



CAALAS opposes children being detained in police lock ups

15 August 2017

Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS) and its Aboriginal Peak Organisations (APO NT) partners, are totally opposed to the Northern Territory Government's plan to amend legislation that will approve police watch houses as detention centres under the Youth Justice Act.

This plan is the Northern Territory Government's response to the impending closure of the Alice Springs Youth Detention Centre for refurbishment. The problem is where to detain children while they are being readied for movement to Darwin.

CAALAS is aware that the Northern Territory Government is trying to make Alice Springs watch house as youth friendly as possible. CAALAS says no amount of dress ups can hide the fact that a watch house is simply not a place to detain children.

CAALAS supports the creation of a youth appropriate, secure location in Alice Springs that can be approved as a temporary remand/ detention centre. This would provide a positive option into the future.

CAALAS is very concerned that the proposed legislative change will open up all police watch houses as youth detention centres. This would be a hugely retrograde step and contrary to what we have learnt in the recent Royal Commission.

CAALAS implores the Northern Territory Government to move quickly to provide a suitable place for short term detention in Alice Springs and shut the door forever on the idea of using police watch houses as youth detention centres.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Mr. Glen Dooley, Principal Legal Officer, 0419 234 606