



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Members present:

Ms CP McMillan MP—Chair
Mr SA Bennett MP
Mr MC Berkman MP
Ms CL Lui MP (virtual)
Mr RCJ Skelton MP

Visiting Member:

Mr RI Katter MP

Staff present:

Ms L Pretty—Acting Committee Secretary
Ms C Furlong—Assistant Committee Secretary

PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO THE CHILD PROTECTION REFORM AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2021

Mount Isa

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The committee met at 10.03 am.

CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. I now declare open this public hearing for the Community Support and Services Committee's inquiry into the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Kalkadoon people, and I pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging. We are very fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose lands, winds and waters we now all share.

On 15 September 2021, the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 was referred to this committee for examination, with a reporting date of 12 November 2021. My name is Corrine McMillan. I am the member for Mansfield and chair of this committee. Mr Stephen Bennett, the member for Burnett, is the deputy chair. The other committee members with me today are: Mr Michael Berkman, the member for Maiwar; Mr Robert Skelton, the member for Nicklin; I am expecting Robbie Katter, the member for Traeger, to join the committee today, which is a great privilege for us; and I also welcome and pay my respects to Cynthia Lui, the member for Cook, who is with us this morning via the phone.

The purpose of today's hearing is to assist the committee with its inquiry into the Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The committee is a committee of the Queensland parliament and its hearings are subject to the rules of the parliament. Today we are in Mount Isa to hear the views of the community. Please take this opportunity to share with us your thoughts and your experiences. I ask that everyone respects the rights of others to hold and express their particular view. When speaking, please take care not to refer to ongoing court matters or name children.

The hearing is being recorded and transcribed by Hansard and speakers should be aware that the transcript of this hearing will be published on our committee webpage. For any media present, I ask that you adhere to my directions as chair at all times. The media rules endorsed by the committee are available from committee staff if required. Please also note that you may be filmed or photographed and images may also appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. Please advise us if this is an issue for you. I ask everyone present to turn mobile phones off or to silent mode.

KEENAN, Mr David, Chief Executive Officer, Mount Isa City Council

SLADE, Ms Danielle, Mayor, Mount Isa City Council

CHAIR: This morning it gives me great honour to welcome from the Mount Isa City Council Mayor Danielle Slade—Mayor, thank you so much for being with us—and Chief Executive Officer David Keenan. It is lovely to have you here, David, and thank you for giving up your valuable time. Good morning and thank you for appearing before the committee today. Mayor Slade, welcome. I invite you to make a brief opening statement, after which committee members will have questions for you I am sure.

Mayor Slade: I start off by also acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Kalkadoons, and pay respects to their elders past, present and emerging. Mount Isa is home to about 30 different First Nations tribes. They all like to call Mount Isa home.

My background is that I emigrated from England when I was seven years old and I grew up in Mount Isa. I have two children and, as much as I did not expect to still be here as an older person, this is a fantastic community to bring up a family in. My husband was born and bred in Mount Isa. We both decided that we wanted our children to have the same safe, fantastic experience that we had growing up in Mount Isa. That was definitely a choice we made.

I would like to introduce our CEO, who is not from Mount Isa. He has been in Mount Isa for only about 12 months. I think you will get a little bit of a broad cross from someone who is not from Mount Isa and their perspective and also from someone who grew up here and loves Mount Isa, which is my perspective.

I read the bill and the amendments to the bill. One of the things I really liked was the fact that the children will get more of a voice. The other thing that stood out to me is definitely liaising across agencies and interstate. As a council we are finding that one of the impacts for us is Queensland and the Northern Territory not working together, and even with the Commonwealth. There is definitely an opportunity to improve there.

I can tell you that youth crime in Mount Isa has escalated in the past five years and probably started escalating about 10 years ago. This is not the norm for Mount Isa. For me personally, I have not seen Mount Isa in this state in the entire time I have been a resident. On the impacts with some of the youth crime that is happening in the city at the moment, we are finding that it is taking a financial toll on businesses, with vandalism, broken windows and those sorts of things. A lot of the businesses now cannot get insurance for glass—windows and things like that. One of the groups of people we get coming to council to talk about the issues most frequently are businesspeople in the city.

The other frequent visits I get are from the Kalkadoons. The Kalkadoons are very concerned about the number of children roaming the streets, especially Indigenous children. They come to council to ask us to support them and help them try to fix the situation, which is really tough because we are a local government. We do acknowledge that this is our community and, as part of that, livability is important. We are doing everything we can to assist in the council. I will get my CEO to talk through some of the things we are doing to try to assist with some of the problems with youth crime.

Basically, from a resident's perspective, there are people who are not feeling that safe in their homes anymore. I am definitely hearing that from people who are now putting up six-foot fences. Definitely the older people are not feeling as safe anymore. As I said, this is a new challenge for Mount Isa. We have not seen this number of children roaming the streets before.

As a council, we have talked to nearly every organisation that we can to highlight the situation we are in and ask for help. I would welcome being investigated as a city to see where the gaps are and to find out how we can fix the situation, because at the end of the day these are children and they are our future. As a Mount Isa child, I had a great experience growing up here. Any child who lives in Mount Isa should have the opportunity to have a safe and fulfilling childhood while living in Mount Isa. I will hand over to my CEO now.

Mr Keenan: Thank you, Madam Mayor. Madam Chair, thank you again for the opportunity to make a contribution to this committee. There are a couple of things from the mayor that I will follow up with and then there are a couple of other initiatives that I will speak about as well.

The mayor is right: Mount Isa is facing a challenge that it has not had before in relation to issues with youth crime and young people on the streets at the moment. On any given night it is estimated that there are up to about 20 to 25 young people walking up and down the streets. I am not sure where their parents are. Some of those people are local people and some of them are not local people, but it is having an impact on the City of Mount Isa, very much from a safety point of view, as pointed out by the mayor, but also from an amenity point of view. I am disappointed to see that graffiti has been put up over the weekend that my staff will clean up yet again. They do that on a repeated basis.

We are working with all agencies to try to deal with these issues. There is a shortage of carers in the area which we have been informed about. There is also a need to try to find meaningful things for a lot of young people to do. One of the initiatives ties in to the blue cards, which is mentioned as part of this committee's investigations. At council we are currently supporting all our staff with a payment of \$300 to get involved in sports. They can use that to join a sporting club. They can use it to join a gym. The premise we work on is that if they are on their way to getting physically fit then they are on their way to getting mentally fit. We are also hoping that those staff who take up the opportunity actually go into an organisation, a sporting organisation, and suddenly they have a network of people around them. They can do volunteer work and fill those dreadful roles on committees such as treasurer—I have been treasurer too many times—get involved with the community through that as well and hopefully bring more young people.

