ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT WELCOME, BUT STILL WAITING FOR JUSTICE TARGETS

Federal Labor welcomes the Interim Report of the Royal commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

Commissioners Margaret White and Mick Gooda have done an outstanding job under difficult circumstances to shine a light on the issues we saw in the Four Corners report on the Don Dale Correction centre.

They have talked with, and listened to, people detained or working in the detention system of the Northern Territory. The stories are heartbreaking, frightening and eye-opening.

They point to their strong initial perception that the system for youth justice and child protection is failing. This is a national problem.

Far too many children and young people go into the system having already faced serious adversities. They are coming out more damaged, with lifelong harm. This has a cruel impact on their families and their communities.

There is no justice in a system that damages the young people in its care.

Labor calls on the Turnbull Government to immediately confirm that they will show national leadership and commit to nationally agreed justice targets on incarceration and family violence.
The Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion needs to show leadership, and step away from his statement in the Senate this week that justice targets are only the state and territories’ responsibility.

It is now beyond argument. The Royal Commission interim report, the Productivity Commission report, and the work of Change the Record Coalition, all point to the need for national leadership and commitment.

The right of children and young people to receive justice and fair treatment is a national responsibility.

Minister Scullion and the Turnbull Government need to act and the Labor Opposition stands ready to work with them on this critical task.

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