

## Submission by the Northern Territory Government to the Productivity Commission Study into Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory

- 1 The Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory (Royal Commission) identified that significant funding has been and continues to be spent by the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments on a wide range of programs, grants and services for children and families in the Northern Territory.
- 2 In its final report, the Royal Commission found that they could not identify any comprehensive framework for co-ordination between the Northern Territory and Commonwealth. Nor did it uncover any proper assessment of need so that services could be appropriately targeted.
- 3 The Royal Commission recommended that the Productivity Commission undertake a review and audit of Commonwealth expenditure in the Northern Territory in the area of family and children's services relevant to the prevention of harm to children. The review should address co-ordination of programs, funding agreements and selection of service providers, service outputs and evaluations.
- 4 Although the Royal Commission's recommendation for the Productivity Commission study focussed solely on Commonwealth expenditure, the Northern Territory Government has worked with the Commonwealth to ensure that the study includes the full extent of Commonwealth and Northern Territory Government expenditure relating to the prevention of harm to children.
- 5 Better coordination between the Northern Territory and Commonwealth will lead to improved outcomes for Territory children. The Northern Territory Government supports the Productivity Commission study with the hope that it provides a foundation for the development of the Coordinated Funding Framework recommended by the Royal Commission. The Royal Commission described the overarching purpose of the Coordinated Funding Framework to:
  - support the development of a more integrated service system on the ground for children and families; and
  - drive a greater return on government investment in this area by ensuring a more co-ordinated approach to the allocation of Commonwealth and Northern Territory Government funding.
- 6 The Northern Territory Government has committed \$229.6 million over the next five years to implement the reform program described in *Safe, Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families* the Northern Territory Government's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission<sup>i</sup>.

- 7 The additional investment reflects the Northern Territory Government's commitment to reform and the Royal Commission's findings that the cost of establishing and maintaining the reforms proposed will be considerable. The Royal Commission expected there would be substantial savings from a coordinated approach to funding decisions and a focus on early intervention in the long term, however identified that significant additional investment from the Northern Territory and Commonwealth is required over a five to ten year period in order to accrue these savings<sup>ii</sup>.
- 8 Safe, Thriving and Connected, is a key pillar of the Northern Territory's Generational Reform Program, which also includes *Starting Early for a Better Future* the Northern Territory's Early Childhood Development Plan and the Northern Territory's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- 9 The Children and Families Tripartite Forum is a key component of the reform program. The forum's purpose is to address an identified need for structured and sustained high level engagement between the Northern Territory Government, Commonwealth Government and community sector regarding children experiencing vulnerability, young people and families, and child protection and youth justice issues. More information regarding the role and activities of the Tripartite Forum in the sections below.
- 10 The Northern Territory Government provided extensive documentation and testimony to the Royal Commission on existing programs, funding and processes, much of which is referenced in the Royal Commission's final report. The Northern Territory Government is also providing specific information to the Productivity Commission on funding, policy and processes.
- 11 This submission does not seek to replicate the information previously provided to the Royal Commission, but instead identify specific reforms designed to support the effective and efficient allocation of funding for children in the Northern Territory. Information requested by the Productivity Commission on funding, policy and procedures is being provided separately.

## Funding and Services for Children in the Northern Territory

### A Public Health Approach

- 12 In Safe, Thriving and Connected, and *Starting Early for a Better Future*, the Northern Territory Government has committed to a public health approach. This recognises the need for a coordinated approach to address the social determinants of health and wellbeing while addressing the specific needs of individuals and families at a point in time. The commitment to early action, in the lives of children and to address potential problems, will reduce the need for crisis intervention in the future.

- 13 The responsibility to support Territory children and families, particularly Aboriginal Territorians, is a responsibility shared by the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments. The social determinants that increase families' likelihood of entering the child protection or youth justice system often also impact on school participation, health outcomes and economic participation; an intervention to prevent future child neglect can also impact on a wide range of outcomes and objectives that are the goals and responsibilities of both the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments. Recognising this, the Royal Commission identified the need for a fundamental shift away from service-driven systems where governments and agencies fund and deploy services based on their identified operational responsibilities, towards a family centred system that matches families' needs and aspirations with the most effective response.
- 14 When children or families are in crisis, it is also vital that for the responses to be timely, high quality and achieving the best outcomes for the child or young person, their family and the wider community. The public health approach proposed by the Royal Commission saw early support and prevention sitting side by side with statutory child protection and interacting effectively to create multiple pathways for families.
- 15 The Northern Territory Government is responsible for the statutory child protection and youth justice systems and has committed to and invested in reforms to these systems. However, factors that build on family, community and cultural strength, resilience and purpose are reflected in shared responsibilities across the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments and the community including the Aboriginal Community Controlled and non-government sectors. Missed opportunities and service failures in early intervention and prevention, increases demand for crisis responses.

