

Question on Notice

No. 1203

Asked on 11 October 2023

MR T NICHOLLS ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, MINISTER FOR PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (HON Y D'ATH)

QUESTION:

Will the Attorney-General provide the number of children and young people visited by OPG Community Visitors in visitable locations (homes and sites) in 2022-23?

ANSWER:

The Office of the Public Guardian is an independent statutory office established on 1 July 2014, following a recommendation by the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry report: *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection*.

The *Public Guardian Act 2014* reflects the Inquiry's intent to refocus the community visiting program towards individual advocacy for the most vulnerable children by mandating regular visits to sites where children and young people are staying (out of home residential care, Authorised Mental Health Services, police watchhouses and youth detention centres). The legislation provides a discretion to visit homes where children and young people in out of home care reside, such as foster care and kinship care. Community visitors play a vital role in safeguarding vulnerable children and young people in visitable sites and homes, which together are known as visitable locations. Community visitors inspect and report on the appropriateness of accommodation in visitable locations. Community visitors also advocate for:

- the participation of children and young people at visitable locations in decision-making;
- their views, wishes and rights to be upheld; and
- their access to information and the services they need.

While the legislation focuses on the locations that must be visited to perform the visitor's functions, the below table presents data on the number of children and young people in visitable locations, who were visited by OPG Community Visitors as at 30 June 2023.

Number of children and young people visited by community visitors in visitable locations (sites and homes) in 2022-23

Total number of children and young people visited	9,909
First Nations children and young people visited	4,559

To ensure community visitors regularly visit the most vulnerable children and young people, the Office of the Public Guardian recently modernised its service model so it better aligned with the Public Guardian's legislated responsibility to 'must regularly visit' children and young people at visitable sites and 'may' visit children and young people at visitable homes.