

NTCOSS SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS Child Protection Reform APRIL 2011

ISSUES	STRATEGIES
Sector Engagement	
Sector feels that reform process has not been communicated by the Department.	Department to develop website to disseminate information
Feelings of distrust because of the power differential between the department and the NGO sector	Build respectful and transparent relationships with the sector Initiate cultural change within the department
There is little joint case management between DCF & NGOs	Develop protocols and interagency meetings which encourage joint case management Work with the NGO sector
DCF staff often appear overwhelmed and therefore at times might make inappropriate decisions	Recruit more DCF staff, monitor case loads, provide PD and supervision
Information Sharing	
Staff at times make decisions without consulting and informing the relevant NGO	Develop protocols which ensure the engagement of the sector in case planning & case review Develop common assessment tool
Current legislation and confidentiality clauses do not encourage information sharing	Review legislation on info sharing and develop protocols
Community or extended family is not consulted on cases	Include extended family, community in case planning, family conferencing
Community Education	
There is a lack of awareness about child- well being issues within the community. Community members have expressed the need for more community education	Provide face- to- face group education on child development, parenting, mandatory reporting and sexual abuse Engage remote radio in community education campaign Run ads on TV. Ads which show Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people have been given the best feedback because problems are seen not to be race
1	Summary of Consultations Child Protection Reform March 2011 specific.

Infrastructure	
While SIHIP has provided some new houses, the rate of construction is not matching the population growth in growth towns, other remote communities and regional centres. The lack of houses in remote areas is an ongoing issue	Construction of more houses in growth towns and remote communities. Engage private developers to build houses in regional towns.
Overcrowding in houses continues to put children at risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and adds to family violence	
Lack of accommodation for workers in remote areas results in positions not being filled.	Construction of more houses is needed. There are some vacant houses leased by government in some of the regional towns which could be used by NGO workers
There is a lack of facilities for service provision in remote communities	Building of new facilities Departments to share facilities with NGOs Share vehicles and other resources in remote towns
Service Delivery	
Early Childhood	
There is a lack of childcare facilities in remote and regional town centres	Increase childcare facilities in remote and regional centres
There is a lack of parenting skills	Increase options for playgroups, & education on culturally relevant parenting and early childhood development
Youth	
There is a lack of child & youth mental health services	Establish child & youth mental health services
Men	
Men are disengaged as fathers and community leaders	Run more men specific programs Include men into FAFT program Include men in program planning
Women's crisis shelter does not take boys over 12 years of age. This creates family and sibling separation if a woman has to move to the shelter. If she does not want to or cannot find a safe place for her son she cannot access this service.	Establish separate women's refuge where teenage boys are welcome.

Out of Home Care	
Children are not safe in their homes	Provide children's safe houses in communities which are professionally staffed
Grandparents provide care without Centrelink benefits	Kinship care needs to be formalised and grandparents supported adequately
Lack of foster carers NT wide but in particular in Katherine	Recruit more foster carers and provide quality support to them
Foster carers are often overwhelmed by the needs of children	Provide quality training and support
Children are placed in non- appropriate care	Follow Aboriginal Placement Principles and apply the same principles for other minority groups
Legal Issues	
Independent legal representation for children Currently the court decides if a separate rep for the child is needed, and the court is guided by the Department's recommendation. If the court determines that a separate rep is needed the department is appointing and paying the rep which is really a conflict of interest.	Change legislation so that Legal Aid can allocate a separate re. Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantees independent representation • More cost effective than appointing private lawyers
Funding Agreements	
Current competitive tendering arrangements do not foster a collaborative approach between NGOs.	Review tendering processes
Short funding cycles do not allow for longterm planning and developing trust with the community	Funding cycles should be over 5 years with a midpoint evaluation.
Difference in funding agreements between fed & Territory complicates design of programs and reporting	Funding agreements need to be standardised between feds and Territory, and have the same format so reporting is more streamlined. Deliverables should be similar across the sector, after taking local conditions into account.
Funding often only allows for part of the work needed	Programs need to be funded adequately to allow for wholistic service provision
Funding only parts of services needed precludes a wholistic approach to service provision	Funding agreements need to be comprehensive and structured to allow for wholistic approach.
Current funding levels do not allow for collaboration and coordination.	Funding needs to reflect the time and effort for interagency collaboration and coordination, perhaps as a percentage of overall funding.

Workforce Development	
Difficulty to recruit and retain qualified staff in particular in remote areas	Resolve pay equity gap between Gov & NGO staff
Lack of skills and expertise within the workforce	Provide sufficient PD. Explore option of having joint PD between DCF & NGO staff Continue with current PD calendar
Feelings of isolation and lack of support for staff	Ensure interagency meetings and processes are in place
Staff feel overwhelmed by complexity of cases, and burn out	Ensure clinical supervision is in place Explore option of having shared supervisors between NGOs who travel in remote.
Local Aboriginal staff have little professional expertise.	Provide PD and mentoring to build local capacity
Recruitment of interstate or international staff with little local knowledge and understanding	Provide adequate cross-cultural training and local induction
Quality Services and Community Ownership	
Currently there is little local involvement in service planning and service provision.	Strengthen role and growth of Aboriginal organisations. Services need to be locally driven, there needs to be 2 way learning and real partnerships. New funding should go to local organisations. If bigger NGOs are to be involved they have to build capacity within the local organisations and also work with each other, Identify areas of expertise, develop a plan of operation together and receive joint funding. They can provide services in their area of expertise and local people can deliver other aspects of the program. They should grow Aboriginal organisations and professionalise them. Establish Aboriginal Peak body
Collaboration	
Government departments function in silos	Strengthen interdepartmental approach
Different understanding of integrated service delivery between feds and NT gov . Currently there is a real risk of the feds doing 'integrated service delivery' their way , NTG doing it their way and NGOs doing their way.	Develop integrated systems of service delivery which includes all players.

