urgently. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: What are the qualifications of contract staff? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I beg your pardon? The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: What are the qualifications of these contract staff? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I do have that information somewhere	This was answered by Paul O'Reilly on page 19 of the transcript.

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			but I will come back to you on that.	
12	19	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Are the staff being provided by for-profit organisations? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I will have to clarify.	I am advised: This question was partially answered by Paul O'Reilly on page 19 of the transcript. Whilst options are being explored, DCJ is using a mixed staffing model in the Waratah Care Cottages. DCJ-employed House Managers provide direct oversight and management of the care team in the cottages and residential care workers are engaged through Pegasus, a contracted labour company. DCJ jointly conducts recruitment, onboarding, and training with Pegasus to ensure alignment with care standards, the Waratah Care Cottages model and departmental operating requirements.
13	19	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Minister, how many DCJ districts are accredited at the moment? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: All of them. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: How many districts currently have an accreditation condition placed on them? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I would defer to Ms Dean on that. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Or maybe it might be easier if I use the term "performance improvement plan". RACHAEL WARD: Would you like me to answer that question? The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes, please. RACHAEL WARD: There's 16 accredited agencies. They're all accredited at the moment, but two of the DCJ districts have—sorry, I've forgotten the terminology. What was the question? The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Performance improvement plans.	I am advised: This was answered by Rachael Ward on page 56 of the transcript.

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			LAUREN DEAN: No, they're not. RACHAEL WARD: No. They're not performance improvement plans. Sorry, that's the terminology. LAUREN DEAN: Action plans. RACHAEL WARD: Yes. Two currently have conditions placed on their accreditation. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: What are the conditions for? RACHAEL WARD: To breaches of the standard—which I can come back to you after the break—the actual standards? The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes, that'd be great. Thank you very much. Minister, are you concerned that two of your districts have conditions placed on them and you weren't aware of it?	
14	27	The Hon. RACHEL MERTON:	The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Minister, how many caseworkers would currently be on workers compensation? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: That one I would have to take on notice. I'm not sure. But I will say that the work done by child protection and out-of-home care caseworkers is some of the most difficult work done by anyone in the State. It's incredibly complex, dealing with really complex situations constantly. As Minister, I want to do everything I can to make sure that they feel valued in the system. The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Would we be able to have that information for the afternoon session, if possible? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: In terms of the workers compensation? We'll try to get that for you this afternoon.	I am advised: As at 30 June 2025, there are a total of 291 open workers compensation claims for caseworkers, of which 178 are not working.

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15	29	The Chair	The CHAIR: Minister, the Minns Labor Government has announced \$250,000 funding to boost New South Wales school students that aims to increase the number of Australian para-athletes in the lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Games and challenge stereotypes about people living with disability. Can you elaborate on how much of this funding will go towards target shooting? It's a very popular Paralympic sport. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I appreciate the acknowledgement of the program. As I said earlier, it reflects on the Minister for Sport's focus on improving inclusion and accessibility of all sports. In terms of target shooting, I'm happy to have that conversation with him and you to see how that can be accommodated as part of that program—indeed, it may well already be. I'm afraid I'll have to come back to you on that.	I am advised: The Office for Sport allocated \$250,000 to Paralympics Australia that will increase awareness of inclusion and accessibility for Year 3-6 students and promote opportunities for students with a disability. The co-facilitated program is being delivered across NSW throughout 2025 and 2026. The program is not sport-specific or sport-exclusive. Further questions relating to para-sports should be directed to the Minister for Sport.
16	29	The Chair	The CHAIR: Will you, or could you, advocate to have vision-impaired target shooting become a Paralympic sport? It's not included at the moment. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I'm happy to have those conversations. If I might, I will correct the record for an answer I gave you earlier around boating. I thought it was the Boating Now Program, but it's the Boating Infrastructure for Communities Grants Program that involved improving disability access to a number of different boating infrastructure pieces across the State. From the information I've got, there were 40 projects to enhance disability access and 22 upgrades to boat ramps. To your earlier question, in that program there's been a real focus in terms of improving accessibility. The CHAIR: Maybe you could take it on notice since you've got some information there in relation to that. How many of those	I am advised: The question relating to vision-impaired target shooting was answered on page 29 of the transcript. Further questions relating to para-sports should be directed to the Minister for Sport. 40 out of 46 facilities under the Boating Infrastructure for Communities Grants Program are being upgraded for disability access. This represents approximately 87% of all funded projects incorporating disability access improvements. The program has a strong focus on making boating infrastructure more inclusive and accessible for people with mobility impairments and other disabilities.

