

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL  
RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE  
**FIRST PROGRESS REPORT**

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## Introduction

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RC: IRCSA) commenced in January 2013. Over the next five years, the Commissioners heard harrowing stories from victims, survivors and their families on the abuse, inaction and apathy they experienced from the people and services meant to care for them. Tragically, this abuse was experienced by many children in every state and territory and in almost every type of institution: missions where Stolen Generation children were housed, education, sporting, religious and recreation programs.

All children regardless of age, ability, where they live or who they live with deserve to be safe, happy, protected from harm and supported to reach their potential.

The Northern Territory recognises ensuring children's safety and improving their outcomes requires increased and sustained collaboration among all stakeholders, including the Commonwealth, Territory, State and Local governments, the community sector, communities, and families.

The Northern Territory is progressing responses to the recommendations from the RC: IRCSA through a coordinated approach outlined in *Safe Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families*, and the Northern Territory's early childhood development plan *Starting Early for a Better Future*, which together lead the Safe Thriving and Connected reform agenda.

Through this one reform agenda, the Northern Territory Government is placing children at the centre and building the foundations required to make the changes critical to improving supports to children and families at risk of, or who are experiencing, vulnerability and to strengthen support services to victims and survivors of abuse.

## Background

The RC: IRCSA submitted its Final Report to the Governor-General on 15 December 2017. This Final Report comprised 17 volumes with 189 recommendations to better protect children against sexual abuse and alleviate the impact of abuse when it occurs. The Northern Territory Government provided an initial response to the Final Report (2017) on 22 June 2018.

In addition to this Final Report, the RC: IRCSA previously released three reports:

- 2017 Criminal Justice Report (85 recommendations)
- 2015 Redress and Civil Litigation Report (99 recommendations)
- 2015 Working with Children Checks Report (36 recommendations).

Together, these reports and the 409 recommendations cover a broad range of issues that governments and other institutions are to consider and respond to.

Preventing child abuse and responding to those who have experienced abuse requires action on many levels, across a broad range of stakeholders. The Northern Territory Government will continue to work in partnership with communities, the Aboriginal community controlled sector and the community services sector to prevent child abuse and support victims and survivors at the local level. The Northern Territory Government will continue to work with Commonwealth, state and territory governments to coordinate action where the Commonwealth, states and territories have joint responsibility.

### Coordinated Reform Agenda

The reports from both the RC: IRCSA and the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory were concerned with the safety and wellbeing of children. The reports highlighted the need for integrated and sustainable responses from governments and institutions providing education, religious services and family support services, to address the complex issues faced by children and families who experience vulnerability, disadvantage or trauma.

Almost half of the recommendations of RC: IRCSA align with the Northern Territory Government's plan for generational change developed in response to the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory (*Safe Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families*).

The coordinated reform approach is centred on working closely with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations on the design and delivery of the reforms and programs in recognition that Aboriginal people are best placed to respond to the needs of Aboriginal children and families.

The Northern Territory Government is already investing in generational change and is implementing substantial reforms in youth justice and child protection. The reforms arising from RC: IRCSA and through *Safe Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families* are being implemented in the context of other significant social reforms designed to improve the safety and wellbeing of all Northern Territory children and families.

# Northern Territory First Annual Report

The Northern Territory Government has committed to table annual reports in parliament for five consecutive years as per recommendation 17.2 of the Final Report from the RC: IRCSA. This first Northern Territory Government Annual report outlines the progress of reforms the Northern Territory Government is implementing to better support victims and survivors and prevent future child sexual abuse and in response to the RC: IRCSA.

The report has been structured into four themes, outlining what has been achieved and what actions are still progressing:

Child Safe Organisations	Supporting Survivors and Victims	Managing and Sharing Information	Legal Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•National Child Safe Principles</li><li>•Working with Children Checks</li><li>•Foster and Kinship Carer Register</li><li>•Teacher Registration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Problematic and harmful sexual behaviour</li><li>•National Redress Scheme</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Information management and sharing</li><li>•Record keeping and Storing Information</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Single Act for Children</li><li>•Aboriginal Justice Agreements</li><li>•Access to Justice</li><li>•Liability and non-delegable duty</li></ul>

## Child Safe Organisations

### National Child Safe Principles

The Northern Territory Government is committed to improving children’s safety no matter which services or organisations they have contact with. Reflecting the rights of the child, the National Child Safe Standards and Principles aim to create organisations where children’s safety and wellbeing is paramount.

