



Joy Burch MLA

MINISTER FOR DISABILITY, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
MINISTER FOR AGEING
MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR WOMEN

MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Ms Roslyn Dundas
Director
ACTCOSS

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Dear Ms Dundas

Thank you for your letter of 9 December 2010, in which you have outlined ACTCOSS recommendations regarding the Working with Vulnerable People checking system. I note that, overall, ACTCOSS supports a centralised background checking system for the ACT.

The ACT Government is committed to improving background checking of people working with vulnerable people in line with the recommendations of several ACT reports and representations made by community groups.

I share ACTCOSS's opinion that background checking is just one component in approaches for protecting vulnerable people, and that it is most effective when systems are underpinned by sound risk management policies and practices. I also acknowledge concerns ACTCOSS has in relation to the impact the proposed system may have on ACT community organisations, in that support is required during the implementation phase.

In this respect, resources will be developed to assist organisations and applicants that have an educational and advisory focus. Organisations will also be provided with opportunities to provide feedback as part of the implementation process.

In relation to the recommendation to establish a multi-disciplinary panel to support the review of complex cases, under the current provisions of the Bill the Commissioner has the capacity to seek information or advice from any entity to assist the assessment process. I will however consider the viability of an independent panel as a component of the process.

Concerning your request to review associated instruments to the legislation, I intend that stakeholders are given an opportunity to comment on the draft notifiable risk assessment guidelines before debate of the Bill in early 2011.

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Responses from key stakeholders, including issues raised by ACTCOSS and feedback from participants at the Community Roundtable that I hosted on 29 September 2010, are being considered in the development of the risk assessment guidelines.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank ACTCOSS for your support of the checking system and continuing participation during the consultation process. This type of collaboration informs the development of sound policy and practice.

Yours sincerely



Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services

17 January 2011