

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

### WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to Minister for Territory Families:

#### Royal Commission into Child Protection and Juvenile Justice

- 1. How much is the NT Government allocating to build a new juvenile detention facility in Darwin?**

The NT Government has announced that \$70 million will be allocated to replace both the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre and the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre with two new youth justice centres. The specific allocation of funds to these projects will be determined following finalisation of site selection and work on detailed design. The NT Government has also called on the Commonwealth Government to contribute funding to address this central recommendation in the Royal Commission report.

- 2. How much is the NT Government allocating to build a new juvenile detention facility in Alice Springs?**

See response to Q1.

- 3. Does “in principle” support of some recommendations mean the NT Government will not be implementing these recommendations?**

The NT Government announced on 1 March that it accepts the intent and direction of all 227 recommendations made in the Royal Commission report. The Government will work towards implementing the recommendations identified as “supported”, and will undertake further consultation with key stakeholders and planning to implement the intent and direction of recommendations identified as “supported in principle”.

- 4. What does “in principle” support exactly mean?**

Recommendations that are supported in principle have been identified as requiring further consultation and planning in order to ensure that the approach taken to implementation fully achieves or even exceeds the outcomes being sought.

Having accepted the intent and direction of all 227 Royal Commission recommendations, the Government proposes to release an implementation plan for consideration in late March or early April that will address the 217 recommendations that relate to the NT Government. The implementation plan will reflect the four major objectives and 17 programs identified in the 1 March announcement.

- 5. How much in total will it cost to implement all recommendations from the Royal Commission report?**

The resource implications of implementing Royal Commission recommendations are being considered as part of the 2018-19 Budget development process.

**6. How much additional funding into Territory Families will the NT Government be allocating for the implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations?**

The resource implications of implementing Royal Commission recommendations are being considered as part of the 2018-19 Budget development process.

**7. What are the time frames for implementing the Recommendations of the Royal Commission? Please provide detail.**

Having accepted the intent and direction of all 227 Royal Commission recommendations, the NT Government will release an implementation plan for consideration in late March or early April that will address the 217 recommendations that relate to the NT Government. The implementation plan will reflect the four major objectives and 17 programs identified in the 1 March announcement, and will include information on phasing.

**8. What recommendations will not be implemented by the NT Government and why?**

The NT Government has indicated its acceptance of the intent and direction of all 227 Royal Commission recommendations and will release an implementation plan for consideration in late March or early April that will address the 217 recommendations that relate to the NT Government. Ten of the 227 recommendations are not the responsibility of the NT Government: 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 3.2, 6.1, 15.4, 32.11, 39.6, 41.3 and 43.4.

**9. How often will Territory Families update the public on the implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission?**

Governance arrangements for the implementation plan, including accountability and reporting mechanisms, will be addressed in the implementation plan to be released for consideration in late March or early April.

**10. How will Territory Families update the public on the implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission?**

See response to Q9.

**11. What recommendations does the NT Government consider are the responsibility of the federal Government?**

Recommendations 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 6.1, 15.4, 32.11 and 39.6 are explicitly the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. A number of other recommendations identify or imply shared responsibility by the Commonwealth Government: 1.1, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 39.3, 39.4, 39.5, 43.3, 43.4 and 43.7.

**12. How much funding is the NT Government requesting from the Federal Government to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission?**

Discussions are ongoing between the NT and Commonwealth governments regarding the resourcing implications of the reforms arising from the Royal Commission recommendations.

**13. Will the NT Government provide the Federal Government with full disclosure and allow an audit of their current financial commitments in Child protection and Juvenile Justice in order to secure more funding for the NT?**

**If not, why not?**

Discussions are ongoing between the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments regarding all recommendations for which the Commonwealth Government has sole or shared responsibility.

**14. How often will the Government review its compliance with the Aboriginal child placement principle?**

Territory Families reviews the percentage of Aboriginal children placed with Aboriginal carers according to the Aboriginal Placement Principal via monthly internal performance reporting.

**15. How many additional staff will be allocated to the Tennant Creek office of Territory Families?**

Territory Families has implemented a three month surge capacity of seven staff.

