

SAFE, THRIVING AND CONNECTED: GENERATIONAL CHANGE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2021 Generational Change Impact Report





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The Reform Management Office has been established to coordinate a whole-of-government reform in response to the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory's findings and recommendations, working closely with all stakeholders including Aboriginal organisations, non-government organisations and the Commonwealth Government.

All photos courtesy Northern Territory Government



Introduction

The *Safe, Thriving and Connected (STC)* Generational Change Reform Agenda is the Northern Territory Government's key social reform schema encompassing three significant elements:

- *Safe, Thriving and Connected* – the response to the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory (RCPDCNT);
- Starting Early for a Better Future (SEBF) – the Northern Territory Government's early childhood plan; and
- The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RCIRCSA) – the Northern Territory Government's response.

The STC Generational Change Reform Agenda is covered by seven Northern Territory Government agencies and is monitored by the Reform Management Office.

Each department has a crucial role in the reform – delivering programs and projects which enhance and complement the work of other agencies. This collaborative approach is an important component of the reform agenda.

The STC Generational Change Reform Agenda consists of six portfolios – Putting Children and Families at the Centre, Improving Care and Protection, Improving Youth Justice, Strengthening Governance and Systems, Preventing Child Sexual Abuse and Supporting Survivors and Victims.

These portfolios address and extend beyond the recommendations of the RCPDCNT and focus on delivering desirable outcomes for children and families. Each portfolio consists of a number of programs which represent vital areas of reform. In turn, the programs contain specific initiatives designed to help deliver the programs and to address Royal Commissions and SEBF recommendations and actions.

Annual progress and impact reports on the reform agenda have been published since 2018.

The next phase of reporting will be the start of the evaluation process with a three stage evaluation plan of the reform agenda being implemented.

Introduction (cont)

The STC Generational Change Reform Agenda has provided a focal point for addressing Royal Commissions' recommendations and the actions under the *Starting Early for a Better Future* plan.

Much has been achieved and there is still more to do.

Some of the emerging data demonstrates positive changes (see Reform Outcomes) but the full impact of the reform will not be fully realised for some time.

As outlined in this report, there have been many achievements through the reform agenda in the last four years – they are listed.

The report also provides some case study highlights which demonstrate some of the positive inroads made through reform initiatives.

A full list of each of the RCPDCNT recommendations and their status is an appendix to this report.

Recommendations

There are 227 recommendations from the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory Government is responsible for 218 of the recommendations, eight are specific to the Australian Government and one is aimed at the land councils.

The Northern Territory Government accepted the intent and direction of the 227 recommendations and in April 2018 committed an additional \$229.6 million over five years to implement the reforms outlined in *Safe, Thriving and Connected*. The Government also announced a further \$45.6 million (including \$10 million ongoing funding) investment under the early childhood development plan *Starting Early for a Better Future*.

At the time of publication of this report, 174 of the 218 recommendations that require action by the NT Government have been completed. The status of the recommendations is included in the table below.

All the actions from *Starting Early for a Better Future* have been implemented and continue as embedded programs.

The relevant recommendations of the RCIRCSA continue to be implemented. They are reported on through the Commonwealth Government's annual report of the Royal Commission.

Status of Recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT

Lead	Complete	Underway	Not supported	Total
NT Government	174 (80%)	44 (20%)	-	218
Commonwealth	2	4	2	8
Other				1

Grand Total 227

Some acronyms/abbreviations used in this report

ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
AMSANT	Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory
APONT	Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory
CFC	Child and Family Centre
CM&C/DCM	Chief Minister & Cabinet (Department of)/Department of the Chief Minister
CMSA	Client Management System Alignment
FACES	Families and Children Enquiry & Support
FaFT	Families as First Teachers
MACCST	Multi Agency Community and Child Safety Teams
Menzies	Menzies School of Health Research
MESCH	Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting program
NAAJA	North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
NTCOSS	NT Council of Social Services
NTG	Northern Territory Government
OOHC	out-of-home care
PHC	Primary Health Care
RCIRCSA	Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
RCPDCNT	Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory
SEBF	Starting Early for a Better Future
STC	Safe, Thriving and Connected
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
TFHC	Territory Families, Housing and Communities

Investing in Generational Change

In response to the Royal Commission into the Prevention and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory Government has been investing in generational change for children, families and communities.

In 2018, the new funding allocated included:

\$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 four 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

It built on the 2017-18 investment which included:

\$18.2 MILLION	per year invested in strengthening youth diversion and bail support	\$1.1 MILLION	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
\$32 MILLION	over four years for early intervention and support for school students with challenging behaviours, disabilities and mental illness	\$92 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

Key Achievements and Highlights

Safe, Thriving and Connected included an allocation of \$229.6 million over five years (including \$31 million ongoing funding). Major funded initiatives include:

- development of a new case management system and information sharing capability (\$67M);
- replace and upgrade youth justice facilities (\$71M);
- expansion of youth engagement and diversion (\$22M);
- establishment of Child and Family Centres (\$11M);
- expansion of the DCM Regional Network (\$9M); and
- establishment of a new supported accommodation service for care leavers (\$5M).

Starting Early for a Better Future included an allocation of \$45.6 million over five years (including \$10 million ongoing funding). Major funded initiatives include:

- Expanding early childhood support in new and existing Child and Family Centres including through the Child and Family Community Fund (\$23M)
- Establishing new FaFT Stay Play Learn Sites (\$6.7M)
- Expanding hearing health initiatives and embedding the Health under 5 Kids Partnering with Families Program (\$15.3M)

Putting Children and Families at the Centre

Key achievements and highlights include:

- Established Families as First Teachers: Stay Play Learn programs in 15 communities, including the recruitment of community hearing workers who provide ear and hearing health promotion.
- Established 10 Literacy for Parents programs across six communities, with more than 300 parents supported to reengage in education and training.
- Completed a pilot project to implement the *Reggio Emilia* approach at Malak preschool.
- Developed and distributed the NT Preschool STEM Games to preschools and early childhood services. The NT Preschool STEM Games assist educators to confidently incorporate STEM learning opportunities into their education program.
- Established the Integrated Service Strategic Forum comprising representatives from government and non-government agencies to develop a strategic approach to early childhood service planning, outcomes and evaluation. The Service Integration Framework was endorsed by the Tripartite Forum.
- Continue to provide *Little Scientists* workshops to early years educators in schools and early childhood services.
- Working with communities at nine sites with Child and Family Centres to identify and fund community priorities for families with children aged 0-5 through the Child and Family Community Fund.
- Establishing the NT Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting (MECSH) programs in the East Arnhem, Katherine and Barkly regions – four Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations have implemented the program in 15 remote communities with a total of 192 clients enrolled.
- Established four additional Hearing Health Partnerships with the Families as First Teachers sites.
- Implemented the Healthy Under 5 Kids Partnering with Families Program across all NT Health Primary Health Care Centres, providing a universal standardised program for all children aged 0-5 years. The program has also been developed in Communicare for the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector to implement in their local health services.

- Opened four new Child and Family Centres in Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin and Kalkarindji. All established through partnering with local Aboriginal leaders and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
- Partnering with the Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) for the Hearing for Learning Joint Venture initiative – eight communities have begun training and seven have completed training. 28 community workers have completed a Certificate II in Ear and Hearing Training.
- Supporting an increasing number of families through the Territory Families FACES Family Support Hotline.
- Implemented major legislative reform to the *Care and Protection of Children* and *Youth Justice Acts* providing for a range of changes recommended by the RCPDCNT from providing for early support for families and reducing the number of children in out-of-home care through to removing barriers to youth diversion programs and ensuring young people's access to legal assistance, information and privacy.
- The NT Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Strategy Addressing FASD in the Northern Territory 2018-2024 was released in December 2018. Prevention is the main focus of the strategy.
- Developed and implemented the NT Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder plan.
- Partnered with Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation with \$2.7 million in funding to establish new Child and Family Centre services across five Alice Springs town camps.

Improving Care and Protection

Key achievements and highlights include:

- Significantly expanded the regional and remote child protection workforce.
- Introduced and embedded the Signs of Safety practice framework focusing on holistic family safety assessments and support.
- Introduced the Safe and Together model to embed domestic violence awareness practice.
- In March 2021 launched the Northern Territory Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management framework and Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce and Sector Development Plan.
- In 2020-21 the Northern Territory Government also released the Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework (RAMF), and the Common Risk Assessment Tool (CRAT). The RAMF provides a consistent way to identify, assess, respond to and manage domestic and family violence risk using current evidence and based on best practice. The CRAT provides an evidence-based tool to assess and respond to risk, particularly the risk factors that are predictive of harm or death.
- Activated the online reporting tool, Professional Reporter's Guide and eLearning materials, and a new staffing structure for Central Intake.
- Contracted a new Intensive Therapeutic Residential Care (ITRC) model for up to 100 young people, funded at \$200 million over five years.
- Distributed mobile tablets to frontline child protection workers to improve their ability to access information and record their work while away from the office.
- Developing the Transforming Out of Home Care program and the *Children Safe, Families Together* Aboriginal out of home care strategy.
- Partnering with Aboriginal Organisations to better support to kinship and foster carers, and improve outcomes for children in care including partnering with Aboriginal organisations to introduce the Aboriginal Carers Growing Up Aboriginal Children grants.
- Established a supported accommodation service for care leavers in Darwin with similar projects underway in Katherine and Alice Springs.
- Introduced the NT Redress Scheme to support eligible survivors of child sexual abuse.

Improving Youth Justice

Key achievements and highlights include:

- Restructured the Police Youth Division within the Northern Territory Police Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES) to improve service delivery and outcomes for young people.
 - Commenced the Custody Notification Service - the NTPFES and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency entered into an MOU in August 2019. The service is based on mutual cooperation and ensures the welfare/legal concerns of young Indigenous persons are maintained as a matter of priority, when in the custody of the NT Police.
 - Introduced programs to deliver consequences for antisocial and offending behaviour and provide alternative pathways tailored to the needs of children and young people aged eight to 17 years.
 - Invested \$4.54 million across five years to develop new short and long-term youth intervention work camps at Seven Emu Station near Borroloola.
 - Expanded night patrol hours and youth drop-in centres in Alice Springs.
 - Established the Youth Engagement Night Officers team in Alice Springs.
 - Improved training for Youth Justice Officers and implementing behaviour management strategies to better respond to and support young people in detention.
 - Improving the physical amenities and staffing arrangements to better support young women in detention.
 - Progressed a CCTV program at current youth detention centres to enable 12 months CCTV footage capture.
 - Progressed the transfer for the provision of health and wellbeing services in the youth detention centres to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. In July 2020, Danila Dilba Health Service began delivery of a comprehensive primary health care and community services to detainees at Don Dale Youth Detention Centre. In Alice Springs, negotiations have progressed with an ACCO to supply primary health care services at the youth detention centre.
 - Finalised design and began construction on a new youth justice facility in Darwin and implemented upgrades to the Alice Springs Youth Justice Centre.
 - Progressed a new \$3.5 million Barkly Regional Deal Youth Justice Accommodation Facility.
 - Continued the successful implementation of Signs of Safety into Youth Justice with the implementation of the tailored Signs of Success practice model.
 - \$15 million renovation of the Alice Springs Local Court to include a multi-purpose court for matters relating to children and young people as well as domestic violence matters.
 - School Based Policing Program - Inter-government agreement between the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES) and the Department of Education to expand and develop the program to:
 - Enhance positive relationships between police and young people;
 - Improve safety, community connections, wellbeing and resilience; and
 - Build understanding of their personal responsibility to contribute positively to community safety.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Service Level Agreement and Operational Guidelines has been drafted and signed.
- Recruitment of additional school based police members and provision of prerequisite training prior to placement in schools, including additional schools in Darwin and Nhulunbuy.