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			are being upgraded for disability access? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I can certainly take it on notice. I think that's the broader piece of work that's going on with councils in terms of their disability inclusion action plans and their access to other different grants to improve amenities and other areas as well.	Further questions regarding Boating Infrastructure for Communities Grants Program should be directed to the Minister for Transport.
17	32	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:	Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Can I just endorse Mr Tidball's recognition of Mr Jeff Smith as commissioner. It's the first time, in a budget estimates hearing as well, and I apologise. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: But that \$2 million a year was previously DCJ top-up funding, so in terms of the actual amount that the commission is getting in order to do its work, which we all agree is incredibly valuable, it's not actually seeing a significant increase, then, in funding. MICHAEL TIDBALL: The total quantum now per year is \$7.2 million. As I recall it, in the years I've been in this job, I don't think the funding is always supplemented by the department to the tune of \$2 million, although I might check on that and clarify this afternoon. In terms of certainty and the commission being able to plan its work, it does place the commission in a stronger position and provides a basis for us to further look at demand and other things, and look at how we resource the commission over the longer term.	I am advised: The 2025/26 Budget has provided an additional \$8 million over four years for the Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC). The additional \$2 million per year lifts the baseline budget of the ADC to \$7.2 million per year to support its vital work. Since the inception of the ADC in 2019, the Department of Communities and Justice has provided additional grant funds each year to mitigate the ADC's budget shortfall and support the ADC's important work.
18	34	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES:	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Minister, you're repeating what you've already said. I'm happy to move on. I've got limited time. Minister, on to the Carer Allowance, you talked about recruiting 200 emergency foster carers. I want to know how many of those are new carers and how many are existing carers that are now taking emergency placements? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: When it comes to foster carers and the	I am advised:

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			recruitment of foster carers, it is part of our effort and reform to fix the crisis that we inherited. We have switched back on the recruitment of foster carers that had been switched off, inexplicably, by your Government, and it was— The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Minister, I'm asking specifically, of the 200, how many are new carers and how many are existing carers? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: We now have more than 200 emergency foster carers as part of that recruitment. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes, and how many— Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I will have to take on notice the number of those that were existing carers	As at 7 August 2025, DCJ has 252 emergency foster carer households. This includes 119 newly authorised carer households.
19	35	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES:	NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Since the removal of the Structured Decision Making tool, how many Aboriginal children have entered care? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I'll have to take that on notice, but we heard Aboriginal communities and families about the importance of switching off that tool and putting in place an interim tool. The work on the redesign of the tool going forward is being done closely in partnership with AbSec and ALS.	I am advised: The number of Aboriginal children entering care in 2024–25 increased by 206 children, when compared with 2023–24.
20	36	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES:	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: That's good. That's our understanding, that it would. Minister, I might move on. How many children between the ages of 14 and 16 who have been reported as ROSH are not in a secure home? Couch surfing or— Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I will have to take that on notice	I am advised: All specialist homelessness services (SHS) providers are mandatory reporters and have an obligation to report children and young people (CYP) who present unaccompanied to their service. As was the case when you were the former minister, data on the number of children in this age group reported as ROSH and not in a secure home is not captured in a way that enables extraction for statewide reporting.

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21	36	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES:	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Minister, I ask each year usually about the education plans for young people. Last September, estimates were advised last year's figures were 70 per cent were enrolled—these are children in out-of-home care that were enrolled in school. We were advised that the figures for this year would be available in June '25. Do you have those? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: In terms of— The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: The number of children in out-of-home— Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Their enrolment at schools? Yes, I believe we've got those and we can provide them to you. I can take it on notice and provide them to you.	I am advised: Data for calendar year 2025 is not yet available, however, for 2024 calendar year: 8,606 (77.9%) of children and young people under Parental Responsibility of the Minister were enrolled in a NSW public school. *Note: Unique children and young people in PRM as at extract dates and whether they were enrolled using latest data from NSW Education. *Note: CYP were counted as enrolled in a NSW public school if they had attendance data recorded. Non-government schools are not included.
22	37	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES:	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Do you have a time frame? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: As I have said numerous times, we have been open and honest about the system we have. Any data that we can capture, we are trying to make it as public as possible. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Do you have a time frame of when you'd be expecting to know how many children in your care— Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I don't have that for you right now. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Can you take it on notice? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I can take that on notice, yes.	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) policy requires that cooperative planning to develop Personalised Learning and Support Plans (PLaSPs, also referred to as 'education plans') is commenced as soon as possible after a child or young person where the Minister holds parental responsibility for education enters care and/or commences school for the first time. Work is underway to improve system capture of education plans for all students and enhancements will be required to ChildStory to allow NGO OOHC service providers to record and upload education plans onto the DCJ platform, which are currently not recorded in a systemic way as a datapoint.

