

From: [Terry Murphy](#)
To: [Child Detention in NT](#)
Cc: [Andrew Turnell](#)
Subject: Signs of Safety child protection approach
Date: Monday, 10 April 2017 10:06:48 PM
Attachments: [Terry Murphy.png](#)
[Signs-of-Safety-Briefing-Paper-4th-ed.pdf](#)
[Summary of the Practice Approach Evidence and Implementation v0.3.0 170314.docx](#)
[ATT00001.txt](#)
[ATT00002.txt](#)

Dear Commissioners

I have enclosed a copy of the fourth edition of the Signs of Safety Comprehensive Briefing Paper by Dr Andrew Turnell and Terry Murphy (former director general of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support in Western Australia from 2007 to 2014 and former member of the NT Ministerial advisory committee on child protection reform implementation during that time). I have also enclosed a five page summary document.

The approach originated in WA in the 1990's, aiming to develop a way of working that would engage and work for Aboriginal people. It was lost to WA until 2008 during which time the approach had developed further in international jurisdictions. It has been implemented in WA since 2008. Currently, the approach is being used in the USA and Canada as well as New Zealand where work with first nation peoples is a major issue, extensively in the UK and The Republic of Ireland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Denmark, Japan, and most lately in Cambodia in an effort to keep and return children to their families from orphanages. In Australia, Tasmania uses the approach, training has been sought in NSW, and Queensland has tried to introduce a facsimile model. Also recently the Signs of Safety has been applied to youth offending services in The Netherlands and the UK and this has been formalised as Signs of Success.

The approach is not a panacea. The search for an approach that of itself will remedy the organisational, practice and social ills that characterise child protection work is illusory, Signs of Safety is an approach that continues to evolve based on what works for practitioners and families. Similarly, how we meet the enormous challenge of implementation is evolving as we learn how best to align organisations with how they do the practice work they exist to provide.

Work to introduce Signs of Safety in the NT commenced during 2013 when Allison Anderson was the Minister and Jenni Collard the acting CEO. This did not proceed when both the Minister and acting CEO were replaced.

I am sure you will find the approach of substantial interest as you look to meet the challenges that face child protection, as well as youth offending, in the NT.

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