Strengthening Governance and Systems

Key achievements and highlights include:

- Establishing the Youth Detention, Out of Home Care and Bail Support Monitoring function in the Office of the Children's Commissioner.
- Progressing further local decision making agreements across the NT.
- Awarded grants of up to \$50,000 to 14 remote Aboriginal community controlled organisations to strengthen the capacity and capability of Aboriginal organisations to develop and implement community-led initiatives and programs.
- Partnering with Menzies School of Health Research to write the Story of Our Children and Young People, a biennial state of the children report. Delivered the 2021 publication building on the 2019 edition including;
 - Updated data against many of the indicators identified in the 2019 Story;
 - Time trends for 13 key indicators;
 - Stories of activities which support the wellbeing of children and young people as well as cultural stories from both Aboriginal and other cultural perspectives; and
 - Review of the data gaps identified in the 2019 Story.
- Established the Children and Families Tripartite Forum which meets quarterly.
- Finalising the 10 Year Generational for Children and Families in the Northern Territory and the Coordinated Funding Framework (now the Coordinated Investment Framework). Both are key policy responses to the RCPDCNT.
- Working to increase the number of qualified early childhood professionals and to support an integrated early childhood workforce.
- Commenced Multi Agency Community and Child Safety Teams (MACCST) across remote communities in the Northern Territory. MACCSTs aim to deliver timely, coordinated responses for vulnerable children and families.
- Investing \$66.9 million over five years (from 2017-18) to develop and implement a new client information system and data brokerage service for child protection and youth justice.
- Improved legislation to allow for information about people experiencing or committing domestic and family violence to be shared without consent if it is necessary to prevent or respond to a serious domestic and family violence threat. Organisations participating in the domestic and family violence Information Sharing Scheme are called Information Sharing Entities. By June 2021, seven non-government organisations and one regional council providing domestic violence related services had joined the scheme.



Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Key achievements and highlights include:

- Reform is underway in the Top End Sexual Assault and Referral Centre (SARC) as a hub and spoke tertiary service provider model.
- Amended the Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004 to expand the power of the Teacher Registration Board of the NT to take disciplinary actions and increase transparency in decision making.
- The recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse relating to teacher registration, and the national review of teacher registration were taken into account in the review of the Act and continue to inform the national landscape for the teaching profession. In addition to concentrating on local needs and expectations, the changes to the Act are future focussed and flexible enough to accommodate a range of potential changes that may result from the current national initiatives, as work towards the agreed national approach to teacher registration.
- Establishment of the Northern Territory (NT) Child Abuse Taskforce – 2018–2021, a partnership with the NT and Australian Federal Police (AFP).
- Establishment of the NT Joint Anti-Child Exploitation Team (NT JACET) – 2018–2021, a partnership with the NT and AFP.
- Operations May and Squire – NT JACET – NT Police operations with interstate law enforcement agencies aimed at investigating children being exploited on social media platforms.

Supporting Survivors and Victims

Key achievements and highlights include:

- Commitment to training NT Police through the investigative interviewing of vulnerable persons courses that provides specialist training to interview children involved with sexual abuse.
- Creation and implementation of an electronic victim referral process to allow members from the Youth Diversion Unit to refer matters directly to Victims of Crime NT.
- Introduced and passed legislative amendments meeting a wide range of RCIRCSA recommendations as well as implementing legislation to provide for a victim's right to speak out and identify themselves publicly.

Program Evaluation

The Northern Territory Government has commissioned the Menzies School of Health Research to conduct the first evaluation of Safe, Thriving and Connected.

The evaluation is a three year review of the progress to implement the Safe, Thriving and Connected reform program, including the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

The first evaluation will focus on the internal implementation of the program. It will also include a brief examination of initial outcomes of the reform program and identification of data sets known and needed for further evaluations.

Generational Change Reform Schema

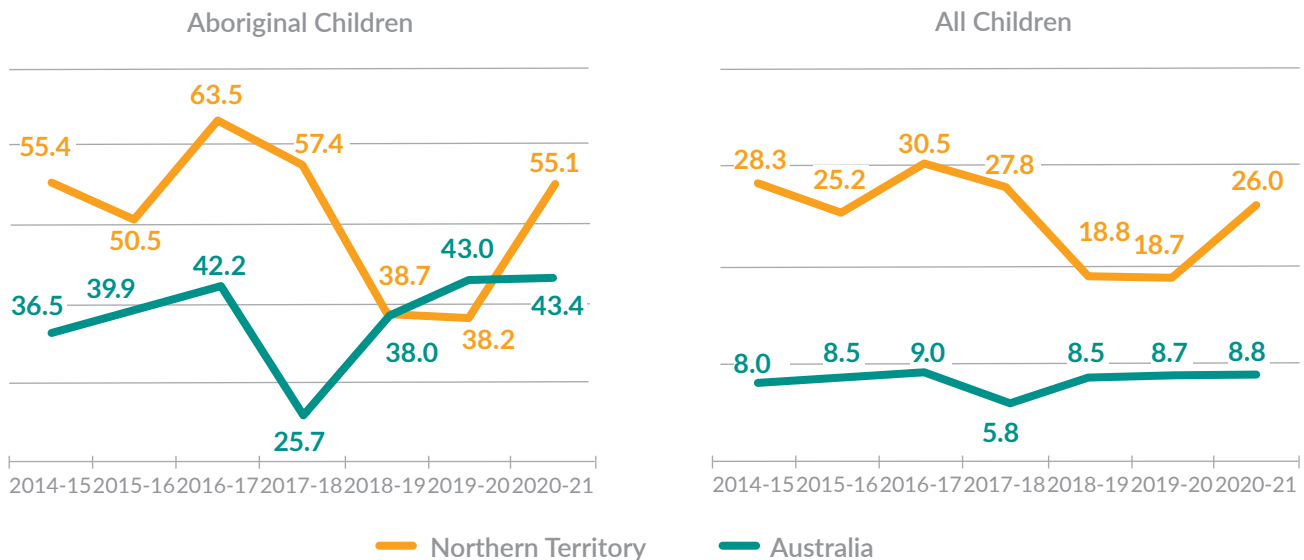
1. Putting Children and Families at the Centre					
1.1 Prevention and Early Support	1.2 Work with Families and Children	1.3 A Legal System for Families	1.4 Support Transition and Restoration		
Ready to Learn	Family Group Conferencing	Representation and Advocacy	Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers		
Getting it Right for Life	Preserve Contact with Family	A Single Act for Children	Transition from Detention and Through-Care		
Family Support Services	Respect Children's Voices	Training for the Legal Profession	Transition from Out-of-Home Care		
Children and Family Centres		Youth and Children's Court			
		Youth Parole			
2. Improving Care and Protection			3. Improving Youth Justice		
2.1 Care and Protection Practice	2.2 Children in the Child Protection and Youth Justice Systems	2.3 Transforming Out of Home Care	3.1 Police and Young People	3.2 Keep Children out of Detention	3.3 Youth Detention that Works
Reporting and Investigation	Meeting the needs of Children in Care who are involved with Youth Justice	Foster and Kinship Care and Aboriginal Out-of-Home Care	Custody Notification	Youth Engagement Grants	Youth Detention Operations
Clinical Practice and Case Management		Trauma Informed and Therapeutic Care			Youth Detention Infrastructure
Care and Protection Orders	Responding to complex behaviour in Out-of-Home Care	Out-of-Home Care Governance and Oversight	Police Youth Division	Youth Justice Programs	Youth Detention Services and Programs
4. Strengthening Governance and Systems					
4.1 Advocacy, Accountability and Quality Improvement	4.2 Managing and Sharing Information	4.3 Community-led Responses	4.4 Evidence-based Practice	4.5 Coordinated Effort Towards Better Outcomes	
Commission for Children and Young People	Information Management and Sharing	Local Decision Making	Research and Evaluation	Operational Coordination and Service Integration	
Internal Accountability and Complaints			Reporting and Monitoring	Strategic Coordination	
				Developing Workforce Capacity	
5. Preventing Child Sexual Abuse			6. Supporting Survivors and Victims		
5.1 Child Safe Organisations	5.2 Sexual Health and Harm	6.1 Redress and Civil Claims	6.2 Support and Professional Care	6.3 Supporting Survivors and Victims through the Justice System	
National Child Safe Standards	Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours	National Redress Scheme	Community Support Services	Limitation Periods	
Foster and Kinship Carer Register	Online Safety	Civil Claims	Counselling and Psychological Care	Police and Survivors and Victims	
Working with Children Checks	Child and Community Education	Liability and Non-Delegable Duty	Institutional Support	Survivors and Victims in Court	
Teacher Registration	Children in Out of Home Care		Sexual Assault Services		

Reform Outcomes

Care and Protection

Children subject to child protection substantiation per 1,000 children

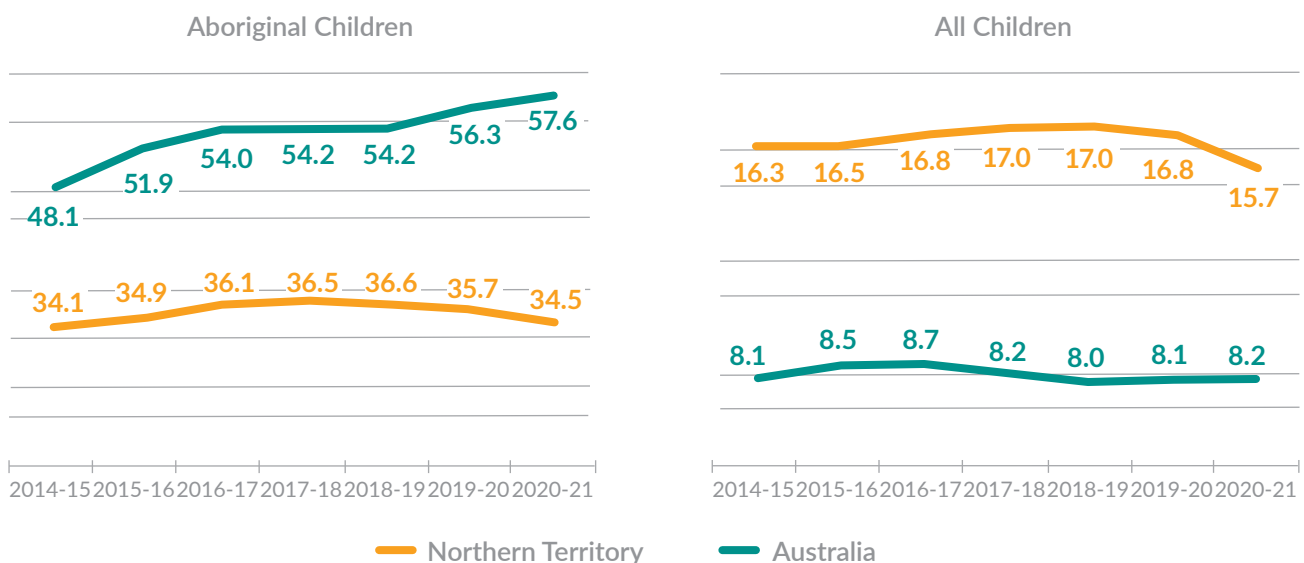
Source: Report on Government Services 2022 - Table 16A1



Between 2016-17 and 2019-20, there was a significant decrease in the number of children subject to substantiation for child abuse and neglect in the Northern Territory. In the most recent year, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of children in the NT subject to substantiation has increased again, however remains below 2016-17 levels.

