

NSW Commission for Children and Young People

Annual Report 2007–2008



nsw commission for
children & young people

The Hon Peter Primrose MLC
President
Legislative Council
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The Hon Richard Torbay MP
Speaker
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr President and Mr Speaker

In accordance with section 23 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, I am pleased to present the Commission's annual report for the 2007–2008 financial year.

The annual report has been prepared in accordance with the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984* (as modified by the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*), the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Regulation 2005* and the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

As provided by section 26 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, I hereby request that you make this report public forthwith.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gillian Calvert". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'G' being particularly large and stylized.

Gillian Calvert
Commissioner
30 October 2008

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NSW Commission for Children and Young People

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Commissioner's foreword

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People is nearing the tenth anniversary of its establishment – June 1999.

What a journey it's been!

In that time, we've consulted with thousands of children and young people, made more than 80 formal submissions to inquiries and, along with other Approved Screening Agencies, background checked almost two million applicants for child-related employment. We have also researched and published more than 80 reports and other publications aimed at improving the lives and circumstances of the children and young people of New South Wales.

The past year has been a continuation of that journey.

It was a pleasure to attend the Commonwealth Government's 2020 Summit in Canberra, where I was able to help put the case for a national system of paid parental leave to better support our youngest Australians. There's growing support for such a scheme. With the National Foundation for Australian Women, the National Investment For The Early Years, and the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, we commissioned a Newspoll survey on the issue, which showed 76 per cent of those surveyed supported paid maternity leave for working women.

I believe there's a strong sense in the community, and increasingly amongst decision-makers, that the time has come for Australia to catch up with the vast majority of developed nations – and bring in paid parental leave nationwide. Research shows that the first year of a child's life is vital for the healthy growth of a baby's brain, and in building connections with learning and development that will last long into the future. That is why we should be aiming for a system for at least 12 months of paid parental leave. Because it's better for babies.

Getting kids off to a good start is crucial for their well-being. It's also important, as they grow, to provide communities and environments where kids feel welcome and safe, and where they can have the freedom to explore and be active.

Play and physical activity are as fundamental a part of any childhood as the provision of food, clothes and somewhere to live. Play with parents and other children is crucial to ongoing development. It affects other things as well, like

the development of trusting and caring relationships and an overall sense of well-being.

Kids want to feel safe, but they also want – and need – to explore and test their limits.

If we focus too fixedly on eliminating risk, there's a strong chance that children themselves might become unnecessarily anxious, nervous or afraid to challenge themselves.

It's important for us all who work for kids' safety and welfare to share information and work towards finding the balance between maximising challenge and minimising the risk of injury.

The Commission came into being following a Royal Commission conducted by the Honourable James Wood AO QC. Another Wood Inquiry, the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services, is also likely to have a far-reaching effect.

Our submission with Dr Judy Cashmore and Professor Dorothy Scott argued for a shift from a child protection system, to a system for protecting children – a system that puts kids first. Every child has the right to feel loved and supported within their family and their community and to participate fully in the richness of life.

We must focus and integrate our efforts and harness the political will to improve the lives of our children. We must support our youngest citizens in their pursuit of such goals with strong public policy and ample resources.

The Commission has spent almost 10 years working with others to make New South Wales a better place for children and young people.

So a big thanks to the many organisations and individuals who have helped us in our work – and especially the children and young people who have shared their knowledge and experience with us, and who play such a vital role in our work to influence positive change for the kids of New South Wales.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gillian Calvert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gillian Calvert
Commissioner

Snapshot: 2007–2008 year at a glance

Planned results	Children are safer in child-related workplaces	Child deaths are prevented	Children benefit from improved legislation, policies, practices and services	Children participate in the decisions that affect their lives
Intermediate results	Organisations are child-safe and child-friendly ↑ Organisations improve management of child safety risks ↑ Organisations identify their child safety risks	Child Death Review Team (CDRT) recommendations are implemented ↑ CDRT recommendations are agreed ↑ CDRT identifies factors contributing to preventable child deaths and recommendations made	Commission's recommendations to improve children's well-being are implemented ↑ Commission's recommendations to improve children's well-being are agreed ↑ Commission identifies factors contributing to children's well-being and makes recommendations – e.g. road safety, alcohol, work, built environment	Organisations help children to be effective participants in decision-making ↑ Organisations and agencies make changes so children can participate in these decisions. ↑ Decision-makers know the value of having children participate in making decisions that affect their lives
Results	237,486 background checks conducted 581 estimates of risk undertaken 84% of preferred applicants assessed as high risk were not employed 63 Prohibited Persons applied for a review of their status Screening agencies implemented the new risk estimate model known as AWARE Child-safe Child-friendly web pages accessed 15,038 times Nine Child-safe Child-friendly training programs delivered, attended by 180 people	Drafted the study <i>Trends in Child Deaths in New South Wales 1996–2005</i> , including nine recommendations Tabled <i>Trends in the fatal assault of children in NSW: 1996–2005</i> report Convened the third annual meeting of Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review Teams (ANZCDRT)	Made 13 submissions to formal inquiries, including the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW, the Senate Standing Committee Inquiry into the Sexualisation of Children in the Contemporary Media Environment as well as the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People's Inquiry into Children and Young People aged 9–14 Years in NSW 321 public engagements on children's issues <i>Babysitting Guide</i> released Research into support for Paid Parental Leave released Papers on children's experience of poverty released	The views of children included in submissions, including the Senate Standing Committee Inquiry into the Sexualisation of Children in the Contemporary Media Environment, and the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues Inquiry Into Closing The Gap – Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Ran a workshop for government agencies on helping children and young people participate in five State Plan Priority Areas Established two Kids Advisory panels Conducted two online discussion forums with children and young people
Plans for the future	Upgrade information technology systems supporting the Working With Children Check Introduce certificates for self-employed people Review Relevant Employment Proceedings database Update the Child-safe and Child-friendly training package Support out of school hours care, children's disability services and early childhood services in Child-safe and Child-friendly practices	Release <i>Trends in Child Deaths in New South Wales 1996–2005</i>	Continue highlighting the benefits that paid parental leave provides to babies Release Child-friendly community indicators – a planning resource for Local Government Release good practice guide for participation of kids in Local Government decisions Release a discussion paper on regulating children's employment	Establish new Young People's Reference Group Continue developing online participation mechanisms, including improvements to the online discussion forums and creating an online participation form
Details	Safety, pages: 58–63	Safety, pages: 58–63	Children's issues, pages 50–55	Participation, pages, 56–57

About the Commission

Introduction

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People is an independent organisation that advocates for the children and young people of New South Wales.

The Commission works to influence and initiate positive change for children and young people.

The Commission promotes the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people in New South Wales.

To achieve this we:

- promote children and young people's participation in activities and decision-making about issues that affect their lives
- research important issues relating to children and young people
- make recommendations to parliaments, government and non-government agencies on legislation, policies, practices and services that affect children and young people
- provide information and training for children and young people and those who work with them
- help employers recruit suitable people to work with children and young people, and help make their organisation child-safe and child-friendly
- manage a voluntary accreditation system for counsellors and therapists who work with people who have committed sexual offences against children.

The Commission administers the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*.

The Commission has no powers to examine individual complaints about unfair, illegal or improper conduct relating to children. Individual grievances by children and young people are referred to the appropriate

body such as the Ombudsman, the Health Care Complaints Commission or the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Vision and Principles

Vision

Together making New South Wales a better place for children and young people.

Principles

Guided by the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, we:

- make the safety, welfare and well-being of children our paramount consideration
- listen to children and young people, take their views seriously and promote their interests
- believe strong relationships between children, families and communities are important
- focus on things that make a positive difference to children and young people, giving priority to vulnerable children and young people
- work cooperatively with other agencies and organisations to achieve our goals.

Stakeholders

Our stakeholders in New South Wales are:

- children and young people aged 17 years and younger
- parents and carers of children and young people
- people who work in the interests of children and young people
- parliamentary committees, Ministers, politicians
- employers, employees, volunteers and unions
- complaints and watchdog agencies

- media

- Commission staff and committees.

History

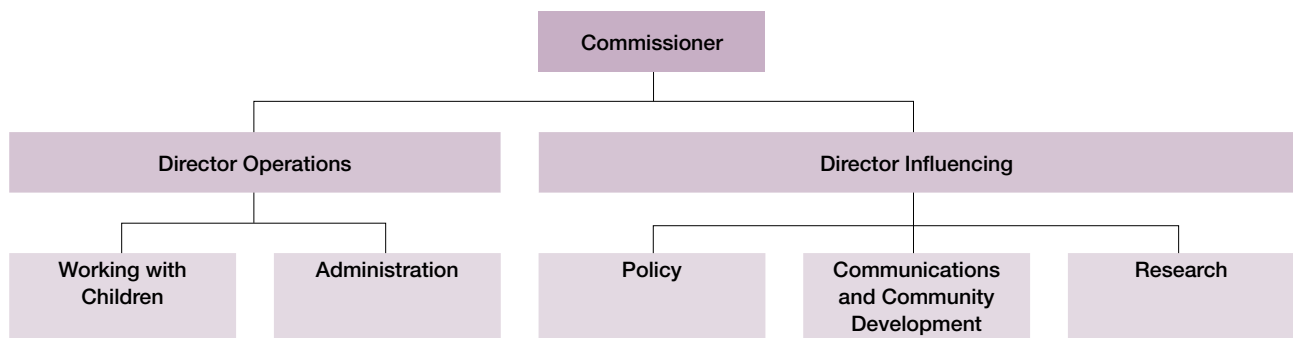
The Commission was established with bipartisan support in June 1999 by the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*. Gillian Calvert was appointed the first Commissioner. In May 2004, Ms Calvert was reappointed for a second, five-year term.

The Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service was a major catalyst for establishing the Commission. In its report to the NSW Government in August 1997, the Royal Commission identified serious, systemic failures that put children and young people at risk of abuse. It found there was no single voice speaking for the interests of children and young people in New South Wales and recommended a Commission for Children be established to advocate for their safety and welfare.