Blue cards are particularly important in a population that is ageing rapidly. The number of volunteers that we have across the board is diminishing at the moment. Anything that streamlines the process, whether it be by getting a blue card or anything else, needs to be taken into account because we need as many volunteers as we possibly can for the different sporting organisations. Hopefully I will not get into trouble for saying that I know that at the moment softball is struggling to get enough people. I know that each sporting organisation goes through surges of being very popular and then Mount Isa

waning a bit. At the moment, council is certainly doing an ambitious program of capital works to make sure that a high standard of sporting facilities is put in place to get more people involved in sport and keep them going down that path.

The Mount Isa City Council certainly does not have the solutions, but we are happy to be involved in trying to go down any of those paths that deliver solutions to make this place appeal to a whole diverse range of people so people can come here to work, live and recreate safely, get a good education, as pointed out by the mayor, and enjoy the lifestyle that is offered here in Mount Isa.

CHAIR: Thank you, David, for that introduction. The payment to staff to join a sporting club is one of the great initiatives that I have heard in my work so far with this committee, so well done to all of you and congratulations on such a tremendous initiative. Before I hand over to the deputy chair for the first question, I acknowledge the member for Traeger. It is great to have you here, Robbie, and thanks so much for giving up your time today.

Mr BENNETT: Good morning, everyone. You raised the blue card issue, and of course our committee is hearing of a lot of issues around that. I guess where we are in Mount Isa could be seen as rural and remote. We are hearing barriers to employment opportunities because of the current blue card system and the proposed changes introduce another level of barrier with domestic violence. Would you be happy to comment about the issues you may see with the current blue card system and the barriers to employment, because we know that with employment comes dignity, opportunity and all of those things?

Mr Keenan: Council is in a position where it requires some of its staff to go through the blue card process. If I am not mistaken, our events staff go through the blue card process. I go through the blue card process and councillors should be going through the blue card process as well, simply because of the interaction with a big diversity of people across the area. I guess what we are always looking for is effective and simple—that is, processes that can be very effective and have a quick turnaround but at the same time pick up all of the issues that are associated with obtaining a blue card. It would be helpful for us to know in all circumstances where a blue card is mandatory. We do not always know that answer, so sometimes we guess that answer.

On the domestic violence front, I do not believe council is in a position to make a comment in relation to domestic violence. That is really out of our jurisdiction. What we are very concerned about is making sure that all employees' records are very much kept confidential and that no additional information comes out about any employee. It should be remembered that Mount Isa probably has one of the higher domestic violence rates, so it is something we are very conscious of and I would encourage the committee to seek feedback from the police in that regard as well.

Mayor Slade: If I could just clarify, prior to about three weeks ago the police only recorded statistics on domestic violence if there was actually a complaint put forward and then about three weeks ago they changed it so there are statistics now if property is damaged or if there is violence of any kind. They are now recording that stat, so I think last month it was 150-odd domestic violence incidents and, because of this change, it then went to 550 for the month—quite an incredible number of DVs.

Mr SKELTON: I note in your opening statement you referred to a few issues and I would ask you to have a look at the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that has received assent already, and obviously it has taken some months for that to come in. With regard to domestic violence and the reporting of it, obviously it is much broader now and that weighs on the statistics. You were talking before about our information sharing with other states and territories. Do you have any comment on this? Obviously you are saying that that is a positive thing but that there might be implementation issues.

Mayor Slade: What we have found is that Mount Isa is very close to the Northern Territory border—we are two hours away from the actual borderline—so we have not just the Queensland communities come to Mount Isa but also the Northern Territory communities come to Mount Isa. When you are talking about First Nations people, there are 30-plus different tribes that live within Mount Isa. One of the questions that I have asked of state government departments is whether they liaise with their Northern Territory counterparts and they do not, so there is no crossover of information when it comes to housing, for instance.

Mr Keenan: The mayor and council have been working very closely in relation to this, and this diverts off a little bit but still stays in the same direction where you are, and the local member has been giving us a hand on this one as well, and that is in relation to the liquor accord and in relation to trying to see what the impact of the change in the liquor laws has been in the Northern Territory. Whilst it has worked out very well for the Northern Territory for those liquor laws to change, it has

meant that we have suddenly had a huge number of people come into Mount Isa from Alice Springs, from Tennant Creek—from right across the board—because there are no restrictions on the alcohol. What would be helpful is to have, as the mayor said, jurisdictions that actually matched up with each other so we are all doing the same thing. Unfortunately at the moment, we are not all doing the same thing. That being said, we have had very good meetings with the office of the Chief Minister from the Northern Territory and some really good meetings—I think it either just occurred last Friday or will occur this Friday—where the commissioners of police will get together from the Northern Territory and our highest person here from police, and I think it is Rhys Newton. They are going to have a chat about how we can better do those jurisdiction things, because otherwise it becomes really difficult, as the mayor said, in relation to housing. It becomes difficult in relation to transport and also trying to identify where young people are. The mayor has concerns that young people are not necessarily being picked up for school and education.

Mayor Slade: Yes. It is up to the education department to flag if a child is not attending school and we believe there are probably 50 kids in Mount Isa at the current time who have probably never been registered in a Mount Isa school, so no-one is looking for them.

Mr BERKMAN: Thanks very much for taking the time to join us this morning. I am interested in the youth justice issues you raised in the opening statement. Statewide, the statistics show us that a really high proportion of those kids who are involved in the criminal legal system are also involved in the child protection system—the crossover kids as they call them. Is that your experience here in Isa as well? Is it the same kids who need support through the child protection system who are encountering police most often?

Mayor Slade: While I do not work in that industry, I do talk to people who work in the industry and it seems that there are children on bail conditions and also in the childcare system and they are still, every single night, walking around Mount Isa at all hours of the morning. So these are under Child Safety and they are under bail conditions, yet every night they are still roaming the streets. That is our experience at the moment.

