

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO**

Program: 1.7 National Security and Criminal Justice

Question No. AE17/093

Senator Pratt asked the following question at the hearing on 28 February 2017:

1. Has any progress been made on developing a national working with children's check?
2. Has any work been done on cross-border/inter-state child protection notifications? Please outline this work, and any planned work.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

1.
Yes. The Commonwealth, and States and Territories, are progressing the Royal Commission's recommendations on working with children checks (WWCC).

The Commonwealth supports an approach that ensures greater national consistency of WWCC schemes between states and territories in order to achieve greater protection of children.

The Commonwealth is committed to working with the states and territories to consider the recommendations of the Royal Commission's Report, including those recommendations on achieving greater national consistency. The 36 recommendations raise a range of significant legal, technical and resourcing issues, most of which fall to states and territories, which have statutory responsibility for child protection matters. Progress has been made in considering these matters in both the Community and Families Secretaries forum and the National Operators' Forum. However, as responsibility for WWCC sits in different portfolios in the states and territories, it is important for ongoing consultation to ensure that all relevant agencies are represented.

To facilitate this discussion in relation to WWCC, the Attorney-General's Department has established a working group with relevant State and Territory officials which will provide a specific forum to discuss and reach agreement on the policy and legal issues raised by the recommendations.

2.
The Department of Social Services (DSS) has responsibility for Commonwealth policy on child protection and therefore questions relating to the sharing of children protection information between jurisdictions should be directed to DSS.