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Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
House of Representatives,
PO Box 6021,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600.

Dear Secretary

**Central Australian Youth Justice Committee Submission To The House Of Representatives
Standing Committee**

Inquiry: Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system

The Central Australian Youth Justice Committee (CAYJ) campaigns and advocates for an appropriate Youth Justice System in the NT, with a focus on criminal justice issues. CAYJ has representatives from a range of organisations in the Northern Territory who work with young people in the criminal justice system. These organisations include: Alice Springs Youth Accommodation and Support Services (ASYASS), Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS), NT Legal Aid, Tangentyere Council, Congress Youth Team, Bush Mob, Youth Development Unit (YDU, Tennant Creek) as well as NTCOSS.

CAYJ welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, about this most critical issue. CAYJ has long been concerned about the high level of involvement of Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system in the Northern Territory, where the recidivism rates in Central Australia are the highest in the country. Given the focus of CAYJ, we will limit our comments primarily to issues affecting young Indigenous people in Central Australia.

CAYJ wishes to highlight a number of factors pertinent to the Northern Territory, which will help to provide a context for some of the specific comments we will make in this submission. Many issues relate to the operation of the revised *Northern Territory Youth Justice Act* (the YJ Act) which came into force in December 2006.

The YJ Act has a number of provisions which clearly outline how young people should be dealt with in the criminal justice system. Although some provisions of the YJ Act are being adhered to by the court, there are clearly some practices that fall short of meeting the requirements of the YJ Act.

The Northern Territory remains the only jurisdiction in Australia that has not established a system of justice for young people that is separate and distinct from the adult criminal justice system. There is no separate department administering justice and therefore no specialist juvenile justice workers. Juvenile Justice Departments in other jurisdictions utilize a different approach in working with young people as compared to working with adults within the system. For example, in Victoria juvenile justice comes under the health department in recognition of the fact that many of the causal factors to offending behavior are linked to social and care and protection needs.

The NT does not demonstrate any recognition of the special needs and issues relating to young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system. The implication of this is that young people within the criminal justice system in the NT are unable to access the same level of support that is available to young people in other jurisdictions.

- 1 Firstly, section.48(2) (b) of the YJ Act provides that the Minister must ensure that the places for the Court to sit are, as far as practicable, separate from the places in which proceedings in relation to adults are being held. However, in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek and the bush circuit courts, youth matters are heard in the same general court complex as adult matters, and are not always in a separate court to adult matters. In Tennant Creek, for example, in all cases the magistrate states “we are closing the Court of Summary Jurisdiction and opening the Youth Justice Court”, or vice versa, with the same people present in the court room, namely adults. .
- 2 The lack of a separate waiting area in the overwhelming majority of court facilities in the NT, to ensure children and young people are kept separate from adults, (e.g. in remote areas, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs). This also contravenes the Youth Justice Act (S26), and has the potential to allow for escalating situations with young people becoming increasingly agitated with long waiting periods.
- 3 There is a significant issue with respect to young people being detained in the Alice Spring Police holding cells. Young people in custody are not prioritised over adults. *See attached YJAP report*
- 4 Young peoples’ matters are often subject to numerous adjournments before matters are finally settled, particularly in relation to young people on diversion¹. *See attached YJAP report*
- 5 There is a significant issue with respect to young people in the Care of the Minister, who end up in the Criminal Justice System – especially when detention is used as alternative accommodation option *See YJAP report attached*

¹ When young people are given the option of diversion or they are on post court diversion, matters can take at least three adjournments until the young person is granted diversion and then three more court appearances whilst they are on a diversion program. This process can take at least six to eight months with about eight court appearances until the diversion is completed. However, the current process is involving young people more in and clogging up the court system unnecessarily. In addition, adjournments occur regularly in relation to plea bargaining with the prosecution to drop charges, as the defendant is a young person usually without a prior offending history. This usually takes up to three adjournments before the case is finalised.