Mr Keenan: Yes, they are the same children. They are aged somewhere between nine and 15. Oddly enough, once they get over about 16 or 17 they are not really there; they disappear to somewhere else. It would be great to see some very effective guidance programs put into place to help these young people. The strange thing is that we are not short of jobs here. If you take the time to walk around this city, on every second shopfront you will see a sign seeking someone to work. There are 250 jobs over at the mine at this point in time—right now. There is a new Bunnings that will be opened by January of next year. They need 70 people to work there. I talked to the owner of the Coffee Club, and he indicated that he closes on a Monday and would like to open at night but he simply cannot get staff. Again, this is about trying to find a meaningful purpose for a lot of people— young people—here. Again, the Coles and the Woolworths are consistently looking for people to go and work there as well, so it is not as if there are not enough employment opportunities. There are. There are enough training opportunities through the TAFE as well. It is a matter of steering people in that right direction and giving them support—not just dropping them at the door but giving them support—and taking them all the way through the whole process. It is really important to do that.

Mr BERKMAN: Yes.

Mayor Slade: Going back to my first point with regard to talking to different agencies across the sharing of information, one of the things that has been brought to my attention is that the money that the parent gets for the child does not follow the child wherever the child goes. It can actually stay with the parent who is probably not playing a part anywhere from a shortened period of time to a very long period of time. One thing that could really help is if the money follows the child to wherever the child goes, in Child Safety or foster or wherever, so that communication between the Commonwealth and the states could be a real game changer.

Mr BERKMAN: From what you have said, it sounds to me very much like the changes that are proposed to the child protection system—the bill we are looking at at the moment—are far from being a complete solution and in fact need to work hand in glove with a variety of other government departments, programs and supports for kids and their families who do not strictly sit within the child protection system. Is that a fair comment?

Mayor Slade: I read through it and I think it is a great start. That is what the agencies are asking for—sharing information—because at the moment if that child who is under Child Safety gets picked up at three o'clock in the morning, you do not want the police to pick that child up and take them to that home where the child was removed from. That child needs to go back to where he or she should be—that is, he or she should be in Child Safety. There is a real need to share information, Mount Isa

and obviously it is very confidential information. Also, if a child has been abused in whatever manner, the parents getting the child should also have that information, because how are they going to provide all of the supports that that child needs to recover if they are not aware of any previous abuse? There is a really strong case there to give that person who wants to be a carer that information, because that information could help them become a better carer.

Mr BERKMAN: Thanks very much.

Ms LUI: My question is probably more of a general one. Do you feel that the government is doing enough to do these consultations across Queensland for everyone to have a voice?

Mayor Slade: I am really grateful. I think coming to Mount Isa is a fantastic start because we really do have one of the biggest Indigenous populations in Queensland, so for you to turn up here tells me you know what you are doing, because we definitely have not only a huge Indigenous population but also a mix of, like I said, 30 different tribes. For you to come here and hear our voice is a really great start. When I went through the bill I thought, 'Yes, that's good, that's good, that's good.' Again, it probably does not go far enough, and that is why I would invite you to recommend that Mount Isa gets investigated, because we are big enough for you to see where the gaps are but small enough to make it an achievable project. I feel like there are gaps and that every organisation here would welcome the investigation because everyone wants the best outcome for the kids and there is a level of frustration.

Mr Keenan: I might just change the word 'investigation' to 'review'. I get very nervous when I hear the word investigation. There should be a review of services that are delivered, whether they are funded from the state government, the federal government or the not-for-profit sector, to see how effective that service delivery has been over the last two years or pick a number you like from there. Just do a review and say, 'Is it working? What could be done better if it's not? What are the things that are working really well, and if those things are working really well why aren't we giving them more resources to do that?' Perhaps not an investigation; we will do a review. That review would be welcome because there is a lot of funding that comes into Mount Isa to deal with social and community issues and youth specific issues as well. However, trying to identify whether that has been effectively spent would be really important.

Mayor Slade: I do not think I would know one organisation that would not welcome it. They are all dealing with fatigue. Like I said, they all want the best outcome for the children and we are not achieving that. In the last five years we have found ourselves in a situation none of us have ever seen before. A review would be welcomed. It might be a good learning experience for the rest of the state.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for your input and your local experience and local knowledge. Thank you for your concerns and detail of some of the benefits of the bill. We very much appreciate you giving up your time to share that with us. Thank you sincerely for your time. I know that our committee will certainly take on board your feedback. Thank you again. We will now have to move on to the next witness, who is joining us by teleconference.

We have a little bit of a change to our program. We were hoping to speak to Alvin Hava, the General Manager of Young People Ahead, who is not available on the phone right now. Instead, we will move to the open mic session where we provide the opportunity for a number of our visitors who have come this morning to share with us your experience of the organisation you are working with and your feedback on the bill. Considering we still have the mayor and deputy mayor here, we may have some further questions. We will spend the next half an hour doing some sharing and engaging in an open mic session to hear a little bit more about some of the needs and the feedback of the community. I ask those of you who would like to contribute to come forward and sit at the table, the only reason being that Hansard cannot pick up the voices unless you are sitting at a mic. Be brave and come forward.

CONNELLY, Mr Michael, Private capacity

KHAN, Mr Faisal, Private capacity

KUZMANOVIC, Mr Adam, Manager, Youth Hub

McLURE, Ms Helen, Churches of Christ in Queensland

SHERRY, Ms Marissa, Churches of Christ in Queensland

CHAIR: We will spend the next half an hour doing some sharing. I will ask each organisation to give a brief opening statement, after which the committee will have a number of questions for you. We will start with these lovely gentlemen on my left. Could you introduce yourselves and state a little bit about your organisation and some of your feedback on the bill?

Mr Kuzmanovic: My name is Adam Kuzmanovic and beside me is Evan Ah Wing. We are managers of the Youth Hub in Mount Isa. We are funded under Youth Justice. Part of our funding is to offer a 24-hour outreach program for the youth who are disengaged in Mount Isa. In regards to the bill, we probably have not seen too much effect in Mount Isa at this stage, but we are hoping.

I just want to give a little bit more feedback. I know that the mayor and the CEO touched on it a bit, but the 24 young people that we are talking about is a real figure. Last week and the week before on average there were between 24 and 25 kids per night and the youngest was eight years old. The leader of these little packs is 12 years old and their biggest feedback to us is, 'What are you going to do?' The worst thing that happens to a young person who is caught in a criminal act is they go to an Airbnb in Townsville where they are fed, they have a roof over their head, a comfy bed and activities. That is what they want. When we look at how we can help these young people, we need to look a little bit further. On the weekend we had a 12-year-old steal a car and do burnouts for half an hour in traffic. He does not mind because, again, the worst thing that happens is he gets a comfy bed and somewhere safe to stay.

