

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

An alliance of the CLC, NLC, CAALAS, NAAJA and AMSANT

MEDIA RELEASE

Let the Royal Commission do its work

6 February 2017

Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT) is concerned that attacks on the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory are undermining public confidence in the Commission's work.

APO NT spokeswoman Priscilla Collins has dismissed a call by the Independent Member for Blain, Mr Terry Mills, to scrap the Commission, and says negative commentary during the weekend by the Northern Territory News is unwarranted and needlessly destructive.

"APO NT understands the community's frustrations with wayward youth in the Territory but tough on crime policies are not working", Ms Collins said.

"Diverting young people away from the justice system makes financial sense and it also helps prevent reoffending. We need to do what we can to keep young people out of detention. Rehabilitation of young people makes communities safer than locking them up; intensive supervision works and is cheaper than detention. Young people in the criminal justice system are more likely to offend as adults.

"Aboriginal people have invested a lot of trust in this Royal Commission. APO NT has confidence that it will identify where systems have failed and make recommendations on how to improve laws, policies and practices in the Northern Territory to provide a safer future for our children.

"Calls for the Royal Commission to be abandoned in favour of 'quick fix' solutions are just a shallow catchcry.

"We utterly reject the notion that the Commission has been a 'disaster' or 'an outrageous waste of money', as the NT News commented this weekend. It still has a lot of important work ahead, and Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory want that to continue."

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