Children, young people and others consulted about establishing the Commission felt it should broaden its focus to encompass the range of issues affecting all children and young people in New South Wales and should focus on their well-being.

An independent review of the Commission's legislation (*Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 and the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998*) was completed in 2004. While recommending improvements to the legislation, the review found that the policy objectives and the terms of the Acts generally remained appropriate.

The *Commission for Children and Young People Amendment Act 2005* was passed by the NSW Parliament in November 2005, again with bipartisan support.



Structure and staff

The Commission reports directly to the NSW Parliament and is overseen by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People.

In 2007–2008, the Commission changed its structure to bring the Policy, Communications and Community Development and Research Teams within the Influencing Directorate. This sharpened our focus by bringing together the policy, community education and research activities under one Director.

At 30 June 2008, the Commission employed a full-time equivalent of 38.8 positions, against a staff establishment of 41.9.

Of these staff, one is a Senior Executive Service officer, with all other staff employed under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002*.

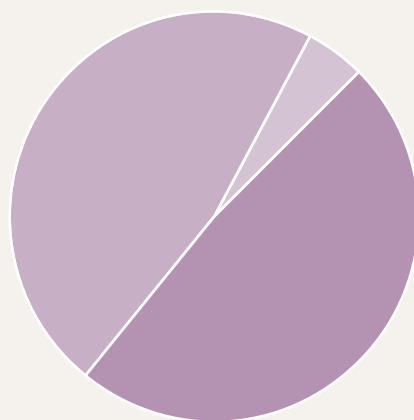
More information about the human resource policies and practices of the Commission is on page 64.

Financial summary

Where the money came from

The Commission's funding comes from the Office for Children as grants and contributions. For 2007–2008 this totalled: \$ 8,689,000

How the money was spent



- Employee related expenditure
\$4,230,000 (48.5%)
- Maintenance and operating expenses
\$4,084,000 (47%)
- Grants and subsidies
\$375,000 (4.5%)

Total Expenditure \$8,689,000

Year in review

Children's issues

The Commission works with other organisations and the community to promote the well-being of children and young people.

The Commission helps shape decisions made by governments, businesses, communities, professions and service organisations using a variety of methods. These include forming strategic alliances with stakeholders, making comment through the media, presenting at conferences and other events, providing formal policy advice through submissions or committees, undertaking research, running seminars and training, developing resources and modelling good practice.

Children at Work

Background

The Commission's 2005 research *Children at Work* reported on the work experiences of children and young people in Years 7–10. Advice was received from a task force comprised of young people and representatives of employer organisations, community organisations, unions and government agencies. The Commissioner tabled recommendations in the NSW Parliament in December 2006. Two recommendations proposed that the Commission undertake further work: repeating aspects of the Children at Work research and developing a guide to babysitting for young people and parents. Sixteen other recommendations proposed action by other organisations.

Results

In 2007–2008, the Commission completed the data collection for Wave Two of the Children at Work research.

With the approval of the Department of Education and Training, the Commission surveyed 2,131 students in Years 7–10 from 30 government schools across New South Wales. The survey was conducted over school terms 3 and 4 in 2007. Schools were provided with descriptive information relevant to their school to inform them about the working life of their students. The results can be used by schools for planning and teaching purposes. Analysis of the study results is underway.

The Commission also developed the *Babysitting Guide* to help children and parents plan for their babysitting experience. The guide was informed by the babysitting experiences of young people and has proved popular with parents, schools and young people.

We worked to achieve better workplaces for children and young people by highlighting their developmental needs in our advocacy work with relevant agencies.

To respond to the changes in industrial relations law, the Commission contacted Professor Andrew Stewart, University of Adelaide, to review children's employment laws in each Australian State and Territory and advise on options for regulating children's employment to enhance children's well-being.

The Commission encouraged the responsible agencies to implement the other 16 *Children at Work* recommendations. By the end of June 2008, 10 agencies had commenced implementing 13 of these recommendations.

Plans for the future

We will continue working with relevant agencies on implementing the three remaining Children at Work recommendations.

We will propose a framework for regulating the conditions of children's employment and continue advocating for workplaces that are safe and fair for children and young people.

Paid parental leave

Background

In mid 2007, the Commission, the National Investment for the Early Years (NIFTeY) the National Foundation for Australian Women, and the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian commissioned a Newspan survey which found widespread support for paid maternity leave. The Commission with others has worked to build support for paid parental leave.

The Australian Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave began in early 2008 and is due to report in February 2009.

Results

The Commission and NIFTeY collaborated to propose Terms of Reference for the Inquiry which were largely adopted by the Australian Government for the Productivity Commission Inquiry.

The Commission prepared a submission to this inquiry in collaboration with NIFTeY. This submission's special contribution was its focus on the importance of paid parental leave for children's well-being and development.

The submission made particular reference to the scientific research of Professor Stuart Shanker that shows how the continuous interaction between baby and parents in the baby's first twelve months of life shapes how a child regulates their emotions, communicates, solves problems, thinks logically and reacts to the world.

Plans for the future

The Commission will continue promoting the importance of paid parental leave for children's well-being and development. We will respond to the Productivity Commission by promoting our written submission, participating in public hearings and developing responses to the Inquiry.

Children's understanding of poverty

Background

Poverty remains an issue for children and young people. Traditionally, research into the effects and experience of poverty has focused on adults or families, rather than children. The Commission believes policies aimed at reducing poverty will be more effective if they include the views of children.

In 2006, the Commission formed a partnership with the Benevolent Society and RMIT University Melbourne to develop a research project to explore the dimensions of children's experience of poverty.

Funding was obtained through the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) ARC/NHMRC Research Network – Future Generation Program of Support for New Collaborations.

Results

Collaborators presented the findings of our work at a capacity-building seminar for ARACY members. The seminar brought together participants from seven states and territories.

Four papers were published on the Commission's website:

- *Children and poverty: Why their experience of their lives matter for policy*
- *The importance of identity in policy: The case for and of children*

- *Children's lived experience of poverty: A review of the literature*
- *Pulling the threads together – Consultations, conversations and contemplations on child poverty in Australia.*

A grant application for an Australian Research Council Discovery Project examining children's lived experience of poverty was submitted – *Giving Children Voice: Children's lived experience of poverty and the implications for social policy.*

Plans for the future

Future planning depends on the success of the application to the Australian Research Council. The outcome is expected in November 2008.

The built environment

Background

The Commission made a submission to the NSW Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into Children and Young People and the Built Environment in 2006. The submission drew on the views of children and young people as well as research and discussions with experts on the role of playgrounds, parks, libraries, schools and roads. Children told us their environment was very important to their well-being.

Results

A draft set of child-friendly community indicators has been developed with the Urban Research Program at Griffith University. The community indicators will be used as a planning tool to help planners understand the needs of children and young people. The indicators are now being trialled and further developed in cooperation with a group of local governments. The final version of the indicators and supporting implementation material will be released in 2009.

The Commission is also developing a good practice guide for children's participation in planning processes at the local government level. Six local governments, led by Wollongong City Council, will be involved in developing the guide.

An *Ask the Children* publication on the built environment was drafted, and revised after further consultations with children and young people.

Plans for the future

The *Ask the Children* on the built environment will be released in July 2008. The Commission will also release indicators and planning guidelines as tools to increase participation of children and young people in local government planning processes and to raise awareness of the needs of children and young people.

The Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW

Background

In November 2007, the Minister for Community Services announced the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW, headed by the Honourable James Wood AO, QC.

Results

A joint submission to the Inquiry was made by the Commissioner with Dr Judy Cashmore and Professor Dorothy Scott. It had been downloaded 6,963 times from the Commission's website as at 30 June 2008.

The Commissioner was also part of a panel at the two public forums on the role of oversight agencies and interagency cooperation.

The Special Commission of Inquiry is expected to report by 30 September 2008.

Mobile Me: Investigating children and young people's use of mobile telecommunications

Background

The Commission believes it is important to understand the impact of emerging technologies on young people's lives.

In 2007–2008, the Commission continued research into children and young people's use of mobile telecommunications. The project is being conducted in collaboration with the University of Technology, Sydney and funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Project Grant.

The research explores the extent that mobile phone ownership and patterns of use impact on young people's relationships with family and friends, their economic maturity and their general well-being. A range of methodologies were applied, including large-scale survey administration and in-depth focus groups with a smaller sample of young people.

Results

The first stage of the research was completed. The large-scale survey was conducted with children and young people in Years 6 and 9. The Commission also conducted six focus groups in New South Wales schools.

Preliminary analysis of the large-scale survey and focus group data has been conducted. Research results have been provided to all schools involved in the project.

Staff from the University of Technology, Sydney, made more than nine presentations on topics related to children and young people's use of mobile telecommunications.

Plans for the future

Analysis of the data from Wave One will continue. This will include analysis of transcripts of focus groups to produce an *Ask the Children* publication in 2008–2009. The results of these analyses, combined with advice provided from the reference group of children and young people will be used to plan for Wave Two of the study.

A reference group of children and young people will be established to guide Wave Two of the study.

An interagency injury prevention strategy

Background

International evidence suggests that it should be possible to reduce the rate of some types of preventable, serious, unintended injury in New South Wales by implementing proven strategies. In the timeframe for this project, such a reduction in injury rates will not be demonstrated, but the strategies will be in place for a rate reduction to be evident in the following few years.

Results

An interagency injury prevention strategy project plan was developed.

Plans for the future

The Commission will facilitate and broker a multi-lateral agreement with relevant agencies to develop and implement a coordinated plan for reducing childhood injury from:

- falls from a building or structure, including from windows
- off road use of motor cycles or other vehicles
- safe socialising and transport options for young people.

Monitoring well-being

Background

The Commission's Kid's Stats web pages provide key data about the well-being of children and young people in New South Wales. There are 22 indicators monitored.

Kids Stats presents information in two categories: *Aspects* and *Age Groups*. *Aspects* categorises information under headings for key areas of kids' lives. *Age Groups* presents information within specified age groups.