The other part we face is that every night there is an eight-year-old out at three o'clock in the morning—a little eight-year-old—and there is nothing we can do. We do not know who to call when we try to get these young people home—what home? There is partying, drinking and overcrowding. At three o'clock in the morning, who do we call to get these young people into a safe place? We can call the police, but the police call us to help them. It is a very difficult situation that we are in because we want to help. We are out there. We will do as much as we can. We will even do the things we are not funded to do because we are there. It is just a really broken system. These are the challenges that we face every single night.

The other thing we find is that there are young people who do want to get out of this. They do not want to do crime or hang out; they want to go to boarding school. They want to leave town just to get away from it. However, boarding schools want them to do a term in a school. If they stay here and do a term, they are going to be around the same kids so it is not going to work. That is set up to fail. The second part is that the parents or the guardian will not sign for the young person to go to a boarding school because they lose that payment.

When we are trying to help young people by putting them into sport, which is great, or to go on a trip or to do something different, sometimes we have to go to the pokies at two o'clock in the morning to get a form signed. It is very difficult. In the past quarter we had around 320 kids on our books—24 are disengaged and all up there are around 40. At this stage we are doing interviews with all the young people who are very disengaged and we are sending that to Youth Justice. We will be recording on video with consent and sending why they are doing the things they do and what they want out of life. It is very difficult.

The other thing that comes up again is that there is a lot of organisations to deal with young people in Mount Isa that are funded very well, but we are the only one that operates 24 hours. More funding has just been given out in the last four weeks. Why wasn't that 24 hours as well? Why is it just us? We can only do as much as we can. It is well overfunded. We can do a lot more if we work together, but we do not.

CHAIR: Thank you, Adam, for your feedback. I now welcome Helen and Marissa. Welcome and thank you for being here.

Ms Sherry: Helen and I are representatives of Churches of Christ Care. We are an out-of-home care service provider to children who are subject to statutory intervention under Child Safety. We do operate 24-hour services. We have two residentials at the moment which house young Mount Isa

people who are unable to be placed in the foster care system primarily due to their behaviours and lack of engagement in a family based care arrangement. We currently have 132 children and young people aged zero to 18 placed in our services which are in Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Doomadgee and Mornington Island. They are placed in a range of different arrangements.

Just picking up on a number of points that have been made this morning, when I think about the changes to the legislation, it is a drop in the ocean compared to the rest of system that is really broken. I gave evidence at the Carmody inquiry in 2011. That inquiry saw us raise the threshold of harm. Previously the legislation was that children had to be at risk of harm or significant harm occurring to them. However, we are now at a place where removal from homes generally occurs after harm has already been experienced by that child. Data and evidence provides us very clear information that fixing a hurt child is much harder than fixing a family with supports and early intervention. One of the things that we have not seen in Mount Isa that other areas of this state have seen is the rollout of the family intervention—FAC and IFS—services. We do have an IFS service here and a FAC, but the level of take-up and engagement with families is quite limited because the generational levels of harm and dysfunction in families are so entrenched that it is really hard to break that cycle.

From our point of view in terms of what we see with our kids and the court system, we do work with some of those young people who have been referred to today in stolen cars and involved in the youth justice system. One of the things that we see is that kids will go before a magistrate for a matter that occurred 12 months ago. During those 12 months they have committed a number of other offences, and kids just forget what they have done. We have kids with rap sheets pages and pages long and they are not being dealt with promptly or adequately. Kids are then of the opinion that nothing happens because they go before a magistrate who says, 'If I see you here again, you will go to detention.' Next week it will be exactly the same story with the same message delivered, so there is no consequence for young people. I am certainly not at any point going on record saying I believe detention is the answer for our kids.

The other level of disengagement is that the education systems that our kids have access to are really limited. If they do not fit into mainstream schooling, we have an alternative schooling program. However, in our experience lots of our kids do not fit into that alternative education system or they say to us, 'We don't go because it is boring. We are not learning anything.'

It is interesting to hear the discussion that we have seen it worsen in Mount Isa over the last five years. As part of my role I cover Townsville youth services as well. We are all very aware of the media coverage of the youth crime matters in Townsville. I am not sure that things are worse than they have been before. I just think we are seeing more of it. We see it on Facebook and Instagram and Pinterest and all of those social media platforms. I guess there is no level of intervention or there is no course of deterrence for our kids to stop engaging in some of those antisocial behaviours. Certainly the boarding school issue is a real issue. Kids are wanting to go to boarding school and are then criticised by their peers and their families. That is a real struggle for kids.

Ms McLure: I guess I just wanted to acknowledge, as Adam was saying, that there were some videos being sent with the child's opinion. We had the unique opportunity of assisting with a residential service in September last year where the current provider at that time stepped out of the space. We headed in with two young girls who were part of a group of young people who went to town every night and walked around and did whatever they wanted to do. Relatively quickly, those two young girls disengaged from that group and were then ostracised from the majority of the group that were roaming the streets. When we asked them why they did that, they identified that they had a safe place, they wanted to stay in at night and they did not want to do all that stuff again because they were cared about, they had food, they had clothing and they went on activities.

When we then asked the young girls why the other young people were now enemies and wanted to hurt them quite significantly, they said, 'Because they know that we are safe, they know that we have somewhere to live, they know that we have food and when we need clothes we get them bought and don't have to steal them.' It was really exciting to hear that you guys are getting those views and wishes from the young people. We have had those over the years.

I have worked in the residential space now for 10 years and there have been moments in time when the young people as they are older are able to reflect on what we have done, and it all centres on safety, care, love and on somewhere they are feeling respected and their voices are heard. I am really proud of the fact that as an organisation we do not have a resi; we have a home. It has been reflected on by numerous QPS officers who have come in. A lot of our QPS officers are cycling around and they come from bigger cities and they do their time in Mount Isa. We have had it reflected on a number of occasions, 'Wow, this is not a resi; this is a home.' We start off with the young people

referring to the resi. Within probably the best part of a month they are saying, 'I'll be home later.' That reflection is from the kids, and hopefully a lot of these interviews that Adam is talking about will be recorded and presented to the likes of you guys because, essentially, it has not changed in 10 or 12 years. It is somewhere safe. It is somewhere secure. It is somewhere that they are heard.

We are often referred to as the do-gooders and the marshmallows and all those things. What we do have is consequences. We talk about consequences. We talk about the reasons you should not be doing these things. As Marissa said, there is a lot of time between the legal side of things but within that time we are talking about the whys and the hows and what it does to futures.

