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**REVIEW OF THE
DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

REVIEW REPORT

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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RECOMMENDATION 1	46
A new Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing (DCSW) be created by refocusing the Department for Community Development on identifying and supporting vulnerable children and young people in the context of their families and the community.	
RECOMMENDATION 2	48
A Department of Communities be established to provide the Government and the community with a focal point for the development of an over-arching social development framework, policies and programs for population sub-groups with special needs and for the strengthening of communities.	
RECOMMENDATION 3	49
The Department of Communities, in partnership with communities, the non-government sector and other departments develop an early years strategy for Western Australia that is evidence based and community focused.	
RECOMMENDATION 4	50
The Child Care Licensing Unit together with the current resources be transferred to the Department of Communities.	
RECOMMENDATION 5	50
The <i>Children and Community Services Act 2004</i> be amended to reflect the move of the Child Care licensing function.	
RECOMMENDATION 6	51
The Department of Communities immediately review the Child Care regulations to clarify their purpose and principles, streamline them significantly and ensure they are outcome focused.	
RECOMMENDATION 7	52
The State Government progress discussions with the Australian Government on the transfer of the responsibility to that jurisdiction for developing new inter country adoption programs and for maintaining the existing programs.	
RECOMMENDATION 8	52
The forthcoming Review of the Department of Housing and Works consider whether that Department should have a greater role in supporting people in public housing tenancies in circumstances where, if they were evicted, they would become homeless.	
RECOMMENDATION 9	59
An Aboriginal Reference Group be established to provide input into policy, practice and staff development and training and to provide feedback to the DCSW on the Department's impact on Aboriginal children and young people.	
RECOMMENDATION 10	60
The DCSW develop a planning and forecasting model to predict future demand based on socio-economic indicators and other factors known to be associated with child abuse and neglect (e.g. domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health and poverty).	

- RECOMMENDATION 11**60
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing in conjunction with the Department of Treasury and Finance develop an approach to estimating budget requirements and forward commitments based on the planning model.
- RECOMMENDATION 12**60
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing develop a resource allocation model to ensure that the resources are allocated transparently across districts and between service providers (both Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing and non-government) and that allocation to service providers can be varied in response to changing needs.
- RECOMMENDATION 13**61
Child protection practice guidelines be revised and streamlined to be evidence based, accessible and relevant for front line practitioners.
- RECOMMENDATION 14**61
Business processes that underpin service delivery be revised and re-engineered to update and streamline them.
- RECOMMENDATION 15**61
Delegation arrangements, particularly financial delegations, be revised to ensure that decisions about children and the support to them and their families can be made by those staff who directly assessed the situation and know the child.
- RECOMMENDATION 16**63
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing consider the most effective and efficient process to deliver consistent, risk based intake and assessment services. As an immediate first step, the Department ensure that dedicated, appropriately trained and experienced officers undertake this function.
- RECOMMENDATION 17**64
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Auditor General's Office, review the outcome measures and performance indicators reported annually to Parliament and the community.
- RECOMMENDATION 18**46
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing consider the provision of regular statistical reports, together with interpretive comments, to the community at a District Office level.
- RECOMMENDATION 19**68
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing develop and implement a Workforce Plan that includes workforce modelling and analysis, covers different occupational groups (eg. caseworkers, psychologists, direct care workers and administrative staff) and incorporates a workload measurement system.
- RECOMMENDATION 20**70
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing reduce the number of positions filled on short-term contracts and, wherever possible, vacant and funded positions be advertised and filled permanently as a matter of priority.
- RECOMMENDATION 21**70
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing establish and monitor benchmarks around acceptable timeframes relating to steps in recruitment processes.
- RECOMMENDATION 22**71
A tertiary level qualification in social work, psychology or a relevant human service area be the basic qualification for caseworker positions within the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing.

