INQUIRY INTO THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Northern Territory Chief Minister and Minister for Children and Families have commissioned a Board of Inquiry to conduct a broad ranging public inquiry under the Inquiries Act into the Northern Territory’s child protection system.

The purpose of the inquiry is to review the child protection system and to make recommendations to strengthen and improve the system to enable it to meet the needs of the Northern Territory’s children.

Specifically, the inquiry is to report and make recommendations on:

- the functioning of the current child protection system including the roles and responsibilities of Northern Territory Families and Children and other service providers involved in child protection;
- specific approaches to address the needs of Territory children in the child protection system, including the delivery of child protection services in regional and remote areas as part of the development of A Working Future;
- support systems and operational procedures for all workers engaged in child protection, in particular staff retention and training;
- quality, sustainability and strategic directions of out of home care programs including support systems for foster parents, carers and families;
- the interaction between government departments and agencies involved in child protection, care and safety and non-Government organisations and other groups involved in the protection, care and safety of children.

The inquiry will consider and where appropriate incorporate:

- findings and recommendations arising from recent coronials and other recent investigations, reviews and inquiries into the functioning of the child protection system; and
- child protection issues and developments at the local, national and international level and its implications for the Northern Territory.
The inquiry is encouraged to draw on the advice and expertise of existing NT Government advisory councils, as well as other subject matter experts within the broader community.

The inquiry’s consultation processes should be conducted publicly, unless people or organisations contributing to the inquiry request that their contribution remain confidential.

**TIMEFRAME**

The Board of Inquiry must provide their report to the Chief Minister by 25 April 2010.

The report of the Board of Inquiry must be tabled in the Legislative Assembly within 3 sitting days following receipt of the report by the Chief Minister.