Also on the boarding school angle, a lot of the time boarding schools will need proof of attendance, so if they cannot attend here or mainstream or alternative education, they just do not have the proof of attendance. They want to do it. We know they want to do it. Striking while the iron is hot with these young people is the key. If they are getting up and going to school, we just want to walk into a school. We do not necessarily have the luxury of a meeting. The principal is not here so we have to do the meeting tomorrow. We had a young girl the other week who was re-engaging with school. She slept in her uniform. She packed her lunch the night before. She got up and went to school. They had the wrong meeting. She needed another meeting. That reflected her entering mainstream as opposed to the alternative arm of the school so she went home and we have not been able to get her back. Just those little things all add up—safety and security and comfort and love and not going back to the house that is drinking. Where else do you go? Thank you.

CHAIR: Helen and Marissa, thank you sincerely for sharing your stories. Certainly the ray of hope that you provided in those stories was really encouraging. You are right: our young people need love and security. It comes back to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, really, doesn't it? Thank you for joining us today, Michael Connelly and Faisal Khan. I will hand over to you both just to provide a little bit of detail about the organisation through which you work. If you have any feedback on the Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, that would be great. Then I will hand to your wonderful local member, Robbie Katter, who I am sure will have a question for you. Thank you.

Mr Connelly: I am going to be short and simple, probably because I do not even know if I should be here. I got an invite from Faisal. I am actually a psychologist who works up in Townsville and I visit out this way once a month to do a bit of work with the Youth Hub and Noogathardi. I was born and bred just down the road, at Cloncurry. It has always been a bit of a dream, a goal, a passion to come back and do a bit of work closer to home. In my first year in uni they told me, 'You can't work with family,' so I thought, 'Bugger.' Here I am, though. I made it somehow and I have had this wonderful opportunity to start working with amazing people like Adam and Evan and the NWQICSS organisation as a whole.

In terms of young people, I guess my experience and background has been that I have done about four years up at a school called Abergowrie St Teresa's, which is a boarding school that specialises in Indigenous education. During that time I have seen a lot of I guess what we call trauma, whether that is domestic violence, family breakdown and even transgenerational or intergenerational trauma, which is talking around colonisation and the massive detriment that has had on the history of Aboriginal and to some extent Torres Strait Islander people.

I think when we look at the problems that face youth today, we really need to be aware of trauma as a catalyst for ongoing behaviour and look at it in terms of an idea around attachment, secure relationships and peer orientation. Unfortunately, if those attachments and secure relationships are not happening with families—whether that is mum, dad, aunties, uncles or grandparents—then that child will try to find it in any way possible. Unfortunately, what happens is that they are starting to form these relationships amongst each other and it just takes one kid who has a lot of trouble and a lot of needs to say, 'This is the way we look after each other. If there is not a safe home then we create a safe little community amongst each other.'

Peer orientation occurs especially around adolescence. We know that young people in particular start to form more of a relationship amongst themselves and others, whether they are the kids that we are unfortunately seeing on the street or the kids that we are seeing in schools. It is just natural that we start to look at mum and dad and say, 'You're not as cool as we'd like you to be.' I guess our challenge is that we need to in some way form positive relationships for these kids to have that safe home, have that safe place, have those safe people in their lives so that instead of going out and committing youth crime there is that alternative pathway there. I am a very big believer in the saying that children do good when they can.

Mr Khan: I am here because of Father Mick, who was supposed to be here but unfortunately could not attend. The honourable mayor and the chief executive officer of Mount Isa City Council talked about a few issues such as the blue card and record sharing. The majority of the service Mount Isa

agreements issued in Mount Isa say that you need culturally appropriate staff. To get to that point you need a positive blue card. Something might have happened 20 years ago but the person cannot get a blue card. NWQICSS is an organisation that is trying to support Indigenous people the best we can, but this is a hurdle for us to employ culturally appropriate staff. We need cultural staff because, at the end of the day, there are certain things—and please do not get me wrong: we cannot convey to the kid what a culturally appropriate staff member can convey, because they can talk about the issues much more openly than us.

The second point is the record sharing. I was talking to Father Mick once and, from memory, there was a mental health assessment done on one of the kids and no-one was privy to have a look at it. I believe it was only the magistrate who was authorised to look at it. No-one had the opportunity to look at the mental health assessment and work on that kid. That is something we need to look at. I am glad Adam and Michael are here.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, everyone. Already what you have shared with us is tremendously insightful so thank you sincerely. I will turn to Robbie Katter MP, who I am sure will have a question for the panel.

Mr KATTER: Thank you. Faisal, you just stole my thunder. I wanted to ask a question about buy-in, because I am always interested about buy-in. I know everything you do and everyone puts in a wonderful effort, but sometimes there is a limit as to how much you can cut through. Often I find that there are a lot of people who cannot get accreditation or you cannot get on board. It is not always a blue card. They are the ones who can talk to the family and get some buy-in with the parents.

I would be interested to tease that out a bit more than just blue cards—I am big on the blue card—and how you can procure those people who do get the cut-through right back to the household and the family. You were saying, Helen, that kids are just after safety. I totally agree that is the case with some of the cohort, but I think that falls a bit short, and I would be interested to hear a psychologist's point of view. I think sometimes that gets given as the only reason they are there. My own personal view is that there are some layers of trauma, which in some cases are pretty severe, and I find hard to comprehend that makes them angry. A lady was punched in the face on the weekend. They broke into her home. Some of that transcends looking for a bed or safety. That has not been mentioned too much. I am interested to hear a response to that. I think some of those activities transcend looking for safety and shelter. Perhaps the antidote is the same, but I would just like to make that point.

The last comment I would make is that Community Connect is sitting there. It has not been mentioned and they are not here. I am not saying it is a silver bullet. We are talking about getting better access to mental health records. To me it seems like a pretty good conduit to some of what you need. I have not framed that question very well, but it has not come up. Is it of any benefit or does it have value in coordinating housing, youth justice and then referring on to you guys? Those are the three points I raise for comment: the buy-in with the adults; the spectre of kids with trauma who we are trying to deal with and whether it is more than just kids looking for security; and Community Connect. That is directed at no-one in particular.

Mr Kuzmanovic: I will have a stab at that first. In terms of Community Connect, when I first started in this industry that was the first place I went to because, obviously, there was nowhere that you could really go for a bit of guidance. I hold Community Connect right up there. I meet with them every Wednesday at 10 o'clock. Mostly I meet with QPS and Education. It is important to have that relationship with Community Connect because it does cut the red tape.

