

Justice

Thursday 10 December 2020 – Question to the Minister for Territory Families and Urban Housing – Electronic Monitoring

Mr GUYULA: Yes, please. I was listening to the monitoring, talking about a child running off and police and Territory Families—you will have to accept that I want to work with Territory Families and police, but in my electorate we are missing out on senior leaders and elders who can work towards finding those if kids or adults run away with the offenders. There are always the elders there to help us. That is what I have been calling for—Aboriginal leaders and senior elders to be employed as policing officers as well through our Yolngu law system.

They will know where our child is. They will know where an offender is in our region, at least. If we can have use for senior elders in clans—Territory Families go up and find out who the relevant senior elder is—they will guide them to where our child is or where the offender is.

If we can make that connection between, if I can say, Balanda policing and Yolngu policing, working together through elders, we can do things safely in the community. That is where community elders have been all the time to save that. I will have to say I do not really like to see people with monitoring bracelets in my electorate because if we can use elders safely, women and men, people can bring offenders to police. People can bring all those children, too, and work with Territory Families together. That is what I know and I believe.

It is not necessary in some areas, like in my electorate, because if it worked through that way, through the system of senior elders working together with the law and order, police, and senior elders as policing officers as well, we can work together and do the safety of those children and the safety of those adults. That is all.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR: Member for Mulka, would you like to put that as question to the minister?

Mrs WORDEN: I will speak to that if that is ...

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR: You will speak to it? Yes, okay. Thank you member.

Mrs WORDEN: A little earlier we were talking about the establishment of community accountability boards, Member for Mulka, and that is certainly—the CEO just reminded me that out at Groote Eylandt, they are calling for something quite similar. We are going to be working on that. We are looking to pull together local elders and businesses, and the community to have their say about offender consequences and community expectations.

So, it can be part of those discussions when we get around to establishing community accountability boards. Perhaps, we can look to your area early in the establishment of that. We are expecting that, I said earlier, in the first half of next year. I am very happy to keep that discussion open as part of that.

And I think local community accountability boards on the back of local decision-making will be able to get some of those outcomes that you are looking for.

We accept that and we respect that.

Mr GUYULA: Yes. I guess, personally, I do not want to see my countrymen, my people wearing a bracelet and walking around when we can be a part of the rescue and try and help and work with elders, Territory Families, and police. We can make the community safe together, if we work together.

Mrs WORDEN: Member for Mulka, I do not like to see any young person in my electorate either with an electronic monitoring bracelet on. It is better than locking kids up, I would say that. There is a base for them and, unfortunately, they are necessary at the moment with the system as it is. But certainly, we will continue to work with you offline to look at what we can do out in your area with those community accountability boards.

Mr GUYULA: Yes. But I am sorry; I am strict on this. I just do not want to see our children and elders on bracelets where, if we can do it through the help of elders and policing, and elders and Territory Families together.

Mrs WORDEN: Yes, we will keep talking about that.

Thursday 10 December 2020 – Mr GUYULA – Question to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Family and Regional Services – Kinship Care

Mr GUYULA: I want to talk about the childcare responsibilities or—that question here. What has been provided in this budget to continue to work with Aboriginal communities to improve kinship care placements?

Mrs WORDEN: I will invite Jeanette Kerr to respond to your question.

Ms KERR: In terms of financial support or contractual arrangements with remote Aboriginal communities, we have Aboriginal carer grants under the Aboriginal Carers for Aboriginal Children program. We have contracted seven agencies through that, including Yalu in Arnhem. We also work very closely with the Mikan Reference Group, who have representatives from all the clan groups in the Arnhem region. We give them funding to carry their operations and they support us in child protection investigation and strengthening families matters in the Arnhem region. We have also put a remote family support worker in Lake Evella and we have multiple local staff across the Arnhem region. Some of them are very senior TOs—strong women, strong men.

Mr GUYULA: Sorry, one more question. Just following up those organisations like the Yalu, Yirrkala reference group did you say?

Ms KERR: Mikan.

Mr GUYULA: And Gapuwiyak group that looks after these kind of issues would be good. They will be working very closely with Territory Families and be in the middle working with Territory Families and

the actual family that the children belong to, so they already know the families know where the children are and they can add some kind of power to say where their children can be safe in whose hands, wherever. That is what I would like to see when Yalu and Mikan working with that, make sure they do not make the decision on behalf of another clan family. They need to go and approach those people and sit down with Territory Families and the family of the child and work out a way that is safe for that child.

Ms KERR: Yes, completely agree with you Member for Mulka. We are working with a number of other communities to develop care and protection reference groups as well, or cultural authority groups on Galiwinku, Maningrida, Tiwi Islands, and a range of communities. I think it is probably reflected where there have been very few children taken into care from Arnhem in the last year, and I think, I will have to check, it is only one. It has been a very successful partnership. We are learning a lot.

Mr GUYULA: Just one more while we are on this area. How many children from the Yolngu country have been removed during the last term of government and how many of these kids were placed in kinship care and how many were placed elsewhere?

Mrs WORDEN: We are happy to take that on notice. That is quite a breakdown that you are requesting.

Question on Notice No 8.7

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR: Member for Mulka, can you please restate the question for the record.

