



7 October 2023

Statement

FOOTAGE OF TENNANT CREEK CHILD RESTRAINED AND THREATENED TO BE KILLED

Acting Children's Commissioner Nicole Hucks condemns the unauthorised use of force to restrain children in the Northern Territory.

The Commissioner holds grave concerns regarding recent footage released by the *NT Independent* appearing to show Barkly Regional Council Mayor Jeffery McLaughlin restraining a young child while other adults threaten the child's life.

This behaviour shows the utmost disregard for a child's safety and wellbeing.

The actions allegedly taken by Mr McLaughlin and the other unidentified adults present are absolutely unacceptable. As well as compounding further potential trauma and damage to a young person, evidence shows that a vigilante, violent approach to deterring youth offending is ineffective compared to more restorative measures.

Subsequent sharing of the footage, even if out of concern for the child, is cautioned as it may cause additional distress and detrimental harm to the child as well as to other vulnerable members of the community.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner supports the authorised capacity of the Northern Territory police to investigate the matter.

Quotes attributable to Nicole Hucks, A/ NT Children's Commissioner:

- I can only describe the actions of the adults in the footage as cruel and extremely alarming.
- Most unnerving is that one of the adults identified in the footage is an elected local leader and holds the position of Barkly Regional Council Mayor.
- I am deeply concerned that this footage shows vigilantism is alive in the Northern Territory, and that this behaviour is only encouraged by the continued negative, stereotypical and often discriminatory portrayal of children in the media and on social media - which has to stop.
- Harm to, or abuse of, children is unlawful. Every Territory adult has mandatory reporting responsibilities. If you are aware a child has been, or is being harmed or abused you are legally required to report to the Northern Territory child protection reporting line on 1800 700 250. The reporting line operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Nicole Hucks
A/ Children's Commissioner, Northern Territory

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