When we are talking about the 50-odd disengaged kids—not just the 24 or 25—we can cut the red tape and find out where a young person was originally enrolled, what they have done and where we can get that young person into. It cuts all the red tape. We are doing things straightaway and not waiting months. If I have any questions for the QPS, I also go through the QPS side of Community Connect and get an answer pretty much straightaway. Community Connect helps NWQICSS so much. We get things done that week, not a month or two later. We get any questions answered straightaway.

The other thing you mentioned was kids with trauma. You are right that all kids are different. Some kids have been evaluated. They have different traumas. We do not get to know any of that. Under the child safety provisions, if a kid is being evaluated or has any concerns or issues, we are not going to be told that. The only time we know the young person is going through anything is if they mention it to us. This is the whole information-sharing issue in this very broken system.

If a young person has gone through trauma or has been through abuse or DV, unless we are told, which we will not be, they will join our activity. If they want to talk to us, they can talk to us. If we get a young person assessed, we cannot share that information either. We have a young person that

we had assessed who has had huge trauma, but we cannot tell anyone that. We know that they are in another program right now and we would love to share that information with them, because they need to know before this young person goes out on country. We do have a big problem with sharing information. We have a big problem with working together. For a lot of these funded organisations it is a business, so why would we share? It is very hard. It is very broken.

Mr SKELTON: You are all competing for the same funds.

Mr Kuzmanovic: Absolutely. It is a business. I have made it no secret that I will share with anyone who wants to know any of our data and how we do things. We copied things from Lighthouse in Townsville when we first started. They were a big help. Do not wait months to change something; change it tomorrow and see if it works. Again, these kids are out at night. Organisations need to be out at night. What are you going to do during the day?

Ms Sherry: In terms of questions around the impact of trauma on kids, I was earlier talking about early intervention. When kids are exposed to high levels of violence, drug use—all of those things that you know happen in our families with our kids—that has detrimental effects. If services were going in at a much earlier stage, when we knew families were struggling, that would help. We have families that have generations of kids in care. We are only 21, but we are seeing kids of kids we cared for coming into care. Nothing is changing. What we are doing is not working in the child safety space. There is a unique perspective that should be here—that is, the child safety staff of the Mount Isa-Gulf Child Safety Service Centre. We have an incredible relationship in working with them, but they have a tough gig. Their resources and their staffing do not come anywhere near meeting the needs of families and children.

In terms of sharing information, assessments and diagnoses, when you start to talk about that level of information on kids I always act with extreme caution around sharing kids' stories. Our kids' stories are shared at the level that is people who need to know need to know. If there is no need for that information to be shared, especially around trauma, I do not see the point in sharing it at a multiagency level unless it is relevant. Obviously if there is a safety issue that is involved with those kids or staff, that needs to be shared. In the spirit of human rights, our kids have the right to privacy and confidentiality as well.

In terms of the level of information sharing that we have with the department of child safety, I have a good example of how the department shares relevant information with us as a licensed care service. It is very different to the framework that NWQICSS is working under as we are a licensed service. There are polar differences. We worked with a group of four young people from Mornington Island a number of years ago. They came to Mount Isa under some pretty significant safety and criminal justice matters. The level of information that was shared by Child Safety, QPS and the Griffith Youth Forensic Service in Brisbane was second to none. We as a service provider providing care for those children knew exactly what we needed to know, but we did not know what we did not need to know. I think it needs to be balanced when it comes to our kids' stories being told over and over again. They have all these adults in their lives making choices for them and thinking they know what is right for them, but would we all like our stories to be told? I think there needs to be a place for that story and information to be shared.

In terms of the blue card system, whilst it has been a very clunky system in the past, I think we are getting better. We see it with foster carers. We currently have 87 approved foster carers across the north-west region. Issues in the system come up when they need to come up. They are flagged because someone has DV or whatever. It is about protecting the safety of kids. That is what any blue card suitability process should be checking.

You were talking about the buy-in and kids being fed, but it is more. When Helen was talking about those girls feeling safe, they had been rejected by their community and they had been rejected by their family because they disclosed that they had been harmed by a family member. They were very violent young women who assaulted quite a number of staff along the way. It is not just about food and having somewhere safe to stay but being cared for and having those emotional needs met and obviously support services like psychs and Evolve. One of the limitations that exists in Mount Isa is access to health providers such as psychiatrists. Our kids have to go to Townsville or we have people come into town for a week and they do an assessment that should be done over a period of time done in three hours.

Ms McLure: On the back of what Marissa was saying about the assaults and the very violent young women and the consequences that come from working in the youth work industry, one of our frameworks is therapeutic crisis intervention. We train staff not to let it get to that level of outburst and crisis and, if it does get to the level of outburst and crisis, what to do to follow that up such as teach Mount Isa

better ways to learn to cope with stress. I have been utilising therapeutic crisis intervention for about eight years. It is something that works. There are many similar programs out there. I am not suggesting that that is the only one.

It is about talking and listening to a young person and also acknowledging that anger is okay. It is okay for everyone to be angry, but it is what we do with it that is the problem. That is what happens with the cohort downtown. I absolutely agree with what you are saying, Robbie. Is it just kids who have been traumatised? I am not a psychologist, but trauma comes at many levels and in so many ways. We have seen it manifest in a million ways over the years. You can never pick it.

What I can say with certainty is that it is better when young people are shown that they have a voice and are being heard and consequences are not heaped on them. We know about age-appropriate consequences for young people. It takes a lot of time for staff in the residential area to understand this as well. When something huge has happened and the consequence generally has been dealt with by the police, we do not necessarily have a consequence in-house. Their consequence is being dealt with by the police, which is a huge consequence. They get to go on the activities the next day. They get to go to places like the Youth Hub that has programs that take kids out bush and educational programs. They get to do that because if we heap consequences on these young people, what is the point? I do not know where I was going with that.

I also agree with the comments about the trauma and anger that some young people have. The difference in the young kids that I worked with about eight years ago and some of the young people I see now is the extreme level of anger—a level of anger that I have not seen in a long time—and the antisocial behaviour. We have had across the residential space in the last 10 years some of the highest recidivist offenders, but they were not doing the antisocial things that we are seeing now. They were not walking into shops and pushing over things. They were not abusing shop staff. I am not minimising the criminal activity—if it is against the law, it is against the law—but they were not walking out of our house wanting to cause chaos and havoc. From my point of view and that of a few others who have travelled the residential space in Mount Isa for many years, that level of anger has not been seen in a while.

