

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2020-21 Budget Estimates

Child Protection portfolio: 15 December 2020

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

Witnesses:

- Hon Luke Donnellan MP, Minister for Child Protection
- Mr Ben Rimmer, Deputy Secretary, Housing
- Ms Chris Asquini, Deputy Secretary, Community Services Operations
- Mr Argiri Alisandratos, Deputy Secretary, Children, Families, Community and Disability
- Mr Greg Stenton, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services
- Ms Simone Corin, Director, Quality Improvement and System Reform

QUESTION 1**Unallocated child protection cases**

Mr RIORDAN: Minister, in budget paper 3 relating to child protection, **can you please tell us how many unallocated cases there are as at the end of November 2020 in Victoria's child protection system, please?**

(reference cited: BP3, p. 238)

Minister DONNELLAN: Yes, for sure.

Mr RIORDAN: Perhaps just while you are finding that total figure, **presumably that will be broken down by region, so can we have it on notice to have it broken down by region?** Is that possible?

Minister DONNELLAN: Unallocated, yes. The unallocated rate I think was approximately—I would have to actually check the exact figure. The June figure was 96 per cent allocation rate, so the unallocated rate is obviously 4 per cent.

Mr RIORDAN: So do you have that in the actual number of young people?

Minister DONNELLAN: No, I do not actually have a number, but I will compare it to prior times—

Mr RIORDAN: Could that be provided on notice?

Minister DONNELLAN: where the unallocated rate was over 18 per cent in 2014. So what we have actually done is we have substantially increased the capacity of the child protection system in terms of providing approximately 889 extra child protection officers since we came to government. What that has actually done is reduce the case loads from approximately 17 in 2014–15 to around 14 today. So what we have done is actually put substantial support into the statutory system, so in other words those 889 extra child protection officers have come into the system, so that has substantially increased the allocation rate and reduced the unallocated rate. What actually happens during that period of time for those cases which are unallocated is a senior officer in the child protection system manages those cases and asks other officers to undertake certain tasks.

Mr RIORDAN: That is not my question, Minister. Thanks for that extra bit of detail. **Just wanting to confirm: can we have on notice the total number, not in percentage but the total number, and broken down by region, please?**

Minister DONNELLAN: I have not got that figure in regions at all..

Mr RIORDAN: No, but we will take it on notice. Presumably you will have it by region.

Mr O'BRIEN: It has been provided before.

Minister DONNELLAN: By area, but it will not go down in the fine detail probably you are looking for.

Mr RIORDAN: No, I am happy by area, so just the total number and then the total number allocated by region.

Source: Inquiry into the Victorian Government's Budget Estimates 2020-21, Unverified Transcript for Child Protection (Minister DONNELLAN), 15 December 2020, **pp. 2-3**

RESPONSE

The number of unallocated Child Protection cases by Division as at 30 September 2020 was:

Division	Number of unallocated Child Protection cases
North division	223
South division	274
East division	147
West division	418
Statewide Services Group	2
TOTAL (State of Victoria)	1,064

QUESTION 2**Number of people employed by the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)**

Mr Riordan: Minister, given the important independent oversight role the Commission for Children and Young People has in relation to child protection, can you confirm the total number of people currently employed by the CCYP?

Minister DONNELLAN: No, but that is an initiative of the Labor Government which introduced was in I think 2016, the commissioner for children and youth. As you would be aware, the commissioner has undertaken multiple reports into residential care and the like, which have been very much—

Mr RIORDAN: **But you can take that on notice for us?**

Minister DONNELLAN: What is that, sorry?

Mr RIORDAN: **You can take on notice for us the amount of people currently employed by the commission? Presumably someone will know how many people work there.**

Minister DONNELLAN: In terms of funding, it is about \$16 million over four years, which we have just recently allocated. I do not have staff numbers available today but—

Mr RIORDAN: **But you can take that on notice?**

Minister DONNELLAN: Happy to take that on notice, yes.

Source: Inquiry into the Victorian Government's Budget Estimates 2020-21, Unverified Transcript for Child Protection (Minister DONNELLAN), 15 December 2020, **p. 3**

RESPONSE

As at 13 December 2020, FTE staffing across the Commission for Children and Young People was 72 FTE.

QUESTION 3**Residential facilities**

Mr Hibbins: How many will be two-bedroom and how many will be three-bedroom, and what will then the make-up of residential units be in the state? What will be the figures remaining for four-bedroom and other units?

Mr DONNELLAN: I missed that. What would be the what, sorry?

Mr HIBBINS: If you are having 21 two- and three-bed units, what will then be the overall figures for the state in terms of residential units?

Mr DONNELLAN: I am not sure I have got the figures in terms of the total numbers of residential units, but it is both a leasing package, to lease more two- and three-bedroom units, and also to construct more two- or three-bedroom units. In terms of the total numbers of residential, we have got 450 children approximately in residential care, so I would assume we have got—

Mr HIBBINS: **You can take on notice as we are running out of time.**

Mr DONNELLAN: approximately 450 beds. I would have to—

Mr HIBBINS: **Take that on notice—the number of two-bedroom, three-bedroom, four-bedroom and any other. That would be of benefit to the committee—great, thanks.**

Source: Inquiry into the Victorian Government's Budget Estimates 2020-21, Unverified Transcript for Child Protection (Minister DONNELLAN), 15 December 2020, p. 5

RESPONSE

The 2020-21 State Budget provides capital funding to build 25 new two and three bed homes.

In addition, there is output funding for 35 new residential care beds, increasing the number of funded residential care beds to 507 statewide.

The proportional split of two and three bed homes will be confirmed as part of implementation with consideration to factors such as land size and location. The future notional distribution of available residential care beds following this investment is as follows, noting model distribution can change regularly to reflect local needs:

Number of beds	Number of homes
1 bed homes	8
2 bed homes	52
3 bed homes	6
4 bed homes	96
5 bed homes	1
6 bed homes	1
TOTAL	164 properties

Whilst building of these new properties occurs, budget is available for the leasing of properties to support implementation of additional two and three bed placements from 2020-21, providing immediate support to the Victorian residential care system.