

I have discussed some of the issues with the Magistrates which will be considered by the Inquiry. The most significant is one of jurisdictional amalgamation.

In all jurisdictions except the NT the Youth Court/Youth Justice Court has total responsibility for dealing with matters relating to children. In NSW, Qld, Vic, WA, ACT, Tas, and SA each court deals with criminal cases involving youths as well as all child protection applications. SA also deals with adoption applications in it youth court.

It would be a significant reform in the NT to consolidate all legal matters relating to children in one court. This would then eliminate the need to have a Youth Justice Court dealing with criminal matters as well as the Local Court exercising a Family Matters jurisdiction and dealing with protection applications.

Reports prepared by Community Corrections as well as FACS are often relevant in each jurisdiction. In addition a more co-ordinated approach could be put in place when dealing with children who now cross the boundaries of each separate legal area.

John Birch  
Acting Chief Magistrate