- 6 A lack of sentencing and bail options in relation to alcohol and other drug treatment services.
- 7 The imposition of onerous bail conditions on Aboriginal juveniles and young adults for minor offences with it. This can lead to young people having to face court for a breach of bail, and possible detention – when the initial offence they are alleged to have committed was only minor and may not normally lead to a custodial sentence.
- 8 The absence of a specifically trained practitioners in regards to administering the Youth Justice Act in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek i.e. Magistrates, prosecutors, police, and legal aid lawyers which is in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Beijing) Rules.
- 9 A need for longer term rehabilitation facilities for young people with drug and alcohol problems.
- 10 The complete inadequacy of current specialist resources for young people in Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in the NT and the significant human right's abuses suffered by young people.
- 11 Young People on corrections orders being supervised in the adult system. There is no capacity to genuinely case manage and supervise. Young people on supervision and community work orders are treated like 'mini' adults, unless there is involvement from an appropriate youth service² See *YJAP report attached*
- 12 A lack of responsible adults being present when young people being interviewed by police, There are numerous examples and case studies of young people not having a responsible adult present when being interviewed, when bail is granted and when young people appear in court. Young people do not understand criminal proceedings including bail conditions and need these explained to them, in relation to their responsibilities
- 13 A lack of services for young people with mental health issues.
- 14 The over policing of indigenous people. In Tennant Creek for example, half of the young people incarcerated are Indigenous young people. The majority of these young people have alcohol and other drug issues and because they pursue this in the open they become the target of police. A recent case of a young woman, with no prior, who breached her bail curfew and was flown to Alice Springs. She did not appear in court there, but was brought back for court in Tennant Creek three days later. The police were trying to fail her diversion program because of this breach of bail.
- 15 Police Practices in general. Police need ongoing training in dealing with young people and their powers under the YJA, as countless breaches of the YJA take place. For example, there was a recent situation of a young man held in custody all day for his first breach of bail (which was given to him two days prior). He was granted bail again, but there was no responsible adult present to explain the conditions, which was the reason he breached his bail the first time.
- 16 A need for dedicated police liaison officers in Darwin and Alice Springs and other parts of the NT, to promote positive relationships with young people, and to keep young people out of the criminal justice system

² For example, the Youth Development Unit in Tennant Creek case manages young people to ensure they adhere to their correction order conditions, especially education and alcohol and other drug awareness programs. These programs are tailored to the needs and issues of the young person. YDU ensures that young people that are on community work orders spend a third of their hours in education/training or counselling (this is available under these orders). The rest of the hours the young person has supervision of other young people at YDU and cleaning. In the past some of these young people have gained employment because of successful completion of their order and skills gained whilst on the order.

- 17 The lack of a peak youth organisation to develop and co-ordinate policy and practices in the sector e.g. to address youth issues and Youth Criminal Justice, and to provide a single point of reference for government (This is demonstrated by the fragmentation of NT Ministers portfolios as they relate to young people in youth justice and youth issues. There are four ministers involved with young people's issues which makes it difficult to case manage young people.

This submission will provide some background in relation to how young people in the NT are processed in the criminal justice system with a focus on YJ in the NT before addressing the issues most relevant to three of the terms of references 1, 2 and 5.

ADDRESSING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

ToR 1 How the development of social norms and behaviors for Indigenous juveniles and young adults can lead to positive social engagement; Why are young people in Alice Springs entering into the criminal justice system.

One mayor factor that can not be over looked is that in 1999 the Northern Territory was embroiled in legal and constitutional scrutiny on a national and international level due to the proposed Mandatory Sentencing Laws. During this campaign numerous submissions were made to the Federal and Territory Government aimed at better meeting the legal needs of young people in the Northern Territory. These submission provided the NT Government with a raft of sound recommendations in terms of address the over representation of Aboriginal Young People in the criminal justice system.

From 2000 further attempts have been made by major youth services and young people in Alice Springs to develop an after hours service for young people to address, in particular, substantial publicity about young people on the streets at night, particularly those who were affected by alcohol or VSA misuse. There continues to be ongoing concerns about both the safety and welfare of those young people and about property damage to businesses in the central business area of Alice Springs. There is little evidence to suggest that any early intervention programs have been implemented in Central Australia which addresses the reason why so many Aboriginal young people are entering into the criminal justice system.

The NGO sector in Alice Springs continue to highlight the need to appropriately engage young people in the decision making process in terms of addressing in particular youth boredom. It has been recognised that many young people who enter into the criminal justice system in Central Australia are often disengaged from family and community and are socially disadvantaged, and can quite often feel alienated from services. There is also a growing body of evidence that suggest that youth participation in the development of youth specific programs can lead to greater participation from young people in terms of producing positive outcomes.