The Northern Territory Government endorsed the Child Safe Principles in June 2018 as part of its response to the Final Report from RC: IRCSA. The Child Safe Standards are central to the Northern Territory Government’s legislative reform agenda and will inform the development of a single Act for children to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children are central in decisions and policy development.

The Northern Territory Government is working closely with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to implement the National Child Safe Standards and Principles.

The Northern Territory Government commitment to the National Child Safe Standards and Principles is also demonstrated through the reforms outlined in *Safe Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families*, specifically:

## Listening to children

Listening to and valuing the voices and concerns of children in care is an essential part of supporting children's safety. New processes have been implemented in the Northern Territory Government's Out of Home Care system that enables children and young people in care and detention to be involved in decisions about their care and to report concerns or complaints. This includes enhanced complaints management processes for children, carers and families and the integration of an on-line interactive tool, Viewpoint. Viewpoint gives children a voice about their care experience and allows case managers to involve children and young people in decisions about the way they are supported, (*Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously*).

## Involving families and communities

The Northern Territory Government's implementation of the Signs of Safety practice framework across Territory Families, will enable families and communities to be involved in decisions about their children. The Signs of Safety practice framework integrates professional and cultural knowledge with local families to build partnerships with children and parents to improve the safety and wellbeing of children. The roll out of the Signs of Safety practice framework commenced in November 2018, with the roll out continuing across the Northern Territory through 2019, (*Standard 3 Families and communities are informed and involved*).

## Involving Aboriginal people in decisions about Aboriginal children

The Northern Territory Government is working with Aboriginal organisations and families to develop and implement a comprehensive Aboriginal Out-of-Home Care Strategy in recognition that Aboriginal families are best placed to care for Aboriginal children.

Development of the Out of Home Care Reforms, including the Aboriginal Out-of-Home Care Strategy is a co-design process involving Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APONT) and the Secretariat for Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). A staff member has been seconded from the Northern Territory Government Department, Territory Families, to facilitate community involvement to ensure the cultural needs of Aboriginal children, families and communities are considered in the development and implementation of the Aboriginal Out of Home Care Strategy.

The Northern Territory Government recognises that Aboriginal people are best placed to develop local solutions to local issues and to make a lasting difference across social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions of their lives and is committed to Local Decision Making to provide opportunities to transfer government service delivery to Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organisations based on their community aspirations.

In 2018-19 the Northern Territory Government allocated \$1 million to governance activities to support local communities to make local decisions in a sustainable way. Local Decision Making Agreements have already been signed with Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation in Ngukurr and with Baniyala Aboriginal Corporation and the Djalkiripuyunu Leaders of the Blue Mud Bay Region with a further two agreements being finalised, (*Standard 4 Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account*).

### **Skilled capable workforce**

The Northern Territory Government is investing \$2.77 million per annum to support frontline workers in child protection, youth justice and domestic violence services to improve their practice and place the safety and wellbeing of children at the centre of all decisions.

Territory Families established the Clinical and Professional Practice Directorate in August 2018, designed to improve practice through the coaching and mentoring of staff, monitoring and identifying professional development needs of practitioners, and providing a central point for research and advice on improving service delivery and meeting the needs of children.

The work of the Clinical and Professional Practice Directorate is guided by the new Clinical Governance and Professional Practice Committee. This Committee includes local and interstate professionals, who are renowned nationally for their work with children and families.

The Northern Territory Government is developing an integrated early childhood development workforce to improve the service quality, increase the number of qualified staff and provide innovative workforce development opportunities. An important aspect of the plan is the development of a specific strategy for the attraction, recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff, (*Standard 5 People working with children are suitable and supported*).

