

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**DALE WAKEFIELD  
MINISTER FOR TERRITORY FAMILIES**

Dale Wakefield  
Minister for Territory Families

**NT Government takes action on Children Commissioner's report**

26 October 2016

Territory Families Minister Dale Wakefield today tabled an investigation report by the Northern Territory's Office of the Children's Commissioner on incidents at the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre and Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre.

The incidents contained within the report occurred up to September 2015.

The report is titled *"Own-Initiative Investigation into Services provided by the Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services to Don Dale Youth Detention Centre and Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre"*.

The investigation identified systemic and departmental failings in dealing with young persons who had threatened or inflicted self-harm and were placed in an isolated 'at-risk' cell. The investigation found that the approach to incidents where young persons were placed 'at-risk' was reactive, confronting and at times frantic.

The report contains 21 recommendations, of which 19 required action.

Eight of these have been completed.

*[See attachment documenting actions taken and underway]*

The Minister agrees with the Commissioner's recommendations.

These actions include prohibiting the use of restraint chairs on youth detainees, which the Minister acted on yesterday by introducing the *Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2016* to ban the use of restraint chairs on youths.

The report references three videos of security camera footage of incidents that formed part of the investigation. On advice from the Solicitor-General for the Northern Territory, that footage has not been tabled with the report.

The Children's Commissioner agrees the videos should not be tabled.

"A clear implementation planning process for each of the recommendations is currently underway. We're going to be thorough in how we approach the Commissioner's recommendations that

includes exploring best-practice, leading research and contemporary solutions from Australia and around the world,” Minister Wakefield said.

“We will work diligently with all stakeholders to ensure our youth justice system in the Northern Territory becomes a leading example of evidence-based best practice.”

“We will treat young people in the youth justice system humanely. We will never give up on our kids and their prospects for rehabilitation,” the Minister said.

NT Children’s Commissioner Colleen Gwynne said: “We hope to work collaboratively with the Government and relevant agencies to ensure that young people in detention are treated in a therapeutic and rehabilitative way.”

“We hope that those young people most at risk in our detention centres are provided with all the necessary services and support to safeguard their emotional and physical wellbeing,” the Children’s Commissioner said.

- Minister Wakefield and the Children’s Commissioner will be available for interview on the front steps of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly at 12.30pm today.

- The Children Commissioner’s report is available at [www.childrenscommissioner.nt.gov.au](http://www.childrenscommissioner.nt.gov.au)

### **MEDIA CONTACT**

Rajiv Maharaj, Media Advisor to Minister Wakefield

Mobile: 0436 410 276

[Actions taken on OCC report](#)