

THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT SESSIONAL COMMITTEE MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2024

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF FINAL REPORT OF
THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

The committee met at 1.15 p.m.

CHAIR - Thank you minister to you and your team for appearing before the Commission of Inquiry Committee looking at the implementation of the recommendations that came out of the commission of inquiry. As you would be aware, this is an open and public hearing. It is being broadcast and transcribed by Hansard. We are using voice-to-text, so that can be a little problematic. I need you to make sure you use your microphones very directly and clearly if you could.

The hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege that obviously extends in anything that's said during the committee proceedings, but may not extend beyond this room. If there is anything of a confidential nature you or your team wish to share with the committee, you can make that request and we will consider it. Otherwise, it's all open and public.

Before I ask the other people at the table to take the statutory declaration, I'd just like to open with a bit of a statement, minister.

As the Premier's also outlined in his letter to the committee, I recognise that in these public hearings - during this time we will discuss highly sensitive matters that have deeply impacted on the lives of Tasmanians. This may trigger trauma for committee members, ministers, departmental officials and members of the community. I also acknowledge the victim/survivors who bravely share their experiences with the commission of inquiry and thank them for their courage.

It's important we all take a trauma-informed approach to both asking and answering questions - mindful of those potential impacts. If anyone is watching or watches this later or reads the transcript, I encourage them, if they're impacted by the content, to contact one of the services and supports that are available and these include the statewide sexual assault support line; 24-hour support from local specialist counsellors provided by Sexual Assault Support Service, SASS; Laurel House on 1800 697 877 or 1800MYSUPPORT; Lifeline 24-hour crisis support on 13 11 14 and the Tasmanian Lifeline between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. every day of the year on 1800 984 434 for support and referral; 13YARN, 24 hour crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on 13 92 76 and Relationships Australia Tasmania, a specialist complex trauma counselling, trauma-informed counselling, wellbeing and referral and they're open 9 to 5 Monday to Friday on 1300 364 277. I make that to particularly anyone who is watching that may need support.

Minister, I invite you to introduce the members of your team at the table and ask them to take the statutory declaration and invite you to make an opening statement and also for your secretary too, if you wish. The intention of the committee is to try to work through in numerical order, regardless of what phase the recommendations are in - and we acknowledge there's been a bit of a change. We've updated our records as to what you're responsible for. There probably will be some overview questions before, but if anything can be answered under a particular

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recommendation, we ask that we do it there to make it easy for collating the record for any report the committee may produce. Over to you.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you, committee members, for the opportunity to speak to you about this important work. Joining me at the table is Secretary of the Department for Children, Education and Young People, Tim Bullard, also Claire Lovell, who is the Executive Director, Children and Families, and Sue McKerracher, who is acting Deputy Secretary, Children and Families.

I have an opening statement.

CHAIR - We're just going to the statutory declaration, if you wouldn't mind.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you.

Mr TIM BULLARD, SECRETARY, **Ms SUE MCKERRACHER**, ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, AND **Ms CLAIRE LOVELL**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WERE EXAMINED.

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Chair, I start by acknowledging people with lived experience of abuse and their families who may be following our committee's proceedings today and those who have joined us in the room today. Thank you for being here. I acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the original owners and continuing custodians of the land we are meeting on today and pay my respect to elders and ancestors and acknowledge with deep sadness, the continuing over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in our child safety and youth justice systems as well. I also want to thank our staff in the child safety, out-of-home care and youth justice systems for the incredible work they do to support some of the most vulnerable members of our community and staff involved in the important work of implementing the recommendations of the commission of inquiry right across government.

As a government, we have committed to implementing all 191 recommendations made by the commission of inquiry. The task ahead of us is significant. We are working to transform our government institutions, our systems and our culture. Achieving this and rebuilding trust will take time and investment and an ongoing commitment to deliver change. Madam Chair, I am excited by the challenge and the opportunity presented by these reforms and the heavy responsibilities that we have, and I have as minister, to get it right. This is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to reset the way that we care for young people across multiple care settings that will affect the rest of their lives. I am passionately, personally committed to delivering for them.

Work is progressing to improve our out-of-home care system. Our government has established a dedicated out-of-home care implementation unit to undertake the significant policy work required to implement the commission of inquiry's recommendations. Our key focus for immediate action while that is happening is to increase the supply of available frontline workers through our recently released \$ 4.5 million workforce package, which includes a range of financial incentives to recruit and retain child safety Advice and Referral Line and youth justice staff, particularly in the north-west region. Incentives include a payment of \$ 10,000 for all eligible allied health professional employees and managers statewide, relocation incentives for employees moving to and remaining in the north-west, and an

additional 15 per cent market allowance for north-west employees, which has now been implemented.

We are also introducing strategies to build the future child safety workforce, including scholarships and fee-free places in both university and TasTAFE qualification pathways, and we will continue to work with the unions and the workforce in good faith to finalise the components of the package that need to be put to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission as soon as possible. Work is also underway to develop a youth justice system that achieves better outcomes for young people and their families and keeps our community safe. Immediate actions to keep children and young people safe include a focus on culture and workforce, governance and safety for children, young people and staff at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

The secretary of DPAC is currently leading a whole-of-government youth justice reform taskforce that is progressing elements of our Youth Justice Blueprint that require cross-agency cooperation. An expert panel made up of independent experts has been appointed to provide independent advice on the transition to a therapeutic model of care in the youth justice system. The expert panel is chaired by the honourable Robert Benjamin AM SC, who was a commissioner on the commission of inquiry, and I am very grateful to him for making himself and his expertise available to us, as I am for all the independent members of that panel. They had their inaugural meeting in Hobart this week and I had the opportunity to meet with them to hear their initial thoughts and feedback on Tasmania's proposed youth justice reforms.

Another group, the youth justice reform community engagement group, came together for the first time at the end of July to provide input initially into the youth justice model of care. The engagement group provides a forum for the government to engage with representatives from community service organisations with important roles in the youth justice system who need to be involved in the reform process. The government will continue to work closely with the Commissioner for Children and Young People, service providers, Aboriginal organisations, the judicial system, and others to ensure a coordinated, holistic approach and engage at all times, where possible, with the voices of young people themselves, in all of our institutions and throughout our community.

In closing, Madam Chair, while the magnitude of the reform task ahead of us can seem ambitious or daunting, we need to learn all that we can from the expertise and experience of other people and other jurisdictions addressing similar challenges to ours, I believe that Tasmania has an extraordinary advantage and opportunity to do this in ways that others can't. One of the things which is a challenge to a lot of policy and service delivery in Tasmania is our small scale, small numbers of people.

When it comes to the care of children in our youth justice and out-of-home care and child safety systems, that potentially becomes our superpower. We have the ability, more than any other jurisdiction, to know every single child to be able to offer them individualised care that meets their own complex needs across our services throughout their childhood and adolescence.

I am enlivened by the opportunity we have and the opportunity that the commission of inquiry, the government's responses, and the commitments that we have made to deliver on their recommendations - lasting reforms. I am very grateful to be the minister in the position to

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drive and deliver these changes that will improve the lives of the children who we are responsible for. So thank you very much for your interest. I am very happy to take questions.

CHAIR - Any broad questions that you want to ask before we go to the individual recommendations?

Ms WEBB - Madam Chair, Minister, we had materials provided this morning with updates on routine disclosures relating to the different departments, and I wanted to ask you some questions about some relating to your department, if that is all right.

There are a few things I am interested to know when we look at these documents. At the moment, I am looking at a table which is on page 12 of the document we were provided that was tabled this morning. This one is about - sorry that is not page 12. Sorry, it is page 10.

It is a table that shows routine disclosures, the length of suspension currently suspended on full pay, and it is a table that shows the duration of that suspension and identifies 12 individuals, without identifying who they are but by number, who have been suspended for longer than 365 days. I am wondering, can you tell us, of the 12 who are detailed in the table, how many of those are AYDC staff?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you.

Ms WEBB - I am not asking you to identify them personally; I am just trying to understand how AYDC sits in this table.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you for the question, Ms Webb. I will see if my secretary has anything that we can offer at this hearing that you have not been able to get from your discussions with the Premier and the head of the State Service this morning. I did see some of -

Ms WEBB - This is tabled for us and we were immediately then confronted with trying to understand it and ask questions, so you can understand we didn't drill into it in detail. Now that I have you here I have some questions on matters that relate to your department in here.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. The record that Ms Morgan-Wicks tabled this morning is the updated data. If you have further questions on that, we would be happy to take those on notice and seek further advice from her.

Ms WEBB - Okay, so any detail I ask about in relation to these numbers, even though for example in these tables your department is specified there, in fact, you are part of the DECYP department, youth justice and child safety, so the tables in this document that have that column specifically is for your department. If I ask you questions about these numbers, you will not be able to answer them?

Mr JAENSCH - Not at the table. I would need to seek further advice on those.

Ms WEBB - Can we try -

Mr JAENSCH - I do not have the breakdown of any of the data that you have in front of you with me to answer those questions.

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Ms WEBB - Why would that not be something that you would have brought to this table with this scrutiny committee which is specifically looking at this area?

Mr JAENSCH - Well, you're specifically looking at all of chapters 9 and 12, as I understand it, that I'm responsible for. You had a considerable time this morning with the Premier and the head of the State Service as the employer, who presented new information and unpacked it at the table. I stand by their presentation of those figures and I will take any questions on notice that relate to them and get answers for you where I can.

Ms WEBB - Right. Then there'll be a number of questions that will come through on that.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Perhaps you can answer some broader questions then around those processes without needing to refer to specific data.

Can you confirm whether all or any of the pseudonym-referenced AYDC staff in the commission of inquiry final report have been assessed under at least initial ED5 processes?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm happy to take that question on notice and get any answer that we're able to provide.

Ms WEBB - Can you confirm whether any ED5 investigations in your areas have led to dismissals of AYDC staff?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm happy to take that question on notice and provide any further answers that we can provide.

Ms WEBB - I'm sure that's something you probably are aware of, minister, or your staff are probably aware of here at the table. It's not a complex question -

CHAIR - He can answer his question as he likes.

Ms WEBB - It's just an interesting thing to decline to answer while you're on a public -

CHAIR - He's not declining to answer. I think we just need to be cautious about our language here.

Ms WEBB - Fair enough. It's an interesting thing to step aside from answering and deflect -

Mr JAENSCH - I've undertaken to get you an answer on your question.

Ms WEBB - So, if I ask you any questions about AYDC staff who may be suspended or whose circumstances around that -

Mr JAENSCH - Who are going through public-service-wide processes -

Ms WEBB - Not or [where? Inaudible 1.32.16 p.m.] may have gone through it already?

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Mr JAENSCH - that you've received data on this morning, I will seek any answers to further questions from the people who've put that data together so that I can be assured of an accurate response.

Ms WEBB - Just to clarify, minister, you are still the responsible minister for AYDC?

Mr JAENSCH - I am, yes.

Ms WEBB - Are there any people currently working on staff at AYDC who have been returned there after an ED5 investigation?

Mr JAENSCH - I will again seek further advice on that to ensure that I'm offering you an accurate answer. I will take that on notice.

Ms WEBB - It's a fairly straightforward workforce question.

Mr JAENSCH - I am the minister responsible -

CHAIR - I am conscious of the tone that's being used here -

Ms WEBB - Thank you.

CHAIR - and the minister is seeking to answer. He doesn't have the information readily available. He has the right to take it on notice, and if he doesn't provide them -

Ms WEBB - Thank you, Chair. I understand that. My tone, and I apologise for it, relates to the fact that, if an answer was provided here, we could scrutinise the minister on it, but an answer provided on notice deprives us of that opportunity until potentially quite a later date. So, just noting that as a matter of fact.

Mr BULLARD - I know the committee knows this, but the sensitivity around it - because there are small numbers of staff who were named in Ashley, in the case studies and throughout the report, therefore, there's some personal information restraints. The minister's hesitancy is around ensuring that we are absolutely balancing the right for the committee to have the information on notice, but in a way that ensures that particular employees and the action that has been taken against them can't be identified.

Ms WEBB - Thank you for that clarification. I'm happy to move on from overview.

CHAIR - Anyone else? Any questions that aren't related to the recommendations? No.

Okay, minister, I believe there is an updated schedule. Your first one is 9.1. Is that correct?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

CHAIR - We don't need you to read all the recommendations in because we've got them in front of us. We can certainly reflect on those as you provide any further information on the

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progress with that recommendation, acknowledging they'll expand across phase 1, 2 and 3. This is a phase 1. Over to you.

Mr JAENSCH - Well, I don't have an overview statement for you. I'm happy to take questions on each of these as we go through, if that's what you'd prefer.

CHAIR - Right. So, this relates to the one-off funding to implement the commission of inquiry's recommended out-of-home care reforms.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

CHAIR - So, in terms of that funding, I assume this will appear in the budget? We'll have to wait until -

Mr JAENSCH - Yes it will.

CHAIR - A couple of weeks?

Mr JAENSCH - I think we've been quite upfront about this one and made specific references to it, that it was one of the commission's recommendations that had a 24 July due date, or recommended delivery date, because of our modified budget schedule. The budget response to this recommendation will be part of our 12 September budget announcements.

CHAIR - So, just in terms of that - because I understood when we looked at the supply bill when parliament resumed - it became apparent at that point that some of the commission of inquiry work had been delayed as a result of the election, and the subsequent delay to the budget. So, this month's - was any of the funding to give effect to this recommendation included in the supply bill?

Mr JAENSCH - No, I don't believe it was, because - and I'm not the Treasury expert - but I think that the supply and the supplementary appropriations bills each have specific requirements. Some for continuity of existing budgeted items to bridge the period to the new budget. Secondly, there are some things that had an operational requirement because there was funding ending at a point in time and essential services needing to continue. This is a new appropriation; I understood the determination was made that it has to be part of the new budget.

CHAIR - Okay. So the full effect will be in this year's budget?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms WEBB - Sorry, have we missed one?

CHAIR - We're in 9.1.

Ms WEBB - Yes, 6.7 has got 'Responsibility of Minister for Children and Youth'.

Ms LOVELL - Can I ask a question on this recommendation, if we stay on this and perhaps go back, Chair?

CHAIR - Well, there's one that's been identified, but it says 'Minister for Education'. 6.7.

Ms LOVELL - In mine-

Ms WEBB - Is this the one that's just been printed for us?

CHAIR - Yes. Can I clarify, perhaps, minister, whether you have responsibility for - it does suggest that you do, but I went through this and it's been highlighted - so, there are some in this new schedule, if you like, that's highlighted but 'Minister of Education'. Are you responsible for those?

Mr JAENSCH - Is this the one 'Services and Supports for Children in Schools Settings'?

Ms LOVELL - 'Guidelines to outline ongoing supports'.

CHAIR - Guidelines that should include-

Ms LOVELL - This is the updated - this is the version that was electronically sent to us of the updated -

CHAIR - Oh, this was tabled.

Ms LOVELL - Revised, and that's the one that's tabled. There's a difference in it.

Ms WEBB - There are now three different versions.

CHAIR - Okay, but - let's - are you responsible for recommendation 6.7?

Mr JAENSCH - To my knowledge, we're involved, but the responsible minister is the Minister for Education.

CHAIR - Okay, so, any direction - any questions related to that, we'll direct to -

Mr JAENSCH - I would suggest that you refer to Ms Palmer.

CHAIR - Okay, right.

Ms WHITE - I had a question on the recommendation 9.1. I'm keen to understand - obviously, the recommendation is to provide one-off funding, is that, in your view, going to help you employ more staff, or is it to provide additional direct financial payment to foster carers or those who provide out-of-home care services? It's not clear to me what that money might be used for.

Mr JAENSCH - The recommendation includes funding for delivery of commission of inquiry recommendations, but also a sustained ongoing uplift in the budgeted funding for the operation of our out-of-home care system. So it includes elements of the reforms that have been recommended, including things like the transition of more out-of-home care fund management to non-government organisations, as well as the cost and operations of our out-of-home care system as it is.

Ms WHITE - Does that also include potentially paying foster carers? Because there has been a conversation about whether we might -

Mr JAENSCH - There is a review of the costs and payments to carers as part of the work that's being undertaken and that would be factored into future cost of delivering out-of-home care. I might ask Mr Bullard if he has any more to contribute on that.

Mr BULLARD - Thank you, minister. Yes, as the minister said, there are two streams. One is uplift in the amount of money provided for operations; the other is reform. The element that you refer to is in design at the moment. The question then, is whether it would be ready for this or a future budget. We know that the cost of providing care to our children and young people through our foster carers has increased. We also know there are different costs associated with individual children and young people depending on, for example, some of their medical issues or their complexities. We want to really understand that, and that's the piece of work that's underway to inform our future budgets.

Ms WHITE - Minister, you mentioned the transition to the non-government sector of more of these types of services - one recommendation is to wholly outsource those responsibilities. I can't remember the time line to do that but I know that, despite all of us agreeing that we accept the recommendations, there has been some concern raised about that one in particular, and whether the state should abrogate its responsibility entirely to the not-for-profit sector when we're talking about these most vulnerable young people.

CHAIR - This actually sits under 9.2 a bit more, but I'll let the minister answer and we will come back to 9.1. Do you want to answer it now, whilst it's in your mind?

Mr JAENSCH - If there are any more questions on 9.1-

Ms WHITE - It's linked, because this particular recommendation is about the funding of - you mentioned that would include the funding of non-government organisations to deliver these services, which are captured in 9.2.

Mr JAENSCH - There are non-government organisations delivering services now. I think it's around a third of our out-of-home-care placements are managed by non-government organisations. They, like the government, face challenges in terms of recruiting carers, adding staff. They're the sorts of things that we understand we need our sector-wide workforce planning to be able to account for, so that we don't end up with a situation - and arguably we've had it in the past - where there's competition between government and non-government sectors for staff. We need to clear that up.

In terms of the way you mentioned it before, the commission of inquiry recommendation is not suggesting that the government abrogates or diminishes its responsibilities for provision of care. Rather that it specialises in the case management, quality control and regulation of care, rather than being a provider of care and a regulator at the same time. It's a better separation if government specialises ensuring that good care is happening, and that the NGO sector, as it has done successfully for a subset of our placements, is managing the day-to-day support for carers and provision of the care. That's the sentiment of the recommendation.

We have given undertakings to the sector that we are going to move at a pace that ensures there are no shocks or surprises for them. We recognise the need to develop the capacity of the

sector, and of the workforce, to understand the range of different products, if you like, that are on offer to deal with young people, as the secretary was saying, with complex behaviours, as well as those who might be able to fit in easily to a family-based care setting. We'll work with them to get that transition right.

At the heart of it all, everyone who's involved across the NGO sectors and ourselves has to ensure continuity and stability of care and quality of care for the young people involved. We don't want there to be any sudden changes that affect their period in care.

CHAIR - We'll go back to 9.1. We'll try to keep in order.

Ms WEBB - Returning to 9.1, and under that you were talking about review of payments for carers as a piece of work being undertaken. I'm looking for more detail on specifically how is that work being done? And is it a project with a time line?

CHAIR - This is 9.2 you're in, isn't it?

Ms WEBB - No, it's 9.1. The matters we were talking about under 9.1 about review of payments for carers.

Mr JAENSCH - If I can ask the secretary or others from the department who may be able to comment on that.

Ms C LOVELL - We engaged a consultant, Wise Lord and Ferguson, to do that piece of work on our behalf. They reviewed the current model we have in place for financial support for family-based carers. They have had a look at the arrangements in place in other jurisdictions across Australia and the United Kingdom. They have just come back to us with a report now with some comparisons and some recommendations for us to consider. At the moment we have only just received that and we will be considering and using that as an input to shape our out-of-home care reforms.

Ms WEBB - Did that consultant group who did that piece of work engage with carers here as part of the review?

Ms LOVELL - They did, yes. They engaged with stakeholders across the sector directly with carers, with care providers and with the Foster and Kinship Carers Association Tasmania and our own DECYP workforce in the out-of-home care teams.