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23	37	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES:	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: How many children in your care have a healthcare plan? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Again, that is a requirement that every child who comes into the system has not only a healthcare plan but, more importantly, starts a health check within 30 days of coming into the system. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: And how many— Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Again, we are doing the work that needs to be done to tighten up our capture of that data. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: But no time frame? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I can provide that to you on notice.	I am advised: As was the case when you were the former minister, the recording of health assessments in ChildStory does not occur consistently to enable accurate data extraction. Work is underway, to improve consistent recording (that allows for data extraction) as well as continued partnership with NSW Health to improve service delivery.
24	38	Ms SUE HIGGINSON:	Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, is it the case that the numbers at the moment are that on average 15 Aboriginal children are being removed each week? Is that your understanding? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Sorry, I missed the— Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Fifteen Aboriginal children per week are being removed from their families. Is that your understanding? Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I will have to check that, Ms Higginson.	I am advised: There were 1,013 Aboriginal children and young people who entered out-of-home care during 2024/25. This is equivalent to approximately 20 Aboriginal children and young people per week.
25	39	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES:	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Just back to residential care, and the cottages that you are currently operating, I'm interested to know what the youngest age of a person is in that care. Ms KATE WASHINGTON: What I'm particularly pleased with, in terms of the Waratah Care Cottages, is that they are designed to keep siblings together. So we do have children with quite an age range, where they are siblings. I'll get the detail to you in terms of the youngest in one of our cottages, but it does mean that there are age ranges, because it means that they can be together in one home instead of a high-cost emergency	I am advised: As at 13 August 2025, the youngest child in the Waratah Cottages is six years old.

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			arrangement, or a hotel or motel, which we got them out of to come into the Waratah Care Cottages	
26	39	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES:	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: What's the longest stay of a young person in a serviced apartment? PAUL O'REILLY: I would have to come back to you on that.	I am advised: As at 31 July 2025, the longest stay for a child or young person in a serviced apartment was 514 days.
27	42	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: That then brings us to another one of the ideas that has been put forward in relation to Working with Children Checks, which is that we have conditional approval so that, for example, you can work with children in this particular instance but not in that instance. For example, I've seen people given prohibition notices because they have lost their temper and treated children in a really poor way, but the regulator has said, "We think this is to do with you being under a particular stress or your particular centre not having the right supports," or whatever it is. Is there a proposal, or has any thought been given to the idea, that someone might be prohibited from working with children in an intense setting such as early childhood but might still be okay to go and do contract work on a school doing construction, for instance? RACHAEL WARD: I'd have to take that question on notice. I can't recall whether or not it's in the discussion paper, but I would make this comment: I think it would be a slippery slope because, when we are already having compliance and verification issues, to then add an element of supervision or your check is only valid for this purpose, I think, could actually create a loophole.	I am advised: A NSW Working with Children Check (WWCC) is able to be used in any child-related role. Any departure from this widely-understood premise may lead to significant unintended outcomes, and would require a clear logic and rationale. This change is not being considered by government.

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28	43	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: A couple of the recommendations were in relation to training—there was one for training for legal professionals and one for training for the NSW Police Force—to better develop the understanding of the dynamics at play when you have children who have been subject to risk-of-harm reports and they're part of a domestic violence scenario. In relation to the Department of Communities and Justice working with the NSW Police Force to develop training and guidance, it was only noted in the response. Are you able to tell us why it was simply noted rather than the Government supporting that recommendation? MICHAEL TIDBALL: It may have turned on resourcing. I recall the recommendation. I would like to give you a considered response on notice, if I may, to that question. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: That would be great. MICHAEL TIDBALL: Can I just indicate, if it is something which I am able to take up with New South Wales police now, and if I could just assess the merits of it, I would be happy to undertake to do that.	I am advised: The Secretary has undertaken to liaise with NSW Police on this matter.
29	45	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES:	NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: In relation to the new caseworkers, which I think was \$191 million, how much of that is for the increase in wages of existing staff? MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes, I can respond to that, with some help. Can we take that on notice? We can provide a figure; we'll just need to provide it on notice.	I am advised: \$191.5 million was set aside in the 2025-26 NSW Budget to support significant additional investment in new and existing caseworkers. Specific details can be made available when the new Caseworker Award is finalised, not prior for obvious reasons.
30	46	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Can I get a breakdown of how much is being spent to retain the 2,126 caseworkers, and then, how much is for existing wages. MICHAEL TIDBALL: I'm happy to take that on notice	I am advised: Please see response to QTON 29.