Territory Families has already recruited the following:

- 1 x Aboriginal Community Worker
- 1 x Senior Aboriginal Community Worker

In addition, Territory Families is permanently recruiting to the following:

- 1 x Director (SP2)
- 1 x AO7 YORET / Youth Services Coordinator

Territory Families will further permanently recruit to:

- 2 x P1 / P2 staff
- 1 x AO2 Indigenous Trainee

**16. What is the different approach the NT Government will be using in Tennant Creek?**

Territory Families is leading a five point plan to drive effective child protection service delivery in Tennant Creek, including;

1. Enhancing Locally Based Child Protection Services
2. Working in a connected way and on the ground
3. Respecting, listening and acting
4. Enhancing Domestic and Family Violence Services
5. Expanding responses to young people

The plan is being implemented immediately in collaboration with the additional staff already committed on the ground.

The plan has been informed by finding out what communities need through a direct, face-to-face approach.

To this end, Territory Families' senior executives, including Ken Davies, Chief Executive Officer and Jeanette Kerr, Deputy Chief Executive Officer Operations were in Tennant Creek for a number of days to listen to the local service providers, the community and local Aboriginal elders to take on board their concerns and advice to drive genuine improvements.

The action plan builds on previous enhancements undertaken by NT Government and Territory Families (since its establishment in September 2016), as part of a commitment to reforming the Territory's child protection system.

This has included a focus on responding quickly to communities' immediate needs, while considering a meaningful long-term strategy to address the Territory's inter-generational social and cultural issues.

Territory Families is committed to empowering and strengthening the Territory's most vulnerable families towards a safe and better future and the action plan for Tennant Creek is part of this continued commitment.

**17. What improvements will be made to child protection services in Tennant Creek?**

- Recruitment of an Aboriginal Community Worker (AO4) was 'fast tracked' to support the response in Tennant Creek. Mr Dylan Kerrin commenced on 26 February 2018
- A Senior Aboriginal Community Worker (AO6) commenced duties on 5 March 2018.
- Four additional Child Protection Practitioners have been committed to the Barkly Office for an initial six week operation;
- The Operation Tjupi-Tjala extended hours program used in Alice Springs over Christmas school holidays is now being trialled in Tennant Creek.
  - This operation is referred to as Operation Jalajirrpaa (White Cockatoo) and consists of Child Protection Practitioners and YORET undertaking child protection investigations and outreach work during the evening from COB to 9pm.

**18. What recommendations will not be implemented or only partially implemented if the Federal Government does not provide funding to the NT?**

On 1 March 2018 the NT Government announced its acceptance of the intent and direction of all 227 Royal Commission recommendations.

Reform of the child protection and youth justice systems has been a priority for the Northern Territory Government since coming to office in August 2016, with significant new investment having already been made including \$18.2 million for Youth Diversion for Better Youth Justice Outcomes, and \$3 million in Family Enhanced Support Services. The resource implications of implementing further reforms arising from the Royal Commission report are being considered as part of the 2018-19 Budget development process.

The NT Government will release an implementation plan for consideration in late March or early April that will address the 217 recommendations that relate to the NT Government. Discussions are ongoing between the NT and Commonwealth governments regarding all recommendations for which the Commonwealth Government has sole or shared responsibility.

**19. Which recommendations are a top priority for the NT Government?**

In preliminary planning for implementation, the 217 recommendations relating to the NT Government have been grouped into work programs that are organised under four major objectives:

1. Putting children and families at the centre
2. Improving care and protection
3. Improving youth justice
4. Strengthening governance and systems

These four objectives encompass the top priorities for the NT Government in implementing the reform program arising from the Royal Commission recommendations.

**20. Please provide a list of implementation priorities.**

See response to Q19.

**21. Has the NT Government given consideration to the adverse impact of placing disturbed children on bail in group home in the suburbs of NT towns and cities?**

**Bail Support**

Minimising the unnecessary use of custodial remand for young people is important, as the Northern Territory has obligations under several United Nations instruments (e.g. the Convention on the rights of the child [United Nations 1989]) to use detention of any kind only as a last resort for young people.

Bail Support Services aims to implement support services and developmental interventions (e.g. independent living skills, family support, access to education, employment and training) to increase a young person's capacity to comply with their bail conditions, maintain stable accommodation and to engage positively with family, pro-social peers and broader community on a sustainable basis.

**Residential Care**

The priority for children in care is to always prioritise placements of children in family homes (Kinship and Foster Care or Family Day Care).

For more complex children Territory Families has to provide a home like environment, which is achieved through Agency service contracts with residential care providers. These are residential homes that are required to look and feel like normal homes, but staffed by paid professionals on a rotational basis. There are 35 residential care homes across the Northern Territory.

Residential care facilities differ from bail support accommodation, as Bail Support is intended to provide intensive support for children (not in care) who may otherwise be at risk of being remanded in detention.

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