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Sent: Wednesday, 23 February 2011 4:28 PM
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Cc: Senate.Estimates; MCKENZIE, Cate; LYE, Michael; HALBERT, Cath; BROWN, Philip; EMERSON, Lee; ROCHE, Greg; MURRAY, Gayle; CROOME, Rachel; 'tim.kendall@aph.gov.au'
Subject: Senate Community Affairs Committee - follow up on Bath Report private briefing, 7 February 2011

Good Afternoon

I'm writing to thank you for the opportunity to discuss Bath Report with the committee at the private hearing on 7 February 2011, and provide further advice on a number of issues discussed at that time.

Intensive Family Support Program

During the discussion Senator Boyce queried how many families would access Intensive FSP. The Intensive Family Support Service will assist families through a range of interventions, which will be tailored to the individual's or community's needs. These interventions may include parenting and life skills education, one-on-one counselling, and support delivered either in the home or to small groups in community facilities. The service delivery model is still being refined and we expect that the number of families able to be assisted will depend on the intensity of the intervention needed. For intensive interventions the case load for a family support worker would be between five to eight families, while less intensive group work activities would support larger numbers. Clients may enter in a more intensive mode and move through the range of activities so that they are able to continually build on their parenting and life skills.

The committee expressed interest in the locations and provider NGOs involved in the Intensive FSP. The Department is currently in the process of contracting service providers to operate the new Intensive Family Support Services. Details about the service providers can be provided once the formal provider selection process has been concluded. The first five locations for the new services will be Darwin Town Camps, Palmerston Town Camps, Palmerston Township, Wadeye and the Katherine Township

The committee also queried whether the Intensive Family Support Program model would be publicly released. An important element of the Intensive Family Support service is to develop an evidence-based, outcomes focused intensive family support model for Indigenous families. This model is being collaboratively developed with the aid of a facilitator and researchers. It is anticipated that the practice model will be made available after it has been implemented and an evaluation has been completed.

Aboriginal child protection peak bodies in other jurisdictions

In discussion on the Northern Territory Government plans to develop an Aboriginal peak body the Committee queried whether there were similar bodies in other Australian jurisdictions. The Bath Report outlines the case for establishing an Aboriginal Children and Families peak body in the NT (page 130), and refers to models already operating in other Australian jurisdictions (discussion under Aboriginal controlled child welfare services in Australia – from page 122), particularly in Victoria.

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) runs (among other services and programs) the Lakidjeka Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice and Support Service, who are consulted on all out of home care placements in respects of Aboriginal children (mandated by legislation). (http://www.vacca.org/home/home) This operates in a way similar to the Bath Report proposal for the Northern Territory (with the peak organisation to auspice Aboriginal Child Care Agencies, or ACCAs, along with other advocacy and support roles.)

Examples in other jurisdictions include:

- The Queensland Aboriginal & Islander Health Council (QAIHC), which auspices the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Limited (QATSICPP) (http://www.qaihc.com.au/index.php?page=child-protection).

- the WA Department for Child Protection has a number of Recognised Entities, which are agencies approved under legislation for consultation on child protection (Armadale Noongar Corporation, Yorganop, and Ebenezer Home).
- The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat NSW (AbSec) is the peak NSW body providing child protection and out of home care policy advice on issues affecting Aboriginal families involved in the child protection system. AbSec also auspices the Aboriginal Statewide Foster care Support Service, providing advice and advocacy for carers of Aboriginal children and assisting local communities in establishing Aboriginal foster care groups.

