

# COMMUNIQUÉ

16 November 2021

The Children and Families Tripartite Forum (the Forum) held its fourth meeting of 2021 in Alice Springs.

The Forum was chaired by Ms Donna Ah Chee, 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).

The meeting began with a **Welcome to Country from Arrernte elder, Kumalie Riley** who reflected on the importance of future generations and keeping children safe and with their kin. The Forum acknowledged her guidance and assured her Forum Members are considering the issues she raised.

The meeting heard from **Australian Government Assistant Minister for Children and Families, the Hon Michelle Landry MP**. Senator the Hon Anne Ruston and the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP were unable to attend and sent their apologies. Assistant Minister Landry thanked Forum members for their work and outlined the status of the new National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, *Safe and Supported*, which is due to be released. She said State and Territory Ministers aim to announce action plans under the Framework in March 2022. Forum members thanked Assistant Minister Landry for her ongoing support and Australian Government funding of the Tripartite Forum and its work.

Northern Territory Government Ministers the **Hon Lauren Moss MLA** and the **Hon Kate Worden MLA** also addressed the forum. Minister Moss, the Minister for Children, acknowledged the work of the Gurindji and the Reform Management Office with the recent launch of the Kalkarindji Child and Family Centre and the work of the Forum around the 10 Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory.

Minister Worden, the Minister for Territory Families, spoke about the effects of **domestic and family violence** and the government's commitment to tackling the issues. The forum agreed to explore the causes and effects of domestic and family violence and possible interventions at the next meeting. The Minister also spoke about the announcement with the Australian Government on \$85 million in funding for family support services in the Northern Territory. The Forum discussed the government's commitment to raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility with the Minister.

The development of the **Northern Territory Youth Justice Model of Care** was discussed. Members emphasised the importance of a therapeutic approach in detention and committed to work with the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities to develop the model.

The Forum's Generational Strategy Working Group presented members with the developing **10-Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory** (Generational Strategy) and provided a briefing on implementation planning for the strategy. Members provided feedback on the document which will be included in the final draft to be considered out of session.

The Menzies School of Health Research presented the Forum with an update on the **Child Youth Development Research Partnership** while the Northern Territory Acting Children's Commissioner Sally Sievers outlined the work of the **Office of the Children's Commissioner** in monitoring the child protection and youth justice system.

The Forum discussed the update on the implementation of the NT Government's Safe, Thriving and Connected reform program including the response to the **Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory**. The update included the status of the 218 Royal Commission recommendations for which the Territory is responsible.

The forum agreed to welcome the Australian Government **Department of Education, Skills and Employment** as an additional Australian Government representative of the forum taking the total number of representatives to 13.