

MEDIA RELEASE

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Anglicare NT welcomes 'Smarter Justice for a Safer Territory'

Anglicare NT joins with NTCOSS, AMSANT, APONT and NAAJA in celebrating the significant justice amendments being introduced into NT Parliament today. We congratulate the NT Government, the Attorney General Chansey Paech and all have worked hard to make these changes.

Anglicare NT CEO Dave Pugh said, "Never have we seen rates of youth incarceration like we are witnessing in Alice Springs and Darwin now. While reforms in youth justice can and must go further, the amendments announced today are an important start."

Anglicare NT works with hundreds of young people each year through its youth homeless programs Back on Track, headspace and ReConnect. Mr Pugh says:

"Young people need a justice system that is fair and understands the significant inter-generational trauma in the lives of families. We have learnt from deep experience that relationships, role modelling, and support create lasting change. We have learnt that incarceration and penalties rarely turn lives around."

Anglicare NT agrees with Priscilla Atkins CEO, North Australia Aboriginal Justice Agency when she says that "we recognise that the Northern Territory needs a new way of working in matters of law and justice, for the benefit of all Territorians."

The reforms announced today are a good start, but more is needed. Like APONT and NTCOSS, Anglicare NT is committed to working with the government to create better service responses for young people and to continue to advocate to raise the age of criminal responsibility ultimately to 14 years of age.

Anglicare NT works with adult male offenders on parole through a program called OutCARE. Mr Pugh says that in this work "we see a 300% reduction in recidivism rates simply by offering support, links to employment and secure housing. This work saves the NT economy hundreds of thousands of dollars and creates healthier communities. We need to see the same positive approach to our young people".

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