Ms WEBB - Interesting to hear that. Thank you.

CHAIR - Is that the only 9.1? Did you have one on 9.1?

Ms LOVELL MP - I did, yes. Minister, if I could go back to the answer provided by the secretary on that one of funding. The secretary mentioned some work being done on design of those out-of-home care reforms. Is that including all of the reforms that have come from the commission of inquiry and its recommendations, given that this is a recommendation for 2024 phase 1, for the one-off funding. How does that work in terms of what will be included in that reform package, the design work that is being done now and is there a time line for that piece of work? Sorry, that was quite garbled. I don't know if that made sense.

Mr JAENSCH - While the secretary just prepares himself, there is a lot of work underway on reforms the commission has requested that have a lead time in policy development or legislation, et cetera. Some of those have not resulted in a new budget proposal yet and will appear in future budgets. There is other work that has been committed to for action now that needs to be funded now. There is a combination of the things that you are asking about, but I would ask Mr Bullard if he has any more detail.

Mr BULLARD - This recommendation in the first part, which is funding the out-of-home care reforms, is really looking at that one-off funding to set up the team that will pull all this work together. A concern we had was you could actually land each of these recommendations individually and you would not maximise the impact. If we take the move of out-of-home care into the non-government sector, we could do that today. We could start straight away and we just buy more places from the NGOs and we would move our government foster carers into those places.

What we know is that if you take a child-centric approach, you need to actually design different placement types for different young people and that means we have to take a step back. We have started that work with some different products we are buying from the NGOs. I think it's Care 2 Thrive, which is placement, where it is almost like salaried care. The foster carers are paid a wage. They are looking after young people that need higher intensity care. That is starting to show some promise. We now want to say rather than you are a young person in foster care and therefore you are just going to go into a generic placement, the reform team will be able to look at that.

There is also a recommendation and we will come to that on having an out-of-home care strategy which brings all of those elements together. That is another stream of work. The funding for foster carers is another stream. We did not want to do any of it individually. We are going to package that up and do it in a staged approach.

Regarding time frames, we are already working on this. The teams are only just in their coming-together phase, as we are already working on the phasing of that. We could provide that later to the committee, once much more work has been done. To actually show what is in 24, 26, 29, so that you can get more of a sense of the flow of that.

Ms LOVELL MP - Thank you. That would be very helpful.

Mr JAENSCH - In relation to the to the topic you landed on with the different types of care, we're taking the opportunity to address this issue where we've got children who may have - because of their trauma and backgrounds - challenging behaviour, but not sufficient to trigger what we might have called a special care package or something in the past. Sometimes these are the kids who have, during their time in out-of-home care, multiple placements that break down because they have heightened behaviour and very challenging. That in itself is something which isn't good for those young people. They don't develop the relationships, the stability, the friendships - and things like their education are affected as well. If we are finding these needs for a type of care which sits between family-based foster care and special care packages, we're trying to plug those gaps as well in the interest of those young people.

CHAIR - Okay. We'll go back to 9.2.

Ms WEBB - Minister, have you commenced formal mechanisms of consultation with the community, with community organisations or the community sector in preparation for that transfer of out-of-home care services into that sector? If not, is there a time you will have a formal mechanism for this? What priorities are you hearing from the sector about what they will need in order for that transfer to occur?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. There have been conversations underway with the sector generally and with individual organisations since the recommendations came to light. Clearly, they've had questions about it and we've been trying to provide assurances around that we're going to undertake this in a methodical and step-wise approach and not land it on them in a great rush. I would ask though if Ms Lovell might be able to speak to the processes she's used so far.

Ms C LOVELL - Yes. While formal engagement hasn't yet commenced, we have been meeting with stakeholders in the out-of-home care sector and talking to them about where we're up to with establishing our reform arrangements. Today, there's been a communication go out to them on our reform implementation unit that's been established now and letting them know that by the end of September we have some advisory arrangements in place, including an expert panel. We will be consulting with them through to existing forums we have, one for family-based care providers, one for salaried care providers. We've also invited the centre for excellence, a peak body supporting those organisations in Tasmania, to join us in those forums.

CHAIR - Anything else on 9.2? We've got a 9.3. Minister, without reading out the whole recommendation - it's quite long - is there anything you wish to particularly bring to our attention - this is a phase 2 recommendation - about any progress that has been made to date on it?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. I'm advised the department has begun the process of starting to transition service providers from services secured by grants to contract for services as those grants expire as part of these new models of funding agreements with out-of-home care providers. As at the end of July this year, the department has strengthened oversight mechanisms to give greater confidence that children are thriving in care and to ensure decision making is timely and appropriate and that care providers are adequately resourced and accountable for the care that they provide. And this has been done by establishing a commissioning and sector engagement unit to manage relationships with non-government providers. This is including recruitment of two new assessors to undertake dedicated compliance monitoring functions by actively working with providers to better understand their approaches to governance, service delivery, quality and safety with the services they provide as a first step towards qualification to participate in out-of-home care service delivery and by benchmarking providers' capacity to respond to the commission of inquiry recommendations regarding governance and service delivery, safety and quality, undertaking a gap analysis to understand where attention needs to be directed, and working with the Office of the Crown Solicitor to develop an appropriate service contract to secure out-of-home care services in the future.

The department is also contributing to a whole-of-government review being led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, relating to grants management, and is reviewing future funding arrangements with non-government providers as well. Is there anything further to add, secretary?

Mr BULLARD - I think it is important to note that, as the minister said, we are already moving from grants to contracts. That automatically changes the relationship because the contract has legal requirements about what the quality of the service needs to be, accountability, data sharing, and monitoring requirements. We were really fortunate through the commission process that they went out and consulted young people about what they actually need from adults, and that has given us some really solid evidence about the way that we should be commissioning those services and the types of things we should be asking of those services to provide that moves beyond 'it would be great if they could have a room to sleep in'.

So again, we have started on that journey through contracting, but part of the reform unit's work, as it's working into those types of services that we are commissioning, will be to look with a high level of specificity about what we are requiring of the services.

CHAIR - Was there any information that came back from the young people themselves when you consulted them? Was there anything surprising in there? I mean, kids can come up with the darndest things, but when we are talking to children who are particularly vulnerable, I am interested if there was anything really surprising or if anything will be difficult to deliver on?

Mr BULLARD - Well, I think it is the commonsense approach and the stuff that comes from the heart. So it is not about being on a factory line. The types of things they said are: 'I want a trusted adult, I want someone I can talk to about my worries, I want adults who are authentic, I don't want them to be clueless about harmful sexual behaviours and online abuse in the real world.' There was a sense to say: 'Gosh, you are a little bit outdated in your idea about what goes on out there. I want them to be trained in trauma and diversity.'

So, they are really great things to work on. Obviously, it is going to be not a challenge, but a good challenge to see how you then encapsulate that in contracting arrangements. Certainly, when you pair that with quality standards and a monitoring regime, I think we are going to get closer to what is the experience of a young person who is in and out-of-home care placement, rather than, you know, 'Has everyone got a bedroom?' and you know, 'I'll be happy that they are being fed'. So, that is the underlying shift in this.

CHAIR - In terms of how that is assessed or evaluated, these are things that might be a little hard to evaluate or assess, as some of them can be a little subjective. I am just interested in how you will know whether it is working.

Mr BULLARD - We are already trialling the child and youth voice survey. That asks a whole range of questions which really are experiential for the young person. There is no right or wrong answer to any of them. They're statements such as: 'I have access to the sport that I want to play, I feel that I have a space of my own'. The survey can be undertaken by young people at any point. We are currently just trialling that it works, but we have already used it on a number of occasions where we have thought, 'well I wonder how you are really going to get the young people just to fill it out really quickly and then we can look at it and see what is going well and whether there are areas for improvement'. They are the types of mechanisms I think we will do more of - actually asking what the young person's experience is rather than what we actually see as adults.

CHAIR - How is that data collected? Children have varying levels of literacy and capacity to even be digitally literate. How are you actually collecting the data?

Mr BULLARD - There are two ways. One is that you can do it online, but the other is that you can sit down with a trusted adult - doesn't necessarily have to be a child safety officer, and they can help you to complete that. It is very accessible in terms of the questions. I think one of the things in designing the questions - and a lot of care went in - they are just simple statements about, you know, what you see, how you feel, what you've got access to. In terms of the way that they're worded, very child friendly, but you have multiple ways that they can be completed.

Ms WEBB - This recommendation is about incorporating into funding agreements with non-government organisations certain quality and accountability requirements, and they're listed there. What I'm interested to know: is it anticipated that they will be incorporated into funding agreements from the next, say, iteration of signing new funding agreements with NGOs or at the time that there's a complete transfer to the non-government sector of out-of-home care services?

Mr BULLARD - We're already updating. Some funding agreements have already come to an end, so we're already iterative. Now it's not the perfection that we'll aim for through the reform, but we are updating, placing them into contracts, ensuring another level of specificity and reporting as they're coming up so we're not waiting -

Ms WEBB - Does that mean this list of things would be present already in some funding agreements?

Mr BULLARD - They're the types of things which are being put in; probably, the thing is the measures that we want to be doing some more work on.

Ms WEBB - Is the expectation when we get to that point in time that the transfer has occurred in its entirety to the non-government sector that the funding agreements that apply then would include these quality and accountability requirements listed here?

Mr JAENSCH - As per the recommendation.

Ms WEBB - That's the expectation.

Mr JAENSCH - That's the commitment that we've made to the recommendation.

Ms WEBB - Okay. Can I check now then that as the government sector is still delivering a large proportion of our out-of-home care services, can you confirm whether our government sector in delivering those services is meeting this list currently?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Mr Bullard to comment on that.

Ms WEBB - Obviously, not the funding parts that would apply, but the standards accountability parts that would apply.

Ms C LOVELL - Funding agreements aren't the only way that we manage the quality of care and monitor that, so for our Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) carers, there are mechanisms in place for us and that's one primary function for our

out-of-home care teams through their visiting and their annual reviews and all of those sorts of things. They're checking on the quality of that care.

Ms WEBB - Thank you, but my question was about - can we say that the government-delivered out-of-home care services currently meet this list of requirements:

- (a) compliance with the national standards,
- (b) compliance with child and youth safe standards,
- (c) provision of trauma-informed therapeutic models of care, et cetera.

Are we able to say that with confidence now?

Mr JAENSCH - I will ask Ms Lovell if she can comment further on that.

Ms C LOVELL - I wouldn't say that with confidence. I would say that that's something that we have been working toward and that our energy at the moment needs to go into this transition to the non-government sector. At the moment we do have mechanisms in place to make sure that children in our care are safe. We've got mechanisms in place to respond to complaints, for example, investigate and respond to wellbeing in care concerns. However, I think our energy really does need to go into our future state which is very near in the transition to the non-government sector.

Ms WEBB - I appreciate that. We do want to move to a more effective model and I appreciate the work that's going into making that happen. I want to highlight that in that question I was asking, basically, we're going to be expecting the non-government sector to meet a standard that the government sector has never met in delivering fully - to be able to tick off and say, 'yes, we fully meet this'. We're going to expect that of them, but we have never achieved that under our government-delivered services.

Mr JAENSCH - I think we all need to be moving care in any sector - any setting - needs to be moving towards our aspirations for the highest safety and quality of care for young people, be it government or an NGO.

Ms WEBB - I agree, minister.

Would that indicate to you then, minister, that the expectation would be given that we are going to be expecting that higher level of accountability and quality from our non-government sector when they are delivering the services that we would naturally assume there would need to be a significant increase in investment to help them meet that expectation?

Mr JAENSCH - I think the cost will change as the structure changes and the quality that we're seeking changes across the board, yes. I can't expect it is going to go the other way. We need to ensure, looking back at the commission of inquiry's findings and the history we are now all too aware of, of where there have been failures of the system and failures of the systems that have provided oversight, governance, accountability and reporting for the sector - that we have to invest in better qualities of care and governance for the future. We expect that will cost more money.

Mr BULLARD - If I could add, the envelope at the moment is really funding two streams. One which we have talked about is foster care. The other one is special care packages

which are very expensive. Because there is no other product that sits between those, we believe there is a middle ground which is going to be less than special care packages for some of those children and young people on those packages. I did mention the Care 2 Thrive model, which is effectively paying carers a wage to look after young people who are more complex. Placements such as that will actually bring young people out of special care packages into other settings which do not cost as much and are more suitable for them.

CHAIR - I would like to move to 9.4. This is another phase 2 recommendation. Did you want to provide an update on how things are progressing in this area? I won't read it out as it is very long.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, it is. I will provide some updates. The department is certainly committed to ensuring it has the senior leaders in critical roles who have the specific knowledge and expertise in their fields and the skills to provide strong, strategic direction and leadership across the agency and create cultural change. The new roles recommended by the commission of inquiry, the chief practitioner and the executive director for Aboriginal children and young people, will be integral to the implementation of the commission's recommendations. These roles will contribute expertise and practice knowledge that will strengthen capability across the whole of the department. The update on progress so far is DECYP organisational structure is currently being reviewed. It will continue to change and evolve as the department transitions towards becoming the department where every child and young person is known, safe, well and learning.

The selection process has been completed for an Executive Director, Child Safety and Out of Home Care, which will be finalised shortly. Leadership in youth justice has been strengthened with the addition of an SES2 leadership position, Director, Community and Custodial Youth Justice, as well as the addition of an assistant principal at the Ashley School to enable the principal to have greater role in the leadership of the centre and to strengthen provision of the year 11 and 12 content. That is a subject of another recommendation and a statement of duties for the Executive Director, Youth Justice Operations and SES3 position has been finalised and creation of the office is underway.

There are more recommended positions coming, but the department has been working on ensuring we are creating and filling these positions in the right order. Where we have new positions of leadership that will have supervisory roles, management roles that include other positions that they, wherever possible, are in place first. Mr Bullard might care to add to that if he has any further detail.

Mr BULLARD - Just to talk about the architecture of transition to a new agency. When we came together on 1 October 2022, we did not want to disrupt the leadership structure on either side of the business. We have said as our overarching objective that children still needed to get the services, supports and education they always had. Now we have been together for almost two years, we have been going over the last six or so months through a process of looking at what a new structure should look like to better serve children and young people. That is where this is one input into that, as well as a number of other inputs, including the experience of children and young people in accessing our services, trying to lessen the number of adults that children and young people need to interact with and tell their story to, and ensure the supports are really concentrating on supporting the frontline to serve children and young people.

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CHAIR - Minister, can I clarify, it is a phase 2 recommendation for [inaudible 2.10.26] which needs for full delivery of it. Do you expect the full completion to take that long or are you working to progress some of this a bit earlier? What is the time frame you expect?

Mr JAENSCH - I'll ask the secretary to respond in a moment. The other thing I note included in this recommendation there is a crossover with another role like that of the chief practitioner, which I think that the commission's own recommendation 9.17 for that one puts as a 29 one [2.11.05??... possibly referring to 2029?], but we possibly need it earlier. This is one of the areas where we might need to, for operational reasons, have some variance from the recommended scheduling or sequencing of roll-out.

CHAIR - The question is: do you expect the entirety of the recommendation - there is a lot in it - to be delivered in 2026 acknowledging there's some link to 2029 expectations which is a little hard? We did hear from the Attorney - General last week there are some things being brought forward, because it's sensible to do so.

Mr BULLARD - You can see, and as you say, Chair, it's a very dense recommendation. There are things that are well and truly underway and others may take longer. The chief practitioner is in active discussion and we're doing some design around that. The executive director for Aboriginal children and young people - we're very aware of the fact will need to be designed with the Aboriginal community. We will do that at a pace and intensity that works for that community rather than just go off and make sure we're going to land that time frame. We are well on track with our reorganisation to ensure we are landing those roles at this point in time by 2026.

Ms LOVELL MP - This is probably a question for the Minister for Education, but given that you raised it in your comments on this recommendation, the assistant principal position at Ashley School, is that an ongoing position? Has that been permanently funded now? Do you know?

Mr BULLARD - No, that's not permanent at this point.

Ms WEBB - To clarify, if it's not permanent, is there a particular time frame allocated for it? Fixed term?

Mr BULLARD - I am informed it is tied to the closure of Ashley.

Ms WEBB - The expectation is the position will be there for as long as Ashley remains open.

Mr BULLARD - Yes, I'm told that by my associate secretary.

CHAIR - Thank you, 9.5 is a recommendation on establishing a quality and risk committee for child safety services and there are a number of parts of that. Again, phase 2, minister, could you update us on progress to date, or anything relevant to that area?

Mr JAENSCH - The establishment of a quality and risk committee for child safety services, out-of-home care and youth justice will ensure that the risk of harm to children and young people in institutional care is reduced through greater oversight and management of quality and risk.

Update as at 31 July, a statutory guardian committee has been established. The committee supports the secretary to meet their responsibilities to ensure the individual voices of children and young people are heard and acted upon, to ensure guardianship responsibilities set out in the relevant act are met for the care of children in out-of-home care.

To inform and drive improvement and to oversee complaints and complaints processes relating to children and young people, the safety and wellbeing of children and young people executive committee, which doesn't sound like it has an acronym but needs one, like Schweppes or something like that, was established reporting to the executive board. It provides strategic direction, oversight and advice to the secretary and executive board on safety and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people who have been, or are in, contact with services provided by the department. This includes monitoring and reviewing performance measures relating to the safety and quality of service delivery, including by external providers. This encompasses monitoring trends, key learnings and themes from complaints and incidents, external investigations, and the outcomes of surveys such as the student wellbeing and engagement survey. The committee also operates as the child and youth safe governance group. In this capacity, it provides oversight of DECYP's safeguarding responsibilities.

Next steps: The recommendation to establish the quality and risk committee will be progressed in the context of, and with consideration given to, the existing functions of the committees I've just described and the broader governance and structural reform recommended by the commission of inquiry. New arrangements will be implemented as required to deliver on all aspects of the commission of inquiry's recommendation. They focus on delivering a stronger and more transparent and accountable service system that protects children and young people. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thanks, minister. Are there any other questions?

Ms LOVELL MP - Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, so the committees that you've outlined there, they currently - the functions that are listed there in point 3 in that recommendation - so those two committees - which of those functions would they not currently undertake?

Mr JAENSCH - Could the secretary comment on that?

Mr BULLARD - There would be elements of all of those to some degree. I think what's really important here is that at the moment, the committee - the wellbeing committee, is for the whole agency -

Ms LOVELL MP - I'm sorry to cut you off. I'm a bit confused. That was a lot of information to take in sort of across the table about two different committees. That is not quite what is in here. So, yes, I'm a little unclear on the state of play, I suppose.

Mr BULLARD - I think as a starting point, it's important to note that this committee needs to be established in phase 2 by 2026. What the minister was speaking to was that in the absence of the specific committee, there are governance arrangements in place that are, to some degree, undertaking those functions. The guardian committee, which is my committee, is looking at the experiences of individual young people in out-of-home care or in my custody, particularly where things are not going as we would hope for those young people, so that we can come up with a plan to put them back on track. I take a personal role in those decisions.

So that is individual risk mitigation. The wellbeing committee, which is all-agency, is a committee that is looking at trends and data over time for the entire agency along those parameters of our safety and wellbeing in particular. So it does attend to some of those elements. It wouldn't, at the moment, be looking at the performance against an outcome and reporting framework for out-of-home care, for example, because that needs to be designed by the out-of-home care reform team as one of the elements of the strategy.

Are we there yet? No, because we don't have to be, but have we waited until we've got this architecture all set up? We haven't. We're starting to do parts of it as we can.

Ms LOVELL MP - Thank you. That's helpful.

Ms WEBB - I'll follow up on that, if I might, then. Perhaps it would be useful - could you provide us with a structural diagram to show us how those things do fit? For example, when you were describing the guardian committee and what it does, I'm immediately wondering how that fits alongside, say, activities undertaken by the child advocate or activities as an external entity that the commissioner for children's office is responsible for because they all interact into that out-of-home care space potentially and - yes, it would be good to understand how they overlap.