Results

In 2007–2008 we updated our website with current data in the *Aspects* and *Age Groups* categories. We also moved from an annual update of Kids Stats to more regular updating as data is released.

The Commission began developing a monitoring framework based on the Commission's well-being research. This could not be completed in 2007–2008 due to the high staffing needs of the *Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996–2005* research study.

Plans for the future

Kids Stats will be updated as new data becomes available. Work will continue to adapt Kids Stats to reflect our changing approach for monitoring children's well-being.

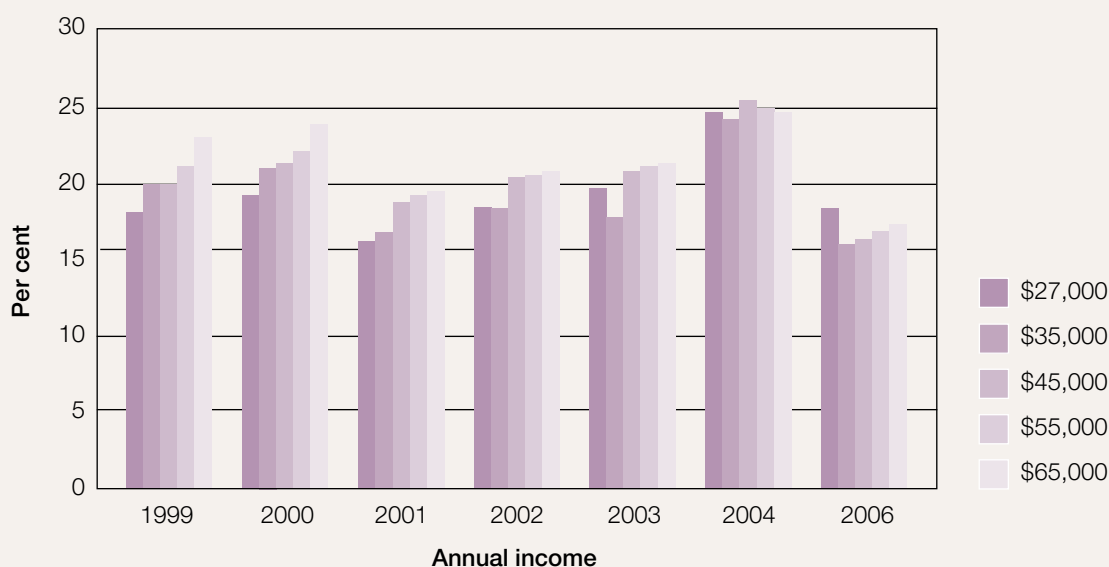
A new well-being indicators framework will be developed for Kids Stats.

Affordability improvements for long day care

Figure 1: Out-of-pocket costs of child care (after subsidies) as a proportion of weekly disposable income, for families with one child in full time centre-based long day care, by gross annual family incomes, NSW, 1999-2006



Figure 2: Out-of-pocket costs of child care (after subsidies) as a proportion of weekly disposable income, for families with two children in full time centre-based long day care, by gross annual family incomes, NSW, 1999-2006



Comment

Figures 1 and 2 show that benefits appear to have made an impact on the affordability of child care immediately following their introduction in 2000. In 2004, the effect of the benefits seemed to have eroded with child care costs increasing at a rate greater than changes to those benefits. There was a dramatic increase in the out-of-pocket expense of long day care in 2004, Australia. However, in 2006 out-of-pocket expenses decreased to below 2000 levels.

From 2004 to 2006, there was a dramatic reduction in child care expenses of approximately 30 per cent. The impact of that decrease was felt differentially by families depending on their household income levels. Out-of-pocket child care expenses are at their lowest since 1999 for all but the lowest income group (<\$27,000). For that group there has been little change since 2002.

The Commission and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) will host a think tank on involving children and young people in research. This will bring together experts from practice, research and policy to discuss what does and does not work in conducting research with and by children and young people.

The Commission and ARACY will also release a review of international literature on ethical and consent issues in involving children and young people in research.

A world fit for children

Background

In 2004, the Commission was contracted by the then Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) to consult with children and young people in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia on Australia's National Plan of Action for *A World Fit for Children*, a United Nations statement aimed at furthering implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Commission consulted with 502 children and young people aged 5–17 years through a series of focus group consultations and an online survey.

Results

The Australian Government released its report, *A World Fit for Children*, in November 2007. The Commission's report on the views of children and young people was published as an appendix. The *A World Fit for Children* report specifically mentioned the importance of family to children, which was consistently raised by children in focus groups and in the online survey.

Achieving better health outcomes for young people with chronic health conditions: a pan-disciplinary approach

In late 2006–2007, the Commission joined an international collaborative research project to investigate systems

where young people with chronic conditions have more say in their health management.

Project partners include the University of Sydney, The Children's Hospital, Westmead, the Australian Family and Disability Services Research Collaboration, the University of Western Australia, the University of Iceland, Lancaster University, the University of Strathclyde and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

The collaboration was awarded funding from the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

Results

The Commission provided advice to project partners regarding the participation of children and young people in the research.

We attended a roundtable discussion to identify critical issues and current knowledge regarding the identity and well-being of young people with chronic health conditions.

Results of the Commission's *Health Futures* consultations were used to promote policies and services that meet the needs of children and young people through our membership of key advisory bodies such as the Children and Young People's Health Priority Taskforce, and Senior Officers Committees on Mental Health, Obesity, and Drugs and Alcohol.

Plans for the future

The Commission will continue assisting the collaboration to maintain a child and young person focus to the research.

We will also attend a second roundtable discussion to identify the research trajectory for the future work of the collaboration. This will involve preparing and submitting at least one grant application in 2008.

Submissions to formal inquiries and reviews

Background

In 2007–2008, the Commission made submissions to 13 government and related inquiries:

1. Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People's Inquiry into Children and Young People aged 9–14 Years in NSW.
2. Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW.
3. Senate Standing Committee Inquiry into the Sexualisation of Children in the Contemporary Media Environment.
4. Australian Commission on Quality and Safety in Health Care Draft National Patient Charter of Rights.
5. Special Commission of Inquiry into Acute Care Services in Public Hospitals in NSW.
6. NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues Inquiry into Closing The Gap – Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage.
7. NSW Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety – Stay Safe Committee Inquiry on Young Driver Safety and Education Programs.
8. Australian Treasurer's request for comment on the 2008 Commonwealth Budget.
9. NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice Inquiry into the prohibition on the publication of names of children involved in criminal proceedings.
10. NSW Attorney General's Department review of laws relating to graffiti.
11. Royal Australasian College of Physicians – Request for comment on Guidelines on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

12. Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration's Inquiry on the Exposure Draft of the *Human Services (Enhanced Service Delivery) Bill 2007*.
13. Review of Children's Television Standards by the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

Results

In 2007–2008, the Commission further developed its processes for monitoring how organisations implement recommendations we make for changes to policy, programs and practice. The monitoring system now better reflects the reality that some recommendations can be quickly considered and implemented while others may require a longer time-frame for development and implementation.

In 2007–2008, the Commission monitored 215 recommendations it made during the year as well as those made in previous years where action was not completed by June 2007.

Implementation of 89 of these recommendations had started by June 2008. The Commission did not proceed further on monitoring 20 recommendations, either because the organisation had decided not to adopt them or because policy changes meant they were no longer relevant (such as recommendations about WorkChoices and the Australian Government's Access card).

Of the 109 recommendations for which an outcome was known in 2007–2008, 82 per cent were implemented.

Plans for the future

The Commission will carry over monitoring 96 recommendations in 2008–2009.

Raising awareness of children's issues

Background

The Commission receives and responds to many requests for information and referral. Enquiries are predominately from individuals, government and non-government organisations seeking advice on working with children and young people.

The Commission also proactively communicates through publications, presentations and the Commission's website at www.kids.nsw.gov.au.

Results

The Commission conducted 321 public engagements in 2007–2008, including conference presentations and media comment on major projects and children's issues. This exceeded the target figure for 2007–2008 by eight per cent.

A particular focus was the benefits that paid parental leave provides babies.

The Commission conducted two local consultations as part of our Community Reach project, bringing local decision-makers together with children and young people to discuss and respond to issues important to kids.

The Commission continued developing its capacity for online communication about children's issues. Website traffic to www.kids.nsw.gov.au increased by more than six per cent compared to the previous year, while the Commission's subscription list for its fortnightly electronic newsletter grew more than 200 per cent.

Further improvements were made to theZone, the section of our website for children and young people, with the addition of:

- *Feedback Mag*, an ezine for young people
- *KidsPoll*, a monthly poll for children and young people

- *Have your Say*, a section relating to participation opportunities and news

- *Out and about with kids*, a section which provides news of the Commission's consultations with children and young people.

In January 2008, the Commission's website was awarded an Outstanding Achievement citation in the Youth category of the international Interactive Media Awards.

Commissioner Gillian Calvert was invited to attend the Australia 2020 Summit, participating in the first of 10 key areas identified by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd: The Productivity Agenda – education, skills, training, science and innovation.

The NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People also participates in the Asia Pacific Children's Commissioners' Forum (APACC). The forum raises shared interests and develops joint positions on issues that affect children across the region.

The issues APACC worked on during 2007–2008 included:

- paid parental leave
- an Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People
- male circumcision
- early childhood care and educational outcomes.

Plans for the future

The Commission will continue to highlight children's issues and advocate for children as a matter of community education and public debate.

Further enhancements will be made to theZone, including building a subscription base for providing online information services for kids.

The Commission will conduct four Community Reach local consultations with children and young people and local decision-makers.

Participation

Participation is about kids and organisations. It is about taking part, becoming actively involved or sharing in an activity.

For organisations, participation means listening to what children and young people say and taking their views into account.

Participation is important to children and young people because it:

- connects them with their community
- lets them express their ideas, feelings and opinions
- helps programs and services for kids appropriately meet their needs.

Increasing kids' participation in the Commission

Background

In 2006–2007, the Commission reviewed its participation practice and mechanisms.