Mr GUYULA: How many children from the Yolngu country have been removed during the last term of government and how many of those kids were placed in kinship care and how many were placed elsewhere?

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR: Minister, do you accept the question?

Mrs WORDEN: Yes.

Mr DEPUTY CHAIR: The question asked by the Member for Mulka has been allocated the number 8.7.

ANSWER

The answer being during 2019-20, five children from the Arnhem region entered out of home care, four children were placed in kinship care arrangements, one child was placed in purchased home based care in Darwin and two children have since exited care. And that is all in one year but that is all we have currently.

**Thursday 10 December 2020 – Mr GUYULA – Question to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer,
Family and Regional Services – Raypirri Camps**

Mr GUYULA: Minister, what is being provided in this budget to assist with youth camps on country? In Arnhem Land, elders talk about raypirri camps, (inaudible) camps, meaning respect, education and developing discipline and training.

Our elders would like youth justice to be managed on country. Could you advise where this is happening? And what funds have been provided for this in the budget?

Mrs WORDEN: Thank you Member for Mulka. At the moment, we have investment in intervention programs as part of our Back on Track: Cutting Youth Crime Plan and they are aimed at reducing offending, substance abuse and at-risk behaviours. They are also orientated to improving the cultural connectedness and identity of participants.

Last financial year, we had Mala'la Aboriginal Health Corporation, Operation Flinders, the Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation and MacDonnell Regional Council delivering short-term camps on country in the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Last financial year, we had a total of 15 camps. Up front, we do not have any in Arnhem Land at this point and, certainly, I do not have anything in my budget for that. But we have Seven Emu Station and B18 out in the Litchfield area, and Balunu Foundation are geared up to do some camps this financial year.

B18 is delivering a long-term youth training and work pathways camp for up to eight young people between the ages of 14 to 17 who are at risk of entering the youth justice system. Those camps will operate twice a year for four months at a time over a five year period. The most recent camp started on 8 September.

We also have the JBAC engaged in delivering youth training and work pathways camps for up to eight young people between the ages of 14 and 17. Unfortunately, at this stage they are not in Arnhem Land.

The Mala'la Aboriginal Health Corporation ran one camp at Maningrida, but we have not got one there. That does not mean we cannot start a discussion.

We are also working on a youth camp under the Barkly Regional Deal. I do not have the figures for this financial year, but we had \$3.55m in capital funding for that project last financial year. We are moving subject to an ILUA, an Indigenous Land Use Agreement, so it has moved slower than we wanted. We have an additional \$2m this financial year to operate that new service.

We have extensive holiday programs out in East Arnhem which will run through from December to January. We are partnering with a number of the Aboriginal corporations for the school holidays. It does not mean we cannot have a discussion at some point. My experience is these things take a while. You have to find the right provider, program and services within that. It is not just a physical building, you have to work on it to make sure you have something that meets all the standards. I encourage you to have that first discussion and we can work toward something.

Mr GUYULA: Since last term we have been asking for raypirri camps in Arnhem Land. There is one across from Melville Bay where this family has been wanting to set up a healing and discipline camp

— a raypirri camp — Ken would know because we have been working together since last term. That one, at a place called Yudu Yudu across the bay from Melville Bay, have been waiting for the minister and Territory Families to work with them. They are ready to go and set up their camps waiting for more assistance to be provided. It is there; I have been calling and asking.

There is another one in Galiwinku, up island, which is a raypirri and healing camp the elders wanted to put up.

Mrs WORDEN: To be fair, we cannot solve it today. What I am offering is to have a good look at it and proper discussions. For these young people we need to make sure they are going into the right environment. We have seen camps in the past fall over because United Nations standards were not met in the treatment of young people. I am not saying that it is not ...

Mr GUYULA: That is where we both need to make sure.

Mrs WORDEN: Yes, we need to make sure that is done with rigour and agreements in place such as which kids would go there. That is a bigger conversation. Are you happy to take it off-line? We cannot solve it here, Member for Mulka.

Mr GUYULA: No, I am just suggesting and saying there are people out there ready to look after their own families. They are not looking after somebody else's family, it is their own clan group family. The other one you probably know is the BSA camp. This was when the volatile substance thing happened at Galiwinku and parents and family members made a quick decision and took them onto an island, Crocodile Island called Rapuma. They have been waiting to try and get assistance from them. Chief Minister's office in Nhulunbuy knows about it and I have been talking to him about it and maybe we can do something again now. Those people are still waiting.

Mrs WORDEN: I think it is important to note that the last four years have been incredible systemic reform. It is not just lock kids up and put them away. Those camps sound like they have a good fit for the current new system that we have, but we would need to put some rigour around that and some checks around service provision and what would be happening in terms of that program because you want to make sure it is going to have success. I am not saying those people are not ready to go, but maybe they would need some support from the department and guidance around that in the way that those kids would be referred to that is important. We need to work through all of those things. There are a lot of layers to work out to make sure it is done right.

Mr GUYULA: I think they are all ready to go there. They are just waiting.

Mrs WORDEN: Noted, and let us take this discussion offline.

Mr GUYULA: Yes, thank you.

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