

COMMUNIQUÉ

14 November 2023

The Children and Families Tripartite Forum (the Forum) held its 20th meeting in Darwin. The forum was chaired by **Mr Rob McPhee**, who welcomed members and observers from the Northern Territory and Australian Governments, Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS), North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) and Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT).

Larrakia woman **Ms Jeanneen McLennan** delivered the **Welcome to Country**, and thanked members for gathering to hold open and robust discussions on important issues for Northern Territory children and families.

The Forum heard from the **Australian and Northern Territory Governments' Departments of Education** on the \$40 million On-Country Learning Measure (OCLM), announced as part of the *Better, safer future for Central Australia* plan. The funding is spread over 2023-24 and 2024-25 and the OCLM is designed to "support improved attendance and education outcomes at all operating government and non-government schools in the Central Australia region". As part of the discussion, forum members provided their thoughts on the management and coordination of \$4.9 million for centrally administered supports, particularly for allied health initiatives.

The **Acting Northern Territory Children's Commissioner Ms Nicole Hucks** provided the Forum with an update on her activities including a project seeking children's views on education and future pathways. She presented on the consultations her office had conducted with young people regarding housing and homelessness, racism and experience in youth detention. Forum members were appreciative of the information imparted by Ms Hucks and discussed the need to change the narrative around young Territorians to more positive depictions.

During the quarterly review of key outcome indicators for children and young people, the Forum agreed to commission further work on measures to monitor each quarter in addition to the monitoring and evaluation work for the 10 Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families described in Action Plan One *Planting the Seeds*.

Jana Harmer and **Janita Sandy** from the **Darrandirra Child and Family Centre** presented to the forum on the work of the Darrandirra Child and Family Centre in Darwin. Run by CAAPS, presenters outlined the various services and programs featured at the centre including mothers and babies and elders programs as well as clinical services such as hearing assessments. Members also heard a summary of the NT Government's progress to establish the 9 of 11 Aboriginal Child and Family Centres across the Territory.

Newly appointed Northern Territory **Minister for Territory Families, the Hon Ngaree Ah Kit MLA** joined the Forum for a session to discuss her focus and priorities. The Minister confirmed her commitment to the Tripartite Forum's 10 Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory and its implementation through Action Plan One *Planting the Seeds*. She said she is invested in the success of the Territory's young people and pledged she would not "be doing any of the work for you, without you". She offered to hear out Forum members on any issues.

The Forum was provided an update on domestic, family and sexual violence reforms by **Gabrielle Brown** and **Anna Davis** from the DFSV Reduction Division of TFHC. The presentation included an update on funding and resourcing (NT and Federal), governance structures to support reform, the formation of the Cross Agency Working Group (CAWG) which is a government and non-government partnership and strategic reform approaches to help implement the DFSV Action Plan Two.

The Forum agreed to write to the **NT Executive Council on Aboriginal Affairs** requesting the Forum be recognised as the responsible and accountable partnership for the implementation of Closing the Gap priorities and target for children and families, and education.