February 8, 2011
Child Protection Reform Committee Meets In Darwin

The Child Protection External Monitoring and Reporting Committee, responsible for monitoring the progress of reforms to the child protection system in the Northern Territory, is meeting today in Darwin for the first time.

The Committee, comprised of child protection experts from around Australia and overseen by Chairman, Dr Graham Vimpani AM, was appointed by the Minister for Child Protection, Kon Vatskalis, and will meet on a quarterly basis.

Mr Vatskalis welcomed members to the meeting this morning over breakfast.

“The NT Government committed an additional $130 million over five years into the child protection system following the calling of the most comprehensive Inquiry ever seen in the Territory,” Mr Vatskalis said,’ he said.

“The External Monitoring and Reporting Committee is a vital component of child protection reform – sitting externally to Government, it will monitor the progress of the reforms and report directly back to me.

“The Committee members have been selected for their knowledge of the Northern Territory and their expertise in child protection. The primary focus for the meeting will be to familiarise the Committee with the child protection reform agenda in the Northern Territory, which is being lead by the Department of Children and Families,” Mr Vatskalis said.

The External Reporting and Monitoring Committee Chairman is Dr Graham Vimpani AM, from John Hunter Children’s Hospital in Newcastle. Members of the Committee are:

- Mr Charlie King – Darwin sports commentator and community activist
- Dr Sven Silburn – Menzies School of Health Research
- Mr Terry Murphy – Director General, Department of Child Protection, Western Australia
- Ms Donna Ah Chee – Central Australia Aboriginal Congress
- Mr Frank Hytten – Executive Officer, SNAICC (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care)
- Ms Teresa Neihus – President, Foster Care NT
- Ms Jacqui Reed – CEO, Create Foundation

The Committee was established in response to Growing them strong, together, which was released on 18 October 2010. The Northern Territory Government committed to implementing the recommendations from the report, and implementation of the 34 urgent recommendations has commenced.

The External Monitoring and Reporting Committee will next convene at the end May 2011.

Media contact: Maria Billias 0401 119 746