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31	46	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: And then, how much is for employing new caseworkers? MICHAEL TIDBALL: I'm happy to take that on notice.	I am advised: Please see response to QTON 29.
32	47	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Were any other options presented when you spoke to the Minister about the Waratah cottages? Were any other options considered? PAUL O'REILLY: Not that I am aware of. But I was not in all the conversations myself, so I don't know. I'm not aware of other options being considered. The intention was to start, as we've said before, re-establishing DCJ's role and capability in providing direct residential care. That was the intention, and then it was a question of how quickly we can do that to take pressure off those younger sibling groups at HCEA. That was the course that was taken last year. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: And did that advice or recommendation to go down the residential care path come from the department or was it from the Minister? PAUL O'REILLY: I would have to check exactly what the documents say about all of that and come back to you. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Could you also then look at whether any other options were presented to address that very issue? PAUL O'REILLY: Yes, happy to.	I am advised: Expanding DCJ delivered residential care, now known as the Waratah Care Cottages, is one of six initiatives announced by the Minister in 2024 as part of Tranche One reforms to stabilise the OOHHC system. Collectively, these reforms aim to address the most critical challenges inherited by the NSW Government and impacting the OOHHC system, including the use of high-cost emergency arrangements (HCEA) and consequent financial sustainability.
33	47	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Back to the 44, the \$49.2 million is over three years? PAUL O'REILLY: I believe three or four, but I'll confirm that. MICHAEL TIDBALL: Just let me check on that. Hopefully before the session is out, I can respond to you with a final answer.	This was answered by Michael Tidball on page 75 of the transcript.

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34	49	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: But I'm not asking about the accuracy of the data. I did ask, if you had any of that information in various categories, if you could come with it this afternoon. I'm actually asking if things like "children in care reported at ROSH that are waiting for an assessment"—does that exist in the category? LAUREN DEAN: I have to take it on notice, Ms Maclaren-Jones, unless you're willing to share what you're referring to. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Could you take on notice each category that is available. That would include children with allocation decisions pending; children with allocation decisions pending, less than 28 days; children allocated field assessment, not commenced; children in care reported at ROSH awaiting assessment; and then also children with allocations decisions pending, greater than 60 days. LAUREN DEAN: I'm happy to take those items on notice Ms Maclaren-Jones, but not beyond that, given the size and scope of our database. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Also, could you then provide the breakdown for the financial year? I'm not asking for this 1 July but the last 2024-25 data, which, I assume you would have had looked at and cleansed by then. LAUREN DEAN: I'll take that on notice. We'll supply what we can	I am advised: The primary purpose of the operational dashboard is to ensure point-in-time visibility of families as they await allocation decisions and throughout the investigation process, and to assist in point-in-time management decisions. It does not present validated data, given frontline caseworkers are not required to enter data in real time – for obvious reasons. Therefore, the dashboard may include families that have received a response; or families who have already engaged with DCJ-provided or -funded services, as new reports are often received as a result of these engagements. The categories in the operational dashboard include: • Children with allocation decision pending • Children no triage > 28 days • Children with allocation decision pending > 28 days • Children allocated field assessment not commenced • Children allocated for review existing case or other • Children in care reported at ROSH The dashboard is refreshed daily, incorporating data entered the day before. It does not retain historical data over the course of the year, nor does it provide access to prior days' priority lists. For data accuracy reasons, it is not intended to serve as a public performance report.
35	55	The Hon. NATASHA	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Just following on from that, do you have the number of staff that are employed with the Joint Child Protection	I am advised: Please refer to attachment QTON# 35-36 Table.

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		MACLARE N-JONES	Response team? LAUREN DEAN: I do, if you'd like to give me a moment to find that. There's 119 caseworkers allocated to the JCPRP area of work. Just a call-out to them: They do an immensely, incredibly difficult job each and every day, working with the tri-agency of the police and NSW Health as well. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes, they do. How many vacancies are there? LAUREN DEAN: I might have to take that on notice, Ms Maclaren-Jones. I don't think I've got a specific JCPRP vacancy rate, just the overall vacancy rate of 7 per cent. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: If you could provide that by district as well for the JCPRT. LAUREN DEAN: The district rate for vacancies? The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes. LAUREN DEAN: Yes, we can do that.	
36	55	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Could you provide that as a breakdown by district and also those that are on workers comp from the JCPRT? LAUREN DEAN: I'll take it on notice, as long as the number is large enough that we maintain confidentiality.	I am advised: Please refer to attachment QTON# 35-36 Table.
37	55	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes, that's fine, I understand. I might just touch on family preservation programs. In the DCJ funding approach paper, it states that there'll be additional funding for the cultural and linguistically diverse communities. Has that funding been allocated the amount? PAUL O'REILLY: I don't have the funding approach paper with me right now, but I think what that comment or that statement refers to is the build-up of the funding model for the client	I am advised: Information relating to the breakdown of annualised contract values per district for 2026/27, with additional loadings given to districts with families with higher needs, are contained in the Funding Approach Paper: https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/service-providers/deliver-services-to-children-and-families/family-preservation/family-preservation-funding-approach.pdf.