Children in Out of Home Care at 30 June per 1,000 children

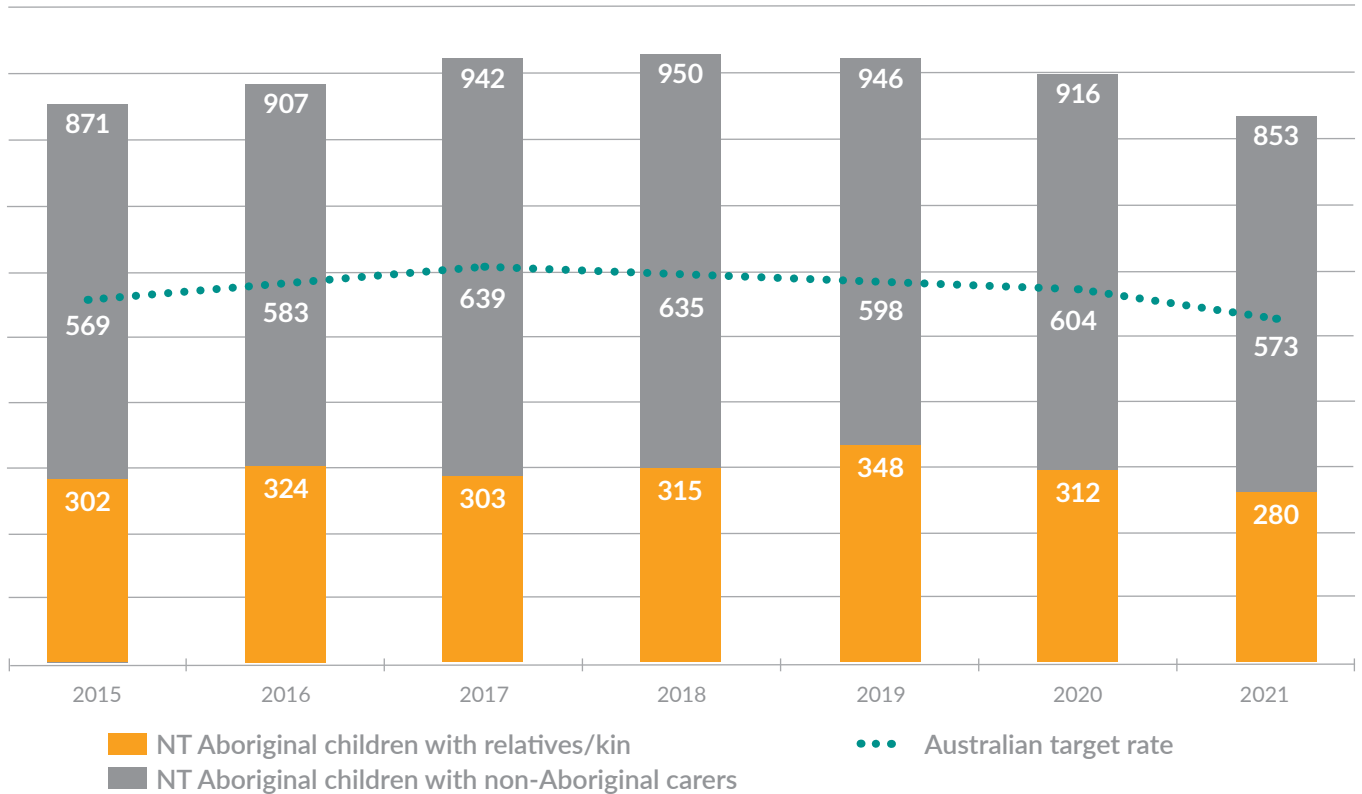
Source: Report on Government Services 2022 - Table 16A2



The proportion of Aboriginal Children in out-of-home care in the Northern Territory continues to be well below the Australian rate, the NT removes fewer Aboriginal children than all other jurisdictions except Tasmania. The NT also has the fewest non-Aboriginal children in care in Australia, however, given the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care around Australia and the size of the Aboriginal population in the NT, the NT continues to have the highest rate of children in out-of-home care in Australia.

Aboriginal children in care with relatives/kin or other Aboriginal carers

Source: Report on Government Services 2022 - Table 16A21



Between 2018 and 2021, there are 97 fewer Aboriginal children in care in the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory is the only Australian jurisdiction to experience a consistent decrease in the number of Aboriginal children in care over the last four years.

In 2021, 32.8 per cent of Aboriginal children in care in the NT were living with relatives/kin or other Aboriginal carers compared to 63.8 per cent across Australia, however in 2021 the NT saw the fewest Aboriginal Children in care with non-Aboriginal carers since 2015.

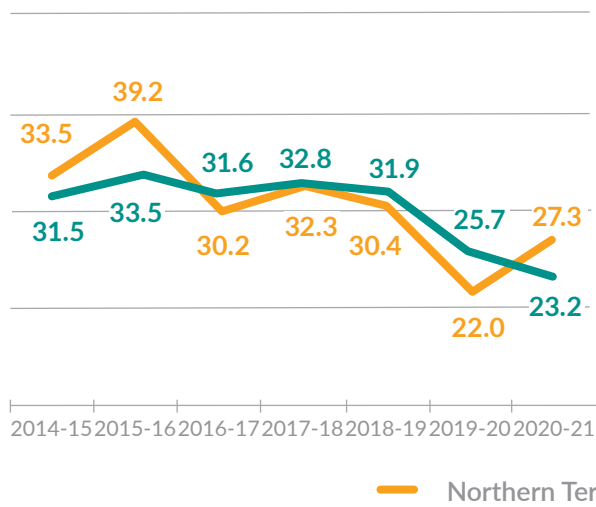
Over the last three years, the Northern Territory Government has expanded partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to engage and support Aboriginal carers through the Aboriginal Carers Growing Up Aboriginal Children program.

Youth Justice

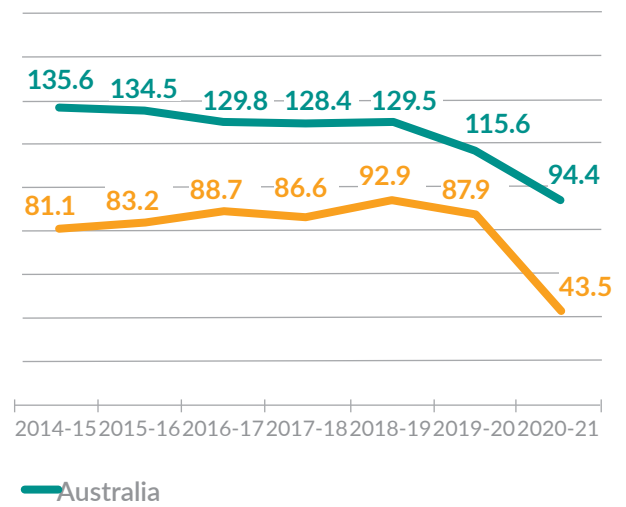
Aboriginal young people in detention and subject to community-based supervision

Source: Report on Government Services 2022 - Tables 17A5, 17A6

Rate of Aboriginal young people in detention on an average day per 10,000 young people (Table 17A.5)



Rate of Aboriginal young people subject to community-based supervision per 10,000 young people (Table 17A.6)



Considering the nationally comparable data reported in the Report on Government Services, the rate of Aboriginal young people in detention in the NT from 2016-17 to 2019-20 was below the national rate. In 2019-20, the Northern Territory recorded a significant increase in the rate of Aboriginal young people in detention, however it remains below pre 2018-19 rates.

Putting Children and Families at the Centre

This reform approach includes early intervention and prevention projects and programs designed to support families earlier and avoid issues escalating into crises. The portfolio also includes programs to reorientate the legal system towards a child and family centred approach, and actions to ensure that the voices of children and families are heard and respected.



Putting Children and Families at the Centre

PROJECTS

1.1.1 Ready to Learn – covers Early Childhood and education initiatives

1.1.2 Getting it Right for Life – covers childhood health and disability initiatives

1.1.3 Family Support Services – covers family and parental support initiatives

1.1.4 Child and Family Centres – covers child and family centres and the child and family community fund

1.1 Prevention and Early Support

Families and children are being helped in culturally secure ways to keep them strong and make communities safer.

The Prevention and Early Support program includes much of the actions from the *Starting Early for a Better Future* framework. It also addresses the prevention and early intervention recommendations of the RCPDCNT.

Families as First Teachers: Stay Play Learn – Canteen Creek

FaFT Stay Play Learn at Canteen Creek has been using Abecedarian Northern Territory (NT) LearningGames® and the NT Preschool Science Games to provide opportunities for children to develop transferable scientific thinking skills.

The Abecedarian NT LearningGames® are used to extend and scaffold learning and complement the variety of experiences families and early childhood professionals provide to support children's early learning.

The NT Preschool Science Games build on and extend the NT LearningGames®, and in doing so acknowledge that families are children's first teachers.

At Canteen Creek, the children participated in a LearningGames® and learned vocabulary associated with riding a bike such as go, stop, fast, slow and turn. They transferred this knowledge when they engaged in a science experiment to predict and test whether cars travel faster or slower on ramps of different surfaces.

Strong Young Parents Program

The key to the Strong Young Parents Program's success is the unique and flexible service delivery of programs in targeted sites. The Literacy for Parents Framework and Principles are embedded in each program; however, each program is place-based producing a range of activities, delivered on different number of days and hours, achieving a diverse range of outcomes for young parents and their families.

The following feedback from a *Young Mothers Strong Mothers* participant highlights the impact the programs have for young parents and their families.

"I was a new mum with no family or support in Darwin, I was clueless with no guidance and little knowledge of parenting. I started attending baby groups at the Palmerston Child and Family Centre and heard about the Young Mums program.

"I found the program amazing, everyone was so supportive and I loved all the small programs we did throughout the course and received very caring support for my child.

"I feel so empowered having my Certificate III of Community Services behind me now and excited to study some more next year. I would highly recommend this program to any mum. There's definitely a reason to why they call it *Young Mothers are Strong Mothers* program. I have been able to find the understanding of motherhood, I feel strong and confident knowing what to do for my child. I have the power and I am in control of my life and my family."

Putting Children and Families at the Centre

MECSH – Helping the vulnerable

From one Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation delivering the Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting (MECSH) Program - The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scoring tool has identified a number of clients who are suffering from Postnatal Depression. The MECSH program referred a client to the local health clinic where the client is now monitored more closely from MECSH and the clinic. Additionally, mandatory reporting of Domestic and Family Violence has also enabled the MECSH program to work more closely with the local safe house and TFHC - Family Support Program. The client is feeling more supported from, and is growing in her trust and rapport with, the MECSH program.

Child and Family Centres – help where it is needed

The below letter was written by a 17 year old client who wanted to thank the Big Rivers Centre for their help. The Centre has since helped this client to start an administration and office support traineeship in Katherine. This young lady now wants to mentor others in the Centre to help them get the same support she did.

“The Big Rivers Child and Family Centre have been a big impact in my life. Without the Big Rivers Child and Family Centre’s support I would not be in the position I am standing in today. They have endlessly supported me with all my on-going situations and have helped me deal with my problems in a much productive way. The Big Rivers Child and Family Centre have shown me the more you help yourself is actually helping the ones that is supporting you more than you think it is. The Big Rivers gave me a new start. At the beginning before I wasn’t aware of the Big Rivers, I felt like I could not get a move on with my life. Until I came across the Big Rivers Child and Family Centre. The more you’re willing to work the more support and opportunity you’ll have given to you. I am personally and honestly grateful for the Big Rivers Child and Family Centre and how they made a big difference in my life.”



Putting Children and Families at the Centre

In another case, Emma was a 15 year old mother with a three week old baby. Scared and unsure, Emma went to the only place she knew and felt safe in, where it was OK to ask for help – her middle school.

The Darrandirra CFC, operated by CAAPs Aboriginal Corporation, had an MoU with the school with outreach staff onsite. Being involved within the school community, allowed for a strong foundation where students and families, present and past, have access to the CFC and its services allowing for a “warm” referral process. Leveraging off the trusting relationship between young Emma and the school, Darrandirra staff were able to meet with the family (Emma, her mum and her sister – all young mothers) in a way that they felt safe.

Having strong networks and a deep understanding of local services, staff were able to identify that Emma would also benefit from the Brave Foundation, an organisation specifically providing mentoring support to young parents. The Darrandirra team spoke with Emma and her family about the Brave Foundation and consents for the program were signed.

Emma now has access to the programs and benefits that all services offer and behind the scenes both organisations are working together pooling strengths and resources to meet the needs of this family, as well as others. In this situation local services were able to operate together so seamlessly, that Emma was not aware she was receiving support from multiple different sources.

STOP PRESS

Darrandirra Child and Family Centre now has its own home. The Centre’s permanent venue was launched in early 2022 at Malak Shopping Centre. Its connections with the school remain strong.



