



- 9 MAY 2016

CHIEF MINISTER
MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

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Ms Claire Mallinson
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Amnesty International Australia
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Dear Ms Mallinson

Thank you for your letter dated 12 April 2016 advising of Amnesty International Australia's (Amnesty) support of the Northern Territory Government's Aboriginal Affairs Strategy (strategy). I note your suggestion to call on the Australian Government to set overarching national justice targets.

Thank you also for your questions relating to the strategy. My Government remains resolute in its commitment to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in NT jails and has committed to a wide range of measures and strategies to ensure that this over-representation is halved by 2030.

Some of these measures include:

- construction of the \$1.2 million purpose-built NT Children's Court
- a multi-agency Youth Detention Reform Advisory Group set up to oversee the implementation of all recommendations contained within the Vita Report
- the implementation of further recommendations as handed down by the NT Children's Commissioner's 'Own Initiative Investigation Report into the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre'
- production and release of the Plain English Legal Dictionary by the NT Aboriginal Interpreter Service in conjunction with the Aboriginal Resource and Development Service and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)
- significant investment in 'upstream' services to work with at risk young people in diversion programs
- further investment in post-release support programs for offenders to help reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

Comprehensive community input is critical in the development of any strategies which directly impact on Indigenous Territorians. Indeed, much of the current strategy itself was informed through conversations with people in communities, and often with the assistance of interpreters allowing people to use their first languages. I note Amnesty agrees that Indigenous Territorians' engagement in the development process is crucial.

Finally, I welcome Amnesty's interest in the Northern Territory Government's reporting and monitoring of progress against the targets in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework. Indeed, as you state, targets alone are not an end in themselves which is why, in February 2015, I established a joint Northern Territory Government and non-Government Organisation Working Group which advises government on a number of critical issues, such as remote housing, education, community safety and justice.

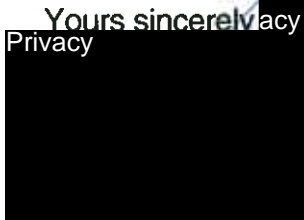
This working group sits within the Department of the Chief Minister and is made up of Chief Executive Officers from across key Northern Territory agencies, including; the NT Council of Social Services, NT Shelter, Tangentyere Council, NAAJA and their counterparts in the Northern Territory Government. This is a successful and robust partnership and continues to provide critical recommendations and insights across a range of matters affecting urban, regional and remote Territorians and importantly, ensures both government and the wider community work collaboratively to address these matters with urgency and respect.

As you have stated in your letter, the states and territories cannot do all the heavy lifting alone however, I can assure you that the Northern Territory Government is not resting on its laurels waiting for Canberra to provide a magic wand. We are proactive and committed to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians in the criminal justice system and, we will continue to implement a range of meaningful measures which are informed by all sectors of the community and underpinned by transparency and accountability.

Yours sincerely

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ADAM GILES

- 3 MAY 2016