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			group. People providing services to those clients will have a particular funding model for those clients, but I might take it on notice to provide a more detailed response.	
38	55	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Also around the CALD advisory service and when that will be implemented. PAUL O'REILLY: I'll come back to you on that.	I am advised: \$800,000 p.a. has been reserved to fund a specialist statewide Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) service to support practitioners delivering Families Together to access cultural expertise and advice for working with CALD families. Procurement is expected to progress in 2026.
39	55	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: There's an additional loading for CALD communities and also Aboriginal families. Was consideration given to rural, regional and remote communities? PAUL O'REILLY: It was a very long consultation and co-design process before I started here in this program. I will check whether that came up in any of the other conversations or considerations and come back to you. It was a very long and complex process.	I am advised: Please refer to the QTON 37.
40	55	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: What were the data that was analysed? I noticed that the Hunter got a lot more versus PAUL O'REILLY: The Hunter is a good example. The Hunter is a very big, complex area. It has a very high demand for child protection and out-of-home care. Surprising to a lot of people, the level of demand up there. It's not surprising to me that it would get more need-identified and family preservation resource allocation model. That makes sense to me in terms of a needs-based approach. If I was to give you all of the need metrics accurately—I don't want to mislead you—I will take it	I am advised: Please refer to the QTON 37.

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			away because it is complex, and I don't want to mislead you.	
41	58	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Do you have a breakdown of the number of young people that would have a cultural plan that's both Aboriginal and CALD? LAUREN DEAN: I do. If you wanted to give me a moment, I think I actually have that in my notes, Ms Maclaren-Jones. Do you want me to take that on notice and provide it back? Is that quicker? The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes, that's fine.	I am advised: DCJ undertake multicultural planning for children and young people in out of home care with a CALD background, as part of the case planning process. There are, however, no specific 'CALD Plans' and as such, data on cultural plans for children and young people from a CALD background is not readily extractable from the Child Story system. For Aboriginal children and young people, data on cultural support plans is readily extractable. At 30 June 2025, 412 children and young people were identified as Aboriginal and CALD, and under parental responsibility to the Minister, requiring a cultural support plan. Of those Aboriginal children and young people, 72.3% had a cultural support plan.
42	60	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: You took some of this on notice this morning, but could you advise the number of section 90s that the department has applied for in the past 12 months—I'm happy with financial year—broken down by how long they were in care and whether or not those section 90s were successful? LAUREN DEAN: Yes, we can take those three aspects on notice.	I am advised: • 284 applications in the period 1 September 2024 to 1 September 2025 were filed by DCJ under section 90. 138 of these matters were finalised in that period. Of the 138 matters that were finalised, 29 of them resulted in restoration orders and 59 resulted in guardianship orders. • In the same period, a total of 260 applications filed by DCJ under section 90 were finalised. Of these, 57 of the orders recorded involved restoration; and 83 resulted in guardianship or parental responsibility to another suitable person orders.

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				Data on the number of section 90 applications filed by DCJ cannot be broken down by how long the child was in care at the time of filing.
43	61	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: A final question, which is both to yourself and also to Ms Ward, around data sharing. I'm interested to know how many formal information sharing agreements you currently have and with which agencies. JEFF SMITH: If I can answer that in general terms and then take the question on notice. I know that we've got, either signed or in train, quite a few. We've got one with police which, amongst other things, involves read-only access to the COPS database. That helps in much of the work that we do. We've got one in the late stages with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. As I understand it, that work has been going on since 2019. I'm not quite sure when we're going to get the signature on that, but I approved the final version just the other day. We've got a pilot and a memorandum of understanding with the NDIS commission as well, and we've got one with the health department	I am advised: The ADC currently has 12 formal information sharing agreements in place, with: • NSW Trustee and Guardian • NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) • NSW Office of the Children's Guardian • NSW Ombudsman • NSW Police Force • NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission • National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) • Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) • Office of the NSW Legal Services Commissioner • NSW Health • Seniors Rights Service • Relationships Australia NSW.
44	62	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Mr Tidball, has there been any data breaches within DCJ in the last 12 months? MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes. DCJ is a very significant entity. The most significant data breach, which I think is more relevant to the Attorney General's estimates, but I don't mind indicating—The	I am advised: The number of eligible data breaches received by the DCJ Open Government and Information Privacy (OGIP) unit for the 2024/25 financial year is 11. These data breaches have involved the data of families and young people.

