

COMMUNIQUÉ

Out of Session Meeting – Productivity Commission Study into Expenditure for Children in the Northern Territory

29 August 2019

The Children and Families Tripartite Forum (Tripartite Forum) held a special meeting with the Productivity Commission to discuss the study into expenditure for children in the Northern Territory.

The Tripartite Forum discussed the importance of increased cooperation between the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments and with local communities in order to improve outcomes for children and families. The Tripartite Forum shared a draft Coordinated Funding Framework concept paper developed by the Forum over the last twelve months as a mechanism to support increased cooperation and collaboration in the planning, funding and implementation of services.

The Productivity Commission welcomed the opportunity to speak with the Tripartite Forum about what good practice for funding children and family services looks like in the Northern Territory and sought the views of Forum members on implementing a place based and public health approach to funding services to children and families.

The Forum identified a number of key elements that should be central to future funding arrangements including:

1. Self determination, local decision making and local control
 - a. Aboriginal organisations should be preferred for funding services to Aboriginal children, young people, families and Aboriginal communities, and
 - b. local engagement with communities and Aboriginal community control is essential in the development and implementation of policies and programs.
2. Early intervention and a public health approach
 - a. early intervention and prevention services are essential to addressing the needs of vulnerable and at risk families; and
 - b. factors that impact on children experiencing vulnerability extend well beyond children and families services, and include for example housing, health, economic participation, and education.
3. Support Indigenous governance and capacity development
 - a. Include investment and expectations to encourage partnership; and
 - b. Resource capacity development including developing Aboriginal governance
4. Evidence informed programs and increased accountability
 - a. Programs are supported by effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
 - b. Establishing effective baseline data and building the evidence of what works in the Northern Territory is required; and
 - c. Data and outcomes need to be shared.

The draft report from the Productivity Commission is due in November 2019. The Commission agreed that the meeting was a valuable discussion and agreed to further engage with the Forum through the study as a key stakeholder.