CHAIR - Schematic or something?

Ms WEBB - Yes, schematic basically, and how we ensure that where they overlap - is there clarity about who's doing the job or where someone should go with their issue?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm happy for Mr Bullard to answer that. Noting, that there is room for overlap too, because there needs to be independent oversight as well -

Ms WEBB - Totally agree. Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - -that covers the same ground and the same circumstances.

Mr BULLARD - The guardian committee, the easiest way to think about that is me as statutory parent. So -

CHAIR - If we could have a schematic, or something to describe it?

Ms WEBB - Just to show the relationships and the structure.

Mr BULLARD - Yes. We can provide you with the terms of reference for the two committees we've referred to. The commissioner for children's role is set out in the act, and that sits separately.

It's important to note that the child advocate, as that position currently stands - noting that it's a recommendation that it's sent to the new commission for children - but at the moment -

Ms WEBB - Currently in the department? Yes.

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Mr BULLARD - Is a role that sits there for me to discharge my role as guardian, and also to inform Claire in her role as executive director about children and young people's experience of the child safety service and the ARL. That role, you could think of as advisory, but also bringing the voice of children in. The two terms of reference and an outline of the role of the child advocate will show the delineation. We have worked hard to ensure that where there is overlap, it's very clear who's doing what.

Mr JAENSCH - We'll take that on notice as a deliverable for the Committee. Thank you.

CHAIR - Anything else on 9.5? We'll go to 9.6.

Minister, with regards to development of the strategy -

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

CHAIR - Which you have touched on already, a little bit.

Mr JAENSCH - Yeah, absolutely. Ensuring that children and young people are known and heard and included is central to everything that the department does. Participation and empowerment is one of the department's four strategic priorities. The commission of inquiry recommended that the department develop a participation and empowerment strategy for children and young people in out-of-home care and, similarly, for those in detention as well.

To realise the department's strategic plan, and uphold the rights of children and young people, and meet the commission of inquiry's recommendations - it's identified a need to go beyond what the commission recommended and to develop a participation and empowerment strategy that builds the lived experience of children and young people and families into the department's culture and governance and policies and practices across all of its service delivery. The department has now scoped the work to develop a participation and empowerment strategy and developed a project plan for that.

In response to recommendation 9.6, the online 'Youth Voice' survey was implemented as a six-month trial from April to October this year.

CHAIR - That's what we were talking about earlier.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. The survey is a tool for young people aged 12 to 17 in out-of-home care to share their views directly into the care-team and care-planning processes. Acting on the feedback during the trial, a paper-based version has also been created.

The department doubled its capacity to respond to individual advocacy referrals by recruiting a child advocate liaison for the south, in addition to the existing child advocate liaison in the greater north.

In preparation to establish an independent child advocate and for individual advocacy work to move from the department to a new independent entity in the future, a review of the existing child advocate's functions has resulted in the creation and appointment of a director of child and youth empowerment. The child-advocate team has been renamed the child and youth empowerment individual. Individual advocacy work will continue as part of that team.

The director of child and youth empowerment has continuing responsibility to act as child advocate for children in out-of-home care, until it transitions outside the department. The referral process has been streamlined to make it easier for young people and professionals and carers to access individual advocacy as well.

Is there any further detail you wanted to add?

Mr BULLARD - Only that this sits central to the work of the agency. The director of child and youth empowerment is a role that goes right across the agency - all schools, child and family learning centres, libraries, out-of-home care, ARL and youth justice - and it is something that we are working really hard on. We know that we can just stick some lines on a piece of paper that says, 'Yes, we do listen to children,' but we also know that when you go and consult children - and, again, this was in the commission's report - that children said that they want to be asked, they really want to be listened to, and they need adults to be authentic.

We've started the work already, we're not waiting for the strategy. We had over 400 leaders come together this year to discuss what does it mean if we really believe that children and young people have a right to influence the decisions that affect them. That's led to some very interesting conversations about ensuring we're moving not only the minds of people to say, 'Yes, I can sign up to that', but the hearts of people, because it's not always easy. It's easy to ask what they'd like for lunch or the canteen to serve. Sometimes it's not so easy to say, 'Where would you like your placement to be?' when it might not accord with what an adult wants to happen. It's good work.

Ms LOVELL MP - I had a question on the timeline. This is a Phase 2 recommendation, but we heard this morning from the Premier that there is a delay in establishing the commission of children of close to a year. Hopefully not that long, but could be. Are you anticipating that will impact your ability to deliver this recommendation and any others that involve some kind of work with, or consultation with, the commission?

Mr JAENSCH - I would have thought that we're ahead of schedule, probably.

Mr BULLARD - What we know in terms of this recommendation is the move of child advocacy out of the agency into the commission, which we're very supportive of, because it should be at arm's length. You shouldn't be asking children about, 'How are you finding our services?' There is already a power imbalance. Until that time, what we have done is increased the resources for the child advocate and the advocacy service, and we're ensuring that those individuals are undertaking the role in a way that is going to serve really well for two transfers, so more arm's length from the agency, regular feedback to me, Claire and Sue. That does not really hold us up. We're getting that team in a really good place to be able to say once the commission's ready, 'We've done the work with the team for the function to shift'.

Ms WEBB - This recommendation is about developing those higher-level policy input mechanisms for empowerment and participation from young people. In the meantime, at a more personal, individual level, it is very important for young people to be empowered and facilitated to participate in the decision-making that's affecting them personally. I am concerned about the degree to which that can happen. For example, in an out-of-home care system, where we know we are stretched for staffing and our carers are stretched, and the degree to which young people

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are therefore empowered and able to participate in their decision-making. Can you give me an indication about what work is being done to improve how that happens at that level?

Mr BULLARD - It's multi-streamed. Again, I have mentioned the survey as one thing.

Ms WEBB - How many kids currently in out-of-home care have utilised the survey?

Mr BULLARD - We have only just launched that. That's been going for only a number of weeks and we are encouraging -

Ms WEBB - This isn't the online questionnaire?

Mr BULLARD - Yes, that's the online questionnaire.

Ms WEBB - April to October?

Mr JAENSCH - Seventeen.

Ms WEBB - People? I just wrote down April to October.

Mr BULLARD - 17.

Ms WEBB - 17 kids in out-of-home care have participated in the survey so far? Again, that's not about their personal care, is it?

Mr BULLARD - It's about their experience. Absolutely personal.

Ms WEBB - To feed into, though, decision-making for their personal circumstances. Thank you. 17 of the 1000 or so, how many kids? No, we have two-thirds haven't we? Maybe 600 or 700?

Ms C LOVELL - It's 350 in that age cohort.

Mr BULLARD - In the age cohort there are 350. That's one way. We've already spoken about more child advocates. We have moved from one child advocate to three or four FTEs. We have a 400 per cent increase in number of people out on the ground. There is also the expectation that children and young people, where they're able, will be involved in their care teams and they will be involved in the decisions that impact them.

Ms WEBB - May I ask about that? Because my understanding is the child advocate has developed tools, and apparently quite well-regarded tools, for enabling children and young people to have their voices heard in those care team meetings. How frequently are those tools being used and how frequently are children actually involved in those meetings? Do you have data on that?

Ms C LOVELL - We don't have data on children's participation in their care teams. Our current system doesn't capture that. That's something that we would hope to capture in the system we're developing currently, so that we can gain a snapshot of that at any given time.

Ms WEBB - We can't really hold ourselves to account for children's participation in decision-making for their circumstances if we're not counting.

Ms C LOVELL - Not through use of data, no, but we have incorporated that through a range of other mechanisms in our operational procedures. Before a particular decision is made by a delegate, for example, it has to be evidenced that the child's voice has been included in that.

Ms WEBB - How well are we doing on that front, do you think?

Ms C LOVELL - We're quality-assured for that. When we run a quality assurance project on, for example, the decision-making forum, that's one of the things that we check and measure, and that's an improvement process, a continuous improvement process. Where we find that there might be cases where that's not happening, we would be looking at why is that not happening and what do we need to do to make sure it does.

Ms WEBB - Regarding care team meetings, though, which is that granular kind of practical decision-making for that child, we don't have any data. Do we have any way to reflect how well we think we're doing with children's involvement in those?

Ms C LOVELL - Not through data. As there's a greater uptake in responses to the Child and Youth Voice survey, that does include the child's own view of how well they're able to participate in decision-making about their own lives. That will be a way of capturing data directly from them about their experience.

Ms WEBB - Do we capture whether we're meeting a metric or requirement for conducting care team meetings, just as a raw piece of data? To what degree are we meeting that metric?

Ms LOVELL - We have developed a dashboard so we can monitor the uptake of care teams, and we're watching that increase.

Ms WEBB - Where are we sitting?

Ms C LOVELL - For children who are allocated, it's sitting at 71 per cent.

Ms WEBB - That are having care team meetings as frequently as required?

Ms C LOVELL - They have active care teams as the measure, yes.

Ms WEBB - Active care teams.

Ms C LOVELL - Again, the data is not as accurate as it will be when we improve this system. At the moment we can see who has an active care team by how many - well, not how many, but whether care teams have been conducted within particular timeframes.

Mr BULLARD - It's important to note that that's come from a very low base. 71 per cent is a good metric at the moment. Not enough, because it needs to be 100 per cent. It's also important to note that it is something I constantly talk about, and Claire constantly talks about, as an expectation, and not only for child safety. One of the things that we have had to work on,

and we continue to work on, is a care team as an agency responsibility. It's not a child safety, or doing it over there. We're setting up mechanisms at higher levels to model that. We know that on the ground we want child safety officers, school social workers, psychologists, teachers, carers and young people coming together and talking about their aspirations and how they're going in each of the wellbeing domains. But we also are mirroring that at a director level. There are director-level care teams where the experiences of young people are more complex, or the outcomes aren't as we expect.

There's an opportunity too, through the Sure Start initiative, for me to take those young people to a secretary's board meeting where we will work through very complex situations that some young people find themselves in and make decisions at that level about what needs to happen in their best interest. We're on a journey. That's important to note. This empowerment and participation strategy isn't due until 2026, but we're already that far advanced in terms of a cultural shift.

Ms WEBB - The secretary's board mechanism sounds like a little bit of 'back to the future', doesn't it? I think we have previously had something like that in this space -

Mr BULLARD - We had an inter-agency support team many years ago, which I was involved in when I was in Premier and Cabinet. Yes, similar but different. We've pulled all that out, dusted it off and learnt from what worked and didn't work.

CHAIR - Is that the last question? Minister, we had scheduled a break about now, so unless you want to say something else - you look like you're about to say something.

Mr JAENSCH - All I was going to suggest is that given the time allocation and the number of recommendations yet to cover, I'd be happy to forego a sort of overview statement of progress reporting if you wanted to instead focus on where your members have questions and be guided by that. That way we might be able to move through some of the ones more quickly.

CHAIR - That's fine.

Ms LOVELL MP - The only issue with that is we're getting quite a bit of new information in those overview statements we don't have available to us to know what questions we need to ask, which would be my only hesitation.

CHAIR - Let's just take a break. Maybe during the break, we can discuss how best to move forward, minister, so we can make sure you have the opportunity to update the Committee.

Mr JAENSCH - I'll read faster.

CHAIR - Yes. There's a lot in this portfolio.

Mr JAENSCH - There is and thank you for the interest. I'm very grateful for the interest.

CHAIR - It is more in terms of the way we allocate the time. It might be that we need to be back at a later time also but at this point we'll take a break and get back by 2.45 p.m.

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The Committee suspended from 2.35 p.m. to 2.45 p.m.

CHAIR - Thanks, minister. I believe you have something you want to table with the Committee.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Chair. Secretary Bullard has some documents he referred to in his contributions he would like to table, please.

Mr BULLARD - Thank you, minister. We spoke about the governance of the agency with regard to oversight of children and young people, particularly in out-of-home care and our monitoring of that. If I could table the current Department for Education Children and Young People governance structure that outlines all of the committees. As promised, the terms of reference for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people executive committee and the terms of reference for the statutory guardian committee.

CHAIR - Thank you. I think Meg has a follow-up question on one of the matters we've raised in this area.

Ms WEBB - I wanted to clarify, to be clear on the record, when I asked about whether we're measuring care-team meetings for kids currently in out-of-home care in the government system and you gave me a 71 per cent figure. I don't think that was referring to care-team meetings, was it?

Mr BULLARD - Care teams.

Ms WEBB - Care teams?

Mr JAENSCH - The proportion of young people with a with an active care team. Is that correct?

Ms WEBB - How do we define active care team?

Ms C LOVELL - We can see in our system where there's case notes that have that heading type that it's a record relating to a care team.

Ms WEBB - What might that mean? How would we know if they'd had a meeting or actually communicated?

Ms C LOVELL - We have a dashboard that shows us some indicators relating to case management. One is an active care team where we can see that there's been activity. There is another one which is where they have a formal care-team record uploaded with that type and it's the minutes from a meeting. There are also measures about the number who have a care plan as well on our dashboard.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. Would you always expect minutes to be provided for care-team meetings?

Ms C LOVELL - No. The minutes aren't necessarily in that format. Sometimes the team will have a meeting and they'll share the outcome of that via email, for example. Care-team activity at the moment is the one that shows us which children and young people do have a team

of people around them who are communicating, liaising and managing their care. It's not a reliable enough indicator that we would publicly report, but it's an indicator that we use to measure our progress in the implementation of this case-management approach.

Mr BULLARD - We know that the data is not where we need it to be and it is one of the mainstays of system improvement to the IT system that supports that. People need to be deliberate in what information they put in and then we can extract with integrity, but also a level of detail, some of the input that is going in rather than some of the free text or Word documents that are uploaded now.

It is a similar challenge to what we had with individual learning plans for students with disability a couple of years ago where they were all just Word documents going up and now there's a system that dictates the way it is captured in the system and can be reported across quite a number of fields.

Ms WEBB - Do you think it would be fair enough to say that that 71 per cent, if you spoke to the carers involved in those numbers, they wouldn't necessarily identify there was an active care team going on that the figure for that might be a bit lower?

Ms C LOVELL - That's hard to speculate on. Generally, when we use the term 'care team', people understand that they're a member of that whether it's a very formally run care team or a more informal iteration.

Mr BULLARD - We have had to dismantle some taxonomy within the agency because schools all had care teams and there were special care teams going on in child and family learning centres. The care team now has a definition, one definition for the agency, over time that will build in its integrity.

CHAIR - We might need to move on. If we can go to 9.7, we have touched on some of this already, minister, about the appointment of an executive director for Aboriginal children and young people. I know in DPAC we did cover a little bit that related to this too. If you could give us any particular information you think is important to share.

Mr JAENSCH - The highlights are that planning has begun for the senior executive role consultation with key stakeholders, which will include Aboriginal people. This will commence in 2025 to develop and define the scope of the role further. Recruitment for the senior executive role will proceed in accordance with the commission's time frame.

CHAIR - Minister, engaging with Aboriginal people is critical and crucial to this, how are we engaging with the Aboriginal community across the state? I want to understand that better.

Mr JAENSCH - With all of the matters that we'll cover across these recommendations and these chapters, where there is a requirement to engage with Aboriginal people, and for them to help inform and co-design the policies and structures and positions that we're talking about, we'll be engaging with all Aboriginal organisations across the state to ensure that we're getting a diversity of views there.

CHAIR - Directly? Yes.

PUBLIC

Mr JAENSCH - There are, in some cases, established reference groups for particular purposes, which we'll continue to use. We do note, however, that sometimes there are organisations who choose not to participate and we have to engage with them separately.

CHAIR - Sure. And you will do that, you'll make sure you cover the field, so to speak?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

CHAIR - Any other questions on that one?

Okay, 9.8. This is - again, we've touched a little bit on some of this in the other comments that have been made - the development of a strategic plan for an out-of-home care system. Is there anything you wish to add in addition to what you've already told us on this area?

Mr JAENSCH - Anything further?

CHAIR - This is a phase three one, so it's to be completed.

Mr BULLARD - It's a phase three one. The out-of-home care reform team needs to be established, and this will be a core component of the work that it does. The only other thing to note is that there are a number of streams of work in that. The plan is kind of the overarching architecture, and they'll be progressed at different rates.

CHAIR - And it refers to a number of other recommendations within it.

Anything else on that one, members? We'll go to 9.9.

Mr JAENSCH - I think we've touched on aspects of this as well. If there's particular questions that members have, happy to take them.

CHAIR - This is really about the data collection and analysis, if you like. Anyone have any particular questions? Okay.

In developing some of the data capability, are you having to build a whole new system? I know that Health, for example, is rolling out their HRIS, it's called - Human Information Resource System, I think that is - and when we heard evidence on a different committee about that, it was intended to be able to be used more broadly across departments. I'm just interested in rebuilding a whole system - we know how long HRIS has taken. I'm interested in whether you're building a new thing, or is it something that can be used to collect and report the data?

Mr BULLARD - I think there are three streams.

One is what data do we already collect and can we actually put it together? If you imagine, we've come together now as a much larger agency, we hold a lot more data about how children and young people are faring in being known, safe, well, and learning, and we have been able to do some work for individual children and young people that draws that together into a visual display, which makes it much easier for people to see how they're going.

The second is data gaps. If you think about the discussion we had earlier about wanting to measure quality of out-of-home care as the actual experience of children and young people,

that doesn't necessarily exist. The question there is, can that be captured and then reported through an existing or a new system.

And the third, there will be cases where it's impossible with what we've got. I think the Child Protection Information System (CPIS) reflections about how it stores care-team information is key, that it's not doing what we need it to do, and we'll need to have an upgrade.

CHAIR - Is the funding for that part of the forward budget planning, minister?

Mr BULLARD - Certainly in the work that we've been doing around what needs to happen. In a number of these spaces, there's an underpinning element about the collection of data and/or information to inform better decisions. We're actively looking at each of the streams and where it might need some additional support.

Ms WEBB - Can I ask one question on this section, before we move on? Was there any similar work to this going on already, prior to the commission's bringing down a recommendation on it? When did we begin work on something similar to this in relation to the out-of-home care sector?

Mr JAENSCH - Hasn't it been a continuously evolving thing with key data and we've just been presenting it in different forms over time?

Mr BULLARD - Yeah. It's had different manifestations over time. Certainly, when the agency came together, we had the human services dashboard, which had some reporting about out-of-home care and the performance of child safety services, and before that there's been different manifestations of those reports. A question we're asking ourselves now is: does it actually capture data or is it capturing and reporting data that makes sense in terms of outcomes for children and young people or are we just counting a lot of things?

That's a maturing of data sets across education as well where we might have gone from, 'How many days are you attending?', still a measure, but actually we're more interested in, 'How many days are you engaging?', which is the real measure.

Ms WEBB - Did we have something that could be identified as a framework prior to this coming down as a recommendation that we are building on or are we starting afresh with this?

Ms C LOVELL - An outcomes framework?

Ms WEBB - Yes, this is to do with an outcomes and performance reporting framework for out of-home-care.

Ms C LOVELL - There was an outcomes' framework developed under Strong Families Safe Kids.

Ms WEBB - That's what I thought.

Ms C LOVELL - That is the basis for a new outcomes' framework. At the time that was quite aspirational in that the indicators - it wasn't possible to capture data.

The one that's under development at the moment isn't starting from scratch. It is actually based on that.

Ms WEBB - It's going to build on that previous framework, but bring in the data capability around it or as part of it.

Ms C LOVELL - Yes.

CHAIR - A good outcomes focus.

Ms C LOVELL - An outcome focus, yes.

Ms WEBB - The framework had that already, but you weren't able to capture data.

Ms C LOVELL - The original framework was based on the child wellbeing domains.

Ms WEBB - That's what I recall.

CHAIR - Is there anything else?

We'll move to 9.10. This is the recommendation related to development of a workforce strategy for the child and family welfare sector. That's a phase three as well, minister.

