

175 The Hon Kate WASHINGTON MP

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES, AND DISABILITY INCLUSION

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
1	Sue Higginson MLC	Estimates project that the levy for the new Portable Long Service Leave scheme will cost the community services sector an additional \$84 million each year. a) Has the Government provided any funding to contribute to this new cost? b) Is the Government concerned that impacted organisations may need to cut service levels in response? c) What steps will the Minister take to support impacted organisations in her portfolio in covering costs for this new levy?	I am advised: a) It is unclear what data was used to determine this calculation. On average, providers are already acquitting 1.2% of their ordinary wages against DCJ contracts for existing long service leave (LSL) liabilities, making the additional cost of this scheme a nominal 0.5% of their ordinary wages to meet the 1.7% levy. The NSW Treasury indexation rate for financial year 2025/26 is 3.5% across entire contracts, not just the employee-related expenses portion. Indexation typically addresses increases in salary and wages, oncosts, superannuation, and unforeseen costs. b & c) The Scheme levy is not a new cost – community sector employers already had legally-enforceable long service accrual liabilities, but this scheme does represent a change in practice and requirements. Ultimately, greater funding certainty in the Secure Jobs and Funding Certainty Roadmap will strengthen employee retention, improve providers' capacity to plan and innovate, ensuring community service providers and their workers can focus on delivering outcomes for vulnerable communities.
2	Sue Higginson MLC	How many non-government out of home care providers are currently operating in NSW? a) How many were identified as having non-compliance issues as a result of the system review process? b) How many instances of non compliance related to financial issues?	I am advised: As at 1 June 2025, there were 53 Permanency Support Program (PSP) service providers, including 18 ACCOs.

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		c) How many instances of non compliance related to child protection issues? d) How many were subject to further audit following the system review? e) How many were subject to financial audit? f) How many financial audits produced results inconsistent with the Government's expectations?	(a, b & c) The System Review assessed the lack of effectiveness and accountability in out-of-home care (OOHC) as a systemic issue, but also highlighted a case of non-compliance that necessitated action. To address systemic lack of financial accountability in the PSP, we have negotiated contract variations with providers that came into effect from 1 September 2025. DCJ monitors compliance to the contract, and where concerns arise will undertake appropriate contractual action. (d, e & f) A number of accountability activities have been undertaken, including formal and informal audits, performance improvement plans, requests for information, and additional sector-wide reporting and declaration processes.
3	Sue Higginson MLC	How many reports has the Government received of young people in residential care facilities who are vulnerable to ongoing sexual abuse in the financial year: (a) 2024/25? (b) 2023/24? (c) 2022/23? (d) 2021/22? (e) 2020/21? (f) 2019/20? (g) 2018/19? (h) 2017/18?	I am advised: The number of children who were assessed with a Safety in Care issue related to sexual abuse for the following financial years is as follows. (a) 2024/25: 26 (b) 2023/24: 29 (c) 2022/23: 29 (d) 2021/22: 22 (e - h) This data is not readily available Data quality is poor for 2017/18 and 2018/19, and a counting rule change in 2019/20 means this data is not comparable to subsequent data.

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4	Sue Higginson MLC	How many reports has the Government received of young people in residential care facilities who are vulnerable to drug abuse? (a) 2024/25? (b) 2023/24? (c) 2022/23? (d) 2021/22? (e) 2020/21? (f) 2019/20? (g) 2018/19? (h) 2017/18?	I am advised: In 2017/18, 20 children and young people were reported at risk of significant harm while living in residential care, with drug use as the primary issue reported to the Child Protection Helpline. After 2017/18, drug use by the child or young person was included with other behaviours that placed them at risk. More recent data is not available for drug abuse specifically.
5	Sue Higginson MLC	The 2025/26 NSW budget includes \$8.5 million to "fund disability initiatives and upgrade government-owned disability properties." We understand this includes critical upgrades to Tomaree Lodge. What are the other specific disability initiatives that will be funded under this allocation?	I am advised: The 2025/26 Budget provided \$8.5 million to fund disability initiatives and upgrade government-owned disability properties. This includes \$4.6 million to remediate and enhance the Tomaree Lodge site. It also includes \$3.9 million over two years to deliver better outcomes for residents of government-owned disability housing in NSW, including support to find and relocate to homes that better meet their needs.
6	Sue Higginson MLC	What steps has the Minister taken to ensure recurrent funding for the Midjumbirri Youth Service in Marrickville? (a) Has there been an increase in funding for Midjumbirri since amalgamation? If not, why? (b) What steps does the government take to support services who transition to become ACCOs?	I am advised: Midjuburi Youth Resource Centre (MYRC) is currently funded under the Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Program. The TEI program will soon be recommissioned under the Community and Family Support (CaFS) program. MYRC transitioned to an ACCO in September 2024. There has not been an increase in funding since that time apart from government-funded indexation. The current recommissioning process will prioritise funding to ACCOs, and deliver at least 15% investment of CAFS funding to ACCO service delivery, in line with statewide needs.

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			b) DCJ provides support to all organisations who meet the definition of an ACCO under Clause 44 of Closing the Gap. The additional support DCJ can offer ACCOs includes support from local commissioning and planning teams, a centrally based Aboriginal commissioning team, funding prioritisation in some of DCJ's programs, culturally responsive procurement and sector development support including training and yarning circles. There are also a number of government-funded peak bodies and services funded to support the establishment and ongoing operation of ACCOs.
7	Sue Higginson MLC	Given the overwhelming need for Family Preservation programs, and the system imperative to reduce demand for out of home care, why has the Government chosen not to increase the quantum of funding to Family Preservation programs in New South Wales? (a) What is the number of Family Preservation places available to NSW families before and after recommissioning?	I am advised: The NSW Government is investing significantly more money in early intervention, prevention and intensive family preservation programs across the State. The number of available places for Family Preservation, across all models, is determined by the number of contracted places as well as the number of places that are in fact available from service providers (i.e. their capacity to deliver a contracted place). These numbers vary at any point in time for a variety of reasons. a) The NSW Government funds over 4,000 Family Preservation places each year. In 2023-24, 16,696 children and young people were supported by Family Preservation. For the first time, the recommissioning approach ensures that funding is distributed across districts based on need, and secures 40% to be delivered by ACCOs.

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8	Sue Higginson MLC	What was the total number of Family Preservation places available in New South Wales, overall in: (a) 2022-23? (b) 2023-24? (c) 2024-25?	I am advised: Please refer to SQ#7.
9	Sue Higginson MLC	What was the total number of Family Preservation places available in New South Wales in each DCJ district: (a) 2022-23? (b) 2023-24? (c) 2024-25?	I am advised: Please refer to SQ#7.
10	Sue Higginson MLC	For each District, in what proportion of cases where a child has been identified as being at risk of significant harm (ROSH), have families been referred to Family Preservations Services? (a) For each District, what is the average time between a ROSH report being received, and the families being referred to Family Preservation Services?	I am advised: Please refer to attachment SQ#10 Table.
11	Sue Higginson MLC	Has the Risk of Significant Harm threshold changed? (a) If yes, can the Minister provide a breakdown of which categories have changed and why? (b) If no, are there any plans to lower the threshold for ROSH?	I am advised: No, the Risk of Significant Harm threshold has not changed. In fact, Risk of Significant Harm is defined by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (Care Act). The Department of Communities and Justice continues to assess Risk of Significant Harm in alignment with the Care Act.
12	Sue Higginson MLC	How many kids between the ages of 14 to 16 who have been reported as ROSH, are not in secure homes (couch surfing)? (a) How many of these kids do not have active case work securing housing and appropriate support?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) does not maintain updated records of the living arrangements for children and young people reported at risk of significant harm. DCJ only maintains living arrangement records for children and young

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		(b) How many kids are in refuges and not allocated to a case worker actively locating permanent housing options?	people in out-of-home care, or in the care of the Minister or the Secretary.
13	Sue Higginson MLC	What is the government's rationale for capping community referrals into Family Preservation programs at 10%, despite strong stakeholder recommendations that this would lead to delays in providing support to families with a child at risk of significant harm? (a) DCJ's Finalising the Family Preservation foundational elements paper makes a commitment to "explore approaches to trial higher rates of community referrals in a small number of locations to build an evidence base and better understand whether an increased proportion of community referrals reduces the number of children and young people entering out of home care". How will stakeholders be consulted about the development of the trial, and when will it be implemented?	I am advised: The Finalising Family Preservation foundational elements paper set out that DCJ will have a referral split across NSW of 10 per cent community referrals and 90 per cent DCJ referrals. This approach enables DCJ, as the system steward that triages ROSH reports and has allocated cases, to have the best possible opportunity to arrange intensive support for children who are at risk of significant harm. This acknowledges that Family Preservation is the most intensive and most expensive service available to families who might otherwise enter out-of-home care, and ensures that DCJ is able to rely on Family Preservation supports to keep families safely together. (a) DCJ is currently considering how to approach the development of the trial. The consultation approach has not yet been determined.
14	Sue Higginson MLC	Does the government agree it has a cultural issue in the caseworkers in that some CSCs just do not make referrals? What is the Minister doing to rectify this?	I am advised: That proposition is not accurate. However, any missed or declined referral can have a significant impact on a family's capacity to stay safely together. Therefore, I have requested regular reports of vacant packages and declined referrals by district and provider.

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15	Sue Higginson MLC	DCJ's Funding Approach paper for Family Preservation services notes that \$5.6 million per annum will be held back by the department for implementation. What is the current status and intended use of the Family Preservation implementation funding? (a) When will detailed plans be released?	I am advised: For the first time, DCJ has a dedicated budget (\$5.6 million per annum) to support implementation of Family Preservation. This budget will become available from 1 April 2026, and fund system and operational requirements, data and evidence, oversight, practice and workforce development. (a) DCJ is currently developing an implementation plan which is intended to be published ahead of the commencement of new contracts on 1 April 2026. However, to be clear, it is not intended for this funding to be given to providers.
16	Sue Higginson MLC	The funding approach paper for Family Preservation programs notes that services will receive an additional CALD cultural loading when working with some families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and earmarks funding for an advisory service. (a) How will stakeholders be consulted about the development of the CALD advisory service, and when will it be implemented?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is currently developing an approach to commissioning the specialist Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) service to support practitioners to access cultural expertise and advice for working with CALD families. DCJ will consult key stakeholders, with procurement expecting to progress in 2026.
17	Sue Higginson MLC	How many reports are yet to be processed at the Helpline and are in the 'backlog'? (a) What is the oldest report yet to be assessed?	I am advised: The CPHL receives around 11,000 calls per month and 10,300 eReports monthly. Both telephone calls and eReports received by the Helpline are prioritised to ensure that the most urgent matters are responded to as quickly as possible. On submission of an eReport, the ChildStory system triggers an email notification to Helpline which is queued as a new interaction requiring review.

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			Helpline team managers are delegated to undertake a review of new eReports. All eReports are initially assessed by a Helpline team manager who will assign the report a priority level before placing it in a queue for Helpline caseworkers to process. At 30 June 2025, point in time operational data identified that 7,139 eReports were subject to the above process. (a) As stated above, all reports are initially assessed by a Helpline team manager. The oldest report yet to be finalised through the above process in the Helpline queue is 8 December 2024.
18	Sue Higginson MLC	Are you worried that there are children waiting to be assessed at the Helpline that may die without ever seeing a caseworker?	I am advised: Helpline reports that necessitate urgent action are given a response priority of <24 hours.
19	Sue Higginson MLC	How many reports that met the JCPR criteria resulted in criminal proceedings and ultimately convictions?	I am advised: The Joint Child Protection Response Program responds to and investigates serious and complex child protection matters in order to keep children and young people safe. It is not intended to monitor, track and report on criminal proceedings and convictions.
20	Sue Higginson MLC	In the past 29 months how many children have been left in Police Stations overnight because the Helpline afterhours team did not respond? (a) How old were these children and how did this happen? (b) Did the children sleep in the cells? (c) At which police stations did this occur?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice is aware of two instances in the last 29 months. (a) One child was 14 and the other was 12. The 14 year old required emergency accommodation. The 12 year old had absconded from her home and needed assistance from police. (b) They did not sleep in the cells.

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			(c) Both were in the Hunter Central Coast Area.
21	Sue Higginson MLC	Of children entered in the OOHC system, how many children received a face-to-face assessment? (a) Are there any CSCs that did not complete any face-to-face assessments in June, May or April 2025? (b) If so, which CSCs?	I am advised: In 2024/25, 1,404 children and young people entered out-of-home care for the first time. Of those children and young people, the Department of Communities and Justice records show that 1,386 (98.7%) were seen by a caseworker. Reasons that children and young people may not have had a face-to-face assessment could be due to transfers of orders from outside of NSW and recording issues on the system. (a & b) In 2024 to 2025, 1 CSC (Nyngan) did not perform a face-to-face assessment in the period from 1 April to 30 June 2025, as Nyngan reports are allocated to Cobar CSC.
22	Sue Higginson MLC	How many children entered care before a safety assessment was completed?	I am advised: A total of 1,404 children and young people entered out-of-home care for the first time in NSW during 2024/25. Of those children and young people, 72 (5.1%) did not have a safety assessment completed before they entered care. This could be due to recording issues on the system.
23	Sue Higginson MLC	How many children entered care in total during: (a) 2024-25? (b) 2023-24? (c) 2022-23? (d) 2021-22? (e) 2020-21?	I am advised: The number of children that entered out-of-home care in total during: (a) 2024-25: 2,001 (b) 2023-24: 1,767 (c) 2022-23: 2,175 (d) 2021-22: 2,045 (e) 2020-21: 2,406

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24	Sue Higginson MLC	How many children have transitioned from Alternative Care Arrangements (ACA) to Individualised Placement Arrangements (IPA) arrangements rather than into stable long term placements? (a) Of those in IPA, how many are placed with for-profit providers? (b) How many for-profit providers are there delivering IPAs? (c) How many for-profit providers are also providing housing supply to DCJ?	I am advised: Of the children and young people who exited ACAs between 1 July 2024 to April 1 2025: • 45 exited to another HCEA placement. 31 of these were IPAs. • 25 exited to foster care • 19 exited to Residential Care • 17 exited OOHC • <5 exited to Other OOHC Placement • <5 exited to Relative and Aboriginal Kinship Care (a) As at 13 August 2025, there are 202 children and young people in an IPA. Of those, 136 are placed with a for-profit service provider. (b) As at 13 August 2025, of the 19 providers delivering fee-for-service IPAs, 6 are for profit providers. (c) Homes NSW has no active contracts with any of the listed for-profit service providers.
25	Sue Higginson MLC	Over the last 5 years, how many children in the OOHC system have accessed Intensive Therapeutic Transitional Care (ITTC)?	I am advised: Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2025 (inclusive), there have been 333 entries into Intensive Therapeutic Care (ITTC) arrangements, including children who were already in placements as of 1 July 2020. This equates to 302 individual children.
26	Sue Higginson MLC	Is the Government exploring any alternatives to ITTC given DCJ has acknowledged there is an undersupply of residential care in some locations, particularly for children and young people with a disability?	I am advised: Yes. In considering out-of-home care (OOHC) reform strategy options, the NSW Government is reviewing all programs to ensure they are effective, efficient and meet the needs of children and young people, including those with complex needs or disability.