#### **Objectives, Outcomes and Activities**

- 16 The policies of the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments are set by the elected governments of the day. The policies then determine the desired program outcomes and objectives and level of investment allocated to achieve those outcomes.
- 17 Typically, Northern Territory and Commonwealth agencies then design and commission specific activities to achieve the set outcomes and objectives. Often, this process includes the collection and analysis of available evidence, and consultation with key stakeholders and communities. The Royal Commission, however found many examples where funded activities were developed in relative isolation leading to poorly targeted investments, and in some cases perverse outcomes for children and families.

- 18 A coordinated approach to Northern Territory and Commonwealth investment should help avoid poorly targeted program activities by focussing on the congruent outcomes and objectives of governments, then engaging with experts, local communities, and local stakeholders to design and implement the activities that are appropriately targeted and also meet communities' identified outcomes and objectives. This approach should also shift the focus towards long-term, outcomes focussed investment which drives a social and financial return on investment that extends beyond political cycles.

#### National Partnership Agreement on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment

- 19 The National Partnership Agreement is an example of the existing approach to partnership and coordinated funding between the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments.
- 20 The National Partnership (NP) on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment (NTRAI) represents a long-term investment by the Commonwealth in the Territory to improve Indigenous disadvantage and recognises that the Commonwealth and the Territory have a mutual interest in improving Aboriginal outcomes, specifically with regards to improving schooling for Aboriginal children, making remote Aboriginal communities safer and healthier, improving the durability and amenity of housing in remote communities and increasing access to interpreter services and job opportunities for adults.
- 21 The NTRAI NP includes accountability measures in the form of agreed performance indicators, performance benchmarks and milestones and associated reporting requirements. The renegotiation of the NP and associated Implementation Plans between 2014 and 2015, lead to a shift towards milestones with more of an outcomes focus, differing from the superseded agreement.
- 22 Provided all milestones are met, the Territory will be eligible to receive up to \$1028.79 million under NTRAI between 2015-2016 and 2021-2022. While Territory own-purpose funding also contributes to achieving the intended outcomes of the NP, Commonwealth funding continues to be fundamental to the ongoing collective efforts to address Indigenous disadvantage in the Territory.

#### Improving Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability

- 23 The Northern Territory Government has committed to and is implementing a broad range of reforms designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of funded and operated services while also recognising the need to ensure sustainability in service delivery.
- 24 The sector and funding reforms outlined in the following section outline policies and provide examples of the Northern Territory Government's commitments and actions to improve the coordination and delivery of services, engage with Aboriginal Territorians and cede decision making, and improve accountability.

### Local Decision Making and Community-Led Responses

- 25 Local Decision Making (LDM) is a Northern Territory Government commitment to provide opportunities to transfer government service delivery to Aboriginal Territorians and organisations, based on their community aspirations.
- 26 Northern Territory Government agencies are partnering with Aboriginal communities to assist the transition of government services and programs to community control. The Northern Territory Government recognises that building, supporting and investing in strong Aboriginal governance is necessary to ensure local people drive local solutions, and that Aboriginal organisations are supported in managing local decision making.
- 27 Local Decision Making is a ten year plan that will provide a pathway so that communities can have more control over their own affairs, including service delivery based on a community's aspirations and needs. Government and Aboriginal communities will be able to work together to develop policies and practices for service delivery, such as housing; local government; education, training and jobs; health; children and families; and law and justice.
- 28 The Local Decision Making policy is being implemented through a number of different approaches which includes the development of agreements between Aboriginal organisations, communities and the Northern Territory Government, and also through a new approach to government service design, implementation and operations that emphasises community control. Examples of this approach are included below: the establishment of Child and Family Centres, the Barkly Regional Deal, and the Northern Territory's approach to Aboriginal Kinship Care programs.
- 29 The Northern Territory Government continues to strengthen pathways that enable a collaborative approach to the design and delivery of health services for Aboriginal people in partnership with Aboriginal communities, to ensure access to effective, culturally responsive health services and programs to achieve equitable health outcomes. An example of this commitment in practice includes the recent transition of Ramingining and Gapuwiyak Health Centres; the specialist outreach team and the Stronger Women Workers program managed by Top End Health Service to Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation, which occurred on 1 July 2019.

