



## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Parliament House  
State Square  
Darwin NT 0800

GPO Box 3146  
Darwin NT 0801

### REPORT TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Pursuant to section 46B of the *Coroners Act 1993*

In the matter of the Coroner's Findings and Recommendations regarding the deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurk, Kumarn Rabuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood

---

Pursuant to section 46B of the *Coroners Act 1993* (the Act), I provide this Report on the findings and recommendations of Local Court Judge Elisabeth Armitage, Territory Coroner, dated 25 November 2024, regarding the death of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurk, Kumarn Rabuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood (the Deceased persons) (Attachment A refers).

The report includes a Whole-of-Government response to the recommendations of the Territory Coroner.

All deaths involved are Aboriginal women and are subject to domestic and family violence.

Miss Yunupingu, a 29 year old, was stabbed to death by her partner at a residence in Palmerston on 4 October 2018.

Ngeygo Ragurk, a 40 year old, was tortured by her partner at Darwin's Mindil Beach and died on 24 December 2019 as a result of the injuries inflicted.

Kumarn Rabuntja, a 46 year old, was deliberately and repeatedly run over by her partner in the Alice Springs Hospital Emergency Department car park and died as a result of her injuries the same day, on 7 January 2021.

Kumanjayi Haywood, a 34 year old, was burnt to death by her partner of 20 years who set fire to the bathroom she was hiding in, at a Town Camp in Alice Springs on 7 November 2021.

## **Recommendations of the Coroner**

The Coroner made the following formal recommendations in regards to the death of the Deceased persons.

### **Recommendation 1:** *Permanent DFSV-ICRO*

The NT Government should establish a sustainable permanent DFSV whole-of-government coordination mechanism (DFSV-ICRO) to lead consistent and evidence-based DFSV policy and practice, and health, housing and community services to address DFSV. A sustainable, inter-agency DFSV policy lead unit should be a whole-of-government structure to oversee system performance, policy development and implementation.

The DFSV-ICRO mechanism should continue to produce an annual report to the Minister to be published online, including through a visual report card. This annual report should include relevant DFSV statistics and information about the implementation of these recommendations.

### **Recommendation 2:** *Peak body*

Following consultation about the appropriate model, the NT Government should establish and adequately fund a peak body for DFSV in the NT. This expands on action 4.12 of Action Plan 2.

### **Recommendation 3:** *Workforce planning*

The NT Government should consider amending the DFSV Workforce and Sector Development Plan to make explicit reference to engagement of the local university and local communities, so that a) the strategy attracts Aboriginal workers, b) local Territorians can be attracted, trained and retained in the areas of need and c) interstate and international workers with the requisite expertise can be attracted, trained and retained in the areas of need.

Noting the existence of the DFSV Workforce and Sector Development Plan (and particularly Focus Area 2, Action 8). The NT Government should produce a short report at least annually, to be published online, in relation to workforce recruitment and retention strategies addressing the needs of the DFSV workforce.

### **Recommendation 4:** *Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS)*

The NT Government should increase investment in the AIS (funding, training and support) and devise a short, medium and long-term plan to attract, train, and retain interpreters.

### **Recommendation 5:** *Evidence-based alcohol intervention strategy*

In order to reduce the victimisation of Aboriginal people, particularly women and children, the NT Government should develop and enforce an evidence-based strategy to reduce alcohol availability, taking into account that alcohol increases the frequency and severity of DFSV and reducing alcohol availability has a significant impact on reducing DFSV.

**Recommendation 6:** *Specialist alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation*

The NT Government should increase investment in specialist alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation services, including ambulatory care (medical services performed on an outpatient basis, without admission to hospital or another facility), respite and behavioural change services.

**Recommendation 7:** *Co-responder model*

As a matter of urgency, the NT Government should provide further and sufficient funding to the current Alice Springs co-responder pilot (NT Police and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) DFSV Co-responder model) to guarantee its full implementation and independent evaluation. The model must involve victim survivors (including children) as well as perpetrators. Adequate funding (inclusive of independent evaluation) should be provided so that this model can be evaluated, replicated and implemented in other regions. This expands on action 3.6 of Action Plan 2.

In addition, the NT Government should consider the development and implementation of further Co-responder models, including:

- i. consideration of models based on the success of the Queensland models; and
- ii. consideration of NT Police partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to develop a community-led Co-responder model to incidents of domestic and family violence in remote NT communities.

**Recommendation 8:** *Information sharing through Supportlink*

NT Police should:

- i. conduct a review of Supportlink's operational protocols in the context of the legal allowances for information sharing under the DFSV framework; and
- ii. review and enhance NT Police training in the use of Supportlink, including when a referral should be made and the information to include in a referral.