Mr Connelly: It is interesting, because trauma is such a broad term that comprises so many different things. We talked about how DV and reporting has changed to now there is physical damage and physical assault et cetera. Trauma is very similar in that it is not just a physical thing but also an emotional thing—it is a relationship. In order to answer your question around whether it is just trauma, probably not, but I think it is also important to acknowledge that the young people we see today all have their own stories, their own narratives and their own experiences and history. What might be traumatic for one person for another person in a very similar situation can end differently. Part of that comes down to their capacity to cope with that trauma or their capacity to access the resources like those of the lovely ladies sitting next to us from Churches of Christ and housing.

Part of trauma is actually a biological functioning, which when you think about it is very physical. It is about the brain and how it functions. When we go through trauma, we start to rely on this thing called our brain stem, which regulates our body. It is the fight/flight response. As we develop, what happens for somebody who does not experience trauma is that they start to use other parts of their brain, the emotional centre of their brain: I feel happy, I feel angry, I am able to articulate that. Then they go into the logical section of their brain: two plus two equals four. With trauma, their reliance is on the brain stem so their reliance is on behaviours and strategies that they know are there, which is fight/flight.

I have done work with young people and, quite simply, you have to work with the brain when they go through these types of emotions and these types of feelings. The first step is always to establish safety: brain stem. Discuss the emotion and what is going on: 'You look like you feel angry.' I think it is the limbic system. Then prefrontal: 'We can start to talk about some consequences for your behaviour. It is not appropriate. I can understand why you went through it.' That takes a lot of time. That takes a lot of relationship. That takes building.

Earlier I talked about attachment. What we know with trauma and attachment is that our relationships go down the drain. There are about four different types of attachment: secure, which is as good as it sounds; avoidance—'I actually don't need an adult in my life. I don't need anybody. I'm fine being by myself'; anxious: 'I need you, I need you, I need you, I need you,' but you are never really satisfied in that relationship; and then disorganised: 'I know that Mum should be my safe person but Mum also unfortunately hits me.' When we start to grow and develop, we start to apply those same concepts to our other relationships—'All adults are this person who either gives me food or hits me'—so why wouldn't there be a degree of mistrust there? 'Why would I engage in a service if I don't know who they are or what they do?'

The best thing about trauma is that sometimes it is easy to solve because it is around consistency of building a relationship and knowing that you are there. But say I made a promise to a kid when I was working at the school and I did not follow through. All I am going to do is reinforce that disorganised attachment and then that relationship goes down. But if that child knows that no matter whether they are angry, are upset or are becoming violent this person can manage or handle that emotion or that feeling, the child will start to go to him and start to regulate. We constantly work through the brain. From a psychological standpoint, I know I make it sound simple but I am very clear that this is an incredibly complex issue. I think Adam touched on it well, that we need to work together in order to solve it.

The beautiful thing that I have been loving about this—and I have only started coming to Mount Isa since July—is that there are people who are willing to do it. I think we just have to be a bit clearer in terms of our communication. We might not be able to share the information as well, because I am a big believer in confidentiality and protecting that child. If it is not in the child's best interest and I do not have consent, I will not share that information. If it is in the child's best interests, I seek consent and I try and share that information.

Our communication and what is getting done for these children is probably the big thing. They should be in schools and in education. They should have alternative programs. We should be looking at what their basic needs are, their cognitive functioning, whether there is trauma there, where they are at in terms of emotions, whether they can actually handle a classroom from eight to three. There are all these questions and, I will be quite honest, I do not have all the answers for them. I feel like there is something here within this community that we can look at that can provide a bit more support for the children we engage with.

Mr Khan: Michael and Adam talked about working together. I would like to bring to your attention that recently our new service has been funded and the model is pretty similar to the Youth Hub. We are not claiming that we should have got the contract, but at least someone should have come and talked to us and we could have identified the gaps and spent the money in a much better space rather than having two similar models working in Mount Isa.

The second thing is about the blue card. The way we look at it is that something might have happened 20 or 15 years ago. A person says, 'I want to get a blue card.' They put in an application, which is rejected. What happens next is that the person cannot get employment. They are unemployed. They go back on Centrelink and get involved in drugs and alcohol. Domestic violence starts. Eventually the kid gets in trauma again, and the anger and everything starts from there. Probably a holistic model needs to be developed to address all those issues.

Mr BENNETT: Thanks, panel. Your information has been great. Were any of you involved in any consultation prior to the drafting of the bill?

Ms Sherry: No.

Mr BENNETT: I figured that was the case, but I wanted to put it on the record. There were no submissions received from any of you. Are you aware of the parliamentary process, where these sorts of legislative reforms pop up in your inbox? In your inbox it is easy because you can delete it if you do not want to do it. Marissa, you did stuff with Carmody. I would have thought your input would have been welcomed in this inquiry. Are you aware of the process for getting the information that we are working on? If you look on the website you can subscribe to all of this information. The reason I encourage you to do that is that we would love to hear from you from time to time when these sorts of inquiries around these really important issues to your community are discussed. I welcome your comments.

Ms Sherry: Yes, I am aware of the process. Churches of Christ is a statewide organisation. I believe we have made a submission to the amendment and there is also the one coming up in November. Our due date is November. We do all have input into that process—regional managers, sorry. I acknowledge that the lead time for the feedback for this one was very short. I think that will have restricted the quality of some of the feedback that we can provide. Whether that was on the organisational side of things or the time frames that we were given, we certainly did experience a short time frame. We do try to have as much input into those processes as possible, especially when it impacts our kids. We have the benefit of only having referrals from Child Safety, so that is where we get our information or our kids from.

Mr BENNETT: Faisal, you have raised issues around the barriers to employment within the blue card system. Again, it is really important that we flush that out and have those conversations about what that looks like. Again I encourage you to think about subscribing to these sorts of legislative reforms.

Mr Khan: We are aware of these parliamentary sessions. I think Father Mickey did a submission on NWQICSS's behalf. I believe Father Mickey might have done something. He is pretty active.

Mr BENNETT: I better go and check.

Mr Khan: If not, he will do it soon.

CHAIR: Thank you, Faisal. If any of you do wish to subscribe to the work our parliamentary committee does, you can speak to any of us after this session and we would be really happy to show you how to subscribe.

Mr SKELTON: This is probably a two-pronged question. While being supportive of sharing information around children, obviously there is a lot of risk with that. How do we plough through that? If your role is that of a psychologist, it is in-confidence and so on. You are talking about people with complex issues. Would it be possible to put a flag on it but with no information, just to show that there has been something? What would your suggestions be and at what level? Obviously some people want as much information as possible, but there has to be a level where there is a cut-off to protect privacy and so forth.

