

SAFE, THRIVING AND CONNECTED

Generational Change for Children and Families

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

The Northern Territory Government will invest more than \$229 million over the next five years to implement reforms to fix the child protection and youth justice systems.

This response builds on improvements already introduced since August 2016 and provides a whole-of-government approach to consider health care, housing, education, family support, police and justice services - all crucial to drive genuine change in the Northern Territory.

WHY THIS REFORM IS NECESSARY

The Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory found that the Northern Territory failed to care for and protect Territory children over the 10 year period under review. It found that the Territory's youth justice and child protection systems have not in the main helped children and families, and nor have they helped to keep the community safe.

A whole of government approach is needed to enact meaningful reform. Investment to fix the system now will help to achieve genuine, generational change for the future.

THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan has been informed through hundreds of hours of consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, community sector organisations and representatives of government agencies.

The Northern Territory Government is adopting a preventative approach to this reform with a specific focus on avoiding the need for children and families to enter the youth justice and child protection systems.

This Plan addresses the 217 recommendations of the Royal Commission that relate to the Northern Territory Government through 17 work programs and 50 related projects. Through the implementation of this Plan, the Northern Territory Government is:

- ▶ putting children and families at the centre;
- ▶ improving care and protection;
- ▶ improving youth justice; and
- ▶ strengthening governance and systems.

Building on the work to date, this Plan outlines an investment in generational change to fix the broken systems, and ensure that children, families and communities are safe, thriving and connected.

A PHASED APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

The Royal Commission found that introducing the required changes will be a complex and extended process and that the reform strategy must take the long view focussed on generational change. The reform programs and projects described in this Plan will be implemented with the full delivery of reforms identified across three phases. The table on the next page describes the phases for completion and the major deliverables..



IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

►►► Phase 1 | full delivery within 1 year

- Establish 3 new Child and Family Centres as coordination hubs (9 total)
- Establish pathways for families to access early support
- Improve youth detention operations
- Expand access to diversion and bail support
- Improve care and protection practice
- Enact priority legislative amendments
- Convene the tripartite forum
- Increase support to young people leaving care to access housing

►►► Phase 2 | full delivery within 3 years

- Establish 4 new Child and Family Centres as coordination hubs (13 total)
- Establish the Commission for Children and Young People
- Transform Out-of-Home Care
- Strengthen focus on Youth Policing
- Introduce a Single Act for Children
- Introduce Family Group Conferencing
- Establish NT and Australian Government joint planning mechanisms

►►► Phase 3 | full delivery within 5 years

- Establish 4 new Child and Family Centres as coordination hubs (17 total)
- Replace youth detention centres with youth justice training facilities
- Establish a Youth and Children's Court facility in Alice Springs
- Implement new integrated client information system for child protection and youth justice



INVESTING IN GENERATIONAL CHANGE

In response to the Royal Commission, the Northern Territory Government is investing in generational change to ensure children, families and communities are *Safe, Thriving and Connected*. This investment includes:

\$229.6 MILLION	in new funding over five years to reform and improve services for children, young people and families experiencing vulnerability. Including:		
\$11.4 MILLION	over four years to establish the coordination hubs and expand the number of Child and Family Centres to seventeen	\$5.7 MILLION	over four years to work with families and introduce family group conferencing
\$1.2 MILLION	over three years to operate the Youth and Children's Court in Alice Springs	\$5.2 MILLION	over four years to support Care Leavers to access and secure housing
\$2.8 MILLION	over four years to improve care and protection practice	\$5.4 MILLION	over four years to transform out-of-home care
\$9.9 MILLION	over four years to divert young people from crime and stop future offending	\$12.9 MILLION	over four years to effectively and constructively engage young people
\$22.9 MILLION	over five years to improve youth detention operations and reduce recidivism	\$71.4 MILLION	to replace Don Dale and Alice Springs Youth Detention Centres
\$2.5 MILLION	over four years to expand the oversight of child protection and youth justice systems	\$8.9 MILLION	over four years to empower local decision making and community-led reform
\$2.5 MILLION	over four years to build the evidence-base for approaches and evaluate what's working	\$66.9 MILLION	over five years to develop a new platform to manage cases and share information

This builds on the Northern Territory Government's 2017-18 investments for Territory children and families, which included:

\$18.2 MILLION	per year invested in strengthening youth diversion and bail support	\$1.1 BILLION	over ten years invested in improving housing in remote Aboriginal communities
\$1.75 MILLION	per year for after-hours services for young people in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek	\$4 MILLION	per year supporting Families as First Teachers sites across the Territory
\$40 MILLION	over four years for early intervention and support for school students with challenging behaviours, disabilities and mental illness	\$84 MILLION	over four years invested to strengthen schools and support services for students
\$15.5 MILLION	per year to provide specialised services to tackle alcohol misuse and dependence	\$3 MILLION	per year invested in Family Enhanced Support Services for earlier, better support to families
\$5 MILLION	per year to support increased police resourcing and recruitment	\$1 MILLION	per year to expand the Nurse Home Visiting Program

The Northern Territory will align the total budget and effort towards achieving the required reforms. In total, the 2018-19 Budget will include:

\$24.5 MILLION	for supporting families in the care and protection system	\$52.6 MILLION	for youth diversion, bail support and youth detention
\$20.2 MILLION	for front-line child protection	\$5.9 MILLION	estimated for court services for children and young people
\$109.6 MILLION	for care for children in out-of-home care	\$25.8 MILLION	for domestic, family and sexual violence reduction
\$328 MILLION	for policing and crime prevention	\$1.43 BILLION	for health services, including prevention and treatment
\$12.3 MILLION	for Aboriginal Affairs, regional coordination and local decision making	\$1.08 BILLION	for Government and Non-Government school education