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27	Sue Higginson MLC	What are the implications for emergency care capacity for high needs children and young people with very complex needs and behaviours who cannot access ITTC?	I am advised: When a child or young person meets eligibility for an Intensive Therapeutic Transitional Care (ITTC) and a placement is not available, DCJ explores other placement options according to the Permanency Placement Priorities. DCJ is introducing two new residential care models to the Permanency Support Program, to avoid entries into a high-cost emergency arrangements (HCEA).
28	Sue Higginson MLC	How does the unit price for Intensive Therapeutic Care (ITC) in NSW compare to similar services in states like Victoria?	I am advised: The NSW Government has commissioned the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to advise on an efficient benchmark price for therapeutic residential care in NSW. The Out of Home Care (OOHC) cost and pricing review is expected to be delivered to Government by the end of September 2025. Comparative costings between jurisdictions are not possible as therapeutic residential OOHC service types differ between jurisdictions, including key cost drivers such as staffing levels, minimum qualifications, care requirements, service expectations, differing oversight mechanisms, and case management mechanisms.
29	Sue Higginson MLC	How will the government-run residential care model be staffed given there are no Award provisions for DCJ to be able to pay direct care residential staff? (a) How does the staffing differ from ACA arrangements with contracted staff?	I am advised: 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

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			model and departmental operating requirements. (a) The Waratah Care Cottages are grouped, therapeutic residential care homes which may provide medium to longer term care, in a stable accredited care environment. They are also accredited to the NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care by the OCG, its review found the Waratah Care Cottages to deliver a high standard of care, including staff recruitment, training and supervision. Alternative Care Arrangements, which are no longer in operation were individualised, emergency arrangements usually delivered by an agency without residential care accreditation on a fee for service basis in hotels, motels and caravan parks. Children placed in ACAs often had little certainty as to where they would be staying on any given night. The Waratah Care Cottages provide stability, certainty, connection and professional care.
30	Sue Higginson MLC	How will outcomes and economic efficiency be measured/evaluated in these departmentally operated house models?	I am advised: The Waratah Care Cottages are in the early stages of implementation, with a small number of children currently placed in the homes. The Department of Communities and Justice is in the process of determining the best approach to measuring outcomes. This work will contribute to the broader residential care program redesign, alongside recommendations from the Ombudsman's Intensive Therapeutic Care (ITC) Inquiry and the forthcoming ITC evaluation.
31	Sue Higginson MLC	How many children absconded from the Sherwood program in the last financial year? (a) What are you doing to prevent this from occurring?	I am advised: There were ten instances when a young person absconded from the Sherwood Program in the 2024/25 financial year.

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			(a) The program has proactive protocols in place to assess risk and ensure appropriate staffing levels are in place to prevent absconding, and to respond appropriately if it does occur.
32	Sue Higginson MLC	Does the government engage contract providers who have the same qualifications as required by NGO's, Diploma in youth work, Therapeutic Specialists?	I am advised: Current minimum qualification requirements for Waratah Care Cottages staff include: - Shift Mentors are required to hold a minimum Diploma level qualification in a relevant field such as Community Services, Social Work, Psychology, Nursing, or Mental Health - Residential Care Workers are required to hold at least a Certificate IV in a relevant field such as Community Services, Social Work, Psychology, Nursing, or Mental Health - The therapeutic framework for the Waratah Care Cottages is an extension of the Sherwood Program's therapeutic framework. Clinical interventions are delivered by either the Department of Communities and Justice Psychological and Specialist Services team, or a private clinical provider.
33	Sue Higginson MLC	Can the government provider describe the model they have implemented before providing services?	I am advised: The approach to therapeutic residential care in the Waratah Care Cottages is adapted from the established Sherwood Program, DCJ's long-running therapeutic residential care model accredited by the Office of the Children's Guardian. While core elements of the Sherwood Program remain in place such as staffing structures, the therapeutic framework, and approach to care. Adjustments have been made to align with the different target cohort for Waratah Care Cottages, noting Sherwood is for children and young people with the highest needs

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			and the Waratah Care Cottages are for children and young people with low or medium needs.
34	Sue Higginson MLC	What is the Government's future funding intention for the State Peaks Program? (a) With the reform agenda underway, how does the government intend to coordinate and implement with the sector? (b) Will there be an increased role for peaks in supporting implementation, what form will this take and how will it be resourced? (c) Does the Government have a view that there should be a consolidation or fewer number of Peaks?	I am advised: (a, b & c) The NSW Government acknowledges peak bodies have an important role to play in supporting the NSW community services sector. This is recognised through the government's commitment to ongoing funding under the State Peaks Program (SPP) and its recent recommissioning. A genuine and collaborative relationship is a key aspect of the SPP. The Department of Communities and Justice negotiates with each peak to agree what can be delivered within their individual funding envelopes. Peaks must continue to ensure they are purposeful, responsive and accountable to both the NSW Government, sector, the clients and participants that they support. Peak bodies represent the operational and financial interests of their members. This often, but not always, aligns with the government's role as the publicly accountable system steward. In this context, DCJ works collaboratively with peaks to implement government policy where it is beneficial to the public interest. The NSW Government does not have a view about the consolidation of peak bodies.
35	Sue Higginson MLC	Can the Minister confirm whether all carers will receive the full 20% increase on top of their actual current allowance? (a) Is it the case that some carers will not receive an increase in the allowance they receive?	I am advised: All carers will receive at least a minimum standard care allowance set by the Department of Communities and Justice, which will increase by 20 per cent from 1 January 2026, including for guardians and adoptive parents. The rate of increase for carers

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			receiving a Care + 1 or Care + 2 allowance is still being determined, but will also be significant.
36	Sue Higginson MLC	Why did the government not wait for the recommendations of the IPART report before adjusting carer allowance levels? (a) When will the final IPART report on Out-of-Home Care Costs and Pricing be publicly released?	I am advised. The NSW Government received the draft recommendations. The carer allowance increases announced in the 2025/2026 budget are broadly consistent with the recommended carer allowance levels. Waiting until the final IPART report would have significantly delayed the increase to carer allowances. a) The IPART report is expected in late September 2025.
37	Sue Higginson MLC	Of the newly announced caseworker positions, how many are new roles rather than refilled vacancies?	I am advised: 100 new Leading Caseworker positions have been created.
38	Sue Higginson MLC	Why were casework specialist roles deleted, and how will this impact service quality?	I am advised: Casework Specialist positions now report to district teams and have allocated cases to ensure vulnerable families are directly benefiting from some of our best and brightest caseworkers, and assist in increasing the number of children assessed by DCJ. They are also improving service quality by mentoring and working side-by-side with new caseworkers.
39	Sue Higginson MLC	How many caseworkers left are in the first year of their tenure?	I am advised: In 2024/25, 33 caseworkers left in the first year of their tenure (8.2% of new starters).
40	Sue Higginson MLC	How many caseworkers are on Workers Compensation? (a) How many caseworkers are on Workers Compensation for psychological injury?	I am advised:

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		(b) Is the Minister concerned that the Government's proposed Workers Compensation reforms will negatively impact the ability of caseworkers to manage traumatic elements of the work they do?	(a) As at 30 June 2025, there are a total of 291 open workers compensation claims for caseworkers, of which 178 are not working. As at 30 June 2025, there are a total of 238 open psychological workers compensation claims for caseworkers. (b) The NSW Government's Workers Compensation reforms will support early and appropriate treatment for injury, ensure the scheme is sustainable, and support those who can return to work to do so.
41	Sue Higginson MLC	Can the Minister confirm what percentage of the Department's budget is currently allocated to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs), compared with non-Indigenous service providers?	I am advised: Of the total funding committed in human services contracts and grants in the Payment and Contracting System in 2025/26, 14.1% is currently committed to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and 85.9% to non-ACCOs as of 1 September 2025. This is a record investment in ACCOs, and the government intends to invest further to support high-quality ACCOs and improved outcomes for Aboriginal families and children.
42	Sue Higginson MLC	How is the Department ensuring long-term, core funding security for ACCOs, in line with Recommendation Three of the Closing the Gap Jumbunna Indigenous-led Review?	I am advised: DCJ is leading the NSW Government's Secure Jobs and Funding Certainty election commitment which includes introducing preferred five-year funding arrangements, which will support ACCOs with financial stability and the ability to plan and deliver services over a longer period.
43	Sue Higginson MLC	What steps is the Department taking to shift from short-term, competitive tendering to direct investment models for Aboriginal community-controlled services?	I am advised: DCJ is leading the NSW Government's Secure Jobs and Funding Certainty election commitment, which includes a range of provisions that will benefit ACCOs:

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			• introducing preferred five-year funding arrangements, which can provide community organisations with financial stability and the ability to plan and deliver services over a longer period; • a new Community Services Funding Framework that uses a range of commissioning and procurement approaches that are client-focused and support stable and high-quality service delivery that is responsive to community needs, principles in line with ACCO service delivery models; • Community Services Jobs Compact aims to enhance job security for workers, supports workforce development, and encourages the recruitment and retention of staff, supports culturally appropriate service delivery; and • Community Services Prequalification Scheme is expected to streamline the funding application process, reducing administrative burden, allowing organisations focus on service delivery and less on paperwork. The SJFC will strengthen employee retention, improve providers' capacity to plan and innovate, ensuring community service providers and their workers can focus on delivering outcomes for their communities.
44	Sue Higginson MLC	Given new Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) are being funded, what budget allocation has been made for workforce training and capacity building?	I am advised: Service funding is to enable the delivery of programs, which includes supporting staff with commensurate training and professional development. AbSec is a key Department of Communities and Justice partner under the Sector Peaks Program (SPP), with core funding to support capacity strengthening in the Aboriginal sector.

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45	Sue Higginson MLC	Has the number of Aboriginal children entering care increased? What are you doing to keep Aboriginal children safe with their families?	I am advised: The number of Aboriginal children entering care in 2024/25 increased by 206, when compared with 2023/24. The NSW Government: • Proclaimed Active Efforts provisions • Is recommissioning Family Preservation after two years of co-design with AbSec and ACCOs, with 40% of total funding earmarked for ACCO delivery • Funded AbSec to establish 15 Aboriginal Community-Controlled Mechanisms across NSW, to support families in contact with the child protection system • Expanded Aboriginal Child and Family Centres (ACFC), with almost \$98.7 million to enhance and build the capacity of nine centres, and establish six more, with almost double the operational funding • Implemented Safeguarding Decision Making for Aboriginal Children Panels in all DCJ districts • Is recommissioning Targeted Early Intervention, which will at least double the ACCO investment we inherited to 15% • Doubled the number of Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing facilitators, so that nearly all conferences for Aboriginal families are conducted by Aboriginal facilitators • Signed the Partnership Agreement with AbSec and the Aboriginal Legal Service, to redesign child protection assessment and decision making and collaborate on system reforms.
46	Sue Higginson MLC	What are the government's plans to support families currently working with non-Aboriginal providers who may	I am advised:

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		transition to Family Preservation programs run by ACCOs under the 40% target? (a) Which government and non-government workforces will be targeted for implementation and (b) what support will they be provided to implement the framework?	In consultation with ACWA, FAMS, AbSec and the ASU, DCJ is developing a Family Preservation Transition Strategy to support sector transition to the redesigned Family Preservation service system. This will set out how DCJ, current and future service providers can work collaboratively to support families through this process. a) The Transition Strategy will be directed to all staff working in the Family Preservation sector. b) From 1 April 2026, DCJ will be investing \$5.6 million a year on the implementation of Family Preservation, including the implementation of the two new frameworks, Families Together and Aboriginal Family Preservation.
47	Sue Higginson MLC	What investments will be made to support Family Preservation beyond already allocated funds, especially in non-ACCO areas?	I am advised: DCJ released the Family Preservation Funding Approach Paper, setting out the government's funding commitments for Family Preservation over the next five years. This includes: • Committing \$180 million p.a. to fund Family Preservation. • 40% of service delivery funding will be targeted to ACCOs. • \$5.6 million p.a. will be dedicated to support effective implementation. • Funding distribution across districts based on the need of children and families, for the first time ever. • Fair unit costs for different Family Preservation models and frameworks.
48	Sue Higginson MLC	What are the reasons why more than 200 Aboriginal children have transferred from ACCOs back to DCJ? Is this not a 'reverse transition'?	I am advised:

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		(a) How many children in the OOHC system has transferred from ACCOs back to DCJ in i. 2025? ii. 2024? iii. 2023? iv. 2022? v. 2021? vi. 2020? (b) Over the last 12 months, in how many cases did an ACCO request a transfer of a First Nations child back to DCJ? (c) Over the last 12 months, in how many cases did DCJ request the transfer of a child from an ACCO to DCJ? (d) Over the last 12 months, in how many cases did a First Nations child transferred from an ACCO end up with a non-government provider?	Between July 2022 to July 2025, there were 208 Aboriginal children transferred out of ACCOs, including 116 transferred to NGOs and 92 transferred to DCJ. Common reasons ACCOs may request to transfer children can include children with high needs unable to be supported by the ACCO, placement breakdown, and carers requesting to transition. Data is not available to analyse the rationale or exit requests to leave case management of an ACCO.
49	Sue Higginson MLC	How many ACCOs have accreditation conditions placed on them meaning they cannot accept transfers from NGOs?	I am advised: I am not aware of any ACCO with a condition that would limit their ability to accept transfers.
50	Sue Higginson MLC	What specific outcome measures are being used to determine the success of current reforms in child protection and OOHC?	I am advised: A range of measures are used across child protection and out-of-home care (OOHC) initiatives. To ensure we are measuring quality outcomes and not just activities, DCJ has commenced work on a Quality Assurance Oversight Framework, including an Outcomes Framework for child protection and OOHC. Ongoing work is also underway on capturing and measuring wellbeing outcomes for children.

