

Michael Pettersson MLA

Minister for Business, Arts and Creative Industries

Minister for Children, Youth and Families

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Minister for Skills, Training and Industrial Relations

Member for Yerrabi

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**Questions on Notice Paper No 5****Friday, 11 April 2025****Question No. 268****MS BARRY MLA:** To ask the Minister for Children, Youth and Families

1. In relation to reports that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young Persons Commissioner was denied access to Bimberi, and that the Director-General said that access was limited (not denied) to ensure the good management of the centre, does the Minister agree with the Director-General's view that the good management of Bimberi is more important than allowing independent scrutiny of operations by independent statutory officers who are charged (under legislative provisions) to ensuring the wellbeing of children and young people in detention; if not, what will the Minister do to ensure that independent statutory office holders can access Bimberi at any time, to exercise their statutory review obligations.

Michael Pettersson MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. Community Services Directorate (CSD) has no intention of preventing the Commissioners or other oversight agencies from fulfilling their essential functions. The decision made about scheduling routine weekly visits by oversight agencies was made in line with the centre's primary goal which is to ensure it meet all obligations under the *Children and Young People Act 2008* (CYP Act) and relevant Human Rights obligations. The centre is required to manage a range of legal, health, and education requirements of young people, along with providing access to advocacy from oversight agencies.

These scheduling changes to visit times relate to routine walk around visits. These have been implemented as there are current extenuating circumstances. All oversight bodies are welcomed to contact with centre management to make an appointment to see any young person at Bimberi's visit centre outside of the regular visit times.



Bimberi oversight bodies include the ACT Custodial Inspector, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner, the Human Rights Commission, the Public Advocate, the Children and Young people Commissioner, ACT Ombudsman, and Official Visitors.

A number of these bodies hold statutory powers to either conduct scheduled reviews of Bimberi and/or undertake unplanned visits, ensuring that Bimberi is subject to appropriate scrutiny. I understand Bimberi welcomes this oversight and understands that this scrutiny leads to improved practice which is essential in ensuring that its operations remain contemporary and responsive to dynamic risks present. I can confirm that all oversight bodies are continuing to regularly visit Bimberi and CSD is in regular contact with the oversight bodies to discuss these matters.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Michael Pettersson MLA
Minister for Children, Youth and Families

Date: 9/5/25