

Many Colours 1 Direction September 2020

While public discussion and debate about the placement of Tasmanian children at Many Colours 1 Direction (MC1D) in the Northern Territory is important, we must acknowledge there is a real risk this may be done in a way which causes harm to the individual children involved.

It is incumbent on us all to ensure that where an issue is raised publicly, it is done so responsibly and in a way that does no harm to children.

I understand that Tasmanian children under the guardianship of the Secretary of the Department of Communities Tasmania may be placed with MC1D, a non-government organisation providing out-of-home care placements in the Northern Territory.

I understand these placements occur because no equivalent service of this type is available in Tasmania. This has been the case for some years now, under successive governments, and it is a situation that, in my view, should be rectified.

As I have previously stated in my October 2019 *Monitoring Report No. 1 – The Tasmanian Out-of-Home Care System and “Being Healthy”*, I am of the strong view that the Tasmanian Government should fund and facilitate the establishment of a similar service here in Tasmania.

An important part of my role is to monitor and provide a level of independent, external oversight of Tasmania’s out-of-home care system. It is important to acknowledge I do not have a complaint handling role and that my monitoring is systemic in nature.

My capacity to provide independent oversight of or to monitor the wellbeing of children and young people placed with MC1D is limited by the fact those children are interstate.

I cannot directly require a person or organisation outside Tasmania to provide me with information about the way they provide services to, and care for, the children placed with them.

I can only monitor the wellbeing of children placed with MC1D through requesting information from the Department of Communities Tasmania, which I have done.

In particular, I have requested information from the Department about the systems and processes it has put in place to oversee the wellbeing of children placed with MC1D.

I will continue to ask for relevant information to inform my out-of-home care monitoring program. Information most recently provided to me by the Department includes that children currently placed with MC1D report they are feeling well supported.

Leanne McLean
Commissioner for Children and Young People



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