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			Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I'm on that one as well. MICHAEL TIDBALL: The registry end of JusticeLink in the court system was subject to a data breach. There has been comprehensive communication around it. I'm looking for help, and I don't have a note on it. There are— The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: That's okay. We've got the AG next week, and I'm on that. MICHAEL TIDBALL: I just want to ensure that I respond with precision. Can I advise of others, not on notice? There have been several data breaches. We're working with two providers, and currently working with another one, in relation to an incident that meets the threshold of requiring data breach notification—I'm talking service providers. The first incident, which has now been completed, was reported in July 2024, so it is just over a year ago. It arose from a phishing email being received by a staff member who opened an attachment giving the threat actors access to the organisation's systems. The second incident, which has now also been completed, was reported in September 2024 and was as a result of a data breach involving a third-party provider which was used to provide email spam-filtering services. It was determined that this was a notifiable breach. Then there was a third incident reported on 14 January 2025 involving a threat actor and ransomware. That incident was contained, and the notification procedure is well advanced. The most recent incident continues to be managed by DCJ, by our data response team, in close collaboration with the impacted provider. I can indicate that DCJ liaised with the information and privacy commissioners on these matters, with notification approaches	

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			completed, and continues to liaise with them about the matter that is still underway. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Did it involve young people or families? MICHAEL TIDBALL: I would need to take that on notice.	
45	63	Ms SUE HIGGINSON:	SUE HIGGINSON: Is the name of the taskforce the Aboriginal Authority for Restoring Children? Is there a particular name for this— PAUL O'REILLY: That's how it is known, but all that stuff is being worked through. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So at the moment it's known as the AARC, internally? PAUL O'REILLY: Yes. MICHAEL TIDBALL: For the sake of accuracy, we would prefer to take it on notice.	I am advised: At this time, there is no agreed name for the intended restoration taskforce. The NSW Government continues to work in good faith to develop an Aboriginal-led model towards funding and implementation decisions.
46	63	Ms SUE HIGGINSON:	Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I'm very interested in how many children currently in the system have a case plan goal of restoration, and then how many Aboriginal children exited care by way of a restoration. MICHAEL TIDBALL: Ms Higginson, I just want to check this. I think I do have it. No, we'll take it on notice. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I know we ask for things in particular ways and it might not necessarily be the way that it's recorded. MICHAEL TIDBALL: We'll take it on notice. Thank you.	I am advised: There were 131 Aboriginal children and young people restored to their parents from OOHC in 2024/25. Approximately half (65) had a case plan goal of restoration. Another 35 had a case plan goal of 'Assess Restoration'.
47	63	Ms SUE HIGGINSON:	Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Ms Jarrett, the 130 children that exited last year—is there any way to understand whether there's a margin that might return or is there firm certainty that these children have well and truly exited the out-of-home care system?	I am advised: Data from the 2025 Report on Government Services shows that for all the NSW children that exited care to a permanency arrangement in 2022/23 (restoration, guardianship and

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			BIANCA JARRETT: Ms Dean is probably better placed to answer because it's operational data. LAUREN DEAN: I'd have to take that specific question on notice. But at no point would we undertake a restoration activity with a margin that expects kids to re-enter out-of-home care. We would describe that as failure in its most extreme state	adoption), 95.7% had not re-entered care by the end of 2023/24.
48	63	Ms SUE HIGGINSON:	Ms SUE HIGGINSON: In terms of that experience, from previous years, is there a percentage of understanding of a child coming back into the system? LAUREN DEAN: I'd have to take that question on notice. It's not something that we're tracking to say this is the percentage that return, although I would suggest it's part of our annual reporting requirement. So if you're happy for us to take that question on notice—	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to QTON 47.
49	64	Ms SUE HIGGINSON:	Ms SUE HIGGINSON: From the very early days and given the behemoth data system that DCJ has to run, is there likely to be the requirement of some kind of legislative change in order to give true to the data sovereignty requirements of First Nations families and communities? PAUL O'REILLY: I don't know. Certainly there are different views about what it means to implement data sovereignty, absolutely. There are lots of different views. Any change that requires the sharing of personal information of people in contact with the system is clearly going to require significant consideration and, potentially, change. That is an important threshold, I think, in understanding the nature and scale of change and whether legislation reform is needed. We've not gotten to that stage of the analysis. MICHAEL TIDBALL: I think it's really important that Bianca Jarrett speaks on this.	I am advised: This question was answered by Bianca Jarrett on page 64 of the transcript.