**Recommendation 9:** *Multi-Agency Protection Service (MAPS)*

The NT Government should consider establishing a Multi-Agency Protection Service (MAPS), modelled on the South Australian initiative so as to formalise a partnership between the NTPF and other relevant government departments.

**Recommendation 10:** *Embedding of Interpreters and/or Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALOs) in JESCC*

The NT Police should:

- i. employ interpreters and/or ALOs in JESCC to provide language and/or cultural skills to assist callers to communicate more effectively;
- ii. embed the role of Aboriginal language speakers within JESCC's operating procedures; and
- iii. improve training for JESCC call takers to know when to ask if a caller would like the assistance of an interpreter.

**Recommendation 11:** *PART training*

The NT Government should specifically fund, and NT Police should provide PART training to all current NT police officers, auxiliaries and new recruits, as well as JESCC staff, including police and auxiliaries.

**Recommendation 12:** *A permanent NT Police DFSV Command*

The NT Police should:

- i. Commit to a significantly expanded and appropriately resourced DFSV Command in Alice Springs and Darwin headed by an Assistant Commissioner, with permanent DFSV positions.
- ii. Commit to ensuring that priority will be given to continuity of DFSV staff, with guidelines, policies and procedures amended (in consultation with the current Command and NGO sector) to recognise the necessity of maintaining staff continuity.
- iii. Commit to a training unit within the DFSV Command, with staff whose role would include a) liaising with the PART coordinator to make sure that delivery is occurring as planned; b) recording and incorporating into training the lessons from the Family Harm Coordination Project (see below); and c) ensuring NT Police are aware of best practice in response to DFSV.

**Recommendation 13:** *Family Harm Coordination daily auditing program to be expanded*

The Family Harm Coordination Project daily auditing program should receive continued funding and be expanded across the Territory.

**Recommendation 14:** *Continued commitment to Safe and Together Framework*

DCF should demonstrate its continued commitment to the Safe and Together Framework by conducting an audit into the implementation of the Framework, to ensure that the roll out has been effective and complete.

**Recommendation 15:** *Young people engaged in violence*

The NT Government should fund, and DCF should develop and implement, timely and intensive early interventions for young people who are reported as being involved in DFSV (as victims or perpetrators), consistent with the Safe and Together Framework and in an attempt to prevent further DFSV.

These should be in addition to existing programs. This expands on an existing action 3.10 of Action Plan 2.

**Recommendation 16:** *Community-based approaches to child welfare*

The NT Government should provide additional funding for existing and developing community-based approaches to child welfare (such as the Mikan Child Protection Reference Group in East Arnhem) and for research into how community models may be expanded to increase the safety and wellbeing of children in remote NT communities.

**Recommendation 17:** *Specialist DFSV Court*

The NT Government should provide increased funding to allow for an expansion of the specialist court approach in Alice Springs to other courts (prioritising Darwin and Katherine) and to adapt the model for bush courts. This expands on existing AP2 actions 2.2(a-e). The increased funding should be sufficient to enable:

- i. Funding of the suite of services required to support the work of the court, including victim support and risk assessment, offender support and risk assessment and behaviour change programs (including partner contact services), and legal advice and representation for both parties.
- ii. Following the commencement of the *Sentencing Legislation Amendment Act 2023*, adaptation of the current specialist court model, particularly in relation to the introduction of new community based orders and the requirement of the court to consider whether there is unacceptable risk of DFSV in sentencing.
- iii. A trial to determine the extent to which restorative justice practices can be safely incorporated into the model.

**Recommendation 18:** *Culturally appropriate, trauma informed, mediation / peacekeeping for family and community violence.*

The NT Government should fund and ensure trained (including some PARt and RAMF trained) mediators are available to work in conflict resolution processes relating to family and domestic disputes. Adequate funding should include provision for remuneration, training, coordination and exchange of information, and the investigation of opportunities to fund law and justice groups to support, participate in or lead mediations. Peacekeeping groups should include both cultural and DFSV expertise.

**Recommendation 19:** *ADR recognition for Community-led mediation and peacemaker groups*

Community-led mediation and peacemaker groups operating in remote NT communities should be recognised, regulated, and funded by the NT Government as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) service providers, with their consent.

**Recommendation 20:** *Alternatives to custody for perpetrators of domestic and family violence*

The NT Government should commit to enhancing, developing and funding alternatives to custody for perpetrators of domestic and family violence within the NT.