Safe Places

The committee also expressed interest in the location of Safe Places in the Northern Territory. The following table lists Safe Places (funded by the Commonwealth and/or the Northern Territory Government, as part of the NTER, FaHCSIA's Family Violence Partnership Program or other programs):

Location	Men/Youth	Women
Ali Curung Safe House		W
Alice Springs Women's Shelter (transitional house)		W
Angurugu	M	W
Apatula (Finke)	M	
Beswick		W
Borroloola Safe House		W
Darwin (Dawn House Women's Refuge		W
Darwin (Salvation Army Catherine Booth House [Community Harmony Green room])		W (itinerant)
Darwin (Salvation Army Catherine Booth House)		W (single)
Darwin (Salvation Army Sunrise Centre)	M (single)	
Darwin Aboriginal & Islander Women's Shelter (transitional house)		W
Elliott Safe House		W
Gunbalanya Safe House		W
Kalkarindji/Daguragu		W
Katherine Women's Crisis Centre		W
Lajamanu		W
Maningrida	M	W
Milikapiti (Melville Island) Safe House		W
Nauiyu (Daly River) Safe House		W
Nguiu (Bathurst Island)	M	W
Ngukurr Safe House	M	W
Nhulunbuy Safe House (Gove)		W
Ntaria (Hermannsburg)		W
Nturiya (Ti Tree)		W
Palmerston (YMCA Palmerston Family Crisis and accommodation Service)		Families
Peppimenarti		W
Pmara Jutunta (Ti Tree 6 mile)	M	
Ramingining	M	W
Tennant Creek (Tennenat Creek Women's Shelter)		W
Wadeye Safe House		W
Yarralin		W
Yuendumu Safe House	M	

A map of NTER Safe Places is attached, together with photographs of a number of safe houses. (Note that the map lists the Beswick Safe Place as a men's Safe Place – it has been changed to a women's Safe Place since this map was compiled).

Impact of the phased withdrawal of AFP by the Commonwealth

The committee queried how Bath Recommendation 7.11 (23) fits with the Commonwealth future of the NTER work:

> *That the Northern Territory Government in considering the impact of the phased withdrawal of AFP by the Commonwealth, ensures that adequate planning and funding is in place to respond to the issues of serious abuse in remote areas.*

The phased withdrawal of the AFP from the Northern Territory will be considered by the Government as part of the overall consideration of support for remote communities, post NTER.

Australian Federal Police were deployed to support the establishment of 18 new Themis stations in remote Indigenous communities at the commencement of the NTER. The Australian Government's investment to upgrade the NT Police College has enabled active recruitment and training of NT Police Officers and the staged replacement of AFP officers. At 31 January 2011, of the 62 additional police currently deployed in the NT, 10 are AFP Officers. $14.5m provided in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 by the Australian Government through the *Closing the Gap in the NT National Partnership Agreement* has resulted in an additional 45 Northern Territory Police recruits successfully graduating from training and another 15 recruits are due to graduate in April 2011.

During the phased reduction of AFP support to the Northern Territory Police, the AFP will continue to provide police officers to remote communities in the Northern Territory and to the Northern Territory Child Abuse Task Force.

The Government will continue to support the NT Police until it is in a position to take over full responsibility for policing in the affected communities.

An Independent Review of Policing in Remote Indigenous Communities in the Northern Territory, commissioned by the Australian and Northern Territory Governments, found that:

- the current level of policing and coverage is broadly right;
- a significant number of temporary stations need to made permanent;
- there are still communities without a permanent policing presence.

A joint *Police Review Implementation Steering Committee*, with senior representatives from the Australian and Northern Territory Governments, has been established to develop a considered response to the Review recommendations. The Steering Committee is currently prioritising and costing the review's recommendations. The Steering Committee will report to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Northern Territory Chief Minister outlining agreed recommendations and strategies by 30 June 2011.

Further briefing

At the conclusion of our discussion the committee noted that they may seek a further briefing on the NT government's response to the Bath Report, following public release of their Strategic Framework document. The document was to be released during the first sitting week of the NT Parliament, commencing Tuesday 15 February 2011, however this was delayed due to Cyclone Carlos. It was released yesterday (Tuesday 22 February 2011) and a copy is attached. We are happy to support a briefing once the committee have had time to review the document.

Regards

Liza Carroll
Deputy Secretary

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