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			BIANCA JARRETT: There are a few various things. First and foremost, under PR4, CAPO has been funded to progress the work regarding Indigenous data sovereignty and governance, but we are doing a few things internally. Obviously we have funded data connectors under Closing the Gap. That continues. There's an Aboriginal governance panel that has been established for a while now, and AbSec chairs that. That's to provide oversight and direction for the Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study, which is the first larger scale prospective longitudinal study of children and young people in out-of-home care. That panel advises and supports the study on data collection, analysis, interpretation and translation of findings into policy practice. In 2023 FACSIAR executed 10 service agreements for Aboriginal-led or partnered research projects, and they were selected by an all-Aboriginal panel, which was a mixture of DCJ Aboriginal staff and also stakeholders including AbSec. Dr Paul Gray was involved in selecting those research proposals. This is not in this portfolio but, just to quickly add, BOCSAR and the Aboriginal Legal Service have also jointly established an Aboriginal governance group, which oversees data and research related to criminal justice. So there are things happening. We also support many communities and many ACCOs with their data requests. They'll come to us and want specific data. We work with them and FACSIAR or BOCSAR to fulfil those data requests. Obviously BOCSAR has an information service as well, and FACSIAR are looking at —sorry, this is probably your space, Anne— ANNE CAMPBELL: No— BIANCA JARRETT: FACSIAR are looking at doing the same thing.	

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			We can provide more information on notice if that's helpful.	
50	65	Ms SUE HIGGINSON:	Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Given the ALS is running the family advocacy service, is there a connection there between the ALS work in the criminal justice space and that family advocacy service? Is there a nexus that's happening? BIANCA JARRETT: Possibly where there are connections or links to families involved in the youth justice system in particular. That will be teased out further in the evaluation. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Do you know what the decision was to set it all up in Moree? BIANCA JARRETT: I think just because of the advocacy by the ALS regarding the impact of the youth bail laws and the need for additional supports for Aboriginal families in Moree. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: When was it set up? BIANCA JARRETT: They were funded in 2022-23. There were some delays in getting those pilots started, with some recruitment challenges for the ALS, so it started a little bit later than that. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Was it something where the ALS came to DCJ with a proposal? BIANCA JARRETT: Yes. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: But it's only funded until 30 June 2026 at this point? BIANCA JARRETT: Yes. They received four years of funding. We continue to manage that contract and monitor the progress, and we'll continue to review what the positives are. It's being evaluated.	I am advised: In the first three quarters of 2024/25, from July 2024 to March 2025, 1,447 referrals were made to Legal Assistance for Families Partnership Agreement services, involving 1,853 children and young people. Data for the final quarter is not yet available.

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			Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Is there any anecdotal feedback at this point in time? BIANCA JARRETT: I'm sure there is, but I don't have it here. But I'm happy to provide that on notice. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: If you can, on notice, if there is any kind of anecdotal feedback— BIANCA JARRETT: I believe there's a mid-term evaluation that may be almost complete. We may be able to share some of that information, but I'll have to confirm that on notice. LAUREN DEAN: Ms Higginson, if I could also add that we are working closely with the ALS and Legal Aid across the entire division in the child protection system, referring children and young people and families for earlier legal advice, strong advocacy and increased transparency throughout the entire process. That remains a high priority also. I understand that there have been more than 2,000 referrals to LAFPA. We could take on notice to provide further information about that.	
51	66	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Do you have the ratio of caseworker to child case management for DCJ? LAUREN DEAN: Which child? As in children and young people in out-of-home care case management? The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes. LAUREN DEAN: Just remembering that the department only has case management for about 50 per cent of children, and noting that that number fluctuates, I'll just see if I've got the ratio. If I don't have it, Mrs Maclaren-Jones, can I take it on notice? The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes, that's fine.	I am advised: There were 13,582 children and young people in OOHC at 30 June 2025. Approximately half of these children and young people (6,757 or 49.7%) were case managed by DCJ. At 30 June 2025, there were 554 caseworkers funded for OOHC, and the average caseload was approximately 12 per caseworker.

