

41ST PARLIAMENT



Joint Standing Committee on the
Commissioner for Children and Young People

Report 1

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

Presented by
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke, MLA and Hon N. Thomson, MLC
September 2021

Committee Members

Chair	Mrs R.M.J. Clarke, MLA Member for Murray-Wellington
Deputy Chair	Hon N. Thomson, MLC Member for Mining and Pastoral Region
Members	Ms R.S. Stephens, MLA Member for Albany
	Hon K. Andric, MLC Member for South Metropolitan Region

Committee Staff

Principal Research Officer	Dr Sarah Palmer
Research Officer	Ms Lucy Roberts Ms Catherine Parsons

Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Tel: (08) 9222 7494
Email: jsgccyp@parliament.wa.gov.au
Website: www.parliament.wa.gov.au/jsgccyp

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for Children and Young People**

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Report No. 1

Presented by

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Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council on
16 September 2021

Chair's Foreword

AS chair of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People (JSCCCYP), I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2020–2021. This annual reporting period spans the end of the previous parliament (the 40th) and the start of the current parliament (the 41st).

The JSCCCYP of the 41st Parliament met for the first time on 2 June 2021 with four new members. With just one month of operating before the end of the financial year, there were limited activities on which to report. However, an important starting point was holding a briefing with the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Colin Pettit. Mr Pettit provided an overview of his role and key projects he has been working on with his staff in the past months. The Committee will report on some of these in its review of the Commissioner's annual report later in the year.

Mr Pettit's tenure will end in November and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his dedicated service and for furthering the interests of children and young people in this state. In Mr Pettit's time as Commissioner he has dealt with three different JSCCCYPs, from 2015 through to 2021. While we bid him farewell towards the end of the year, we will follow with interest the outcomes and progress of projects and initiatives he has established. We will also look into some of the concerns that have been aired with previous committees.

In this reporting period, the previous JSCCCYP tabled the inquiry report *From Words to Action: Fulfilling the obligation to be child safe*. This was a comprehensive review of what is required to ensure that organisations working with children implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and that appropriate monitoring and oversight is in place. I thank the previous committee for its hard work on this inquiry; we will maintain a watching brief on the progress of the key recommendations.

I also wish to express my thanks to the current members for the interest and dedication they have shown so far. There is important work to be done and I look forward to proceeding with it with their support. Thank you also to the secretariat for facilitating the Committee's operations.



MRS R.M.J. CLARKE, MLA
CHAIR

Contents

Chair's Foreword	iii
1 Committee activities	1
<hr/>	
Introduction	1
40 th Parliament	1
Public hearings	1
Reports tabled	2
41 st Parliament	2
Briefings	2
Work in progress	2
2 Financial Statement	3
<hr/>	
Appendices	5
<hr/>	
1 Committee's functions and powers	5

Chapter 1

Committee activities

Introduction

The 2020–2021 reporting period encompasses two parliaments. The 40th Parliament was prorogued on 7 December 2020, suspending the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People (JSCCCYP) and ending its capacity to meet or conduct any formal business. The JSCCCYP of the 41st Parliament was established on 26 May 2021, pursuant to section 51 of the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006*. Four new members were appointed. The activities of the JSCCCYP for each parliament will be reported separately.

40th Parliament

During the course of the reporting period 1 July 2020 to 7 December 2020, the Committee:

- concluded 1 inquiry
- tabled 3 reports
- held 8 deliberative meetings
- took evidence from 2 witnesses.

Table 1.1: Summary of the activities of the Committee, 1 July 2020–7 December 2020

Description	Activity
Deliberative meetings	8
Formal evidence hearings	1
Witnesses appearing	2
Reports tabled	3
Report findings tabled	65
Report recommendations tabled	19

Public hearings

Pursuant to Assembly Standing Order 264, the Committee has power to send for persons, papers and records. During the period 1 July 2020 to 7 December 2020, the Committee conducted one public hearing, taking evidence from 2 witnesses to assist with its investigations (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Public Hearings of the Committee, 1 July 2020–7 December 2020

Date	Witness	Position	Organisation
16 September 2020	Mr Colin Pettit	Commissioner for Children and Young People	Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People
	Mrs Natalie Hall	Director, Policy, Monitoring and Research	

Reports tabled

The Committee tabled 3 reports during the period 1 July 2020 to 7 December 2020:

- *From Words to Action: Fulfilling the obligation to be child safe* – tabled 13 August 2020
- *Annual Report 2019–2020* – tabled 15 October 2020
- *In their own voice: The participation of children and young people in parliamentary proceedings* – tabled 26 November 2020.

41st Parliament

Between its establishment on 26 May 2021 and the end of the reporting period at 30 June 2021, the Committee:

- held 3 deliberative meetings
- held one briefing.

Table 1.3: Summary of the activities of the Committee, 26 May 2021–30 June 2021

Description	Activity
Briefings	1
Deliberative meetings	3

Briefings

In addition to formal hearings, the Committee is able to hold briefings for which there is no publicly available transcript. Briefings are used to gather information in relation to the Committee’s inquiries as well as other matters of interest. The Committee invited the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Colin Pettit, to a briefing to meet the new members and outline his recent and ongoing work.

Table 1.4: Briefings provided to the Committee, 26 May 2021–30 June 2021

Date	Name	Position	Organisation
23 June 2021	Mr Colin Pettit	Commissioner for Children and Young People	Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People
	Mrs Natalie Hall	Director, Policy, Monitoring and Research	

Work in progress

One of the Committee’s functions is to consult regularly with the Commissioner and review the exercise of the Commissioner’s functions. To this end, in the next months the Committee will review and report on the Commissioner’s annual report and other key recent reports published by his office.

The Committee intends to follow up some of the findings and recommendations made by the previous JSCCCYP – in particular, those related to the appointment of a commissioner for Aboriginal children and young people and the establishment of an oversight body to enforce the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Chapter 2

Financial Statement

The Committee does not have its own formal budget and is funded out of the budget of the Legislative Assembly. Approval for major expenditures is required on a case-by-case basis and is entirely at the discretion of the Speaker.

The Committee's expenditure for the financial year 1 July 2020–30 June 2021 (in accordance with Standing Order 276) is detailed below:

Table 2.1: Expenditure items of the Committee, 1 July 2020–30 June 2021

Expenditure Item	Amount (\$)
Printing	600
Catering	100
TOTAL	700

Notes:

- Figures rounded to nearest \$100.
- Salaries of committee staff are not included.
- Costs of shared administrative expenses, including lease costs for committee accommodation, not included.



MRS R.M.J. CLARKE, MLA
CHAIR

Appendix One

Committee's functions and powers

The following was agreed by concurrence between the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council on 26 May 2021, establishing the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People:

1. Pursuant to section 51 of the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006*, a Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People be appointed by the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.
2. The Joint Standing Committee shall comprise 2 members appointed by the Legislative Assembly and 2 members appointed by the Legislative Council.
3. It is the function of the Joint Standing Committee to —
 - i. monitor, review and report to Parliament on the exercise of the functions of the Commissioner for Children and Young People;
 - ii. examine Annual and other Reports of the Commissioner; and
 - iii. consult regularly with the Commissioner.
4. A report of the Joint Standing Committee will be presented to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council by members of the Joint Standing Committee nominated by it for that purpose.

The Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly relating to Standing and Select Committees will be followed as far as they can be applied.



Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace, West Perth WA 6005
Telephone: +61 8 9222 7222
Email: laco@parliament.wa.gov.au
Website: www.parliament.wa.gov.au