

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. 274****MS BARRY MLA:** To ask the Minister for Children, Youth and Families

1. In relation to the Productivity Commission *Report on Government Services 2025 (ROGs 2025)* and Table 16A.1 (Children aged 0–17 years in notifications, investigations and substantiations and on care and protection orders, by Indigenous status - Rate per 1,000 children aged 0–17 years) that shows the rate per 1,000 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is 343.6, the highest of any Australian jurisdiction, and the rate for non-Indigenous children is 48, can the Minister advise why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are so significantly over-represented in the child welfare system in the ACT.
2. Why are the results in the ACT the worst of all Australian jurisdictions.
3. In relation to Table 16A.31 of the ROGs 2025, under the measure AG3: Cost per child receiving intensive family support services, which shows the cost in the ACT is on average \$14,782 per child which is the second highest average in Australia, and \$6,357 more per child than the equivalent cost in NSW, can the Minister advise why the average cost of providing intensive family support services is so high in the ACT.

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

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disproportionately represented within the child protection and youth justice system. The Government recognises this as a serious issue and is committed to continuing efforts to address it.

As noted in the explanatory material relating to Table 16A.1, data on the number of notifications should be interpreted with caution. Each jurisdiction has different methodology for counting notifications. This means the data may not be comparable. In the ACT, each notification is counted individually whereas some jurisdictions may count related reports as



one notification. In the ACT, we report on ‘caller defined’ notifications, whereas most jurisdictions report on ‘agency defined’ notifications. At the point of notification, the reporter may not have full knowledge of the child or young person’s family circumstances.

Some notifications can be driven by factors other than prevalence of harm. The factors can include disproportionate burden of economic marginalisation that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders face as well as racially biased reporting of child protection concerns.

The overall rate of over-representation in out of home care in the ACT decreased from 14 in 2023 to 11.7 in 2024. This was partly driven by a drop in the rate of Aboriginal children entering care (13.9 to 5.5) (National Voice for our Children, Family Matters Report 2024). This data shows that although ACT continues to have a high rate of notifications for Aboriginal families, entries into care for Aboriginal children and their over-representation in the child protection system in other areas is declining.

2. Refer to the response to question 1.
3. As noted in the explanatory material relating to Table 16A.34, the data in this table is not comparable across jurisdictions.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Michael Pettersson MLA
Minister for Children, Youth and Families

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Date: 9/5/25

This response required 270 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$432.62.