Putting Children and Families at the Centre

1.1 Prevention and Early Support

PROJECT: 1.1.1 Ready to Learn		
SEBF 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 4.2, 4.5		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Families as First Teachers - Stay Play Learn program	Using the Abecedarian Approach Australia to build parents' capacity to engage in their children's early learning	COMPLETED
Early Childhood Education and Care Quality	Department of Education works with early childhood and care providers to improve the quality of services.	COMPLETED
Language, conversational reading and pre-numeracy programs: Little Scientists, Reggio Emilia NT Pilot	Little Scientists helps early childhood educators support young children to explore science technology engineering and maths. The Reggio Emilia approach values children as central to their own learning. Based on the principles of respect, responsibility and community.	COMPLETED
NT Remote Assistant Teacher Preschool Package	Tiered and scaffolded support for remote assistant teachers leading out of scope preschool programs.	COMPLETED
Family involvement and child attendance in early learning programs: Literacy for Parents	Builds parenting capacity as well as supporting them to achieve age appropriate benchmarks in literacy.	COMPLETED
Review of NT Early Childhood Transitioning Policy Package	Examining the effect of the package which supports the sector to provide families with inclusive and welcoming transition to school experiences.	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 1.1.2 Getting it Right for Life		
SEBF 2.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting program	A service delivery strategy aiming to provide a range of family supports provided by registered nurses	COMPLETED
Healthy Under 5 Kids: Partnering with Families	A universal standardised child and family health program for all families with children 0-5 years of age	COMPLETED
FaFT Hearing Health Partnership	Local community members work as part of the FaFT team to promote healthy hearing	COMPLETED
Hearing for Learning Program – Hearing Health Philanthropic Research Project	Focused on hearing health aiming to address services gaps in identified remote NT communities	COMPLETED
NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention Scheme	Assisting the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme's (NDIS) Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) scheme in the Northern Territory	COMPLETED
NT FASD Strategy	A NT Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Plan aligned to the National Strategic FASD Action Plan	COMPLETED

Putting Children and Families at the Centre

PROJECT: 1.1.3 Family Support Services		
RCPDCNT 32.08		SEBF 2.4
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Family Support Services	Relevant support services aimed at helping families avoid the child protection system	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 1.1.4 Child and Family Centres		
RCPDCNT 34.06, 34.16, 39.03, 39.04		SEBF 3.1, 4.1
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Establishment of 11 new centres	Child and Family Centres are a focal point for integrated services for children and their families	UNDERWAY
Child and Family Community Fund	For communities with centres with priorities for families of children from birth to five years old	UNDERWAY

PROJECTS

1.2.1 Family Group Conferencing – covers family group conferencing

1.2.2 Preserve Contact with Family – covers measures to maintain detainees contact with families

1.2.3 Respect Children's Voices – covers advocacy by children initiatives

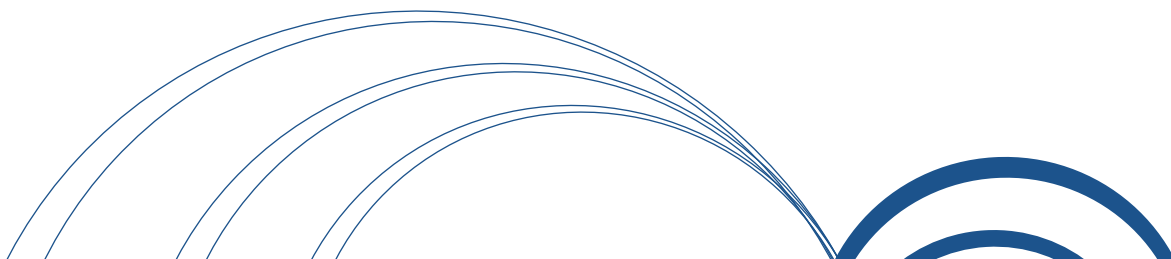
1.2 Work with Families and Children

Families are actively engaged as partners in improving outcomes for their children and their communities, and are involved in decisions affecting them.

The Work with Children and Families program is aimed at deeply involving children and their families in the design and delivery of the services they need.

CREATING an opportunity for young people

The CREATE Round Table brings together young people with an out-of-home care experience and seeks their views and suggestions on ways the child protection system and leaving care experiences can be approved. The Round Table has continued to meet and discuss issues of concern. It has a recent focus on connection to culture and experiences in transitioning to adulthood.



Putting Children and Families at the Centre

1.2 Work with Families and Children

PROJECT: 1.2.1 Family Group Conferencing		
RCPDCNT 34.07, 34.08, 34.09, 34.10		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Family Group Conferencing	A mechanism to engage and empower families in decision making. This is not being progressed as described. It has been assessed as no longer necessary due to extensive practice reforms. Alternative models are being supported.	WILL NOT PROCEED

PROJECT: 1.2.2 Preserve Contact with Family		
RCPDCNT 11.03, 11.04		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Detainee security ratings	All three measures are designed to maintain and encourage contact between detainees and their family – to provide a family friendly environment at detention centres and use technology to support contact	COMPLETED
Remote telephony		
Face-to-face visits		

PROJECT: 1.2.3 Respect Children's Voices		
RCPDCNT 2.01, 2.02, 22.05, 33.01		RCIRCSA FR12.10
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Mechanisms for children to engage in policy/legislation	A way to ensure children and young people in the care and protection and youth justice systems get a chance to express their views on policy and legislation	COMPLETED
Detainee representation	Providing a means for young detainees to be heard	COMPLETED
Child involvement in decision making	A way to ensure children in care are involved in their care and case planning	COMPLETED

Putting Children and Families at the Centre

PROJECTS

1.3.1 Representation and Advocacy – covers legal representation of children initiatives

1.3.2 A Single Act for Children – provides for a single piece of legislation replacing the *Care and Protection of Children Act* and the *Youth Justice Act*

1.3.3 Training for the Legal Profession – covers training on children and young people's development and behaviour

1.3.4 Youth and Children's Court – covers the establishment of a youth court in Alice Springs

1.3.5 Youth Parole – covers expertise for Parole Board on youth matters

1.3 A Legal System for Families

Children, young people and families involved in legal matters will be effectively engaged through a culturally appropriate and family-focussed legal system.

This is a program of initiatives designed to develop a child and family focussed legal system which is trauma informed and culturally secure and acknowledges the complex needs of challenged and vulnerable families.

Working together on training for legal officers

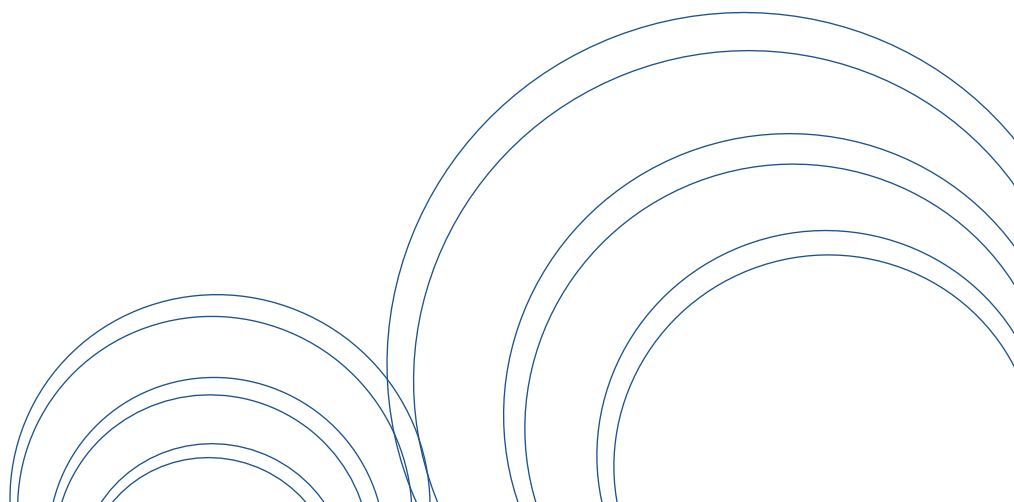
Training programs designed to further understanding and knowledge of children and young people's development and behaviour have been offered to local judicial staff and legal professionals. The Children's Court Training Executive Steering Committee was established in 2018 to provide direction on the implementation of this project.

A Conference sub-committee was established in 2018 with representatives from the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA), Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission (NTLAC), Solicitor for the NT (SFNT), Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and Courts Division, Department of the Attorney General and Justice (AGD) (Courts). The inaugural Children's Court Training Conference was held in Darwin in March 2019. The second was planned for March 2020 in Alice Springs but due to the COVID-19 pandemic was deferred until November 2020 with a focus on practical skills for practitioners. A third annual conference is scheduled for mid-2022.

Work continues on sourcing suitable training opportunities. The non-government sector continues to be a significant partner in this work and there are a number of mechanisms available for further input from key stakeholders.

Committees have also been formed to tackle targeted training needs. For example, the Children's Court Training Executive Steering Committee consists of executive managers from NTLAC, NAAJA, Law Society NT (LSNT), DPP and the Managing Judge of the Children's Court.

There is also a Youth Proceedings Education Committee (YPEC) which is planning to deliver specialised practitioner training.



Putting Children and Families at the Centre

1.3 A Legal System for Families

PROJECT: 1.3.1 Representation and Advocacy		
RCPDCNT 22.07, 25.30, 25.34		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Legislative reforms regarding representation Law and justice groups	Changes to ensure children and young people are represented in contested legal matters and are supported by capable adults	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 1.3.2 A Single Act for Children		
RCPDCNT 27.01, 42.01		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Establish the Single Act for Children	The development of a Single Act for Children has been discontinued after significant consideration determined it no longer necessary, beneficial, cost effective or efficient.	WILL NOT PROCEED

PROJECT: 1.3.3 Training for the Legal Profession		
RCPDCNT 25.26, 25.31, 25.32		RCIRCSA CJ.67, CJ.68
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Training for the Legal Profession	Increase training opportunities for judicial staff to further their understanding and knowledge of children and young people's development and behaviour	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 1.3.4 Youth and Children's Court		
RCPDCNT 25.23, 25.24, 25.25, 25.27, 25.28, 25.29, 25.35, 25.36, 25.37, 25.38, 25.41, 34.04, 34.05, 34.11		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Youth and Children's Court in Alice Springs	Establish a Youth and Children's Court in Alice Springs	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 1.3.5 Youth Parole		
RCPDCNT 25.43		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Youth before the Parole Board	Ensure the Parole Board has the capacity and expertise to fulfil the requirements of the RCPDCNT	COMPLETED

Putting Children and Families at the Centre

PROJECTS

1.4.1 Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers – covers housing and support service initiatives for young people leaving care

1.4.2 Transition from Detention and Through-Care – covers support for the Commonwealth investment in through-care initiatives

1.4.3 Transition from Out-of-Home-Care – covers initiatives supporting care leavers to transition into the wider community

1.4 Support Transition and Restoration

Children and families who have experienced vulnerability or crisis successfully transition from crisis to productive, rewarding lives.

The Support Transition and Restoration program includes a number of initiatives and measures designed to support community re-integration of children and young people and point them towards more productive and positive lives.

Working on transitioning young people leaving care

The Northern Territory Government has granted funding to CASPA Services to deliver a pilot Transition to Independent Living (TIL) program. Similar services are offered interstate, providing appropriate support to young people leaving care. As well as housing support, the pilot offers young care leavers appropriate supports and guidance to assist their successful transition into the wider community. More options focussed on housing/accommodation programs for young people are also being explored. This work complements the implementation and operation of the Housing for Young People program in Darwin (with similar services being established in Alice Springs and Katherine).

Moving to increase the age of young people in care

In a move applauded by the community sector, the Northern Territory Government has committed to support young people to remain in care three additional years, to the age of 21.

CREATE Foundation CEO Jacqui Reed said: “After our sector’s continued, determined advocacy for increasing the age to 21, CREATE applauds the Northern Territory government’s decision to invest in tomorrow’s young adults to have the option to remain in care to 21.”

The Government committed to working with CREATE and the local Home Stretch campaign to progress the reform.

Putting Children and Families at the Centre

1.4 Support Transition and Restoration

PROJECT: 1.4.1 Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers		
RCPDCNT 33.22		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers	Establish a housing brokerage and support service for young people leaving care	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 1.4.2 Transition from Detention and Through-Care		
RCPDCNT 24.01		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Through care case support NAAJA through care service	Work with the Commonwealth and the Aboriginal controlled community sector to ensure that through care service is based on evidence and integrated with other relevant services	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 1.4.3 Transition from Out of Home Care		
RCPDCNT 33.21, 33.23, 33.24		RCIRCSA FR12.22
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Additional Transition from Care Officers	The recruitment of additional transition from care officers and improvement in the quality of care planning advice for young people transitioning from out-of-home care	COMPLETED



Improving Care and Protection

This reform portfolio includes the programs and projects designed for improving the child protection, family support and out-of-home care systems in the Northern Territory. It has a focus on working with Aboriginal families to keep their kids safe.