The Northern Territory Government has yet to develop an appropriately funded best practice model of service which is clearly aimed at engaging young people in the consultation process regarding the development of activities aimed at addressing anti social behaviour, which in turn heightens the risk of young people entering into the criminal justice system. Young people

accessing the CBD after hours continue to be an ongoing issue. However, there continues to be no after hours programs aimed at diverting young people from the criminal justice system and as a result, Aboriginal young people continue to enter into the criminal justice system at alarming rates.

Young people in Alice Springs require positive avenues of expressions, public acceptance and inclusion and an opportunity to integrate their negative experience in a way which will secure a strong and healthy sense of identity.

Recommendation

- A comprehensive, independent review of youth services across the NT would be of considerable value in mapping existing services and identifying gaps in service provision. This issue has been highlighted by the NT Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) in its recent Pre Budget Submission to the NT Government.³ Such a review would also assist in identifying existing inefficiencies and duplications, thereby allowing scarce resources to be used most effectively. A review of this kind would provide an evidence-base to ensure that policy making is transparent and governments are fully accountable.
- Policy co-ordination and Development needs to be brought under one whole-of-government umbrella, to avoid duplication, competition and wastage.
- Punitive approaches to anti-social behaviour should be replaced with provision of more safe, friendly places for young people, and the creation of structured activity programs. Social recovery from distress and community engagement towards positive futures can only come in positive supportive environments.
- Implement Restorative Practices and Social & Emotional Wellbeing programs in every community and school in the NT – to create a holistic program of social support and positive intervention at the whole-organisation and whole-community level, thus providing truly preventive health.

ToR 2. The impact that alcohol use and other substance abuse has on the level of Indigenous juvenile and young adult involvement in the criminal justice system and how health and justice authorities can work together to address this;

Statistical data re the correlation between young offenders in the NT with alcohol and other drug issues who then go on to enter into the adult criminal justice system is somewhat sparse. However statistics collated by the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Service Youth Justice Advocacy Project (YJAP) clearly demonstrate that a high number of young people who have youth offending records have continued to engage in criminal activity which is linked to their substance misuse issues.

It is also important to note that a number of young people who have accessed the YJAP project have been involved in the criminal justice system from an early age. In particular cases there are a long history of substance misuse, starting at the age of 11 which included volatile substance

³ NTCOSS Pre-Budget Submission 2010-11 Recommendation 20.2 Undertake a comprehensive mapping of existing youth services to identify service gaps and provide a transparent basis for policy and planning decisions.

abuse (VSA), marijuana use and alcohol misuse. It is also important to observe that most of the crimes committed are done so whilst the young person is intoxicated and in pursuit of a substance of choice.

Despite the fact that a number of these young people have either been in the care of the minister or have come to the attention of Government departments, there appears to be no clear care plan specifically addressing the need for appropriate residential treatment programs for young people with long term substance misuse issues, who have repeatedly entered into the criminal justice system.

Although a range of programs exist in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, there are no specialised programs currently funded to address the social and emotional needs of young people with the following ongoing issues (Note The young people who have re-entered the system generally have the following in common):

- 1 Ongoing substance misuse issues;
- 2 High levels of sexually transmitted infections;
- 3 Experienced long term family breakdown;
- 4 Have not accessed any form of treatment or rehabilitation;
- 5 Have not accessed any form of formal or alternative education programs; and
- 6 Have not had appropriate care and protection case management structures implemented.

I would also like to highlight the fact that it can be clearly demonstrated that a significant percentage of young offenders with AOD issues have never received any form of structured treatment or rehabilitation for substance misuse. For many young people there have been little or no supports in terms of addressing the underlying offending behaviour and that many young people have demonstrated time and time again that they are not emotionally equipped in terms of addressing the raft of issues that can lead them into criminal activity.

Case Study A

Toby* is a sixteen years old young man from a remote community in Central Australia. Toby has not been afforded natural care from his biological parents and as a result of this he has been in the care of the minister for around five years. During this time Toby has resided in a number of locations in Alice Springs and remote communities.