Results

We began implementing the review's recommendations during 2007–2008.

We modified our document templates and Style Guide, so we can include and keep a record of children's views in making decisions about running the organisation and about delivering our services.

We established Kids Advisory Panels (see below) to provide us with ongoing advice from children and young people.

Plans for the future

Other recommendations from the review have been included in the Commission's Strategic Directions and Business Plan for 2008–2011. In 2008–2009, we will implement the following:

- require at least one reference from a young person for applicants for identified positions at the Commission

- include a mandatory module on child-centred practice during induction of all new staff at the Commission
- develop an ongoing, planned program of school work experience students placed at the Commission
- train a pool of children and young people to participate in staff selection.

Kids Advisory Panels

Background

Arising from the review of our participation practice, we established two Kids Advisory Panels, which are pre-existing groups of children or young people who agree to become an advisory panel to the Commission. Panels can be drawn from schools, sporting organisations, child care services, interest groups or youth centres.

Two Commission Kids Advisory Panels operated in 2007–2008:

- Koori Advocacy and Leadership Mates (KALM), a group of Indigenous young people aged 13–17 years in the Taree and Great Lakes areas
- Ellison Primary School Kids Advisory Group, a group of children aged 10–11 years from Springwood and Winmalee who attend Ellison Primary School.

The panels provided the Commissioner with information, advice and opinions about issues important to children and young people which helped the Commission develop its work.

The KALM Panel met with the Commission four times during 2007–2008, while the Ellison Primary School Panel met with the Commission three times.

Results

The Kids Advisory Panels provided advice on 13 issues, including:

- proposals for police liaison officers in New South Wales schools
- our submission to the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into Closing the Gap – Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage including information about identity, perceptions of the future and decision-making and leadership
- the Senate Inquiry into the Sexualisation of Children in the Contemporary Media Environment
- our work around Police drug 'move on' powers
- the NSW Inquiry into the prohibition on the publication of names of children involved in criminal proceedings
- the Attorney General's Department review of laws relating to graffiti
- updating Commission resources such as the Child-safe Child-friendly organisations training and our form for children's participation
- climate change
- the built environment
- the design and content of Commission publications.

Plans for the future

The Ellison Primary School Kids Advisory Group will continue until the end of 2008. The Commission will appoint a new Young People's Reference Group in 2009. We will also create an online participation form where children and young people can register their interest in participating in the Commission's work.

Online forums

Background

The review of participation mechanisms also recommended using online forums to enable children and young people to have a say about issues.

Results

The Commission conducted two online forums during 2007–2008. The first forum was held in September 2007 and provided valuable advice for developing the *Babysitting Guide*. The second forum conducted in May 2008 focused on climate change and provided advice to help shape the future direction of the Commission's work in this area.

Plans for the future

We will continue developing online discussion forums so the Commission gathers opinions, ideas and advice from a wider range of children and young people about issues important to them.

Government participation seminar

Background

In 2007, the Premier released a set of *Good Practice Principles for Young People's Participation* to guide NSW Government agencies in involving young people in decision-making, particularly in implementing the NSW State Plan.

Results

In collaboration with the Premier's Delivery Unit, the Commission organised a seminar for senior staff from NSW Government agencies with responsibility for leading five Priority Areas in the NSW State Plan. The following Priority Areas were identified by the Commission as those which depended most on young people's participation in their implementation to succeed:

- R3: Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour
- S8: Increased customer satisfaction with government services
- S4: Increasing levels of attainment for all students
- F4: Embedding prevention and early intervention into government services

- E8: More people using parks, sporting and recreational facilities and participating in the arts and cultural activity.

At the seminar, more than 20 senior officers worked to identify opportunities for young people to participate in achieving the goals of the State Plan, along with ways to address barriers to participation.

Plans for the future

The Commission will continue working with these agencies and the Premier's Delivery Unit to increase participation of children and young people in achieving these five priorities, and in the development and review of the State Plan itself.

Regional Cabinet meetings

Background

NSW Cabinet meets in regional areas about six times each year, providing the local communities with an opportunity to meet and talk with Cabinet Ministers about issues of local concern.

Results

To provide young people with an opportunity to participate in the Regional Cabinet process, the Commission organised a consultation forum for young people to meet with the Minister for Youth at the May 2008 Regional Cabinet meeting in Maitland.

About 40 young people aged 13–22 years from Maitland and surrounding areas met with the Minister to discuss the positive and negative aspects of being a young person in Maitland. Samaritans Australia's Maitland Dungog Youth Development project, the Maitland Police Community Youth Centre and the Youth Action and Policy Association assisted with the consultations.

The young people's input has been collated and is now being used to inform local services and the Commission's policy work.

Plans for the future

The Commission will conduct young people's participation forums with the Minister for Youth at future regional Cabinet meetings.

Ethical issues in children's participation in research

Background

The Commission believes that children and young people have a right to participate in processes which affect their lives, and that they are able to reliably inform us about their experience.

Involving children and young people in research can be a controversial issue for researchers and the various committees that approve research projects. There can be disagreement about ethical issues – as well as about children's ability to fully participate in the research, and the benefits they may gain from participating. These can hinder the progress of potentially valuable research.

Little research has been conducted into how adults see children in research and what informs their decisions. We are working with the Queensland University of Technology to build an evidence base for children's participation in research.

Results

A grant application for an Australian Research Council Discovery Project examining children's participation in research was submitted – *Investigating ethical issues in research with young children: Building a multi-disciplinary evidence base for improved research governance and practice*.

Plans for the future

Future planning depends on the success of the Australian Research Council Discovery Project application. The outcome is expected in November 2008.

Safety

The Commission works to improve the safety of New South Wales children through the Working With Children program and the Child Death Review Team.

Working With Children

The Commission leads the Working With Children program, which includes Prohibited Employment (excluding inappropriate people), background checking and building Child-safe Child-friendly organisations and communities.

Child Death Review Team

The Commission provides research and other support for the Child Death Review Team. The Team maintains the Child Death Register and provides information to prevent or reduce the number of deaths of children and young people in New South Wales.

Working with Children

Background

The Commission makes children safer in child-related workplaces and organisations by helping organisations become child-safe and child-friendly. Using an evidence-based situational prevention approach, Child-safe Child-friendly organisations recognise that environmental factors influence individual behaviour.

We offer training to help organisations learn what being child-safe and child-friendly means, along with online tools to help them identify and manage risks posed by the organisation itself, the risks of specific positions, and the risks posed by individuals within the organisation.

One way that organisations manage risks is by meeting their obligations under the Working With Children Check. This means they must:

- exclude people who are prohibited from working with children
- conduct background checking for preferred applicants for paid child-related employment, foster carers and spiritual leaders of religion who have unsupervised direct contact with children as part of their role.

Responding to applications for review of status of Prohibited Persons

Background

Under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, people convicted of serious sex offences, serious violence offences against a child, kidnapping or murder of a child, or who are registered under the *Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000* are prohibited from working or seeking work in child-related employment.

Some prohibited persons can apply for a review of their prohibited status. The Commission for Children and Young People, the Administrative Decisions Tribunal and the Industrial Relations Commission can make orders that prohibited status no longer applies to a person. They cannot make an order unless the applicant demonstrates they do not pose a risk to the safety of children.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of status reviews.

Results

In 2007–2008, 63 Prohibited Persons applied for a review of their status under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*. This was one fewer than in 2006–2007.

Orders granted by the Commission

The Commission received 44 new applications and granted 23 new orders.

The Commission will not grant an order unless satisfied an applicant does not pose a risk to the safety of children.

Appeals

In 2007–2008, one appeal was made to the Supreme Court appealing a decision from the Administrative Decisions Tribunal. The decision of the appeal is pending.

Table 1: Breakdown of status reviews in 2007–2008

2007–2008	New applications	Applications pending from 2006–07	Final orders granted	Final orders granted with conditions	Applications refused	Applications dismissed	Applications withdrawn	Applicants not prohibited	Applications pending decision
Section 33H Commission for Children and Young People	44	7	23	0	10	7	0	2	9
Section 33I Administrative Decisions Tribunal	18	10	7	2	0	4	6	0	9
Section 33I Industrial Relations Commission	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	63	19	31	2	10	11	6	3	19

Self-employed certificates

The Commission is developing a new program that self-employed people will use to demonstrate they are not prohibited from child-related employment. Further changes to the Commission's legislation were required before development of this new program could begin.

The legislative changes were passed at the end of 2007 and the Commission has developed a draft regulation to establish this program.

Plans for the future

In 2009, the Commission will begin issuing certificates to allow self-employed persons to demonstrate they are not prohibited from child-related employment.

Background checking

Background

The Commission is one of five agencies performing the Working With Children background check for employers. The other Approved Screening Agencies are the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation and the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations.

The Working With Children background check provides information to employers that helps them make decisions in selecting staff in primary child-related employment.

Results (statewide)

In 2007–2008, Approved Screening Agencies conducted 237,486 background checks. Figure 3 shows

the total number of checks processed over the past three years.

Results (Commission for Children and Young People)

The Commission conducted 85,350 of the total Working With Children background checks in 2007–2008. This represents over a third (36 per cent) of the total conducted across New South Wales.

The Commission aims to provide results within two days for 80 per cent of background checks. In 2007–2008, we completed 68 per cent of checks within two days.

