

Early Childhood Development Expert Reference Panel Meeting Communique, 6 June 2017

The fifth meeting of the ERP convened at Parliament House Darwin. The meeting focused on mapping the sequence of reforms proposed for the Early Childhood Development Strategic Plan.

Whole of Sector Early Years Outcomes Framework

This strategy aims to improve outcomes for all Territory children by meeting goals in four key areas of children's lives: strong healthy beginnings, enriching learning environments, a safe, loving environment and the material essentials for life. A Northern Territory Outcomes Framework has been developed through the co-design approach of the Plan. It provides a shared approach to help better understand and measure whether work with children, families, communities and at the Territory level is having a real and lasting impact on children's lives. The framework provides a common basis for setting objectives and planning across the sector. Members reviewed and endorsed the Outcomes Framework. A key action proposed for the first year of action of the Strategy will be the wider circulation and call for whole of sector endorsement of the Outcomes Framework.

Analysis of our Early Childhood investments

There was strong agreement around the need to understand the effectiveness of current and planned investments before additional service models are launched. Sharing experiences and evaluations has an essential role to play to better understand how services are working for children and families.

A strong smart system provides the framework for better outcomes for all children

Co-design of the strategy has been strongly focused around eight characteristics for a stronger system. Members collaborated to map a series of actions across the ten year timeframe of the strategy. These focused on:

Stronger leadership and governance, alignment of strategic investment, more effective evaluation and evidence collection, implementation of quality evidence-based services and interventions, better data and information sharing at the operational level, localised service delivery models, stable, sustainable funding arrangements for NGOs and continuing to grow our professional, capable, skilled and sustainable workforce in the NT.

There was a strong sense that having high quality core and universal services in place and building initiatives for a more comprehensive ECD system will have impact at the generational level. Also all agreed that the Plan has to be about collective effort, agreement on directions and then funding for high impact.