****Note: Toby is not his real name***

Toby like so many of his counter parts has followed the path of his parents and some extended family members, that is, to engage in excessive drinking and experience a lack of permanent accommodation (which is one of the main reasons Toby is currently in the care of the minister). During this time Toby has engaged in high risk levels of volatile substance misuse,

which have inevitably lead Toby into the criminal justice system. The majority of Toby's crimes were committed whilst trying to source petrol for sniffing, or alcohol.

In 2005 and again in 2007 Toby was sent to the Ilpurla Outstation to address his VSA misuse. Ilpurla staff reported that Toby was extremely compliant in terms of adhering to the Ilpurla program requirements and was well liked by the staff. Toby left Ilpurla and led a somewhat transient life living between remote communities and Alice Springs. Toby proceeded to re-enter into the criminal justice system, however, the difference is that this time all of Toby offences were committed whilst he was highly intoxicated from alcohol and in some instances marijuana.

Toby came before the courts on seven occasion in 2008 and five in 2009. In December 2009 Toby came before the courts again. Toby was sentenced to a time of detention at Don Dale detention centre, Toby's substance misuse issues were not addressed whilst he was detained at Don Dale. Toby was released from Don Dale Toby and within three weeks proceeded to re-offend whilst heavily intoxicated.

The YJAP project worker conducted a basic mapping for Toby in regards to his substance misuse issues, starting from his VSA misuse. Toby stated the following.

"I want to stop that grog it only gets me into trouble, I want to go back to that old man's place Barry Abbott's (Ilpurla) that old man helped me for that sniffing, he can help me for giving away that grog. Ilpurla is good for me it's a long way but family can still come and see me. We always sit around the fire with that Barry Abbott and tell stories for stopping sniffing. Don Dale no family can visit me they have no money for plane. I'm trying to leave that grog I've been leave that sniffing at Barry Abbott's".

Toby was playing a proactive role in terms of trying to address his substance misuse issues by requesting to go to Ilpurla. This plan was not supported by the representatives of the Minister for Families and Children's in Alice Springs. It needs to be stated that whilst Toby was in the Care of the Minister, no attempts were made to access any kind of treatment for Tody, despite his criminal justice record and life style clearly indicating that Toby was greatly in need of long term supports to address his substance misuse problems. The aim of highlighting this case study is not to excuse Toby for breaking the law, it is to highlight that it has long established that Toby has had little or no supports and is clearly engaging in high risk behaviour, and has not received an adequate level of care and support. Toby and other clients like him with long term substance misuse issues, have demonstrated time and time again that they are often not capable of caring for themselves and in particular are often subject to intense negative family pressure.

Case Study B

In relation to another young man who had an extensive history of breaking and entering into the same liquor outlet, the court ordered a pre-sentencing report. The young man was remanded at Don Dale and the assessment was conducted by phone. The young man received a very negative report from the Corrections supervisor. The report stated that the young man would not engage, and that when released from Don Dale he stated that he was going to drink and smoke marijuana.

On reading the report the young man's lawyer sought advice from the YJAP. The YJAP worker was able to highlight to the Magistrate that two days prior to the phone conversation with the Corrections supervisor the young man's father was tragically murdered. As a result the young man had been placed in isolation at Don Dale for fear he would harm himself. The Magistrate dismissed the corrections report. However there was still no acknowledgement that this young man would benefit from AOD supports

(Note this young man has repeatedly entered into the criminal justice from the age of twelve. He is now 19 and currently incarcerated, and he has never participated in an appropriate AOD treatment program)

Case Study C *Sally is not her real name*

- *Sally first custodial sentence was in January 2007 where she was remanded at Don Dale detention centre, Sally has had periodic detention from 2007 until 2009. All of Sally's offences have been committed whilst she was intoxicated or sourcing a substance of choice. Sally has a long history of VSA misuse (reports indicate that Sally first started sniffing at nine years of age) Sally was in the sole guardianship of the Minister from aged 12 until 18.*
- *Now aged 19 Sally has been charged with breaching a suspended sentence in the Supreme Court for break and enter a dwelling houses at night with intent to commit a crime, namely, steal alcohol*
- *Sally was recently raped in 2009 and also in 2008 (2008 the perpetrator was given a custodial sentence)*
- *Sally had made several attempts on her own life*
- *Sally was granted bail to attend a AOD rehabilitation program in Darwin in late 2009, this is due to there being no appropriate facility in Central Australia*
- *Sally absconded from the rehabilitation program in Darwin, and no service, including Community Corrections or Police were notified.*
- *Sally has never been to Darwin before and does not have any supports structures in place and is not linked into any youth service.*
- *Sally is at large in Darwin, one service in Alice Springs has stated that the only reports they have had in relation to Sally is that she is currently homeless (residing in the long grass) and has presented to the Royal Darwin Hospital for injuries sustained from physical assault*
- *Despite that fact that she has been in the care of the minister for a number of years Sally has never been appropriately supported to participate in any form of rehabilitation or treatment.*