- RECOMMENDATION 23**71
The Department develop training/development modules to enable newly recruited caseworkers to undertake individually tailored competency based programs and that the Department introduce a program (e.g. scholarships) to enable staff who entered the Department as field staff without a relevant tertiary qualification, to complete an appropriate tertiary qualification.
- RECOMMENDATION 24**72
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing investigate collaborative arrangements with other State Departments and the Higher Education sector to increase the range of training delivery mechanisms.
- RECOMMENDATION 25**73
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing, jointly with the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection and the Department of Treasury and Finance, prepare a business case for consideration by Government of additional attraction and retention options for hard to recruit to field positions.
- RECOMMENDATION 26**73
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing implement a comprehensive Work Value process. The work currently being under-taken on an attraction and retention benefit should be accelerated as a short-term measure addressing comparative wage level concerns.
- RECOMMENDATION 27**75
A corporate and quality governance framework be developed within the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing.
- RECOMMENDATION 28**76
A performance review and management approach be developed and implemented to support a culture of performance improvement and accountability within the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing.
- RECOMMENDATION 29**78
Each district office have at least one Senior Quality/Practice Development Officer and, in district offices covering a large geographical area with remote sub-offices, there be two such positions.
- RECOMMENDATION 30**80
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing develop a three-tiered complaints management process supported by clear policies, guidelines and education programs for consumers and staff. This process be developed in conjunction with the Ombudsman and the Corruption and Crime Commission.
- RECOMMENDATION 31**81
The Child Death Review Committee together with its current resources be relocated to the Office for Parliamentary Investigations (the Ombudsman).
- RECOMMENDATION 32**81
A small, specialist investigative unit be established in the Ombudsman's office to facilitate the independent investigation of complaints and enable the further examination, at the discretion of the Ombudsman, of Child Death Review cases where the child is known to a number of agencies.
- RECOMMENDATION 33**84
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing co-ordinate the development of a Strategic Framework and a State Plan for family support services for vulnerable and at risk children and young people, their families and communities. In the meantime, pending the development of the Framework and Plan, the State should build on the existing programs that have been evaluated as being effective. These include initiatives arising from the Gordon Inquiry including: Remote Community Child Protection Workers; Community Child Protection Workers; Community Capacity Builders; Aboriginal Support Workers; and Youth and Family Engagement Workers.

- RECOMMENDATION 34**85
 The Gordon initiatives, the Youth and Family Engagement Workers program, STRONG*families* program and Best Beginnings and Best Start programs be considered as ongoing programs expanded to provide State wide coverage and form the basis of the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing's contribution to the family support arrangements.
- RECOMMENDATION 35**86
 The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing consider and report back to the Government on whether the necessary access to tertiary specialist services can be achieved for children and young people in care through care planning and the associated service provision (see Recommendation 63 and 64) or whether the *Children and Community Service Act 2004* sub-sections 22(3) and 22(4) should be amended along the lines of the ACT Government's *Children and Young People Act 1999*, Section 28.
- RECOMMENDATION 36**86
 In conjunction with the Department of Health, Country Health Service, the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing explore the application of the Telehealth concept and infrastructure as one approach to increasing the access of rural and regional Western Australia to specialist therapeutic services.
- RECOMMENDATION 37**87
 In developing the Strategic Framework and Plan for family support and specialist therapeutic services, consideration be given to expanding the role of the non-government sector. Special attention should be paid to ensuring that services provided to Aboriginal families and communities are culturally appropriate.
- RECOMMENDATION 38**94
 In conjunction with the Departments of Health and of Education and Training, the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing undertake an ongoing assessment and analysis of children and young people in care to provide a more comprehensive picture of the needs of this group to enable the planning and provision of the required level and nature of services.
- RECOMMENDATION 39**95
 The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing engage in community consultation, including with Aboriginal communities, to develop policy on permanency planning and placement and consider whether any legislative amendment (including timeframes), would assist, what ongoing monitoring and support should be provided and identify any other issues.
- RECOMMENDATION 40**96
 The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing continue to pursue vigorously the implementation of the recommendations about Children in Care in the *Report on Quality Assurance and Substantiated Allegations of Abuse in Care, Duty of Care to Children and Young People in Western Australia* and others arising from the *Report on Allegations Concerning the Treatment of Children and Young People in Residential Care Report*.
- RECOMMENDATION 41**98
 The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing in conjunction with the Aboriginal Reference Group and Aboriginal Agencies approved by the CEO under clause 81(2) of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* explore models for engaging appropriately with Aboriginal communities and child care agencies throughout the entire process of out of home care from investigations, placement, to leaving care.
- RECOMMENDATION 42**98
 The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing contribute to the work of the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care on minimum standards for the care protection and support of Aboriginal children.

- RECOMMENDATION 43**98
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing work with the Northern Territory and Queensland governments on issues related to practices, policy and services for Aboriginal children in care.
- RECOMMENDATION 44**98
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing ensure there is an appropriate range of Aboriginal Child Care agencies to recruit, train and support additional Aboriginal carers.
- RECOMMENDATION 45**100
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing expand the role of the non-government sector to increase out of home care options for children.
- RECOMMENDATION 46**104
To increase the pool of foster carers, and in acknowledgement of the ineffectiveness of broad based media campaigns in recruiting new foster carers, the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing encourage word of mouth recruitment through existing foster carers.
- RECOMMENDATION 47**104
The Government increase the subsidy paid to general and relative foster carers in recognition of the increased complexity of needs of children in care and the increased training required by carers to deal effectively with such complexities.
- RECOMMENDATION 48**104
Support for general and relative foster carers be recognised as a specific function provided by the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing. Each district office be provided with dedicated resources, specifically Foster Carer Support Officers, to undertake this role. The number of such workers be determined relative to the number of general and relative foster carers.
- RECOMMENDATION 49**104
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing provide training to general and relative foster carers that is easily accessible and designed in collaboration with the Foster Care Association.
- RECOMMENDATION 50**104
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing recruit general and relative foster carers whose function is to provide respite for existing foster carers with children in their care. Where possible, the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing should endeavour to link children with the same respite carer to provide some stability and continuity for children.
- RECOMMENDATION 51**104
General and relative foster carers be regarded as valuable members of the care and protection team. The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing actively seek and consider the input of general and relative foster carers into decision-making regarding children in their care.
- RECOMMENDATION 52**104
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing provide appropriately full information to general and relative foster carers about the characteristics and needs of children coming into their care so that carers are adequately prepared and informed.
- RECOMMENDATION 53**107
Through the provision of appropriate staffing and capital works where necessary, the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing develop a network of group homes across each district (First Level Residential Care Facilities).