Improving Care and Protection

PROJECTS

2.1.1 Reporting and Investigation – covers initiatives to improve the reporting and investigation of child protection cases

2.1.2 Clinical Practice and Case Management – covers initiatives to improve child protection practice

2.1.3 Care and Protection Orders – covers appropriate legislative changes

2.1 Care and Protection Practice

Children are protected from harm, and children and families entering the child protection system receive high quality responses informed by contemporary practice

The Care and Protection Practice program includes measures and services already underway when the RCPDCNT made its recommendations. These aim to improve the mechanics of the systems and practices that support positive outcomes for Territory children and their families.

Signs of Safety

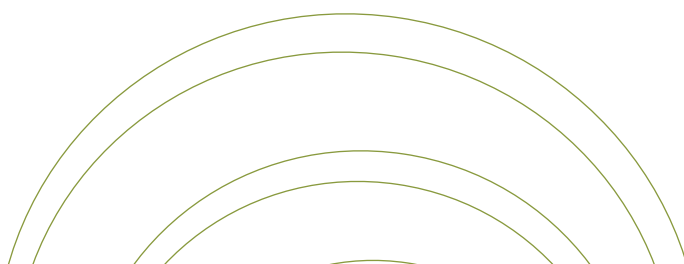
In 2019, the government implemented the Signs of Safety practice model for child protection and youth justice. The practice model complemented other reform initiatives. Signs of Safety is designed to increase child safety, empower parents and families and use the knowledge and expertise of case managers. It centres on holistic family safety assessments and support and has moved child protection processes away from an incident and risk focussed response.

During the year more than 500 department staff and 50 external workers were trained in the practice framework.

Aboriginal staff have been central to the Signs of Safety implementation and engaging with Aboriginal communities throughout the process. A Signs of Safety Aboriginal Leadership Framework was developed and in doing so, operationalised the Territory Families, Housing and Communities' Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework. Through the Signs of Safety Practice Framework, family conferencing has become a key feature in child protection case work. It is an embedded practice, under Signs of Safety, which offers many advantages including encouraging an important collaborative approach by all parties. This new approach to child protection encouraged case workers to tailor individual responses to each child and family situation and empower parents and families.

In 2020-21, a Signs of Safety leaders day was facilitated for 110 child protection and youth justice managers, senior Aboriginal community workers and team leaders.

Now in its second year, the Signs of Safety practice reform has moved into an embedding phase. Through Signs of Safety, TFHC is working more transparently with families, clearly naming concerns for harm and co-designing the actions families and their support network are required to take to make their children safe.



Improving Care and Protection

2.1 Care and Protection Practice

PROJECT: 2.1.1 Reporting and Investigation		
RCPDCNT 32.02, 32.03, 32.04, 32.05, 32.07		RCIRCSA CJ.32, CJ.33, CJ.34, FR.07.01, FR.07.02, FR.07.03, FR.07.04, FR.07.05, FR.07.06
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Triage team	All aimed at improving the reporting and investigation of child protection cases in the Northern Territory. Includes an internal working group to screen intakes and identify appropriate action and development of a new mandatory reporter guide.	COMPLETED
Online reporting tool		
Professional reporters guide		
Senior practice leader		

PROJECT: 2.1.2 Clinical Practice and Case Management		
RCPDCNT 32.01, 32.06, 32.09, 32.10, 33.02, 33.04, 33.14, 33.15, 33.16, 37.02		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Clinical Practice Directorate	Establish a Clinical Practice Directorate to improve child protection practice and professional delivery of statutory services.	COMPLETED
Signs of Safety		
Domestic Violence Practice Reform project	Enhance domestic violence informed practice.	

PROJECT: 2.1.3 Care and Protection Orders		
RCPDCNT 32.12, 33.17, 34.01, 34.02, 34.03, 34.13, 34.14, 34.15		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Stage 2 law reform	Relevant and appropriate changes to the <i>Care and Protection of Children Act</i>	COMPLETED



Improving Care and Protection

PROJECTS

2.2.1 Meeting the needs of children in care who are involved with Youth Justice – covers initiatives aimed at strengthening case management particularly of crossover young people

2.2.2 Responding to Complex Behaviour in Out-of-Home Care – covers agency collaboration initiatives aimed at managing challenging behaviours

2.2 Children in the Child Protection and Youth Justice Systems

Children are protected from harm, and children and families entering the child protection system receive high quality responses informed by contemporary practice

The Care and Protection Practice program includes measures and services already underway when the RCPDCNT made its recommendations. These aim to improve the mechanics of the systems and practices that support positive outcomes for Territory children and their families.

Crossover Care Team – small but giant steps*

The small but dynamic Crossover Care Team in Territory Families, Housing and Communities works with some of the most challenging young clients in the system. It is intense, hard work but the resulting impact can be life changing.

Case managers in the team work with young people in care who are also part of the youth justice system. As well as tackling the extensive needs of children in intensive therapeutic residential care (ITRC), a Crossover case manager's work includes building stakeholder relationships, case planning, court work, engagement with police and Corrections and support for care givers. The unit also provides an on-call service. But it can be worth it.

For example, 16 year old David is a young man who has had continuous involvement with the courts and youth detention. Also in ITRC, David became a client of Crossover Care Team case manager Mick. For 12 months Mick worked tirelessly with David and various stakeholders to turn around his behaviours and create a positive pathway to help David move away from self-destructive conduct.

David has responded well – participating in programs, being more proactive and productive and, in a major step, positively engaging with his family. As well, he has had less involvement with the youth justice system.

Another example is Nathan who has severe cognitive challenges. His Crossover case manager Emma works tirelessly with his care team and carers as well as service stakeholders to specifically address his cognitive needs. This has helped Nathan to thrive and develop more positive responses.

** All names changed for privacy.*



Improving Care and Protection

2.2 Children in the Child Protection and Youth Justice Systems

PROJECT: 2.2.1 Meeting the needs of children in care who are involved with youth justice

RCPDCNT 35.05, 35.06

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Continuity of case management	Build capacity of child protection management teams to strengthen case management continuity and to provide for the needs of "crossover" youths	COMPLETED
Cross portfolio training and development		

PROJECT: 2.2.2 Responding to Complex Behaviour in Out of Home Care

RCPDCNT 33.13, 35.02, 35.03

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Police and Out of Home Care	A collaborative inter-agency approach to provide therapeutic and appropriate responses to children and young people who abscond from OOHC and engage in criminal behaviour	COMPLETED



Improving Care and Protection

PROJECTS

2.3.1 Foster and Kinship Care and Aboriginal Out-of-Home Care – covers system reform and initiatives to increase Aboriginal kinship carers

2.3.2 Trauma Informed and Therapeutic Care – covers initiatives supporting those with complex needs and behavioural issues

2.3.3 Out-of-Home Care Governance and Oversight – covers quality assurance initiatives across OOHC services

2.3 Transforming Out-of-Home Care

Children who require out-of-home care are cared for in culturally-secure, trauma-informed therapeutic environments and by their families where possible.

Transforming Out-of-Home Care is a key program of initiatives aimed at wholesale improvements across the system. It has been an essential focus of Territory Families, Housing and Communities which has been working with children and their families, key organisations and government agencies to improve the system.

A Manymak* Partnership – Yalu Aboriginal Corporation and Territory Families

The Yalu Aboriginal Corporation is positive about working with Territory Families, Housing Communities: “Yalu Aboriginal Corporation at Galiwin’ku offers a range of programs and services for our whole community including children, youth, families, and elders.

“Yalu started formally working with Territory Families in mid-January 2020. It was evident very early that it would be a beneficial working relationship. Staff have hit the ground running – no easing into the work.

“Having two TFHC staff members living on Galiwin’ku who have quickly built a good relationship with Yalu and the community has been pivotal to the early successes. Yalu has two staff formally employed under the Aboriginal Carer Service Program experienced in working to strengthen families and they work very closely with their TFHC colleagues.

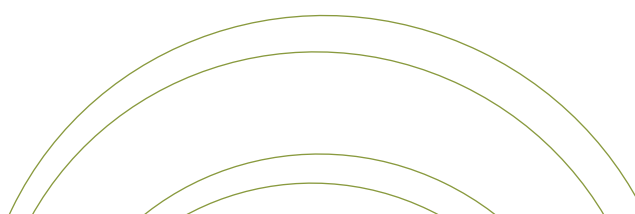
“Yalu also have a pool of staff that provide practical help when needed. For example Yalu has a young staff member that connects with teenage girls, encouraging them to re-engage with school and helping them to fill out enrolment forms for school, assistance to talk to the social worker at Centrelink and generally being a good role model.

“They also have excellent facilitation and mediation skills and assisted our two TFHC colleagues to meet with families and assist with language translation and generally facilitate good will for the meeting. Yalu provides other practical assistance by assisting with visits to Homeland carers, transporting children and carers and delivering aides to daily living supplied through TFHC.

“There are early signs of success in breaking down the ‘stigma’ of welfare taking children away from their families and Yalu has started down the path of expanding the footprint to neighbouring communities.

“There is lots more to do but Yalu are confident that the scope for strengthening families with our Territory Families colleagues is a path well worth following.”

*Manyamak means “very good, OK”



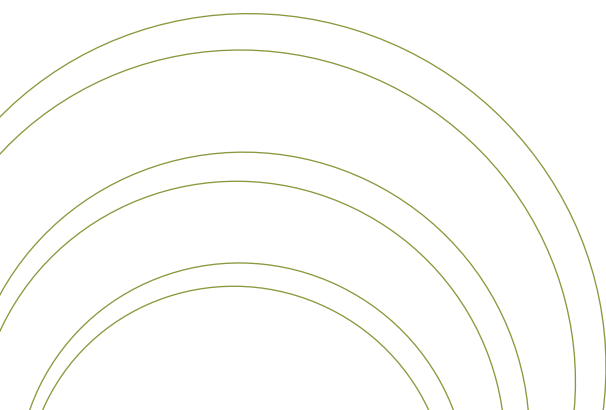
Improving Care and Protection

2.3 Transforming Out of Home Care

PROJECT: 2.3.1 Foster and Kinship Care and Aboriginal Out of Home Care		
RCPDCNT 31.01, 33.05, 33.06, 33.08, 33.09, 33.18, 33.19, 33.20, 37.05		RCIRCSA FR.12.08, FR.12.17, FR.12.20
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Out of Home System reform	A system which revises the structure of out of home care, increases Aboriginal kinship carers, increases Aboriginal children in care being supported by Aboriginal families	COMPLETED
Aboriginal Out of Home Strategy		
Aboriginal Kinship and Foster Carer grants		

PROJECT: 2.3.2 Trauma Informed and Therapeutic Care		
RCPDCNT 33.10, 33.11		RCIRCSA FR.12.11, FR.12.12, FR.12.13, FR.12.14, FR.12.16, FR.12.18, FR.12.19, FR.12.21
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Intensive Therapeutic Care	Support to those with identified complex mental health, disability, emotional and behavioural issues	COMPLETED
Professional Foster care	Improve the training and support of kinship and foster carers	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 2.3.3 OOHC Governance and Oversight		
RCPDCNT 33.12		RCIRCSA FR.12.04, FR.12.05, FR.12.06, FR.12.07
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
OOHC Quality Assurance Program	A QA program across OOHC services	COMPLETED



Improving Youth Justice

The Improving Youth Justice reform portfolio includes the programs and projects designed to improve the youth justice system in the Northern Territory and ensure that there are effective interventions that provide appropriate consequences for young people who offend and work to stop future offending. The portfolio also includes a suite of measures to prevent young people from entering the youth justice system.



Improving Youth Justice

PROJECTS

3.1.1 Custody Notification – covers initiative to ensure legal representation for a child brought into police custody

3.1.2 Police Youth Division – covers initiatives to improve police interaction with young people in the youth justice system

3.1 Police and Young People

The community is safer through Police working effectively and engaging with young people, and focussing on practices that prevent offending.

This program highlights the Northern Territory Police efforts to work with the community and focus on improved and better approaches in youth justice. Many of the initiatives recommended have been implemented and the Northern Territory Police are committed to addressing better outcomes in youth justice.