Mr JAENSCH - There is but there's a there's a lot of different dimensions to this. Clearly, when we're talking about the transition of management of out of home care to the non-government sector, there's a need for them to be able to grow their workforce capabilities. So that's the longer term workforce strategy and we've undertaken to be working with the sector on that. It's not something that which is the government alone doing that. Clearly, this is going to help us plan our trajectory for that transition to a 100 per cent NGO provision. The suggested timeframe is out there as 2029, but I think there is work already underway from the department and maybe the secretary can speak to that in a little bit more detail. In the immediate term, the other thing we need to do is ensure that we are doing everything we can to fill the positions that we have right now and deliver the services that are needed across our sector.

We've had a really good response to the workforce package that the government announced and the campaign that went out nationwide to recruit to our child safety positions, including frontline positions in the north-west and you have already mentioned the market allowance and other -

CHAIR - You have mentioned those. You won't repeat all those, right, minister?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm advised that there's been at least 110 applicants with relevant qualifications and experience that are now progressing to a short-listing process out of that recruitment drive with those incentives as part of it. We aim to get as many of those people in where they are the right people to fill those gaps and we'll continue to recruit to get over establishment - that's our plan so that we have more people than positions because we know in this workforce that there are times where people need to be away from work for their own health and wellbeing, but also maternity leave and other matters that give us gaps from time to time and we need to not have that resulting in vacancies in our teams.

I've been very pleased with how that package has come together. We're very keen for the discussions with the unions to progress the final elements of that to the Industrial Commission to be gazetted and flow through to our workers.

CHAIR - Thanks for that. We've had some of that information so I'll just go to Jacquie.

Mrs PETRUSMA - The minister basically answered the question I had. I was just interested in understanding what the department was doing to increase staff numbers and retention in regard to the welfare sector.

Mr JAENSCH - That is part of the broader workforce planning across the sector. I might ask if the secretary can comment on the process there.

Mr Bullard - In terms of where we want to get, we want to look across the whole life cycle of employees, look at training and we are already in discussions with the University of Tasmania about different pathways into child safety roles. We want to look at the recruitment and as the minister said, we have had a very good response. Induction and then how we retain. That is about really meaningful pathways. The other thing to note too is there is a lot of work going on in the delineation of roles. It has been quite a blunt mechanism that child safety officers do all of the work, whether that is getting your passport, your driver's license, move you between appointments, go and visit your foster family and we can see that there is a delineation of skill sets and roles within a team. And we have already started to not only explore that, but to implement other roles. What that means is that child safety officers who are qualified are doing the work that they are experienced and qualified to do, which is to work with children and young people.

Ms LOVELL MP - I am interested to know - because clearly that is a workforce strategy that is coming online down the track in phase three. You have a strategy now to try to put things in place to increase staffing because we are desperately short, particularly in the north-west. Do you have a straightforward way to tell us what the unmet need is now in terms of staffing? What should we be at and what are we at now in each region?

Ms C LOVELL - Number of vacancies?

Ms LOVELL MP - That might be reported somewhere and I just have not looked at that in front of me.

Mr JAENSCH - If the department has current numbers that they are confident in, I am happy for them to report those.

Ms C LOVELL - For our most recent pay period, 80.7 % of child safety officer roles were occupied statewide. The vacancies that we had in the north-west, there was a vacancy rate of 47.9 % which was 11 vacancies. The north was 6 %, which was one vacancy and the south was 16 %, 9.4 vacancies. They are true vacancies, they are unoccupied positions and that is not factoring in where we have staff absent on leave, for example. It can seem much lower than that vacancy rate that I have just cited when staff hear those figures.

Ms LOVELL MP - Do you have figures including leave?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes, I do. They are less reliable figures because there can be some lag time in that with reconciling leave. We go with the actual occupancy.

Ms LOVELL MP - Would the leave that you are talking about include long term leave?

Ms C LOVELL - The majority is unplanned leave and recreation leave. There are some workers compensation vacancies in there. That is a very low number. The majority of it is recreation leave and unplanned.

Ms LOVELL MP - Is there data collected on how, appreciating that unplanned leave can often be a day or two at a time, might not be extended periods? How frequently that is happening and what kind of impact it has on the workforce generally over an extended period of time? What we are hearing is that you have 47.9 % in the north-west. That was the vacancy rate, is that right? That is still very high. That is not including leave. If you have two or three people off every day, sick or taking a mental health day or whatever they need to do, that obviously has a much more significant impact on the workforce, which I believe the issue here is not necessarily the number of vacancies we have but the effective workforce.

Mr JAENSCH - That is why we are aiming at over-establishment recruitment in the areas where we have shortages and focusing in on them.

Ms LOVELL MP - Do you collect that data? Do you have an idea of what might look like 47.9 %? If you are on the ground in the north-west coast day-to-day, what does that number look like? It might be much worse than 47 %.

CHAIR - It might even look like 60 %.

Ms C LOVELL - We do collect that data. If I were to present that, I would like to do that over a reasonable time frame because it is quite volatile. We will go up and down depending on whether it is a school holiday period and that sort of thing, for example.

Ms LOVELL MP - Would you, minister, be happy to provide that information to the Committee in a way that you are comfortable with?

Mr JAENSCH - If there was a way of providing it that was reliable and statistically sound, I'm happy for it to be provided.

Mr BULLARD - We can look at that and, as Ms Lovell said, a longer time series makes more sense because you're not getting the - to define that from where Sarah was, minister, you said you wanted the 'over-establishment', a very wonky name for it. Let's talk about what you actually mean.

Mr JAENSCH - Recruiting more in certain areas which are subject to volatility and where there are issues to do with the work and the workforce. For example, if we have areas where the work is very complex and difficult -

CHAIR - Specialised.

Mr JAENSCH - and where people may need to be able to take time as well to care for themselves. Also, if we have a workforce where we have a lot of our staff with young families,

women with young families or starting families there's sometimes a pattern of more leave that they're taking. We need to be able, perhaps, to be overstaffed on paper to be able to maintain full staffing on the ground, to take up those sorts of -

CHAIR - What do you think that level is? Let's look at the north west - one of the biggest challenges in the state - what percentage or number of people or FTEs would you need to be overstaffed to feel that adequately address the need?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. I hope this becomes a problem for us, but there's also some internal processes that require for the secretary to have approval to appoint over-establishment. He might be able to speak to us about what those settings are.

CHAIR - What the expectation is there.

Ms WEBB - Let's not worry too much about whether it's going to happen, but just the number would be good.

CHAIR - Where you see the recruitment and the staffing targets?

Ms C LOVELL - There are two reasons in mind for me about why we would go over-establishment at the moment. One of those is to provide that relief capacity as the minister has talked about. The other is we have experienced rapid growth and expect this will continue with new roles coming online as we develop programmes. For example, the after-hours service is about to come online and for that we know we need around 16 new staff members.

CHAIR - That's just to cover that. I'm trying to understand what the task is here to meet the expected requirements that takes into account the leave and the nature of the workforce, all those things.

Ms C LOVELL - Okay. Workforce planning process to model that?

CHAIR - Yes. Do we know what that number is?

Mr BULLARD - We don't know at the moment. That's a piece of work we need to do. We have done it in other areas of the business. Basically, it's going and looking at leave patterns over time by category, by qualification and then adding in additional roles. We knew in another part of the business a couple of years ago that full-time roles were ending up part-time. People would take the full-time role, but then they would want to adjust their hours. Absolutely legitimate, but if five people do that by a day a week, you end up down one full FTE. We have a model that does give us the capacity then to say, for example, we might need to go to 120 per cent in terms of who we need.

CHAIR - We don't know that figure yet.

Mr BULLARD - We don't know that figure yet.

Ms LOVELL MP - Minister, once you've done that work and have worked out what that figure will be, how will those positions be funded if you're recruiting at above establishment? Given that there's some significant pressure on the Budget, other departments are having to cut from their establishment figures. How will that work in child safety?

Mr JAENSCH - We're funded for every child to have a child safety officer, a primary worker. Now, our problem is not having those positions filled. Keeping them filled is going to require us to have a buffer and have extra staff.

Ms LOVELL MP - You would anticipate there will be an additional allocation of funding in the Budget to allow you to recruit with that buffer?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm happy for the secretary to talk about how he budgets for those.

Mr BULLARD - Through the modelling, you can tell some of it's cost neutral. A full-time position only deciding to work 0.6 saves you 0.4. The 0.4 then goes off and funds part of one of your over-establishment roles.

Ms LOVELL MP - How's that over-establishment if that's a full-time position and they're only working 0.6? Does that not mean you're 0.4 under establishment?

Mr BULLARD - Technically yes, but the issue we have at the moment is it's very hard to backfill the 0.4. You end up with somewhat 0.6.

Ms LOVELL MP - You are already under establishment that you're recruiting two establishments?

Mr BULLARD - Well, you're understanding what you need in the service because of people's leave entitlements. 100 per cent establishment is what you need. If every position was filled every day, that'd be the end of it.

Ms LOVELL MP - What I'm hearing from the minister is that 100 per cent establishment is what your budgeted allocation is for. That's what you need. You're not filling those positions because of the difficulties with workforce and attracting. That's fine, we all accept that. But the minister's saying you want to recruit to maybe 100 per cent and, given that this number's not set, 120 per cent of your establishment, that 20 per cent above your establishment. Where will the funding for that come from?

Mr BULLARD - It comes from the vacancies that are sitting underneath.

Ms LOVELL MP - They're not really. But that does not mean if you're filling the vacancies that are under the 100 per cent you're funded for, in order for this to be cost neutral, you can't go above the 100 per cent. Surely.

Mr BULLARD - What I'm saying is you alleviate the ons and offs that are sitting underneath. You are really at 100 per cent. If I tell you I've 100 child safety officers, but I know that each of them is only working 0.6, that's not correct, because we've only got 0.6 or 60 per cent of child safety officers.

Ms LOVELL MP - Are we talking FTE or numbers then because FTE is a different thing if you say 100 child safety FTE and you've only got 100.6 FTE then that's not 100 per cent, that's not your full establishment, is it?

PUBLIC

Mr BULLARD - You are talking about FTE. The technicality in it is that people sit in positions full-time and they have a right to come back. They can ring up and say I'm going to come back and now next week I'm going to start working Thursdays and Fridays again. They lock out of FTE position. We could talk about having all of those FTE, but we wouldn't have that number of hours on the ground.

Going over-establishment allows you to talk about the hours you're providing your service in real terms and that's what the minister's trying to get to.

CHAIR - This maybe something we need to follow up more on Budget Estimates.

Ms LOVELL MP - I'm happy to follow up in more in Budget Estimates. I worry the way it's been presented as we're going to recruit all these extra people in reality is not really what's going to happen in terms of Budget allocation, positions filled in hours being delivered in terms of -

Mr JAENSCH - Budget allocation isn't our challenge at the moment. We have just added enough; \$4.5 million to ensure we can get the people we need.

Ms LOVELL MP - I understand that in terms of your 100 per cent establishment but if we start talking about - we can take it up at Estimates.

CHAIR - We're getting a bit bogged down.

Mr JAENSCH - The point is that having, when we talk about the future workforce and about a lot of these other areas of service delivery. We're not seeing the system working at its full capability right now, because we don't have enough people in it. An essential first step in everything we do is to ensure our service is fully staffed and stays that way, and then we build on that with reforms that fine-tune the service.

CHAIR - Bec, did you have a question on this line?

Ms WHITE - No, it's been answered.

CHAIR - Rebekah?

Mrs PENTLAND - Yes. You're saying that just in the north west you're 11 staff down. Has there been a time when you've been at full capacity with your staffing in the north west?

Mr JAENSCH - No.

Mrs PENTLAND - No.

CHAIR - I said not in living memory from being up there.

Mrs PENTLAND - Yeah, okay. You said before that you've had some recruitment incentives. You spoke about relocation costs and 15 per cent on markets. Are they the only two things that you're offering or?

PUBLIC

Mr JAENSCH - I mentioned some of these in my overview statements at the beginning. There's a 15 per cent market allowance for north west for the band of staff that the package applies to. We've also proposed a \$10,000 payment in two parts across the state in those eligible bands. That is subject to final agreement with the union and ratification with the Industrial Commission. There are also relocation allowances and scholarships, as well for the future workforce we need to invest in. What we need to do is keep the people we've got. We need to make this an attractive option in the market for the type of people who everyone else is competing for as well. These arrangements, for now; will be superseded by the next child safety agreement that we commence negotiation on with the union - when, later this year, Tim? Yes.

Mrs PENTLAND - You think that these need to be reviewed if they're not attracting the 11 people, or the 11 staff members?

Mr JAENSCH - They'll be replaced by what can be agreed with the workforce as the conditions going forward, under a new formal agreement.

Ms WEBB - Just to clarify those numbers. You provided numbers before, for each region, of how many staff you were down. You also provided the percentage that that represented, presumably for a fully staffed number for each region. I didn't write the percentages down. Can you give me the fully staffed number for each region? Like, what would it be if we had all the vacancies filled?

CHAIR - FTE, she would be asking for.

Ms WEBB - Whatever the 11 people in the north west represented, some percentage of -

Mr JAENSCH - I'm happy for that to be provided at the table, if we have it, or if we don't, for it to be provided during this hearing if we need to draw another -

CHAIR - We talked about how many people -

Ms WEBB - You can just give me the percentages; I can do the maths.

Ms C LOVELL - I can give you that. The north, the budgeted FTE is 25; the northwest 23.5; the south 56.4.

Ms WEBB - Thank you. What's the children to worker ratio that that assumes, if we were fully staffed?

Ms C LOVELL - It roughly assumes 15 is the case load trigger point that we apply.

Ms WEBB - 15:1? At the moment, each of those regions are operating, practically speaking, on a worker to child ratio that's quite different to that because of -

Ms C LOVELL - They have different ways of managing the demand that they can't meet.

Ms WEBB - That's okay, I'm sure there'll be more on that during the Estimates. Thank you for those numbers.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Yeah, do you want to move on? Rebekah, one more?

Mrs PENTLAND - Sorry, just one other question. Retention rates - do you have any data on that with the staff that have been employed over the last two years in these positions?

Ms C LOVELL - I do have some retention data, but we might be best to take that one on notice so we can look at it over a period rather than a paid period.

Mr JAENSCH - Do you want to give us a timeframe for that, in a written question on notice?

CHAIR - We'll send that through to you, minister, we'll just get that through.

Mr JAENSCH - With any of those taken on notice -

CHAIR - We'll write to you clarifying what we've asked for.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you.

Mrs PENTLAND - Timeframe.

Ms WEBB - May I double-check with this recommendation 9.10, where we're talking about the workforce strategy for the child and family welfare sector. We're talking about more than just the out-of-home care space. In terms of the child and family services, does it also extend into the family and sexual violence services as well, in terms of this workforce strategy? What are the parameters that this workforce strategy is going to cover?

Mr BULLARD - From our perspective, that strategy relates to services that our department provides, and we would like to do that in collaboration with the sector. It's also where those services are similar or mirrored by the sector that we're building the strategy together, because we know that if the sector benefits, we benefit. Certainly, that's the approach we're taking, that we would have a sector approach primarily focused on services that would traditionally be seen as child safety or ARL services, but might extend to other allied health professionals within the agency as well. We're having that discussion internally at the moment.

CHAIR - We might move on. 9.11 is about the establishment of mandatory core knowledge requirements for child safety officers. Again, a phase three, but if you can update - is any work being done to date with that, minister?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. There are a range of mandatory training components that the department has already deployed, and will continue to, but I might ask the secretary if he can speak to it.

Mr BULLARD - Every staff member in the department has already undertaken mandatory safeguarding training. That occurred this year. I think there were 13,000-plus staff right across the agency that did that training. We've also got wellbeing and care procedure that we're currently updating to ensure that it includes Tasmania's Reportable Conduct Scheme. Again, staff will be trained in their obligations. We are also working with the Office of the Independent Regulator about that reportable conduct. That's the starting point. What this will mean when it's working well is that there's a much greater depth of understanding, not only in

relation to dealing with child sexual abuse, but dealing with elements of trauma, et cetera. The mandatory core knowledge requirements will build on the training that we've delivered. This is a work in progress. Obviously, the chief practitioner coming on will have an impact, because they will put together practice approach, models of care, which we'll need to make sure staff are trained on as well. Again, we've started to do some work in this area, but it will build over time.

CHAIR - Minister, it's not like a set-and-forget, you do it once and you're done? There'll be annual or more frequent updates and mandatory requirements about that?

Mr BULLARD - We started off with - we don't like calling it mandatory reporting, but how to report to the ARL was the first module.

CHAIR - I'm talking about mandatory training. Training you have to do.

Mr BULLARD - We started off with that last year, then this year everyone's done that again, but they've also done safeguarding training looking for signs of grooming or inappropriate conduct. We've also rolled out a version of that which is a public-facing version for volunteers and other workers in our settings. Every year you have to refresh and do that.

CHAIR - I did it before I went to visit a school, I was told I needed to do it before I went, which I did. It is obviously working, because it tagged that I was coming in to the school. Questions on that one?

We can move on then to 9.12. This is the department of education - the Foster and Kinship Carers Handbook to be updated in the manner outlined.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, I can update here, Chair, that the Foster and Kinship Carers Association Tasmania (FKAT) was engaged in May this year to scope required updates to the handbook and to get early information to carers relating to any changes arising from the commission of inquiry recommendations. The FKAT will be providing a proposed plan and scope of work by the end of August, so that's imminent. That is on track for delivery by the commission's suggested reform timeframe. Another update I'm able to provide is that there has been a reference guide developed which I think is called 'Who Can Say it's OK'.

Ms C LOVELL - *Who Can Say OK?*

Mr JAENSCH - *Who Can Say OK?* This is a ready reference for carers and people who may need to gain consent for young people on orders in care to have a haircut, a piercing, go on an excursion, undertake a medical procedure and a range of things like that. Young people tell us that these things sometimes cause them to be treated differently to other people because they need to go through other layers of consent. Sometimes there's confusion. People are very conscious of doing the right thing and sometimes that means a young person in the guardianship of the state is excluded or made to feel different in those processes. There will be this ready guide that everyone will have which will give a quick reference to those things and it needs to, importantly, be known and used by carers, as well as by those who are requiring evidence of consent from the right party. You will see that being published and promoted over coming weeks.

Ms WEBB - Not sure where this fits in, but in terms of developing a handbook, does that sit alongside a registration system for carers or is that going to come under another recommendation that we haven't got to yet?

Mr JAENSCH - A carer's register is a different thing, and accreditation and child new safe standards. I think the handbook is more of a practical guide.

Mrs PETRUSMA - On it being a practical guide, how do you perceive that it will support carers to keep children safe? How do you see it will be used to help the kids?

Mr JAENSCH - In the current version that I've seen that was produced maybe three or four years ago, it includes a lot of practical tips and links to services and resources available to carers that they may not have known about, particularly those who are entering the caring sector for the first time and that can get out of date, that information. That is why the updates are necessary but we are very much seeking to get that from the carer perspective, which is why FCAT is involved in that because they have the questions or the people that they represent and advocate for have those questions. Sometimes they are quite simple things that we might overlook from this end of the service system. Therefore, it is meant to be a practical guide. Is there anything else that Claire wants to add?

Ms WEBB - Are you envisaging this to be an online portal or something like that? I'm just thinking there's probably quite a deal of information and as soon as you print something into a hard copy, it's out of date by the next week. Is this an online portal that will have the policies and procedures and the information?

Mr JAENSCH - As I understand it's previously been hard copy and online, so it can contain things like links as well.

Ms WEBB - That is the intention?

CHAIR - We might move on to 9.13. Just showing all staff have access to the latest out-of-home care practice knowledge by becoming a learning organisation.

Mr JAENSCH - Again, as a sort of an operational matter, I would ask the secretary if he has any particular highlights he wants to bring up.