- RECOMMENDATION 54**107
 In country districts, in the absence of non-government agencies with the capacity to operate these facilities efficiently, the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing operate first Level Residential Care Facilities. In the metropolitan area, given the experience of the non-government sector, the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing consider contracting this sector to provide First Level Residential Care.
- RECOMMENDATION 55**107
 Current Departmentally run facilities in the metropolitan area be reconfigured to provide Second Level Residential Care Facilities. This will require the development of an evidenced-based therapeutic model, staffing model and competency-based training reflecting the therapeutic nature of the services.
- RECOMMENDATION 56**107
 The Kath French Centre be modified to enable it to become the State's Intensive Therapeutic Unit for young people in care.
- RECOMMENDATION 57**107
 The Department establish a reference group in association with the CREATE Foundation for young people who are in care or have recently left care so that such young people can comment on policy development and service delivery. The Department should fund the CREATE Foundation to establish and support this reference group.
- RECOMMENDATION 58**111
 The *STRONGfamilies* program be ongoing and expanded across Western Australia with the coordinator positions becoming permanent positions.
- RECOMMENDATION 59**112
 The Inter-agency Child Safety Teams pilot projects be evaluated and be implemented across the State if the evaluation indicates positive outcomes in terms of improved service coordination and delivery in complex cases.
- RECOMMENDATION 60**114
 Child Safety Directors be identified in the Department of Health, Department of Education and Training, Disability Services Commission, Western Australian Police Service, Department of Corrective Services, Department of Housing and Works, Department of Local Government and Regional Development, Department of Communities, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Department of Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Treasury and Finance. These directors are people who, in their existing roles, report directly to their Director General/Chief Executive Officer and will ensure agencies deliver appropriate services to vulnerable children and their families, including children who are in the care of the State.
- RECOMMENDATION 61**114
 Child Safety Directors' Group be established. This group meet on a fortnightly basis to ensure a coordinated response by government is provided to vulnerable children and their families including children who are in the care of the State. The Child Safety Directors Group include a representative from the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing at an equivalent level.
- RECOMMENDATION 62**115
 District Child Safety Coordinating Groups be established in each district to provide a coordinated across agency response to vulnerable children and their families including children in care. District committee members will comprise senior persons in each department/agency in the district which has child safety responsibility. District committees will provide an avenue for the *STRONGfamilies* Program and the Child Protection Safety Teams to address 'systemic roadblocks' hindering the delivery of an effective coordinated service response at the local level. The District Child Safety Coordinating Group will report to the Child Safety Directors Group.

- RECOMMENDATION 63**.....117
The Departments of Health and of Education and Training respectively be required to develop a Health Plan (covering physical, mental and dental health) and an Education Plan respectively for each child or young person in care.
- RECOMMENDATION 64**.....117
The Department of Health and the Department of Education and Training be responsible for providing the specialist support, resources and services needed to implement the plans for each child and young person in care.
- RECOMMENDATION 65**.....117
The Department of Health, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing report in their Annual Reports each year, the proportion of children and young people in care who have a health or education plan and an annual assessment, the proportion who have achieved improvement in their health/education status and the gap between the health/education status of children and young people in care and those children not in care.
- RECOMMENDATION 66**.....118
The Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing and the State Solicitor’s Office run a joint education program on exchange of information between agencies for the Professional Colleges and staff within the Department of Health.
- RECOMMENDATION 67**.....119
A component of the professional development program for the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing District Office staff (particularly caseworkers) include practical guidance on exercising judgment about appropriate information sharing.
- RECOMMENDATION 68**.....119
The State Solicitors’ Office in conjunction with the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing consider whether Section 23(2) of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* is sufficient or whether further legislative amendment is needed to give protection to Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing staff if they provide information to other interested agencies, service providers or individuals to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person.
- RECOMMENDATION 69**.....119
Any future Statewide privacy legislation provide for the sharing of information to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- RECOMMENDATION 70**.....122
The Government does not expand the range of people mandatorily required to report concerns of child abuse but instead requires the District Child Safety coordinators’ and the Child Safety Directors’ Groups to implement the Interagency Collaborative Framework for Protecting Children and advise the Director General of the Department of Child Safety and Wellbeing of any amendment needed to that framework to improve service provision for vulnerable children and young people and enhanced interdepartmental cooperation and accountability.