**Recommendation 21:** *The NT Victims Register to be an opt-out system*

The operation of the NT Victims Register should be reviewed to consider whether it should be as opt-out system of registration. Such a review should consider how the Register can be used to notify victims of the release of inmates to “time served” and those inmates dealt with under the provisions of Schedule IIA of the Criminal Code.

If those changes are made, the NT Government should provide CVSU with a corresponding increase in funding.

**Recommendation 22:** *Update to NT Charter of Victims' Rights*

The NT Government should consider whether the Charter of Victims' Rights should be embedded as a new Part 5A of the *Victims of Crime Rights and Services Act 2006* (NT).

**Recommendation 23:** *Funding for men's prison-based behaviour programs and counselling*

The NT Government should ensure increased and long term funding is allocated for behavioural change programs and counselling in prisons, inclusive of independent evaluation of the effectiveness of those programs. This *should not* be done at the expense of funding for offence specific programs, such as the RAGE program. This expands on Action Plan 2 action 2.1c.

**Recommendation 24:** *Criteria for men's prison-based behaviour programs and counselling*

The criteria for entry into men's prison-based programs and counselling should be revised to improve accessibility, particularly for the large cohort of inmates on remand and those with disabilities.

**Recommendation 25:** *Men's prison-based behaviour programs for deniers*

The NT Government should urgently fund the development and implementation of a program for 'preparatory' counselling and/or programs to target men who are reluctant to accept responsibility for violent behaviour.

**Recommendation 26:** *DFSV specific throughcare and reintegration*

The NT Government should provide long-term funding to establish specific Throughcare and reintegration programs for men leaving prison and returning to community, and support for their partners. The programs should be centred around the Risk Assessment and Management Framework (RAMF) so that the safety of women is paramount. If it is safe to do so, these programs should occur on country.

**Recommendation 27:** *DFSV screening and assessment of health clients*

NT Health should:

- i. continue to improve and increase its screening of clients for DFSV, with priority given to antenatal and emergency service clients, and amend any policy or procedures necessary to embed this change;
- ii. implement and enhance training to ensure that this screening is undertaken by employees who have had DFSV training, cultural competency training, anti-racism training and training in using AIS interpreters. It is important that these social workers be trained in DFSV risk assessment and safety planning for clients identified with DFSV through the screening process;
- iii. develop policies that encourage its staff to report a suspected case of DFSV to Police, even where a patient claims to have already reported it, with related training about the importance and value of these reports; and

- iv. raise staff awareness and give staff the tools and structures to assess and manage risk by engaging in and funding the PART Consortium to pilot DFSV (PART and RAMF) training for NT Health workers, including Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALOs).

**Recommendation 28:** *Aboriginal Liaison Officers in hospitals and clinics*

The NT Government and NT Health should ensure that the terms of remuneration and supports for ALOs in hospitals are increased in recognition of their unique expertise and the crucial cultural role they provide for clients and staff, including support provided to clients with DFSV.

**Recommendation 29:** *Men's community-based programs and prevention related activities*

The NT Government should increase funding for existing behavioural change programs and other community-driven DFSV programs for men, to improve their current capacity and to provide for delivery of programs into additional locations (including remote communities according to identified need), and for independent evaluation of all programs. These should include culturally appropriate prevention related activities. Where possible, each of these programs should be developed and delivered by or in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. This expands on Action Plan 2 action 2.1b.

**Recommendation 30:** *Education*

The NT Government should invest in the development of culturally appropriate prevention and education programs, initially in schools, but also in the wider media, including social media, so that young people have the opportunity to learn about DFSV and interpersonal violence (IPV) and, conversely, respectful relationships. This builds on Action Plan 2 action 1.1.

**Recommendation 31:** *DFSV training for clubs and pubs*

The NT Government should retain an independent service provider and fund a training package in 'becoming domestic and family violence aware' (similar to that provided by Dr Chay Brown to the Gillen Club), that is funded by NT licensed clubs and can be rolled out to all clubs and other licenced premises. Such training may be mandated or incentivised as part of the licensing Scheme.

**Recommendation 32:** *Banned Drinker Register (BDR) scanners*

To give effect to s138 *Liquor Act*, the NT Government should impose a mandatory 12-month trial of the use of BDR scanners in licensed venues to screen patrons who intend to consume liquor on the premises, and should evaluate the trial to determine its efficacy. If the trial is evaluated to be ineffective, consideration should be given to amending the terms of s138 of the *Liquor Act*.

