

INQUIRY INTO THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY 2010

UPDATE ON INQUIRY INTO THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

21 April 2010

The three co-chairs of the Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the Northern Territory would like to thank the hundreds of people who have contributed to the Inquiry to date.

Professor Muriel Bamblett AM, Dr Howard Bath and Dr Rob Roseby, their support Secretariat staff and research team have been undertaking an exhaustive examination of the many issues surrounding child protection in the Territory, as well as canvassing best practice solutions, since the Inquiry began in late 2009.

“We have been encouraged by the number and quality of submissions received. Many people have come forward to tell us their story, which has often taken courage, and we really appreciate that. We also appreciate the many people who have shared their ideas for bringing about positive change,” the three co-chairs said today.

“Forums have been well-attended by a range of people, including family members, foster carers, child protection workers, academics and a range of other professionals.”

The deadline for reporting to the Minister has been extended to the end of June to ensure the Inquiry has time to properly consider the submissions it has received.

The Inquiry has now received about 150 written and 50 oral submissions. Many organisations and individuals asked for extensions of time to submit and additional oral hearings were scheduled.

The co-chairs have also met with an expert reference group, with another meeting to be held in May.

The Inquiry is visiting a number of remote communities over the next month to canvass the views of community members and to look at a range of local services and initiatives.

To date the inquiry has:

- held public information sessions in five regional centres
- held dozens of meetings with government and non-government agencies, Aboriginal groups, Shire Councils and young people
- consulted a number of experts in the field of child protection
- commenced a broad-ranging research program
- held public hearings in key regional centres
- commenced a program of remote community visits.

“A key consideration for us has been respecting the confidentiality of people wanting to talk to us,” the three co-chairs said.

“Our primary interest is in conducting a comprehensive inquiry that listens to people’s experiences and solutions. This means creating a climate where people have the confidence to come forward and talk about what are often difficult and sensitive matters.

“However, we also understand the importance of openness and transparency. Once we have assessed all submissions we will post non-confidential submissions on the Inquiry’s website where these do not contain specific complaints or allegations, could lead to the identification of individuals or may breach other legislative provisions.”

Media inquiries: Dale Webster, Michels Warren Munday – 08 8981 6445, 0448 656 668

Floor 4 National Mutual Building, 9-11 Cavenagh Street, Darwin
Phone: 08 8999 6269 **Fax:** 08 8999 6266 **www.childprotectioninquiry.nt.gov.au**