We rely on CrimTrac to return any relevant criminal records for an applicant. In 68 per cent of our checks, CrimTrac returned no relevant record. We completed these checks within two days. For the remaining

Figure 3: Background checking requests processed by all Approved Screening Agencies

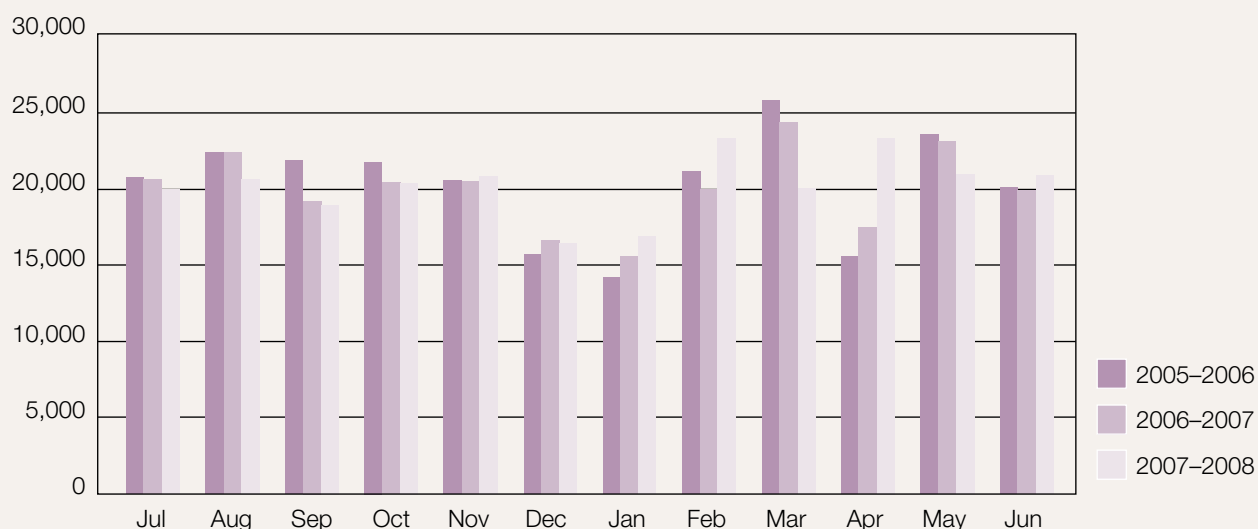


Table 2: Working With Children background checks processed

Activity	Target	Result 2006–07	Result 2007–08	Outcome 2007–08
Number of Working With Children background checks to be processed	<80,000	78,401	85,350	Not achieved
80% of Working With Children background checks completed on time	Within 2 days	63%	68%	Not achieved
90% of Working With Children background checks completed on time	Within 10 days	81%	87%	Almost achieved

32 per cent of checks, CrimTrac matched the name of the applicant with a name on its database. Police around Australia need to cross-check these matches. Most of them are false matches, often when an applicant has a common name. Once the false matches are cleared, we complete these checks.

The Commission aims to provide results within 10 days for 90 per cent of background checks. We were able to complete 87 per cent of our checks within 10 days in 2007–2008.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of Working With Children background checks processed.

Formulas used by our database reporting tool were revised during 2007–2008 to provide a more accurate figure. They show slightly more checks for 2006–2007 than previously reported. In this annual report, we have corrected the data for 2006–2007.

The Commission updated the *Working With Children Employer Guidelines* in February 2008 to reflect minor legislative changes, improve the forms and provide more information about Freedom of Information requirements.

In June 2008, work towards developing an online background checking system was deferred so that security arrangements proposed for online checking could be considered.

The Commission continued supporting the COAG Working Group on the Inter-Jurisdictional Exchange of Criminal History Information for People Working With Children. The Working Group is collating details of the information needs of all jurisdictions.

Plans for the future

The Commission will concentrate its efforts on upgrading its Employment Screening System, which is almost a decade old. Treasury granted the Commission funds to develop a business case for upgrading its Employment Screening System. If

funding is available, we plan to rebuild this system over the next two years.

Estimates of risk

Background

The Commission developed A Workplace and Applicant Risk Estimate (AWARE) in 2007 following an evaluation of the Working With Children Check risk assessment model. AWARE comprises three instruments for estimating risk.

1. The risk an individual may bring to the workplace.
2. The risks associated with an employment position independently of who might fill it.
3. An organisation's level of control over risks.

AWARE provides employers with better information to help them make employment decisions. It also develops and supports their understanding of risks to children in their workplace and how they can be better managed. The end result is workplaces that are more child-safe and child-friendly.

The Commission trained all Approved Screening Agencies in AWARE during 2007–2008 and required them to implement it from the end of 2007. Four forums for AWARE users were held from January to June 2008 to share information and increase user skills in operating AWARE.

In addition, the Commission presented the principles of AWARE to the employer groups of the Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation, and the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations.

Results (statewide)

Of the 237,486 people background checked in 2007–2008, 581 resulted in an estimate of risk being undertaken. Estimates of risk are triggered by a relevant record as defined in Section 33(1) of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*.

Results (Commission for Children and Young People)

The Commission has previously set an annual target of completing 75 per cent of its risk estimates within eight weeks. This risk estimate process relies on information from external parties, and our experience shows that this target is unrealistic. We have therefore set a new target of 70 per cent completed within 16 weeks, which better reflects the risk estimate process. As we consistently complete about 200 risk estimates per year, we have also revised this target from 120 per year to 200.

Table 3 opposite, details results for 2007–2008.

The Commission has anticipated that most applicants assessed as high risk will not be employed in child-related employment. We set a target of 95 per cent of high risk applicants not being employed.

Of the 43 applicants assessed as high risk, seven applicants (16 per cent) were employed in child-related employment. Four of these were employed in the October–December period: two were childcare assistants, one an assistant in nursing and one a foster carer. In each case the employer believed they could provide supervision and management to mitigate the risk.

In 2007–2008, 84 per cent of high risk applicants were refused child-related employment.

Table 4 opposite, shows the percentage of high risk applicants who were refused child-related employment.

Figure 5 opposite, provides more details on high risk applicants refused child-related employment in 2007–2008.

In 2007–2008, the Commission reviewed employer understanding of Relevant Employment Proceedings processes. The review highlighted that employers would value clearer

and more extensive information about Relevant Employment Proceedings and how to report them.

Plans for the future

Clearer information for employers about Relevant Employment Proceedings will be developed.

AWARE user forums will be held bi-monthly.

Child Sex Offender Accreditation Scheme

Background

The NSW Child Sex Offender Counsellors Accreditation Scheme (CSOCAS) promotes the well-being of children and young people by establishing a public register of counsellors with the necessary knowledge and skill to work with people who sexually offend against children. The Commission publishes contact information for accredited counsellors on its website to help the community locate counsellors.

Results

In 2007–2008, there were 56 counsellors accredited: 19 at associate level, 18 at clinical level and 19 at the supervisor level. This represents an increase in overall numbers from 2006–2007 as well as an increase in the number of counsellors accredited at associate and clinical level.

The Commission also aimed to develop accreditation programs that provide treatment of sexual offenders. This project was deferred because staff had to be allocated to other projects such as the development of self-employed certificates.

Plans for the future

The Commission will develop an accreditation system for child sex offender programs as well as for individual counsellors.

Figure 4: Number of estimates of risk undertaken by all Approved Screening Agencies



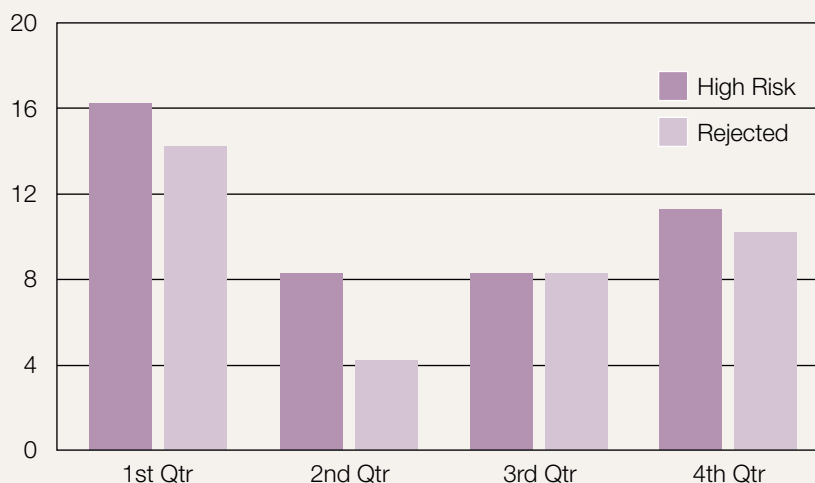
Table 3: Risk Estimates 2007–2008

Activity	Target	Result 2007–08	Result 2006–07	Outcome 2007–08
Number of estimates of risk to be completed	200	199	207	Achieved
Estimates of risk completed within 16 weeks	70%	73%	N/A	Achieved

Table 4: High risk applicants refused child-related employment

	Target	Result 2007–08	Result 2006–07	Outcome 2007–08
High risk applicants refused child-related employment	95%	84%	88%	Not achieved

Figure 5: High risk applicants refused child-related employment



Child-related conduct declarations

Background

In 2006–2007, responsibility for the Commission to audit child-related conduct declarations of elected members of Parliament was established in amendments to the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912*. We audited our processes for checking child-related conduct declarations.

Results

The audit recommendations were implemented.

Child-safe, Child-friendly organisations

Background

The Commission encourages organisations to develop their capacity to be safe and friendly for children. Our Child-safe Child-friendly Organisations program aims to:

- build awareness that organisations have an ethical and legal responsibility to reduce the risk of harm to children and young people
- achieve behavioural change among targeted organisations so they implement child-safe, child-friendly practices.

Results

Child-safe Child-friendly principles were included in the NSW Department of Community Services training package.

The Commission continued working with sporting organisations such as the Department of Sport and Recreation and the Australian Sports Commission. This work included developing material for relevant websites on child protection in a sporting context.

We also worked with the NSW Public Library's Child-safe, Child-friendly Working Group to help them develop their policies and procedures.

The Commission also delivered nine Child-safe, Child-friendly training courses which were attended by 180 people during the year, exceeding our target by 20 per cent.

Our Child-safe Child-friendly web pages were downloaded 15,038 times, a reduction of about 10 per cent compared to 2006–2007. The key resource, 'Getting Started' was downloaded 5,840 of times, a reduction of about 16 per cent compared to 2006–2007.

Work progressed on reviewing and updating our training package and online resources, and on developing a licensing agreement for other organisations to deliver the training package. This work could not be completed during 2007–2008 because of staffing changes, however this will be finalised in 2008–2009.

