



MEDIA RELEASE

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) has released their 2017-18 Annual Report. The report considers key highlights and achievements throughout the year, a summary of complaint trends and OCC monitoring activities relating to the administration of the *Care and Protection of Children Act*.

2017-18 was a year of significant change for the OCC with a focus on the whole-of-government reform agenda in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory (Royal Commission).

This reporting period the OCC;

- Managed 236 approaches to the office, with 92 being assessed as complaints and 82 were subject to preliminary inquiries. This resulted in 25 referrals and 36 resolutions to the relevant service provider.
- Conducted two own initiative investigations, one in relation to the services provided by an authorised carer and the other relating to the alleged sexual assault of a toddler. The recommendations from those two reports are being monitored by the OCC on a quarterly basis.
- Monitoring activities included a review of young peoples' care plans, children in out-of-home care that had a substantiated harm and exploitation investigation and data analysis of the application of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (ACPP). The monitoring activities highlighted a decrease in the substantiated harm and exploitation of children in care and improvements in the number and quality of care plans in place for young people.
- Conducted a comprehensive analysis of child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations managed by Territory Families. This identified an 11% increase in child protection notifications to Territory Families and an 18% increase in notifications that progressed to an investigation. The predominant notification category was neglect.

The Commissioner has set the OCC priorities for this year including implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations with stage one well underway. The OCC has realigned its structure and functions to commence an enhanced and expanded role in the monitoring of youth justice and child protection systems in 2019.

The report can be found at <https://occ.nt.gov.au/publications>

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