



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING  
Mr Johnathan Davis MLA (Chair), Mr James Milligan MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

**Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

QoN No - 50

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Asked by Elizabeth Kikkert: To ask the Minister Families and Community Services

Ref: Child and Youth Protection Services, Budget Statement G, p. 22, output class CSD 1.1 Inclusion and Participation, CSD 1.3 Strategic Policy, CSD 1.4 Quality, Complaints and Regulation, CSD 2.3 Child and Youth Protection Services

In relation to: Permanency Placements:

1. Budget Statement G shows 25 permanency placements for last year. How many of these involved children in out-of-home care, and of these, how many were adoptions and how many were enduring parental responsibility orders?
2. During the last round of estimates hearings, all adoptions of children from out-of-home care had been suddenly put on hold pending a test case before the Supreme Court. When did the processing of local adoption applications resume, and how many have been completed since then?
3. Processing of applications had been put on hold to see how the court would interpret and apply changes to the Adoptions Act passed last year.
  - a. What was the court's response? Did it accord with the intent of the amendments to the act?
  - b. What has been and will be the impact of this response on the processing of local adoption applications?
  - c. Did the five matters that had already been lodged with the Supreme Court proceed, and were the orders issued?
4. Regarding the confusion caused when families were abruptly informed that all adoption applications were being put on hold with enough clarity about why and what to expect, it was stated in February that 'a more direct line of communication with the families who are awaiting and pursuing adoption processes' would be established. How was that accomplished?

RACHEL STEPHEN-SMITH MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The reference in Budget Statement G regarding 25 permanency placements is the target for the year. During 2020-21, 24 permanency placements occurred; of those 20 were for children and young people in out of home-care. Of the 20, two were adoptions, and 18 were Enduring Parental Responsibility orders.
2. On 1 July 2021, the process for local adoption applications resumed. Since then, zero applications have been completed.

3.
  - a) The decision made by the Supreme Court was consistent with the intent of government – that is, to make the best interest of children the paramount consideration in decision making.
  - b) ACT Together has reviewed potential adoption applications to ensure assessment of the best interests of children is clearly considered and documented. Each adoption matter will then continue to be progressed and heard before the Supreme Court.
  - c) These matters are currently being reviewed by the Government Solicitors Office (GSO).
4. CYPS has met with all applicants who were seeking an adoption outcome for the child in their care and provided an update on their matter.

Additional processes have been introduced. This includes intake meetings with carers, ACT Together, GSO and CYPS at the earliest stage of an adoption being pursued. This meeting outlines expectations, communication processes and clarifies any matters for the carers. Monthly updates for the carers on the status of the application continue as usual.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature:



Date:

18 / 11 / 21

By the Minister Families and Community Services, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA