



Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022 **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Asked by Dr Marisa PATERSON MLA on 2 November 2022: Mr David Fintan, Senior Assistant Ombudsman, Program Delivery Branch, took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript 2 November 2022 [PAGE 55]

In relation to:

DR PATERSON: Has there been any changes in the number of complaints in terms of, for example, residential care organisations? There are 12 complaints, is that fairly steady over the last few years or has there been any alarming changes in where the complaints are coming from?

Mr Fintan: So generally in this financial year we are starting to see a reasonably slow but steady increase in the number of reports. I have to take on notice whether there are particular areas where there is more increases rather than less, but generally speaking we are seeing a return to I would say pre-COVID levels of reporting. There was a decline not dissimilar to the decline in FOI during that period.

ACT OMBUDSMAN: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

Notifications received by the ACT Ombudsman over the past 3 years to 30 June 2022 have been relatively consistent in terms of both volume and source – that is, the sectors submitting the notifications (see Table 1 below).

Despite some fluctuations from year-to-year, the Office has not identified any material changes or concerning trends in the volume and source of notifications during this period. For example, the top 4 sectors consistently are Government and Non-Government Schools, Kinship and Foster Care, Education and Care Service Providers, and Residential Care Organisations.

The low volume of notifications for some sectors means it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from fluctuations in volume. For example, during the 3-year period to 30 June 2022, notifications from Residential Care Organisations have gone from 8 (5%) in 2019-20, to 7 (4%) in 2020-21, to 12 (9%) in 2021-22.

Table 1—Notifications received by sector and percentage of total notifications received for 2019-20 to 2021-22

Sector	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Government and Non-Government Schools	66	37%	73	43%	43	32%
Kinship and Foster Care	52	29%	37	22%	34	25%
Education and Care Service Providers	36	20%	41	24%	31	23%
Residential Care Organisations	8	5%	7	4%	12	9%
ACT Directorates	6	4%	6	3%	7	5%
Religious Organisations	6	3%	5	3%	1	1%
Health Service Providers	3	2%	2	1%	7	5%

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:



Date: 10/11/22

By the ACT Ombudsman, Mr Iain Anderson