



## Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory

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### MEDIA RELEASE

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017

### **Forward schedule for NT Royal Commission**

The Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory has today released its work schedule until March 31 when it will deliver an Interim Report.

The Royal Commission will hold further public hearings in March focused on issues relating to youth detention.

These hearings are expected to run for three weeks and will commence in Alice Springs on the 13<sup>th</sup> March. They will continue in Darwin from 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Meetings will be held in February to hear directly from current and former staff of youth detention facilities in both Darwin and Alice Springs. A roundtable on comparative and alternative approaches to youth detention will be also held.

As part of its investigation, the Commission is examining child protection and detention systems in other Australian and international jurisdictions.

In the past two weeks Commissioners Gooda and White AO have met with researchers, judges, magistrates and service providers in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia.

Next week, the Commissioners will visit New Zealand to see first-hand their alternative approach to youth protection and detention. New Zealand faces many similar challenges to the Northern Territory in dealing with youth issues in protection and detention.

New Zealand's alternative model is based on restorative justice principles and focuses on community based alternative action outside of the formal criminal justice system. There is an emphasis on diversion, with youth offenders required to face up to and be accountable for their actions. The Commissioners will visit a number of sites in Auckland and Wellington and speak to young people, staff and judicial representatives.

Official Secretary, Kirsty Windeyer said it was important for the Commission to canvass views from those directly involved in child protection and detention systems both in the Northern Territory and more broadly.

Ms Windeyer said that the Commission was seeking input from communities, social and medical workers, school teachers, police, legal practitioners and detention and protection staff as part of its inquiry.

“In order for the Commission to achieve positive outcomes we need input from all of these people. It is hearing from the people most affected – both from the young people and those working with them - that will help us determine the best recommendations to put forward to Government.”



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The Commission's community engagement team is continuing to speak to communities about the various ways they can provide information.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March the Royal Commission will deliver an Interim Report to both the Federal and Northern Territory Government that will provide a summary of the Commission's work to date.

The Royal Commission will hold further hearings before it completes its work and delivers a final report on 1st August 2017.

Date	Royal Commission schedule
<b>24 – 31 January 2017</b>	Commissioners met with representatives with expertise in youth justice and child protection issues in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia.
<b>7 – 10 February 2017</b>	Commissioners travel to New Zealand to investigate alternative approaches to youth justice and detention. A representative from the Northern Territory Government will attend relevant meetings and site visits.
<b>22 February</b>	Meeting with current and former youth detention facility staff to be held in Darwin
<b>23 February</b>	Meeting with current and former youth detention facility staff to be held in Alice Springs
<b>13 March</b>	Public hearings focusing on issues surrounding youth detention commence in Alice Springs (Alice Springs Convention Centre)
<b>20 March</b>	Public hearings focusing on issues surrounding youth detention commence in Darwin (Darwin Supreme Court)
<b>31 March</b>	Royal Commission delivers its Interim Report
<b>Ongoing</b>	Royal Commission's community engagement team meet with communities across the Northern Territory.

The March detention system hearings will explore issues regarding:

- treatment and control of children held in detention centres
- the adequacy of the facilities
- care, including health and education
- administration and governance of the detention centres
- staffing and training of the detention centres
- oversight, monitoring and complaints mechanisms



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During these hearings the Royal Commission expects to hear from:

- Former Youth Justice Officers
- Children/young adults who have been in detention facilities in the Northern Territory
- Superintendents/managers of the detention centres along with those responsible for oversight of the detention centres
- Professionals providing services to those in detention such as case workers and lawyers

The Commission would like to hear from anyone with an interest in the issues of detention and protection in the Northern Territory. This includes past and present children held in detention and their families, detention centre workers, police, teachers, principals and care and protection workers.

The Commission can be contacted by:

- Phone: 1800 604 604 between 9.00am – 5.30pm (AEDT and ACST)
- Email: [ChildDetentionNT@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:ChildDetentionNT@royalcommission.gov.au)
- Writing: PO Box 4215, Kingston ACT 2604