

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Ms Fyles to the Minister for Correctional Services:

Children's Commissioner Recommendations

1. Can you please provide your agency's response to each of the seven recommendations made by the Children's Commissioner in relation to its investigation into Don Dale Youth Detention Centre of August 2014.

Answer:

Recommendation 1

A Certificate III in Correctional Practice (Youth Justice) has been introduced for Youth Justice Officers. New and existing officers will be required to complete this qualification. Youth Justice Officers will undergo a rigorous eight week training course with core competency requirements which is then followed by ten months on the job and on line training.

Recommendation 2

Youth Justice introduced a new recruitment approach for Youth Justice Officers in early 2015 (prior to the Children's Commissioner's report). This approach has been designed to model best practice recruitment methodologies and incorporates cognitive abilities and work preferences testing.

The process has significantly changed from historical practice. The significant areas of change include partnering with an expert recruitment agency to provide a qualified shortlist for the department's consideration; introducing cognitive abilities and work preferences testing; assessment centres; physical fitness testing; and integrity checks.

This more comprehensive assessment and screening approach is designed to better screen applicants to determine skills, knowledge and personal attributes appropriate to the role and to better predict on the job performance. The Department of Correctional Services does not believe that psychometric testing is required.

Recommendation 3

In line with public sector requirements all positions in the youth justice detention centres have been evaluated in relation to the level of responsibilities and accountabilities of the role. The most recent evaluation was undertaken for the front line positions including Youth Justice Officers, Senior Youth Justice Officers and Shift Supervisors and were completed in January 2015 and October 2014 respectively.

Recommendation 4,5 and 6

In line with the Recommendations from the Vita Report, a review of operating procedures in Detention Centres has been undertaken and seen the development of a new Procedures Manual. This includes site specific procedures for each detention Centre. The procedures have been provided to the Youth Detention Advisory Group which was established to oversee the implementation of the Vita Report for review and comment. This group consists of members across Government Agencies and also includes members from North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency and the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Service.

Recommendation 7

The Department has introduced the Youth Level Service of Inventory in line with the Vita recommendations. Staff in both case management units has been trained in its use and it now forms part of standard practice.

2. Can you also outline the timeframe for implementation of each recommendation?

Answer:

With the exception of Recommendation 2, all recommendations have been implemented.