

Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER)

12 Month Review

Terms of Reference

Introduction

An NTER Review Board convened by the Australian Government will undertake a review of the NTER. The members of the NTER Review Board will consist of persons with strong expertise in public policy and knowledge of the issues facing remote communities.

The Review will take into account both the original measures of the NTER announced in June 2007 and those adjustments made during the first 12 months. The original objectives stated that in the short term the NTER aimed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous children and in the longer-term the measures implemented would focus on ways to normalise arrangements within prescribed areas of the NT.

This goal was to be pursued by:

- improving community safety and access to health services
- ensuring better education and employment outcomes
- extending the mutual obligation framework to include responsibility for the care, education and development of children.

The objectives of the NTER were to be pursued through a combination of measures, designed to address the multifaceted nature of the response.

The review will invite public submissions and undertake consultations with Indigenous people. In undertaking this consultation the review will consider oral evidence and engage interpreters where appropriate. The Review Board will be assisted by an Expert Reference Group. The Review will analyse existing monitoring data and also commission its own data collection and research as appropriate.

Terms of Reference

The NTER Review Board will:

1. examine evidence and assess the overall progress of the NTER in improving the safety and wellbeing of children and laying the basis for a sustainable and better future for residents of remote communities in the NT, and in particular, in improving the education, health, community safety and employment outcomes for citizens, and particularly women and children, resident in remote communities and town camps in the NT;

2. consider what is and isn't working and whether the current suite of NTER measures will deliver the intended results, whether any unintended consequences have emerged and whether other measures should be developed or ways of working applied to better address circumstances facing remote communities in the NT; and
3. in relation to each NTER measure, make an assessment of its effects to date, and recommend any required changes to improve each measure and monitor performance.

In making these assessments and recommendations, the Review Board should give particular regard to the Government's intention that Indigenous interests be engaged to ensure effective policy development and implementation processes, and that policy and program measures to be adopted or endorsed by the Government give primacy to the interests of families and children and have regard to the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*.

The Review Board should also have regard to any relevant evaluation and review processes that may have already undertaken in relation to the NTER.

Reporting

The NTER Review Board will provide the Australian Government with a final report by 30 September 2008.

Expert Reference Group

An Expert Reference Group will be established as a source of expert advice for the NTER Review Board. The Expert Reference Group will include representatives of the Northern Territory Indigenous constituency (both male and female representatives) and independent experts in various fields such as policy evaluation, social policy, health, child welfare, legal arrangements and economic development.

Secretariat support

The NTER Review Board and the Expert Reference Group will be supported by a secretariat which will provide project management support. The secretariat will provide administrative services, assist with contract management for any supporting research and manage an internet site to provide a contact point for communities and interest groups on the progress of the review and a portal for written submissions.