



**Hon Simone McGurk MLA**  
Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests;  
Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services

Our ref: 74-02552

Dr Sarah Palmer  
Principal Research Officer  
Education and Health Standing Committee  
Parliament of Western Australia  
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Dear Dr Palmer

Thank you for the correspondence dated 1 December 2017, which enclosed a letter from Ms J.M. Freeman, MLA, Chair of the Education and Health Standing Committee, regarding the provision of information on Recommendation 28 in Report No. 8, *Alcohol Restrictions in the Kimberley: A Window of Opportunity for Improved Health, Education, Housing and Employment*.

I apologise for the delay in responding.

As you would be aware, this recommendation was not supported by the then Government. I am advised by the Department of Communities (Communities) that it was not supported on the basis there were already thirteen Family Group Homes and three Residential Group Homes in the area and Communities had not identified the need for additional safe houses in the Kimberley for children at risk.

Since the Report of the Committee, a number of reforms and initiatives have been undertaken in the Kimberley region. Communities provides approximately \$16.8 million in funding to the community services sector in the Kimberley region for the provision of a range of services including:

- Homelessness accommodation and support services;
- Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services;
- Out-of-Home care services;
- Family and Domestic Violence accommodation and support services;
- Services for Young People at Risk;
- Secondary Family Support services;
- Community and Neighbourhood Development services;
- Parenting services;
- Volunteering Development services; and
- Financial Counselling services.

In addition, the development and implementation of a number of reform projects by Communities has seen changes and improvements in the child protection and family support area in the Kimberley region. Changes include:

- The introduction of the Signs of Safety Framework;
- Centralised Intake; and
- The implementation of the Aboriginal Services and Practice Framework.

In April 2016, the former Department for Child Protection and Family Support released *Building a Better Future Out-of-Home Care Reform in Western Australia* and in September 2016, *Building Safe and Strong Families – Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy*. These reforms aim to develop a system that improves the lives of children in care, and be responsive to the needs of vulnerable families to better support their children, with a particular focus on improving support for Aboriginal families.

Given this significant and ongoing reform, the Government is not currently considering the construction of a safe house in the towns listed. If the Committee requires more information on this matter contact Mr Scott Hollingworth, Interim Assistant Director General Strategy and Policy by telephone on 6552 1440.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely



HON SIMONE MCGURK MLA  
**MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION; WOMEN'S INTERESTS;  
PREVENTION OF FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE; COMMUNITY SERVICES**

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