Plans for the future

In 2008–2009, the Commission will target three new sectors with training and awareness-raising activities to build their capacity to manage risks around their work with children and young people:

- out of school hours care
- children's disability services
- early childhood services.

We will also work with the Children's Guardian to incorporate Child-safe and Child-friendly principles in the review of out-of-home care standards.

We will complete updating of our workshop training package and develop a licensing agreement for other organisations to deliver the workshop package.

We will finalise our update of the Child-safe, Child-friendly online resources to include best practice risk management standards and reflect the standards in AWARE, the Commission's risk estimate model.

Child Death Review Team

Background

The Commission provided secretariat support to the Child Death Review Team throughout 2007–2008. The Team currently has 14 members consisting of independent experts appointed by the Minister of Youth and nominees from NSW Government departments.

The Commission chairs the Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review Team (ANZCDRT). The aim is to standardise reporting and improve comparisons between jurisdictions.

Results

The Child Death Review Team met five times during 2007–2008. The *Child Death Review Team Annual Report 2006* was tabled according to legislative requirements.

The Commission monitored 11 recommendations made in previous reports and will continue to monitor the progress of nine of these recommendations.

Progress was made on reporting the deaths of all New South Wales children and young people:

- changes were made to the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* to allow the Child Death Review Team to exchange information with other states and territories
- information on deaths of New South Wales children was obtained from Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland.

A special report *Trends in the fatal assault of children in NSW: 1996–2005* was tabled in Parliament on February 2008. This report was released to provide important information to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW. Resources required to prepare this report led to a delay in tabling the *Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996–2005*.

The Commission convened the third annual meeting of the ANZCDRT in December 2007 and progressed the work plan agreed in March of that year.

On behalf of the ANZCDRT, the Commission sought funding for a staff position to undertake the work necessary to achieve national reporting of child deaths. The Australian Department of Health and Ageing is considering this request.

Plans for the future

The Team will table *Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996–2005* in July 2008.

The Team will also redevelop the format and contents of the *Child Death Review Team Annual Report*. This will be informed by the findings of the *Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996–2005* research study.

Child Death Register

Background

Since 1996, the Child Death Review Team has maintained a Child Death Register (the Register) of the deaths of all children and young people aged 0–17 years registered in New South Wales. The Register is based on death registration data from the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, including date of birth, date of death, date of death registration, age, sex, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, cause of death as noted on the death certificate, place and country of birth, usual place of residence and parents' names.

The Register seeks to capture 100 per cent of child deaths registered in New South Wales.

Results

The Child Death Register was updated with the deaths of children and young people registered in New South Wales. The deaths were classified according to cause of death, demographic criteria and other relevant factors.

Cause of death coding was completed for all deaths examined in the *Trends in Child Deaths in New South Wales 1996–2005* study according to the current version of the International Classification of Diseases (Australian Modification).

The Child Death Register was modified to allow additional monitoring of sudden unexpected deaths in infancy.

Plans for the future

The Child Death Register will be further developed based on the findings of the study *Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996–2005*.

Trends in the fatal assault of children in NSW 1996–2005

Background

In 2007, the Minister for Youth approved the Child Death Review Team to undertake a study of trends in the fatal assault of children in New South Wales from 1996 to 2005. This study was conducted to provide information to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW.

The information was drawn from the Child Death Review Team's much larger study examining trends in child deaths from a range of causes from 1996 to 2005.

Results

The report *Trends in the fatal assault of children in NSW 1996–2005* was tabled in February 2008.

A copy of the report was forwarded to Commissioner Wood to inform the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW.

The findings were also used by the Commission to inform its submission to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW and other submissions concerning child protection.

Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996–2005

Background

In 2005, the Minister for Youth approved the Child Death Review Team to undertake a study of trends in child deaths in New South Wales from 1996 to 2005.

Information was gathered from stakeholder agencies, and the Team's analysis for the study began in 2007.

Results

The Convenor appointed nine medical specialists expert in particular diseases to advise the Child Death Review Team.

The *Trends in Child Deaths in New South Wales 1996–2005* report was drafted.

Resources required to complete the *Trends in the fatal assault of children in NSW 1996–2005*, released to provide important information to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW, slightly delayed tabling *Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996–2005*.

Plans for the future

The Child Death Review Team's study *Trends in Child Deaths in New South Wales 1996–2005* will be tabled in July 2008.

Additional statutory requirements

The following statutory reporting requirements are provided in accordance with Treasury Circular NSW TC 06/13 *Financial Reporting and Annual Reporting Requirements Arising from Employment Arrangements*.

Commission for Children and Young People – Additional statutory requirements

This annual report includes statutory reporting requirements in accordance with the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984* about the functions of the Commission for Children and Young People. The annual report for the Office for Children covers the functions provided to the Commission by that Office.

Action Plan for Women

See the Office for Children Statutory Reporting Requirements on page 10 of this report.

Chief and Senior Executive Officers

Numbers of executive officers

Bands	30 June 2006	30 June 2007	30 June 2008
Level 8	0	0	0
Level 7	0	0	0
Level 6	0	0	0
Level 5	0	0	0
Level 4	1	1	1
Level 3	0	0	0
Level 2	0	0	0
Level 1	0	0	0
Total	1	1	1

Numbers of female executive officers

CES/SES staff 30 June 2006		CES/SES staff 30 June 2007		CES/SES staff 30 June 2008	
Total staff	Women	Total staff	Women	Total staff	Women
1	1 (100%)	1	1 (100%)	1	1 (100%)

After balance date events

There were no after balance date events having a significant effect in the year 2006–2007.

Performance Statements

Ms Gillian Calvert

Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Social Work, Master of Business Administration

Commissioner

Contract appointment from 31 May 1999, renewed 31 May 2004
SES Level 4

The Minister for Youth has expressed satisfaction with Ms Calvert's management of the Commission throughout 2007–2008.

As Commissioner for Children and Young People, Ms Calvert has overall responsibility for the Commission's performance in working with others to make New South Wales a better place for children and young people.

A record of the many significant matters handled by the Commission in 2007–2008 appears elsewhere

in this report. Key results achieved by Ms Calvert during 2007–2008 included:

- Implementing AWARE
- Drafting *Trends in Child Deaths in New South Wales 1996–2005* drafted
- Influencing on child-related issues, including 13 submissions to formal inquiries.

Consultants

During 2007–2008, the Commission did not engage any consultants at a cost equal to or more than \$30,000.

Six consultants were engaged during 2007–2008 to provide specialist management advice at a total cost of \$19,833 (excluding GST).

Cost of annual report

Refer to information contained in the Office for Children Statutory Reporting Requirements on page 12 of this report.

Disability Action Plan

The *Disability Services Act 1983* requires all government agencies to publish a Disability Strategic Plan.

Summary of 2007–2008 outcomes:

- Conducted a joint research project with the Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW to explore the experiences of young carers and the impact of their care-giving on their participation in education, employment, friendship and social networks. This three-year project funded by the Australian Research Council is due for completion in 2010.
- The Commission continued to provide accommodation services to the Disability Council for their monthly meetings.
- The Commission attended the 2007 annual meeting of the European Network of Ombudspersons for

Children, which had the special needs of children with a disability as its theme.

Key Disability Action Plan Priorities for 2008–2009

- Continue providing reasonable assistance and adaptations to accommodate the needs of employees and visitors with disabilities.
- Encourage employees to identify as a person with a disability in the Office's HRMIS database.
- The Child-safe Child-friendly program will provide targeted support for employers in the disability sector.

Ethnic Affairs Priority Statements (EAPS)

The *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* requires all government agencies to report on their key initiatives. Following amendments to the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act and Regulations* and the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act and Regulations* agencies with an equivalent full-time staff of less than 200 are now required to report on their EAPS on a triennial basis.

The Commission is next required to report in 2009–2010.

Equal employment opportunity

Refer to information contained in the Office for Children Statutory Reporting Requirements on page 11 of this report.

Freedom of information

Refer to information contained in the Office for Children Statutory Reporting Requirements on page 14 of this report.

Human resources

The Office for Children provides personnel services to the Commission and the Children's Guardian.

Personnel Services provided to the Commission for Children and Young People

	EFT 30 June 2006	EFT 30 June 2007	EFT 30 June 2008
Clerk Grade 1/2	1.6	4.2	4.2
Clerk Grade 3/4	6.5	4.5	3
Clerk Grade 5/6	5	4	5
Clerk Grade 7/8	14.2	11.6	7.4
Clerk Grade 9/10	7.8	9.2	10.4
Clerk Grade 11/12	4.6	6.6	5.2
Legal Officer Grade IV	0.6	0.6	0.6
Senior Officer	2	2	2
Senior Executive Service	1	1	1
Total	43.3	43.7	38.8

Employees by classification

At 30 June 2008, the Commission employed a full-time equivalent of 38.8 positions, against a staff establishment of 41.9.

There were no exceptional movements in salaries during 2007–2008. Consistent with the provisions of the *Crown Employees (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Award 2002*, staff were paid a four per cent salary increase from July 2007. Senior Executive Service Officers were also paid a 2.5 per cent increase in accordance with the determination of the Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Tribunal.

There were no industrial disputes within the Office for Children during 2007–2008.

Legal Change

Commission for Children and Young People Amendment Act 2007

The *Commission for Children and Young People Amendment Act 2007* amended the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* to:

- require all preferred applicants for primary child-related employment

to be subject to background checking, regardless of whether they are related to the children they work with

- clarify that a relevant employment proceeding is completed only when the employer has made a determination as to the reportable conduct that had or may have occurred and any disciplinary action that may follow
- impose an obligation on an employer who has notified a relevant employment proceeding to the Commission to provide sufficient details for the purpose of background checking
- empower the Commission to charge a fee for issuing certificates to self-employed people in child-related employment
- allow reciprocal arrangements between New South Wales and other Australian jurisdictions to enable the Child Death Review Team to research the deaths of New South Wales children who die elsewhere in Australia and to provide information for research aimed at preventing or reducing child deaths in other Australian jurisdictions

- constitute the Child Death Review Team as a Committee of the Commission rather than as a corporation to alleviate the necessity for separate financial reporting
- amend the terminology in relation to the definition of an “apprehended violence order” to ensure consistency with the *Crimes Act 1900* by substituting the phrase “external protection orders” for “interstate restraint orders”
- ensure that the Commission is governed by the provisions of the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984*
- clarify liability issues by providing that protection from personal liability is available for any action conducted or omitted in good faith in the execution of this or any other Act.

