

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE COMMISSIONER  
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

*Seventh Report — Annual report 2022–23 — Tabling*

**HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral)** [10.06 am]: I am directed to present the seventh report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People titled *Annual report 2022–23*.

[See paper [2834](#).]

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I am very pleased to present the committee's third annual report for tabling. It highlights the important work of the committee, particularly the inquiry that resulted in the report *Hungry for change: Addressing food insecurity for children and young people affected by poverty*. This was the culmination of approximately 18 months of work for the committee. The inquiry looked at a range of measures and experiences across Western Australia. It involved a study tour to Tasmania where a trial school lunch program is being run, which was very interesting indeed. The inquiry commenced in April 2022 to find out how to address food insecurity for children living in poverty, while acknowledging that every child has a right to sufficient good food every day. A number of hearings were conducted, including in Albany, Katanning and remote communities in the Pilbara, the Gascoyne and the goldfields. The committee met with witnesses who made it very clear that the physical problems of under-nutrition and malnutrition can turn into mental health problems and social problems. The ability of students to complete their education or to pursue training opportunities that could lead to employment is compromised and they tend to become stuck in the cycle of poverty. The inquiry found that it is time to find a way to break this cycle, but with an ongoing solution. There certainly are no quick fixes.

The committee received 494 submissions for the inquiry, of which around 450 were from students who attended Catholic schools across WA. I congratulate the Catholic school community for participating in such an active way, including those from some of the most remote areas in which Catholic schools are the only school. The committee also engaged with some multicultural communities across Western Australia and held two forums in Mirrabooka. I want to acknowledge my committee colleague Hon Ayor Makur Chuot who assisted us in engaging with that community and was very helpful indeed.

I just want to take the opportunity to thank my fellow committee members. The committee has been working very hard and the report outlines the people who we spoke to over time. The report is titled *Hungry for change: Addressing food insecurity for children and young people affected by poverty*. If members care to have a look at it, they will see the recommendations. No doubt they will be debated in this place at some point. I want to take the opportunity to thank my fellow committee members for their contributions over the past year. That includes our chair from the other place and the members of the committee who played such a key role throughout the process, including the staff, of course, who supported the committee in achieving its outcomes over time.