

APPENDIX 1

PROTOCOLS BETWEEN NT FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (FACS) AND CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

AGENCY REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

December 2006

1. Protocol for Report

Community Organisations will:

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK Reconnect, Tang, NPY, Congress, WALTJA	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
a) Relevant workers are trained in mandatory notification procedures - notifying FACS regarding training needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two organizations provide regular training • Remaining organizations identified need to for comprehensive training through their agency • MN is covered in some induction programs but is not part of regular training in many agencies • Organisations identified need for training of Management Committee members. • Training needs are ongoing for staff • Training is required for workers and for executive of agencies • Training should be prioritised for front line workers • Training is also required for other workers eg CDEP workers at Tangentyere 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular training sessions will be offered every 4 months by FACS. FACS has a training officer available to provide training. Training schedule to be arranged and distributed for the year. 2. Training sessions to be offered for both mandatory notification and protocol training. 3. NGO's to ensure that relevant staff are booked in and receive training 4. Training for organisations and their executive can be arranged by request 5. Training for additional workers can be arranged by request

<p>b) Have internal notification procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress/Waltja – have internal notification procedures but are reviewing them or have identified the need for review in the face of program changes • NPY - no documented internal practice and procedures about making notifications. Informally, all staff will seek advice before making a notification and some programs are required to copy all notifications to their manager. All relevant staff have regular case supervision and reviews where this is discussed.- no formal internal information sharing processes. This has been highlighted as an area of concern within the organization and one they aim to address in the near future. • Tangentyere & Reconnect – no response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO’S to review internal policies and procedures regarding mandatory notification and implement if not current
<p>c) Provide all relevant information to FACS as per child concern report form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All but one organisation is using this form • Identified need to train staff in use of form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol training will include use of the child concern report form • Supervisors to oversee that staff are using report form
<p>d) Inform the child or young person and caregiver(s) prior to making a report to FACS, where possible and appropriate</p>	<p>All agencies reported compliance however it was raised that some staff feel very uneasy about doing so and have requested training in how to do this effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training to be developed to assist staff
<p>e) Develop a procedure to consult with FACS if there is uncertainty about a notification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no clear procedures for agencies • This varied greatly among different organizations and program areas. Some programs report seeking advice from the FACS intake officer or team and others report discussing their concerns with other professionals such as ASH Pediatric Social Worker or the clinic. • NPY - Staff report that ‘if in doubt notify’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To use FACS intake officer without identifiable info and get advice. ▪ It is envisaged that the relationships between agencies will developed so that NGO staff can contact relevant FACS team leaders for advice

1. cont. FACS will:

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK - FACS
<p>f) Provide ongoing mandatory notification training for Community Organisation workers as required.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular training sessions will be offered every 4 months by FACS. FACS has a training officer available to provide training. Training schedule to be arranged and distributed for the year. 2. Training sessions to be offered for both mandatory notification and protocol training. 3. NGO's to ensure that relevant staff are booked in and receive training 4. Training for organisations and their executive can be arranged by request 5. Training for additional workers can be arranged by request
<p>g) Identify specific workers who are available to assist Community Organisations with their decision to notify or not.</p>	<p>FACS intake officer to provide advice to NGO's who provide un-identifiable information regarding a possible notification</p> <p>It is envisaged that the relationships between agencies will developed so that NGO staff can contact relevant FACS team leaders for advice</p>

2. Protocol for Intake

FACS will:

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK Reconnect, Congress, NPY	FEEDBACK FACS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
a) Ensure that all staff are trained in the intake procedures	Suggest that FACS provide training to NGO so than can develop a better understanding of FACS process	There is one intake officer. Training in intake procedures to be provided as part of orientation, CP and Mandatory Reporting training	1. Training in intake procedures to be provided as part of orientation, CP and Mandatory Reporting training. 2. Training of staff to include protocol and child concern report form
b) Provide feedback to reporting agencies:			
i) at point of report , or as soon as possible, about the decision to investigate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter from FACS was suggested • Currently agencies experience that FACS fail to ring back • Reports about decisions ranged from never to minimal information infrequently. 	<p>Written feedback will be provided to reporting agencies via OUTCOME OF NOTIFICATION and REFERRAL FORM.</p> <p>Until form in place, the intake worker will provide this feedback</p>	<p>1. Outcome of Notification Form to be developed and implemented by FACS by January 07</p> <p>2. Interagency Basic Referral Form to be developed and implemented by FACS for referral to NGO's – by January 07</p> <p>3. Review of forms and success of implementation to occur at Reference Group meeting</p>

ii) regarding progress of the investigation	NPY - Information is provided usually when worker contacts FACS seeking information.	As above	As above New Joint Case Management procedures to provide clear process for inclusion of relevant NGO's in progress of investigations
c) Consult with reporting agencies about any actions to be taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experience that this does not occur regularly and only occurs if FACS requires assistance ▪ Experience that some newer staff are better at this. ▪ Suggestion that a meeting be called for all agencies involved with the client or phone call if one agency is involved with the client 	NA	New Joint Case Management procedures to provide clear process for inclusion of relevant NGO's in progress of cases and actions to be taken
d) Identify other relevant agencies clients are involved with, therefore determining service provider/agencies to be involved.	This occurs irregularly and reports that it depends on FACS worker.	Part of Intake process	New Joint Case Management procedures to provide clear process for identification of relevant NGO's and services for cases
e) Involve relevant agencies in case planning and management	<p>Congress Under 2s meet with FACS fortnightly</p> <p>Occurs if initiated by NGO – not often initiated by FACS</p>	Next step	New Joint Case Management procedures to provide clear process for inclusion of relevant NGO's in case planning and management