Mr Bullard - As a department, we are a learning organisation having education in the title but if we put that to one side, there is a lot going on in terms of being much more explicit about our expectation of staff and then putting the supports in place. One of the things that we launched in 2023 through Services for Children and Families was a new practice approach, Feel Safe Are Safe, and this is a really practical guide that says the types of knowledge and behaviours that we need our frontline practitioners to hold and what we expect to see. That then has provided a foundation for training and professional learning to ensure that where some of that knowledge, skill or capability is missing that we can support our workforce to obtain that. That will only be built on as we move forward. If we come back to the chief practitioner, the chief practitioner will be seen as the pre-eminent expert in the agency on what we see as quality practice in terms of child safety and the support of out of home care. We'll be able to continue to build our training and professional learning capability on resources that they develop.

CHAIR - Anything else on that one?

Recommendation 9.14: Again, we have covered a fair bit this is about the appointment of a commissioner for Aboriginal children and young people. Is there anything further to add or any other questions from the -

Ms LOVELL MP - That was the Premier, wasn't it?

CHAIR - It was the Premier, sorry. Yes, there's some cross over there.

Mr JAENSCH - Very important and as I understand it, due to be commencing in 2026 at the same time as the child advocate, if not before, as part of the new commission structure.

CHAIR - If we go to 9.15, which is yours, minister, or you have a lead for us. Again, it is very lengthy and detailed. The phase three recommendation to fully implement all elements of the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Child Placement principle. I assume that is going to take some time to do. Is there anything you wish to state at this stage about the progress of that?

Mr JAENSCH - No specific updates except for particularly acknowledging the over representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the out-of-home care population. That is partly a function of the availability of - sorry, effectively meeting the requirements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child placement principle means that we need more Aboriginal carers and more Aboriginal community-controlled organisations who are in a position to provide supports for those carers and those families. There are some that are doing an excellent job and we need to be working with them. These are topics that are being advanced not only through the context of the out-of-home care strategies, but through the Closing the Gap processes as well and capacity building work that's happening with individual organisations around the state.

Ms LOVELL MP - Minister, how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are in out-of-home care at the moment?

Mr JAENSCH - I am happy to see if we have a number.

Ms LOVELL MP - As a follow on from that, how many of those children are in placements in accordance with the principles?

Mr JAENSCH - Similarly, I'll see if we can provide that advice at the table. If we can't, we'll take it on notice.

Mr BULLARD - On openings, about 12 months ago we did significant work to properly understand whether children and young people identified as Aboriginal - and we updated the record so we've got a much more forensic record. It is around 40 per cent, but that's going to give you the percentage and you probably want the number which I think Ms Lovell is trying to find.

Ms C LOVELL - Which do have. It's very close to 40 per cent; I will find that.

Mr BULLARD - But a significant over representation in out-of-home care.

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CHAIR - While that's been looked for, I might just go to Mrs Pentland at the end of the table so that she may put her question while you are seeking that information - you've got it?

Ms C LOVELL - 42 per cent.

Ms LOVELL MP - Do you have a number?

CHAIR - The number of young people who identify as Aboriginal or as Torres Strait Islander?

Ms LOVELL MP - And then also the number of children who are placed in accordance with the principles was the second part of the question.

Ms C LOVELL - The number of children in out-of-home care - let me get my daily average correct - 938.

Ms LOVELL MP - It's 42 per cent of that.

Ms C LOVELL - Is the daily average.

Ms LOVELL MP - Thank you.

Ms C LOVELL - 42 per cent of that.

Ms LOVELL MP - That was 938?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes, 938.

Ms LOVELL MP - Thank you.

Ms C LOVELL - Is the daily average for quarter 2, 2024?

Mr JAENSCH - Total number of all children in out-of-home care.

Ms C LOVELL - That's the total number of children in out-of-home care and 42 per cent of those are Aboriginal.

Ms LOVELL MP - Of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, how many of them are in placements currently in accordance with the principles?

Ms C LOVELL - I don't have that figure with me.

Ms LOVELL MP - Okay. Minister, are you happy to take that on notice?

Mr JAENSCH - If we have it.

Ms C LOVELL - I don't know that it is a number, but we can provide information about our compliance with the Aboriginal child placement principle, which is something that we report.

Mr JAENSCH - We do report against it.

Ms LOVELL - There are some indicators for that, so we can provide that.

Ms LOVELL MP - Okay.

CHAIR - Rebekah?

Mrs PENTLAND - Obviously, phase two is due in 2026 with the commissioner for Aboriginal children and young people. How urgently would you say that you're looking to recruit for that position? Would you say that you'd be looking to bring someone on way before 2026, given we've just learned that 42 per cent of young people are -

Mr JAENSCH - I think the government has brought this commitment forward.

I think you're back in 9.14 but I'm happy to go there.

Mrs PENTLAND - I am.

Mr JAENSCH - This recommendation was originally slated as a 2029 or third phase delivery, but I understand it's been brought forward to 2026 and that we're on track for that to be appointed in 2026. It's very important particularly in terms of co-design of what we do and the ability for Aboriginal people to have a hand in that at the level of commissioner as well.

Mrs PENTLAND - Yes, shouldn't that perhaps be brought forward, do you not see -

Ms WEBB - I presume it's part of establishing the new commission which we heard this morning was going to be legislated in the new year at some point. I would assume -

CHAIR - It's been delayed because of the additional consultations.

Mrs PENTLAND - Right.

CHAIR - It all sits on that. We have quite a bit of information about that.

Mr JAENSCH - The preparatory stages of that in terms of developing the role, et cetera, can advance in parallel with the legislation going through its processes. We can be ready for that.

CHAIR - If we go to 9.16, which is about the quality and risk committee -

Mr JAENSCH - Sorry, Chair, we can just update the number regarding Aboriginal children in out-of-home care placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle.

Ms C LOVELL - The Aboriginal Child Placement principle has five components: prevention, partnership, placement, participation, and connection. If we're narrowing it down and talking about placement alone of the number of children that I mentioned just earlier, 56.1 per cent of children and young people are placed in accordance with the Aboriginal placement principle.

Ms LOVELL MP - That's 56.1 per cent of those - that 40 per cent - 42 per cent.

Ms C LOVELL - Who identify as Aboriginal. Yes.

Ms LOVELL MP - Thank you.

Mr JAENSCH - Which might translate as things like placement with in-kinship care arrangements wherever possible, if there are not other Aboriginal foster-care providers, for example, available.

CHAIR - Okay. If we move on to 9.16. These are on the quality and risk committee and the requirements of the Department for Education, Children and Young People.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, 9.16, case management? Is that the one you're looking at?

CHAIR - Yes. It talks about setting a maximum limit for child safety officers. I don't want to have to read the whole thing out.

Mr JAENSCH - We have. We touched on a couple of elements of this in previous discussions and I think Ms Lovell gave a recommended caseload limit. We've also spoken about workforce matters in ensuring that we have existing positions filled. We also have spoken about care teams and the proportions of young people in out-of-home care with active care teams.

CHAIR - The reporting to the quality and risk committee then that will occur once when?

Ms WEBB - The committee exists, for a start.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Mr BULLARD - We need to set the measures and establish the -

CHAIR - You've got to set performance information to start with.

Mr BULLARD - Yes.

CHAIR - Do you have an indicative timeline for this to be completed? It is phase two, so it's not due until 2026.

Mr JAENSCH - I understand the department's committed to delivering that within the recommended time frame.

Mr BULLARD - Without making it too complicated, it does come right back to what we were talking about regarding designing different products for children in out-of-home care as well. There is - it's interesting that we've given a measure of one to 15 as a relevant caseload at the moment. The system doesn't currently delineate the attributes or experiences of those children and young people. You could have 15 very complex young people, you could have

15 young people who are in stable foster care. Part of what we want to do, in terms of designing that, is not come out with a blunt measure.

If you are a worker who is experienced in supporting stable foster-care placements, you may have more because those children are stable, they're in a home that's caring for them and what you're doing is liaising with the foster families about the particular needs, the interstate holiday, the passport, et cetera. If you have a cohort of young people who are very complex, you might have less. That's part of the design work that we want to do.

CHAIR - Trying to be child-centered.

Mr BULLARD - Very child-centred, rather than just come out with a blunt measure and say, 'Well you're in with another 14 children'.

Ms ROSOL - I have a question. Given the vacancies you've talked about across the state at the moment, what are the caseload levels like for case managers at the moment? Ideally, they would have 15. How many do they actually have?

Ms C LOVELL - The caseloads are less than 15 at the moment for workers who have children and young people directly allocated to them. What we've done in this period of staffing shortages is not overload our workers with a higher caseload than they would ordinarily have. We've made other arrangements for the children and young people who can't have the direct allocation. The caseloads are lower than what that trigger point is, but there are children and young people who don't have their own child safety officer.

Ms ROSOL - Okay, thank you. That was going to be my next question. How are they being managed in that situation? Is that their teams that we've talked about, the case management teams?

Ms C LOVELL - It's a little bit different in each region. In the north and north west they have what they refer to as 'team-managed'. They - various members of their service, their office - provide support to those children who don't have an individual child safety officer. In the south, the numbers were far greater and two of the case management teams, over the last few years, have adjusted their practice so they don't have individual allocations. A whole team supports a number of children undertaking the tasks that they need but without that individual one-to-one relationship.

Ms ROSOL - How many children at the moment are in those teams?

Ms C LOVELL - At the moment, in the north we have - are we ready for some numbers because there's quite a few numbers here, or would you like the statewide figure first? Statewide we have 457 children directly allocated to a child safety officer and we have 658 not allocated to a child safety officer.

Ms ROSOL - 650 across the state in the team management?

Ms C LOVELL - It doesn't mean that they're not receiving a service, that means they're not allocated to their own discrete child safety officer.

Ms ROSOL - This talks about reporting quarterly once the quality and risk committee is established, I'm assuming you're gathering figures on these kinds of things already about the average frequency of case manager visits and that kind of thing. What's the longest time at the moment that children are waiting between visits?

Ms C LOVELL - We don't record the longest time. We have some other measures about child visits that I can provide you when I find the right page. Sorry, I've got too many papers in front of me. Let me find the correct one. I do have it. No, it's not that.

Mr JAENSCH - If we want to ask Ms Lovell to confirm that. You have it?

Ms C LOVELL - The proportion of visits conducted within required timeframes for children on orders during 2023-24, of those allocated to a child safety officer, 45 per cent had visits within the required timeframes and for those not allocated to child safety officers, 16 per cent.

Ms WEBB - Can I pick up on the answer that was provided to Ms Rosol about the team's approach to ensure that they might not have an allocated person but have a team. We know the Commissioner for Children and Young People looked into that and reviewed that model and made a draft of recommendations. I haven't got them in front of me at the moment, is the department implementing the recommendations from the commissioner to make improvements to that system? Where are we at in making those changes?

Ms C LOVELL - Turning that around will rely on recruitment and filling those vacancies so that we can allocate children and young people back to an individual worker.

Mr BULLARD - The outcome we seek is that each child and young person has an individual worker and hence the increase in the number of child safety FTE. We are looking to fill those. That doesn't mean no teams either, does it? There's still a group of people who have responsibilities to provide supports and services to the young person.

Ms C LOVELL - Yeah, that's right. The children who are allocated to case management teams within the Child Safety Service, they have their own child safety officer, but then there are the members of that team who support them as well.

Ms ROSOL - The goal is that every child will be allocated to an individual child safety officer?

Ms C LOVELL - An individual worker, yeah. That might look different for children depending on their needs. For example, if it's a young person who has a youth worker who is their main contact point, their child safety officer might have less frequent contact with them and less direct involvement. They'd still be overseeing their case, but they might not be that go to person. We're finding that is the case at the moment with youth workers that are a recent addition to the service, they're providing a lot of individual support to our young people. In those figures, where I've said that those children and young people aren't allocated to a child safety office, that doesn't mean they're not receiving a service, some of them are receiving a fantastic service from these youth workers who are seeing them very regularly and meeting all of their needs. The child just doesn't have their own child safety officer.

CHAIR - We might move on.

Ms WEBB - I just wanted to clarify, are there seven recommendations from the Commissioner for Children and Young People's report being implemented or are we just hoping through recruitment to be able to transition away from the model full stop?

Mr BULLARD - We actively accepted all of them and we're progressing them.

Ms WEBB - Okay.

Mr BULLARD - Yeah. We certainly understood the recommendations and the concerns that were raised by the commissioner. We've discussed them with her in detail and we are working to implement them.

CHAIR - We'll move on to 9.17. Again, we've talked a little bit about some of this, this phase three recommendation about the permanent chief practitioner and their role. Is there anything you want to particularly add to that, minister?

Mr JAENSCH - The update I've been given is that the planning and design of the role has commenced, and that the next steps are development of statement of duties and the fit to the department's reviewed organisational structure. That's meant to be happening next year, so that's significantly in advance of the commission's recommended timeframes.

Mr BULLARD - It's one that's out of step, in terms of that you need that person to be doing a lot of the other work. We're moving on that earlier so that we can get the harmful sexual behaviour unit set up, and the practise approach, et cetera.

CHAIR - We'll move to 9.18, which is a phase two one. This is about the requirement to have all out-of-home-care be trauma-informed and therapeutic. It goes onto more detail there. I think we have covered a lot of this, but if you could share with us, minister, the work being done there?

Mr JAENSCH - This leans strongly into the development of models of care for a number of different settings that come under DECYP's responsibilities and the commission of inquiry's purview as well, to ensure that there is common language, values and elements embedded in those, particularly as our young people move across our services and our systems. We don't want there to be confusion. We need them to know what to expect from the care they're going to get. We need it to be all up to date and contemporary, so that we have the ability to do case management and a smooth handover and transition as young people move through our systems. Is there anything you'd like to add, Tim?

CHAIR - We're talking about a shared understanding of what this is.

Mr JAENSCH - A documented model of care is to be the underpinning set of principles for delivery of each of our services.

CHAIR - Anything to add or any questions?

Ms WEBB - Yes. It's a pretty straightforward one, I guess. Moving to that sort of model of care will cost more to deliver. Would that be a fair comment? Are we anticipating that and intending to invest in that?

Mr JAENSCH - I don't know if it's necessarily explicitly going to cost more to deliver, but it's about alignment and ensuring that we have a consistent approach across the board.

Ms WEBB - Even meeting point three of 19.8, doing a trauma assessment as part of a holistic assessment as every child enters, is more than we do now. Therefore, it will cost more to deliver on this recommendation, just from that.

CHAIR - It might cost less in the long run though.

Mr JAENSCH - I don't know. I don't know where that turns in.

Mr BULLARD - There are other streams that are attending to that as well. You're looking at a DECYP approach come up with a model of care, however there are Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) reforms that are underway, there are the paediatric clinics and assessments for children in out of home care, there is the Sure Start initiative to provide specialised services for children and young people in out of home care. There is resource that is around and coming online. What we're doing at the moment is ensuring that we are talking to those other agencies, or even within our own agency, with youth justice, to ensure that we're aligning all of that work, and that there are really clear pathways and approaches so that the young person isn't bouncing between different approaches as they come into contact with different services. I think the guardian committee had a briefing from Brett McDermott the other day around CAMHS, that looks like a very positive reform, and some support for children in out-of-home care and on orders, that will pick some of this up, absolutely.

Ms WEBB - My question was about an expectation that we will be required to invest in delivering this outcome, and I'm not raising that because I think that's wrong. I think we absolutely should be. If you look at point two under this, it's also about requiring non-government out of home care providers, whom we expect to be the providers entirely after phase two, to be doing that. That is likely to be a higher level of investment required from the department to fund that in the non-government sector. I am just clarifying that that's a shared expectation that we have.

Mr JAENSCH - It links to earlier discussions that we had about standards, training, and capability across the sector. I think there's truth in what you say. Whether it is a defined, separate item to invest in those things or if it's distributed across a range of other -

Ms WEBB - I wasn't speaking of it as a defined item, just that to deliver that in a holistic sense. If we're expecting NGOs to do that, we'll have to fund them to do it.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

CHAIR - We might move on then.

Ms WEBB - Seems straightforward, but let's refer back to this conversation down the track, shall we?

CHAIR - Well, Budget.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

CHAIR - 9.19, phase two links to recommendation 20.2, 'Developing a professional conduct policy'.

Mr JAENSCH - My advice is that the department has completed the development of a draft conduct and behaviour policy and a draft general conduct standards for all workers, and has commenced drafting an additional set of conduct standards for workers in child safety and out-of-home care settings.

Consultation with subject-matter experts has commenced and I understand that this is on track to be delivered by the commission's suggested reform time frame.

CHAIR - And that will be published?

Mr JAENSCH - I expect so. That would be publicly available, yes.

CHAIR - Any other questions on that? If I go to 9.20, which is an extensive recommendation about establishing and maintaining a care register for all types of carers in the out-of-home care setting and a few other requirements there, if we could update on where that's at. Noting it is a phase three as well.

Mr JAENSCH - It is and it requires legislative change, I understand, to establish it formally. That will be part of the review of the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act*, which will be proceeding in stages as well.

Scoping for the carer register is underway, looking at the different types of care arrangements and services that are provided across the sector for children and young people across government and non-government providers. Best practice approaches and learning from other jurisdictions are being considered in developing both the accreditation framework and the carers register. There is liaison underway with other jurisdictions to understand what their systems and processes are. That has the dual benefit of learning from their work and investment and being up to date with that, and also, if there is some interoperability or consistency nationally, it goes to the mobility of the carer workforce and the ability for us to refer with confidence across jurisdictions where we've got families and young people who are mobile.

CHAIR - Is it DECYP's responsibility to keep the register current? Whose responsibility is that?

Mr BULLARD - I think that will be dictated by design, which is where we are now. It's got to live somewhere, doesn't it?

CHAIR - It needs to be kept up to date.

Mr BULLARD - People are going to have to be registered on it and it's going to have to be kept up to date. Where that lives will need to be looked at moving forward.

Ms WHITE - I touched on this earlier, the fact that we don't have paid foster carers in most instances in the state. Obviously, these are a lot of requirements for people to meet. I'm in agreement with the necessity to do that, but there is a cost associated, there is a time element

associated with doing, particularly, some of the education and the training. How will people be supported to make sure they are compliant? Especially noting that the age of some kinship carers might make it difficult for them to do online courses, for instance. How will the department work with them to make sure they're not disadvantaged?

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. No, you're right. There are supports for foster carers and other out-of-home care workers now. There are reviews, as we discussed earlier in this session, underway now to determine what's needed, what's adequate, and how it should be effectively resourced as well. That will continue as we adopt the changes that have been proposed through these recommendations.

Ms WHITE - In the work you do about that, who do you consult with? Who are the peak groups that you talk with?

Mr JAENSCH - I'll Leave that to Ms Lovell.

Ms C LOVELL - Designing the out-of-home care system. Yes, one of the peak groups will be the newly expanded Centre for Excellence and the Foster and Kinship Carers Association of Tasmania (FKAT).

Ms WEBB - Just for clarity, this recommendation is a phase three, so it is not expected to have this register in place and up and running until potentially 2029. By that stage we know, because it is a phase two deliverable, we are looking to actually transition the carers to a non-government sector. Presumably, what we are talking about here is going to have to be facilitated through funding agreements with the non-government providers who will be then responsible for those carers.

I am clarifying that because the question earlier about where this sits and who is responsible for maintaining the register. Because the department will have funding agreements with NGOs who are delivering the services to the carers and supporting the carers. It will need to be, presumably, the department that holds the register and works with the funded providers to maintain the register. Is that a fair assumption to make? That would be the model?

Mr BULLARD - I think we need to look at who holds the register. I am not going to make any assumption. I am not saying we wouldn't, but we know there are a number of registers. You register with the teacher registration board, you register with RWVP, you can be registered with [inaudible 4.01.35 p.m.] One of the things that we'll want to look at is that underlying principle about if you have one or more of those other registrations, what addition does this give you and where would it sit? If there is experience that we can gain from other jurisdictions about how they have managed it, we will be using that.

