

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY WELFARE DIVISION

MINUTE

TO: DIRECTOR

RE: REVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES
(SUBSTITUTE CARE & YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAMMES)

DATE: 13/3/79

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper contains proposals for the deployment of existing and proposed residential facilities, both within the Northern and Southern Regions. It is submitted that the proposed changes are necessary, in order that our programmes may become increasingly relevant to the needs of children and youth.

2. NORTHERN REGION

2.1 Substitute Care Facilities

The existing resources for the care of children in the Care of the Director are as follows :

Dundas House	- receiving home	(Darwin)
Harney House	- family home	(Darwin)
Chinnery House	- family home	(Darwin)
Ryan House	- family home	(Katherine)
O'Keefe House	- family home	(Katherine)
Sommerville Homes	- Uniting Church	(Darwin)
Retta Dixon	- A.I.M.	(Darwin)
Foster Care Programme		

2.1.1 Receiving Home, Darwin

Dundas House is a large institutional facility providing emergency and short-term care to young children. It provides dormitory-style accommodation and is staffed by residential staff on a shift-roster basis.

The impersonal nature of this type of care does not adequately provide the degree of nurturance and security which is essential to the satisfactory emotional adjustment and development of young children, even on a short-term basis.

It is proposed that the operation of Dundas House as a receiving home be discontinued. The functions which have been performed by Dundas House are to be continued by the development of alternative resources, as follows:

- the facility at Chapman Road, being leased from Sommerville Homes as a remand centre for juveniles (and soon to be vacated), is to be redeployed as a receiving home

staffed by house-parents, with the back-up support of Child Care Assistants, to be drawn from the present Dundas House establishment.

- . Chinnery House family home, which is presently being under-used, because of the imminent resignation of the house-parents, is to be used as a back-up receiving and temporary-care facility. The house-parents in this facility would also receive some relief and other support from the small pool of Child Care Assistants to be retained following the closure of Dundas House.
- . It is intended that the foster care programme is to be further developed to provide greater resources for emergency and short-term care of children.

What is envisaged, as a result of this re-organisation, is the provision of high quality substitute care services within family settings, as opposed to the sterile institutional environment which prevails at present and is inherent in a facility such as Dundas House. This will be achieved at a lower cost than at present because of lower staffing requirements and operational costs generally.

Some of the staff of Dundas House (i.e. a small number of Child Care Assistants) will be retained in their present capacity to form a pool of relief and resource personnel for the receiving home and other family homes operated by the Division. The other staff will need to be deployed elsewhere. Further proposals on this aspect will be forthcoming at a later date.

Dundas House itself is to be used as an attendance centre and is to form the focal point of the Youth Service Programme in Darwin. This is to be dealt with later in the submission.

2.1.2 Family Homes

- . Harney House, Darwin is to continue to operate as at present, but with the benefit of back-up from the Child Care Assistants.
- . Ryan House, Katherine is also to continue to operate as a family home. The matter of relief/support to the house-parents will also receive some attention.
- . O'Keefe House, Katherine is no longer operating as a family home and is currently being used by a community organisation as a day-care centre. It is not proposed that this facility be re-opened as a family home.
- . The denominational homes will continue to perform existing functions. Discussions have been carried out with the

Director of Sommerville Homes, concerning greater involvement of their facilities in the area of temporary or emergency care. This is to be developed further.

2.1.3 Foster Care Programme

Historically, foster care has not been developed to its fullest as an integral part of the Substitute Care Programme. It is recognised that the Darwin community, in particular, poses certain problems in this regard as it does not have the same stable permanent population from which foster parents are traditionally drawn in other communities. It is considered, however, that this population still exists in sufficient numbers, and will increasingly so in future, to justify concerted efforts at an expanded foster care programme. In fact this is vital as fostering is an important alternative which must be available for the short and long-term care of children. It is the only form of substitute care, apart from adoption, which reasonably approximates the normal family situation. An officer at Supervisor level is now working full-time on the foster care programme and will continue to do so.

2.2 Youth Service Facilities

The existing facilities for use in the Youth Services area are as follows:

Remand & Assessment Centre, Darwin (Malak)
 Chapman Road - temporary remand home, Darwin
 Youth Camp, Darwin River
 Youth Refuge, Tambling House, Darwin
 Palmerston Lodge - not being used (to be demolished)

2.2.1 Integrated Youth Services Programme

It is proposed that a variety of residential and non-residential facilities be utilised in a co-ordinated manner to provide a range of services directed towards the needs of juvenile offenders and other youth considered to be at risk.