The *Commission for Children and Young People Amendment Act 2007* also amended the *Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912* by empowering the Commission to request the Police and courts to provide copies of documents it needs to complete an audit and to require agencies to comply.

The Act commenced on 13 December 2007.

The Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007

The *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* amended the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* to make the definition of a “relevant apprehended violence order” consistent with the definition in the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*.

The amendment commenced on 10 March 2008.

Management and Activities

The Commission's Strategic Directions 2007–2008 lists activities to support the Commission's Results and Services

Plan. Key Performance Indicators against these activities and the Commission's corporate services are monitored through quarterly and annual reports to the Management Group.

Details of the Commission's achievements relating to identified targets are contained in the main body of the *Commission for Children and Young People Annual Report for 2007–2008*.

Management and structure

Ms Gillian Calvert

Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Social Work, Master of Business Administration

Commissioner

Contract appointment from 31 May 1999, renewed 31 May 2004
SES Level 4

Child Sex Offender Counsellor Accreditation Scheme (CSOCAS) Panel

1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008

Ms Virginia Neighbour
NSW Commission for Children and Young People, Chair

Mr Dale Tolliday
NSW Health

Dr Christopher Lennings
University of Sydney

Ms Bronwyn Cintio
Social worker

Mr Jayson Ware
Department of Corrective Services

Advisory Committees and statutory bodies

NSW Child Death Review Team

The purpose of the NSW Child Death Review Team, as specified in the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, is to prevent or reduce the number of child deaths in New South Wales. The Team considers children from birth to 17 years and only live births.

1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008, members of the Team were:

Ms Gillian Calvert
Convenor

Dr Ian Cameron
Deputy Convenor, Rural Doctor's Network

Mr John Feneley
NSW Attorney General's Department (until August 2007)

Mr Stephen Olischlager
NSW Attorney General's Department (from August 2007)

Dr Jonathan Gillis
The Children's Hospital at Westmead

Dr John Howard
Ted Noffs Foundation

Associate Professor Judith Irwin
School of Social Work and Policy Studies, University of Sydney

Dr Dianne Little
Forensic pathologist, Westmead Hospital

Mr David McKie
Department of Education and Training

Dr Elisabeth Murphy
NSW Health

Ms Robyn Shields
Aboriginal Mental Health Unit, Central Sydney Area Mental Health

Mr Maurice Taylor
NSW State Coroner's Office

Ms Anna Edwards
Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

Ms Helen Freeland
Department of Community Services

Detective Superintendent Geoffrey Beresford, NSW Police

Mr Jack Beetson
Aboriginal representative

Expert Advisory Committee

The principal role of the Committee is to assist the Commissioner in the exercise of her functions. The

Committee's functions are detailed in Part 3 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*.

From 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008 the members were:

Mr Andrew Cappie-Wood, Chair

Mr Jack Beetson

Ms Emily Booker

Mr Peter Homel

Ms Helen Kerr-Roubicek

Ms Helen L'Orange

Ms Judith Meppem

Mr Jonathan Nicholas

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People

The functions of the Committee are detailed in Part 6 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*.

Members from 21 June 2007 were:

The Hon Carmel Tebbutt, MP, Chair

Ms Marie Andrews, MP

Mr Stephen Candsell, MP

The Hon Catherine Cusack, MLC

The Hon Kaye Griffin, MLC

Dr Andrew McDonald, MP

Reverend the Hon Fred Nile, MLC

Overseas visits

In September 2007, the Commissioner travelled to Spain to attend the 2007 European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) meeting as the representative of the Asia Pacific Association of Children's Commissioners (APACC). The Commissioner also visited the Children's Commissions of Northern Ireland and England and met with their staff. Total cost incurred by the Commission was \$12,463.

In April 2008, the Commissioner travelled to Ireland as the keynote speaker at the Youth Participation Project, Catalyst for Change Conference. The Commissioner was

also a keynote speaker at a Republic of Ireland meeting on mechanisms for reviewing child deaths. All costs were met by the Youth Participation Board of Ireland and the Irish Ombudsman for Children.

Publications

The Commission for Children and Young People published the following publications in 2007–2008:

Child-friendly Community Indicators - a literature review

A world fit for children – summary

Trends in the fatal assault of children in NSW: 1996–2005

Child Death Review Team Annual and Summary Reports January–December 2007

Commission for Children and Young People Annual Report 2006–2007

Feedback 2007 – Annual Reports for primary school age kids and high school age kids

Babysitting guide – including a guide for parents and an information checklist

Exchange newsletter – four issues

A full list of the Commission's publications is available from www.kids.nsw.gov.au or from the Commission's office.

Research and development

Child Death Review Team research

Eight staff members worked on the research that forms the basis of the Child Death Review Team's annual reports.

Trends in Child Deaths in NSW: 1996–2005

Twelve staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Children at Work research

Nine staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

AWARE (A Workplace and Applicant Risk Estimate) research

Three staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Kids' Stats

Four staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Develop monitoring framework from well-being research

Three staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Development of the Child Death Register

Three staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Joint research into children's use of mobile telecommunications

Seven staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Joint research into the impact of parents' employment on children's well-being

Two staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Joint research into young carers

Three staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Joint development of research into children's lived experience of poverty

Three staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Joint development of research into achieving better health outcomes for youth with chronic health conditions.

Two staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

Joint development of research into ethical issues in children's participation in research

Three staff members worked on this during 2007–2008.

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**Statement by the Commissioner of the Commission for Children and Young People**

Pursuant to Section 45F of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I state that to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (a) the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards, other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, Urgent Issues Group Consensus Views, the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the *Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2000*, the Financial Reporting Code for Budget Dependant General Government Sector Agencies and Treasurer's Directions.
- (b) the financial statements exhibit a true and fair view of the financial position of the Commission for Children and Young People as at 30 June 2008 and for the operations for the year then ended;
- (c) there are no circumstances which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.



Gillian Calvert
Commissioner

Dated: 15.10.2008



GPO BOX 12
Sydney NSW 2001

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

NSW Commission For Children and Young People

To Members of the New South Wales Parliament

I have audited the accompanying financial report of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission) which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2008, and the operating statement, statement of recognised income and expense, cash flow statement, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report:

- presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Commission as at 30 June 2008, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations)
- is in accordance with section 45E of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (the PF&A Act) and the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2005.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

Commissioner's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Commissioner is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the PF&A Act. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Commissioner, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

My opinion does *not* provide assurance:

- about the future viability of the Commission
- that it has carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically, or
- about the effectiveness of its internal controls.

Independence

In conducting this audit, the Audit Office of New South Wales has complied with the independence requirements of the Australian Auditing Standards and other relevant ethical requirements. The PF&A Act further promotes independence by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General, and
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of public sector agencies but precluding the provision of non-audit services, thus ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their role by the possibility of losing clients or income.



Jack Kheir BEc, FCPA
Director, Financial Audit Services

20 October 2008
SYDNEY

**Commission For Children & Young People
Operating Statement
for the year ended 30 June 2008**

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Expenses excluding losses		
Personnel services expenses	4,230	3,853
Other operating expenses	4,084	3,906
Grants and subsidies	<u>375</u>	<u>331</u>
Total Expenses excluding losses	<u>8,689</u>	<u>8,090</u>
Less:		
Revenue		
Grants and contributions	<u>8,689</u>	<u>8,090</u>
Total Revenue	<u>8,689</u>	<u>8,090</u>
Gain / (loss) on disposal	-	-
Other gains/(losses)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Cost of Services	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**Commission For Children & Young People
Statement of Recognised Income and Expense
for the year ended 30 June 2008**

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	-	-
TOTAL INCOME AND EXPENSE RECOGNISED FOR THE YEAR	-	-

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Commission For Children & Young People
Balance sheet
as at 30 June 2008

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	-	-
Receivables	-	-
Total Current Assets	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment	-	-
Total Non-Current Assets	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Assets	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Payables	-	-
Provisions	-	-
Total Current Liabilities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Non-Current Liabilities		
Provisions	-	-
Total Non-Current Liabilities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Assets	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
EQUITY		
Accumulated funds	-	-
Total Equity	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Commission For Children & Young People
Cash Flow Statement
for the year ended 30 June 2008

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Payments		
Employee related	-	-
Grants and subsidies	-	-
Total Payments	-	-
Receipts		
Sale of goods and services	-	-
Interest and dividends received	-	-
Total Receipts	-	-
Cash Flows From Government		
Recurrent appropriation	-	-
Capital appropriation	-	-
Net Cash Flows From Government	-	-
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	-	-
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds from sale of Land and Buildings, Plant and Equipment and Infrastructure Systems	-	-
Purchases of Land and Buildings, Plant and Equipment and Infrastructure Systems	-	-
NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	-	-
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	-	-
Opening cash and cash equivalents	-	-
CLOSING CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	-	-

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) *Reporting entity*

The NSW Commission for Children & Young People (the Commission) is a reporting entity.

The Public Sector Employment and Management (Children and other matters) Order 2006 abolished the Commission as a Department of the Public Service on 2nd April 2006 and transferred its branches to the Office for Children.

However the Commission is a statutory body established under the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 and it is listed in Schedule 2 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983. Accordingly, it must continue preparing a separate financial report.

The Commission's 2007-08 financial report comprises the value of services provided free of charge by the Office for Children for the year ended 30 June 2008.

The Commission's assets and liabilities were previously transferred to the Office for Children. Therefore it has nil assets and liabilities as at 30 June 2008.