Mr JAENSCH - It should be noted as well that the Tasmanian government committed some years ago to the creation of a carers register as part of the child and youth safe organisation framework and outcomes from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, so this is not a new concept.

Ms WEBB - No, it is not.

Mr JAENSCH - It has been reflected again and it needs to also be viewed through the lens of how our new commission structure evolves and what some of the separations of roles are that emerge from that as well.

I think the expectation is that the registration applies to the individual carer rather than to say NGO managers of a group of clients under that, so it would come down to the individual regardless of whether they were working under a government- or NGO-managed structure.

Ms WEBB - Given that this has been in the mix for quite a while, we have already invested significantly into this space across that time, theoretically to develop pretty much this very thing. What has been the barrier to it coming to fruition already, before having to be a recommendation here?

Mr JAENSCH - One of the things that we are faced with is that there are waves of recommendations and reviews that we adopt components of, then they are doubled-down on by the next one, and we have to ensure alignment of what we have got with what the next one has recommended as well.

Ms WEBB - We have never had something like this actually come to fruition, have we? Have we ever had a system of registration for carers that even looked like an element of this?

Mr JAENSCH - I am not the expert on the history. What I know about is what we have committed to deliver here.

CHAIR - Registration register could be different things too.

Mr JAENSCH - Do you want to speak to that at all?

CHAIR - Because we used registration at one point then we're using the word register-

Ms WEBB - Okay well in terms of a register, my understanding is we have not had a register in this sort of idea even at a smaller scale than this, at any point.

Ms C LOVELL - No. At the moment the system doesn't include registration, it includes approval. All approved carers, we hold all their records in DECYP in our child-protection information system that was referred to earlier. That could be considered a register, but it is bringing in all of these components about the expectations of carers that will actually create a process of formal registration with some independent oversight and increased visibility.

CHAIR - Did you have something Tim? We might move on. We're up to 9.21, to improve the placement and stability and oversight of the care of children by third party guardians.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. Yes.

CHAIR - Again a phase three.

Mr JAENSCH - It is, and I think it has links back to some of the things we've discussed earlier as well about assessing the need and the range of different carer placement types and what they require in the way of supports and resourcing as well. Maybe Tim or Claire could speak to that.

Mr BULLARD - It fits in with the work that we're also doing around permanence and stability. Again, it's where can we find a permanent or stable placement for a young person, and often kinship care is the place for that. As you say it's off in the future to be delivered, but we are thinking about it now in terms of those care types and where is the most appropriate placement for you.

CHAIR - We'll move to 9.22, which is the out-of-home care processes, including assessments, placements and care planning. We have covered a fair bit of this. I'm not sure if there's anything else you want to add in relation to this one? It does talk about children with diverse needs in this one particularly.

Mr JAENSCH - It does, and it also dips into the area that we've discussed about young people's voice and engagement in the decisions made about their care. I think we've covered a fair bit of this territory but if there are any questions I'd be happy to take them.

CHAIR - When you're surveying young people, I expect there are controls to ensure that you get the voice of children with disability, for example, children with mental illness and children from the LGBTIQ+ community. It's controlled to the point that you make sure you hear a variety of voices?

Mr BULLARD - That will be the intent. I think that one thing that has strengthened in terms of coming together as an agency is some of the experience from, for example, our support schools about how you would best engage with young people who have a disability, and the ways that you can communicate and get their views involved in decisions that impact them. It's a work underway. I think if you put that child-centric, children are truly engaged. Go back to the engagement and empowerment strategy - children are truly engaged in decisions that affect them. This will naturally come to the fore because there will be elements of them as individuals that need to be attended to.

CHAIR - There have been clearly some failures. Otherwise, it wouldn't be a recommendation of the commission of inquiry.

Mr BULLARD - Exactly.

CHAIR - Yes. I'll go to 9.23. This is for children in care to have access to a range of health and other services.

Mr JAENSCH - I'm advised that every child entering out-of-home care receives holistic assessment through out-of-home care paediatric clinics that are being expanded across the community. We're calling them kids' care clinics. They include behavioural health screening and making necessary referrals and recommendations regarding appropriate care and support for those children. We can unpack that a little bit more.

I understand that we've now recruited disability liaison officers in all regions to help young people access the assessments and assistance they need to manage issues related to their disability. The Sure Start inter-agency escalation process has been referred to by the secretary previously. I understand this is one that we're also intending to bring significantly forward from where the Commission was recommending.

Ms WEBB - It's phase two, 2026. I mean, it would be delightful if it could be implemented by 2026 because I think we're far short of this right now, minister. You mentioned the kids' care clinic. That's only in the south of the state, as is my understanding. The assessments that you said every child receives who comes into the system - can you just clarify that that was correct? Perhaps you'd like to correct the record that that's in the south.

Mr JAENSCH - I'm working from advice that I've been given, but those who know more about it can bring more information to the table.

Ms C LOVELL - It might be a terminology issue, I think. All children in out-of-home care for many years have been receiving services through the paediatric out-of-home care clinics. Those clinics are being expanded or adjusted to become kids' care clinics throughout the community, so children do receive those health assessments upon entering care and then at regular intervals through the period that they are in care.

Ms WEBB - Every child at regular intervals, and how regularly?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes, so every child has regular health assessments at - I am not sure what the interval is, but I believe that it is annually unless it is required more often, dependent on their need.

Ms WEBB - Do you collect data on that?

Ms C LOVELL - I believe so, yes.

Ms WEBB - Wow. Speaking to people who are carers in the system, that is wildly at odds with what is described to me - people at the table can speak up if they have personal experience to speak to - wildly at odds from what the reality is in terms of what the children they are caring for are receiving in terms of a health assessment. How would it be, if you are collecting data that tells you that every child in our out-of-home care system receives an annual check through a paediatric care clinic - if that is the data that we have and if people in the system felt that that was wildly incorrect -

Mr JAENSCH - I said initial, I think.

Ms WEBB - No, subsequent to you saying that, minister, I have just heard that theoretically, or according to data, we are getting annual checks through that system.

Ms C LOVELL - Every child certainly has that initial check, and then their referrals are made to attend to the identified needs there. It may be that only children who have ongoing needs for a paediatrician have those checks scheduled at the regular intervals. I might have to come back to you on that, but we do have data that we work with the Department of Health on those services. We also have liaison officers in each region that facilitate access to the paediatric clinics at regular intervals for the children in out-of-home care.

Ms WEBB - Is there a mechanism whereby the carers in the system are asked to identify unmet need in these areas in terms of the health needs of the children they are caring for, and in that, I would also include the disability care needs of the children they are caring for - are they invited to or able to provide information about the unmet need there so that you would have a picture of what that was?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes, that is what care teams do. They look at the needs of children and young people across all domains, health being one of those domains. Any unmet needs and health goals would be determined there through that group and arrangements put in place to respond to that need or achieve that goal.

Ms WEBB - Would we know then, right now, for example, how many children in the system have a need to be assessed, say, for the NDIS, and they haven't yet had that been facilitated, and their carers would have identified that we need this to be done? Would we know what that number was, what that figure was, for example, through that system of collecting those needs through the care teams?

Ms C LOVELL - No, I don't think that we would have data on that without reviewing individual matters. We do have the new disability liaison officers at the moment though, who are supporting care teams to attend to that and make sure that children can access the NDIS or can access the assessments required to become NDIS participants, and then where they do have plans to support them to be able to make the most of the plan that they have to fully utilise it.

Ms WEBB - Does the initial assessment as they come in include assessment relating to whether they need to be referred to the NDIS?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes, it does identify disability needs; it does identify trauma needs and health needs.

Ms WEBB - If that was identified at the initial intake assessment of health, do we know for sure that there is follow-up to assist in accessing NDIS for the carers to be able to make that happen?

Ms C LOVELL - I believe there has been a gap there, and that that is why we have brought these disability liaisons on board to help navigate that and make sure that there are not delays and obstacles preventing children from accessing NDIS.

Ms ROSOL - I find this all very interesting. I know this Committee is not about my personal experience, but some of what you are saying does not match my personal experience, so I do have some questions. When did the initial assessments for all children coming into care commence? Has that been a recent thing? Was there a start date for that?

Ms C LOVELL - No, this goes back many years. The paediatric out-of-home care clinics have been in place for a long time.

Ms ROSOL - Do you have statistics on the number of children who are assessed in that? Because that doesn't match my experience, which goes back many years now, which is why I was curious about when there might be a start date.

Ms C LOVELL - I don't have that at the table with me today. We do collect some data on that. We work with the Department of Health in regard to reporting to do with kids care clinics and access to the paediatric out-of-home care clinics.

Ms ROSOL - How do you inform carers about the paediatric care clinics? This is something fairly recent that I've found out about and I've been a carer for over a decade now.

How is that information passed on to carers? How do they know where they can go to get medical care for the children in their care?

Ms C LOVELL - The child safety service facilitate access to those clinics, so they would be liaising with the carer, because it's the carer that takes the child to the clinics in nearly every circumstance. Care teams would be the best way of a carer knowing what support is available to meet the child's individual health needs.

Ms WEBB - Do the care team have to meet for that to be identified.

Ms C LOVELL - Either meet or be networked. Otherwise, the child safety officer would provide that information. We do have the liaison roles that specialise in that who would also be providing advice.

Mr JAENSCH - That would also be information included in the carers handbook, wouldn't it?

Ms C LOVELL - And provided by staff in out-of-home care.

Ms WEBB - It's astonishing what a mismatch this discussion is to what I hear directly from people involved in the sector. That is a piece of feedback I'm putting to you.

Mr JAENSCH - I'm happy for you to refer those cases to us so that we can track through and see where there's been a disconnect, if there is one.

Ms WEBB - I would hope there would be ways for people to be able to raise it.

Mr BULLARD - Just a point of clarification, there are kids' care clinics across the state now.

Ms WEBB - There are, as from when?

Mr BULLARD - I haven't got that date, but that's the advice that we've got through.

Ms WEBB - That operate fully like the southern one has for some time?

Mr BULLARD - The advice that I've got is that there are kids care clinics now available across the state.

CHAIR - Can we move on?

Mrs PENTLAND - What would the follow-up be for a child who has a holistic assessment and does not have anything that's identified as far as a need? What would be the follow-up for that child if there's nothing that's needed as a measure whilst they're in care to ensure there's no trauma that's happened whilst they're in care. Is there a follow-up assessment that happens for people that don't need it at all?

Ms C LOVELL - No, there is no formal follow-up that's triggered at a point in time. The follow-up would occur as observed. If the carer identified that there was an issue, that they're observing an issue and that there was a service needed, that is what would trigger a referral.

Mr JAENSCH - Or any care team member.

Ms C LOVELL - Or any other care team member, yes.

Mrs PENTLAND - If a child is in care for three years and they've had the holistic assessment done, you wouldn't have a follow-up for that child in that three years' time if they didn't identify a need at that first assessment?

Ms C LOVELL - Not generally, no.

Ms LOVELL - Can I clarify? I thought you said earlier that all children care did get an annual health check.

Ms C LOVELL - Only if they have an identified need.

Mr JAENSCH - I advised each child entering the out-of-home care received holistic assessment and then Ms Lovell made a reference.

Ms WEBB - We did say annual checks and then we clarified that to say perhaps only in instances when there had been a health need identified for follow-up.

Mrs PENTLAND - It does say in 9.23 that there is an annual check only when there is an identified need, so obviously that becomes -

Ms LOVELL - No, it says 'or more', 'or more often where there is an identified need'.

Ms WEBB - This is what we're aiming to get to, the 9.23. We're not there yet. Be great if we are there by 2026. I think people in the sector would be delighted.

Mrs PENTLAND - Is that the goal, that you want to do annual checks or?

CHAIR - That's what the recommendation says. Can we move on? We are a little bit bogged down?

Ms WEBB - It's an interesting one, isn't it? Part of the reason to dig into it is if the picture that the department has now about the support and health care that is there and available is at odds with what is being experienced in the sector, then even if we get to a point where the department ticks off that, 'Yes, we have done this', how can we have confidence that that will be the reality that is being experienced out there amongst the carers?

Mr JAENSCH - Point made, but if there are cases that you can direct us to of where that appears not to be the case, it will help us to understand where there may have been a deficiency. Overarching that, in the context of this discussion, the government is committed to delivering the recommendation in full, as it was presented by the commission. That is the outcome that we have committed to and we will deliver it. How far that is from what is being delivered right now is a matter for the department to work through and to ensure that we are meeting the recommendations.

Ms WEBB - These are not issues that the department has ever heard from the representative organisations for carers in the sector?

Mr JAENSCH - Is that a question?

Ms WEBB - Yes. Have you not had these issues raised about the adequacy of health support that is available or about the adequacy of the assessments available? Has that never been raised by the organisations that represent carers?

Mr JAENSCH - I do not know if that is a question that the department would be able to answer definitively - 'Has there never been anything?' - I am sure that in our conversations with carers over the years, there would be a range of matters identified from time to time. I do not know if any carer themselves has specifically asked for the things that the commission has recommended, but they are what we have committed to delivering.

Mrs PENTLAND - Maybe it needs to be clearer how it could be measurable then, because clearly there is a breakdown in it being measurable then for each child if you do not know if it is happening or not or if people have other experiences. How could that perhaps be measurable where people would know that is actually the case?

Mr JAENSCH - Again, that is where the handbook, the organisations, the child safety officers and the liaisons being able to provide that follow-up like the new disability liaison officers are important elements of that.

CHAIR - We will move to 9.25. This is about improving placement stability and reduce the risk of sexual abuse of children in care.

Mr JAENSCH - On a couple of occasions today, the secretary has referred to the Care to Thrive pilot, which has been trialling a new, more intensive or professionalised foster care model. As we discussed previously, the aim of this is to prevent there being young people rattling around in the system with a succession of failed placements where they've got more challenging behaviours.

We have also touched on, in the context of guardianship, the permanency and stability policy, which aims to ensure that we do not treat out-of-home care as a holding place for young people, where our aim is to get them into a permanent, loving home arrangement, whether that is through reunification with their natural family or with kin or with other carers who can offer a forever placement for them. There are some aspects of this we have touched on. I am happy for us to field any further questions in this area.

CHAIR - We will move on to 9.26. This is about children being involved in the development of their own care plans and other matters.

Mr JAENSCH - We have had various conversations about care plans. We have talked about the Youth Voice survey and the Sure Start escalation process. We are happy to take any further questions.

Ms WHITE - I just have one, Chair. There was a discussion over a period of years about raising the age to 21 for children in out-of-home care. Would the care plans developed in this

instance be for children up to the age of 21 or to the age of 18, or would it depend on the circumstance?

Mr JAENSCH - I think Claire may be best to answer that, though there are supports provided for young people up to 21 if that is what they need - if they are not ready to live independently from a placement. There are supports for their carers as well to be able to do that. In terms of the planning though, does it extend beyond 18?

Ms C LOVELL - The final care plan that a young person will have is intended to facilitate their transition into adulthood. It won't stop at 18. They will identify what their future needs are and the planning that occurs there that's supported by our transition to independence. Coordinators put supports in place so that they can be stable in their early adulthood.

Ms WHITE - Are there very many young people in Tasmania who are utilising the option to stay until 21?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes, there are. It has been almost five years since that was implemented.

Ms WEBB - Home Stretch.

Ms C LOVELL - Yes, based on the Home Stretch. Tasmania was the first jurisdiction to extend it to 21, and yes, many children and young people have benefited from that and have remained in care.

Ms WHITE - What percentage of young people would opt for that, do you think? Do you have information about that?

Ms C LOVELL - The majority of children who age out of care, are in foster care or kinship care. They are in family-based care and they stay in their care arrangement. The thing that has changed is that their carer continues to receive that payment to support them in the same way that they were prior to age 18 so that there is no change, no disruption.

Ms WHITE - The majority of young people now in out-of-home care would be supported until the age of 21? Would you say that is a fair assessment?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes. My assessment is that foster and kinship carers do not turn children and young people out at age 18. Like most parents in the community, they will support them until they are ready to become fully independent.

Ms WHITE - That is formally recognised by the department, and the provision of support continues in the majority of cases for young people until the age of 21 now?

Ms C LOVELL - That's right.

Ms WHITE - Good. Thank you.

CHAIR - Before we go to 9.27, I just realised we have a pretty long session. Maybe we should have a short five-minute break to allow people to fill up their water and do the other thing that you might need to do.

The Committee suspended from 4.27 p.m. to 4.34 p.m.

CHAIR - Thanks, minister. I appreciate the little break, I'm sure everyone did too.

To 9.27, in its role of statutory guardian, there is a range of requirements here that do refer to some of the other recommendations as well in terms of a child's appearance in court. It's a phase three, so there may not be much you can report at this stage.

Mr JAENSCH - There's a couple of aspects here I might just draw out. The advice I have is that child safety staff do attend court when a child or young person in out-of-home care is required to appear in the Magistrates Court youth justice division. There are also reforms being made to ensure that the child safety and youth justice components of the department are working together on consistent care team approaches for young people who are moving across our different systems. That is very much the ethos of that consistent underlying model of care and the DECYP joined-up approach.

The other thing that I wanted to reference in this one is in regard to the reform timeframes. This is one where we've had to navigate carefully. The recommendation itself refers to the new specialist children's division of the Magistrates Court, which, in itself, is a phase three delivery but is embedded in this one, which has a phase two delivery. As I understand it, apart from that section, substantially we've committed to the delivery of the components of it but -

CHAIR - We need that to happen too.

Mr JAENSCH - We need to acknowledge that there is a bit of an accounting issue there with the timeframes for that element.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Minister, in regard to that, have there already been improvements for children on orders who become involved in the youth justice system?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes, that is as I understand it. There is a more joined-up case of care team approach working across the two services, also an intensive case management service that's provided both for children on orders and those who are not on orders, but don't have an effective guardian in their life.

Mrs PETRUSMA - That's current? That's what's happening now?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. I might ask the department to comment further on those matters.

Ms C LOVELL - That's right. That's the intensive case management team for children and young people both on orders and who are not on orders but have very complex needs and where the child safety service being involved alongside other services will help to meet those needs.

Mr JAENSCH - That will include things like transition and exit planning and that notion of through-care emerging there. There are teams of people and case management that extends across the services but also their pre-entry, their time in detention and where they go to next so it's not a cold exit, if you like, from the service.

Mrs PETRUSMA - What is your expectation? What sort of improvement do you see that that, holistically, is going to lead to? More kids exiting and not coming back in?

Mr JAENSCH - The power of knowing the young person's story, their history, the trauma in their life, the care they've experienced or the needs they've got and ensuring that we can deal with them consistently throughout. Then, as we progress through these reforms, ultimately and potentially sentencing options that include phases of stepdown back into community with supports intact around those young people so they've got a chance of making that transition successfully. A bit in the same way as we were talking about with young people leaving out-of-home care. For different young people, their capabilities to fend for themselves or find their own way after a period in detention will vary greatly and a whole therapeutic approach is designed to wrap around them and ensure it is successful at each stage.

Ms WEBB - Would it be fair to say that we wouldn't expect to see a young person in the youth justice system who is also under orders who ends up on remand in Ashley for the reason of not having somewhere else to be cared for and at home?

Mr JAENSCH - I think you could reasonably expect that, but the individual cases and the circumstances of the young people, that sometimes what happens when their placements break down might mean that that's very difficult to achieve and very individual. Sometimes the young people who are under the guardianship of the state, on orders, fail to settle in any placement and who 'self-select' - is the term that's used inside the -

Ms WEBB - I don't like that term, my goodness me.

Mr JAENSCH - I don't like it either, but, put it this way, 'run away' from that placement or choose their own where they're going to stay, and sometimes that's destabilising for them and they end up getting into trouble. They remain the responsibility of the state as guardian and there are people who track them and provide supports to them wherever they can.

Ms WEBB - I'm talking about kids who are on remand, and there might be valid reasons that kids on remand might be put into detention for the safety of the community. I'm not speaking about those instances, but we also know kids sometimes on remand are put into Ashley because it's deemed that there's nowhere suitable for them to be housed and cared for.

