

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

Fourth Report — Annual report 2021–2022 — Tabling

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [10.05 am]: I present for tabling the fourth report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People titled *Annual report 2021–2022*.

[See paper [1596](#).]

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: I am pleased to present the committee’s second annual report for tabling. The committee has had a productive year that included several welcomes and farewells. In September, we finally settled our committee membership, welcoming Hon Ayor Makur Chuot, MLC. She replaced Hon Klara Andric, MLC, who had been serving on two joint committees that were meeting at the same time. At the end of 2021, we farewelled Commissioner for Children and Young People Colin Pettit and thanked him for his six years of distinguished service in the role. At the start of 2022, we held a briefing with the new commissioner, Jacqueline McGowan-Jones. Ms McGowan-Jones is the first Aboriginal person appointed to this position. Although this provides a useful perspective on Indigenous issues, she is, like the commissioners before her, a commissioner for all children and young people in the state. We look forward to meeting with her again in the coming weeks to hear about what the office has achieved in the 2021–22 financial year.

In April, the committee launched an inquiry into ways to address food insecurity for children and young people affected by poverty. We are discovering that food insecurity is a multidimensional problem. It is not only about not having money to buy healthy food, but also about knowing what is healthy, where to find it and how to prepare it. It is about having access in our neighbourhoods to affordable, healthy options and about ensuring that children are not disadvantaged in their schooling because they do not have enough food to eat. We have heard that some children do not attend school because they do not have anything to take for lunch. We hope our inquiry will find a way to address these kinds of inequities.

Throughout this inquiry, we will endeavour to uphold the rights of all children and young people to have their voices heard and to participate in making decisions that affect them, as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This has meant offering children and young people different ways to make a submission, such as sending us a video or drawing. We also commissioned consultants to produce an easy English, illustrated version of the inquiry’s terms of reference for use by children and people with limited English. We are hopeful that these efforts will capture the views of at least some children and young people, who are at the heart of this committee’s work.

I take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members for their contributions over the past year: the deputy chair, Hon Neil Thomson; Rebecca Stephens, MLA; and Hon Ayor Makur Chuot, MLC. Thank you also to the research staff for their support: the principal research officer, Sarah Palmer; and the research officers, Carmen Cummings and Lucy Roberts.