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Jesuit Social Services calls for NT Government to end the transportation and imprisonment of children far away from their families

Jesuit Social Services is calling on the Northern Territory Government to end the practice of imprisoning children from Central Australia in facilities in Darwin and to accept the five recommendations from a new report from the NT Office of the Children’s Commissioner.

“The practice of transporting children more than 1500 kilometres from Alice Springs to Darwin, away from their communities and families, is inconsistent with the rights of children under both domestic and international law,” says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

“What the Office of the Children’s Commissioner Inquiry highlights is that this practice is now business as usual, and that the situation for young people in detention in the Territory is getting worse overall.”

“We support the five recommendations made by the Commissioner including: to ensure that young people’s dignity is respected when they are being transported, a commitment to facilitating family visits, a commitment to consulting families before young people are transferred and for arrangements for Aboriginal language interpreters where a young person does not speak English. The fifth recommendation was for the Department of Corrections to provide evidence that it is adhering to its own through-care policies and procedures within six months.”

“The Department of Corrections rejection of these recommendations from the Commissioner raises serious questions about the administration of the youth justice system in the NT. We are calling on the NT Government to ensure the basic rights of children in detention are being protected,” says Ms Edwards.

“We urge the Northern Territory Government to treat detention as a last resort, to commit to programs that will keep children out of jail in the first place and to urgently end the practice of transporting and imprisoning children so far from home.”

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Media enquiries: Kathryn Kernohan, 0409 901 248 or kathryn.kernohan@jss.org.au.