Mr JAENSCH - And this is where the intensive case management approach comes in.

Ms WEBB - My question was about, if it's the state's responsibility to have somewhere safe and appropriate for that child to be housed and cared for and they are put on remand instead into Ashley, the state has obviously failed to provide that place for them and has put them into detention instead. Are there current instances of that that we can point to?

Mr JAENSCH - I don't know, and I don't know if we would be unpacking the detail of individual cases here. I can imagine, though, from the sort of case histories that I've been exposed to in my role, that if we have young people exhibiting violent and dangerous behaviour -

Ms WEBB - Except I'm not speaking about those young people.

Mr JAENSCH - and that there are carers or placements or providers of accommodation who aren't prepared to accept the risk of being their carer, and those young people are a risk to themselves or others, I can imagine there being a decision of an after-hours JP to have them held in Ashley while a suitable alternative is found or until their matters are dealt with by the courts. This is again where some of our intensive case management approaches, working with them to find a combination of accommodation and supports and supervision and supports for whoever it is that's providing care for them, comes to the fore.

Ms WEBB - The situation, though, if that young person is on orders, had to and was in the situation of appearing before a JP or anybody who is going to be making decisions about where they're placed. I'm talking about kids who have been placed on remand. Generally, that's done through a court, I think. We've got somebody - I think from what you described earlier - somebody from the department is there as part of that process, and are there times that we have to say, 'Yes, as a state, we're responsible for this young person'. You are putting them on remand. We can't house them anywhere. You'll have to put them into Ashley?

Mr JAENSCH - Do you want to go through some steps, Ms Lovell?

Ms C LOVELL - For the majority of children in out-of-home care, they do have an approved placement. It's seldom that we don't have a placement for a child. When that happens, it's for a short period of time and, in nearly every case, it's because the young person's behaviour is so violent that it places the carers and any other children and young people in that care environment at risk. Often, the incident which has catalysed a young person being before a court, that situation has occurred.

It can be very challenging in some of those circumstances to be able to produce an alternative placement immediately, because of the risk that young person is posing to the community. The magistrate will make a decision to place them on remand, not so much because they're without a home but because they are so escalated at that time that there is no place where they could safely live where they're not going to be a risk to themselves or others.

Ms WEBB - We're not providing them with a place that's safe to live.

Ms C LOVELL - What can become challenging is when they are on remand and we do need to establish a care arrangement for them, and that's what this intensive case management team has been put together to do - has been established to do. We don't want to say that there is nothing in the system. We actually need to actively create something in the system that's bespoke and meets their individual needs.

Ms WEBB - Is that a new development in the intensive case management team and, if so, when was that established?

Ms C LOVELL - Yes, that was established last year. We appointed a youth practice manager in DECYP to coordinate that process.

Mr BULLARD - There was a recognition that young people exiting Ashley were being expected to turn up in the other services and that was the education services, as well as the child safety services, and that was not happening. Therefore, there was bounce back into Ashley. This was the expectation of me as the guardian, is that every young person has

a well-developed plan about where they are going to live, where they are going to access some kind of learning, and what other supports they are going to have.

The other thing we have done there is that we have allowed that team to be quite creative in the way that they come up with those pathways. For example, I know that we have worked with kin and looked at what supports they would need to be able to support the young person to live with them rather than just say, 'We would not pay for that and you are not on this and you,' et cetera. That now sits as an expectation that the plan is in place well before you are exiting.

Are you going to get stability in every one of those instances? No, but I think we are showing that we have a better chance.

Ms WEBB - Does it work out into the community services space as well, knowing that those services in that space are going to be encountering these kids and providing support to them often, too? The CYP or the TIS? In a formal sense or is it just a case-by-case?

Mr BULLARD - They are part of the plan.

Ms C LOVELL - Yes, so where they do have a worker from TIS, CYP or JCP youth, they are involved in that care team and support the strategies that are needed for the young person to exit detention and remain out of detention.

CHAIR - Thank you, onto 9.28. This is about the department's responsibility to establish a harmful sexual behaviour support unit across the department.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, the update I have is that the department has commenced working with relevant business units, including student support in the department itself, the Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People, services for children and families, out of home care and youth justice to commence creation of the harmful sexual behaviours support unit within the department, as recommended by the commission.

I understand that this is one area where the department is proposing an earlier achievement of the recommendation than the commission recommended, with a 2026 delivery.

Ms LOVELL MP - What is the timeline for that, if it is earlier than 2026?

Mr JAENSCH - No, it was the commission's suggested timeframe, 2029. The department has advised that it is looking forward to phase two.

Ms LOVELL MP - Okay, thank you.

Mr BULLARD - We have really solid bones for the unit. Over the past two or more years, we have built the capacity in our student support service, the student supports in the education side of the business, to have a specific expertise around harmful sexual behaviours and then run, for example, through our nursing service, psychs and social workers, our specific training and professional learning.

That is well underway; the next step is how you bring some of that resource and expertise centrally so that it is available and accessible by all of the agency. This one is also contingent

on establishing the chief practitioner because in the recommendations they would be reporting to the chief practitioner.

CHAIR - 9.29 is a bit similar to that, it requires the chief practitioner's involvement in developing a framework to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation of children in care. So, if you would like to add anything further on that one, minister, it is phase three as well.

Mr JAENSCH - Is there anything else you have to add?

Mr BULLARD - No.

Mr JAENSCH - Do the rest have questions?

CHAIR - No, and if that is the case, we will move then to 9.31. This is for developing and maintaining a complaint policy and procedures for child safety services and out of home care. Phase two recommendation requires the chief practitioner, I'm asking if there's any specific timeline.

Mr JAENSCH - I understand that the complaints management oversight unit has been established and recruited to as of March this year, and the recommendation is on track for delivery as recommended by the commission. Is there anything you would like to add?

Mr BULLARD - The unit itself is well advanced and phase one of their work is setting up the complaints management procedures and obviously it's also responsible for reportable conduct in the agency. It is intersected with the Independent Regulator which has been established and is now in operation, which is really positive. I think Ms Morgan-Wicks may have previously referred to the fact that complaints management is also a whole of government theme. We will want to look at how we either harmonise the complaints management arrangements across government or even look at some kind of centralised model so that members of the public who want to make a complaint aren't having to deal in different manifestations depending on which agency they're intersecting with.

CHAIR - That is to be determined as to what that decision is.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Minister, will this all lead to greater transparency and accountability for the department? Do you see that it will improve transparency?

Mr JAENSCH - I believe it is a strong theme emerging from the commission of inquiry and also some of the requirements of the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act* that has come through. They have a common theme of multiple avenues for people to raise concerns that they don't involve having to go through the people you've got concerns about, for example, and that was a strong theme in some of the commission of inquiry reporting regarding Ashley and out-of-home care as well. Transparency as well, but also a culture and an expectation that people's rights to raise concerns about their care and well-being are upheld.

Mrs PETRUSMA - Have there been any visible improvements or outcomes that you can point to?

Mr BULLARD - It's only been in existence for a number of months, but I have been closely involved and I think they've done an amazing job to get established and put in place

some parameters. They don't want to be dealing with every single dinner or light lunch served at school last Tuesday, there is an escalation process that sits in there. One of the things that struck me is that the unit centred themselves as a learning unit as a place where people can come and make criticism of the way that policies and procedures haven't been met. That feeds back into an improvement cycle about our policies and procedures or approaches. It's also provided an avenue for some very - I know it's dealt with one incredibly complex matter because you've got dedicated experienced officers who are working in it being able to, with some rigour, go and look at what didn't work.

CHAIR - We will go to 9.32, I'll have a similar response. This is again dependent on some other things happening, it requires the development of a new policy to guide responses to concerns.

Mr JAENSCH - There are a series of existing safeguarding frameworks and policies and procedures that have been developed over recent years. The well-being in care procedure that ensures any concerns relating to safety and well-being of children in care are responded to appropriately, which has been implemented with information sessions for all staff. It is being updated, I understand, in consultation with the Office of the Independent Regulator, a new creation as part of the roll out of the Child New Safe Organisations framework, which means the procedure will be further strengthened to incorporate recommendations arising from this commission of inquiry - including, oversight by the child-related incident management directorate and the chief practitioner. I think that is probably a feature of this recommendation's time line - that it links to the chief practitioner, as proposed.

Mr BULLARD - Again, it's a phasing issue that it's got to report through to the chief practitioner and it has to go to the risk committee.

Ms WHITE - They have to exist first.

Mr BULLARD - Yes, they have to exist first. Certainly, there is a wellbeing and care policy that has been in place since 2023, but the architecture that sits around that doesn't accord with this recommendation, hence the motive for a different time frame.

CHAIR - No other questions? We'll go to 9.34, it is the independent community visitor scheme for children in out-of-home care, youth detention and other residential youth-justice facilities. Another phase 3 one.

Mr JAENSCH - The update is that the required legislative reforms enabling the implementation of a community visitor scheme are being developed and progressed in conjunction with the establishment of the new commission for children and young people and the new independent child advocate. Work on those two areas is a DPAC delivery so that it is working across the different departments to deliver this one.

Ms WHITE - I'm keen to understand whether these positions will be employed and are they to report to the commissioner for children or to DPAC, or is there another arrangement?

Mr BULLARD - They're still in design. How they will operate needs to be designed. My understanding is that they will report into the commission for children and be part of that child advocate stream, so the deputy commissioner around the child advocate in the new commission.

Ms WHITE - Would that be the same for the legally trained child advocacy officers, who are also referenced in this recommendation?

Mr BULLARD - My understanding is that the intent of the commission was to set up the feedback loop that you would be getting from children and young people in out-of-home care, and to set it at arm's length from the agency that was commissioning that service. So, yes.

Ms WHITE - You might not know the answer to this yet, but it might be that those contracted services, if there is a child advocacy officer who is legally trained, who might then represent that child's needs because they might have a grievance with the government, for instance.

Mr BULLARD - Absolutely. The child advocate, although sitting within the agency, has taken that role on. That's not foreign. It obviously is not best practice governance because that person is in the agency, but one of the roles that Sonya Pringle-Jones has played is being an advocate where a child believes that things haven't gone according to plan - being an advocate for that child.

Ms WHITE - When do you think we might have some more details about the design of this particular recommendation? I know that's not expected to be delivered until phase 3.

Mr JAENSCH - The next steps will shine a fair bit of light on it because they involve consultation with service providers in the out-of-home care and youth justice sectors, carers themselves, Aboriginal organisations, importantly, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, also victim/survivors and young people in out-of-home care themselves who can speak to the benefits they want. Also though - this has come up previously, some years ago there was discussion about visitor schemes and there were concerns raised at that time about stability for young people, how many adults turning up in their lives with expectations to interact with them, feeling safe about them as well. They are all important factors that we'll have to take into account. As we work through these conversations with people who are involved, potentially as visitors, as those other sets of eyes, questions about how they are selected or appointed or qualified to - not qualification in terms of training, but what is suitable and safe for everyone and how that rolls out - we'll get a better picture as we work through those consultations.

Ms WEBB - For the record, we did have a community visitor scheme back in time. We didn't just talk about it; we had it. It was abolished and we talked about bringing it back at various times. I think it was under the children's commissioner about four commissioners ago that that scheme was in place for a while. The recommendation to the government here is to introduce the legislation that provides for the establishment of the scheme, which you've said is coming along in train with the legislation to establish the new commission.

At that point, though, does the design of the scheme and the responsibility for the scheme then sit with the new children's commission? I'm trying to understand actually where the key design work - and the thinking and the consulting and the development of that - where that sits. The way I read the recommendation and had imagined it would sit would be government legislates the new commission into existence, provides the legislative basis for a community visitor scheme, and then, because the recommendation says it's going to be administered by the

new commission, the new commission with its expertise and within its structures and expert knowledge designs the scheme and puts it in place. Is that not the way it would work?

Mr JAENSCH - I think that's the broad overview, but as with all these things, they're not operating in isolation. Work can commence to assist them with that establishment. Otherwise, it all starts later down the track.

Ms WEBB - Then on the other side of that coin, though, is if the government legislates the new commission, legislates a basis for a community visitor scheme, has already done consultation and some design work for it, hands that over to the new commission when it exists and the new commission and the commissioners who are going to be in that - because there's going to be a variety of them now - they turn around and say, 'Well, actually, that's not the way we see it should happen. We're going to redesign it.' That could also occur if you went too far down the design path.

Mr JAENSCH - Exactly. It ends up being a bit of a loop. You have to do consultation to create the enabling legislation to make the basic provisions in the first place.

Ms WEBB - So that's what the consultation is on.

Mr JAENSCH - You have to be able to have some picture of what it is that you are seeking to enable to start that off.

Ms WEBB - So just for clarity, the consultation that's occurring at these early stages is more to do with the enabling legislation for the community visitor scheme, not necessarily the full design of what will come.

Mr JAENSCH - It needs to have some purpose to it to be able to be an adequate legislative basis.

Ms WEBB - Sure.

Mr JAENSCH - It's an inexact science, but the legislation should be enabling rather than prescriptive, I suppose is the angle.

Mr BULLARD - I understand, minister, that the draft legislation as it stands provides the child advocate with the power to establish the scheme. So, I think you probably have a win-win.

Ms WEBB - Yes.

Mr BULLARD - So you're providing the framework for the scheme to be established, but you're -

Ms WEBB - Yes, it's just enabling legislation.

Mr BULLARD - Giving it to the statutory officer that sits in the commission -

Ms WEBB - To develop. Yes, that's what I believed to be the case. Thank you.

CHAIR - We might move on. 9.35. That's about legislative reform. I think we probably don't need to - we've talked about that a lot - 9.36 - that's not yours. We'll jump to 9.37. This is a phase 2 recommendation regarding notification to the commission for children. Again, this might be waiting a little bit on legislation.

Mr JAENSCH - Is there anything to report there, Tim, that you can speak to?

Mr BULLARD - No. You need the commission to be established and the information sharing - either a requirement or an ability to request or a requirement to deliver that information. So that's part of the -

CHAIR - And that becomes part of that legislation.

Ms WEBB - Is there any oversight like this that occurs now though while we're waiting for this to be in place? If we think about the intent of this recommendation, are we giving effect to that intent in some way now?

Mr BULLARD - Who don't we tell is probably the question.

CHAIR - You can't tell the commission right now.

Mr BULLARD - We can't tell the commission, but it is reportable conduct, so we do tell the independent regulator, we tell our WVP, the police, we tell the Integrity Commission, so there is a range of reporting that goes on at the moment.

Ms WEBB - But not to the current Commissioner for Children and Young People?

Mr BULLARD - We do not have an ability to be advising and sharing that information.

Ms WEBB - Okay, sure.

Mr BULLARD - That is why I am saying part of the legislation will have to be to compel me as the secretary to provide the information or provide the power to ask for it.

Ms WEBB - Because we don't have that information-sharing facility there, as in legislation. Is there a legislative block to you sharing that information?

Mr BULLARD - I think at the moment, to be frank, we are still coming to terms with the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act*, in particular section 40, and we are trying to understand the scope of the information-sharing powers that sit under that act -

Ms WEBB - That was the intent of that to allow it to happen.

Mr BULLARD - In that regard, but that requires you to be either an entity or a registered organisation. I am not answering definitively yes or no, because we are still actually coming to grips about whether or not that does provide some of that scope.

We are in active discussion, for example, with the Independent Regulator, Louise Coe, about how we might use that to allow some broader information-sharing for the Teachers

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Registration Board, so it is actively in discussion. We are looking at ways to share information where it needs to be.

I think the other element is what would the commission for children be doing with that? That is just as important, just reporting something in without activating - is it about looking at patterns over time, is it about understanding instances where they need to deploy an advocacy role or a child visitor role? Is it about looking at support? Is it just reporting on outcomes? Part of the legislation has to say what actually happens to that once it is reported.

Ms WEBB - Not that that's outlined here for the new commissioner either.

CHAIR - Which comes to 9.38 a bit, in terms of the legislation that is required for that. We will go to 12.1. This is around the closure of Ashley. Do you need to bring some more people to the table?

Mr JAENSCH - I'll have a bit of a team change if I can. Thank you very much to Mr Bullard and Ms Lovell and Ms McKerracher.

The witnesses withdrew.

Ms JENNY BURGESS, ASSOCIATE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WAS EXAMINED.

Mr JAENSCH - I understand you have already had some discussions about this with the Premier earlier today, so we are working to similar briefs. I am happy to take questions from the committee.

CHAIR - We will go straight to questions.

Ms WEBB - There are some things I would like to clarify from this morning actually and get more detail on now. The Premier, when he spoke with us this morning, spoke about a 12-month period of time to design the new youth justice model that would replace Ashley and then a 24-month construction period for the new facilities needed for that and because that is relevant to the closure of Ashley, because we cannot close Ashley apparently until that is done, I am just -

CHAIR - Sorry to interrupt, but we might just talk about 12.16 and 12.01 at the same time, because that is what the Premier did.

Ms WEBB - The Premier did that this morning; they do interact a bit. So, my question here is, and because this was not able to be answered this morning, if there is a 12-month design phase, where are we at in that 12-month period? Are we in month one of that 12-month period? Are we in month six or where are we because I am then trying to then add those periods up to take us to when it will be ready?

Mr JAENSCH - I do not have an exact start date for a 12-month design phase, but there has been work underway for many months on the development of things like the model of care, which will inform the design of the new facility, also investigative work and site work to do

with how we are going to place the new facility on the site and what we might need to accommodate in that design.

So, there have been professionals engaged to assist in that process and I am happy for Ms Hurworth to talk about that in a little bit more detail as well.

Ms WEBB - We probably do not need to repeat information we heard this morning. The question that I am putting to you goes to the fact, in terms of the design phase, how much longer is there of that design phase? If it is a 12-month period and you cannot tell me where we are in that time line -

CHAIR - When would the design be finalised, perhaps?

Ms WEBB - Yes, when does that period end, in your expectation?

Mr JAENSCH - In the information that you received this morning, there was sort of a laying out of the components of that work and that is what you would expect for an infrastructure project of this scale and complexity; normally on paper, where we are aiming, still, for this to be delivered as soon as possible. We are bringing extra resources and different approaches to bear on it than would normally be used in an infrastructure project like this, including, for example, our secretary for the Department of Premier and Cabinet convening a taskforce of heads of agency creating and authorising environment to be able to recruit people, be they infrastructure experts, policy developers, people from any department, any part of government needed to crash this process through in far shorter than the usual time frames. So we remain ambitious to be doing better than the time frame that the Premier laid out this morning.

We believe that can be done. We have advanced into the process already and we are working in parallel with other elements of what are needed to enable this facility to be delivered and for Ashley to be closed and it is something that is often overlooked in the commentary that what we are aiming to deliver on the site of Pontville is a far smaller facility than Ashley, designed predominantly for young people who have been sentenced and who are 16 or older.

In order to be able to use that as planned, we need to modify everything upstream of detention and transform what is happening at Ashley now to be able to reduce the number of young people in our detention component of our youth justice system and meet a point where we have got a new facility which is set up just for them.

This is something which requires a lot of work across government and with parties external to government, our service providers, our expert group, expertise from around the world to land this and, therefore, we are running many work streams in parallel, they are informing each other. We need to deliver it as soon as possible, but we need to deliver on two or three different fronts at once to deliver the outcome that we have planned.

Ms WEBB - All I am trying to do is understand the time line the Premier laid out. You just said you are hoping to do it sooner. I accept that. He laid out 12 months to design, 24 months to construct, which is three years, so I am trying to figure out if it's three years from now, you're going to miss your deadline of the end of 2026. What I'm trying to establish is where are we in that process, in that time that he laid out this morning?

