

Care and Protection of Children Amendment Bill



22 May 2026

The Legislative Scrutiny Committee
Northern Territory

To Whom it May Concern

I am writing to submit my views on the CLP's proposed Care and Protection of Children Amend Bill. I feel strongly that the assembly should not pass this bill as it does not have sufficient regard for the rights and liberties of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

This bill has been condemned nationally by 330 Aboriginal organisations as it undermines the Child Placement Principal. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children belong with their families and where the state must intervene due to harm or neglect, it is imperative that every effort is made to ensure their cultural and spiritual well-being is safeguarded by maintaining connection to family, culture and community.

This bill is not evidence-based and it has not been designed with or for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the people who are most impacted by its implementation. This is not good law or good policy for Territorians and it will not make Territory children safer.

In my role as



I have daily contact with children and families involved in the child protection system, and frequent contact with Department of Children and Families staff, including case workers. Many of these children are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and many of them are in the care of Aunties, Uncles and Grandparents. These children are precious and beloved by their families and communities. Many of them have suffered harm or neglect by parents for various reasons, yet because they are in the care of their extended family, they remain connected to those who love and understand them best, in safe and secure homes.

Teachers and schools are highly aware of the failures of the child protection system. In my experience, Territory Families has an incredibly high staff turnover, suggesting high levels of stress and burnout due to under staffing and under resourcing. This means proper oversight of children's well-being is frequently lacking and teachers are often the ones raising the alarm about children's safety and coordinating necessary services when this work should be done by DCF. However, if the government were serious about children's safety, they would address the very real issue of under funding and under resourcing the social services sector, including housing, domestic violence and drug and alcohol services. Instead, they seem intent on further vilifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families when it is a racist and underfunded system that is to blame.

I urge the committee to advise the assembly against passing of this bill and instead look at ways to address the root causes of child harm and neglect - racism, poverty, domestic violence and insecure housing.

Sincerely yours,

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