### Child and Family Centres

- 30 One example of the changed approach is the implementation of the new Child and Family Centres committed to in Safe, Thriving and Connected and Starting Early for a Better Future.
- 31 The Child and Family Centres were a key recommendation of the Royal Commission and aim to improve a range of wellbeing outcomes for children and families experiencing vulnerability by supporting them to access services that will help address their priority needs. This includes addressing any child safety issues within families so as to avoid the need for further involvement with the statutory child protection system.

- 32 To identify the potential model and sites for the new centres, the Northern Territory Government worked with the Children and Families Tripartite Forum, a forum comprising Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community sector representatives, and the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments. The forum developed the summary service model through sector workshops and then considered regional and local indicators of vulnerability to advise on the locations for the new centres. The forum recommended 27 towns and communities as priority locations for the centres and from the 27 locations recommended by the forum, the Northern Territory Government selected 17 sites including the locations with existing centres.
- 33 The service model co-designed with the Tripartite Forum is consistent with the Royal Commission's vision and identified that the centres will be controlled by local communities and include local governance structures supported by the Local Decision Making. Where possible, the new centres will be operated by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. The local design and control of the Child and Family Centres will depend on what local communities want and decide.
- 34 To establish the new centres, the Northern Territory Government is working in partnership with communities and community led organisations to design the new services. This approach includes engaging first with Aboriginal Controlled organisations and leaders and identifying how a local centre should operate, and working with them to identify local governance structures to support the centres.
- 35 In Katherine, Tennant Creek and the Northern Suburbs, local Aboriginal organisations and leaders have supported the establishment of Leadership Advisory Boards comprised of board representatives from local Aboriginal organisations. These Leadership Advisory Boards provide advice to the Northern Territory Government on the activities of the centre and on the approach to engage a suitable provider. Dependent on the advice of the board the Northern Territory Government then takes one of three approaches:
- If the local board unanimously recommends an Aboriginal organisation to operate the local centre, the Northern Territory Government undertakes due diligence to confirm the organisation's capacity and capability, then works with them in partnership to establish the service;
  - If the local board identifies multiple Aboriginal organisations as suitable, the Northern Territory Government proceeds with a select competitive grant where organisations are assessed based on the criteria set by the board by a panel that includes non-competing local Aboriginal organisations;
  - If the local board does not identify any suitable Aboriginal organisations, the Northern Territory proceeds with an open competitive grant where organisations are assessed based on the criteria set by the board by a panel that includes non-competing local Aboriginal organisations.

- 36 In Katherine, the local board unanimously recommended an Aboriginal organisation and the Northern Territory Government is now working with them to establish the centre. In Tennant Creek and the Northern Suburbs the process is continuing.
- 37 The implementation of the centres provides an opportunity to improve local coordination and control of Northern Territory and Commonwealth funded and provided services. The associated Leadership Boards may provide a ready mechanism to lead local discussions on the effective and efficient allocation of Northern Territory and Commonwealth funding.

#### Barkly Regional Deal

- 38 The Barkly Regional Deal is the first regional deal in Australia—a ten year \$78.4 million commitment between the Australian Government, the Northern Territory Government and Barkly Regional Council. The Deal aims to improve the productivity and liveability of the Barkly region by stimulating economic growth, improving social outcomes and supporting local Aboriginal leadership. The Deal recognises the future vision of the Barkly community to build a stronger, prosperous and inclusive region for current and future generations.
- 39 The implementation of the Barkly Regional Deal is led by the Barkly Governance Table which will also advance other economic and social development priorities in the region over the next ten years. Membership of the Governance Table includes the three levels of government, as well as Aboriginal leaders, local business leaders, non-government organisations, young people and other community stakeholders.
- 40 The Barkly community has been integral to the development of programs and activities under the Regional Deal. The priorities and actions in the Deal were developed through a Local Decision Making approach. These include addressing overcrowding and other housing issues, better outcomes for the region's youth, boosting key industries such as tourism and agribusiness, tackling alcohol-related crime and improving school attendance rates.
- 41 The Barkly Deal could provide a template for progressing place-based and regional joint funding approaches, with shared governance, accountability and evaluation frameworks.

