



12 May 2021

Media Statement

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER MONITORING REPORT: SALTBUSH BAIL SUPPORT ACCOMMODATION

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) Report on its first round of monitoring of Saltbush Social Enterprises Bail Support Accommodation (Saltbush) has been tabled in parliament yesterday by the Hon Selena Uibo, Attorney General and Minister for Justice. The purpose of the report is to monitor the standard of care provided in Saltbush on behalf of Territory Families Housing and Communities (TFHC).

Bail Support Accommodation is designed to support children to have timely access to services needed to address the factors impacting on their offending behaviour, including those that meet their physical and mental health needs. Importantly Bail Support Accommodation is an alternative to being remanded in detention, which we know does not help to reduce offending.

In August and September 2020, the OCC assessed Saltbush against six relevant National Out-of-Home Care Standards (OoHCS) by conducting monitoring visits to inspect the facilities in Darwin and Alice Springs, and to speak with young people, staff and service providers.

Some of the key findings and recommendations from the Report include:

- It was positive to see young people at Saltbush have access to culturally appropriate programs, delivered by Indigenous staff providing cultural advice and mentoring. These cultural activities have great potential to positively impact on young people.
- Saltbush is a relatively new service and is demonstrating some therapeutic approaches to working with children, however the OCC was unable to establish that a documented therapeutic framework has been developed, and recommends that Saltbush develops and implements an evidence-based therapeutic framework of care within its facilities by 31 August 2021.

The OCC will continue monitoring the implementation of the recommendations from the Report. At the time of finalising this Report, Saltbush had already fully implemented one of the ten direct recommendations made for their sole implementation. The OCC will also monitor the implementation of recommendations made to the Department of Education and TFHC.

The OCC thanks the young people at Saltbush, TFHC, Department of Education, Catholic Education and Saltbush Social Enterprises Bail Supported Accommodation for their cooperation and collaboration with the OCC throughout the monitoring process.

Quotes from Acting Children's Commissioner, Sally Sievers:

- Bail Support Accommodation is a critical component in the youth justice continuum to ensure children have access to safe accommodation and support to comply with bail conditions.
- Saltbush is a relatively new service and is demonstrating some therapeutic approaches to working with children. This is the first time the OCC has completed monitoring of Bail Support Accommodation, which was established as a recommendation of the 2017 Royal Commission into the Detention and Protection of Children in the Northern Territory to ensure compliance with the evidence based principle for detention to be a measure of last resort for children.



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