

Early Childhood Development Expert Reference Panel Meeting Communique, 10 May 2017

The fourth meeting of the ERP convened at Danila Dilba Health Service. The meeting focused on priorities to strengthen the ECD system in the NT.

Cross-sector governance and leadership

Children's Commissioner Colleen Gwynne attended the meeting and together with the Expert Reference Panel members discussed actions to build stronger governance and leadership needed to ensure children's safety and wellbeing. The panel was clear in its view that addressing child abuse and neglect through effective prevention and intervention efforts is one of the single most effective commitments that the Northern Territory government could make to the health, wellbeing and productivity of society.

Panel members identified that our current oversight mechanisms in the NT need to be strengthened to enable them to improve outcomes for our Territory children.

Through building strong cross-sector governance and leadership to oversee policies, services and investment in early childhood, we have a greater chance of improving outcomes in partnership with Territory families and children. This requires broad leadership and the sharing of responsibility across government, NGO, service providers, families and communities and the private sector. Cross-sector collaboration will contribute to holistic outcomes and 'break down the silos' between agencies delivering services to families.

Strengthening an integrated framework for child safety and wellbeing is essential.

They stressed that more has to be done to support the families and communities where our children are raised.