

GUARDIAN for CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE

2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY

THE GUARDIAN IS SHONA REID

COMMENCED 1 AUG 2022

SHONA IS AN EASTERN ARRERNTJE WOMAN AND ALSO THE TRAINING CENTRE VISITOR.



"MY JOB IS TO ADVOCATE FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE."

"I PAY MY RESPECT TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF MEETING THIS YEAR."

THE GUARDIAN IN 2022-23

ADVOCATE:

54 IN-MANDATE ENQUIRIES

338 FOLLOWED UP FOR: ASSESSMENT - ADVOCACY - MONITORING

TOP 3 ISSUES RAISED BY YOUNG PEOPLE:

1. PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING
2. SAFE AND STABLE PLACEMENTS
3. CONTACT WITH SIGNIFICANT OTHERS.

PROMOTE BEST INTERESTS



INQUIRE & ADVISE the MINISTER

REPORT ON CHILD PROTECTION EXPENDITURE

"I CALLED THE GUARDIAN BECAUSE I NEED HELP ADVOCATING AND NOBODY'S LISTENING."



MONITOR: 112 ANNUAL REVIEW AUDITS
122 CARE CONCERN REFERRALS RECEIVED

KEY OBSERVATIONS

DCP BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT

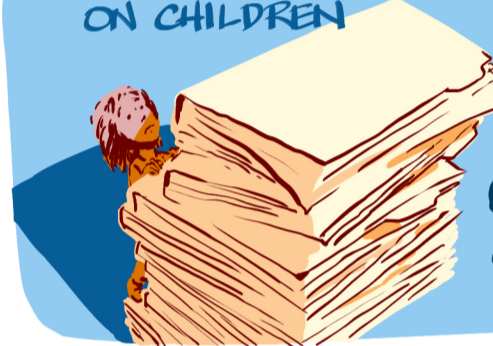
REDRAWN OFFICE BOUNDARIES MEANT:

- CASELOADS DOUBLED IN SOME OFFICES
- LOSS OF TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



"IN OUR AREA, EVERY KID IS LOSING THEIR SOCIAL WORKER."

LACK OF PLANNING FOR THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN



"THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THESE DECISIONS DON'T HAVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH US KIDS."

DELAYS FOR CARER ASSESSMENTS

LONG WAIT TIMES FOR KINSHIP CARER ASSESSMENTS

- CHILDREN STAYING TOO LONG IN TEMPORARY PLACEMENTS WITH UNAPPROVED CARERS
- LIVING IN RESIDENTIAL CARE WHEN THEY COULD BE WITH FAMILY.



1,117 TEMPORARY PLACEMENTS EXTENDED BEYOND THREE MONTHS

- HUMAN RIGHTS! -

CHARTER OF RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

RIGHTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE EARNED AND THEY CANNOT BE LOST



"I HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE A DECISION."

I NEED REASONABLE RESOURCING."

SINCE 2016-17 MORE THAN DOUBLE THE ENQUIRIES BUT NO NEW MONEY!

THIS MEANS:

- 75% REDUCTION IN AUDITS
- LESS VOICE FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
- LIMITED RESOURCES TO MEET CORE FUNCTIONS
- COULDN'T AFFORD TO REPLACE STAFF
- LESS ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN IN FAMILY-BASED CARE.

EXPERIENCES IN CARE

ABORIGINAL YOUNG PEOPLE

GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO EMBED ALL 5 ELEMENTS OF THE ABORIGINAL CHILD PLACEMENT PRINCIPLE.

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE the Right TO CONNECT WITH THEIR CULTURE.

ACTIVE EFFORTS ARE NEEDED TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY & COUNTRY



"[MY WORKER] NEVER ASKED WHAT I WOULD LIKE AND WHAT WOULD BENEFIT ME."



CLOSING THE GAP

WE NEED TO FOCUS ON IMPROVING OUTCOMES ACROSS ALL LIFE DOMAINS FOR ABORIGINAL YOUNG PEOPLE.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

[AT LEAST] ONE IN FOUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE HAVE A DISABILITY.



DCP DID GOOD WORK IN NAVIGATING THE NDIS SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN.



"HE'S WORKED WITH ME VERY HARD TO GET THE SPECIAL HELP I NEED [FOR] LEARNING."

Ongoing Systemic Improvements Needed for:

- Undiagnosed disability needs
- Access to disability data
- Advocacy gaps for children with a disability

SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

THE GUARDIAN HAS SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT THE ONGOING TARGETED EXPLOITATION OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN CARE.



Some children are turned away from specialist support because there aren't enough resources.

CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE a RIGHT TO PRIVACY

WE SHOULD BE ASKING... IS THIS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST OR JUST OF INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC?



ACCESS TO SERVICES

THE WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT IS THE CHILD'S PARENT.

ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES NEED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY - NOT JUST DCP!



POST-18 HOUSING

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! 18

CHRONIC HOUSING SHORTAGES FOR CARE LEAVERS.



"I BET THEY CAN'T WAIT UNTIL I TURN 18 AND I'M NOT THEIR PROBLEM ANYMORE."

MENTAL HEALTH

"I NEED THE MULLEE WARD - I NEED THAT HELP."



THE GUARDIAN SUPPORTS THE CHIEF PSYCHIATRIST'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

CONNECTIONS

ONE IN FOUR ENQUIRIES RELATED TO CONTACT WITH FAMILY.

GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CONTACT DETERMINATIONS.

SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

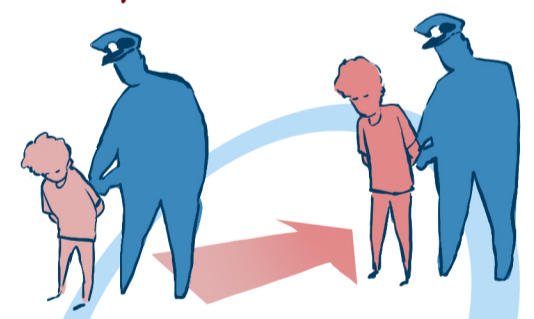


"I HAVE MISSED HALF OF HER LIFE."

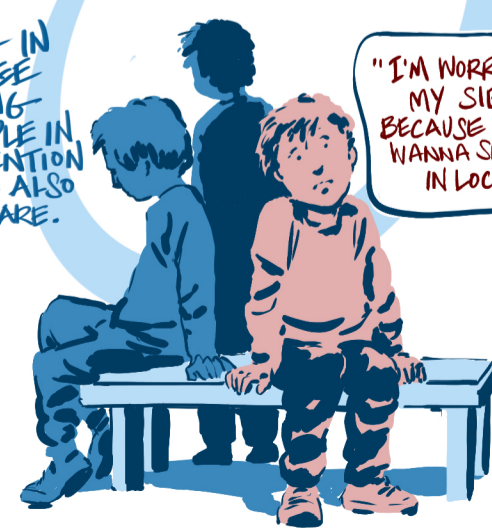
THE WORD "SIBLING" ISN'T EVEN IN THE LEGISLATION!

CARE CRIMINALISATION

POLICE CONTACT = GREATER CHANCE OF MORE POLICE CONTACT



ONE IN THREE YOUNG PEOPLE IN DETENTION ARE ALSO IN CARE.



"I'M WORRIED FOR MY SIBLING BECAUSE I DON'T WANNA SEE THEM IN LOCK-UP."