### **Strong complaints system**

The Northern Territory Government has provided the Northern Territory's Office of the Children's Commissioner with an additional \$2.5 million over four years to increase the Children's Commissioner's capacity to monitor and audit the youth justice and child protection systems. This additional funding has enabled the Northern Territory Office of the Children's Commissioner to carry out inspections of detention centres and out-of-home care facilities.

In addition, the Northern Territory Government is establishing a new Commission for Children and Young People, which will provide the appropriate level of oversight of the care and protection and youth justice systems and advocacy for the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in the Northern Territory.



Development of the new Commission is being progressed in consultation with key stakeholders to ensure the function of the new Commission is consistent with the intent of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, best practice and is responsive to Northern Territory children, young people, families and communities, (*Standard 6 Processes to respond to the complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused*).

### **Ongoing support and professional development**

The Northern Territory Government has also introduced significant improvements in residential care services aimed at improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in care. Working in partnership with the Australian Childhood Foundation, the Northern Territory Government Department, Territory Families, has implemented a therapeutic residential care model in residential care homes in Darwin operated by Territory Families.

This model supports young people to recover from the impact of trauma, focussing on supporting young people to build trust and positive relationships with consistent, caring adults. The provision of training under this model, to staff of Territory Families and non-government residential care providers in Darwin and Alice Springs, commenced in May 2018 with the first young people entering the program in June 2018, (*Standard 7 Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training*).

### **Safe physical environments**

All children and young people need to be safe no matter where they live, this includes children in detention. The Northern Territory Government is investing \$71.4 million over four years to develop new youth justice centres in Darwin and Alice Springs. These new Centres will replace the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Darwin and the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre. The Centres will be based on contemporary therapeutic and restorative approaches to youth justice and the safety of detainees. The new Centres are being developed in consultation with young people, the community sector and Aboriginal leaders.

While these new facilities are being developed, the Northern Territory Government has implemented a program to 'fix and make safe' the current Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Darwin and the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre by investing in facilities to improve safety, hygiene, comfort and access to education programs, (*Standard 8 Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur*).

## Working with Children Checks

The RC: IRCSA released the Working with Children Checks (WWCCs) Report in August 2015. The report contained 36 recommendations, 29 of these recommendations align with activities identified through *Safe Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families*.

The recommendations in the WWCC report aim to strengthen the protection of children. The RC: IRCSA recommended a national model for WWCCs, which would introduce consistent standards to be used in conjunction with the establishment of a centralised WWCC database to facilitate cross-border information sharing.

The RC: IRCSA acknowledged that while WWCCs are only one strategy required by organisations to ensure the safety of children, the checks are a useful tool in detecting people who have previously been reported or have come to the attention of authorities for offending against children and pose a danger.

The Northern Territory Government endorsed the National Standards for Working with Children Check in January 2019 and is working with the federal, state and territory governments to develop National Standards for Working with Children Check that will create nationally consistent parameters for screening people wanting to engage in child-related work.

In addition, the Northern Territory Working with Children Check or Ochre card, which has been in place since 2010, is being reviewed as part of the Northern Territory Government's legislative reform process.

## Foster and Kinship Carer Register

The Northern Territory Government is implementing a number of reforms to strengthen support provided to foster and kinship carers and to improve the safety and wellbeing of children placed in their care. These reforms recognise that children in out-of-home care are among the most vulnerable children in the Northern Territory and require safe, nurturing care until they can be safely returned to their families or successfully transition from out-of-home care.

These reforms include:

- developing an Aboriginal Out-of-Home Care Strategy and increasing the number of Aboriginal foster and kinship carers to increase the number and proportion of Aboriginal children in care who are placed with Aboriginal kinship or foster carers in safe, suitable and culturally connected homes;
- introducing a robust quality assurance program that requires all out of home care service providers to demonstrate they are delivering quality care in line with agreed National Standards for Children in out-of-home care services and principles. The Northern Territory Government's Department, Territory Families is moving to introduce an accreditation scheme for out-of-home care services in the Northern Territory in partnership with service providers;
- improving the collection and storage of data and information about carers through the development of a new Client Information Management System (CMSA).

