



**Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLC**  
**Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food;**  
**Hydrogen Industry**

---

Our ref: 64-25976

Hon Peter Foster MLC  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
18-32 Parliament Place  
West Perth WA 6005

[env@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:env@parliament.wa.gov.au)

Dear Chair

**Petition No. 047 – Crime and anti-social behaviour across the Kimberley**

Your correspondence regarding the above petition has been forwarded to me to coordinate the Government's response. I have read the petition carefully, together with the supporting statements by the Principal Petitioner, Mr Harold Tracey, and by the tabling Member, Hon. Neil Thomson MLC.

I share the petitioner's deep concern and sense of urgency about the patterns of crime across the Kimberley region. Accounts of children and adolescents engaging in violent and extreme behaviour are by now all too common and well documented. They include ram raids against police vehicles and shops, extreme vandalism of community services, and instances of social media being used to coordinate "challenges" across the region.

The increasing severity of crime is damaging the region's economy in many ways. These include property damage, increased insurance costs, and greater difficulty attracting investment, workers and visitors to the region.

I agree with the petitioner's assessment that "urgent intervention and changes are required with a co-ordinated approach across Government agencies and the community." The need is both for an immediate response to crime, and for long-term, effective investments into improving the lives and prospects of young Aboriginal people and their families.

The Mc Gowan Government's Kimberley Youth and Community Justice Response is a \$40.4m package of investments, announced shortly after the tabling of the aforementioned petition. It includes the following measures:

- \$15 million towards an on-country residential facility to provide an alternative to detention, as well as \$500,000 to plan and develop other safe place proposals;
- \$4.3 million to expand the Government's successful Target 120 program to four new sites in the Kimberley (Broome, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and Derby);
- \$11.7 million to extend the Kimberley Schools Project to keep young people engaged with the education system;
- \$2.5 million for Operation Regional Shield, enabling police to deploy additional resources to parts of regional WA as required;
- \$2 million for the Kimberley Community Action Fund, which will provide grants to community organisations and businesses to improve security and fund initiatives to reduce crime;
- \$2 million to pilot an early intervention and intensive family support service for young people at risk;
- \$1 million to develop a business case for a Western Australia School of Agriculture in the Kimberley, to bolster training and employment opportunities for young people in the region.
- \$1.1 million to expand the Broome night patrol from 2 to 7 nights per week, and to enhance case management for young people in supervised activities.

These measures include an immediate focus on crime reduction, as well as longer-term preventative investments in family services and education. The immediate police response has been effective in the short-term. For example, by March 2022, property offences fell by around 50% from their peak in December and January in Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek.

We know police and prisons alone do not get to the heart of the problem. Young offenders are not inherently malevolent; their offending is a response to the absence in their lives of the structure, caring and purpose ordinarily provided by family, school, work, sport and community.

That is why the investments also include long-term preventative initiatives, many of which are being delivered in close partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

The Response represents an ambitious injection of resources into solutions that we know work, as well as piloting new approaches and partnerships.

Following the Response, two additional investments into youth wellbeing in the Kimberley have been made:

- \$33.98 million to establish five new residential care homes for vulnerable and at-risk youth (including three in the Kimberley and two in Geraldton), as well as an overall review of the residential care model; and

- \$868,000 from Lotterywest towards youth programs in Derby, and \$155,000 towards a Men's Wellness Centre in Derby to reduce family and domestic violence.

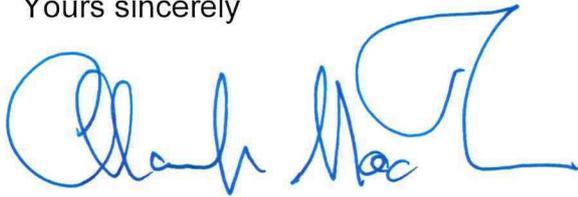
The Government has supported important work being done through the Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Operational Working Group (KAYW OWG), which includes representatives of the Aboriginal Regional Governance Group and seven WA Government Departments and Agencies. The Government remains committed to the

KAYW OWG as the primary vehicle for collaborative design and coordination of further investments into Aboriginal youth wellbeing in the Kimberley.

We are also actively working with Commonwealth counterparts to secure additional resources for Kimberley youth and safety initiatives, including through the new Government's commitment of \$79 million towards justice re-investment initiatives.

Empowering our young people to see a positive future for themselves will not happen overnight. It will require sustained effort over many years, with deep cooperation among all tiers of government, Aboriginal organisations, businesses and families and communities. We will continue to support the structures and identify the investments needed to make that happen.

Yours sincerely



**HON ALANNAH MACTIERNAN MLC  
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT; AGRICULTURE AND FOOD;  
HYDROGEN INDUSTRY**

**13 JUN 2022**