#### Aboriginal Carers Growing Up Aboriginal Children

- 42 The Aboriginal Carers Growing Up Aboriginal Children program is included as an example of the Northern Territory Government working in partnership to improve program outcomes. In this case, the partnership is directly with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

- 43 In September 2018, Territory Families launched the Aboriginal Carers Growing Up Aboriginal Carers Strategy. The strategy was designed with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and included a place-based approach to engaging Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to find and support Aboriginal carers for Aboriginal children in Out-of-Home Care. The strategy included a relatively modest allocation of \$500 000 in 2018-19 to pilot the new approach across Darwin and Alice Springs.
- 44 In the first round of grants in late 2018, three Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations received pilot funding to find and support Aboriginal carers and develop a model to support delivery of Aboriginal carer support services across the Northern Territory.
- 45 Early outcomes in the program are promising: In 2018-19 the number of registered kinship carers has increased at the highest rate ever recorded (18 per cent). Forty-six additional Aboriginal children are now placed with kinship carers as a result of the partnerships with Aboriginal organisations through the program.
- 46 The second round of grants under the program will be released in the first half of 2019-2020 which expands the total allocation to the program to \$800 000 per annum.

#### Northern Territory Aboriginal Justice Agreement

- 47 In partnership with Aboriginal Territorians, the Northern Territory Government is developing the Northern Territory Aboriginal Justice Agreement (NTAJA). The NTAJA outlines how the Northern Territory Government and Aboriginal Territorians will work together to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal people.
- 48 In 2017 and 2018, the Aboriginal Justice Unit (AJU) from the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice visited 80 communities and Aboriginal organisations, and conducted 120 consultations to seek views on how justice issues facing Aboriginal people should be addressed. Consultations attempted to operate within a culturally-safe and appropriate framework. Wherever possible, Elders, leaders, interpreters, and cultural brokers were engaged by the AJU to facilitate the meetings. Consultations focused on listening and hearing the voices of Aboriginal Territorians.
- 49 The consultation findings, together with data and research, have informed the development of a draft Agreement which is expected to be released for further consultation shortly. The NTAJA recognises that improving justice outcomes requires shared commitment and whole-of-government approaches to address the underlying factors bringing Aboriginal people into contact with the criminal justice system and contributing to their continued overrepresentation in prisons and detention centres.
- 50 The aims of the NTAJA are to:
- reduce reoffending and imprisonment rates of Aboriginal Territorians;
  - engage and support Aboriginal leadership; and
  - improve justice responses and services to Aboriginal Territorians.



- 51 The NTAJA sets out proposed strategies, actions, responsibilities and outcomes under each of the aims, including strategies directed to governance, monitoring and evaluation of the NTAJA.
- 52 Some of the consultation findings relevant to the Productivity Commission's study include:
- many programs do not come to fruition, or are funded for short periods, and although reasons are given the community is left without the services it needs;
  - perception that programs and services are constantly changing, due to discontinuation or changes in funding and other matters; and
  - some services delivered in remote communities did not have sufficient resources or skilled staff willing or capable to deliver the programs.
- 53 The NTAJA is expected to be finalised in late 2019, following a further period of targeted consultations. The NTAJA will reflect the shared commitment of Aboriginal Territorians and the Northern Territory Government to deliver agreed actions to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal people.