Resources help connect police to kids...and teach valuable lessons

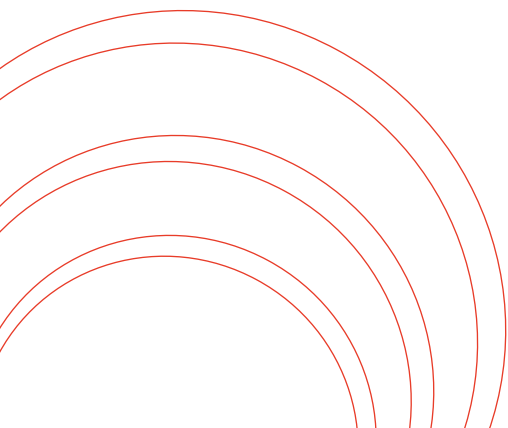
The expansion of the 'School Based Policing Program' from 10 Constables to a blended model of 15 police officers (Constables and Auxiliaries) will ensure the provision of the 'Police in Schools Resource Kit' is provided to an increased number of students.

The resource kit has been developed in conjunction with the Department of Education and focusses on alcohol and other drugs, personal safety, cyber safety, road safety and community safety. The kit is co-delivered alongside teaching staff and fits into the current year 7 to 10 school curriculum

3.1 Police and Young People

PROJECT: 3.1.1 Custody Notification		
RCPDCNT 25.04, 25.33		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Custody Notification Scheme	Police to notify an appropriate lawyer as soon as a child or young person is brought into custody.	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 3.1.2 Police Youth Division		
RCPDCNT 25.01, 25.02,25.03, 25.06, 25.07, 25.08, 25.10, 25.12, 25.18, 25.20		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Police Youth Division Training Program	Reforms to ensure police work effectively with young people in the youth justice system.	COMPLETED
Policy Development		



Improving Youth Justice

PROJECTS

3.2.1 Youth Engagement Grants – covers funding for initiatives aimed at helping at risk and vulnerable youths

3.2.2 Youth Justice Programs – covers initiatives for constructive programs for young people in the justice system

3.2 Getting Kids Back on Track

Children and young people who offend or at risk of offending are provided with evidence-based interventions that stop continued offending before they end up in detention.

The Getting Kids Back on Track program provides an essential focus on giving vulnerable children and young people the tools they need to choose a positive path away from offending. The Northern Territory Government's investment in youth diversion is evidence-based and includes strong partnerships with stakeholders including the crucial non-government sector.

Helping young people get back on track

In 2020–21, \$6.4 million was expended across seven contractors and five regions for the delivery of the Back on Track program, which is a multi-faceted and strength-based program in Greater Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Katherine for young people between eight and 17 who are engaged in offending behaviour.

In 2020–21, 106 young people received a service in the Back on Track program across the Northern Territory, which is in excess of the anticipated 85 young people per year. Young people in the program were supported through coordinated case management to engage with education, employment and skills development to participate in targeted therapeutic intervention and in activities that connect with family and culture.

The work of Youth Justice Group Conferencing

Youth Justice Group Conferencing (Group Conferencing) is a restorative justice program operated by Jesuit Social Services across the Northern Territory.

For young people, a Group Conference provides the opportunity to tell their story, develop insight into the true impact of their offending behaviour, and take practical steps to repair the harm they have caused and avoid further offending. For victims, it provides a safe and structured space for their voice to be heard and to have a say in how the young person can make amends.

An internal evaluation of the program undertook conversations with young people and victims. Over the first two years, all but one young person reported an improved understanding of the impact of their behaviour. Almost 6 in 10 young people (59%) indicated their understanding improved 'a lot'. One young person shared, "All of it, it was one big change. It was like a wake-up call for me that I had to change and stop doing bad stuff and concentrate on my future."

Almost 8 in 10 victims (78%) said they were satisfied with the overall process and would recommend Group Conferencing to other victims of crime. More than 8 in 10 victims (85%) believed the young person had a better understanding of their actions' impact on the victim at the end of the conference.

Improving Youth Justice



Camps to reduce offending

In 2020–21, funding of \$1.88 million was allocated to youth camp intervention programs. Youth cultural and work camps are designed to reduce offending, target substance use and at-risk behaviour, increase educational and vocational engagement, improve cultural connectedness and identity and enhance health and wellbeing.

For example, Jarrdimba Bayamuku was funded to deliver a new cultural and work experience camp, centred on cultural frameworks that provide a solid foundation for young people to improve their life skills and address antisocial behaviours.

Jarrdimba Bayamuku (Strengthening the Children) Aboriginal Corporation operates from Seven Emu Station, near Borroloola in the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Seven Emu Station is a working organic cattle station that operates several commercial activities, including a wildlife sanctuary, stockmen camps, camping and fishing activities. As part of Jarrdimba Bayamuku's program, young people are able to experience and learn about the operations of a commercial cattle station.

3.2 Getting Kids Back on Track

PROJECT: 3.2.1 Youth Engagement Grants

RCPDCNT N/A

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Regional Youth Grants	Aimed at funding organisations to provide programs addressing the needs of at risk and vulnerable youth	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 3.2.2 Youth Justice Programs – “Kids get Back on Track”

RCPDCNT 25.09, 25.11, 25.13, 25.14, 25.15, 25.16, 25.17, 25.19, 25.21, 25.22, 25.39, 25.40, 25.42

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Back on Track	Programs offering young people sentencing options, alternatives to detention and bail support services	COMPLETED
Bail Support		
Electronic Monitoring	Continue electronic monitoring of young people on bail	COMPLETED
Court Diversions and Restorative Justice Conferencing	Expand and improve Restorative Youth Justice and Victim Offender Conferencing	COMPLETED

Improving Youth Justice

PROJECTS

3.3.1 Youth Detention Operations – covers initiatives to improve the operation of youth justice facilities

3.3.2 Youth Detention Infrastructure – covers replacement and upgrades of youth detention facilities

3.3.3 Youth Detention Services and Programs – covers initiatives to improve programs within youth detention facilities

3.3 Youth Detention that Works

Young people in detention are housed in secure therapeutic facilities that support their rehabilitation and receive the help, guidance and structure necessary to stop future offending.

Detention facilities and programs play an important role in encouraging better outcomes in detainee rehabilitation. The delivery of high quality therapeutic programs; education services; and interpersonal and life skill development opportunities are all key areas of effective detention.

Elders connect with detainees

The Aboriginal Elders and Mentors Program assists young people in detention to develop a cultural plan to help them stay connected to culture and have their cultural needs considered.

Elders and mentors are identified by Aboriginal community members and non-government organisation leaders.

The program is influential in improving the wellbeing and sense of identity of the young people in preparation for their return to country. It is acknowledged for its connections to improving individual health and wellbeing, improved engagement with education and training, reducing negative behaviour and prevent re-offending.

New referral system

A new referral system developed by the Specialist Assessment and Treatment team has been providing both short term and longer term interventions for young people. The team has two psychologists and a speech pathologist available to complete assessments and deliver treatment plans along with other interventions as required.

The Specialist Assessment and Treatment team is based within Don Dale Youth Detention Centre to provide effective response and support to the young people in the centre. They regularly travel to Alice Springs to provide intervention to the young people in Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre.



Improving Youth Justice

Detention infrastructure

About \$83 million is now allocated for infrastructure works and a new build at the Territory's two main youth justice centres.

Works have started on the Alice Springs Youth Justice Centre redevelopment which will see the facility more than triple in size.

The project will deliver:

- increased amenity across all existing facilities, including new programs and specialist service spaces
- contemporary technology and security systems that will support unobtrusive supervision and notably improved site security
- the removal of 75 per cent of razor wire from the facility by introduction of cowl (an anti-climb usually cylindrical structure), significantly reducing the institutionalised look of the facility
- landscaping and outdoor learning areas aimed at providing therapeutic environments for program and education delivery.

The redevelopment will include improved accommodation areas, including:

- refurbished kitchens, dining and staff supervision areas;
- new program delivery spaces for a range of organisations to deliver services;
- new offices, staff amenity space, education and vocational learning hub, admissions and induction area for young people, visitor facilities and recreation area;
- a dedicated medical and dental room and professional service delivery areas; and
- advanced security, including perimeter monitoring through CCTV and increasing the external perimeter fence height to 5.4 metres.

The project to replace the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre is advancing. Local Darwin company Halikos was awarded the construction contract with works starting in 2020-21.

The purpose built facility has been designed to ensure the centre is technology-rich, youth-appropriate and centres on achieving improved outcomes for young people. It will include:

- bedrooms equipped with study areas
- a learning and training hub to support the delivery of traditional schooling and vocational education and training activities
- a reception area equipped with screening for staff, visitors and service providers as well as visitation spaces to facilitate in-person and virtual conferencing with family, elders, mentors, and legal, youth justice and support service providers
- a health and wellbeing hub, including a dental consultation room and space for an audiology booth
- an admissions area equipped with contemporary scanning technology and an orientation area to provide a detailed induction to the centre for newly arriving young people
- contemporary security systems, including perimeter security, movement-detecting cameras, advanced CCTV system, contemporary digital access technology, full body scanners and anti-climb external perimeter fence that will be 5.4 metres in height to provide a strong security reinforcement and deterrent
- open-plan community of practice office space for youth justice staff and government and non-government health, wellbeing, education and specialist assessment treatment service providers.

Improving Youth Justice

3.3 Youth Detention that Works

PROJECT: 3.3.1 Youth Detention Operations		
RCPDCNT 10.01, 11.01, 11.02, 11.05, 11.06, 11.07, 11.08, 11.09, 13.01, 13.02, 13.03, 13.04, 13.05, 13.06, 13.07, 13.08, 13.09, 14.01, 15.01, 15.02, 15.03, 16.02, 16.03, 16.04, 16.05, 16.06, 16.07, 16.08, 16.09, 16.10, 17.01, 17.02, 17.03, 17.04, 18.01, 19.01, 20.01, 20.02, 20.03, 20.04, 20.05, 20.06, 20.07, 20.08, 20.09, 21.01, 21.02, 21.03, 21.04, 21.05, 22.01, 23.01, 23.02		
RCIRCSA FR.15.03, FR.15.04, FR.15.05, FR.15.06, FR.15.07, FR.15.08, FR.15.09		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Youth Justice Operations	A Youth Justice Model of Care Framework to ensure the Northern Territory youth justice system provides quality care, supervision and guidance for all young people in detention	UNDERWAY
Transfer to adult facilities	Changes to cease the temporary accommodation of youth detainees in custodial correctional facilities	COMPLETED
PROJECT: 3.3.2 Youth Detention Infrastructure		
RCPDCNT 10.02, 28.01, 28.02		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Construction of new Youth Justice Facilities	Replace the Don Dale Centre in Darwin and the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre	UNDERWAY
PROJECT: 3.3.3 Youth Detention Services and Programs		
RCPDCNT N/A		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Education and Training: Strengthening governance arrangements	Programs aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering education and training to young detainees	COMPLETED
Access to information to allow identification of support needs and facilitate early intervention		
Differentiated learning pathways		
Building a skilled workforce		
Health and Wellbeing: Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre	Improve health and wellbeing services for detainees at the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre	UNDERWAY
Health and Wellbeing: Don Dale Youth Detention Centre	Improve health and wellbeing services for detainees at the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre	COMPLETED



Strengthening Governance and Systems

This reform portfolio includes programs and projects designed to increase scrutiny and accountability of services for children and families experiencing vulnerability and put in place strong systems and processes that ensure efficiency, coordination and efficacy.

Strengthening Governance and Systems

PROJECTS

4.1.1 Commission for Children and Young People – covers a possible Commission for Children and Young People

4.1.2 Internal Accountability and Complaints – covers initiatives aimed at improving accountability and complaints mechanisms

4.1 Advocacy, Accountability and Quality Improvement

Organisations and Departments working with families are held to account for ensuring that the services they provide reflect or are on a monitored pathway towards best practice and are achieving desired outcomes.

Strong systems, accountability and monitoring are essential for the delivery of programs and services. Key to ensuring agencies and organisations are on target is an appropriate level of accountability and monitoring.

