



16 August 2018

Changing the Narrative – doing better for children under 3

The Committee has released a report, *Changing the narrative for vulnerable children: Strengthening ACT systems*. Key findings from the report highlight the critical need for Government and related support services to recognise and improve the supports for children under 3 years where cumulative risks have been identified.

Chair of the Committee, Ms Margaret Carmody, said "The report is important. It provides us with a greater understanding of the risk factors that were apparent in the lives of 11 children under the age of 3 who have died in the ACT in recent years. The challenges that the children experienced prior to their death were considerable and this report identifies what government and the community can do to reduce the vulnerability of children and prevent the likelihood of deaths in the future".

"By looking at the deaths of children and understanding the environments in which they lived, we can identify opportunities to decrease the risks children experience and reduce the number of deaths in the future.

"We know that children and young people are dying less frequently from avoidable causes of death. However, these children remained invisible to the systems that were there to support them, in particular where there were issues of family violence, parental drug and alcohol use, housing instability and low income.

"The Committee also raises concerns that the relative risk of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse children remains higher than that of non-indigenous children. More effective strategies are needed to better support these most vulnerable children.

The Committee acknowledges that recent reform has been implemented in the ACT that will have improved support systems for children and their families. The Committee will continue to report on trends, to improve the quality of data, and recommend improvements to systems and processes to help prevent future avoidable deaths. The Committee's next report will provide data for the 2017 period.

Mr Eric Chalmers and Dr Judith Bragg is available for further comment on the contact details below.