



Tangentyere Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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GOVERNMENTS WORK TO CHANGE HISTORY OF CHILD WELFARE

Tangentyere Council applauds the Australian and the Northern Territory Governments for their backing of the Safe Families program.

The program was designed by local indigenous people wanting to take responsibility for what was occurring with their children entering the welfare system.

The Council decided to take on the program when the need for a service for the care of indigenous children aged between 6 and 15 years of age was identified by the Government. Acting Executive Director for Tangentyere Council, Tracey Brand says, "Two years ago, the Tangentyere Executive Governing Council, came together with one voice and said, "these are our children and we should be looking after them."

"The program is built on the strengths within the indigenous community and the expertise that is available to ensure that children are well cared for. While there is neglect and abuse in our communities there is also a strong kinship care system that is supported by many skilled people who are ensuring our children can be cared for properly."

The program provides crisis accommodation for children and works with family and extended family to identify safe and responsible kinship placements. The program works in partnership with the Northern Territory Family and Children's services, however the ultimate aim is to divert children from the welfare system and secure their care within their cultural and family structures.

Ms. Brand says "We have had great success in the past 10 months and we are looking forward to this continuing for the next two and a half years. We want to establish a model that can be looked at by people around the country as a new way to look after our children in need. We hope through this program that we are breaking the cycle of the Stolen Generations"

"Programs like this require great support from Government. We applaud both the Australian and Northern Territory Government for their partnership commitment. This is a landmark shift from the historical approach to welfare services and all partners should be commended."

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