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			These efforts are responsive to recommendations from the Auditor-General, Ombudsman and the System Review into OOHC.
51	Sue Higginson MLC	Why has the Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety (CARAS) been delayed?	I am advised: The Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety (CARAS) framework has been developed. Implementation planning is underway, including consideration around sectors that may be prioritised for the next phase of the project. Considerations around the implementation of the CARAS will also be guided by the work of the Domestic and Family Violence Special Advisor, which is due to complete on 30 September 2025.
52	Sue Higginson MLC	How is the Department supporting ACCOs to access and govern child protection and family support data relevant to Aboriginal children and families, in line with Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles?	I am advised: DCJ supports ACCOs to access child protection and family support data through the PR4 Data Connector Service. Since the establishment of the service, DCJ Data Connectors have supported 21 requests for Communities data from Aboriginal people and organisations. In line our commitments under Closing the Gap, the service supports ACCOs to access data by community-defined boundaries. The service enables ACCOs to access DCJ data for planning, advocacy, and accountability purposes, which supports Aboriginal communities to identify and develop solutions in line with community needs.
53	Sue Higginson MLC	Has the Department committed resources or partnered with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to develop culturally governed monitoring and evaluation frameworks for Closing the Gap targets?	I am advised: The Families and Justice Sector Committee focuses on driving progress of key initiatives towards achieving socio-economic outcomes including criminal justice, child safety and wellbeing, and domestic and family violence. Monitoring and evaluation

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			frameworks are embedded in Families and Justice Closing the Gap funded projects.
54	Sue Higginson MLC	How many DCJ districts are accredited by the OCG? (a) How many districts have accreditation conditions placed on them?	I am advised: All 14 Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) districts are accredited. The Metro Intensive Support Services Program and the Sherwood Program are also accredited. Two DCJ districts currently have special conditions on their accreditation.
55	Sue Higginson MLC	How many districts have an OCG performance improvement plan?	I am advised: Action plans are in place for the two Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) districts that currently have special conditions on their accreditation, with periodic reporting to the Office of Children's Guardian.
56	Sue Higginson MLC	Why is it that some districts cannot even meet the most basic of minimum standards? How can you consider delivering more OOHC when you can't meet the standards? Is this not a recipe for disaster?	I am advised: The premise of the question is inaccurate. If a special condition was seen or treated in that way, many non-government service providers would be unable to deliver OOHC. All of the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) districts, specialist services, Metropolitan Intensive Support Services (ISS) and Sherwood House, are fully accredited to provide OOHC. DCJ are the largest provider of out-of-home care in NSW. The 2025/26 budget secured \$191.5 million to recruit more than 200 new caseworkers and retain 2,126 caseworkers with higher pay and specialised training, which will support increased capacity to deliver OOHC.

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57	Sue Higginson MLC	What evidence of change in the Department has taken place that will avoid another Wood Special Inquiry?	I am advised: DCJ has maintained OOHC accreditation steadily since 2015. Prior to the Wood Special Commission, DCJ was not accredited. DCJ's designated agencies have evolved systems to monitor compliance, measure performance and drive continuous improvement. Since I became minister, I have been open and honest about the challenges facing the OOHC system – but any stakeholder suggesting the Department has not changed since the Wood Special Commission is likely doing so in self-interest.
58	Sue Higginson MLC	Given the increased workload on DCJ staff, what steps have you taken to ensure a safe workplace culture at DCJ?	I am advised: DCJ offers a range of workplace support services to all staff as well as specific supports for caseworkers, including: • The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers counselling, coaching, and crisis support in a variety of ways including by phone, online and in person. • My Healthy Workplace is an online platform supporting physical and mental wellbeing initiatives, including critical incident support. • Caseworker Wellbeing checks are offered by clinical psychologists with development of a personalised wellbeing plan, as needed. A new DCJ Leadership and Mentoring Program is being co-designed with the Public Service Association (PSA) to upskill and support employees in their roles, provide practical leadership and management training for career development, strengthen accountability and further build a positive workforce culture.

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			DCJ is working collaboratively with the state-wide Aboriginal Staff Reference Group to implement cultural supervision and strengthen cultural safety in the work environment for Aboriginal staff. The DCJ Anti-Racism Unit is developing a stand-alone DCJ anti-racism policy which will embed an anti-racism approach into all DCJ business and consider best practice when managing workplace racism disclosures.
59	Sue Higginson MLC	Given multiple staff reports of bullying, harassment and unfair termination, will you commit to an external and independent review of the workplace culture at DCJ?	I am advised: In the past two years, DCJ has made a concerted effort to improve workplace culture and has started rebuilding a foundation that supports practitioners and creates a safe working environment. For additional information, please see SQ#58. A core element of DCJ's efforts to improve workplace culture is also a more consistent approach to upholding high-quality public sector standards. Where employees fail to adhere to employment standards and policies, breach confidentiality, or engage in bullying or harassing behaviour, they will be subject to disciplinary action and/or termination – as the public would rightly expect.
60	Sue Higginson MLC	Could the Minister please provide an update on the implementation of the Family is Culture Report, specifically which recommendations have changed in status since the February 2024 progress update?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice is progressing the implementation of the Family is Culture Review recommendations through coordinated, system-wide reform that delivers meaningful, long-term change for Aboriginal children and families. The new Partnership Agreement between DCJ, AbSec and the Aboriginal Legal Service will assist in this process.
61	Sue Higginson MLC	Of the 126 recommendations, how many remain “not supported” by this Government?	I am advised:

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		(a) Could the Minister please list each of the recommendations that have the status of “not supported”?	As you are aware, the response to the Family is Culture Report, and its implementation plan, was provided by the former government. The current government has not sought to reverse or reconsider that plan – instead, we have openly and transparently focussed on the spiralling OOHC system that was cycling hundreds of children and young people through unaccredited emergency arrangements, including hotels and motels. While the NSW Government’s OOHC reform plan does not seek to reconsider FIC recommendations, it does seek to enhance and complement existing FIC reforms. Three recommendations were not supported: 11, 20, 121.
62	Sue Higginson MLC	How many of the recommendations have been addressed by the funding allocation in this year’s budget?	I am advised: The NSW Government’s OOHC reform plan is comprehensive in relation to the delivery and oversight of high-quality, culturally appropriate and publicly accountable OOHC services. I am unable to provide a matrix connecting all proposed reform investments with FIC recommendations.
63	Sue Higginson MLC	Will the Minister commit to annual reporting on these recommendations?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ#60.
64	Sue Higginson MLC	What is the Minister doing to ensure greater transparency with regard to the 3000+ case specific recommendations of the Family is Culture Review Report? (a) What mechanism is DCJ using to track the 3000+ specific cases? (b) How many of the cases have been resolved?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice remains committed to implementation of the over 3,000 individual recommendations for Aboriginal children from the Family is Culture review.

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			a) Review and oversight of the individual recommendations is undertaken by the DCJ Office of the Senior Practitioner (OSP) b) 97 per cent of recommendations have been completed. A small number are in the process of being finalised, supported by action plans created and endorsed by Aboriginal staff.
65	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "The NSW Government should amend clause 45 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012 and all other related clauses to ensure that only a charitable or non-profit organisation may apply to the Office of the Children's Guardian for accreditation as a designated agency." The NSW Liberal National Government failed to support this recommendation - will the Minister reverse this decision and support this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: No for-profit providers deliver OOHC under the Permanency Support Program. However, some for-profit providers deliver high-cost emergency arrangement. It is the Government's intention to minimise and then remove the use of for-profit providers or suppliers across the system. a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 62.
66	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "The NSW Government should amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and the Adoption Act 2000 to ensure that adoption is not an option for Aboriginal children in OOHC." The NSW Liberal National Government failed to support this recommendation - will the Minister reverse this decision and support this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: No. The NSW Government recognises the importance and depth of feeling on all sides of this issue, but does not intend to prohibit adoptions of Aboriginal children and young people.
67	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "The NSW Government should amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012 to ensure that the Office of the Children's Guardian does not have the power to accredit agencies that have not demonstrated compliance	I am advised: a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61 and SQ 62.

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		with the accreditation criteria." The NSW Liberal National Government failed to support this recommendation - will the Minister reverse this decision and support this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	
68	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "The NSW Government should establish a new, independent Child Protection Commission. The Commission should be required by legislation to operate openly and transparently." The NSW Liberal National 11 Government failed to support this recommendation - will the Minister reverse this decision and support this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: We continue to work towards the possibility of an Aboriginal Children's Commissioner in NSW, noting that significant changes to existing regulatory and oversight mechanisms would be required to avoid duplication and inconsistency. The NSW Government remains committed to working genuinely with Aboriginal stakeholders to develop this issue.
69	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "The Children's Court of NSW should be appropriately resourced to enable it to publish all its final judgments online in a de-identified and searchable form." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61.
70	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "The NSW Government should amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) to mandate the provision of support services to Aboriginal families to prevent the entry of Aboriginal children into OOHC." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation?	I am advised: a) Previous legislative consultation determined that existing Care Act provisions align with this recommendation. In addition, under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture) Act 2022 No 67, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is now required to provide evidence to the Children's Court regarding what 'active efforts' were taken

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		(a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	to keep families together, including the provision of support services (as per Recommendation 26).
71	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "The NSW Government should, in partnership with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders, introduce a system of qualitative file reviews modelled on the Quality Case Review and Quality Service Review systems that have been implemented in some states of the United States of America, with the introduction of the additional component of a Family Group Conference." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: Implementation of the Safeguarding Decision Making for Aboriginal Children (SDMAC) panels across DCJ districts in 2023 aligns with this recommendation. Ongoing oversight and review of these panels will provide further and continuous improvement of SDMAC panels.
72	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "DCJ establish a notification service, similar to the NSW Custody Notification Service, to notify a relevant Aboriginal community body about the removal of an Aboriginal child or young person from their family, providing a timely opportunity for review, oversight, and advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal families and communities in the best interests of Aboriginal children and young people." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: Under the Closing the Gap budget process, \$9.9 million has been allocated over four years (2022-2026) to the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT (ALS) for an Aboriginal Child and Family Advocacy Support (ACFAS) pilot aimed at keeping Aboriginal families safely together and preventing removals; and escalation of matters to the Children's Court through legal and non-legal advocacy. a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61.
73	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "DCJ should work with the First Peoples Disability Network Australia, People with Disability Australia, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and Aboriginal community and stakeholders to develop a plan of action to improve	I am advised: DCJ continues to partner with NSW Health on the OOHC Health Pathway, for all children and young people to undergo a health assessment within 30 days of entering OOHC, which considers

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		disability identification, practice competence, and 12 pathways to specialist disability service involvement within DCJ for children and families at all stages of the child protection system—from early intervention support through to entry into care, restoration and post entry into care casework." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	physical, developmental, psychosocial and mental health, to develop a Health Management Plan. Importantly, the ASQ-TRAK tool is used. Plans are reviewed every six months for children under five, and annually for children over five. Caseworkers may use this information and evidence to apply for an NDIS package for the child. The primary function of the DCJ Engagement and Family Support team is to work collaboratively with caseworkers and the National Disability Insurance Agency to keep children and young people at home with their families – this includes children and young people with disability, and parents with disability who have children. (a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61.
74	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "DCJ should, in partnership with the First Peoples Disability Network Australia, People with Disability Australia, Aboriginal community and stakeholders, implement a strategy for early intervention and prevention work specifically targeted towards early identification and responses to the needs of Aboriginal parents and children with disability who come into contact with the child protection system." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: (a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 73.
75	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "DCJ should design and implement, in partnership with Aboriginal community groups and representatives, a system of postremoval support for Aboriginal mothers and fathers who have had newborn or infant children removed from their care. The system should include the mandatory provision of information to parents about their ability to seek post-	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) policy is for parents of all children to receive support post-removal. The DCJ Restoration Mandate is publicly available https://psplearninghub.com.au/document/23777/.

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		removal support from the Secretary of DCJ under s 21 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	(a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61.
76	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "DCJ should revise its mandate on Temporary Care Arrangements to ensure that the ability of a parent to terminate a Temporary Care Arrangement is not used to deter its use." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: Alongside broader child protection reforms, DCJ is currently revising its Temporary Care Arrangements policy with a view to strengthening its appropriate use. a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61.
77	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "The NSW Government should establish a Child Protection Advocacy Program to train and support a state-wide network of specialist child protection advocates to give advice to, and advocate for, families who are involved in the child protection system. This program should be akin to the Tenant's Advice and Advocacy Program currently resourced by Fair Trading NSW. This program should be informed also by the advocacy method that GMAR NSW have been performing unofficially." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: AbSec is funded to establish Aboriginal Community Controlled Mechanism (ACCMs) across NSW. ACCMs provide community advice, advocacy and support for families in contact with the child protection system. There are currently four functioning ACCMs (Illawarra, Hunter, Wagga and Dubbo). As per SQ 72, under Closing the Gap, \$9.9 million has been allocated over four years (2022-2026) to the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT (ALS) for an Aboriginal Child and Family Advocacy Support (ACFAS) pilot aimed at keeping Aboriginal families safely together and preventing removals; and escalation of matters to the Children's Court through legal and non-legal advocacy.

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			The Legal Assistance for Families Partnership Agreement (LAFPA) also supports early advocacy for families. Additionally, the ALS and Legal Aid accept warm referrals from DCJ caseworkers and others to provide legal advice, support and assistance to Aboriginal families for any child protection legal matters. The success of the ADR model from LAFPA referrals can be identified in the high rate of agreement by parties (90% as at July 2025). Some of the outcomes from these lawyer-assisted mediations have included: • Care Plans by consent; • Family Action Plan; • Safety Plan; • Family law style arrangements such as parenting plan and consent orders. a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61.
78	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "DCJ should develop policy guidance for caseworkers that addresses the desirability of promoting regular contact between Aboriginal children and their family, kin, and community; how to promote this contact in practice; and when supervision is necessary in contact arrangements." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: This is a common practice and case plan priority for all children and young people in care, where it is safe to do so. There are a number of initiatives which prioritise this for Aboriginal children: • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles, to prioritise kinship and community-based care. • Care Plans, which are required to have actions for contact with family and kin. • Cultural Support Plans, required for all Aboriginal children, to promote engagement with cultural identity, connection to family and community. • Transitions to ACCOs: to ensure culturally safe support, and promote engagement with culture and community.

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			Safeguarding Decision Making for Aboriginal Children (SDMAC) panels: panels include Aboriginal expert practitioner input to ensure appropriate placements and actions to support connections with culture, kin, community and culture. a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61.
79	Sue Higginson MLC	The Family is Culture Review Report recommends that "DCJ should review and update the restoration information that is publicly available on its website in line with issues raised in this report. The Department should also provide online information to improve guidance for parents in relation to restoration practices and processes and further information about what parents can do when restoration is not deemed to be a 'realistic possibility'." What steps has the Minister taken to meet this recommendation? (a) Will this recommendation be adopted by the end of the government's term?	I am advised: Updated information regarding restoration is publicly available on the Department's website, https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/child-protection-guide-for-families/restoration---bringing-your-child-home.html. a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61.
80	Sue Higginson MLC	What is the projected commencement and completion date for the comprehensive review of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998? (a) How will the Government ensure that urgent recommendations from the Family is Culture Report are not delayed for years pending the review's finalisation? (b) Will the Government commit to introducing interim legislative amendments in this term of Parliament to address the most pressing reforms affecting Aboriginal children?	I am advised: a) Please refer to the answer to SQ 61. b) The NSW Government has not yet made a commitment on the terms and timeline of a comprehensive review of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.
81	Sue Higginson MLC	Can you confirm that the terms of reference for the Care Act review will explicitly include consideration of all outstanding	I am advised:

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		Family is Culture recommendations, including those previously rejected or deferred?	Please refer to the answer to SQ 80.
82	Sue Higginson MLC	How will the Government ensure that the review does not narrow or water down the intent of Professor Megan Davis's recommendations? (a) Will the review be co-designed and co-led with Aboriginal community-controlled peaks such as AbSec and the ALS, with equal decision-making authority as required under Priority Reform One of the Closing the Gap Agreement?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 80.
83	Sue Higginson MLC	What mechanisms will be in place to ensure Aboriginal community voices—including lived experience – have authority in drafting legislative proposals before they are tabled in Parliament?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 80.
84	Sue Higginson MLC	What budget allocation has been set aside to fund Aboriginal-led governance and consultation for the review process?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 80.
85	Sue Higginson MLC	Will funding be ring-fenced for regional, remote, and linguistically diverse engagement to ensure the review process is genuinely inclusive?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 80.
86	Sue Higginson MLC	How will the Government transparently report on expenditure linked to Aboriginal-led elements of the Care Act review?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 80.
87	Sue Higginson MLC	Given the continuing high rates of Aboriginal child removals, what risk mitigation strategies will be in place during the review period to prevent further avoidable removals?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 45 and SQ 80.
88	Sue Higginson MLC	Will the Government publish quarterly progress updates on the review to ensure accountability to Aboriginal communities and the public?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 80.

