

# DFFH (CHILD PROTECTION) APPLICATIONS FOR EMERGENCY CARE/SAFE CUSTODY WARRANTS

[AT LEAST 90% ARE FOR CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE]

## ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE CHILDREN'S COURT OF VICTORIA

YEAR	TOTAL	AVERAGE PER WEEK
2014/2015	4961	95.4
2015/2016	5432	104.4
2016/2017	6478	124.5
2017/2018	6505	125
2018/2019	7983	153.5
2019/2020	8439	162.2
2020/2021	6429	123.6
2021/2022	5672	109
2022/2023	5886	113.1
2023/2024*	5661	108.8
2024/2025*	6234	119.8

\*Statistics not included in the Annual Reports of the Children's Court. Statistics obtained from the State Co-ordinator of the Children's Court.

The overwhelming majority of the young people have serious substance abuse and mental health issues and have been exposed to family violence. Many are engaging in criminal offending and especially if they are female, but not exclusively, are being sexually exploited. There is almost a template in which these characteristics are detailed in the affidavits of DFFH supporting the application for a warrant. Almost invariably, the affidavits also include that particularly substance abuse, mental health and family violence were also experienced by their parents. The cycle continues.

The statements below are comments by young people which are quoted in the Affidavits of DFFH. They highlight the challenge of engaging young people in treatment.

- *'A was admitted to a detox unit in .... however, left after staying only a few hours'*
- *'B ... secure care ... mentally volatile, threatening self-harm, disclosed sexual assault, hallucinating on and off post suspected ice use with peers and unknown associates ... her refusal to have medical or therapeutic appointments ...'*
- *'C is currently disengaged from many services and her care team are not able to engage her whilst she is constantly missing ...'*
- *'D ... persistent references to suicide ... since hospitalisation (D) passing black urine, longer sleeping ... refused to attend medical appointment ...'*
- *'E lit a fire at a residential home in multiple locations and said she wanted to trap and kill a co-resident ... refused a mental health assessment. ..'*

Jennifer Bowles

12 March 2026