The Northern Territory Government is continuing to work with other states and territories to introduce legislation to establish carer registrations.

## Teachers Registration

Access to quality, safe education is the right of every child; though for some children this has not been their experience. The RC: IRCSA made a number of recommendations about strengthening teacher registration requirements and improving the sharing of teacher registration information across jurisdictions and schools, so that perpetrators of child abuse could not easily hide or move between schools.

The Teacher Registration Board Northern Territory is working closely with other state and territory jurisdictions to ensure children are safe at school and address the recommendations from RC: IRCSA. This work is being addressed through the *National Review of Teacher Registration* project.

The *National Review of Teacher Registration* project commenced in February 2018 and was established to assess the effectiveness of the current teacher regulatory system including, the extent to which there is consistency in the way the National Framework for Teacher Registration is applied. This project includes reviewing suitability requirements for registration as a teacher; specifically, measures of being a 'fit and proper person' in response to the RC: IRCSA and strengthening information sharing with relevant bodies, including other teacher registration agencies.

## Supporting Survivors and Victims

### Problematic and harmful sexual behaviour

The RC: IRCSA found that not all children who had been victims of sexual abuse were abused by adults, some children had been sexually abused by other children. Both groups of children (the victim and the perpetrator) require ongoing therapeutic support; to assist victims with the trauma of the abuse and to work with perpetrators to prevent further abuse.

Support for adults and children who have experienced sexual assault in the Northern Territory is provided through the Northern Territory Government's Department of Health, Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek.

Sexual Assault Referral Centres provide services that include:

- 24 hour medical and crisis response, including therapeutic counselling, advocacy, support and specialist therapeutic treatment for adults and children who have been sexually assaulted at any time in their life;
- therapeutic support for children under the age of 10 living in urban areas who are displaying harmful sexualised behaviours;
- support access to traditional healers via close collaboration with Akeyulerre and Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council;
- support for victims and survivors with reporting and legal processes, for example adults reporting about recent or historical sexual abuse;
- protective behaviours and healthy relationship programs with children in urban and remote settings;
- networking with other government and non-government agencies on prevention and intervention strategies, raising community awareness and promoting destigmatising messages about the impacts of child sexual abuse in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner.

Through *Safe Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families* the Northern Territory Government is leading a multi-agency and multifaceted approach to coordinate and oversee the delivery of new policies, programs, practice and campaigns to prevent and respond to the sexual exploitation of children and young people in the Northern Territory.

In December 2017, the Northern Territory Government released the *Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028* (the Framework). The Framework describes the Northern Territory Government's investment in prevention, early intervention, and safety and recovery for women and children who have been affected by domestic, family and sexual violence.

The impacts of family and sexual violence are far reaching and can have devastating effects on children and young people who witness it or are victims themselves. Witnessing domestic and family violence causes serious, lasting harm to children, including impacting on attitudes to relationships and violence. Exposure to domestic and family violence also increases the risk of a child or young person experiencing other forms of abuse or neglect.

The Framework aims to reduce violence and achieve safer homes, communities, workplaces and schools by:

- continuing the implementation of the *Family Safety Framework* across regions of the Northern Territory to provide intensive interventions and support for high risk victims of domestic and family violence;
- providing additional funding of \$300,000 per annum for the *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Prevention Fund* to support local projects employing evidence-based prevention and early intervention strategies to break the cycle of domestic, family and sexual violence. The first round of additional funding under the *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Prevention Fund*, released in September 2018, was allocated to prevention programs operating in Darwin, Palmerston, Lajamanu, Galiwin'ku, Alice Springs, Central Australia, Tennant Creek and the Barkly Region. Applications for the second round of funding closed in December 2018, successful recipients will be announced in early 2019;
- providing \$450,000 funding to develop an integrated and specialist domestic, family and sexual violence hub model for the Northern Territory town of Tennant Creek to support women and their children in the Barkly Region.

In addition to the implementation of the *Family Safety Framework* by the Northern Territory Government, a Northern Territory cross-agency working group comprising representatives from government and non-government organisations has been established to develop a *Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy*. Development of the Strategy will occur over a 12-month period in consultation with Northern Territory Government agencies, the specialist services sectors and the community.