Mr JAENSCH - I think that the Premier's use of a 12-month period for design is a rule of thumb period. I don't think it is measured in days and if we set a start date for it with some specific point that you can measure from. We are into the design phase now. We will continue to progress through it as fast as we can. As elements of that come into clear view, we will commence the next steps of seeking the relevant planning and approvals, et cetera, for delivery of this building. We can run a number of streams of work alongside each other.

Ms WEBB - For example, when do you expect to get to the planning approval side of things?

Mr JAENSCH - As soon as we've got our initial designs that identify the footprint and the features of the facility that are required for council's processes. That may not include all of the service delivery designed to be completed at that stage. We'll work on the different stages as they're completed.

Ms WEBB - What's the risk you're going to miss the deadline, minister?

Mr JAENSCH - It's possible. But our intention is to drive to the deadline as best we can. I don't want to set another arbitrary deadline and then have to speak to you every six months about how close we are to that. What we want to be able to do -

Ms WEBB - And yet if you keep missing it, then on into the future we go.

Mr JAENSCH - What we need to be able to show you and the Tasmanian community, and people who are following the progress of the obligations we've given closely, is updates on where we're at, and why we're doing what we're doing, so that they can see what the reform is that we're aiming to deliver. It's not as simple as closing one building and opening another. We have to fundamentally redesign the whole approach to our youth justice pipeline so that we end up with fewer young people in detention and fewer young people offending in the first place.

CHAIR - You're becoming a little bit repetitive, I might just go to Sarah.

Ms LOVELL MP - We're getting very short on time. I don't think anyone wants an arbitrary time line. We want a time line that we can be confident that you're going to deliver on. I'm getting some very mixed messages from you across the table around the fact that you're trying to get it done as quickly as possible, you're going to do things in parallel, there are things you can do to make it happen more quickly. But then at the same time you're saying it's very complex, it involves a lot of work, and there are many other aspects to this. Again, nobody's disagreeing with that. I think we all understand this is a complex project.

I think two years for a construction time line is actually fairly ambitious for any major infrastructure project at the moment. How confident are you that construction will start by the end of this year? I think it's likely that you're going to need at least that amount of time to meet your deadline of the end of 2026. I'll just draw you back to the fact that this commitment was made almost three years ago now. I'm understanding and not disputing that there's a lot of work that needs to be done, but we're three years in already. I guess the question is: why are we still talking about planning, construction and design, and not ready to start construction?

Mr JAENSCH - Three years ago, the former premier committed to closing Ashley and establishing two smaller facilities, one in the north and one in the south. Two smaller Ashleys.

Ms LOVELL MP - I don't know that that's -

Mr JAENSCH - In Ashley, at the moment, there are 13 young people. Only five of them are sentenced. Our challenge is to design a facility for only sentenced, over 16. That requires a significant reform of the system. There has been a lot of work done on that over the intervening years. There has also been the commission of inquiry, during which time we did receive strong advice to say that the commission of inquiry was considering the future of youth justice layout, and that we should be taking into account their findings as they are delivered. That process in itself extended out over another six months or so further than what it was planned to. All of these things have contributed to the time frame you're talking about. I think the reforms that we are taking on are more ambitious and more valuable than the ones that were talked about in 2021. They have the potential to benefit the lives of more young people and to reduce youth offending in Tasmania, which is what everyone ultimately wants. You are seeking time frames on this; we have a time frame in the commission of inquiry report, we have a broader time frame laid out by the Premier this morning, which is a rule-of-thumb type time frame. There are probably 12 months that separate the two which we are aiming for as soon as possible. There is a target period where we'll definitely be aiming to deliver.

Ms LOVELL MP - I am not disagreeing with you.

Mr JAENSCH - I don't want to presuppose any of the steps in between.

Ms LOVELL MP - I'm not disagreeing with you on the reforms that we're working towards are more valuable. I agree with you on that; they will deliver much better outcomes for young people. But, with respect, minister, as soon as possible is not a time frame. When will we know?

Mr JAENSCH - Sooner than possible is dangerous.

Ms LOVELL MP - When will we know what the time frame is for delivery? When will you have a plan for construction where you can say this project is underway and it's due to finish on this date?

Mr JAENSCH - I'll have a delivery time frame once I have contracted a builder for the facility. We are not there yet.

Ms LOVELL MP - When will that be? How close are you to that?

Mr JAENSCH - We are commencing the design process for the site and what we know of the footprint and requirements of the building, but we don't have that in hand just yet. I don't want to make a date for you today to just answer your question.

Ms LOVELL MP - I understand and nobody wants that. The frustration comes from the fact that you have said we're commencing design. Design takes time, construction takes time. I don't think anyone is looking at this end of 2026 and really believing that we're going to have this met - that is the reality. What we need and what the community needs is just an honest conversation and some concrete plans that we can actually look at and be confident in.

Mr JAENSCH - In your question is the answer as well. When I have a concrete plan, I can give a concrete date. Until then, it would be us choosing a political date for delivery. What I'd prefer to do is to keep the parliament and the public informed of where we are up to. There is an enormous number of people who are involved in the work that's happening right now regarding the policies, the design, the intentions of this including our expert panel including our community engagement group, which includes a large number of community organisations and service providers who interact with our youth justice system. We've got the cross agency taskforce that Ms Morgan-Wicks chairs and we've got dedicated units within our departments doing that.

Ms LOVELL MP - I understand and I appreciate the position you're in. My last question is, I know you've said you're aiming for it to be done before the time line, as soon as possible. How confident are you that it will be delivered by the end of 2026? Really?

Mr JAENSCH - I'm confident we're throwing everything at it. I'm not the expert.

Ms LOVELL MP - That is not the question.

Mr JAENSCH - You are asking me to make a call with a level of expertise about all of the elements that I've talked to you about. All I'm doing is synthesising the work that we're doing - that's what we're aiming for. The Premier has given an envelope based on a rule of thumb. The commission of inquiry has given us a different time period. We'll deliver this as soon as possible. It is to be enabled, though, by what we achieve with the numbers of young people in our system and all of that prevention, diversion, alternative sentencing et cetera that gets us down to the small numbers that we want to be catering for and I know, if Ms Hurworth has got any comments to make further about the design time lines -

CHAIR - Can I just put a design time line more clearly. In terms of the amount of work that is still required in design of the facility at Pontville prior to your ability to lodge a DA, what are we looking at there? That is not all the other service design. I am talking about the physical infrastructure.

Ms MORGAN-WICKS - If I could make a comment. The critical thing that needs to be landed here is the model of care for the facility, and if I may speak to the experience, for example, from the Department of Health in building facilities without a settled model of care agreed by clinicians, that then requires major pieces of re-work and wasted cost. We really need to settle and for many, many months the department has been working through the model of care.

This has now come over into our Youth Justice Task Force environment. We are settling and getting that up for final approval and these are the requirements that are fed through to an architect to settle the design. The biggest mistake we could make is to rebuild Ashley and that is what we are attempting to avoid and we want to do it in the right way, but we must settle that model of care first and we have learned from many, many years of experience in doing that. Once we have that, we already have been visiting and speaking to experts across the system to actually identify if there are designs that are already built that we can pick up and use. Why start again exactly from scratch?

We have got various sizes and concept designs that have been looked at across the years, but it is settling the model of care, doing all of the work around the diversion so that we're absolutely settled on the size of facility that we are building - and with all of the agencies making youth justice and the closure of Ashley and conversion to this new model our priority. This has got the best chance of actually delivering it as soon as we possibly can and with the time line that we can come back to this committee and have the minister speak to.

CHAIR - With the work that is required in the planning of the model of care, do you have an anticipated time line for that - acknowledging what Ms Morgan-Wicks has said?

Mr JAENSCH - We have a draft model of care that is currently being consulted, so that is underway.

CHAIR - What is the time line for consultation on that? Have you got a definitive time line for that?

Ms HURWORTH - We are aiming to have the model of care finalised by the end of September. We are concurrently looking at a practice around guidance on how you would operationalise that to a high degree. I also did just want to note that there will be works on the site this year so we are not just waiting for the actual site design. There are huge amounts of base infrastructure that needs to go in. We also do have - the current access point from the site has a significant deposit of Aboriginal heritage on it. Our intention is to be very sensitive to that.

We have seen some model's interstate where they are even able to work with their Aboriginal communities to utilise that heritage for Aboriginal children who may be in custody and how that supports connection to culture. We are considering all of these things, but the intention is to have early works including all the foundation and baseline services in this year.

Mrs PENTLAND - The Premier said that the address was 466 Brighton Road. Looking on the list, that is about 50 acres. That site?

Mr JAENSCH - Twenty hectares.

CHAIR - I hate to demonstrate that lack of technical expertise.

Mrs PENTLAND - How does that compare in size to Ashley and how much of that space will the children who are sentenced have of that space in comparison to Ashley?

Mr JAENSCH - In broad terms, my understanding is we have got about a 20-hectare site. We need about two hectares of it for the facility and services themselves. That gives us a lot of latitude as to where we place the facility on the site to be able to manage around things like Aboriginal heritage, placement of utilities and services, but also to address things like sightlines from neighbouring properties and security, et cetera.

One of the advantages of this site apart from its zoning and its distance from services et cetera, is the flexibility it gives us to place the facility in the site and make it work. We are talking about a facility substantially smaller than the Ashley Youth Detention Centre and far more of a home-like, a place for the young people to live while they are receiving the therapeutic care and programs that they need to be able to address their offending behaviours,

their health issues, their socialisation and their readiness to rejoin society at the completion of their mandated term at the site.

Mrs PENTLAND - So, will the grounds themselves be a lot smaller?

Mr JAENSCH - The overall site is as large as you have said. There will be, within that, the facility and playing surfaces, open space, et cetera, these are elements that we - with landscape design underway, if you want to speak to that, Ms Hurworth?

Ms HURWORTH - Yes, so through you, minister, one of the really important things that we need to do as we continue community engagement, particularly for residents around the area, is help people to understand that it will not look like a detention facility and to work with people to understand that real change in concept. We do know from research that all adolescent young people benefit from lots of outdoor space and so the intention would be that we would meet those sorts of needs.

Mr JAENSCH - And again, while this is underway, we will be using every lever we can to reduce the number of young people in the system across the state and so, at various points of time that have been mentioned and with the commission's deadlines, et cetera, if we find ourselves in a position where the construction is being finalised in the fit-out, et cetera, and we have only four or five young people in Ashley being cared for under a therapeutic model and all of those young people, or the majority of young people, who are currently in there on remand in different placements, receiving different care, not having a period in detention as part of their story, then we will be achieving something for the young people we are trying to help.

Again though, we remain committed to doing everything in our power, including transferring this reform task across to DPAC so that we can bring all the resources of government to bear on it to make this happen.

Ms WEBB - Just there, minister, on that, you talked about the fact that, regardless of the progress of building the new facility, circumstances will be changing around AYDC and, hopefully, reducing as you have described. So, are you contemplating, because 12.1 is about closing Ashley, so it is not about achieving the new centre yet, it is about closing Ashley, so-

Mr JAENSCH - We are doing 12.01 and 12.16 together.

Ms WEBB - Yes, but I am focusing on 12.01 now with my question. So, regardless of progress on the other facility, are you contemplating closing Ashley when you can transfer any people, young people and children who are left there, to appropriate alternative therapeutic models of care and detention - and have you been presented with those models already by your department that could be brought into play in that circumstance?

Mr JAENSCH - I do not think I am 100 per cent clear on what you have asked, but put it this way - look at it from the other side: I would not be, for the sake of a date, moving a young person from Ashley Youth Detention Centre to any other placement that was less fit for purpose.

Ms WEBB - That is not what I am asking you, so can I just redirect you back to my question? Let us start from the last part of my question. Have you been presented by your

department with an alternative therapeutic model to Ashley that could be brought into play prior to the new facilities being online?

Mr JAENSCH - What the department is working towards, including the model of care that is currently drafted and hoping to be finalised by the end of September, is a model of care that can be brought into play in Ashley and in any other setting where we have young people in our youth justice system, as soon as it is formed and we are able to deploy it and train staff, we will recruit staff to it.

So, young people should get the benefit of every part of this model as soon as it becomes available to them. The model of care, the approach to education, the approach to the cultural sensitivity for Aboriginal young people who are in detention, ultimately a built environment for those in detention that supports that as part of its design ethos. That's what we're looking for.

Ms WEBB - That's the ultimate goal.

Mr JAENSCH - In the meantime, we will bring online the elements of that model as we can, so that we're giving as many young people as possible the benefits of a better approach as soon as possible.

Ms WEBB - Yet we know that AYDC is not a safe environment. The commission told us that very clearly. That's why they made it a matter of urgency to close it. In fact, the expert report you've just had done recently by Dr Morag MacSween, Experts by Experience, identified that Ashley was markedly distinct in terms of the sexual abuse that occurred there. That report said it was organised, collective and collaborative. That's a site where the people involved in that site have delivered organised, collective and collaborative child sexual abuse through to the commission time.

You can't imagine that a therapeutic model can be fully implemented there. That's why I'm asking about whether you would contemplate an earlier transfer to an alternative therapeutic model, and have you been presented with a model of that sort?

Mr JAENSCH - If we had an alternative therapeutic model that could deliver better outcomes for young people, we'd be using it already.

Ms WEBB - So your department has never presented you with a model of that sort?

Mr JAENSCH - We have engaged with various people who have knowledge and who have conducted research and who have examined case studies from around the world on different approaches. They are feeding our design process right now. We will not move people out of Ashley into anything less fit for purpose. We will deploy whatever we can of a therapeutic model of care at Ashley in the meantime as soon as we're able to. What we understand is that sometimes the built environment can work with you to deliver that therapeutic care, or it can work against you because of the way that the buildings are formed.

As I've said, we want to move to a therapeutic model of care in a facility that's designed for that purpose. In the meantime, we will do everything in our power to ensure that Ashley is as safe as possible. When you refer to the commission and other commentary, if that's referring to a period of 20 years or more, and the combined assessments of what's happened in there, we

accept that assessment and that's why we've committed to closing Ashley and moving away from it. In the meantime, what we've done is vastly increased the number of closed-circuit TV cameras -

Ms WEBB - I think we'll get onto that in another recommendation.

Mr JAENSCH - We've introduced body-worn cameras, we've introduced a whole-body scanner, we have dramatically changed the way that searches of individual young people are undertaken, we've introduced the Australian Childhood Foundation onsite as an independent monitor and provider of feedback and advice on the integrity of our system and the way that we care for young people.

We've got the Commissioner for Children and Young People, who was a regular visitor, and the custodial inspector, both of whom have got powers now that this government gave them to be on the ground there. We've introduced a new advocate for children in detention as well, in order that, from everything we can learn about the history of what's happened at this place, we are addressing those risks and doing everything we can to ensure young people there are safe.

We will give them the benefit of a progressively more sophisticated, informed therapeutic model of care as soon as we possibly can, culminating, ultimately, in young people not being placed in Ashley, but being placed in a new facility that's designed just for that therapeutic care.

Ms WEBB - Yet you're still having to suspend staff because of contemporary allegations of abuse, even with all those things. I'm sure we'll talk more about all those other things.

Mr JAENSCH - This is part of safety, though, Ms Webb. We will take -

Ms WEBB - But it points to the lack of safety.

Mr JAENSCH - What it points to is that we will take every allegation seriously. We will believe every young person. That's another thing that has changed at Ashley, compared to the period that was covered by the report.

Ms WHITE - In the design you're doing for the new facility, can you outline how many beds it will have?

Mr JAENSCH - The current scope, as I am advised, is that we are planning for a facility that can be designed for around 8-12 young people to be in it, but recognising that those numbers might flex overtime and may surge, for example, if there is an incident where there's a number of young people involved. And, so, there needs to be flexibility and spaces that can be reconfigured. That's as I understand from my last conversations on the brief.

Ms WHITE - So how many beds would that be, minister? Have you had advice about the number of beds?

Mr JAENSCH - I don't know if this comes down to beds, but the design capacity should be for 8 to 12 with the capacity to surge to around 20, as I understand it.

Ms WHITE - Twenty. And you would be familiar, because I've met with residents who were constituents of mine there and I know you have as well, that there are concerns about the location of that site due to its proximity to a gun club or the rifle range, the medicinal cannabis production facility with this - obviously it's got very strong odour. How will you mitigate those matters so that children aren't further traumatised or triggered due to the location?

Mr JAENSCH - Do you want to speak to some of the work underway there, Courtney?

Ms HURWORTH - Yes, thank you. So, through you, minister, we're working with the CEO of the medicinal cannabis company that you've mentioned to look at if there are different ways that they can dispose of their unused cannabis that doesn't involve burning, which is a lot of the smell that can be experienced in the area. So, we're looking at things like composting.

In terms of the gun club, we're having acoustic and specialised testing done on the site around the sounds that you can hear and we're seeking advice around the impacts of what that might be, but we're confident that both of those can be mitigated.

Ms WHITE - Is there any commitment to a change in practice from either of those businesses? Noting as well the one I forgot to mention is the distillery that's very close as well. Is there a commitment to a change in practice from those two businesses you've just spoken about then?

Ms HURWORTH - I couldn't say right now that there's a commitment, but we're certainly having those conversations.

Ms WHITE - Will that be necessary, do you think, for you to feel confident that's the right site?

Mr JAENSCH - We need to - any site will have drawbacks, neighbours, things that need to be mitigated to ensure that we can occupy them safely and that they'll do the job, both for the purpose of the centre, the young people in it and the staff, as well as for the neighbouring businesses and residents as well. So, what we're doing is working through those and working out what the mitigations might be that are acceptable to everybody. No site will not have neighbours, sight lines, access issues, locational matters to deal with.

Ms WHITE - I take from the evidence you've already provided the committee today, though, that the site is the site and you don't have plans to choose a different site if you can't mitigate those matters.

Mr JAENSCH - We don't have plans for any other site other than this one. We're working through the issues that remain with this site to be sure that we can arrive at an acceptable outcome for all concerned.

Ms WHITE - How have you communicated that with the residents in that community and the businesses so that they feel satisfied, too, because that has been - quite a lot of feedback you and I have both had from that area.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes and I have met with the residents and we've had staff on the ground contacting them. We've updated them and we have a communication strategy underway now. Maybe Ms Hurworth can speak to that.

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Ms HURWORTH - Our intention, through you minister, will be to meet with the adjacent landowners as intensively and frequently as possible throughout this process. We've recently appointed a specialist to assist us in communications with the whole community around that area and, so, we're building on the consultation that was undertaken last year by DECYP and the work that the minister's done in meeting with local residents.

Ms WHITE - Maybe it's a matter for the committee to consider another time -

CHAIR - Just be conscious of the time, Bec. We might - yes.

Ms WHITE - Is there likely to be compensation payable to those businesses to help them transition their practices?

Mr JAENSCH - I would say that depends on what we come up with and what we find that is going to accommodate their needs as well as ours. I don't know what all of the matters are. We've spoken about a couple here today. I'm sure that there are others as well.

Ms WHITE - Okay. Sorry, Chair. Thank you for your indulgence.

Mr JAENSCH - We want to be a good neighbour.

CHAIR - Okay. We've still got another recommendation in chapter 12 and then 21 as well. In the first instance, we would invite you to provide any written updates in relation to those recommendations we haven't gotten to. Then there will be some questions on notice that'll come and I imagine we'll need to call you back at some stage to continue through. Acknowledging the budget is coming very soon and times are busy at that point.

Mr JAENSCH - We'll provide what information we can against the remaining recommendations. I want to double-check on - did you say chapter 21?

CHAIR - There are a couple in 21 that are yours. 21.9, 21.10 according to my list.

Mr JAENSCH - I am recalling some earlier advice. That is okay. Understood. We will provide what we can by way of updates and responses.

CHAIR - A written update on the progress. That might make a next appearance more expedited.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you.

CHAIR - Thanks for your time minister and thanks for your team.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you for yours and thanks for your interest.

CHAIR - It's been a long session, for some of us particularly more so than others in the room, perhaps. Thank you for your time.

The witnesses withdrew.

The committee adjourned at 5.46 p.m.