

CHILD PROTECTION SUBMISSION

Executive Summary:

My association with NT Children's and Families (formerly Family and Childrens Services) dates back to 1994. In my various professional capacities, I have worked as a contractor for psychological services over this past decade.

This inquiry is very welcomed and most needed. I believe that the entire organisation is in need of a total overhaul with regard to the services it seeks to provides and the communication culture that has evolved. The workers 'on the ground' are overloaded, there are not enough trained carers and the children in care are challenged to feel where they 'belong'.

This is a 'whole-of-community' challenge not just that of a government department. Establish a task force to dismantle what's currently in place and build a new service that is reflective of a whole of community approach.

- 1) ABORIGINAL SERVICE PROVIDERS – need to build capacity of numbers and training provided. Adequate remuneration in a timely and effective manner.
- 2) ROLE OF CPS re CHILD WELL-BEING: Engage more with other community and government agencies. Share the information with others. Issues around confidentiality can be worked through.
- 3) CP and the WORKING FUTURES POLICY FRAMEWORK. Include in the Territory 2030 strategy as well.
- 4) CP ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES – ALL GOVERNMENT, NON-GOVERNMENT, INDIVIDUAL (ADD COMMUNITY) - co-ordination, collaboration, resourcing, training, mandatory notification.
- 5) ROLES OF ALL GOVERNMENTS (Federal, NT and local – add shires and 20 growth towns under the Working Futures program).
- 6) WORKFORCE & WORKPLACE ISSUES: Training imperatives, reduce careloads for workers so that they can truel maange the children in their care.
PRACTICES & SYSTEMS: Simplify and reduce the bureaucracy around all this. The department is too complex and dysfunctional. Listen to the 'workers on the ground' at the 'coal-face' for ideas and ways forward.
- 7) INTAKE & ASSESSMENT: All processes to be reviewed.
- 8) OUT OF HOME CARE SERVICES: Increased and spread across whole of community
- 9) FAMILY SUPPORT & WELL-BEING SERVICES: (include Central Australian Youth Action Plan)
- 10) ON-GOING CARE (NOT CASE) MANAGEMENT – services for at risk young people, children & families. Work with other agencies across community.
- 11) LEGAL MATTERS: CARE & PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ACT (NT) etc.

It is my intention to be part of the next NT Legislative Assembly (below) where I would like to work very closely with this department to help engage the new processes.

Apologies for the delay in getting these thoughts above to you. I wish you every success in the implementation of the new and re-focused initiatives.

Phil Walcott

M.A. B. Soc. Sc. Dip. Teach. J.P. MAPS