

# Community Services Update

June 2008

## Factsheet

### Community Service Reforms and New initiatives

In July 2007, the NT Government announced an 'Independent Audit of Clients at Risk' to cover high risk clients within the Community Services portfolio. This followed the deaths of two people for whom the Department had some level of statutory responsibility. In December 2007 the Minister for Family and Community Services committed DHCS to implementing all 30 recommendations arising from the Audit to improve complex client management and reduce gaps in service, including establishment of a new quality and performance unit within the Community Services division.

A number of other initiatives being delivered concurrently are also providing improvements and additional resources and services to support families and clients, and extra capacity to increase staff resources across child protection and family related services.

#### These Initiatives include the:

- Northern Territory Government's 'Closing the Gap of Indigenous Disadvantage' initiative, a response to the *Little Children are Sacred* report by the Anderson-Wild Board of Inquiry into the Sexual Abuse of Indigenous Children;
- Australian Government Intervention program;
- implementation of the new Care and Protection of Children Act 2007;
- NT Public Safety Model; and the
- Youth Justice Strategy.

This report card highlights the implementation of the Audit recommendations and provides an update on implementation of initiatives under the Northern Territory Government Closing the Gap, Australian Government Intervention and new Child Protection legislation initiatives.

## Cross Program Achievements 2007-09

The interim appointment of a Principal Advisor for 6 months to develop functions of managing clients and facilitate cross program coordination as part of the strategy to minimise risk of critical incidents within the Department.

Development of Shared Client Case Management Framework (termed Complex Needs Coordination Strategy in Audit) for DHCS has commenced.

Review the risk status of all cases identified in the High Risk Audit by Principal Advisor.

Agreement reached to share client information across programs within the Department. The implementation details and policies can now be developed.

Approval gained from Commissioner for Public Employment to directly appoint overseas experienced child protection workers. This will enable new and expanded child protection services to progress quicker. ● ●

Agreement reached in principle with the Commissioner for Public Employment to address cross-jurisdictional parity of salaries for child protection workers and to work towards a new career pathway. ● ●

Appointment of the Children's Commissioner ●

### LEGEND

- Closing the Gap/Little Children are Sacred supported initiative
- Australian Government Intervention Program supported initiative
- Care and Protection for Children Act supported initiative
- Disability Services Review supported initiative
- Mental Health and Related Services Act Amendment Bill supported initiative



## Program Specific Achievements

### Family and Children's Services

Child Abuse Task Force Expansion in Darwin –completed for 07/08 with the creation of 9 extra positions.

Child Abuse Task Force Expansion in Alice Springs established with 3 new positions.

Mobile Child Protection Team commencing 28 April with 8 experienced Child Protection workers.

Total staff establishment of 10 FTE.

#### Remote Aboriginal Family and Community workers:

Service model developed and recruitment to positions are currently in process.

2 Coordinators have been recruited.

13 communities will participate in this new program.

#### Sexual Assault Expansion:

Accommodation options have been identified in Casuarina, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Establishment process is in place for 'fit out'.

A permanent Medical Coordinator has been recruited in Darwin.

Work has commenced for a Mobile Outreach service funded by OATSIH to establish the team at the end of this financial year.

#### Out of Home Care System:

Family care manual developed and distributed.

Foster carer training package "Shared Lives, Shared Stories" rolled out as core training for carers.

Finalisation of – A Framework to Create a Sustainable Out of Home Care System in the NT.

Additional funding to Foster Care NT for new office in Alice Springs.

Establishment of new emergency care options in Darwin to reduce reliance on non trained/assessed carers. (to be finalized by June 08)

#### Implementation of FACS Quality Framework:

Two dedicated FACS Quality Officers appointed to implement Quality Framework internally reviewing child protection intakes.

CP investigations and substitute care cases on a monthly basis against core policy standards.

Review of Risk assessment/intake tool commenced.

Process to establish Children and Family Review Team commenced.

Recruitment for 8 Additional Child Protection workers including recruitment efforts from the UK resulting in 25 offers of employment being made under the regional skills migration scheme.

Establish a Therapeutic Services Team:

Service model developed. Recruitment action occurring. It is expected the service will be established by end of 07/08.

Establish a Residential Care Facility - A project officer has been employed since December 2007 to develop options for the establishment of a residential care facility. The project has also been expanded to consider the establishment of 'secure care' as required by the High Risk Audit.

#### Family Violence Community Program - Safe Houses achievements:

- The NT has led the development of the safe house service model, safe house staff training package and progressed worker recruitment, community consultation, and the development of reporting systems.
- Communities will have a safe house constructed when all installation and fit out is completed by September 2008.

## Program Specific Achievements

### Aged and Disability

Individual Needs and Risk Assessment for all high risk clients undertaken.

Development of revised care plans for identified clients and increased case management role for program where identified through risk assessment.

Program wide Risk Assessment Policy Issued.

Program wide Critical Incident Management Policy Issued.

Program wide Records Management Policy Issued.

Program wide Case Allocation Policy developed with intake guidelines implemented.

All Service Agreements with Non Government Organisations (NGOs) issued since 1 October 2007 include need to compile A&DP Critical Incident Reporting Processes and Risk Management Reporting Processes.

New process for reporting critical incidents commenced.

A risk rating and notification protocol with NGO services implemented.

Monitor casework compliance ongoing, with 15 high risk clients care plans currently being reviewed both for the role of the A&DP as case coordinator and the role of NGO as service provider. This review is being undertaken by an external consultant.

Draft of Quality Framework developed for A&D Executive to review including management of NGO Quality Issues. ●

Development of new service model for Santa Teresa to be implemented from 1 July 2008.

Single point of entry into the service system through The Office of Disability 1800 phone number established. ●

Increased capacity within the Home and Community Care sector with growth of \$478 000. ●

Additional \$206 000 to the TIMES Scheme. ●

Additional 8 Transitional Care Beds (4 in Alice Springs and 4 in Darwin). ●

Additional \$25 000 to the TAXI Subsidy Scheme. ●

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## Program Specific Achievements

### Mental Health

Revised and new Approved Procedures and forms near completion. Work has commenced on publications to support the implementation of amendments. A Training schedule and enactment date for the amended Act is being finalised. ●

Risk Assessment Tracking Tool (RATT) review in progress (recommendation was to review RATT to see if it met 'the requirements of clinicians in the different work settings'). This will be completed by the end of June 2008.

Risk policies being reviewed as part of the Departmental Core Baseline Risk Assessment Policy.

Specific training re Health of Nation Outcome Scales (HONOS) & CCIS will take place when Mental Health and Related Services Act (MHARS) Act education sessions commence in August.

Development of an annual risk management plan in accordance with the DHCS Policy document on Risk Management will commence when the Departmental Core Baseline Risk Assessment Policy has been finalised.

RATT form adjustments are dependent on outcome of review.

## Program Specific Achievements

### Alcohol and Other Drugs

Final draft of Risk Management Protocol completed.

Training Provided for outreach workers by Clinical Director.

Outreach Support Workers employed by Aboriginal Medical Services and DHCS.

Clinical Director and Nurse Coordinator appointed. ●

Additional staff to Bushmob (NGO) to support Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act (VSA) initiative for youth. ●

Proposal for Outreach Post Treatment Service expansion in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy developed with Australian Government. Finalising of agreement is imminent. ●

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