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89	Sue Higginson MLC	How many ACCMs have been established before November 2024?	I am advised: The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) have identified two stages within the process of establishing Aboriginal Community Controlled Mechanisms (ACCMs): 1. Formed: ACCMs have been established, community members meet regularly to work through probity, training and building relationships with the relevant DCJ district. 2. Functioning: ACCMs have completed probity and training, and are actively receiving referrals. Before November 2024, there were two functioning ACCMs (Illawarra and Hunter) and one formed ACCM (Wagga Wagga).
90	Sue Higginson MLC	How many ACCMs have been established since November 2024?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 89. Since November 2024, there have been two additional functioning ACCMs (Dubbo and Wagga Wagga) and three formed ACCMs (Walgett, Coraki and Gunnedah).
91	Sue Higginson MLC	Is there a formalised process for the establishment of ACCMs through DCJ?	I am advised: AbSec is contracted by DCJ through the Strong Families Our Way project to establish and support 15 Aboriginal Community Controlled Mechanisms (ACCMS) across NSW.
92	Sue Higginson MLC	The Jumbunna Review highlights significant underperformance by local governments in implementing Closing the Gap reforms. Could this present an opportunity to consider support for locally-led initiatives, such as ACCMs, in	I am advised: It is unclear how these initiatives or targets are related.

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		ensuring child and family services meet their Closing the Gap obligations?	
93	Sue Higginson MLC	What funding or capability-building programs are currently available specifically for local government partners or community-led initiatives working with Aboriginal children and families?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) provides support to all organisations who meet the definition of an Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisation (ACCO) under Clause 44 of Closing the Gap. The additional support DCJ can offer ACCOs includes support from local DCJ commissioning and planning teams, a centrally based Aboriginal commissioning team, funding prioritisation in some of DCJ's funding programs, culturally responsive procurement and sector development support including training and yarning circles.
94	Sue Higginson MLC	Are there dedicated resources or programs to support the development and scaling of ACCMs as a model for delivering child and family services at the local level?	I am advised: AbSec is funded \$8.7 million from 2022-2026 to support the development of 15 Aboriginal Community Controlled Mechanisms (ACCMs) across NSW. This funding allocation includes an ACCM model evaluation.
95	Sue Higginson MLC	How is the Department engaging with Aboriginal communities to ensure ACCMs have the necessary support, funding, and governance capacity to meet Closing the Gap targets?e. Does the Department have a plan to evaluate and learn from ACCMs that are successfully improving outcomes for Aboriginal children and families, and to expand these models where appropriate?	I am advised: DCJ has funded AbSec to engage with Aboriginal communities and ensure that Aboriginal Community Controlled Mechanisms (ACCMs) have the necessary support, funding, and governance capacity. The Strong Families Our Way Project contract funding includes an evaluation of the ACCM model. Governance of the program is established through the Closing the Gap (CTG) Aboriginal Children and Families Partnership Committee.

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96	Sue Higginson MLC	Does the DCJ track the number of instances where ADRs are offered to families involved in care and protection matters? (a) If so, in how many instances were ADRs offered to families by the Children's Court in: i. 2018? ii. 2019? iii. 2020? iv. 2021? v. 2022? vi. 2023? vii. 2024? viii. 2025? (b) If so, in how many instances were ADRs not offered to families by the Children's Court in: i. 2018? ii. 2019? iii. 2020? iv. 2021? v. 2022? vi. 2023? vii. 2024? viii. 2025? (c) If so, in how many instances were ADRs offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by the Children's Court in: i. 2018? ii. 2019? iii. 2020? iv. 2021? v. 2022? vi. 2023? vii. 2024? viii. 2025?	I am advised: DCJ does not hold this information. The Children's Court has a specific form of ADR called a Dispute Resolution Conference (DRC) in care and protection matters, facilitated by a Children's Court Registrar. DRCs are strongly encouraged to resolve issues in dispute and occur frequently in Children's Court care and protection proceedings. DRCs are confidential, and outcomes reached at DRCs cannot be disclosed without the consent of all participants.

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		(d) If so, in how many instances were ADRs not offered to families by the Children's Court in: i. 2018? ii. 2019? iii. 2020? iv. 2021? v. 2022? vi. 2023? vii. 2024? viii. 2025? (e) If so, in how many instances were ADRs offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by the Children's Court in: i. 2018? ii. 2019? iii. 2020? iv. 2021? v. 2022? vi. 2023? vii. 2024? viii. 2025? (f) If so, in how many instances were ADRs not offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by the Children's Court in: i. 2018? ii. 2019? iii. 2020? iv. 2021? v. 2022? vi. 2023? vii. 2024? viii. 2025? (g) If not, will the Minister commit to commencing a process that would track this process within the	

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		courts and publicly report on these statistics periodically? i. Will the Minister ensure this process keeps track of the outcomes specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families?	
97	Sue Higginson MLC	The Productivity Commission report in 2024 talked about the shifting of power as part of the transformation of government. What formal mechanisms are in place to share decision making – the kind that requires power shifting – with AbSec and other Aboriginal peaks on child and family policy and funding decisions?	I am advised: DCJ has committed to working with the Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations through a formal child protection policy partnership that was signed in May 2025. In addition, there is the Family is Culture (FiC) mapping and alignment Partnership Agreement between the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), AbSec and the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS).
98	Sue Higginson MLC	How is the Department measuring the effectiveness of shared decision-making structures, and are there KPIs for Departmental leaders responsible for partnership work in place linked to Closing the Gap Priority Reform 1?	I am advised: Shared decision making can mean different things to different people. For instance, shared decision making can be a mix of genuine collaboration, partnership, co-design, consultation, oversight and formal or informal agreement. Others may view shared decision making as, at a minimum, an opportunity to deconstruct systems of representative government. Therefore, these complicated issues are best addressed in good faith and through open dialogue. For this reason, DCJ has not developed formal KPIs for shared decision making.

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99	Sue Higginson MLC	Has the Department conducted any internal review of its governance processes to ensure they align with cultural governance principles recommended in the Jumbunna Independent Review (Recommendation 5a, p. 15)?	I am advised: Recommendation 5a of the Jumbunna independent review as cited, relates to a self-evaluation process led by the Aboriginal community-controlled sector. The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) has no role in implementing this recommendation.
100	Sue Higginson MLC	Given the Independent Review's finding that "governments have yet to commence any genuine transformative work" (p. 8), what specific initiatives or reforms is the Department undertaking to address systemic racism within child protection services?	I am advised: The NSW Government has commenced genuinely transformative work. The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is undertaking a cultural review of the DCJ child protection sector to improve experiences for Aboriginal caseworkers. DCJ has established an Anti-Racism Unit, who are working with DCJ leadership to tackle racism and support employees who experience racism. The DCJ Anti-Racism Strategy is being finalised and will include key initiatives to address disclosures of systemic and interpersonal experiences of racism.
101	Sue Higginson MLC	Has the Department established dedicated targets or benchmarks for reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care, and how do these align with Closing the Gap Outcome 12?	I am advised: While the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) has not set separate targets, DCJ has committed to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031, in line with Closing the Gap Outcome 12. This target reflects a commitment to culturally safe, community-led approaches, including early intervention, Aboriginal-led decision-making, and family restoration initiatives. DCJ continues to implement reforms towards achieving this goal.

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102	Sue Higginson MLC	What resourcing has been allocated within the Department to build Aboriginal cultural capability and address the “cultural load” identified in Recommendation 2b (p. 12) of the Review?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) has various programs and learning initiatives promoting cultural capability that are mandatory for all DCJ staff, and accessible on the DCJ central learning platform. In addition, executive leaders have recently undertaken the Thirriwirri Cultural Intelligence program. A range of initiatives are in place to support Aboriginal staff to address cultural load concerns including: cultural supervision and mentoring programs; establishment of the DCJ Antiracism unit, and; establishment of Safeguarding Decision Making for Aboriginal Children panels to provide cultural oversight around decision making for Aboriginal children.
103	Sue Higginson MLC	How has the Department considered shifting or sharing power with Aboriginal people and organisations in order for them to truly participate in decision-making regarding their children?	I am advised: The partnership agreement between the Department of Communities and Justice, AbSec – NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation – and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) will assist reform to the state’s child protection and out-of-home care systems.
104	Sue Higginson MLC	Under section 11 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, the Minister can negotiate and agree with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the implementation of programs and strategies that promote self-determination? Can you outline when you have done this in the last 12 months and how those programs and strategies promoted self-determination?	I am advised: The historic partnership agreement between DCJ, Absec and the ALS was executed in May 2025 and will assist reform to the state’s child protection and out-of-home care systems. Through this agreement the partners will review the Family is Culture Review recommendations and ensure they align with broader system reform agenda.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
105	Sue Higginson MLC	Where are we at with the Minister's commitment to the Aboriginal Authority for Restoring Children?	The NSW Government has committed to increasing restoration of Aboriginal children through establishment of a restoration taskforce. DCJ provided funding to Absec and the University of New South Wales in 2024/25 to help support the planning and development phase for the initiative. DCJ is continuing to work with AbSec and Associate Professor BJ Newton to refine and test the proposed model.
106	Sue Higginson MLC	How many Aboriginal children in OOHC have a case plan goal of restoration?	I am advised: 153 Aboriginal children in OOHC had a case plan goal of restoration at 30 June 2025.
107	Sue Higginson MLC	How many Aboriginal children exited care by way of restoration?	I am advised: 131 Aboriginal children exited OOHC by way of restoration during 2024/25.
108	Sue Higginson MLC	Can you update on the status of AARC, including in relation to any business case for ongoing funding?	The NSW Government has committed to increasing restoration of Aboriginal children through establishment of a restoration taskforce. DCJ is working with Associate Professor BJ Newton, AbSec, Justice and Equity Centre and other stakeholders to further develop elements of their proposal. Once the proposal is finalised, a NSW Government business case will be prepared and considered.
109	Sue Higginson MLC	What commitment has your government actually made to AARC in financial terms?	I am advised: The proposed final model is not yet complete, and a business case has not been prepared or considered.

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			Please refer to the answer to SQ 108.
110	Sue Higginson MLC	Are you still committed to the AARC?	I am advised: The Government has never committed to implementing the AARC. The government has been working in good faith to help develop an Aboriginal-led proposal by that name to ensure it aligns with legislative requirements, is implementable and likely to increase restorations. Please refer to the answer to SQ 108.
111	Sue Higginson MLC	Given the repeated failures identified by recent CTG reviews to close the gap in the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in OOHHC, why hasn't the NSW Government publicly committed to the AARC as a form of Aboriginal-led restoration? Isn't it time to do things differently?	I am advised: I am unable to commit to a proposal that is not yet finalised.
112	Sue Higginson MLC	How many DCJ-led restoration teams currently exist? (a) How much funding is going to DCJ-led restoration initiatives? (b) How many of those DCJ-led restoration teams have been set up within the last 12 months? (c) How many staff are working on DCJ-led restoration taskforces, and how many of those staff are Aboriginal and in identified positions? (d) How do the DCJ-led restoration taskforces align with the Govt's CTG commitments to work in genuine partnership and transform? (e) How can you argue that DCJ is improving restoration practices, when the rates of restoration continue to drop each year?	I am advised: It is every caseworkers' responsibility to support children and families toward their case plan goal, including restoration. However, it is clear more needs to be done to prioritise restoration: (a) Three restoration teams are funded from within existing caseworker resources. (b) None. (c) 12, with one Aboriginal caseworker in an identified position. (d) Please refer to various answers above regarding the government's genuine efforts to help develop an Aboriginal-led proposal.

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			(e) The former government's Permanency Support Program has been an abject failure in driving restoration practice, and in fact, often disincentivises restoration through its design. Those contracts are in place until 2027. The NSW Government is committed to a restoration taskforce, and is considering ways to prioritise restoration in a systemic way in the OOHC Strategy and recommissioning of the OOHC program, currently under development.
113	Sue Higginson MLC	The NSW Government has announced a \$1.2 billion Child Protection Package in the 2025-26 budget, including \$800 million for "supporting children ... in OOHC". (a) How much of this \$1.2 billion is new money (rather than overspend)? (b) How much of the \$1.2 billion is going to restoration? (c) How much of the \$1.2 billion is going to early intervention and support services that are co-designed with the community and intended to keep Aboriginal children at home and within their communities?	I am advised: (a) None of the \$1.2 billion funding package has been allocated to manage overspend. (b) There are a range of initiatives focused on achieving restoration outcomes, however funding cannot be separately quantified as it is allocated by initiative, not by outcome. (c) The new OOHC Strategy being developed underpins eight key reform directions, including expanding Aboriginal-delivered services and keeping children with family and community. These directions will guide future investment and ensure services are better aligned with the needs of Aboriginal children and families.
114	Sue Higginson MLC	How much is going towards the Aboriginal Authority for Restoring Children?	I am advised: Please refer to SQ 111.
115	Sue Higginson MLC	Will the Minister commit to a review of the case files of all Aboriginal children who were removed during the usage of the Structured Decision-Making tools?	I am advised: The premise of the question is incorrect. The actuarial safety and risk assessment tool has been removed and replaced with an interim tool. The Partnership Agreement between DCJ, AbSec and