The key elements of this programme would be :

- . Remand & Assessment Centre, Darwin
- . Day Attendance Centre
- . Youth Camp
- . Youth Residential
- . Community Youth Work Programme

The functions of each of these programme components will be detailed separately. An essential ingredient of the overall programme will be a pool of Youth Workers who will perform various functions across the whole range of services. The Youth Workers will be responsible to a Youth Work Supervisor based at the Day Attendance Centre. However, individual Youth Workers will not be attached to any particular facility, but will perform duties, as appropriate at any particular time, within any part of the programme's operations.

This inbuilt flexibility is essential if the total programme is to be responsive to changing needs in the Youth Services area.

2.2.2 Remand & Assessment Centre, Darwin

It is proposed that the facility at Malak be used for this purpose. It is not envisaged that this facility be used for the long-term detention of juveniles. The programme is to be geared for short-term detention and psychological assessment. It is designed as an open centre and will operate on minimum security basis, security being provided through supervision.

The centre is to be operated by a live-in married couple on contract. The couple would be responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre and care of the residents. It is intended that this will assist in approximating a normal family environment and, in doing so, provide the residents with a consistent set of parent-figures and adult-models. This would provide a far greater opportunity for the establishment of relationships within which personal growth, or the part of the residents, can be facilitated than does the present system involving residential staff on a roster.

Because of the heavy demands upon any couple undertaking this job, adequate back-up and support would be essential. This would include :

- . Domestic assistance and the services of a Cook.
- . Support and relief by Youth Workers. During the day most of the residents would be away from the Centre, at work, school or the Day Attendance Centre. However, additional support would be needed between the hours of 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. This would include the busy meal periods. There is also a need for somebody on duty to handle any problems during the night and arrange admissions.
One Youth Worker for each of the two 8 hour shifts during this period would be quite adequate.
- . At weekends additional Youth Workers would need to be rostered on duty to provide support and relief to the couple.
Relief could also be provided at other times when necessary.
- . The Psychologist should also be based at the Centre and will be responsible for the assessment programme. It is considered that the environment proposed will be far more conducive to a meaningful assessment process than is the environment provided in a traditional facility of this sort. It enables assessment to be partially based on the child's responses to a variety of situations for which there are parallels within the

wider community. This will be most valuable in terms of case planning.

2.2.3 Day Attendance Centre

A significant number of juveniles who come to the notice of the Division demonstrate a similar pattern of personal characteristics. These characteristics include a lack of basic life-skills necessary to function adequately within the community and a confused set of social values. The background to these characteristics can generally be traced to various forms of social deprivation associated with a poor quality parenting experience.

The purposes of a day attendance centre are to assist in the development of life-skills through involvement in a variety of educational, work preparation and recreational activities and to provide value orientation through experiencing a positive interaction with sound adult-models through the course of the programme.

The present facilities at Dundas House, with the very open style architecture, provide an ideal, centrally-located setting for such a programme. It is recommended that, following the closure of Dundas House as a receiving home, it be redeployed as a Day Attendance Centre.

The centre will be staffed by Youth Workers from this Division and an Education officer who has been provided for this purpose by the Department of Education. The Commonwealth Employment Service is also interested in the programme and will make an officer available to liaise with the centre. Referrals to the centre will be by way of court orders or by referral from other agencies (e.g. police, schools) or child's own family. It is hoped that the centre can play a preventative role by early referral, rather than waiting for a child to appear before the court.

2.2.4 Youth Camp

The Department owns a 40 acre block of land at Darwin River. It is intended to develop this as a Youth Camp to provide a range of outdoor recreational activities to supplement the programmes at the Remand & Assessment Centre and the Day Attendance Centre. The activities at the Youth Camp are to be conducted by Youth Workers who will take small groups of adolescents to the Youth Camp for varying periods of time. These would include both residents of the Remand and Assessment Centre as well as young people involved in the activities of the Day Attendance Centre. This would also serve a useful purpose in providing relief to the couple running the Remand and Assessment Centre, by occasionally taking the residents to the Youth Camp for weekends.

It is not envisaged that the Youth Camp would be in constant use for this purpose. During the times it is not being used, it will be feasible to allow other activities take place there. Access could be provided to community organisations for recreational purposes. Provision has been made in the Forward Estimates for 1979/ for the expenditure of \$60,000 on Capital Works in developing the Youth Camp and plus recurring operating and maintenance costs.