The Northern Territory is working with the Commonwealth Government and other jurisdictions to prioritise the inclusion of the complex issue of children's harmful sexual behaviours in the National Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse which the National Office of Child Safety is responsible for developing.

## National Redress Scheme

In April 2018, the Northern Territory Government agreed to join the National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. The aim of the National Redress Scheme is to acknowledge and reduce the impact of the harm caused to survivors who experienced institutional child sexual abuse. There are three main components of redress: a monetary payment; access to counselling and psychological care; and the opportunity for an apology and acknowledgement of the abuse from the institution responsible.

The Northern Territory Government became a fully participating jurisdiction in the National Redress Scheme in November 2018. A large number of both current and defunct Northern Territory Government institutions from multiple agencies have been declared for the purposes of the scheme, predominately from within Territory Families, the Department of Education and the Department of Health. The team has begun receiving requests for information (RFIs) from the scheme operator in relation to Northern Territory Government related claims, however, at the date of writing no offers of redress have been made in relation to these claims.

The NT Redress Coordination Team has been established and is situated within the Crime Victims Services Unit of the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. The Team provides the whole of government primary point of contact for the Scheme and is working closely with a range of stakeholders, including the following:

- Australian Government, Department of Social Services (Scheme Operator) in policy development and operational outcomes;
- Australian Government, Department of Human Services (Scheme Operator) in investigating and responding to Requests for Information;
- All relevant Northern Territory Government institutions/agencies to support the investigation into claims and providing coordinated responses back to the Scheme Operator;
- Commonwealth Government (Northern Territory based) institutions supporting the investigation into claims that occurred prior to the Territory achieving self-government in 1978, as well as the South Australian Government, noting their responsibility for education in the Northern Territory during the period 1948-1971.

The Redress Coordination Team further supports those survivors found eligible for redress by assisting individuals to access to direct personal responses from the relevant responsible Northern Territory Government institution. The team is developing processes to ensure access to multiple methods in which the survivors may request an apology from the institution. Where survivors request a face to face direct personal response, the team has developed processes to facilitate a restorative justice group conferencing model of engagement, in which the survivors and the institutional representative are prepared and supported.

The NT Redress Coordination Team is also responsible for oversight and coordination of the brokerage of counselling and psychological support services, consistent with the national standard, for all Northern Territory based survivors who have been found eligible for redress, regardless of the institution responsible. The Team has begun consultations with relevant providers to ensure culturally appropriate services will be accessible across the Northern Territory.

# Managing and Sharing Information

## Information Management and Sharing

During the RC: IRCSA, one of the concerns Commissioners regularly heard was information that should have been available, and which could have helped children and young people, was not shared between people and agencies. The RC: IRCSA made a number of recommendations to improve information sharing and record keeping.

The Northern Territory Government supports a consistent approach to information sharing across federal, state and territory governments and is progressing improvements in the way information is collected, stored and shared in the Northern Territory:

- Northern Territory Government is investing \$66.9 million over five years from 2017/18 into a new Client Management System Alignment (CMSA). CMSA will enable the sharing of information at the operational level across all Northern Territory human service agencies working with children and families experiencing vulnerability;
- Northern Territory Government is currently developing replacement information systems for the Department of Health and Northern Territory Police.

The Northern Territory Government will also continue to work with state and territory jurisdictions to identify and remove barriers and develop responses that promote the effective sharing of data and information. This will include supporting increased understanding of current laws, such as privacy laws, and how information can be shared under present regimes.

## Record keeping and storing information

In response to the RC: IRCSA recommendation regarding record keeping and disposal, the Northern Territory Government implemented a freeze on the disposal of records concerning youth justice and child protection matters. The freeze was issued to ensure records that were or could become relevant to a claim of child sexual abuse would be protected and be available to assist in any potential legal action. The Northern Territory Government has maintained record disposal freezes for Juvenile Justice and Child Abuse records until June 2020 and is proposing to extend the disposal schedules for records that relate to child abuse so that they are retained for 45 years.



