



Media Release

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Organisations must improve their systems to respond to allegations of child abuse

The Ombudsman's report, *Western Australia's Reportable Conduct Scheme: A review of systems to protect children*, was tabled in Parliament today.

The report examined the compliance of organisations with legislative requirements to have systems in place under Western Australia's Reportable Conduct Scheme (**the Scheme**). The Scheme compels heads of organisations that exercise care, supervision or authority over children to notify the Ombudsman of allegations and convictions of child abuse by their employees and then investigate the allegations. The Ombudsman oversees these investigations. The Scheme covers organisations in a range of settings including schools, religious institutions, childcare centres, hospitals, detention centres and out-of-home care.

Deputy Ombudsman, David Robinson, said:

"Some organisations had made significant progress in implementing the systems required by the Scheme, however, further work is required with only 39.3 per cent of organisations reporting that they had implemented all required systems."

The review identified that awareness and understanding of the Scheme's requirements was still developing. Areas for improvement include:

- integration of the Scheme into the reporting systems of organisations;
- the readiness of organisations to investigate allegations of reportable conduct; and
- procedures in place for the storage, access and disclosure of investigation information.

"While we observed some comprehensive and effective systems, many organisations are just beginning their journey to comply with the Scheme's requirements," said Mr Robinson.

In addition to overseeing investigations, the office of the Ombudsman educates and builds the capacity of organisations through guidance material on its website, training, a dedicated enquiries line and individual engagement with organisations that have notified conduct.

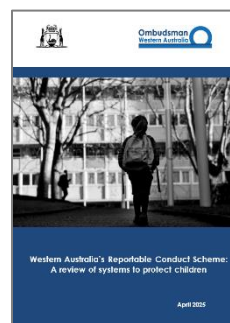
"The implementation of systems is essential to ensuring that allegations of child abuse are not dismissed, ignored or mishandled. I encourage organisations covered by the Scheme to reflect upon the areas for improvement set out in this report, access the resources available on our website and to contact our enquiries line should they need further assistance," said Mr Robinson.

Resources

- [Full report](#)
- [Summary of report](#)
- [Additional analyses of victims and subjects of allegations](#)

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