3. Protocol for Investigation

FACS will:

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK Reconnect, Congress	FEEDBACK FACS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
<p>a) Call upon the experience and expertise of reporting agencies and relevant service providers for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family histories • Client background • Appropriate family and community contact points • Current situation and agency involvement • Interviews / investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to clarify confidentiality issues, the best way to convey this information • Does occur with some services but not all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will as much as possible utilise the expertise of other agencies. • Intake will also utilise other agencies expertise in these areas at the point of notification. • FACS to involve reporting agencies in case plan process. • Regular 3mth review thereafter. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Joint Case Management procedures to provide clear process for inclusion of relevant NGO's 2 Intake will also utilise other agencies expertise in these areas at the point of notification. 3 FACS to involve reporting agencies in case plan process. 4 Regular 3mth review thereafter.
<p>b) Accept the value and need of an independent child advocate and, where practicable,</p> <p>Ask the child/young person or carer if they want an advocate from a relevant Community Organisation in the interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure client understands role of an advocate. ▪ There is a need to train staff/workers for them to better understand their role as advocates, the expectations and the requirements of the role of an advocate. 	<p>Will do so unless if it does not compromise investigation as per Community Welfare Act.</p> <p>This to occur</p> <p>If NGO made report are they advocate or more of a support person.</p>	<p>There is an understanding of the role of advocates and the importance of their inclusion.</p> <p>There is a need to clarify joint understanding of advocates (roles, responsibilities) across all agencies</p> <p>Workshop and training regarding advocacy to be scheduled in the New Year for all organisations.</p>

3. cont. Community Organisations will:

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK Reconnect, Tangentyere, WALTJA	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
b) Accept the wishes of the child/young person or carer in relation to advocacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconnect - Need to put a mechanism in place to help the person identify an advocate • Tang - There are some circumstances where the level of child safety dictates how the practitioner responds in such circumstances. • Waltja -Fine 	<p>There is a need to clarify joint understanding of advocates (roles, responsibilities) across all agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop and training regarding advocacy to be scheduled in the New Year for all organisations
c) Clarify their role prior to the interview when a representative is acting as an advocate, and ensure that advocates who are present in child protection interviews are aware that they may be required to give evidence or produce documents in legal proceedings at a later date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waltja - Training is needed in this area • Tang - What if in interview the actions of other practitioners is in breach of a child's rights. • Cross sector training in Advocacy may be the most appropriate thing to do • Waltja - Hasn't happened yet but we can do it when required 	<p>There is a need to clarify joint understanding of advocates (roles, responsibilities) across all agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshop and training regarding advocacy to be scheduled in the New Year for all organisations
d) Provide relevant information to FACS for the purpose of child protection investigations.	<p>Only one organisation responded clearly to this protocol requirement. Waltja – Fine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need affirmation by NGO's regarding this section of the protocol ▪ NGO's to ensure their policies and procedures allow for this sharing of information

4. Protocol for FACS Referral to other Agencies

FACS acknowledges the needed value of referring to other agencies and will:

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK Reconnect, Congress, NPY	FEEDBACK FACS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
a) Indicate at the time of referral whether there is to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no ongoing FACS involvement; or • ongoing FACS involvement 	Writing is preferred method of referral Currently no referral from FACS occurring for one agency NPY reported very few referrals from FACS and if they do it is often for a very specific request with very minimal information about the client and their circumstances.	This to be clarified by FACS	Process for Referral: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phone Call is made to notify of intent of referral 2. FACS send a written referral on a standard interagency referral form providing basic referral information (to be developed by FACS in consultation with agencies) 3. If agency required more information they can request this from FACS Form to include FACS intent for ongoing involvement
b) Provide all relevant information when there is a referral for involvement of a Community Organisation.	Can be clarified during the case management section	FACS to provide all relevant information on referral	As above
c) Explain the reason for the referral and seek agreement from the child or young person and caregiver(s) where possible and appropriate prior to making a referral to Community Organisations...	Request to use the NGO's referral form.	FACS to consult with child/young person and caregivers prior to a referral to Community Organisations when appropriate and possible.	FACS to consult with child/young person and caregivers prior to a referral to Community Organisations when appropriate and possible

5 Protocol for Case Management

FACS will:

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK - FACS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
d) Be committed to joint case planning with relevant Community Organisations.	Looking at doing this better. To incorporate regular case meetings and reviews into casework practice. Team Leaders to monitor this.	New Joint Case Management procedures provide for this
e) Coordinate a case planning meeting with relevant Community Organisations upon identifying a child or young person as at ongoing risk of abuse and neglect, including an initial case conference where a case manager is appointed.	FACS to ensure this occurs. Who is appointed Case Manager is negotiable in CP cases.	New Joint Case Management procedures provide for this
f) Act as the case manager for a child or young person where the child or young person is in the care of the Minister.	FACS will comply with this as per Community Welfare Act	New Joint Case Management procedures provide for this with ability to include joint case managers with NGO's

5. cont. Community Organisations will:

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK Reconnect, Tangentyere, WALTJA	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
g) Be committed to joint case planning with FACS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reconnect - With roles clarified ▪ Tang - Yes ▪ Waltja - Can be difficult when field workers are out bush a lot 	New Joint Case Management procedures provide for this
h) Involve FACS in case planning when Community Organisations are acting as case managers for a child or young person who has been identified at risk by FACS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reconnect - In case of a FACS client to be a joint case management, between FACS and an NGO ▪ Tang - We should invite the department however they may not have the resources to attend. It should not hold cases up for too long ▪ Waltja - Assured of this although it is yet to happen 	New Joint Case Management procedures provide for this

6 Confidentiality

FACS and Community Organisations:

- a. FACS and Community Organisation employees are subject to the confidentiality provisions of the Community Welfare Act (1983) (Section 97(5)).

FACS:

- b. Confidentiality provisions of the Community Welfare Act do not prohibit FACS disclosure of information to Community Organisations as necessary for the purpose of protecting children and young people, and for the implementation of this protocol.

Community Organisations:

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK Reconnect, Tangentyere, WALTJA, NPY	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
c) Community Organisations confidentiality policies will not prohibit the disclosure of information necessary for the implementation of this protocol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tang - Clear for Tang Youth services departments and are reasonably compliant. However unclear with other departments e.g. Night Patrol especially those that had there beginnings out of Black Deaths in Custody report. ▪ Waltja - fine 	NGO's to ensure policies allow for appropriate disclosure in accordance with the intent of the protocol
d) Community Organisations will keep FACS informed of the appropriate contact person for the release of information regarding existing clients for the purpose of child protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tang currently looking at release of information policies ▪ Waltja - currently either Liz or Sharijn. Could include field workers who know communities and young people/children better. May vary on a case by case basis ▪ Clear guidelines of what could and should be disclosed and what shouldn't, and how information is shared would address this issue 	Release of information policies to be reviewed and updated in NGO's
e) Community Organisations will develop internal confidentiality policies and procedures in relation to child protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TANG - Safe Families procedures clear. However other departments need work ▪ WALTJA - Fine ▪ NPY - documented in the orientation manual and in individual orientation sessions. 	Policies to be reviewed in NGO's to ensure they are current

7 Grievance Procedures

FEEDBACK Reconnect, NPY	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
<p>NPY reported Most staff are aware of the grievance procedures but have not adhered to them. There was a general feeling that grievances were poorly dealt with and did not usually result in better outcomes/practices. However, last week I advised a staff member to go through the proper grievance procedure with an excellent outcome as a result.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Grievance procedure developed ▪ Training in the procedure and conflict management to be implemented in the New Year
<p>Reconnect: If needed, the workers directly involved with the yp might have to step aside, or might have to contribute through a mediator/representative/consultant to ensure the discussion remain objective and remain focused on the yp's needs.</p> <p>When there is a huge difference in the opinion of the parties involved about what needs to be done, a third party might need to be called to facilitate the process and to decide objectively what is best for the client.</p> <p>Staff need to be trained in conflict management and conflict resolution</p>	

8. Review of Protocol

RESPONSIBILITY	FEEDBACK FACS	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
a) This protocol will be reviewed after six months at a Reference Group Meeting, and thereafter annually. Where a signatory organisation raises concerns with the application of the protocol a Reference Group Meeting will be convened.	FACS to comply.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agencies to commit and review to the schedule 2. Outcomes and recommendations of this checklist and review to be considered at next review 3. Next review is to occur in June 2007 4. Implementation strategies will be reviewed 	
b) Reviews are to assess ongoing validity of the protocol document and accommodate any necessary revision.	FACS to assess ongoing validity of the protocol document in conjunction with Community organisations. Utilising Reference Group Meetings for this process.		
c) Revisions deemed necessary, must be the result of consultation and agreement between signatory organisations and will be placed in writing and provided to the Community Organisations and FACS.	FACS will comply with this process		
d) Responsibility to convene the annual reviews will lie with the Program Manager, FACS, Alice Springs.	Program Manager FACS to convene annual reviews		Program Manager FACS to convene review in June 2007
e) Other signatories may be added through the review process.	FACS to comply with this process		