## Legal Responses to Child Abuse

### Single Act for children

The Northern Territory Government is developing a single Act to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children is at the centre of its reform agenda. The single Act will replace the Care and Protection of Children Act and the Youth Justice Act and give effect to the philosophy that all children, no matter which Government agency or process they are subject to, deserve to thrive, learn and grow and be supported to reach their full potential. The new single Act is being developed in consultation with key stakeholders.

The single Act will embed a common system wide set of values, principles and ways of working with children and families and reflect the National Child Safe Standards and include the review of the Working with Children Check.

### Aboriginal Justice Agreements

The Northern Territory Government is committed to increasing the role of traditional Aboriginal leadership in the justice system and reasserting local power.

The Aboriginal Justice Agreements are a partnership between the Northern Territory Government and local communities that recognise the role of cultural authority in legal matters, enables the inclusion of traditional leadership in community court decision making processes and aims to reduce the imprisonment and re-offending rates for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

Development of the Justice Agreements commenced in mid-2017 and has involved engagement with communities and Aboriginal people across the NT, including:

- non-Aboriginal agents and Territorians;
- remote and very remote communities;
- correctional centres;
- major peak Aboriginal bodies such as Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APONT), the Northern Land Council, Central Land Council, Anindilyakwa Land Council;
- Elders Visiting Program workshops organised by NT Correctional Services.

Further consultations on the draft Aboriginal Justice Agreement will take place across the Northern Territory in 2019.

## Access to justice

Reporting child sexual abuse and participating in court processes can be very stressful and difficult for adult and child victims and survivors. The RC: IRCSA found that of the 88.9% of survivors who told the Royal Commission about their disclosure experiences:

- 42.6% disclosed as a child;
- 57.4% disclosed as an adult.

The Northern Territory Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Act commenced in June 2017. This Act removed limitation periods in relation to action for damages by victims of sexual abuse, serious physical abuse or psychological abuse arising from sexual or serious physical abuse. The Act applies retrospectively and allows survivors to bring civil actions regardless of the time period between the date of the abuse and the bringing of an action.

The Northern Territory Government is reviewing the sexual offences in the Criminal Code to modernise relevant parts of the Criminal Code, both in language and in offences that relate to persistent child sexual abuse, grooming offences and circumstances where abuse occurs in the context of a relationship of authority. These changes will strengthen legal responses in the Northern Territory to child sexual abuse.

In September 2017, the Northern Territory Government approved a revised *Model Litigant Policy for the Northern Territory* that includes *Guiding Principles for Responding to Civil Claims alleging Child Abuse*. The *Model Litigant Policy* provides guidance on best practice to Northern Territory Government agencies involved in civil litigation matters and includes specific information to assist in responding to claims concerning child abuse in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

## Liability and Non-delegable Duty

The RC: IRCSA made a number of recommendations through the Redress and Civil Litigation Report to reform civil laws to make it easier for victims of institutional child sexual abuse to seek legal responses and redress.

In September 2018, the Northern Territory Government released a discussion paper addressing a number of recommendations from the Redress and Civil Litigation Report aiming to provide a fairer response to victims of institutional child sexual abuse. The discussion paper considered:

- the liability of institutions for child abuse, including vicarious liability for the actions of an employee who causes harm to a child and the non-delegable duty of care; and
- identifying a defendant, particularly in relation to religious institutions and property trusts.

Submissions closed in November 2018, a report will be presented to the Northern Territory Government for consideration in early 2019.

## Public Reporting

The Northern Territory Government is committed to regular public reporting on progress against the current reforms underway in the Northern Territory. The first Annual Progress Report against *Safe Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families* was released publicly by the Northern Territory Government in December 2018.

To facilitate the ongoing coordination of reforms associated with the Northern Territory Government's *Safe Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families* and *Starting Early for a Better Future*, and RC: IRCSA recommendations, consideration is being given to the development of and a single consistent reform and reporting architecture.

In addition, the Northern Territory Government will publish a biennial *Story of Our Children* report, which will provide information and a comprehensive snapshot of the health, education and wellbeing of Territory children across a number of agreed indicators.





