

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to Minister for Children and Families

Child Protection Services

1. For each recommendation of the 2007 Bath Inquiry High Risk Audit Report, have they been fully, partially implemented or not implemented at all. If partially implemented or not implemented at all, when will the recommendations be implemented?

The recent Board of Inquiry report, "*Growing them strong, together*" is considered the most comprehensive review of child protection ever undertaken in the history of the Northern Territory has incorporated, and in some cases expanded, on the recommendations of this report.

A copy of the High Risk Audit implementation update as of April 2011 is available on line at:

[http://www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au/library/scripts/objectifyMedia.aspx?file=pdf/60/38.pdf&siteID=5&str_title=High Risk Audit - Recommendations and Implementation update - April 2011.pdf](http://www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au/library/scripts/objectifyMedia.aspx?file=pdf/60/38.pdf&siteID=5&str_title=High%20Risk%20Audit%20-%20Recommendations%20and%20Implementation%20update%20-%20April%202011.pdf)

2. For each recommendation of the Bath Report into the Department of Children and Families (formerly NTFC) Intake system, have they been fully, partially implemented or not implemented at all. If partially or not implemented at all, when will the recommendations be implemented?

The recent Board of Inquiry report, "*Growing them strong, together*" is considered the most comprehensive review of child protection ever undertaken in the history of the Northern Territory has incorporated, and in some cases expanded, on the recommendations of this report.

3. For each recommendation of the 2007 Jay Tolhurst Report into the NTFC Intake System of child protection, have they been fully, partially implemented or not implemented at all. If partially implemented or not implemented at all, when will the recommendations be implemented?

The recent Board of Inquiry report, "*Growing them strong, together*" is considered the most comprehensive review of child protection ever undertaken in the history of the Northern Territory has incorporated, and in some cases expanded, on the recommendations of this report.

4. For each recommendation of the 2009 Coronial Inquest in the Death of Deborah Melville, have they been fully, partially implemented or not implemented at all. If partially implemented or not implemented at all, when will the recommendations be implemented?

In the 2009 Coronial Inquest in the Death of Deborah Melville, 14 recommendations in total were made. Of the 14 recommendations:

- Six have been implemented
- Five of the 14 Melville coronial recommendations will be incorporated into the Board of Inquiry recommendations

The majority of the coronial recommendations to be implemented are based on legislative change. Implementation plans are in place to have all remaining recommendations finalised by November 2011.

A copy of the January 2010 Coronial Recommendations implementation update as of April 2011 is available on line at:

http://www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au/library/scripts/objectifyMedia.aspx?file=pdf/60/39.pdf&siteID=5&str_title=January%202010%20Coronial%20Recommendations%20update%20-%20April%202011.pdf

5. How many Department of Children and Families residential care homes are currently providing care to children?

DCF has 9 residential care homes.

6. Where are those Department of Children and Families residential care homes located?

Four of these homes are in Darwin and five are in Alice Springs.

7. How many children under the care of the CEO are currently residing in a Department of Children and Families residential care home?

Overall, 27 children under the care of the CEO are currently residing in a Department of Children and Families residential care homes.

8. What are the ages of the children currently residing in Department of Children and Families residential care homes and how long has each child been residing in their current Department of Children and Families residential care home?

Darwin – 7 Children

- 9 years – residing since 15/10/2010 (DR)
- 16 years - residing since 15/10/2010 (KD)
- 15 years - residing since 16/09/2010 (ES)
- 15 years - residing since 02/11/2010 (TS)
- 13 years - residing since 05/02/2011 (CR)
- 14 years - residing since 23/08/2010 (NG)
- 17 years - residing since 16/7/2010 (MI)

Alice Springs – 20 Children

- 9 years -residing since 20/06/2010
- 11 years - residing since 20/06/2010
- 10 years - residing since 29/09/2010

- 12 years - residing since 20/07/2009
- 17 years - residing since 19/06/2009
- 2 year - residing since 10/11/2010
- 4 years - residing since 26/08/2010
- 6 years - residing since 08/11/2010
- 7 years - residing since 13/12/2010
- 7 years - residing since 08/12/2010
- 12 years - residing since 14/01/2011
- 6 years - residing since 22/06/2010
- 8 years -residing since 22/06/2010
- 11 years - residing since 11/05/2010
- 13 years - residing since 11/05/2010
- 13 years - residing since 24/05/2010
- 13 years – residing since 23/03/2011
- 10 years – residing since 23/03/2011
- 7 years – residing since 23/03/2011
- 6 years – residing since 23/03/2011

9. How many staff are allocated to each child by age who currently are residing in Department of Children and Families residential care homes?

Darwin

- 2 staff members per shift working on a 3 shift roster - 7 am to 5 pm, 2pm to 12 midnight, 2pm to 8 am.

Alice Springs

- Generally between 2-6 shifts per day. Staffing ratio depends on numbers and ages of children, medical needs and behavioural issues. The houses that have more than 3 children have at least 2 staff on during working hours plus additional support staff if required.

10. How many children currently under the care of the CEO are residing interstate or are placed with carers who are residing interstate?

There are 44 children in care of the Chief Executive who are currently residing interstate.

11. Given the announcement that the Government will provide an extra \$130 million over 5 years to improve child protection services in the Territory, what amount of funding of that \$130 million will be provided to the Children's Commissioner?

Over the next five years, \$3.2M in additional funding will be provided to the Children's Commissioner.

12. Has the Minister investigated the claim made by Save the Children and reported in the Growing them stronger, together report on page 255 that no notification made in relation to children on a town camp has resulted in children being removed to safety despite at times serious violence and neglect issues? If not, why not?

The Save the Children report provided no specific identifying information on particular town camps referred to.

13. Since the Coroner handed down his report into the death of Deborah Melville, how many children in the care of the CEO have been placed with kinship carers and did the Department undertake assessments of the capacity of each of these kinship carers to care for the child?

There are 182 children in kinship care in the Northern Territory.

14. Has the Minister instructed the Department to review all child protection notifications that were "written off", that is closed off without investigation following the release of the Jay Tolhurst Report into the Child Intake system? If not, why not?

DCF have undertaken the process of reviewing and auditing a randomly selected sample of the child protection notifications subject to the streamlined recording process. As a result of this audit it was determined that all cases would be reviewed. All contacts have now been subjected to a desktop exercise to determine which children have had subsequent case involvement with the Department. Further assessment of the contacts relating to children who have not had subsequent case involvement with the Department is being undertaken by a senior Child Protection Worker, to determine what action is appropriate.

No intakes were "written off" all were assessed and recorded as appropriate.

15. As at 1 January 2010, how many children are in the care and protection of the CEO and how many of those children in care have current case management plans?

As at 5 May 2011:

765 children were on Protection Orders and of those children all had case plans.

16. As at 1 January 2010, how many families have been placed on Income Management plans effecting 70% of their welfare payments?

Centrelink would be able to provide this information.