As this example demonstrates, having suitable residential rehabilitation programs for young people and adults in Alice Springs may have meant that if Sally were to abscond from a rehabilitation service in Alice Springs, she would have approached youth services that have worked with her for many years, her whereabouts would be known therefore her overall safety would not be as tenuous as it currently is.

The YJAP has collated the following statistics and case studies.

- Fifteen young men
- Nine young women

A number of these young people have been in the Care of the Minister and have similar offending patterns, due to substance misuse. Again no attempts have been made to support these young people to address the overwhelming life circumstance that have led these young people into high risk patterns of offending behaviour as well as alcohol and other drug misuse.

By comparison in NSW when a young person has committed a crime and it is established that there are substance misuse issues, they can be referred to the Youth Drug and Alcohol Court (YDAC). This program can run for up to 12 months. YDAC has been described as intensive court supervision or "Therapeutic Jurisprudence". It only works if there are intensive resources in the community to support the young person in a range of areas. If accepted on to the program they are referred to the drug and alcohol support program which is made up of a multi case management team.

- 1 Drug and Alcohol supports
- 2 Education and training supports
- 3 Department of Children's Services
- 4 Health
- 5 Accommodation supports

Recommendations

- There are little or no programs, Territory wide, for young people under 16 with AOD, VSA and other behavioural needs and issues. Such programs need to be holistic programs with education/training, life skills, anger management, sport and recreation and access to counselling and other health services. There is a need to replicate programs of best practice available here in the Territory and Australia wide
- There is an immediate need for both short-term crisis accommodation and longer term rehabilitation facilities for young people with drug and alcohol problems.
- Dedicated police youth liaison officers located in Darwin and Alice Springs would assist in forging more positive relationships with young people, and would begin to relate with the relevant networks to create mutual understanding that can solve issues before they become serious.

ToR 3 Any initiatives which would improve the effectiveness of the education system in contributing to reducing the levels of involvement of Indigenous juveniles and young adults with the criminal justice system;

In relation to young people who have entered into the criminal justice system in Central Australia the evidence highlights that these young people have not accessed any formal education for a number of years. For example, some young people have disengaged from education at the primary school level. These same young people do not have the capacity to engage in or address the barriers to education due to being profoundly affected by overarching issues such as homelessness, domestic violence, and periods in custody or offending. In addition, early school leaving and having English as a second language can cause significant barriers. Also, in terms of trying to source a more suitable educational option, there is very little in choice in terms of alternative education supports for Aboriginal young people.

Another glaring observation from the YJAP is, for example, when a young person has spent a period of time in detention at Don Dale they are required to participate in school on a daily level. This, in most cases, is the first contact a young person has had with the education system in a lengthy period of time. Surprisingly, individual progress reports from Don Dale often highlight that the young person has actively participated in school and their literacy and numeracy level have greatly improved.

A critical issue is that there are no post release programs for young people from Central Australia who are released from Don Dale, therefore young people return to Alice Springs and are once again disconnected from education due to a lack of supports.

ToR 5 Best practice examples of programs that support diversion of Indigenous people from juvenile detention centers and crime, and provide support for those returning from such centres;

- *In responding to TOR 5 CAYJ would like to focus on the issues relating to the practice of Youth Diversion in the NT.*

There are a number of issues regarding the use of diversion for young people – including the significant time lag between an offence being committed and the assessment process and the acceptance of young people on to diversion – at times the process has taken up to 8- 12 months, by which time diversion loses its impact. The intention of diversion, in theory is to keep young people out of the courts altogether. (Part 3 of the Northern Territory *Youth Justice Act (2009)* specifically prescribes that a police officer must divert a young person, except in certain circumstances as prescribed by the Legislation). However, young people on diversion are still having to face court processes it appears that many young people are not being diverted as the investigating officer does not consider them an appropriate candidate and we are concerned that investigating police officers are in effect acting as the ‘gate keepers’ of diversion.