2.2.5 Youth Residential

Many of the young offenders who are regularly re-admitted to institutional care have a basic problem related to chronic homelessness or an unsatisfactory home environment. It is a totally inadequate response to detain these people for a few months and then release them back into the situation which is the very root cause of their behaviour.

In such cases, it is transitional care which is required until they are able to cope on their own in the community. The type of care should be geared to developing the coping mechanisms necessary to do this. A family home type environment would be best suited to this purpose, with some modifications in design to allow for the additional requirements of adolescents for privacy and personal space. By providing this type of facility, it is envisaged that the demands upon the Remand and Assessment Centre would be reduced and a positive environment provided for those juvenile offenders in need of alternative care.

The Forward Estimates for 1979/80 contain provision for the expenditure of \$90,000 for Capital Works plus recurring operational and maintenance costs for this facility.

2.2.6 Community Youth Work

Although this does not involve the use of a residential facility, it is an integral part of the overall programme to which the facilities relate. Youth Workers will be involved in work with young people in the community and, in particular, to seek out accommodation and employment opportunities in the community, for those people involved in the programme. Special priority will be given to the needs of those in the residential facilities. This aspect of the Youth Work Programme will be particularly relevant to the overall aim of assisting young people to function adequately within the wider community.

2.3 Staged Implementation of Northern Region Programmes

Because the programmes described above involve changes in the use of different facilities, some problems arise in implementation. They are as follows :

- . It is not feasible to open the Remand & Assessment Centre

in the manner suggested without the Day Attendance Centre to provide the range of day-time activities suggested.

- . Dundas House can not be used as a Day Attendance Centre until its present functions are transferred elsewhere.
- . The Chapman Road facility, which is to fulfil the major part of the receiving home function presently performed at Dundas House, will need substantial repairs before it can be used for this purpose.

A suggested timetable for implementation is as follows :

Stage I (March)

- . Temporarily transfer the Chapman Road remand functions to an alternative site. Palmerston Lodge, which is to be demolished later this year, is being investigated for this purpose.
- . Commence repairs to Chapman Road.
- . Locate Psychologist at Malak to commence the assessment programme at that facility.
- . Commence a small scale Day Attendance programme at Malak for residents of the remand home.
- . Advertise the following positions :
 - a) House parents for Receiving Home;
 - b) Resident couple to manage Remand & Assessment Centre;
 - c) Youth Workers;
 - d) Youth Work Supervisor

State II (May-June)

Having completed repairs to Chapman Road and abovementioned recruitment programme :

- . Open Remand & Assessment Centre, Malak;
- . Transfer Receiving Home to Chapman Road;
- . Commence Day Attendance Centre at Dundas House;
- . Commence development of Youth Camp.

2.4 Staffing

The remaining issues to be resolved relate to relocation of staff

- . The current Group Workers, will, of course, apply for the Youth Worker positions but may not all be suitable. Some may need to be relocated in other sections of the Department.
- . Some Child Care Assistants from Dundas will continue to be employed in that capacity, providing relief and support in the various family homes. Other Dundas staff will, however, require redeployment also.
- . Generally it is not envisaged that the matter of redeployment will cause major problems. Careful attention will be given to the task of placing people in positions compatible with their abilities and preferences.

- . In terms of overall establishment there will be a saving of positions. The size of the pool of Child Care Assistants required for relief purposes in Darwin will be four. Two positions might be allocated to Alice Springs and one to Katherine. Thus seven A1 positions will fulfil the back-up residential care requirements as opposed to a total establishment of sixteen positions presently at Dundas House and a similar establishment which would be required if another receiving home were to be opened at Alice Springs along traditional lines. In staffing terms alone, the costs of family home care and foster care is drastically less than that of institutional care.
The present Chapman Road establishment will be adequate for the Youth Work Programme. Therefore, in establishment terms, the surplus positions available for redeployment as a result of these changes will be 2 x A4; 2 x A1; 4 x Domestics; 1 x Cook.
In the short term the actual number of people needing redeployment might be slightly more.

3. SOUTHERN REGION

Existing resources in the Southern Region are as follows:

- . Giles House
- . Family Home, Park Crescent, Alice Springs
- . Family Home, Forrest Crescent, Alice Springs
- . Bradshaw House, Alice Springs
- . Family Home, Tennant Creek
- . St. Mary's Homes, Alice Springs (Anglican Church)

3.1 Giles House

This is a medium-size assessment and training centre for juvenile offenders. It contains provisions for the secure detention of juveniles and is a modern example of the traditional design for juvenile detention facilities. Because of design factors, Giles House could not be staffed other than with residential workers on a shift basis. This is not necessarily a negative factor, however, as it is quite a good facility of its type, both in terms of design and the programme being operated there.