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			LAUREN DEAN: I don't think we've got the specific case allocation number, so I'll have to take that on notice, please. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Is that something that you capture on an annual basis? LAUREN DEAN: The number fluctuates all the time for obvious reasons because we've got children and young people coming in and out of the cohort and we have caseworkers coming in and out of the cohort, so the number fluctuates. I can take on notice to give you an average for the last financial year.	
52	67	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Could I get a breakdown of the number of adoptions before those contracts changed and to the current financial year—so 2023-24 and 2024-25? I'm happy for you to take that on notice. MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes. We'll take that on notice.	I am advised: There were 9 local adoptions in 2023/24 and less than 5 in 2024/25. These figures do not include OOHC adoptions.
53	67	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Yes. That brings me to unaccompanied humanitarian minors. How many are currently in DCJ or under the supervision of the Minister? MICHAEL TIDBALL: We will need to take that on notice.	I am advised: As at 1 September 2025, there are 21 unaccompanied humanitarian minors under the supervision of the Minister.
54	67	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: That's fine. A question in the previous estimates was in relation to 30 June, the number of young people in out-of-home care with a case plan goal. I asked for the breakdown of adoption, restoration, guardianship, long-term care, assess restoration and then there were a number who are blank. What does blank mean? MICHAEL TIDBALL: I would really prefer to take that on notice for the sake of accuracy.	I am advised: 'Blank' generally means that the child or young person did not yet have a case plan goal. This means that the child may have entered OOHC recently and caseworkers were still working with the child and their family to determine appropriate case plan goals, at the time of data reporting. It is also possible that some data may be missing due to data quality issues, requiring remediation.

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55	67	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: That's fine. This might be another one—a similar thing. When asked about case plan goals from zero to 17, it states that there were a number of children—for this one it's around 4,000—that did not require a case plan, or a small proportion has missing goals. I'm just interested to know why they wouldn't have a case plan and what the missing goals would be. LAUREN DEAN: We'll have to take on notice in relation to the missing goals. As to why they might not need a plan, it depends where they've entered out-of-home care; it depends when they've exited; it depends on the order and a range of other things. Can I just circle back? You asked a question about local adoption numbers. I've got some of those here if it's useful for me to share with you. In relation to 2024-25 preliminary numbers, were you asking about local adoption, or adoption generally?	I am advised: Only children and young people under parental responsibility to Minister are required to have a case plan. There may be children in supported or voluntary care who do not require a case plan. In relation to missing goals, this potentially means that the child may have entered OOHC recently and the caseworkers are still working with the child and family to determine the appropriate case plan goal. It is also possible that some data may be missing due to data quality issues, requiring remediation.
56	67	The Hon. NATASHA MACLARE N-JONES	LAUREN DEAN: There were zero Aboriginal children adopted and then I understand it's 55 children adopted for the whole year, and that is a decrease from the year prior. The year prior it was 64 in total and five of those children were Aboriginal. Sorry, can I have another go at that? In relation to 2024-25, it was zero Aboriginal children adopted and 55 non-Aboriginal children adopted—a total of 55. For the year prior—I think you asked about also—it was five Aboriginal children adopted, 64 non-Aboriginal children adopted, and 69 in total. The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: How does that reflect	I am advised: At 30 June 2024, 197 children in OOHC had a permanency goal of 'Adoption'. By June 2025, the number with adoption as their permanency goal increased by 4, reaching 201. At 30 June 2024, 5 Aboriginal children and young people had a permanency goal of 'Adoption'.

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			the number of young people that have a case plan goal of adoption? Has that also decreased? LAUREN DEAN: I'd have to take that on notice to confirm that we're providing you with accurate information about	
57	70	Ms SUE HIGGINSON:	Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Does the department currently publish data on the prevalence of disability amongst Aboriginal children and young people in the out-of-home care space? ANNE CAMPBELL: We do publish it more broadly. I'm not sure if it's broken down by Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal, but I can take that on notice. Certainly, there were a number of recommendations from the disability royal commission around Aboriginal children and data. We've had a number of consultations over the last year-and-a-half, particularly with First Nations. I think it's the First People's Aboriginal network that have raised issues about the lack of disability data, both within the child protection system but equally within the justice system, so we are trying to progress joint work on that. One of the other bits of work that one of my teams, FACSIAR, are doing is looking at the number of children recorded in the ChildStory system who are notified as having a disability versus what we now have access to through the NDIA data, in which I suspect the prevalence is much higher. We have a higher number of children and young people in out-of-home care that have an NDIS plan than what's reported at the moment, which is that about 19 per cent of children in out-of-home care have a disability. I think it's likely to be closer to 38 or 39 per cent, but don't hold me to that; we're just finalising the cross-check and getting permission from the NDIA to share that data.	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 147.

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58	71	Ms SUE HIGGINSON:	Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I will ask you when we're in the other estimates about whether we capture that number in relation to also presenting with a disability. I think I'd have to do that from the Justice end, wouldn't I, to get that? PAUL O'REILLY: Yes, you would, and I may well take it on notice. Thanks for the heads-up. We'll try and get something earlier. This is a very complex question.	I am advised: This is not a QTON.