



Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

Our Ref: 22/6385

Senator Helen Polley
Chair
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement

E-mail: le.committee@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Polley

Updated data - submission to inquiry into law enforcement capabilities in relation to child exploitation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an updated submission to the Committee's inquiry into law enforcement capabilities in relation to child exploitation.

The submission made by my predecessor as Commissioner for Children and Young People brought to the Committee's attention the following key statistics collected from a sample of almost 5,000 Western Australian school-aged children and young people via the 2019 Speaking Out Survey (SOS):

- 53.6 per cent of female students and 26.7 per cent of male students in years 9-12 reported they had been sent unwanted sexual material (such as pornographic pictures, words or videos).
- Of the students who had received unwanted sexual material, 39.6 per cent reported they had received it three or more times in the last 12 months, and 34.2 per cent reported they had received unwanted sexual material once or twice in the last 12 months.
- Most students who had been sent unwanted sexual material reported they had received it via social media (92.9 per cent), while a much smaller proportion received it via text message (15.8 per cent).

In the period since submissions to this inquiry initially closed my office has completed the analysis of data collected during the second SOS in 2021. I therefore wish to advise the Committee of the following updates to the information outlined above:

- The 2021 SOS included a fully representative sample of 16,532 Western Australian school-aged children and young people.
- 56 per cent of female students and 30 per cent of male students in years 9-12 reported they had been sent unwanted sexual material.
- Of the students who had received unwanted sexual material, 41.9 per cent reported they had received it three or more times in the last 12 months, and 35.7 per cent reported they had received unwanted sexual material once or twice in the last 12 months.

- The vast majority students who had been sent unwanted sexual material continued to report they had received the material via social media (92.9 per cent – unchanged from 2019), with a lower proportion reporting receiving it via text message (18.7 per cent).

In 2022 I instituted the Commissioner's Listening Tour to ensure Western Australian children and young people from metropolitan, regional and remote areas of the State have the opportunity to share their views and experiences with me directly. The discussions I have had with children and young people through the Listening Tour have clearly demonstrated that receiving unwanted sexual material is an issue affecting children and young people of all socio-economic and cultural groups.

Yours sincerely,

Jacqueline McGowan-Jones
Commissioner

19 SEP 2022