

**Division 29: Commissioner for Children and Young People, \$3 077 000 —**

Ms S.E. Winton, Chair.

Mr J.R. Quigley, Attorney General.

Mr C. Pettit, Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Ms P. Heath, Director, Policy and Research.

Miss L. Markussen, Ministerial Liaison Officer.

Mr J. Lee, Principal Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number.

If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 29 September 2017. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice through the online questions system.

I give the call to the member for Hillarys.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Thank you, and welcome, commissioner.

I refer to page 462 of budget paper No 2. Only one service is listed under the heading "Service Summary", and that is, "Consultation, Research and Promotion of the Wellbeing of Children and Young People". That is a very important thing, as we all agree. In that context, and through the Attorney General, is the commissioner aware of an exhibition that opened this week at the Art Gallery of Western Australia by an artist called Bill Henson? I have been provided with copies of some of the images that are exhibited at this exhibition and I have to say that they appear to be, frankly, really, really disturbing images of naked children. Has this exhibition come to the awareness of the commissioner? Was the commissioner consulted before these images of naked children were displayed in the Art Gallery of Western Australia? Is any action being taken on it?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I will defer to the commissioner. Of course, Mr Henson's photography and his images were a matter of some controversy 25 years ago and have been the subject of commentary over the years. I would have thought that if the member were concerned about the publication of what he would regard as offensive images of children, as his question clearly indicates, the proper people to go to would be Western Australia Police.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** But obviously the commissioner is here to protect the wellbeing of children and young people. I am simply asking if he is aware of this exhibition and if he was consulted before these images were displayed. I recognise that for criminal complaints we go to the police. I am speaking to the Minister for Police later today and I will take it up there, too.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Can I just add, having just glanced at them, clearly they are photographically of high quality, but they are images of naked children clearly under the age of 16.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** That was a commentary from the member for Cottesloe, but I will respond to his comment, which was, of course, what initiated the controversy 25 years ago and has been raised on and off ever since. I will defer to the commissioner for his answer to the question.

**Mr C. Pettit:** Thank you, minister. Member, that is the first I have heard of it and the first it has been raised with me, so I will have a look at it when I leave here.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Thank you; I appreciate that.

Another area I want to ask questions about today relates to the heading “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” at page 461 and the dot point on page 462. I will read it quickly, because we are running out of time. It states —

both the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse and the Royal Commission into the Don Dale Detention Centre will hand down findings this financial year that highlight the actions required to address the risk of harm to some of our most vulnerable children and young people. The Commissioner will undertake a range of initiatives to enhance its continuing work in leading the development of child safe organisation principles in Western Australia and build on the findings of these important Inquiries including supporting development of effective responses for children displaying harmful sexual behaviours towards other children and development of an Oversight Mapping Report to analyse current oversight of key services for children and young people and identify areas for improvement;

Which government agencies is the commissioner working with to improve the rights, voices and contributions of children and young people? How is it intended that this oversight mapping report will be used both within and outside of government?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I will ask the commissioner to proffer an answer on that.

**Mr C. Pettit:** Thank you, minister. I ask the member to please repeat the question if I miss elements of it.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Yes, definitely.

**Mr C. Pettit:** Certainly in relation to child safe organisations, we have been working with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse on some of the issues around how the interpretation of younger people around sexual abuse relates to characteristics of harmful sexual behaviour in their lives. We are working with a range of agencies now to develop a policy to assist them to, first, identify when that occurs in their environment, and then, more importantly, how to support an individual child and victim through that process, and also the perpetrator. That is the first bit of work. What was the second question the member had — I apologise?

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** How is the oversight mapping report intended to be utilised within and outside government, and when is it likely to be completed?

**Mr C. Pettit:** We have been working with all oversight agencies, including the Ombudsman, the Office of Inspector of Custodial Services and the Auditor General, to look at all the oversight that relates to children, particularly our most vulnerable. That report is nearing finalisation and we are now working back with a number of other agencies, particularly the bigger service delivery agencies like Education and Health, to make sure we have not missed anything there. That report will hopefully be finished by the end of October, early November.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Thank you. Through the Attorney General, is the commissioner working within government in respect of the government’s Target 120 policy, which specifically targets the 120-odd most high-volume offenders, with a view to keeping them out of the judicial system?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I am advised no.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Okay. Perhaps the Attorney General can answer this: is there any intention to include the Commissioner for Children and Young People in the consultation process for developing the policy for Target 120?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Not at this stage.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Thank you. I do not have any other questions.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I refer to page 462 and the heading “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”. At page 462 there is reference to a report being prepared into the way in which the state cares for vulnerable children and young people. Will that include children in remote communities; and, if so, how will their experience be accommodated?

[12.50 pm]

**Mr C. Pettit:** That is a really important issue in making sure that remote communities are involved. The report came out due to the fact that our office is 10 years old this year. We have carried out a large number of consultations over that period around vulnerability, particularly with Aboriginal children from remote locations. We are collating all that information as part of the premise to look at where vulnerability sits at this point in time. In answer to the member’s question, yes, that will certainly be involved. We continually liaise with a number of Aboriginal communities and talk to Aboriginal children about their issues, and they will be included.

**The appropriation was recommended.**