
Productivity Commission Study into the Expenditure of Children in the NT

Brief Comments

2 July 2019

- 001 A six-year-old boy got raped by a twelve-year-old boy. Obviously both boys need help, but the victim was forgotten about within a few weeks. The offender got more attention but even that seems to have diminished. Kids with hidden special needs that can be dismissed as “naughty” or “energetic” behaviours are largely forgotten about in remote communities. FASD is under-diagnosed yet contributes immensely to crime, dangerous behaviours, suicide and imprisonment - not to mention difficulties in learning. Territory Families has no way to support this given their staff and budget shortfalls. In the past I've been disappointed by attitudes from Territory Families workers who didn't know their own mandatory reporting requirements and protocols and were dismissive and disrespectful of frontline workers, even asking us to do potentially dangerous things like interrogating the very adults we were reporting. However, the culture and professionalism of Territory Families is improving and we are cooperating well together. I feel very sorry for Territory Families staff - their hands are often tied, they have to deal with more cases than is humanly possible, and they (like us) are affected by trauma. If I had a magic wand I would put a couple of Social Workers, including housing and four-wheel-drive vehicles for positive activities - and drop-in centres, into every small community, and I'd increase this in the bigger communities. I'd also invest heavily in Outstations because people are happier and seem to make better choices on their own country in smaller family groups.

Government Sector
