

Question on Notice

No. 229

Asked on 11 March 2021

MS A CAMM asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise, between 2015 and 2021 to date, the total number of permanent care orders granting long-term guardianship of a child to a suitable person in accordance with s 61(g) of the *Child Protection Act 1999* (reported separately by year, district and age)?

ANSWER

On 29 October 2018, the *Child Protection Act 1999* (CPA) amendments commenced to introduce a new permanency framework in response to the 2013 Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry recommendations.

One of these amendments, section 61(g) of the CPA, allows the Children's Court to make a permanent care order granting long-term guardianship of a child to a suitable person other than a parent of the child or the chief executive, as nominated by the chief executive.

These orders are suitable when a child cannot be safely reunified with their parents and the child requires a permanent home that can provide them with stability as well as physical, relational and legal permanency.

Permanent care orders are just one in a suite of permanency options. When it is not possible for a child to remain at home or to return home, the department looks for the most suitable legal permanency option, including permanent care orders, long-term guardianship child protection orders, or adoption.

Since commencement of the CPA amendments in 2018, as at 30 June 2020 there were 44 permanent care orders granted by the Children's Court.

Children subject to a permanent care order, Queensland

As at 30 June 2019 ^(a)	As at 30 June 2020
8	44

Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

Notes:

(a) Data for this period is sourced from the Director of Child Protection Litigation, Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Until late 2020, the Adoption and Permanency Unit of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural affairs was part of the South East Region, which may have contributed to higher numbers of Permanent Care Orders being sought and granted for children and young people in that region.

Adoption and Permanent Care Services now operate within the department's Statewide Services Office under the Assisting Chief Operating Officer responsible for statewide operations.

Children subject to a permanent care order, by region, Queensland

Region	As at 30 June 2020
Central Queensland	4
Moreton	5
Northern Queensland	7
South East	21
South West	7
Total	44

Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

Children subject to a permanent care order, by age grouping, Queensland

Region	As at 30 June 2020
0 to 4	7
5 to 9	17
10 to 14	15
15 to 17	5
Total	44

Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

In February 2021 the department finalised a Permanency Strategy and Roadmap to strengthen practice and embed legislative changes to improve permanency outcomes, including consistency across regions. The development of the strategy was informed by consultation with relevant internal and external stakeholders and includes initiatives that drive cultural change and improve practice regarding permanency planning.