



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Chiaka Barry MLA

Addressed to: Ms Barbara Causon PSM, Acting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner

In relation to: Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in out-of-home care

Hearing: 13 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript p 4

Transcript provided: 19 November 2025

Answer Due: 26 November 2025

MS BARRY: Ms Causon, what percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait young people in out-of-home care are you currently involved in case managing?

Ms Causon: I would have to take the question on notice in terms of actual percentage.

MS BARRY: Sure. Percentage, yes.

Barb Causon: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The Office of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner provides individual advocacy support to multiple Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, and their families involved with child protection and out-of-home care at any given time. As set out below, the level of involvement varies depending on the needs and circumstances of each child and young person, which change over time and cannot readily be reduced to a percentage.

The Commissioner's office provides a level of oversight for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People in the ACT out of home care system. The Commissioner is required to be notified whenever the Director-General or police take emergency action to remove an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person from their family and must be notified about proceedings for care and protection orders. The Commissioner's Office must be given an annual review report for each Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person subject to care and protection orders which includes care and cultural plans. The Commissioner's Office is also required to be notified about appraisal orders, assessments and family group conferences.

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The Commissioner's office carefully reviews and assesses documents provided by the Director-General and initiates involvement to advocate for individual children and young people where concerns are identified, including requesting further detailed information from the Director-General. The Commissioner's office also responds to requests for advocacy assistance from children and young people and their families. Referrals to the Commissioner can be made in various ways, including through the Commissioner's Office website, self-referrals from young people or parents, extended family members, carers and kinship carers, or via referrals from other agencies.

Currently, the Office is providing active individual advocacy for 41 children and young people, with advocacy responsibilities shared between the Commissioner and two senior advocates. These figures represent a snapshot in time, as the Office steps in and out of cases as required and in response to referral requests. In addition, the Commissioner's Office has approximately 144 identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child protection open cases across a range of placements, including foster care, kinship care, and residential care.

The level of involvement of the Commissioner's Office will vary depending on the circumstances of each child or young person and particular risks identified. In some cases, the Commissioner's Office will attend case management meetings, seek additional documents and attend and provide submissions in Court processes, while in others the Office may provide oversight through reviewing documents and staying in touch with children and families to step in where concerns arise.

It is important to note that some children on care and protection orders are placed with their extended Aboriginal family and maintain strong, regular cultural connections. This connection helps support identity, belonging, and wellbeing, and preserves ties to family, community, and culture—key protective factors against long-term disadvantage and disconnection. These cases generally require less involvement from the Office but are monitored to ensure that these placements are appropriately supported.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:



Date: 26 November 2025

By the Acting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner, Barb Causon
PSM