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			the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) will now review and redesign the frameworks that govern child protection assessment.
116	Sue Higginson MLC	Did the usage of the Structured Decision-Making tool resulted in removal of children from mothers who have been victimised by partners who used violence? How does the Government plan to address this?	I am advised: Please refer to SQ 115.
117	Sue Higginson MLC	Since the removal of the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool, how many Aboriginal children have entered care compared to similar prior periods?	I am advised: Please refer to SQ 115. The number of Aboriginal children entering care in 2024–25 increased by 206 children, when compared with 2023–24.
118	Sue Higginson MLC	DCJ's decision-making process can be time-intensive and opaque, will introducing a requirement for DCJ approval of purchases over \$10,000 – or \$2,000 in bulk – be workable?	I am advised: Yes – workable, robust, and necessary.
119	Sue Higginson MLC	As of July 2025, key purchasing approval processes had not been finalised, creating unreasonable obligations that risk service delivery and child wellbeing. This approach contradicts Closing the Gap Priority Reforms 1 and 3 and imposes administrative burdens, given that most ACCOs allow CEOs to approve up to \$50,000. The IPART draft report confirms DCJ's frequent delays, with decisions sometimes taking months. Why should it be acceptable to demand that NGOs and ACCOs sign contract variations when some procedures relevant to those variations are not known, finalised or in some cases even developed?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 118.
120	Sue Higginson MLC	If the purpose of the mooted approval process is solely to enhance transparency, would the Government consider	I am advised:

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		having the NGO and ACCO sector provide more regular reports on asset purchases as an alternative?	Please refer to the answer to SQ 118.
121	Sue Higginson MLC	If the contract variations proceed and some NGOs and ACCOs are forced to exit the provision of OOHC, DCJ will inherit the case management of hundreds if not thousands of children, close to half of which are Aboriginal. What contingency arrangements does DCJ have in place to assume case management responsibility for all these children?	I am advised: The premise of the question is incorrect. One provider has declined the variation. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate how these changes could risk the viability of service providers or the provision of services. Importantly, ACCOs and NGOs that choose not to sign the variation will not be required to exit the provision of PSP services, and will continue to operate under their existing contract terms. This has been made abundantly clear on multiple occasions.
122	Sue Higginson MLC	Can the Minister explain how the scale and complexity of reabsorbing these cases will somehow not place DCJ's own accreditation at risk?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 121.
123	Sue Higginson MLC	Why does the Minister think DCJ is better at caring for Aboriginal children than ACCOs, notwithstanding that multiple inquiries and Royal Commissions have found that DCJ does not provide culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal children?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 121.
124	Sue Higginson MLC	Why is the Minister demanding that NGOs and ACCOs implement poor governance and financial management processes, such as limiting rollover for any uncommitted expenditure to 2%?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 121. I make no apologies for expecting public money intended to support children and young people in OOHC being used for this purpose. By definition, uncommitted funds represent a missed opportunity to provide supports and services to vulnerable young people.
125	Sue Higginson MLC	What is the current DCJ policy in relation to de-identification of Aboriginal children and young people?	I am advised:

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			DCJ has drafted a proposed Misidentification Policy which involves shared decision-making with ACCOs regarding identification and de-identification of Aboriginal cultural status. Consultation is occurring with Aboriginal peaks, ACCOs and the Ministerial Aboriginal Partnership (MAP) Group, to inform finalisation of the policy.
126	Sue Higginson MLC	What is the current process for changing the cultural status of an Aboriginal child on the DCJ ChildStory system?	I am advised: The process prior to identifying a child as Aboriginal on the DCJ ChildStory information system involves consultation with the child, their family and community to inform this decision. If a child is suspected to be Aboriginal their identification is recorded as 'Reported as Aboriginal', to enable this consultation process to occur.
127	Sue Higginson MLC	What is the progress on finalising DCJ's new Identification Policy for recording and changing Aboriginal cultural status?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 125.
128	Sue Higginson MLC	Has DCJ consulted with Stolen Generations organisations regarding this Identification Policy?	I am advised: Yes, the Department of Communities and Justice has consulted with Stolen Generation organisations on the draft Aboriginal Identification Policy.
129	Sue Higginson MLC	How many children have had their cultural status changed from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to another status since January 2024?	I am advised: The NSW Government paused corrections of the misidentification of Aboriginal children since March 2024, to allow policy work to occur. Prior to the pause, there were 15 children with Indigenous Status changes made during January and February 2024.

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130	Sue Higginson MLC	Are there measurable impacts (social, emotional, psychological) from changes to cultural status, especially where children or families continue to self-identify as Aboriginal?	I am advised: Cultural misidentification can lead to incorrect service referrals and lack of access to appropriate cultural supports for children and families.
131	Sue Higginson MLC	How many times have you met with the Ministerial Aboriginal Partnership Group (MAP) members?	I am advised: 11.
132	Sue Higginson MLC	What are the reform priorities identified by MAP Group members and agreed with your office as priorities?	I am advised: MAP Group members identified four priority areas in their workplan, agreed with the Minister and her office as priorities: • Aboriginal Community Decision Making • Strong Families • Bring Children Home • Bolster ACCOs
133	Sue Higginson MLC	The MAP Group uses “partnership” in its name – how do you interpret this distinction from “advisory”? How are you ensuring genuine partnership in practice?	I am advised: Through honesty, openness, dialogue and discussion.
134	Sue Higginson MLC	What steps have been taken to develop the reinvestment plan recommended by the System Review and the 2016 Tune Report (including the proposed NSW Family Investment Commission)?	I am advised: The former government’s failed Permanency Support Program was based on ‘invest to save’ principles that have not been realised, taxpayers were penalised, with children and young people paying the highest price. The Government is working towards stabilising and rebuilding the OOHC system, and has been focussed on foundational reform

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			priorities rather than inserting haphazard trials and additional layers on top of the existing failed structures. The intent of this approach is to rebuild a foundation that drives better outcomes and successfully improves early intervention and prevention supports for children and families. This is set out in DCJ's Reform Plan, published earlier this year: https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/service-providers/out-of-home-care-and-permanency-support-program/oohc-resources/OOHC-Reform-Plan.pdf
135	Sue Higginson MLC	How does the IPART Interim Report (and final report, expected in July 2025) integrate with the above recommendations?	I am advised: With input from the IPART report, the PSP Evaluation and other sources, the NSW Government is developing a cost model to ensure the OOHC system is based on realistic assumptions that will enable better outcomes for vulnerable children. In conjunction with comprehensive child protection reforms, this will allow us to make the shift to early intervention and prevention referred to in SQ 134.
136	Sue Higginson MLC	Have you considered whether any of the recent OOHC budget announcements might be impacted by the IPART final report?	I am advised: Please refer to SQ 135.
137	Sue Higginson MLC	There are a number of reports now received by the NSW Government that demonstrate that the money DCJ is spending in OOHC is not resulting in the needs of Aboriginal children being met – when will DCJ move that money to where it is better invested and could make immediate impacts?	I am advised: Please refer to SQ 135.

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138	Sue Higginson MLC	Your TEI update states the Minister intends to double ACCO investment from the 7.2% reported in August 2023. What is the projected (or actual) amount and % of total funding to be allocated to: (a) Targeted Early Intervention (TEI)? (b) Family Connect and Support (FCS)? (c) Family Preservation?	I am advised: (a & b) The NSW Department of Communities and Justice intends to merge Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) and Family Connect and Support programs into one program from 1 January 2026. The new program name will be the Community and Family Support program (CAFS). The TEI recommissioning process will deliver at least 15% investment of CAFS funding in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) service delivery, which doubles previous investment we inherited. c) From 1 April 2026, the NSW Government will invest \$180 million annually into Family Preservation. 40% – (\$72 million) – will go to ACCOs.
139	Sue Higginson MLC	Could the Department provide annual data for the 5-year period commencing 2020-21 through to 2024-25 the number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children who exited OOHC by being restored home and the number who exited to Guardianship.	I am advised: Please see responses to Supplementary Questions 140, 141, 142, 143, 144 and 145.
140	Sue Higginson MLC	How many Aboriginal children exited OOHC to be restored home in: (a) 2020-21? (b) 2021-22? (c) 2022-23? (d) 2023-24? (e) 2024-25?	I am advised: The number of Aboriginal children that exited out-of-home care to restoration: (a) 2020-21: 181 (b) 2021-22: 157 (c) 2022-23: 164 (d) 2023-24: 158 (e) 2024-25: 131
141	Sue Higginson MLC	How many Aboriginal children exited OOHC to guardianship in:	I am advised:

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
		(a) 2020-21? (b) 2021-22? (c) 2022-23? (d) 2023-24? (e) 2024-25?	The number of Aboriginal children that exited out-of-home care to guardianship: (a) 2020-21: 179 (b) 2021-22: 142 (c) 2022-23: 114 (d) 2023-24: 97 (e) 2024-25: 65
142	Sue Higginson MLC	How many non-Aboriginal children exited OOHC to be restored home in: (a) 2020-21? (b) 2021-22? (c) 2022-23? (d) 2023-24? (e) 2024-25?	I am advised: The number of non-Aboriginal children exited out-of-home care to restoration: (a) 2020-21: 307 (b) 2021-22: 265 (c) 2022-23: 253 (d) 2023-24: 260 (e) 2024-25: 208
143	Sue Higginson MLC	How many non-Aboriginal children exited OOHC to guardianship in: (a) 2020-21? (b) 2021-22? (c) 2022-23? (d) 2023-24? (e) 2024-25?	I am advised: The number of non-Aboriginal children exited out-of-home care to guardianship: (a) 2020-21: 272 (b) 2021-22: 233 (c) 2022-23: 185 (d) 2023-24: 154 (e) 2024-25: 94
144	Sue Higginson MLC	For Guardianship Orders made for Aboriginal children or young people, what is the number and proportion of	I am advised:

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		Aboriginal children and young people who have Aboriginal Guardians versus non-Aboriginal Guardians as of: (a) 2020-21? (b) 2021-22? (c) 2022-23? (d) 2023-24? (e) 2024-25?	As at 30 June 2025, there were 1,193 Aboriginal children and young people on guardianship orders. Of these children and young people, 700 (58.7%) had Aboriginal guardians. As at 30 June 2024, there were 1,243 Aboriginal children and young people on guardianship orders. Of these children and young people, 753 (60.8%) had Aboriginal guardians. This data is not available for previous years.
145	Sue Higginson MLC	Where Guardianship Orders saw an Aboriginal child or young people placed with a non Aboriginal Guardian, on how many occasions did the NSW Children's Court make an Order for Contact with a member of members of the child or young person's aboriginal family in conjunction with the Guardianship Order in: (a) 2020-21? (b) 2021-22? (c) 2022-23? (d) 2023-24? (e) 2024-25?	I am advised: This information is not held by DCJ.
146	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	What funding has been allocated since 2019 to: (a) Improve disability data collection in DCJ systems? (b) Accurately identify and record disability status for Aboriginal families?	I am advised: (a) \$25,000 was allocated to disability recording improvements in ChildStory in 2023/24. (b) ChildStory holds profiles for individuals rather than families. \$300,000 was allocated to ensure ChildStory met Family is Culture legislative requirements, including enhancements in recording of Aboriginal identity details.
147	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Does the Department currently publish any data on the prevalence of disability among Aboriginal children or parents in OOHC? If not, when will this commence?	I am advised:

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			At 30 June 2025, there were 6,327 Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC, of whom 1,465 (23.2%) were on an approved NDIS plan. An additional 23 Aboriginal children and young people (0.4%) have met the eligibility criteria, but are waiting for an NDIS plan to be approved. DCJ is not planning to report the prevalence of disability among Aboriginal children, young people, or their parents in the statutory child protection system. Table S5.8 of the AIHW report “Child Protection Australia: Insights” has data on the prevalence of disability among children and young people in NSW out-of-home care. However, the latest report, for 2022-23, underestimates the prevalence of disability in NSW, as it relies on information reported by the families. Future editions will also include the data from the NDIA quoted above, which will increase the accuracy.
148	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	What investment has been made to improve disability-informed and culturally safe practice among DCJ caseworkers, particularly for Aboriginal parents with intellectual disability?	I am advised: DCJ’s Engagement and Family Support (EFS) team supports caseworkers to navigate the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and ensure that children and parents with disability have the appropriate NDIS funded supports in place to meet their disability related needs. EFS has one Aboriginal team member who provides consultations for caseworkers and support to EFS colleagues as needed. EFS provides support to caseworkers on supporting access to NDIS through various formats, including panels and groups supervisions. These formats provide an opportunity for joint consultation with Aboriginal staff regarding practices to support Aboriginal parents, including those with disability. DCJ also provides training for casework staff to understand disability issues, how to talk with people who live with disability,

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			and how to assess and facilitate case plan when working with families where disability is present.
149	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	How many Aboriginal families with disability have received supported accommodation, practical parenting support, or coordinated NDIS-linked early intervention?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Engagement and Family Support (EFS) team work closely with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to keep children with complex disability needs supported at home with their family under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between DCJ, the NDIA and the Department of Social Services. As of 2 September 2025, under the MOU there were: • <5 Aboriginal children being supported in an early intervention and prevention approach (out of a total cohort number of <25 children), and • <5 Aboriginal children being supported outside the family home, with their parents retaining parental responsibility (out of a total cohort number of <45).
150	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	What funding has been allocated to: (a) Improve disability referral pathways in child protection? (b) Ensure Aboriginal families in contact with DCJ are supported to access NDIS services?	I am advised: Assuming your question relates to children and young people in OOHC, the Department of Communities and Justice is refining the way that it works with children, carers, families and the National Disability Insurance Agency to improve access to disability services. This work is done within existing staffing and departmental resources. Please refer to the answer to SQ 149.
151	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Has the NSW Government committed to implementing Recommendation 9.1 of the Disability Royal Commission	I am advised:

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		concerning culturally appropriate parenting capacity assessments for First Nations parents with disability? (a) What steps have been taken to progress this recommendation?	The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is working in close partnership with NSW Health to develop principles for ensuring parenting capacity assessments are culturally appropriate. To support this work, DCJ will engage with key stakeholders, including the First Peoples Disability Network. A new governance group is being established to provide oversight of NSW implementation of this recommendation.
152	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	What funding, if any, has been allocated to support the co-design of culturally and disability appropriate parenting capacity assessments with First Nations stakeholders? (a) Which First Nations peak bodies, or representatives have been engaged in the codesign of culturally appropriate parenting capacity assessment guidelines? (b) What mechanisms are in place to ensure this engagement is ongoing and equitable?	I am advised: This work is under consideration, in partnership with NSW Health.
153	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Will the NSW Government introduce a legislative or policy requirement that all practitioners conducting these assessments must undertake mandatory cultural competence training, as recommended? (a) If not, why not?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 152.
154	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	How will the NSW Government ensure consistency in the implementation of these guidelines across NSW, particularly in remote or regional areas with limited access to culturally safe practitioners?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 152.
155	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Can you explain what you requested in your budget bid ahead of the 2025-26 NSW Budget?	I am advised:

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		(a) Did the Minister engage with the Commission regarding this?	Through the annual budget process, I requested funding for the Ageing and Disability Commission to continue its frontline safeguarding work. I engaged with the Commission in preparation for the budget process in the usual way.
156	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Can you explain the gap in the current funding following the latest budget, compared to what was requested to meet minimum demand and fulfill statutory requirements, as well as what is actually needed to comprehensively carry out duties?	I am advised: Please see QTON 17. The Ageing and Disability Commission is not demand-funded, and like all frontline government service agencies, is expected to manage and operate within its budget allocation. While I appreciate an agency's right to request, and campaign for, demand-funding, it is not a proposal I can support given the significant pressures on all frontline services at this time – who, no doubt, would all appreciate demand-funding models.
157	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	I understand from the disability community and peak bodies that there is a level of fear, confusion and distress about adults with disability losing vital supports following recent NDIS eligibility changes, resulting in concerning outcomes. Is this something the Commission is aware of or is looking into?	I am advised: The ADC is aware of concerns associated with some of the NDIS reforms that have been raised with the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline. These include issues relating to evidence requirement, and the impact on NDIS access decisions for children on their parents with disability. The ADC is examining and responding to concerns within its remit.
158	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	How many total reports relating to coercive control has the Commission received?	I am advised: Data is currently unavailable as the ADC database did not systematically record reports involving coercive control until a system update in August 2025. The database update will enable

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			data capture and reporting involving coercive control going forward.
159	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Lack of available and affordable housing that is accessible is regularly noted as one of the biggest concerns people with disability are facing right now, which is leading to people being forced into homelessness, living in a home that is not accessible, or living in an unsafe or dangerous situation. Can you advise the number of reports or calls received relating to this?	I am advised: Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, the Ageing and Disability Commission received 155 reports involving allegations that an older person or adult with disability was subject to, or at risk of, neglect associated with shelter.
160	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	One of the Commission's legislated functions is to advise, and make recommendations to, the Minister. Since establishment, how many times has the Commission provided advice or recommendations to the Minister, and in relation to what?	I am advised: The Commissioner provides information and advice on matters affecting adults with disability through regular meetings between the Commissioner and the Minister.
161	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	How do you monitor whether the government acts in response to recommendations made?	I am advised: Monitoring has not been required as the ADC has not made formal recommendations requiring a response.
162	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	What is the government's timeline for consulting and designing foundational supports? (a) Once the budget for NSW is known, will there be further community consultations around the practical design of foundational supports? (b) How does the government plan to ensure foundational supports are fit for purpose for all people with disabilities (beyond the initial 0-9 cohort)?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice is currently undertaking public consultations on the design of foundational supports for children under 9 years. Details of the sessions are available on the DCJ website and information about future consultations will also be published. The design and sequencing of foundational supports for other cohorts would be subject to agreement by state, territory and Commonwealth governments.

