



Tuesday, 08 March 2016

## Information sharing key to intervention and prevention

The ACT Children and Young People Death Review Committee met yesterday with Mr Laurie Glanfield to provide its input into the review of ACT system responses to incidents of family violence.

Chair of the Committee, Dr Penny Gregory, said that “The review is an important component of the greater task of ensuring that all ACT crisis and social justice systems work the way they are meant to and create the best environment to support children and their families to get the best help when they need it.

“Too often in the reviews this Committee carries out we see the need for a greater ability to share information between the high numbers of agencies engaged with families in need. This improved communication could have been the key to minimising or preventing harm.

“The often high number of agencies involved with individuals or families experiencing complex situations can mean that no one has complete oversight of what’s happening and sadly, the child’s experience and needs can become invisible as a result.

“Each agency is often operating with a small piece of the picture and in this way, things get missed or the signs that people need help or that a situation is escalating aren’t recognised.

“This is something we can do better.

“The rates of preventable deaths of children and young people in the ACT have been improving in recent years and are on par with other jurisdictions. We are a small jurisdiction and we are making progress in terms of efficient and effective service provision. Yet we still see children who are harmed through violence, poverty, or poor health where this may be aggravated by the system’s difficulty in finding a way through the reticence of many to share vital information when it comes to perceived privacy constraints.

“Ensuring child safety and well-being ought to be the common purpose that brings this community together to better support families before they reach crisis point. In this way we will better minimise and hopefully prevent harm to children and young people.

“The issue of ensuring that the child’s rights and needs are the central focus was a key element of the discussion. We discussed it both in terms of parental rights to privacy overriding the child’s rights for information to be shared for their safety and also in terms of parent rights vs child rights in decisions regarding removing a child.

“The committee shared these views with Mr Glanfield and encouraged him to take a long-term view regarding his recommendations.

“We’re keen to see the outcome of this work and join it with our own reviews of how the system responses might be improved so that there are stronger and more effective mechanisms for early intervention and prevention.

**Dr Gregory is available for further comment on the contact details below.**

### Media

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