The Commission does not maintain its own bank account, and therefore there are no cash flows shown in the Commission's report.

As the Commission is a single program entity, the financial operations disclosed in the operating statement are those of the Commission's program. Accordingly, a separate supplementary program statement has not been prepared.

The Commission is a not-for-profit entity (as profit is not its principal objective) and it has no cash generating units.

The consolidated financial report for the year ended 30 June 2008 has been authorised for issue by the Commissioner on 15th October 2008.

(b) *Basis of Preparation*

The Commission's financial statements are a general purpose financial report which has been prepared in accordance with:

- applicable Australian Accounting Standards (which include Australian Accounting interpretations);
- the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and Regulation; and
- the Financial Reporting Directions published in the Financial Reporting Code for Budget Dependent General Government Sector Agencies or issued by the Treasurer.

The Financial report is prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

All amounts are rounded to the nearest one thousand dollars and are expressed in Australian currency.

(c) *Income Recognition*

Income is measured at the fair value of the consideration or contribution received or receivable. Additional comments regarding the accounting policies for the recognition of income are discussed below.

(i) *Sale of Goods and Services*

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised as revenue when the agency transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership of the assets.

(ii) *Rendering of Services*

Revenue is recognised when the service is provided or by reference to the stage of completion (based on labour hours incurred to date).

(d) *Comparative Information*

Except when an Australian Accounting Standard permits or provides otherwise, comparative information is disclosed in respect of the previous period for all amounts reported in the financial statements.

(e) *New Australian Accounting Standards issued but not effective*

At reporting date, the following Standards and Interpretations were in issue but not yet effective. NSW Treasury mandate

Commission For Children & Young People
Notes to the financial statements
for the year ended 30 June 2008

(TC08/04) precludes early adoption of these accounting standards.

<u>Australian Accounting Standard/Interpretations</u>	<u>Effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after</u>
AASB 101 (September 2007) and AASB 2007-8 regarding presentation of financial statements	1 January 2009
AASB 1004 (December 2007) regarding contributions	1 July 2008
ASB 1049 (October 2007) regarding the whole of government and general government sector financial reporting	1 July 2008
AASB 2007-9 regarding amendments arising from review of AASs 27, 29 and 31	1 July 2008
Interpretation 4 (February 2007) regarding determining whether an arrangement contains a lease	1 January 2008
Interpretation 12 and AASB 2007-2 regarding service concession arrangements	1 January 2009
Interpretation 129 (February 2007) regarding service concession disclosures	1 January 2008
Interpretation 1038 (December 2007) regarding contributions by owners	1 July 2008

The Commission anticipates that the adoption of these Standards and Interpretations in future periods will not have a material financial impact on the financial statements.

These Standards and Interpretations will be first applied in the financial report of the Commission that relates to the annual reporting period beginning after the effective date of each pronouncement.

2 EXPENSES EXCLUDING LOSSES

	30 June 2008 \$'000	30 June 2007 \$'000
(a) Personnel services expenses		
Personnel Services	<u>4,230</u>	<u>3,853</u>
	4,230	3,853
 (b) Other operating expenses		
Auditor's remuneration - audit or review of the financial reports	25	14
Operating lease rental expense - minimum lease payments	448	437
Insurance	5	6
Corporate services	512	491
Consultancy costs	20	37
Contractors	494	413
Storage	15	20
Travel related	49	40
Data processing	68	63
Motor vehicle expenses	13	11
Postage and freight	37	30
Conference and seminars	20	21
Stores and stationery	74	61
Printing	101	121
Boards, Tribunals and Meetings	3	30
Events Management	42	56

Commission For Children & Young People
Notes to the financial statements
for the year ended 30 June 2008

Community Education	4	21
Employment Screening	1,720	1,631
Data Services	106	92
Telephone	45	71
Other	<u>283</u>	<u>240</u>
	<u>4,084</u>	<u>3,906</u>

(c) Grants and subsidies

Grants to Catholic Commission	<u>375</u>	<u>331</u>
	<u>375</u>	<u>331</u>

3 REVENUES

(a) Grants and contributions

Grants Received	130	-
Services provided free of charge	<u>8,559</u>	<u>8,090</u>
	<u>8,689</u>	<u>8,090</u>

4 ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY

Objective - To promote and enhance the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people in the community, and to encourage their participation in decisions that affect their lives.

5 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

The Commission is not aware of any contingent liabilities and / or assets associated with it's operations.

6 AFTER BALANCE DATE EVENTS

There are no events subsequent to balance date which affect the financial report.

End of audited financial statements

Appendix A – Commitment to young Australians

The Commission is a signatory to the Commitment to young Australians developed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY). The Commitment is guided by seven principles, and highlights of the Commission's work to support and progress these principles are outlined below.

The well-being of children and young people needs to be a national priority

The Commission is actively promoting paid parental leave as a national priority to increase the well-being of Australia's infants. In collaboration with the National Investment for the Early Years (NIFTeY), the Commission proposed Terms of Reference for a national inquiry into paid parental leave. These terms were largely adopted by the Australian Government for an Inquiry by the Productivity Commission.

Also with NIFTeY, the Commission prepared a submission to the Inquiry, focussing on the importance of paid parental leave for children's well-being and development.

The submission refers to scientific research that shows how the continuous interaction between baby and parents in a baby's first 12 months of life shapes how a child regulates their emotions, communicates, solves problems, thinks logically and reacts to the world.

The whole community is responsible for the well-being of children and young people

The Commission is working to improve built environments for children and young people, and to encourage local communities to involve kids in decisions about the community's built and natural spaces.

Together with the Urban Research Program of Griffith University, we developed a draft set of child-friendly community indicators. The indicators will be used as a planning tool to help planners understand the needs of children and young people. They are now being trialled and further developed in cooperation with a group of local councils. The final version of the indicators and supporting implementation material will be released in 2009.

We are also developing a good practice guide for children's participation in planning processes at the local level. Six local councils, led by Wollongong City Council, will be involved in developing this guide.

Families need support and resources to nurture children and young people

The Commissioner's joint submission, *Think Child, Think Family, Think Community*, with Dr Judy Cashmore and Professor Dorothy Scott, to the Special Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW emphasised the importance of supporting families to benefit children and young people. This includes developing national frameworks to reduce disadvantage caused by poverty, domestic violence, parental alcohol misuse and illicit substance use and parental mental illness.

Children and young people should grow up in a safe environment

The Commission's work with the Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review Teams contributes to building a safer New South Wales for children and young people. We lead the Working With Children program that helps organisations become safer and more enjoyable for children and young people, and includes the Working With Children Check.



Children and young people should be valued and respected

The Commission conducted 321 public engagements on children's issues in 2007–2008. These included media comment and conference presentations. The importance of valuing and respecting children and young people is a key message of the Commission's public engagements.

Children and young people should have learning and development opportunities which encourage them to realise their potential

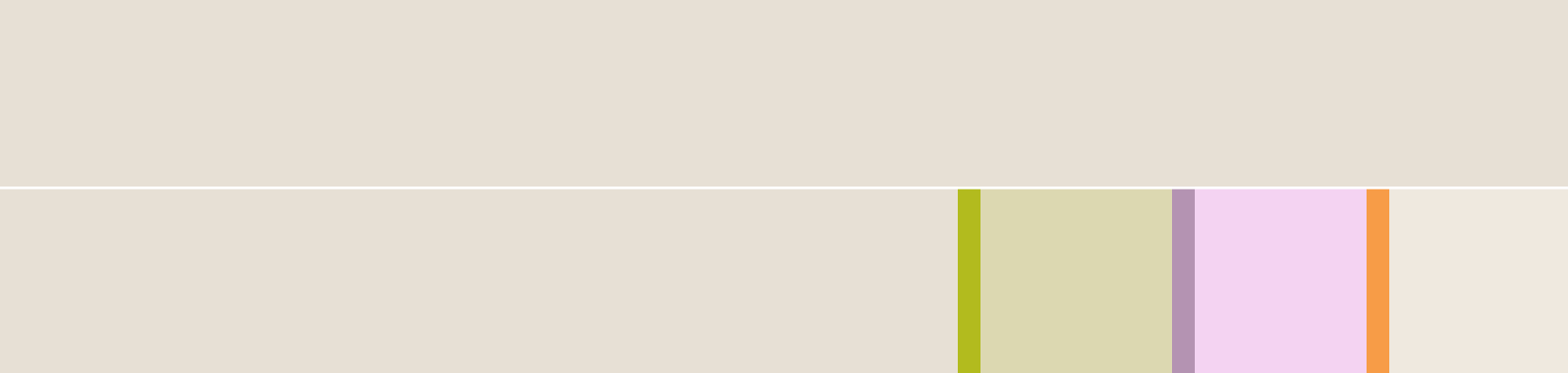
The Commission provides a range of learning and development opportunities for children and young people. These include sponsoring young people to attend conferences, supporting young people to co-

present and deliver presentations with Commission staff as well as facilitating training sessions and workshops for young people, such as the Communication Skills workshop conducted for the Red Cross in Albury and at the Western Sydney Students Representative Council Conference 2007. The Commission also provides support and guidance for members of NSW Student Representative Councils to build communication and self-advocacy skills.

The capacity of children and young people to contribute to the community should be acknowledged and enabled

The Commission's submissions to formal inquiries highlight the importance of children's knowledge and participation in developing our policy responses and recommendations. We also added a new section to our website providing news of participation opportunities for children and young people which includes tips on how to participate effectively. See www.kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/thezone/haveyoursay.cfm.

The Commission organised a seminar for senior staff from NSW Government agencies with responsibility for leading five Priority Areas in the NSW State Plan. These Priority Areas were identified by the Commission as those most dependent on young people's participation in their implementation to succeed. At the seminar, more than 20 senior officers worked to identify opportunities for young people to participate in achieving the goals of the State Plan, along with ways to address any barriers to participation.



Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the children and young people who took and agreed to appear in the photographs reproduced in this report, and to those who told us about their experiences and gave us their views on a range of topics included in this report.

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