4.1 Advocacy, Accountability and Quality Improvement

PROJECT: 4.1.1 Commission for Children and Young People		
RCPDCNT 22.02, 22.03, 22.04, 37.04, 37.07, 37.08, 37.09, 37.10, 40.01, 40.02, 40.03, 40.04, 40.05, 40.06, 40.07, 43.03		
RCIRCSA FR.06.11, FR.14.04, FR.15.02, FR.15.10		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Commission for Children and Young People	Review of the function and scope of a Commission for Children and Young People	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 4.1.2 Internal Accountability and Complaints		
RCPDCNT 22.06, 33.07, 37.01, 37.03, 37.06		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Increased Accountability	Legislative amendments to introduce a test of recklessness in the consideration of immunity	COMPLETED
Internal Accountability and Complaints Management	Strengthen the process and systems to receive and act on complaints from carers, clients and families	COMPLETED



Strengthening Governance and Systems

PROJECTS

4.2.1 Information Management and Sharing – covers initiative to implement a new client information system

4.2.2 Information Exchange Scheme – covers initiative to develop an information exchange scheme

4.2.3 Institutional Record Keeping – covers initiatives to improve and ensure appropriate records are kept

4.2 Managing and Sharing Information

Best practice care and support for children, young people and families is enabled and underpinned by contemporary information management approaches and systems.

Well defined, accessible and efficient information delivery services are necessary as well as reliable data and information exchange mechanisms. These are systems which are the backbone to delivering effective programs and services for the management of the welfare and wellbeing of vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Developing a new client management system

Work has continued on the new \$64.4 million client management system alignment (CMSA) project – CARE. It is a major frontline digital transformation initiative and will support four themes outlined by the RCPDCNT recommendations: information sharing, record keeping, case management practices, reporting.

The CMSA project will implement the CARE solution and will incorporate mobility, portal and business intelligence functions to enable timely access of information for workers, both at their desk and in the field. CARE will replace numerous standalone systems, applications and databases being used by Territory Families, Housing and Communities. The project is expected to be fully complete by early 2023.

CARE is designed to support the critical services for children, families and communities that aims to:

- enable a contemporary and integrated child protection and youth justice solution that improves outcomes for Territory children and families
- provide real-time data to give frontline child protection and youth justice workers the information they need to make decisions regarding vulnerable and at-risk children and youth
- incorporate mobility, external portals and business intelligence functions that will provide timely information to workers both at their desk and in the field
- improve information exchange via the integration of CARE with other government agencies, reducing the need for a child or young person to repeat their story
- provide portals for service providers, carers, children and their families and mandatory reporters.

CARE will improve outcomes for vulnerable children by equipping users with a contemporary case management solution and relevant, timely data to inform decision making.



Strengthening Governance and Systems

4.2 Managing and Sharing Information

PROJECT: 4.2.1 Information Management and Sharing		
RCPDCNT 16.01, 34.12, 35.07, 41.05		
SEBF 4.3, 4.4		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
CMSA system replacement	A new client information system and data brokerage service for child protection and youth justice	UNDERWAY
Territory Families Data Brokerage		

PROJECT: 4.2.2 Information Exchange Scheme		
RCIRCSA FR.08.06, FR.08.07, FR.08.08, FR.08.13, FR.08.14, FR.08.15, FR.08.16		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Establish an information exchange scheme	An information exchange scheme with nationally consistent provisions across info sharing, info access and roles and responsibilities for preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse in institutional contexts	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 4.2.3 Institutional Record Keeping		
RCIRCSA FR.08.01, FR.08.02, FR.08.03, FR.08.04, FR.08.05		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Institutional Record Keeping principles	Five key principles relating to records and record keeping, “to a level that responds to the risk of child sexual abuse occurring within the institution”	UNDERWAY



Strengthening Governance and Systems

PROJECTS

4.3.1 Local Decision Making (LDM) – covers the Northern Territory Government’s initiatives to increase the role of local communities in designing and delivery of services

Historic Homeland Local Decision Making Agreement signed

On 24 January 2022 the Werenbun Homeland Local Decision Making Implementation Plan 2022-2027 was signed.

The historic agreement is the first for an Aboriginal homeland in the Territory. Werenbun is home to approximately 20 residents, and is located 5 kilometres from the iconic Leilyn (Edith) Falls.

Residents of Werenbun initiated the Local Decision Making Implementation Plan. The strategic priorities include Economic Development (Employment, Education and Training), Health and Community Wellbeing, Infrastructure and Housing, Culture and Heritage.

4.3 Community Led Responses

Local Decision Making is a key NT Government policy that helps facilitate a new working relationship between Aboriginal communities and government agencies to support self-determination.

The Commonwealth Government, local government and regional councils are key partners to helping LDM succeed in benefitting communities and stakeholders.

The LDM policy is a ten year roadmap for consultation and implementation. LDM stands to benefit community and government by transforming the way services are delivered and having a positive impact on community.

Progress with a Local Decision Making Agreement

The Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) signed its second Local Decision Making (LDM) Implementation Plan in November 2021. The 2021-23 plan builds upon the first two year Implementation Plan and has six key focuses:

- Cultural Strength and Respect;
- Business Development and Contracting (governance and capacity);
- Youth Services - Child and Family;
- Community housing;
- Local jobs and training (for local people); and
- Community recreation facilities.

The GAC LDM Implementation Plan 2018-20 was one of the first to be signed in the Northern Territory. Achievements over the past two years include:

- A 52 per cent increase in overall cash flow, resulting in a 16.6 per cent (net worth) growth in business;
- Gaining \$3.5 million Contractor Accreditation Limited accreditation, gaining electrical certification;
- Successfully completing 10 Remote Housing upgrades, 10 Room to Breathe upgrades and 13 Government Employee Housing contracts in Kalkaringi; and
- Establishing the Kalkaringi Community and Family Centre.

The GAC Local Decision Making Agreement is one of six in various stages of implementation across the Territory. Regional Coordination teams continue to engage across the Northern Territory with numerous LDM Agreements to be signed in 2022.

Strengthening Governance and Systems

4.3 Community Led Responses

PROJECT: 4.3.1 Local Decision Making		
RCPDCNT 1.01, 7.01, 7.02, 7.03		
SEBF 4.9		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
LDM Agreement Regional Network Expansion ACCO Development	A group of initiatives designed to increase the role of local communities in designing and delivering services particularly in remote communities	COMPLETED

PROJECTS

4.4.1 Research and Evaluation – covers further research of child protection and youth detention issues and programs evaluations

4.4.2 Reporting and Monitoring – covers initiatives to provide for reporting mechanisms and improved monitoring

4.4 Evidence Based Practice

Service models and practices are underpinned by research and evidence, and supported by comprehensive planning, monitoring and evaluation.

The Northern Territory Government continues to work on ensuring good data and evidence are sought, stored, maintained and used to provide vital support and measures of the impact of services and initiatives.

4.4 Evidence Based Practice

PROJECT: 4.4.1 Research and Evaluation		
RCPDCNT 24.02, 35.01, 35.04, 39.01, 43.01, 43.02		
RCIRCSA FR.02.01		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
RCPDCNT identified research Evaluation research	Further research into full spectrum of child protection and detention in the NT. Design and implement monitoring and evaluation measures across programs	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 4.4.2 Reporting and Monitoring		
RCPDCNT 25.05, 33.03, 33.25, 41.01, 41.02, 41.04		
RCIRCSA CJ.02, CJ.82, FR.12.01, FR.12.02, FR.12.03, FR.12.15		
SEBF 4.8		
Initiative	Brief Description	Status
National reporting Reporting Systems	Additional data collection and reporting mechanisms to improve monitoring and reporting of children and families experiencing vulnerability	COMPLETED

Strengthening Governance and Systems

PROJECTS

4.5.1 Operational Coordination and Service Integration – covers initiatives aimed at improving cross-border cooperation on child protection matters

4.5.2 Strategic Coordination – covers strategic coordination initiatives

4.5.3 Developing Workforce Capacity – covers improving workforce capacity initiatives

4.5 Coordinated Effort Towards Better Outcomes

Government will work in partnership with local communities and the community sector to develop and successfully implement a long-term strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Effective coordination has been recognised as a basis to better outcomes in social services. Coordinated effort helps address duplication of services and programs from governments and non-government organisations.

An improved Story of Our Children and Young People

The Story of Our Children and Young People (the Story) presents data and stories about the wellbeing of our children and young people for the Northern Territory's six regions. The 2021 Story delivered an interactive online data platform to allow users to:

- interact with the data from the Story;
- build custom data tables and graphs; and
- access further information, including by Aboriginal status and sub-region.

Feedback was sought, both formally and informally, from users of the 2019 Story. Respondents to a survey on the Story were split evenly between government and community sectors and across the Northern Territory.

For those who had used the Story in their work, they did so as a reference tool, a regional and Northern Territory data source and for staff induction. A smaller number of people had used the Story in community planning, individual service planning and when writing grant applications.



Strengthening Governance and Systems

4.5 Coordinated Effort Towards Better Outcomes

PROJECT: 4.5.1 Operational Coordination and Service Integration

RCPDCNT 3.01

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Operational coordination	Coordination with other jurisdictions to improve cross-border cooperation and coordination on child protection matters	COMPLETED
Early Childhood Integrated Services Framework	A systemic support framework for Early Childhood Integrated Services, through the Integrated Service Strategic Forum	Superseded by 10 Year Generational Strategy

PROJECT: 4.5.2 Strategic Coordination

RCPDCNT 39.02, 39.05, 39.07, 43.05, 43.06, 43.07, 6.01

RCIRCSA FR.17.01, FR.17.02, FR.17.03, WC.35, WC.36

SEBF 4.7

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
10 Year Generational Strategy	A 10 year plan to capture whole of government child-focussed actions and map them against a social outcomes framework	COMPLETED
Ministerial Advisory Council	A Ministerial Advisory Council to provide specific advice on improving outcomes for NT children	COMPLETED
Story of Our Children	Also referred to as a biannual State of the Children report. Includes baseline data and case studies on the status against key indicators of child wellbeing.	COMPLETED
Children and Families Tripartite Forum	A forum comprising NTG, Commonwealth Government and relevant Non-Government Organisations to develop a shared, generational strategy for children and families underpinned by robust evaluation and a coordinated funding framework	COMPLETED
Family Support Co-Funding Framework	A joint Commonwealth-Territory Co-ordinated Funding Framework	COMPLETED
Productivity Commission report recommendations	Coordination of the response to the recommendations contained in the report Expenditure on <i>Children in the Northern Territory</i>	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 4.5.3 Developing Workforce Capacity

SEBF 3.8, 4.6

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Human Services Workforce Strategy	Develop a strategy aimed at building workforce capacity in the human services area	COMPLETED

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

The programs in Preventing Child Sexual Abuse recognise that all children deserve to be safe, happy, protected from harm and are designed to prevent and respond to the sexual exploitation of children and young people in the Northern Territory.

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

PROJECTS

5.1.1 National Child Safe Standards – covers initiatives to adopt national standards

5.1.2 Foster and Kinship Carer Register – covers initiatives to implement a register

5.1.3 Working with Children checks – covers updates and improvements to checks

5.1 Child Safe Organisations

The Northern Territory Government has been working with other jurisdictions, the Australian Government and key stakeholders to implement national standards for Working with Children Check and Child Safe Standards. Work is also continuing on nationally consistent foster and kinship carer and teachers registers.

Child safety a focus of joint investigations

Operation May is an NT Police led, joint investigation with the AFP targeting offenders in the NT, who are using online accounts and carriage services to commit Commonwealth offences in relation to children i.e. non-contact offending. Intelligence from Operation May generated six target referrals to AFP/Queensland Police. As a result of Operation May:

- 18 search warrants were executed;
- 11 offenders were arrested in the NT, including one extradition from WA; and
- 39 charges were laid, mostly relating to procuring children and child abuse material.