- In Tennant Creek, for example, the Youth Development Unit (YDU) completes the assessment for diversion within a two week time frame. However, it can take at least

three months for police to initiate the diversion program after the conference. Most programs are at least three months long. In most cases, the whole diversion process can take up to eight months to complete and some of the offences were committed eight months prior. This loses the impact of diversion as young people cannot remember their offending behaviour clearly. As a young man stated to me this week he would rather take his chance in court because diversion takes too long.

- In addition, the experience from Tennant Creek is that all young people on post court diversion are also on bail with the same or similar conditions, especially curfews. This appears to be double dipping. If they breach their bail, they will fail their diversion program. Curfews seem to a standard program condition which is in place for the whole of the diversion program, sometimes three months. It seems we are setting up the young people to fail.
- ☐ **ToR 6 The scope for the clearer responsibilities within and between government jurisdictions to achieve better co-coordinated and targeted service provision for Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the justice system; (See YJAP report 07/08)**
- ☐ **ToR 7 The extent to which current preventative programs across government jurisdictions are aligned against common goals to improve the health and emotional well-being of Indigenous adolescents, any gaps or duplication in effort, and recommendations for their modification or enhancement. (See YJAP report 07/08)**

Court Processes

- 1 While in the past year, in Alice Springs, a specific day has been allocated (Mondays) for matters involving young people, they are still required to attend on other days. Other courts in the NT (e.g. Tennant Creek) do not have specific youth court days. In these situations, young people are not prioritized and often wait all day, impacting on families/guardians that also have to wait.
- 2 At the end of a long day of waiting, matters in Alice Springs are often adjourned or young people are bailed to reside in a remote community or Tennant Creek. This makes it very difficult for the court support worker or the Corrections Officer to organise travel, especially same day travel. This is very inconvenient and unnecessary, and especially difficult for families who have come in from bush.
- 3 Young people in detention, who attend court, are required to be kept in cells while they wait for court. A young person cannot be kept in the same cell as an adult. Having just one young person in a cell can lead to overcrowding of adults in the other cells at court. In addition, young people in custody are not prioritised over adults.
- 4 Shortages of lawyers (e.g. at bush court) can result in a young person having to deal with a different lawyer every time their matter is brought before the court. The lack of continuity of representation often results in multiple adjournments due to the new lawyer not having enough time to discuss the previous instruction with their colleagues.
- 5 Court lists are too long for the time allotted for each court day

Recommendation:

- The need for Youth Advocacy Project/Legal service was highlighted in the 'Seen and Heard: priority for children in the legal process' report of the Australia Law Reform Commission and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission in 1997. Indigenous young people continue to be grossly over-represented in the criminal justice system. A major focus of the project is the involvement of immediate and extended families to reinforce and support young people in the criminal justice system to break the cycle that leads to incarceration and recidivism, thus having a positive
- CAYJ strongly support the development of a Community Court model (similar to Koori Courts in Victoria) across the board in the NT, rather than the occasional use of Youth Justice Community Courts at a few remote locations. Models such as this which promote that restorative justice practices must be given appropriate levels of support and funding to ensure they can be effective, and lead to a reduction of young people re-entering the criminal justice system.

Cyclical nature of youth crime.

It would appear that youth criminal activity in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek is cyclical, with crime statistics and the number of young people being detained generally being higher in the warmer months. Evidence suggests that the weather has an impact on young people and criminal activity. For example March 2007 saw a huge increase in young people being detained for long periods at the Alice Springs watch house. By contrast, the winter period is relatively quiet. In the Barkly region, for example, offending and anti social behaviour increases over the wet season, this is due to people moving in town due to the wet and school holidays.

Recommendation:

- Those systems are put in place to address the cyclical nature of offending e.g. appropriate programs and supports put in place.

I would be happy to be contacted in relation to any of the issues raised in this submission, and I can be contacted on the numbers below. If it would assist the House Of Representatives Standing Committee to speak further with members of CAYJ to further explore some of the issues particular to the Northern territory, I would be happy to arrange this.

Yours sincerely

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