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163	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Is the NSW Government conducting any kind of needs-based analysis of people with disabilities in NSW being removed from the NDIS, to catch those who are falling through the cracks?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) monitors data published by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to identify any trends over time for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) access and supports for people in NSW.
164	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Was the Minister consulted about the Thriving Kids proposal ahead of the Federal government's announcement this week?	I am advised: I became aware of the Thriving Kids proposal when it was announced.
165	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Can you please provide any further information or details about the proposal?	I am advised: The Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has published a fact sheet, which is available at https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/thriving-kids-fact-sheet .
166	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	How will Thriving Kids interact with the NSW government's current work designing and developing foundational supports?	I am advised: The Australian Government has publicly set out some of their priorities under the banner of 'Thriving Kids'. NSW Government work on foundational supports for children under 9 years old will form part of the broader national design work by governments.
167	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	As Minister for Disability Inclusion, what have you done since the announcement was made to get clarity on the proposal from the Federal government?	I am advised: I have discussed these matters with my Commonwealth colleagues. All governments are working towards a longer-term agreement in relation to health and disability reforms later this year. Timing for

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			the implementation of new services will be confirmed as part of this process.
168	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Were you involved in the government response to the PC3 inquiry into the experiences of children and young people with disability in education settings? (a) Were you briefed as Minister for Disability Inclusion? (b) Do you support the idea of an independent oversight body, to advocate for children with disability and their families in the education system?	I am advised: As Minister for Disability Inclusion, I was involved in the government response to this Inquiry. The NSW Government will consider this recommendation in the context of its response to recommendations 7.10 and 7.11 from the Disability Royal Commission.
169	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	For each financial year since it was established, how much funding has DCJ provided to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to fill the funding gap needed to fulfil its statutory duties?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) provided additional grant funds each year since the inception of the ADC in 2019 to mitigate the budget deficit and to support its work.
170	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	What is the government doing to raise awareness across local councils about accessibility and universal design?	I am advised: The NSW Government actively raises awareness and drives action regarding accessibility and universal design across local councils in alignment with the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (the Act) and the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan (DIP) 2021-2025. Under the Act, all local councils and other public authorities are required to develop Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) which serve as strategic frameworks to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. The Act also requires public authorities to make their DIAP available in one or more formats accessible to people with disability. To support councils in this work, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ):

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			1. has developed comprehensive Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines. These guidelines provide practical steps for embedding accessibility and universal design principles into councils' operations, infrastructure and community engagement to create liveable communities – which is a focus area of the NSW DIP. 2. delivers a webinar each year to local councils providing information about new policies, resources and government commitments such as Easy Read and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. 1. Promotes and administers the Accessible Australia Initiative, which provides funding towards accessible infrastructure that is consistent with universal design principles.
171	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	When will a Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) be signed with the commonwealth regarding the \$17.1 million Commonwealth Accessible Australia initiative (Accessible Australia) announced in February 2025?	I am advised: The NSW Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) for tranche 1 of Accessible Australia was signed on 7 August 2025 for the financial year 2025/26. Separate FFAs are required to be signed for each tranche of Accessible Australia grants.
172	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Many of the recommendations from the federal inquiry into family violence orders were directed at both the commonwealth and state governments, and throughout the report there were many findings and comments of concern about gaps in state processes and systems. Which Minister has responsibility for this? (a) Has the NSW government met with the commonwealth yet about these cross jurisdictional issues following the report's publication in February?	I am advised: This question should be referred to the Hon. Michael Daley MP, in his capacity as the Attorney General.

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		(b) Is there any action underway to address the gaps identified at a state level?	
173	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	On 12 February 2025, the NSW Legislative Council passed my motion relating to the National Autism Strategy, which called on the government to “commit to developing a statewide plan for improving outcomes for the autistic community across health, education and employment, as well as diagnosis, services and support systems, that is neuro-affirming, human rights based and co-designed with autistic people.” Has the government made any progress on developing a statewide plan?	I am advised: Following the release of the National Autism Strategy, the NSW Government is carefully considering its approach to supporting people with autism, within the context of reforms arising from the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review, including the development of foundational supports. In NSW, disability inclusion is implemented through the state Disability Inclusion Plan (DIP) as well as through Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) in each government department and local council. The NSW Government has not committed to a standalone Autism Strategy in NSW, but continues to consult on this issue through the development of the next NSW DIP.
174	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	I understand the new NSW DIAP is due in November 2025, and that all agencies and departments are due to deliver their new plans within the 6 months ahead of this. Have all departments and agencies done so? (a) How are you ensuring this is more meaningful for all people with disability, for example things like ensuring inclusive employment targets and actions include people with intellectual disability?	I am advised: The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan (DIP) 2026-2029 is due for release at the end of 2025. All NSW public authorities, including government departments and relevant agencies are expected to develop their DIAPs in the 6 months following the release of the next DIP. This will ensure consistency of actions and allow DIAPs to reflect the focus areas of the statewide DIP. There has been significant consultation including with people with lived experience, peak bodies, advocacy organisations and the NSW Disability Council. This consultation has focussed on ensuring lived experience is captured in the development, implementation and monitoring of all actions contained in the DIP.

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			People with intellectual disability have been consulted as part of this process, including specific discussions with the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability on inclusive employment activities.
175	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	An essential part of individual emergency planning for people with disability is early evacuation, however our current systems are not set up to provide early warnings, open evacuation centers early, nor to provide accessible transport in most of rural and regional NSW to evacuate. Will the government commit to working with people with disability and their representative groups on these and other issues to make planning for and responding to emergencies more accessible and inclusive? (a) Is there any work underway between DCJ and other government agencies to improve emergency planning?	I am advised: Homes NSW and the Premier's Department co-hosted an emergency services and disability forum in October 2024 bringing together disability support providers, disability advocacy bodies, the National Disability Insurance Agency and the NDIS Commission, the Ageing and Disability Commission, and health, transport, reconstruction, and emergency services agencies. Together these groups informed an action plan endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee that will improve disaster response outcomes for people with disability. Key actions include ensuring emergency warnings and evacuation information are timely and accessible, and encouraging early evacuation supported by personalised emergency plans. During emergencies, people with disability presenting at Homes NSW evacuation centres may be triaged and supported into suitable accommodation or health services, if required. Homes NSW is partnering with local health districts and community transport providers to map services and coordinate support to help prepare for these scenarios.
176	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	Does the Minister or DCJ have any involvement in or oversight of ensuring assistance animals are considered in biosecurity and disease control? (a) Australia is preparing for the arrival of a new H5N1 variant via migratory birds that we have seen jump species in the northern hemisphere. Are you aware if	I am advised: This is a question for the Minister for Local Government.

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		plans for zoonotic disease control in NSW take into account the needs, numbers and variety of species that serve as assistance animals in NSW? (b) Has the government planned to count the numbers and species of assistance animals in service in NSW?	
177	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	I understand the government intended to hold stakeholder roundtables to inform further advice on the proposed restrictive practices framework in the first half of 2025. How many roundtables have been held so far? (a) Who attended these? (b) Will any further roundtables be held? (c) The NSW Council for Intellectual Disability has proposed that key aspects of the development of a legislative model in relation to restrictive practices in NSW should be informed by a working group, similar to the approach used in relation to guardianship reform recommendations, which the Ageing and Disability Commission supported. Will the government commit to establishing such a working group?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice has sought stakeholder views on the potential legislative framework for the authorisation of restrictive practices in a number of ways, including a focus group with people with intellectual disability, surveys, written submissions, roundtables and targeted consultation with the Centre for Intellectual Disability (CID) and the Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC) amongst others. Five roundtables have been held so far. (a) The roundtables were attended by stakeholders from the following sectors: legal, health, behaviour support practitioners, disability support providers and disability advocates. (b) At this stage no further roundtables will be held. (c) A Working Group is not proposed to be established at this time, however the Government will consider how best to engage stakeholders in further phases of this work.
178	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	In the government's response to recommendation 8 of the NSW inquiry into Child protection and social services system, it indicated that DCJ is undertaking a quality service review to consider how best to capture and assess concerns about domestic and family violence in existing decision-making tools. What is the status of this? (a) When will it be completed?	I am advised: (a & b) The Better Decisions for Children project, which included the Quality Service Review of Structured Decision Making tools, was discontinued in January 2024. In its place, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) has entered into a partnership with AbSec and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) to co-design a

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
		(b) Will the findings be made public? (c) The inquiry found that crucial information about FVOs and breaches is not being shared between police in different jurisdictions, and family law court orders are not being routinely shared with police. Will the government take action to address this?	new approach to child protection assessment and decision-making in NSW that is culturally responsive and community-led. (c) This finding falls within the remit of the Federal Government.
179	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	The government supported recommendation 12 of the NSW inquiry into Child protection and social services system, which was “that the NSW Government consult with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and advocate for improvements to the mandated training for legal professionals working with children in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, including mandatory and comprehensive training in child abuse and family violence and managing family law matters that involve child abuse and family violence.” What is the status of this work?	I am advised: This question should be referred to the Hon. Michael Daley MP, in his capacity as the Attorney General.
180	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	The inquiry found that children and young people are not being provided the opportunity to be heard, in their own words, in court proceedings where significant decisions are often made for them. What are the barriers to DCJ introducing new tools for children to record their own experiences in a form that can be presented in both state children's and federal family law courts? (a) Has DCJ begun any work liaising with the Advocate for Children and Young People or the Children's Court on the adequacy of current tools to support hearing children's perspectives through court proceedings?	I am advised: DCJ will soon engage with the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Children's Court to discuss the adequacy of current tools for hearing children's perspectives in court proceedings. The inquiry's reference to the UK's 'Mind of My Own' digital tool will inform these discussions. In the Children's Court, section 104 of the Care and Protection Act 1998 presumes a child's right to participate, including in Dispute Resolution Conferences. Caseworkers and legal representatives assess and arrange a child's attendance. All children in care proceedings are legally represented, either by an Independent or Direct Legal Representative, based on age and capacity. Legal Aid NSW ensures representatives are skilled and trained, and many provide written or verbal statements of the child's views.

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			Legal Aid NSW also offers 'Your Voice – Children's OOHCA Advocacy', a free legal service for children in out-of-home care, with a focus on residential care and support from a wellbeing team including an Aboriginal Field Officer.
181	Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	In relation to recommendation 14, can you explain how the government is closely monitoring reforms that are underway at a federal level? (a) What is the status of this?	I am advised: NSW is a participating jurisdiction in the National Framework for Information Sharing between the Family Law and Family Violence and Child Protection Systems. The Commonwealth, state and territory Attorney-Generals endorsed the National Framework in 2021. It is overseen by the Standing Council of Attorneys-General. a) This is a matter for Legal NSW and as such this question should be referred to the Hon. Michael Daley MP, in his capacity as the Attorney General.
182	Opposition	Commonwealth funding is expiring this year for the pilot co-locating specialist staff at family court registries in NSW. Is this funding being extended by the Commonwealth? (a) If not, what will happen to the pilot? (b) Will the NSW government provide any funding to continue or expand the pilot, given its success? (c) How much funding does the NSW Government provide in supplementary funding related to the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence National Partnership Agreement to support implementation of the National Framework?	I am advised: NSW is a participating jurisdiction in the National Framework for Information Sharing between the Family Law and Family Violence and Child Protection Systems. At a meeting of the Standing Council of Attorneys-General on 15 August 2025, participants endorsed in principle, subject to appropriate Cabinet approval in each jurisdiction, arrangements to distribute Australian Government funding to state and territory agencies to extend information sharing under the National Framework and the Co-location Program until 30 June 2028.
183	Opposition	Can you please break down the allocation of \$3.9 million over two years to audit and upgrade existing government owned disability properties? (a) What is the timeline for the audit?	I am advised: The 2025/26 Budget includes \$3.9 million over two years to deliver better outcomes for residents of government owned disability housing in NSW, including development of processes to

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		(b) Who is carrying out this work? (c) How many properties will be considered in this process? (d) Will assisted boarding houses be included?	support residents to find and relocate to homes that better meet their needs. As at 30 June 2025, DCJ owned or managed 804 properties comprised mostly of group homes and a small number of respite and day program facilities. These DCJ properties do not include assisted boarding houses.
184	Opposition	Have TEI service providers been sent contract offers, or letters of invitation, to negotiate? (a) If not, why not? (b) When will the sector get certainty?	I am advised: The NSW Government has approved the recommissioning approach for the Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) and Family Connect and Support (FCS) programs, for a new contract term of 5.5 years from 1 January 2026 to 30 June 2031 under the Community and Family Support (CAFS) program. DCJ will inform all TEI and FCS service providers of the recommissioning decision for their service in September 2025, with DCJ intending to invite relevant service providers to engage in CAFS contract negotiations from September 2025.
185	Opposition	I understand the government granted a six-month contract extension for TEI services with a view to align with FS from 1 January 2026. Is the government on track to commence new TEI contracts from 1 January 2026?	I am advised: The NSW Government has approved the recommissioning approach for the Targeted Earlier Intervention and Family Connect and Support programs, for a new contract term of 5.5 years from 1 January 2026 to 30 June 2031, under the Community and Family Support program.
186	Opposition	Have the Community and Family Support Program Specifications been finalised? (a) When will this be available on the DCJ website?	I am advised: The finalised Community and Family Support Program Specifications were published on 2 September on the DCJ website.