Mr Connelly: I just say that communication is key.

Ms Sherry: Under the child protection legislation, information is shared with us openly and freely. I think Adam's services are very different to ours because we have the authority to care for that child. The level of information that we are able to have under the act sounds like it is far greater than what NWQICSS is able to access. I do not really have a view of how that could work because I have the benefit of having that information all the time.

Mr Connelly: From my other work, I think it just comes down to communication and a discussion around consent to release information for the young person or from their carers or guardians. Sometimes that might be Child Safety. For my role and, I guess, as a psychologist, we have an agreement around consent and confidentiality. I can release information if I ask that young person or the client I am working with, 'Do you give me permission to release this information to such and such?' I would generally have a discussion with that young person around the benefits and, I guess, the concerns of releasing such information to them.

Mr Kuzmanovic: Probably to give a little more context to what I was saying about sharing information, one of the biggest ones is if a young person comes under Child Safety or a different foster, when do they tell the services that they also come under, like the Youth Hub? We will take a young person back home because that is where they are supposed to be, not knowing that that young person is now under Child Safety and has been put—

Mr SKELTON: In residential care.

Mr Kuzmanovic: Yes, so we are getting in trouble. What is the rule there?

Mr SKELTON: Good question. I was trying to find that out.

Mr Kuzmanovic: I have asked that one a lot.

Ms Sherry: Who are you getting into trouble with?

Mr Kuzmanovic: Who was it, Faisal? Do you remember who called us and asked us why we took that young—I think it was actually Child Safety themselves. My answer was, 'So what do we do?'

Ms Sherry: I know we had a meeting with Evan probably towards the end of last year around some young people being dropped off to our resi, because that was where all the cool kids went. That was pretty easily resolved. I can understand your frustration around that, because if you are then being told, 'What are you taking the kid home for when it is unsafe?', where is your crystal ball?

Mr Kuzmanovic: It is just another part that probably needs clarification for the young people. If they have made a decision that day that the young person is being moved, we do not know. We have a form in our system to say that this is where the young person lives.

Mr SKELTON: It is not up-to-date information, possibly? The information sharing occurs, but it is not necessarily up-to-date so that as soon as the person moves you are informed?

Mr Kuzmanovic: No. Churches of Christ let us know which young people are moved. Not all young people come under them. With the kids that do not come under Churches of Christ, the kids that are being fostered under Child Safety, they do not ever tell us. If you look at the disengaged kids that we are working with, there are 24 or 25 in a night. I can tell you that three-quarters of them are under Child Safety, but we are still going to take those kids to the original address that we have. We are putting those kids back in harm's way by taking them to the original address that we have.

Ms Sherry: If they are in fostering placements and they are out at those hours of the night, I would probably want to know about it anyway. Maybe we can look at that.

Mr Kuzmanovic: I think, Faisal, you were in that meeting last week with Child Safety. I am not having a stab at Child Safety or anything like that; I am just trying to get this so we know what we are doing to help the young people. If we have an eight-year-old out all week, who just broke into another fast-food shop and was in a stolen car, we call the police if that eight-year-old is out at night. When does Child Safety get called? 'Don't call us; call QPS.'

Mr SKELTON: You possibly need some youth responders here, which is another model that is being introduced.

Ms Sherry: Yes, rapid action.

Mr Kuzmanovic: And a safe place. Again, one of the biggest things is that it is very hard to help and support these young people because of the different layers of trauma. If you do not help and change that environment, it is twice as hard already. You can start another program to help like Evan runs. It is just taking one or two young people out bush for the day to getting them away and they are kids again. But it is two staff for two kids for a full day, just to give them a break.

Mr BERKMAN: We heard from both the mayor and the CEO of council before that they thought what they called a review—what sounds to me like a service-mapping exercise for the area—was really important. Is that something you would support? Would it be valuable for your purposes to get a clear picture of what services are available in and around Mount Isa and what is lacking in the way they have suggested?

Ms Sherry: I think, yes, it would be a beneficial task. As Adam and Faisal have mentioned, the introduction of new services to Mount Isa is something that we are experiencing. There are services that exist and have existed and continue to deliver quality services in Mount Isa for a number of years. It is a pretty competitive market as a service provider. When the commissioning team of the department are waving money in front of you, it is a survival mechanism for agencies but we are all fishing from the same pond. We have a service about to commence on 1 November and there are some pretty aggressive tactics that are occurring in terms of recruiting from other agencies, rather than looking at what services actually exist in Mount Isa and utilising the quality, knowledge and expertise that is here. They range from staff who are tertiary qualified to the local, born and bred and raised cultural expertise that no-one can come from Brisbane and drop it here in Mount Isa to make it work. I would welcome that opportunity to have a full understanding of what people are supposed to be doing and delivering on. Just by show of agencies that are not here today, there needs to be more buying into what we are doing in the community.

Mr Kuzmanovic: Yes, I think there does need to be service mapping. I keep on getting told that it has been, but what we really need to look at is not what they have published on the website as to what they do. What is their actual funding? What time do they finish? What is their KPI? This is information. I am finding out that organisations are open until this time or that time when, no, they are actually funded until later but they advertise they are open until six o'clock. No, they are funded until eight o'clock, so why is that not being put out? Why are they not made to share that information?

I do not like talking about funding or money, but the other thing is that when everyone goes for funding you need to look at the background. What have they been doing? What else do they do? What else do they do for the community? It is not just what looks great on paper. They are getting lawyers to write their applications. I wrote the last one and I am no lawyer. I think there needs to be more done in that space when people are going for funding and being transparent and having those meetings and looking at what they are actually funded to do.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you. I am going to have to stop because I have already run out of time. I am going to be cheeky and say that all of you are doing extraordinary work. Thank you so much for what you are doing. We are also inquiring into a bill that proposes to raise the age of criminal responsibility, which Marissa referred to before. If you have any scope to make a submission, your insights on this issue of youth justice would be incredibly valuable.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Maiwar. I note that we will be speaking with the Mount Isa Neighbourhood Centre after lunch so that will certainly be insightful. I thank each and every one of you for your contributions. We are here because we care and we want to make a difference. Thank you to the local member, Robbie Katter. Thanks for having us in your community, Robbie. Thank you for being here and being a visiting member of our committee. It is always a pleasure to work with you. Thanks to each and every one of you for what you do for our young people in Mount Isa. Thanks for giving up your time today. I know that you are busy, but if you do have some time to tune into the public hearing this afternoon you would be most welcome.

The committee adjourned at 11.34 am.