Interim Report Backs Territory Government Action

31 March 2017

Chief Minister Michael Gunner welcomes the release of the Royal Commission’s interim report which highlights work already happening to address the cycle of crime through the Territory Labor Government’s youth justice system overhaul.

Mr Gunner said the Interim Report did not put forward recommendations or findings, but identified themes directly relating to work already underway.

“My Government took immediate action upon coming to Government to overhaul the broken youth justice system and implement our child protection agenda,” Mr Gunner said.

“Our $18.2 million reform – the most comprehensive in our history - directly aligns with many of the challenges the Royal Commission has identified in its interim report.

“I have discussed the Report with the Prime Minister, and reiterated with him the challenges and issues identified in the interim report require an aligned effort between the Commonwealth and the NT Government.”

Changes already implemented by the Territory Labor Government include:

- Passing legislation to ban spit hoods and restraint chairs;
- Funding 52 new youth diversion workers;
- Providing $6 million to NGO’s to run diversion programs and boot camps;
- Recruitment and training 25 new Youth Justice Officers in Darwin and Alice Springs.

“This is not a short term fix. We are rebuilding trust in Government by making a long term commitment that goes beyond election cycles, focussing on breaking the cycle of crime through early intervention and tough but fair rehabilitation and diversion programs,” Mr Gunner said.

Mr Gunner said the root cause of many of the challenges highlighted in the Royal Commission’s Interim Report was disadvantage.

He said the NT Government is addressing the cycle of disadvantage through its record $1.1 billion investment to build and improve remote houses right across the Territory.

“Along with reforms to youth justice and our early childhood reforms, this Government has begun building more remote houses because we know a good home leads to a good education, good health and good community outcomes,” Mr Gunner said.

“We are also tackling the causes of crime and social dysfunction through a plan to combat alcohol abuse – bringing back the BDR – and investing in appropriate rehabilitation strategies.”

Mr Gunner said he looked forward to receiving the final report in August.

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