

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Guyula to the Minister for Territory Families:

Family Support

1. How many Family Conferences were held during the 2021/22 year? And how much is budgeted for family conferencing in the 2022/23 budget? Who facilitates these conferences?

Answer:

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (the Department) has implemented the Signs of Safety Framework that prioritises family-led decision making and planning for the safety and wellbeing for their children. This practice framework centres on involving the family and their natural network in decision making and planning to increase children's safety. These network meetings include family, their network, often extended family members, and/or services to support the child or family and the Department. The network meetings allows for family time for private discussion and solutions to be developed to protect their children.

Family meetings are convened by the Department and are facilitated to draw out concerns, what works well, strengths, options and solutions.

Family meetings are not specifically funded or counted as they are embedded into all family support, child protection and out of home care service delivery.

The Signs of Safety, family led decision making network meetings function as Family Conferences within the case management framework.

2. What policies and procedures are there that ensure that the correct Aboriginal authorities for children at risk: such as their clan elders, their grandparents, their Djungaya (in Yolŋu culture this is someone from another clan who is dedicated to manage the needs of the person – they are an intermediary) are being included by child protection workers in the business of making sure the child is protected?

Answer:

The Department's policies, procedures and practice guidance include content detailing the inclusion of consultation with Aboriginal Community Workers (employed by the Department) to be able to fully inform and provide advice on cultural aspects of case planning, working with families, children and young people. Further, these documents also reference the

Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework that highlights when providing a service to Aboriginal people, Department staff must actively seek to understand and address the concerns and questions the person may have and appropriately recognise cultural differences.

In addition to the Aboriginal Community Workers policy, procedures and practice guidance highlight the use of interpreters if required and involving Aboriginal community controlled agencies as appropriate to the family.

The Department's policies, procedures and practice guidance includes references to genogram mapping of family relationships to assist in identifying key family members to involve in a child or family's planning. Department workers are supported in the completion of genograms through factsheets.