



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert : To ask the Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services

Ref: Budget Outlook, p. 131

Hearing Date: 25 July 2023

In relation to: Youth Justice: New Service Responses

- (1) In the hearing, it was said that new service responses to allow for raising of the minimum age of criminal responsibility had been designed based on averages over the past several years. What is the historical average daily number of 10- and 11-year-old children in contact with the youth justice system used in the planning for these new service responses, and what is the historical daily average for 12- and 13-year-old young people that was used in planning?
- (2) What will new service responses be doing during periods when no 10- or 11-year-old children are in need of services?
- (3) The most recent Bimberi Headline Indicators Report shows the number of young people detained at Bimberi in the first half of last financial year to be higher than in any previous quarter going back to 2018 (51 in Q1 and 60 in Q2), and the average daily number of detainees was also a historical high (19 per day). What do you understand to be the cause/s of this increase in the number of detainees?
- (4) What are the figures (if known) for the last two quarters of the financial year?

MINISTER DAVIDSON: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

- 1) The historical average daily number of 10–13-year-old children and young people under youth justice supervision in the ACT is extremely low, and spread sporadically throughout the year, such that averages often end up being less than 1.0 over the course of a whole year. It is important that we do not report on numbers of children in our youth justice system in such a way that those families are identifiable due to the very low numbers involved.

I can advise that from 2017-2018 to 2021-2022, there have been no children aged 10 years on youth justice supervision. In some of those years, we have had no children aged 11 years on youth justice supervision. Table S139a of *Youth Justice in Australia 2021-22*, published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, provides this information on average numbers for 10 to 13 year olds on youth justice supervision, but you will see that the numbers are so low as to demonstrate that it would be difficult to predict when during the year we might see those young people in need of services.

- 2) The ACT Government is enhancing existing service responses to ensure children and young people have appropriate support based on their needs. These services will continue with their usual work with children, young people, carers and kinship networks as appropriate.
- 3) Driving Factors to increase numbers of young people in custody are based on the work of ACT Policing, rather than youth justice services.

4) YOUNG PEOPLE DETAINED IN BIMBERI BY GENDER, ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER IDENTITY, SEX AND AGE GROUP

Cultural Identity	Sex	Age	2022-23	
			Q3	Q4
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people	Male	10 – 13	2	1
		14 – 17	4	7
	Female	10 – 13	1	0
		14 – 17	3	1
	Total		10	9
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people	Male	10 – 13	2	2
		14 – 17	25	29
		18+	2	2
	Female	10 – 13	3	3
		14 – 17	4	6
	Total		36	42
Unknown Cultural Identity	Male	10 – 13	0	0
		14 – 17	1	2
		18+	1	0
	Female	14 – 17	1	2
	Total		3	4
All young people			49	55

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature: 

Date: 17 August 2024

By the Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, Emma Davidson MLA