5.1 Child Safe Organisations

PROJECT: 5.1.1 National Child Safe Standards

RCIRCSA FR.06.04, FR.06.05, FR.06.06, FR.06.07, FR.06.08, FR.06.09, FR.06.10, FR.06.12, FR.06.15, FR.06.17, FR.07.07, FR.07.08, FR.13.01, FR.13.02, FR.13.03, FR.13.04, FR.13.05, FR.13.06, FR.13.07, FR.14.01, FR.15.01

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Child Safe Standards	Adopt national child safe standards, legislate for the standards	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 5.1.2 Foster and Kinship Carer Register

RCIRCSA FR.08.17, FR.08.18, FR.08.19, FR.08.20, FR.08.21, FR.08.22, FR.08.23

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Foster and Kinship Carer Register	Establish a carers register, consider appropriate legislative and administrative arrangements required for a carers register	National project activity reprioritised for reconsideration in 2022

PROJECT: : 5.1.3 Working with Children Checks

RCIRCSA WC.01, WC.03, WC.04, WC.05, WC.06, WC.07, WC.08, WC.09, WC.10, WC.11, WC.12, WC.13, WC.14, WC.15, WC.16, WC.17, WC.18, WC.19, WC.20, WC.21, WC.22, WC.23, WC.24, WC.25, WC.26, WC.27, WC.28, WC.29, WC.30, WC.31, WC.32, WC.33, WC.34

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Working with Children Checks	Encompassing 36 recommendations providing for updated, consistent and simplified approaches and legislation for Working with Children Checks.	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 5.1.4 Teacher Registration

RCIRCSA FR.08.09, FR.08.10, FR.08.11, FR.08.12, FR.12.09, FR.13.08

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Teacher registration recommendations	Consider improvements to teacher registers, information sharing between authorities and nationally consistent provisions	UNDERWAY

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

PROJECTS

5.2.1 Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours – covers services offered through Sexual Assault Referral Centres

5.2.2 Online Safety – covers initiatives to improve online safety

5.2.3 Child and Community Education – covers sexual violence prevention and response framework

5.2.4 Children in Out-of-Home Care and Detention – covers initiatives aimed at sexual abuse prevention education for children in care and detention

5.2 Sexual Health and Harm

Addressing Sexual Health and Harm in the community is a complicated, complex and challenging area. Initiatives are necessarily broad reaching and at the same time targeted. They range from addressing problematic and harmful sexual behaviours and online safety to the sexual health of children in care and detention.

5.2 Sexual Health and Harm

PROJECT: 5.2.1 Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours

RCIRCSA FR.10.02, FR.10.03, FR.10.04, FR.10.05, FR.10.06, FR.10.07

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Clinical and Therapeutic Services for Child Sexual Abuse	Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) provide forensic medical and some counselling services to adults and children	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 5.2.2 Online Safety

RCIRCSA FR.06.19, FR.06.20, FR.06.21, FR.06.22, FR.06.23, FR.06.24

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Online Safety	Commonwealth-led. Better online safety, training, frameworks	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 5.2.3 Child and Community Education

RCPDCNT 36.02, 36.04, 36.05

RCIRCSA FR.10.01

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence reduction	A sexual violence prevention and response framework as part of the first action plan of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework	UNDERWAY
Sexual Health Taskforce	A multi-agency taskforce to oversee the delivery of new policies, programs, practices and campaigns to prevent and respond to the sexual exploitation of children and young people in the Northern Territory	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 5.2.4 Children in Out of Home Care and Detention

RCPDCNT 36.01, 36.03

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Sexual Health of Children in Care and Detention	Policies and procedures review, implement a sexual abuse prevention education campaign for children in care, review notifications, investigations, outcomes	COMPLETED



Supporting Survivors and Victims

The Supporting Survivors and Victims portfolio includes programs which aim to provide the best possible support mechanisms for victims as well as supporting their needs. The programs recognise survivors and victims should be helped to be empowered including providing them with the tools to thrive.

Supporting Survivors and Victims

PROJECTS

6.1.1 National Redress Scheme – an initiative to provide eligible survivors with a redress payment

6.1.2 Civil Claims – an initiative to provide for guidelines for responding to compensation claims

6.1.3 Liability and Non-Delegable Duty – covers legislation providing for non-delegable duty on institutions

6.1 Redress and Civil Claims

The Northern Territory Government is a full participant in the National Redress Scheme (a recommendation by the RCIRCSA).

The NT Redress Coordination Team, along with Northern Territory Government agencies, continues to investigate and process claims relating to NT institutions.

This is ongoing work and will continue to progress the claims brought forward by survivors and victims.

Working on redress

As more survivors are provided redress, the NT Redress Coordination Team supports NT resident survivors to access trauma-informed counselling and psychological care.

In addition to its ongoing role in responding to requests for information from the National Redress Scheme, the Team delivered more than 30 training sessions across the Territory on the following topics:

- Understanding the National Redress Scheme
- Practicing Trauma informed care in the workplace
- Reducing Stress and Vicarious Trauma in the workplace
- Understanding and Building Resilience through Positive Psychology

Training was made available to the public but also delivered directly to organisations and service providers who work with survivors of child sexual abuse. More training will be offered in 2022.

The Team continued to work with the Australian Government to support access to the scheme for NT residents, with a specific focus on remote Territorians. The Team is close to finalising a communication and engagement project with an aim to ensure culturally strong communication of the scheme in Aboriginal language, with the support of Aboriginal interpreter services.

Members of the Team also represent the Territory on a number of inter-jurisdictional committees and support the minister at national board meetings.



Supporting Survivors and Victims

6.1 Redress and Civil Claims

PROJECT: 6.1.1 National Redress Scheme

RCIRCSA RC.01, RC.02, RC.03, RC.04, RC.06, RC.07, RC.09, RC.15, RC.16, RC.17, RC.18, RC.19, RC.20, RC.21, RC.22, RC.23, RC.24, RC.25, RC.26, RC.27, RC.28, RC.29, RC.30, RC.31, RC.32, RC.33, RC.34, RC.35, RC.36, RC.37, RC.38, RC.39, RC.40, RC.41, RC.42, RC.43, RC.44, RC.45, RC.46, RC.47, RC.48, RC.49, RC.50, RC.51, RC.52 through to RC.84

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
National Redress Scheme	To provide eligible survivors with a payment, access to counselling and a direct apology from the responsible institution	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 6.1.2 Civil Claims

RCIRCSA RC.96, RC.97, RC.98, RC.99

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Civil Claims	Guidelines providing for responding to claims for compensation concerning allegations of child sexual abuse	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 6.1.3 Liability and Non-Delegable Duty

RCIRCSA RC.89, RC.90, RC.91, RC.92, RC.93, RC.94, RC.95

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Liability and Non-Delegable Duty	Legislation providing for a non-delegable duty on institutions	UNDERWAY



Supporting Survivors and Victims

PROJECTS

6.2.1 Community Support Services – covers funding initiatives for support services

6.2.2 Counselling and Psychological Care – covers initiative to support expansion of services

6.2.3 Institutional Support – covers NT institutions providing direct responses to survivors

6.2.4 Sexual Assault Services – covers funding to address gaps in services

6.2 Support and Professional Care

Access to good professional care is integral to support for survivors and victims of sexual assault. The Northern Territory Government supplies funding to a variety of organisations offering suitable programs at a community level. As well, the Northern Territory Health Services provides the Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) program in Darwin and Alice Springs.

6.2 Support and Professional Care

PROJECT: 6.2.1 Community Support Services

RCIRCSA FR.09.01, FR.09.02, FR.09.03, FR.09.04, FR.09.05

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Community Support Services	Fund dedicated community support services to provide an integrated model of advocacy, support and counselling to children and adults who experienced childhood sexual abuse in institutional contexts.	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 6.2.2 Counselling and Psychological Care

RCIRCSA RC.10, RC.11, RC.12, RC.13, RC.14

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Counselling and Psychological Care	Support, facilitation, expansion of counselling and psychological care services by practitioners with appropriate capabilities to work with clients with complex trauma	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 6.2.3 Institutional Support

RCIRCSA FR.09.08, FR.09.09, RC.05, RC.08

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Institutional Support	Institutions to provide a direct personal response to survivors	COMPLETED

PROJECT: 6.2.4 Sexual Assault Services

RCIRCSA FR.09.06, FR.09.07

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Sexual Assault Services	Address existing specialist sexual assault service gaps by increasing funding	UNDERWAY

Supporting Survivors and Victims

PROJECTS

6.3.1 Limitation Periods – cover legislation to remove limitation periods applying to damages claim

6.3.2 Police and Survivors and Victims – covers initiatives to change police practices to encourage and support reporting of child sexual abuse allegations

6.3.3 Survivors and Victim in Court – covers initiatives to support vulnerable witnesses in the court

6.3 Supporting Survivors and Victims through the Justice System

The Northern Territory Government continues to seek and implement appropriate approaches to support survivors and victims through the justice system. These include funding and in kind support for Victims of Crime NT as well as partnerships with specialist services to provide help to those in need.

Providing support in different ways

The RCIRCSA made a number of wide ranging recommendations including: prerecording of the entirety of a witness's evidence in child sexual abuse prosecutions, provision of qualified intermediaries to help in communicating with vulnerable witnesses, and legislation review. The intent of many recommendations were already embedded in the practices and procedures of the NT's justice system. In addition to those measures there have been the following changes to support survivors and victims in court:

- In March 2019, the *Criminal Code Further Amendment Act 2019* was urgently passed to rectify the Supreme Court's ability to hear historic child sexual assault matters. This legislation responded to a court case which found the Supreme Court was not able to exercise that power due to legislative changes over time. The Act ensured that historical charges of indecent assault were able to be heard by the Supreme Court and also retrospectively validated the court's jurisdiction on matters that had already been decided.
- In June 2020 the *Sexual Offences (Evidence and Procedure) Amendment Act 2020* commenced to enable a victim in a sexual offence matter to consent to being identified in a publication, statement or representation, provided that they are an adult with capacity to consent.
- In April 2021, the *Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Amendment Act 2021* commenced. Based on model legislation developed by a national working group, its purpose was to enable more relevant evidence about child sexual abuse to be put before a jury in child sexual offence proceedings. The amendments were aimed at improving criminal justice outcomes for survivors of child sexual offences and were targeted at offences involving child victims.
- The Witness Assistance Service (WAS) rolled out an initiative in Darwin involving an automated notification process for victims in Local Court matters at an early stage of the court proceedings. Previously, victims in Local Court matters were referred to WAS in contested hearings only where the victim was considered particularly vulnerable or distressed. To make victims feel more involved in the criminal justice process and to provide assistance to a wider range of victims, an automated text message will be sent to any victim where a mobile number has been provided by the officer in charge of the case. The message will invite victims to contact WAS for information and assistance at an early stage in order to prepare them for the journey through the criminal justice system.
- The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has updated its review, feedback and complaint policy in an effort to improve its service and also to ensure the principles of the Northern Territory Charter of Victims' Rights are upheld.

Supporting Survivors and Victims

Praise for the Witness Assistance Service

The following is client feedback for the WAS:

"I would not have made it through the week without your constant care. Your presence, caring and constant communication all week gave me the strength and determination to keep going. You helped me not only mentally but spiritually and physically. You reminded me to take care of myself and constantly checked I was OK even when your work day had finished. You were honest and clear from the start and you helped me understand exactly what was happening without all the confusing law language! You went above and beyond and there are no words that could ever describe how truly grateful I am! You allowed me to be myself with no expectations and held space for me when I really needed it. I did not feel



6.3 Supporting Survivors and Victims through the Justice System

PROJECT: 6.3.1 Limitation Periods

RCIRCSA RC.85, RC.86, RC.87, RC.88

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Limitation Periods	Legislation to remove limitation period that applies to a claim for damages by a survivor of child sexual abuse in an institutional context	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 6.3.2 Police and Survivors and Victims

RCIRCSA CJ.03, CJ.04, CJ.05, CJ.06, CJ.12, CJ.13

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Police and Survivors and Victims	Broad changes to policing agencies to encourage reporting of allegations of child sexual abuse including further specialist training, relationship building, and a "guarantee of service".	UNDERWAY

PROJECT: 6.3.3 Survivors and Victims in Court

RCIRCSA CJ.01, CJ.52, CJ.53, CJ.54, CJ.58, CJ.59, CJ.60, CJ.61, CJ.62, CJ.63, CJ.77, CJ.78, CJ.84

Initiative	Brief Description	Status
Survivors and Victims in Court	Wide ranging measures including: prerecording of the entirety of a witness's evidence in child sexual abuse prosecutions, provision of qualified intermediaries to help in communicating with vulnerable witnesses, legislation review	UNDERWAY



