



ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God Queen of Australia and Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth:

TO

The Honourable Margaret Jean White AO; and

Michael Lloyd Gooda

GREETING

WE do, by Our Letters Patent issued in Our name by Our Administrator of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia on the advice of the Federal Executive Council and under the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia, the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* and every other enabling power, appoint you to be a Commission of inquiry, and require and authorise you, to inquire into the following matters:

- (a) failings in the child protection and youth detention systems of the Government of the Northern Territory during the period since the commencement of the *Youth Justice Act* of the Northern Territory (the *relevant period*);
- (b) the treatment, during the relevant period, of children and young persons detained at youth detention facilities administered by the Government of the Northern Territory (the *relevant facilities*), including the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Darwin;
- (c) whether any such treatment during the relevant period may:
  - (i) amount to a breach of a law of the Commonwealth; or
  - (ii) amount to a breach of a law in force in the Northern Territory; or
  - (iii) amount to a breach of a duty of care, or any other legal duty, owed by the Government of the Northern Territory to a person detained at any of the relevant facilities; or

- (iv) be inconsistent with, or contrary to, a human right or freedom that:
  - (A) is embodied in a law of the Commonwealth or of the Northern Territory; and
  - (B) is recognised or declared by an international instrument; or
- (v) amount to a breach of a rule, policy, procedure, standard or management practice that applied to any or all of the relevant facilities;
- (d) both:
  - (i) what oversight mechanisms and safeguards (if any) were in place during the relevant period at the relevant facilities to ensure that the treatment of children and young persons detained is appropriate; and
  - (ii) whether those oversight mechanisms and safeguards have failed, or are failing, to prevent inappropriate treatment, and if so, why;
- (e) whether, during the relevant period, there were deficiencies in the organisational culture, structure or management in, or in relation to, any or all of the relevant facilities;
- (f) whether, during the relevant period, more should have been done by the Government of the Northern Territory to take appropriate measures to prevent the recurrence of inappropriate treatment of children and young persons detained at the relevant facilities and, in particular, to act on the recommendations of past reports and reviews, including:
  - (i) the Review of the Northern Territory Youth Detention System Report, of January 2015; and
  - (ii) the Report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner of the Northern Territory about services at Don Dale Youth Detention Centre, of August 2015;

- (g) what measures should be adopted by the Government of the Northern Territory, or enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, to prevent inappropriate treatment of children and young persons detained at the relevant facilities, including:
  - (i) law reform; and
  - (ii) reform of administrative practices; and
  - (iii) reform of oversight measures and safeguards; and
  - (iv) reform of management practices, education, training and suitability of officers; and
  - (v) any other relevant matters;
- (h) what improvements could be made to the child protection system of the Northern Territory, including the identification of early intervention options and pathways for children at risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour;
- (i) the access, during the relevant period, by children and young persons detained at the relevant facilities, to appropriate medical care, including psychiatric care;
- (j) any matter reasonably incidental to a matter mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (i).

AND We further declare that you are not required by these Our Letters Patent to inquire, or to continue to inquire, into a particular matter to the extent that you are satisfied that the matter has been, is being, or will be, sufficiently and appropriately dealt with by another inquiry or investigation or a criminal or civil proceeding.

AND, without limiting the scope of your inquiry or the scope of any recommendations arising out of your inquiry that you may consider appropriate, We direct you, for the purposes of your inquiry and recommendations, to consider the following matters, and We authorise you to take (or refrain from taking) any action that you consider appropriate arising out of your consideration:

- (k) the need to establish mechanisms to facilitate the timely communication of information, or the furnishing of evidence, documents or things, in accordance with section 6P of the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* or any other relevant law, including, for example, for the purpose of enabling the timely investigation and prosecution of offences;
- (l) the need to ensure that evidence that may be received by you that identifies particular individuals as having been subject to inappropriate treatment is dealt with in a way that does not prejudice current or future criminal or civil proceedings or other contemporaneous inquiries;
- (m) the need to establish appropriate arrangements in relation to current and previous inquiries, in Australia and elsewhere, for evidence and information to be shared with you in ways consistent with relevant obligations so that the work of those inquiries, including, with any necessary consents, the testimony of witnesses, can be taken into account by you in a way that avoids unnecessary duplication, improves efficiency and avoids unnecessary trauma to witnesses.

AND We direct you to make any recommendations arising out of your inquiry that you consider appropriate.

AND We appoint you, the Honourable Margaret Jean White AO, to be the Chair of the Commission.

AND We declare that you are a relevant Commission for the purposes of sections 4 and 5 of the *Royal Commissions Act 1902*.

AND We declare that you are authorised to conduct your inquiry into any matter under these Our Letters Patent in combination with any inquiry into the same matter, or a matter related to that matter, that you are directed or authorised to conduct by any Commission, or under any order or appointment, made by the Government or a Minister of the Northern Territory.

AND We declare that in these Our Letters Patent:

**child** means a person under the age of 18 years, and **children** has a corresponding meaning.

AND We:

- (n) require you to begin your inquiry as soon as practicable; and
- (o) require you to make your inquiry as expeditiously as possible; and
- (p) require you to submit to Our Governor-General a report of the results of your inquiry, and your recommendations, not later than 31 March 2017.

IN WITNESS, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent.

WITNESS the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC QC,  
Administrator of the Government of the Commonwealth of  
Australia.

Dated 2016

By His Excellency's Command

Administrator

Attorney-General