

FROM MEETING 14 NOVEMBER 2023

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY PREVENTION ALLIANCE (NTPA) HELD OUR EIGHTH MEETING AT DARWIN'S MOTOR SPORTS HOUSE, HIDDEN VALLEY RACEWAY

The Alliance brings together a diverse group of influential NT leaders committed to preventing harm to children and young people and promoting their welfare and wellbeing.

A range of issues was explored at the meeting, including the impact of child maltreatment on children and young people in the NT.

Prof Daryl Higgins, Australian Catholic University, presented on the AUSTRALIAN CHILD MALTREATMENT STUDY (ACMS)

- a landmark study of the national prevalence of all forms of child maltreatment, and associated health and behavioural outcomes.

Findings:

- **Child maltreatment is widespread** - 62% of Australians have experienced 1 or more types of maltreatment; 23% have experienced 3-5 types; abuse of girls is more prevalent; most maltreatment happens within family contexts

Experiencing child maltreatment:

- dramatically increases the likelihood of mental health disorders, and
- increases health risk behaviours (e.g. smoking, binge drinking, cannabis dependence, suicide attempts).

Recommendations:



- Recognise the **impact of lived experience** on clients and workers
- Be aware that children who **experience abuse are at high risk** of further harm
- Be child-focused, and **tailor support to risk factors, environments and times of risk**

- A **national survey** on what parents say they need to support them and protect their children.

Call for a National Summit to Prevent Child Maltreatment

- Prevention cannot be advanced through a **child protection lens** - leadership from other sectors such as Health, Education and Justice is vital
- Calling on the **Commonwealth Government** to host the summit.



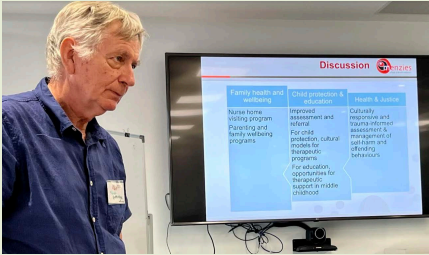
Campaign to change legislation to end corporal punishment

- **62.5% of adults** experienced corporal punishment as a child
- Corporal punishment places kids at **greater odds of mental health diagnoses**
- beliefs are changing - providing **opportunity for law reform** and public education

Prof Steven Guthridge, Menzies School of Health Research presented on:

- the **partnership** between the NT Government and Menzies' Centre for Child Development and Education to support research and evaluation that informs child and youth wellbeing policies and programs
- **linked data sets** on NT children and young people born since 1986 (including across health, education, child protection and youth justice).

Key findings:

- High rates of maltreatment for Aboriginal children are **associated with a high risk of offending, poor school attendance and self harm**
 - Clear **intersection of vulnerabilities for families and children across domains** such as mental illness, family violence, DFV, justice, school attendance and child protection reports
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- The image shows Prof Steven Guthridge standing next to a presentation screen. The screen displays a slide titled 'Discussion' with three columns of text:
- | Family health and wellbeing | Child protection & justice | Health & justice |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture home visiting program • Parenting and family wellbeing programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved assessment and referral • For child protection, cultural medicine, and justice programs • For education opportunities for transition, support in middle childhood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally responsive and trauma informed assessment & care • System and offender behaviour |
- The multi-system involvement of young people highlights the **importance of information sharing and inter-agency collaboration** and prevention responses across government and non-government agencies - such as family health and wellbeing, education, child protection, health and justice
 - **More studies are in the pipeline** to inform the work of the NTPA.

NTPA MEMBERS AGREED TO:

- **Promote the ACMS and NT data** within their respective agencies and use it for advocacy
- Revisit the **NT media messaging guides**, incorporating updated ACMS and NT maltreatment data
- **Invite youth groups to review them**, and include member contact details for guides and website
- Review the new **NTPA website** and **mission statement**
- Consider developing a **message guide on parenting** and review existing guides to increase focus on strengths
- Continue to **share positive stories** about young people and identify narratives for inclusion in NTPA resources.

The NTPA aims to harness the collective impact of key NT agencies and businesses to raise awareness of the needs and experiences of children, young people and families, and focus on wellbeing and prevention.