

Department of Health and Human Services

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WITS No.: 99748

Mr Gerry Moore and Ms Natalie Lewis
Family Matters
Suite 8, First Floor
252-260 St Georges Road
NORTH FITZROY VIC 3068

Dear Gerry and Natalie

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 May 2017 regarding an update to inform the 2017 Family Matters Report. The Minister for Human Services has requested I respond on her behalf, and I apologise for the delay in this response.

The Tasmanian Government understands the critical importance of early intervention to diminish the flow of indigenous children into the system, including the benefits of identifying opportunities to reduce over-representation.

In Tasmania, it is difficult to run programs specifically for Indigenous children given the cohort's low numbers, but a focus on Indigenous over-representation continues to underpin our broader initiatives.

The Child Safety Redesign proposes two cultural liaison positions in the child safety/protection space. The positions attract approximately \$660 000 of funding over three years and will:

- ensure services are able to connect to the Aboriginal community
- respond in a way that is culturally appropriate and sensitive and
- provide linkages with existing support services and networks.

Furthermore the Safe Home, Safe Families, Family Violence Action Plan commits to working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to support families experiencing family violence. As part of the Government's priority to reset its relationship with the Aboriginal community, the 2016-17 budget included funding of \$333 000 over three years to improve the quality and accessibility of culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal children affected by family violence.

The Out of Home Care (OoHC) Strategic Plan will prioritise actions that implement systems and process to ensure that children and young people are heard and that their views have a genuine impact on system design and decisions about their care. This will be supported by the development of an outcomes framework that establishes and implements rigorous quality improvement processes.

Tasmania is committed to improving levels of family preservation and reunification, with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through its membership in the Children and Families Secretaries national working group. The Tasmanian Government is continuing to invest in activities that support the Council of Australian Governments agenda to close the gap in Aboriginal disadvantage, with a focus on family violence, the early years, economic development and employment.

The Tasmanian Government supports the Family Matters aim to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OoHC by 2040.

Thank you once again for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'MP', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Pervan
Secretary

17 July 2017