



May 29, 2008

Reference group helps direct Department's efforts

A group that gives Aboriginal families and communities greater involvement in the way the Department for Child Protection supports Aboriginal people was officially launched yesterday.

The Aboriginal Reference Group (ARG) is made up of a chairperson and 14 community members from various parts of the State.

Department for Child Protection Director General Terry Murphy said the ARG was a recommendation of the 2007 Ford Review into the former Department for Community Development.

"The review recommended that an Aboriginal-specific reference group be created to provide advice on how the Department can work more effectively with Aboriginal people and organisations," he said.

"With Aboriginal children and young people heavily over-represented in child protection services, the ARG will help ensure the Department delivers appropriate support and services to the people who need them most."

Mr Murphy said about one third of the Department's clients and 41 per cent of children in State care in 2006-07 were Aboriginal, but Aboriginal children made up less than six per cent of the State's young people.

"The ARG will report directly to me and provide valuable input into policy development, fieldwork practice, staff development and training programs," he said.

"It will meet six times per year and be supported by the Department's Aboriginal Engagement and Coordination Directorate."

Members of the group were appointed by the Child Protection Minister for a two-year term.

Note to editors: One or more of the following ARG members live in your readership area. Please note the areas noted in brackets are sorted by DCP regions.

Chairman: Ted Wilkes (Perth);

Committee members:

Glenda Kickett (Midland);

Phil Narkle (Armadale/Cannington);

Dawn Wallam (Perth);

Harley Hayward (Mirrabooka);

Cheryl Kickett (Midland);

Heidi Mippy (Fremantle/Rockingham);

Eugenia George (Fitzroy Crossing/Halls Creek);

Vicki O'Donnell (Derby/Broome);

Tootsie Daniels (Roebourne/Karratha);

Julie Walker (Port Hedland/Newman);

Ashley Taylor (Geraldton);

Arthur (Sandy) Davies
(Geraldton/Murchison);

Vanessa Heng (Busselton);

Helen McNear (Shark Bay).

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