#### **Social Outcomes Framework and the 10-Year Generational Plan**

- 54 The Northern Territory Government, working with the non-government sector, is developing a Social Outcomes Framework to articulate how the Northern Territory Government and its partners will measure whether social and human services and programs are making a lasting and positive difference in all Territorians' lives. The Framework will identify agreed priority outcomes for government and the community as well as the high level indicators that will show what needs to be measured in order to progress toward the outcome.
- 55 The Framework is anticipated to be the overarching framework under which all new agency and reform specific outcomes frameworks are developed, ensuring they contribute to the overarching whole-of-government outcomes and indicators.
- 56 The approach will take two years, which will allow time for meaningful engagement, which is critical to ensure trust and a shared commitment is built between the Northern Territory Government and stakeholders. Outcomes will need to be defined, tested and agreed on by government and the community.
- 57 The Social Outcomes Framework will inform the development of the ten year Generational Strategy that was recommended by the Royal Commission. The development of the Strategy was supported in principle by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Government and will be developed through the Children and Families Tripartite Forum.

### Community Sector Engagement and Co-design

- 58 To support community sector engagement and the co-design of programs and services, the Northern Territory Government has worked with the Commonwealth and community sector to establish the Children and Families Tripartite Forum.
- 59 The Forum complements other fora and committees including the Northern Territory Government/Non-Government Organisation (NGO) partnership group (NNPG) which provides a coordinated executive level leadership across government and the NGO sector to facilitate and proactively manage the relationship between the Northern Territory Government and the NGO Sector, and the Northern Territory Aboriginal Health Forum which comprises senior representatives from the Australian Government Department of Health, the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory Department of Health and provides advice and direction on Aboriginal health issues in the Northern Territory.

### Children and Families Tripartite Forum

- 60 The Children and Families Tripartite Forum membership includes the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments and the community sector represented by Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT), the Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS); and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA).
- 61 The role of the Tripartite Forum is to provide advice to the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments to guide and support the implementation of the agreed reform agenda arising from the Royal Commission report including:
- enable and facilitate cross-government, inter-agency and inter-sectoral cooperation, coordination and collaboration in delivering the reform agenda and services for children and young people experiencing vulnerability including those in the youth justice and child protection systems;
  - work collaboratively with other relevant bodies as appropriate in light of the broad-based influence of social determinants on the life course of individuals including their potential interaction with child protection or youth justice services;
  - provide strategic oversight and monitor the development and implementation of the ten year Generational Strategy and key reforms for children and families in the Northern Territory; and
  - provide strategic advice and facilitate integrated efforts in relation to community engagement and supporting Local Decision Making to help ensure that local engagement is coordinated, purposeful and shaped as far as possible by the interests and preferences of local communities;
- 62 The Forum was established in July 2018 and has met six times in 2018 and 2019.

### Coordinated Funding Framework

- 63 A key activity for the Children and Families Tripartite Forum is to provide advice to the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Government on the development of the Coordinated Funding Framework recommended by the Royal Commission and supported in principle by the two governments.
- 64 The need to develop the Framework recognises that funding to support children and families in the Northern Territory has not previously been used as efficiently or effectively as it could be, and there is scope to increase and improve the impact from existing resource investment through improved coordination of planning and decision-making.
- 65 The Children and Families Tripartite Forum is currently developing a concept paper for the Framework that will outline the scope and approach to supporting the development of a more integrated service system and drive a greater return on investment. The advice of the Tripartite Forum will be considered alongside the outcomes of the Productivity Commission study.
- 66 The Northern Territory Government fully supports the development of the Coordinated Funding Framework.

### Research and Evaluation

- 67 Safe, Thriving and Connected and Starting Early for a Better Future both emphasise the need for improved evidence-based approaches to program design and evaluation and include commitments to commission further research relating to child vulnerability in the Northern Territory and embed evaluation in program delivery.
- 68 In 2018-19, through the reform program the Northern Territory commissioned two key projects:
- Australian Institute of Family Studies will conduct a historical review of the original intentions of the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments and the operation of the six existing Child and Family Centres, and will explore the current operation of those six Centres and the establishment of new Child and Family Centres; and
  - Menzies School of Health Research: As recommended by the Royal Commission, into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory Menzies will examine the number and characteristics of children who have been the subject of a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect or have recorded involvement with the youth justice system and examine the prevalence of trauma-related mental health issues in these groups of children and factors that are predictive of criminal behaviour.

