



## **SNAICC JOINS CALLS TO CLOSE DON DALE**

SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children has joined calls for the Northern Territory Government to close the notorious Don Dale youth detention facility in Darwin.

SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle said concerns about conditions in Don Dale had been aired for many years, but recent reports showed an alarming deterioration inside the facility.

Key community leaders, including Acting Children’s Commissioner Nicole Hucks, AMSANT CEO John Paterson, Danila Dilba CEO Rob McPhee and many others have said the centre is not fit for purpose and is causing more harm to vulnerable children.

“That children, nearly all of them Aboriginal, continue to be incarcerated in a building that the Royal Commission said should be closed down five years ago, is a national embarrassment and a stain on the Northern Territory,” Ms Liddle said.

“Children deserve access to therapeutic programs that heal, reconnect them with family and culture and prevent reoffending.

“Instead, we have an inhumane facility where children are often locked up alone, where self-harm is rife, where educational opportunities are limited. How can we expect children to heal and thrive under such conditions.

“The majority of children locked up in Don Dale are on remand, so they have not been found guilty of any crime. Yet they are treated as criminals.

“While there are more children than ever being locked up in the Northern Territory, there continue to be reports of an escalation in youth crime.

“It’s clear the youth justice system in the Northern Territory is broken, it is not serving the best interests of the community and it is certainly not serving the best interests of children.

“The Northern Territory Government must close Don Dale now, reinvest funding into alternatives to detention for young people and work with the local community and organisations to deliver services to children and families that close the pathways to youth detention.”

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