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187	Opposition	The NSW Accessible Public Transport Disability Standards were issued under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, over 32 years ago. Whilst substantial improvements have been made, much of our public transport network is still inaccessible. Will the Government set a date by which all public transport will be fully accessible? (a) Have you met with the Minister for Transport about this important issue?	I am advised: The NSW Government has invested significant additional funds into transport accessibility upgrades since 2023. I can guarantee that transport accessibility has already been improved, and will be further improved more by this government compared to the former government.
188	Opposition	For many in NSW there is no public transport, meaning that people with disability, children and elders are unable to access essential services. With less than 2% rental vacancy, and up to 40% rises in rents over the past 5 years, relocation to places with public transport is not feasible for most anymore. Will the government commit to mapping the parts of this state without accessible public transport, and to a plan to address this deficit?	I am advised: The NSW Government has invested significant additional money into transport accessibility upgrades since 2023. I can guarantee that transport accessibility has already been improved, and will be further improved more by this government compared to the former government.
189	Opposition	How will DCJ implement the domestic and family violence NSW Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety Framework (CARAS) to ensure child protection and family support service staff have the capability to identify domestic and family violence and assess or manage risk?	I am advised: Implementation planning for the Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety Framework (CARAS) is underway, including consideration around sectors that may be prioritised for the next phase of the project. Considerations around the implementation of the CARAS will also be guided by the work of the Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Special Advisor, which is due to be completed on 30 September 2025.
190	Opposition	On the impact of domestic violence on children and young people, what processes are in place to hold perpetrators of violence to account, and to keep protective parents safe and together with children?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is leading work to develop a strategy to respond to the use of Domestic and

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			Family Violence (DFV) and has consulted with over 300 stakeholders to inform development of the strategy. Holding perpetrators to account while keeping victims safe is central to the NSW Government's response to domestic and family violence. A key component to this is funding Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs), which prioritise victim safety and offer supports to victim survivors, including identifying, monitoring and managing risk and referrals to specialist services.
191	Opposition	How many calls were made into the Child Protection Hotline during 2024-25?	I am advised: It is not a hotline. The Child Protection Helpline received 134,452 calls during the FY 2024/25.
192	Opposition	How many calls were made into the Child Protection Hotline between: (a) January to March 2025? (b) April to June 2025?	I am advised: (a) For January to March 2025 the Child Protection Helpline received 32,897 calls. (b) For April to June 2025 the Child Protection Helpline received 33,585 calls.
193	Opposition	Which CSCs did not complete any face-to-face assessments during the following months: (a) January 2025 (b) February 2025 (c) April 2025 (d) May 2025 (e) June 2025?	I am advised: Due to the nature of allocation, response hubs and regional groupings children and young people subject of an assessment are not directly attributable to some specific Community Services Centres (CSCs). Please see response to SQ 21.
194	Opposition	For the above, how many children entered care before a safety assessment was completed?	I am advised: During 2024/25, a total of 1,404 children and young people entered out-of-home care for the first time in NSW. Of those

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		(a) In 2024/25 how many had their cases closed without being seen by a caseworker?	children and young people, 72 (5.1%) did not have a safety assessment completed before they entered care, due to recording issues requiring remediation. (a) In 2024/25, there were 114,160 children and young people reported at risk of significant harm (ROSH). Of these 91,896 (80.5%) were reviewed at a local CSC and closed at the triage stage or after allocation, with referrals made to a relevant service, where needed. A total of 22,264 (19.5%), children and young people were seen by a caseworker for assessment.
195	Opposition	Are Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors still captured as a ROSH report? (a) What is the current list of categories for the ROSH threshold? (b) Who determines the threshold criteria? (c) Has the criteria changed in the last 12 months? i. If so, why	I am advised: Yes, Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors are still included in reporting of risk of significant harm concerns. a) and b) The Risk of Significant Harm (RoSH) threshold is defined by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (Care Act). All suspected risk of significant harm concerns reported to the Child Protection Helpline are assessed by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to determine if there is sufficient reason to believe the child or young person may be at risk of significant harm. c) No, the threshold has not changed in the last 12 months.
196	Opposition	How many reports that met the JCPR (Joint Child Protection Response) criteria resulted in criminal proceedings and ultimately convictions in last financial year?	I am advised: The Joint Child Protection Response Program responds to and investigates serious and complex child protection matters in order to keep children and young people safe. It is not intended to monitor, track and report on criminal proceedings and convictions.

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197	Opposition	What is the age of the youngest person in an IPA at the moment?	I am advised: As at 31 July 2025, the youngest child in an Individual Placement Arrangement (IPA) was aged one.
198	Opposition	How much was allocated in 2025/26 for early intervention programs?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice is investing more than \$268.3 million in 2025/26 in early intervention programs.
199	Opposition	How much was allocated in 2025/26 for family preservation programs?	I am advised: \$176 million.
200	Opposition	What funding has Family Connect and Support (FCS) received for the following years: (a) 2023-24? (b) 2024-25?	I am advised: (a) The 2023/24 NSW Budget provided \$21 million for Family Connect and Support (FCS). (b) The 2024/25 NSW Budget provided \$21.6 million for FCS.
201	Opposition	How many clients have FCS supported for the following years: (a) 2023-24? (b) 2024-25? (c) How many of the above were Aboriginal, in each year?	I am advised: (a) In 2023/24, there were 19,123 individual Family Connect Support (FCS) client. Of these, 4,689 clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. (b) 2024/25 FCS program data is not yet available.
202	Opposition	What is the total number of contracted places that family preservation programs have provided to families for the following years: (a) 2023-24? (b) 2024-25? (c) How many of the above were Aboriginal, in each year?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ#203.

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203	Opposition	Regarding the above, how many services were delivered to children for the following years: (a) 2023-24? (b) 2024-25? (c) How many of the above were Aboriginal, in each year?	I am advised: (a) In 2023/24, 16,696 children and young people were engaged in a Family Preservation service at some point in the year. (b) Data for 2024/25 is not yet available (c) In 2023/24, of the 16,696 children and young people who were engaged in a Family Preservation service at some point in the year, 6,131 were Aboriginal. 10,565 were non-Aboriginal (including 420 with unknown Aboriginality status).
204	Opposition	How many individual clients has the TEI program seen for the following years: (a) 2023-24 (b) 20240-2025 (c) How many of the above were Aboriginal, in each year?	I am advised: (a) In 2023/24, there were 176,888 individual Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) clients. Of these, 27,245 clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. (a) 2024/25 TEI program data is not yet available.
205	Opposition	How many unidentified clients has the TEI program seen for the following years: (a) 2023-24? (b) 2024-25?	I am advised: (a) In 2023/24, there were 1,188,299 unidentified Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) group clients. (b) 2024/25 TEI program data is not yet available.
206	Opposition	How many children and young people were in each HCEA for: (a) January to March 2025? (b) April to June 2025? (c) Regarding the above, how many cases are managed by DCJ and how many cases are managed by a non-government organisation during the same timeframes?	I am advised: Please refer to attachment SQ#206 Table.
207	Opposition	What is the cost of each HCEA for January to June 2025?	I am advised:

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			Please refer to attachment SQ#207 Table.
208	Opposition	What is the highest number of ROSH re-reports received for a single child for the following periods: (a) January to March 2025? (b) April to June 2025? (c) For the above in which district was the ROSH report made, in each period?	I am advised: The highest number of RoSH reports received by a single child or young person was: (a) 18 for January to March 2025, allocated to the Nepean Blue Mountains district. (b) 39 for April to June 2025, allocated to the Statewide Services South West Metropolitan Joint Child Protection Response Program. (c) See responses to (a) and (b) above.
209	Opposition	How many young people have a plan for guardianship as of 30 June 2025?	I am advised: At 30 June 2025, 594 children and young people in out-of-home care had a plan goal of 'guardianship'.
210	Opposition	How many young people have a plan for restoration as of 30 June 2025?	I am advised: At 30 June 2025, 431 children and young people in out-of-home care had a plan goal of 'restoration'.
211	Opposition	As of 30 June 2025, how many children have a case management plan of adoption?	I am advised: At 30 June 2025, 201 children and young people had a case plan goal of 'adoption'.
212	Opposition	As of 30 June 2025, how many young people who are under Parental Responsibility of the Minister were not in a placement with authorised carer? (a) How many were "Absent over 24 hours – location unknown"? (b) How many were Self-placed?	I am advised: As of 30 June 2025, 1004 young people who were under Parental Responsibility of the Minister were not in a placement with an authorised carer. (a) 7 were 'Absent over 24 hours – location unknown';

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		(c) How many were 'no placement or whereabouts recorded'? (d) How many were with Parent/s - Both Parents, Parent/s – Father, Parent/s – Mother? (e) How many were in a Youth Justice Centre – remand or sentence?	(b) 432 were self-placed; (c) 239 were 'no placement or whereabouts recorded'; (d) 298 were with parent/s - including 'Both Parents', 'Parent/s – Father' and 'Parent/s – Mother'; (e) 14 were in a youth justice centre – remand or sentence; and the remaining 14 included those at a camp, in hospital or rehab, and in refuge/supported accommodation.
213	Opposition	How many critical instances reports has the Minister received in relation to OOHC pregnancies from: (a) 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024? (b) 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025?	I am advised: The following critical incident reports were received for a young person in care who becomes pregnant or has requested a termination of pregnancy: a) 51 were received from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. b) 24 were received from 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025
214	Opposition	How many internal reviews of CSCs were conducted in 203-24 and 2024-25? (a) Please list these reviews by CSC?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice has not conducted any internal reviews of Community Service Centres (CSCs) in the periods of 2023/24 and 2024/25.
215	Opposition	How many internal reviews of CSCs was the Minister made aware of?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ#214.
216	Opposition	How many children and young people are currently in ITC?	I am advised: As at 31 July 2025, there were 808 children and young people residing in an ITC placement.

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217	Opposition	As of 30 June 2025, how many children and young people have a CALD plan?	I am advised: Although the Department of Communities and Justice records information specifically related to the identity and needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and young people, there is no specific instrument such as a 'CALD plan'.
218	Opposition	As of 30 June 2025, how many children and young people have an education plan?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) policy requires that cooperative planning to develop Personalised Learning and Support Plans (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 providers to record and upload education plans onto the DCJ platform, which are currently not recorded in a systemic way as a datapoint.
219	Opposition	As of 30 June 2025, how many children and young people have a leaving care plan?	I am advised: As of 30 June 2025, 2,259 children and young people in out-of-home care had a leaving care plan, including those managed by the Department of Communities and Justice and other service providers.

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220	Opposition	What is the NSW public school enrolment for 2025 for children and young people under the parental responsibility of the Minister? (a) Of the children enrolled to attend school, what is their attendance rate?	I am advised: Data for calendar year 2025 is not yet available, for 2024 calendar year: 8,606 (77.9%) of children and young people under PRM were enrolled in a NSW public school. (a) Please refer to attachment SQ#220a Table.
221	Opposition	What is done for those children who are suspended from attend school, where the carer is working and must leave the child unattended?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) can make arrangements to provide daytime respite for children for short periods when carers are unavailable.
222	Opposition	What is done for those children who are refusing to attend school, where the carer is working and must leave the child unattended?	I am advised: Please refer to answer to SQ 221.
223	Opposition	How many young people in OOHC and case managed by DCJ were suspended from school during: (a) 2023-24? (b) 2024-25?	I am advised: As was the case under the former government, the Department of Communities and Justice does not hold this information in the structured data.
224	Opposition	What percentage of carers complete a carers education course, and in what kind of timeframe?	I am advised: All DCJ Foster Carers receive mandatory training prior to the assessment commencing while all DCJ relative and kinship carers receive mandatory training prior to full authorisation. Additional training and support are offered at different times through the carer journey that is more specific to the child and carer household.

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225	Opposition	How and when is a carer informed of what types of supports, funded and otherwise, are available to them in their role as carer? (a) Can you provide a list of what they are and in what circumstances they are made available (if not in all circumstances)?	I am advised: Recently the Department of Communities and Justice has mandated that all non-government providers distribute letters to their carers advising of their specific carer payments, the funding packages provided for the child in their care, other available supports from NSW and Commonwealth governments, and complaints mechanism. Some of these topics are also covered in the initial training provided. See Tabled Document 'Your Carer Supports' tendered by Minister Washington. During the carer assessment process, carer assessors speak with applicants about support available to them through LINKS training and Caring for Kids. All applicants are required to complete the Shared Stories, Shared Lives program, which includes information about trauma-informed care. If any additional training or support is identified during the assessment, it is included in the report as a recommendation, which is shared with the applicants and the casework team so that this can be provided.
226	Opposition	What is the number of foster carer households during 2023/24 and 2024/25 by district?	I am advised: There have been issues with the finalisation of the 2024-25 data regarding foster carer households. The department is working to

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			finalise this data and will provide it to the Minister's office as soon as it becomes available.
227	Opposition	What is the number of children and young people in foster carer households for 2023/24 and 24/25 by district?	I am advised: There have been issues with the finalisation of the 2024-25 data regarding foster carer households. The department is working to finalise this data and will provide it to the Minister's office as soon as it becomes available.
228	Opposition	Has the Department established mandatory arrangements to enable timely monitoring of children in OOHC who present to homelessness services?	I am advised: Every child under the Parental Responsibility of the Minister (PRM) has an allocated caseworker. If a child leaves their placement or is away from their placement they actively work with them to safely return to their placement or find an alternative placement. If there are concerns for a child's safety, a risk of significant harm report is made and assessed in line with DCJs safety in care mandate. Every child under PRM receives a leaving care plan when they turn 15 years old, those at risk of homelessness continue to receive a full casework service and receive outreach support to meet their daily care needs, continuously manage risk and transition them to independence including a safe and permanent home.
229	Opposition	Has the Department conducted a systemic review of children in OOHC who are presenting as homeless to an SHS?	I am advised: Please see response to SQ228.
230	Opposition	In 2024/25 how many children were removed from their families in total?	I am advised:

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
		(a) How many children were removed from their families by warrant and how many were Aboriginal? (b) How many children were removed by NSW police and how many were Aboriginal?	In 2024–25, 1,232 children and young people were removed under legal orders S43, S44, and by warrant. (a) In 2024-25, 34 children and young people were removed by warrant, including 20 Aboriginal children and young people. (b) In 2023-24, 51 children and young people were removed from their parents by Police. Of those children and young people, 22 were reported as, or identified as Aboriginal. The remaining 29 were non-Aboriginal. Similar data for 2024-25 is not yet available.
231	Opposition	How many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children were restored to their parents from final orders and from interim orders in 2023-24 and 2024-25? (a) What were the restoration rates for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children by type of order in these years? (b) For the above what were the ages range? (c) How long were the children and young people in care?	I am advised: There were 131 Aboriginal children and young people and 208 non-Aboriginal children and young people who exited out-of-home care due to restoration in 2024-25. Of the 131 Aboriginal children and young people: (a) 73 (55.7%) were on final orders, 12 (9.2%) were on interim orders and 46 (35.1%) had a missing legal order type. (b) 46.6% of these Aboriginal children and young people were aged between 0 and 4 years, 30.5% were aged between 5 and 9 years and 22.9% were aged between 10 and 17 years. (c) 62.6% of these Aboriginal children and young people were in out-of-home care for less than two years. Restoration is the goal for children and young people when they enter out-of-home care. Of the 208 non-Aboriginal children and young people: (a) 111 (53.4%) were on final orders, 23 (11.1%) were on interim orders and 74 (35.6%) had a missing legal order type.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
			(b) 33.2% of these non-Aboriginal children and young people were aged between 0 and 4 years, 33.2% were aged between 5 and 9 years and 33.7% were aged between 10 and 17 years. (c) 62.5% of these non-Aboriginal children and young people were in out-of-home care for less than two years. Restoration is the goal for children and young people when they enter out-of-home care. 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, as this information is not collected in the legal file management.
232	Opposition	During 2023/24 and 2024/25 how many Section 90 variations has the Department made for a child that was “missing from placement”? (a) Of these how many were successful? (b) How many were unsuccessful?	I am advised: During the period 1 September 2024 to 1 September 2025, 284 applications were filed by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) under section 90. Data on the number of section 90 applications filed by DCJ cannot be broken down by whether the child or young person was 'missing from placement' at the time of filing, or whether the final orders obtained were consistent with the original orders sought, as this information is not specifically collected in the legal file management system.
233	Opposition	How many children absconded from the Sherwood program during 2024-25? (a) What was the longest period of time a young person was away from this placement?	I am advised: There were ten instances when a young person absconded from the Sherwood Program in the 2024/25 financial year.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
		(b) What are you doing to prevent this from occurring?	(a) The program has proactive protocols in place to assess risk and ensure appropriate staffing levels are in place to prevent absconding, and to respond appropriately if it does occur.
234	Opposition	How many children and young people are in each category of HCEA? (a) Of these, how many have been in emergency or temporary arrangements for: i. 0-3, ii. 3-6, iii. 6-9, iv. 9-12, or v. 12+ months? (b) How many have been in emergency or temporary arrangements for: under 5 years, 5-12 years? (c) Of these, what is the longest stay of any individual child or young person? (d) Of these, what is the median stay in these arrangements? (e) Of these, provide a breakdown by type of accommodation?	I am advised: Please refer to attachment SQ#234 Table.
235	Opposition	How many children have been moved out of temporary and emergency accommodation arrangements and to what kind of care have they exited?	I am advised: Please refer to attachment SQ#235 Table.
236	Opposition	How many children under 12 are currently in residential care? (a) What is the youngest age? (b) How long has this person been in the accommodation? (c) What is the usual length of stay in these placements?	I am advised: There were 977 children and young people placed in residential care at 30 June 2025, of which 187 were under 12 years old. a) The youngest child placed in residential care was 1 year old. b) This child was in residential care for less than two months.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
			c) The median length of stay was 6 months, the mean was 10 months, the minimum was less than a month.
237	Opposition	How many children under 12 are currently in IPA? (a) What is the youngest age? (b) How long has this person been in the accommodation? (c) What is the usual length of stay in these placements?	I am advised: As at 31 July 2025, there were 111 children under 12 years old residing in an Individual Placement Arrangement (IPA). (a) youngest age is one year. (b) length of stay for the youngest child is 86 days (c) Median length of stay for all children and young people in IPA as at 31 July 2025 is 149 days.
238	Opposition	How many children are in a serviced apartment? (a) What is the youngest age? (b) How long has this person been in the accommodation? (c) What is the usual length of stay in these placements?	I am advised: As at 31 July 2025, there were 17 children and young people living in serviced apartments. (a) youngest age is 6 years old (b) length of stay for the youngest child is 17 days (c) Median length of stay for all children and young people in serviced apartments as at 31 July 2025 is 72 days.
239	Opposition	What is the total attrition rate for 2024-25, by percentage, for DCJ Child Protection Caseworkers employed: (a) Less than 1 year? (b) 1 - 2 years? (c) 2 - 5 years? (d) 5 - 10 years? (e) 10 - 20 years? (f) More than 20 years? (g) For the above, please provide a breakdown for the Joint Children Protection Response Team.	I am advised: Please refer to attachment SQ#239 Table.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
240	Opposition	For 2023-24, and 2024-25 what was the total number of Family Preservation Places available in New South Wales, overall and in each DCJ district?	I am advised: Please refer to Supplementary Questions #8 and #9.
241	Opposition	What is the projected number of Family Preservation Places available in 2025-26 and 2026-27 and in each DCJ district?	I am advised: DCJ has tendered for providers to deliver Family Preservation services across all districts, including specifying the number of places per annum which are to be provided. Should all contracts be awarded, DCJ is planning to fund the following number of places across NSW from 1 April 2026: - Hunter, Central Coast: 699 - Murrumbidgee, Far West, Western NSW: 565 - Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Southern: 402 - Northern, Mid North Coast, New England: 585 - Western Sydney, Nepean, Blue Mountains: 764 - Sydney, South East Sydney, Northern Sydney: 471 - South West Sydney: 545
242	Opposition	For each District, in what proportion of cases where a child has been identified as being at risk of significant harm (ROSH), have families been referred to Family Preservation Services?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ#10.
243	Opposition	For each District, what is the average time between a ROSH report being received, and the families being referred to Family Preservation Services?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ#10.
244	Opposition	DCJs Funding Approach paper for Family Preservation Services notes that \$5.6 million per annum will be held back by the department for implementation. What is the current status and intended use of the Family Preservation implementation funding?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ#15.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
		(a) When will details of the implementation plan be released?	
245	Opposition	How will stakeholders be consulted about the development of the CALD advisory service, and when will it be implemented?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ#16.
246	Opposition	How much funding was allocated to the “targeted advertising” campaign to promote multicultural child protection applications? (a) How many CALD candidates applied? (b) How many were successful?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice has not allocated funding for specific campaigns to attract multicultural child protection workers. In 2024 DCJ created an inclusive campaign featuring caseworkers and casework managers from diverse cultural backgrounds. DCJ has also just undertaken a repeat campaign in 2025. The 2024 campaign had \$50,000 in funding. Social media sites and the Caseworker Careers page saw high engagement rates and the campaign was supported with regional press and Koori Mail advertisements for Aboriginal audiences. Applicants may choose not to identify their cultural background when applying for a role with DCJ. DCJ does not collect data on the number of CALD candidates applying for roles, noting they may also apply for generic roles as well as Multicultural Caseworker roles.
247	Opposition	How would the OCG audit an organisation to ensure their data on under 18 members is being handled responsibly?	I am advised: It is unclear what this question is seeking.
248	Opposition	There was a report recently that Rising Tide was harvesting information of under 18s around Newcastle in a recruitment program. Has the OCG investigated how Rising Tide stores its information and who has access to these records?	I am advised: No.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
249	Opposition	Has the OCG conducted spot checks on Rising Tide camps to ensure Rising Tide has registered every adult attending their all-ages camps?	I am advised: No.
250	Opposition	How many WWCC applicants received an 'interim bar' whilst their application was being assessed?	I am advised: In 2024/25 FY, 1004 Interim Bars were imposed on individuals who required a risk assessment.
251	Opposition	In response to QON 550 (Legislative Assembly) the Minister advised "We are also pursuing a range of reforms to further strengthen the WWCC system and expedite the integration with other jurisdictions' systems." – Can you outline what these reforms will be?	I am advised: Urgent reforms will include a mutual recognition of negative notices in other jurisdictions, such that if a person is prevented from working with children in another Australian state or territory, they will not be able to hold a clearance in New South Wales. Other reforms include progression toward a National Continuous Checking Capability. The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) is also undertaking a review of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 to strengthen the Working with Children Check (WWCC) Scheme to ensure it is operating in line with community expectations. The OCG is preparing for the release of a public discussion paper later this year on the scope and operation of the Scheme, for further potential improvements.
252	Opposition	How many children and young people, including by percentage, in OOHC have completed Health Measure? (a) For the above how many are Aboriginal?	I am advised: DCJ acknowledge that current recording systems do not fully reflect the number of health assessments and management plans in place. DCJ is actively working with partner agencies, and NGO providers, to improve data accuracy and consistency, which are not currently recorded in a systemic way as a datapoint. This

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
			includes reviewing guidance provided to caseworkers and enhancing training to support more effective recording practices.
253	Opposition	How many children entering out-of-home care (OOHC) received a health assessment within 30 days, as required?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ 252.
254	Opposition	How often is a health plan or assessment undertaken or reviewed?	I am advised: Children and young people entering out of home care (OOHC) are referred by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to commence a primary health assessment within 30 days of entering OOHC. DCJ and non-government organisations (NGO) caseworkers contact the OOHC Health Pathway Coordinator to arrange for a health assessment review at key stages: • 0-5 years - every six months • 6-14 years – every 12 months • Leaving Care – young people aged 15 to 17 years, reviews commence at 15 years.
255	Opposition	How many Aboriginal children have been transitioned from NGOs back to DCJ case management?	I am advised: There were 34 Aboriginal children and young people that transitioned from Non-ACCO Non-Government Organisation to the Department of Communities and Justice case management in 2024/25.
256	Opposition	How many Aboriginal children have been transitioned from ACCOs back to DCJ case management?	I am advised: Between July 2022 to July 2025, 92 Aboriginal children transitioned from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to the Department of Communities and Justice.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
257	Opposition	In 2022/23 and 2024/25 how many Aboriginal children and young people have been deidentified? (a) How many are in the process of being de-identified?	I am advised: Between 1 January 2023 to 29 February 2024, 99 children had an Indigenous Status Change from Aboriginal. From March 2024 to present, updated data is not available due to a Ministerial pause on correcting Aboriginal misidentification. This pause remains in effect until the Department of Communities and Justice finalises a policy in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
258	Opposition	How many Aboriginal children and young people have been given an exemption by DCJ not to transfer? (a) What were these reasons? (b) Who is involved in making this decision?	I am advised: It is unclear what this question is seeking. Carers will not be forced to transition against their will.
259	Opposition	What is the percentage and total number of senior managers who are currently based outside of Sydney?	I am advised: Child protection is a statewide service, and work locations vary depending on business requirements.
260	Opposition	How many district staff are not based in their district?	I am advised: Please refer to the answer to SQ#259.
261	Opposition	When will the NSW Government report and update on the progress against the final recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission?	I am advised: Governments are working to deliver the first National Disability Royal Commission Progress Report. The first progress report will provide updates on work to progress the 222 recommendations, and is expected to be published in September 2025, on the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
262	Opposition	What is the NSW Government doing to monitor the impacts of the current changes to the NDIS on the supports being delivered to people with disabilities in NSW?	I am advised: DCJ monitors data published by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to identify trends over time for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) access and supports for people in NSW. DCJ has established a time-limited NSW NDIS Rules Group with members of the Disability Council NSW, NSW Carers Advisory Council, NSW Ageing and Disability Commission Advisory Board, and the NSW Disability Advocacy Network. The group is providing advice to DCJ on how previous and new NDIS Rules changes are impacting NDIS participants in NSW.
263	Opposition	What is the NSW Government's plan to ensure changes to the NDIS do not negatively impact people with disabilities in NSW?	I am advised: Many of the changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) are to be made through new Category A NDIS Rules, which require the agreement of state and territory governments. The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) has established a time-limited NSW NDIS Rules Group with members of the Disability Council NSW, NSW Carers Advisory Council, NSW Ageing and Disability Commission Advisory Board, and the NSW Disability Advocacy Network. The group is providing advice to DCJ on how previous and new NDIS Rules changes are impacting NDIS participants in NSW.
264	Opposition	Is there any funding allocated for the developing foundational supports for people with disabilities in 2024/25?	I am advised: In the 2024/25 NSW Budget, \$7.1 million over two years was allocated to ensure the Cabinet Office and the Department of Communities and Justice have capacity to drive significant disability reforms, including the design of foundational supports for children.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
265	Opposition	How many meetings of the Foundational Supports advisory committee have been held?	I am advised: The Foundational Supports for Children Advisory Group has met five times between 1 July 2025 and 27 August 2025.
266	Opposition	What further consultation with the sections is planned?	I am advised: The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is currently undertaking public consultations on the design of foundational supports for children from August to November 2025. Details of these sessions are available on the DCJ website.
267	Opposition	Who is the lead minister in NSW for the implementation of foundational supports?	I am advised: Responsibilities for implementation of foundational supports will be confirmed when longer-term agreements between states and territories and the Commonwealth are reached.
268	Opposition	What are you doing to provided early intervention support for people with disability ineligible for the NDIS?	I am advised: Early intervention supports for people with disability are available through a range of services provided through the NSW Government. Information for families and children on where to get support is available on the DCJ website at https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-inclusion/disability-and-inclusion/foundational-supports-for-children.html .
269	Opposition	What are you doing to provided support for children with developmental concerns, delay and/or disability who are ineligible for the NDIS?	I am advised: Refer to SQ268.

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
270	Opposition	What support is being provided to carers, families and kin of children and young people who are not ineligible for the NDIS?	I am advised: Refer to SQ268.
271	Opposition	How many people with disability are there in NSW? (a) Of these, how many are children and young people?	I am advised: The most recent data available via the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2022 estimated there were approximately 1.5 million people of all ages with disability in NSW. This includes approximately 138,000 people aged 0 to 14 years.
272	Opposition	In 2023-24 and 2024-25, how many people in NSW have had their NDIS funding plan cut? (a) Of these, how many are children and young people?	I am advised: This question should be directed to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).
273	Opposition	In 2023-24 and 2024-25, how many people in NSW have had their NDIS funding plan cancelled? (a) Of these, how many are children and young people?	I am advised: This question should be directed to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).
274	Opposition	How many children and young people in OOHC have an NDIS plan?	I am advised: At 30 June 2025, there were 13,582 children and young people in OOHC, of whom 3457 (25.5%) were on an approved NDIS plan. An additional 50 children (0.3%) have met the eligibility criteria, but are currently waiting for an approved NDIS plan
275	Opposition	In 2023-24 and 2024-25, how many children and young people in OOHC have had their NDIS funding plan cut?	I am advised:

Question Number	Member	Supplementary Question	Answer
			This question should be directed to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).
276	Opposition	In 2023-24 and 2024-25, how many children and young people in OOHC have had their NDIS funding plan cancelled?	I am advised: This question should be directed to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).