- 69 These projects build on the existing research investment of the Northern Territory Government, which includes the Child and Youth Development Research Partnership with the Menzies School of Health Research, partnerships with Charles Darwin University and the University of Melbourne on school attendance and the impact of early childhood programs and health research partnerships with the Menzies School of Health Research, Flinders University, the University of New South Wales, and Centre for Research Excellence Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition.
- 70 The need for a whole of government approach to program evaluation was a key recommendation in the Northern Territory Fiscal Strategy Panel's final report: A Plan for Budget Repair.
- 71 This will include the establishment of a Program Evaluation Unit that will support regular assessment of agency activities to determine their effectiveness and efficiency. The whole of government approach will encourage a consistent standard of evaluation across agencies. Developing and implementing a program evaluation framework will embed a culture of evidence-based policy across the Territory Government. The framework will be designed to ascertain whether:
- a program is achieving the desired outcomes;
  - the outcomes remain aligned with government priorities;
  - the resources allocated to the program are being used effectively and efficiently; and
  - changes to program design or resource allocation could improve the outcomes.

#### **Story of our Children**

- 72 The Northern Territory Government in partnership with Menzies School of Health Research is progressing the development and writing of the Story of Our Children report. The Story will include baseline data on the status against key indicators of child wellbeing. It will lay the foundation for future planning and action to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The Story of Our Children will be a publicly available document for the whole community –government, non-government, communities and families.
- 73 The development of the report is overseen by an independent editorial board comprised of academic experts and community leaders. The report will be delivered in late 2019.

#### **Community Sector Partnership Reform**

- 74 The Northern Territory Government has commenced a body of work regarding Northern Territory Government- Non-Government Organisation (NGO) system reform, particularly concentrating on enhancing the working relationship between Government agencies and the NGO sector. A number of these projects aim to improve the allocation of funding and the actual funding process.

### Supporting Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Enterprises

- 75 The Remote Aboriginal Governance and Capacity Building Grant Program was funded in response to the Royal Commission and is available to support remote communities across the Northern Territory to strengthen their capacity and capabilities to actively enhance their governance, leadership and operational processes and structures to meet their community aspirations.
- 76 Funding under the program is available for projects that will benefit Aboriginal people by:
- improving governance;
  - building capacity - leadership, skills and expertise;
  - improving operational management skills and expertise;
  - contributing to community capacity building; and
  - increasing community input into service delivery.
- 77 Additionally, the Northern Territory Department of Trade, Business and Innovation provides support to Aboriginal businesses through the Aboriginal Business Development Program. The program provides small grants to assist Aboriginal enterprises to start or develop.

### Introduction of five-year funding terms

- 78 Service agreements where funding is provided to the same organisation for the same service on a recurrent basis are now mandated to be for a five-year funding term (unless there are extenuating circumstances). All new agreements are for five years, others will transition to a five-year term when their current agreement expires.
- 79 The benefits from longer terms of funding include stability of service provision which should lead to better outcomes for clients in the long-term. The service provider has greater funding certainty and can engage in longer-term planning and investment leading to staff retention, development of expertise and quality and better value for the Territory. There will also be a reduction in the administrative burden for both the Northern Territory Government and the service provider.

### Whole-of-Government Grant Policy and Guidelines

- 80 The Grant Policy sets the context for grant funding by the Northern Territory Government. The Policy also includes overarching Principles for Grant Funding, such as encouraging partnerships, collaboration and sustainable outcomes.
- 81 The Grant Funding Rules and Guidelines for Service Provision aims to improve engagement with service providers and encourages long term capacity building. The Policy intent is that the funding approach does not create unintended barriers for particular organisations such as small organisations with limited resources or Aboriginal organisations based in remote locations. The monitoring and reporting requirements on service providers have also been minimised and should be tailored to the level and source of risk, minimising the administrative burden on the service providers.

Standard Funding Agreements

- 82 The Standard Agreement was completed in early 2019 and delivers consistent core terms and conditions, which will ensure Government policy is applied consistently and fairly.
- 83 The Standard Agreement provides benefits to NGOs that have multiple funding agreements with different Northern Territory Government agencies. It also provides for improved clarity of terms and conditions compared to existing agreements. A number of the terms and conditions have also been updated to improve conditions for NGOs, including offering a level of funding certainty.

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<sup>i</sup> Northern Territory of Australia (2018), "Safe, Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families"

<sup>ii</sup> White, M & Gooda, M (2017) "Report of the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory", Chapter 39: Changing the Approach to Child Protection