In fact we are to be provided, in the Territory, with the unique opportunity to evaluate the relative effectiveness of a well-run traditional facility such as Giles House, on the one hand, and the range of new approaches being developed in Darwin, on the other. There is seen to be considerable value in continuing the operation of Giles House along basically the same lines as at present.

3.2 Family Home, Park Crescent

This is the only Departmental family home being operated for that purpose in Alice Springs at present. It is performing a valuable function and will continue to do so.

3.3 Family Home, Forrest Crescent

This family home has been temporarily closed. It is to be re-opened for a different purpose. A number of residents of Giles House have been there for quite some time, mainly because of lack of suitable alternative accommodation.

This is quite unsatisfactory, both in terms of the overcrowding resulting at Giles House and, most importantly, of the socially crippling effects of long-term institutionalisation. The institution-dependence which this can create in these crucial years of a young person's life can be an important causal factor in prison-recidivism in later years.

The response to the needs of these young people is to be the re-opening of the Forrest Crescent facility to provide family-type transitional care to adolescents, as an alternative or sequel to admission to Giles House, in appropriate cases.

3.4 Receiving Home, Alice Springs

Bradshaw House, the former receiving home for young children, was closed when it became unsuitable for that purpose due to deterioration.

tion in physical condition of the facility. It is presently being used by the Homemaker Service and is proving quite suitable for that purpose.

Original plans were to build another receiving home, on the same scale as Bradshaw House, as a replacement. Present plans are to use family home care for this purpose, as is also intended in Darwin.

This will necessitate the construction of another family home Alice Springs. The 1979/80 Forward Estimates provide for capital expenditure of \$90,000 and recurrent operational and maintenance costs.

3.5 Family Home, Tennant Creek

This facility is not being used at present. It is not intended that it be re-opened as a family home as there is insufficient need to justify this. Alternative uses are being considered. Children needing substitute care in Tennant Creek will be quite adequately catered for by the foster care programme.

4. REMAINING PROBLEMS

This paper is a starting point, dealing basically with the use of existing resources. It by no means pretends to provide solutions to all the problems facing us in the Youth Services and Substitute Care areas. However, by rationalising the use of those resources already at our disposal, it will be possible to develop a clearer picture of where we need to go from here.

There are two very obvious problem areas which remain and which demand further attention.

4.1 Aboriginal Juvenile Offenders and State Wards

Aboriginal children are grossly over-represented in our facilities at present. It needs to be stated quite clearly that the answers to Aboriginal juvenile delinquency and child neglect do not lie in removing Aboriginal youths and children from their communities and placing them in our facilities. If the stereotyped institutional response to juvenile crime has been generally unsuccessful in relation to the European community, it has been an abject failure in relation to Aboriginal children. The lessons of history have been quite clear also, in relation to the penal settlement approach with Aboriginal offenders, as can be witnessed by the disastrous Breman Island experiment.

The nature of the relationship of the Aboriginal person to his kinship group and the land they occupy makes any attempts at socialisation outside of that context quite futile. For this reason it is imperative that we direct our attention to the task of assisting Aboriginal communities to develop their own responses to these problems. In this lies the only hope to any long-term solutions. It is worthy of note that recent Conferences of Social Welfare Administrators have been addressing the issue of finding ways to involve Aboriginal people in planning services appropriate to their needs.

These issues will need to be given high priority by the Aboriginal Community Work Programme. With the advent of Community Government Aboriginal communities will be in a position to expand their own activities in this area.

4.2 Security Detention of Juveniles in Darwin

There are many issues which need to be resolved before we will be in a position to plan for appropriate facilities in Darwin for those juvenile offenders needing security detention.

It will first be necessary to evaluate the results of the new innovations in the Youth Services Programme and, in particular, their effectiveness in reducing the need for security facilities. Having thus established the extent of the need, it will then be necessary to examine those social, psychological and other relevant characteristics common to those juveniles requiring security detention in order to develop proposals consistent with their particular needs.

To enable proper planning to occur, in this regard, the item originally on the 1979/80 Forward Estimates for the construction of a "security facility for juveniles" has been deferred until the following financial year.

In accordance with your instructions, a staff working party has commenced examining these issues.

5. RECOMMENDATION

It is requested that this paper be submitted to the Minister for his consideration of the proposals contained herein.



(T.W. Simpson)
Assistant Director (Welfare Services)