**Recommendation 33:** *Full Implementation of NT DFSV Action Plan 2*

The NT Government should fully implement Action Plan 2 (to be read with the associated Mapping Report) as developed and costed by the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Interagency Coordination and Reform Office (DFSV-ICRO) (that is, at the cost of at least \$180 million over five years, and ongoing funding of \$36 million per annum, adjusted for inflation to account for the years since the DFSV-ICRO made its submission).

**Recommendation 34:** *Increase to core funding*

The NT Government should increase the baseline funding for frontline DFSV crisis services (for example but not limited to safe houses, outreach support for women and children experiencing DFSV; counselling and healing services) by a figure in the order of 10%, to address the quantified lack of core funding which results in unmet need.

**Recommendation 35:** *Indexation*

With respect to frontline DFSV services, the NT Government guidelines should be amended so that grant funding terms and conditions explicitly include indexation that is commensurate with real cost of living increases, and ensure those services are exempt from (what are referred to by the Government as) “efficiency dividends” and “budget measures”.

**Responses to Coroner’s recommendations**

A copy of the Coronial Findings was provided to the CEO’s of CM&C, DoH, AGD, Acting CEO of DCF, Acting Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of DoC on 22 January 2025, in accordance with section 46A(1) of the Act.

All agencies responded to the Coronial Findings with the final response received on 15 May 2025 as required by section 46B(1) of the Act. Included in the responses was a written response from the Acting CEO of DCF, advising that the whole of government response was as follows:

**Recommendation 1**

Supported in principle consistent with existing whole of government unit in DCF. New investment through 2025 Budget allocation.

**Recommendation 2**

Not supported. DCF funds 2 DFSV Policy Officers based in the sector and has prioritised the DFSV Training and Resource Centre as a critical element to sector development and retention.

**Recommendation 3**

Supported within existing resources. Industry development requires expertise from other agencies and DCF would seek support from the Department of Industry / Business on implementing this recommendation.

**Recommendation 4**

Supported in principle through existing resources and Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment funding.

**Recommendation 5**

Supported through existing resources under the remit of the Reducing Crime Standing Committee.

**Recommendation 6**

Supported through existing resources. NT Health has convened an Alcohol Treatment Collaborative as part of the Tackling Problem Drinking Election Commitment.

**Recommendation 7**

Supported. Resourcing through 2025 Budget allocation alongside National Partnership Agreement funding.

**Recommendation 8**

Supported. To be funded through existing resources.

**Recommendation 9**

Supported. To be funded through existing resources.

**Recommendation 10**

Supported. Funding through existing resources. Community Resilience and Engagement Command (CREC) staff and additional Aboriginal language speakers have been embedded into the JESCC.

All JESCC officers have been trained in the use of AIS functionality through JESCC day training. CREC, Digital Transformation and Reform and NT Police Media, Corporate Communications and Engagement Division has developed a Triple Zero Strategy to educate the community on the appropriate use of 000 that will be supported by embedding language speakers in the JESCC call centre. Ongoing recruitment by AIS is increasing the cohort of approved

**Recommendation 11**

Supported. Funding through existing resources. PARt training is ongoing for all recruit squads through the delivery of face-to-face training to all recruits which commenced in January 2024.

**Recommendation 12**

Supported. Funding through existing resources. NT Police underwent an organisational re-structure, establishing the DFSV and Youth Command. The expansion of specialised resourcing includes: the introduction of DV Senior Sergeants embedded in the JESCC; implementation of the DV Training and Auditing Cells; and the transfer of SF Lyra into the DV Sex Crimes Division in Darwin.

**Recommendation 13**

Supported. To be funded through existing resources.

**Recommendation 14**

Supported. To be funded through existing resources.

**Recommendation 15**

Supported. New investment through 2025 Budget allocation. DCF has established Circuit Breaker, which is operational in Big Rivers, Central Australia and Greater Darwin. Expansion of the program is planned for Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy.

**Recommendation 16**

Supported. Funding through existing resources. Recommendation is in line with commitments under Safe and Supported, National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 relating to place base, community led responses to child protection and is consistent with Target 12 of Closing the Gap and aligned to the NTRAI. Work is underway implementing Safe and Supported through nationally agreed Action Plans staged over the 10 years of the plan.

**Recommendation 17**

Supported. New investment through 2025 Budget allocation, alongside National Partnership Agreement funding.

**Recommendation 18**

Supported in principle, noting this would require a whole new model of operation for the Community Justice Centre.

**Recommendation 19**

Supported in principle, noting existing services are run through the CJC, NT Government.

**Recommendation 20**

Supported in principle, noting the current ATCs are not specific to perpetrators of DFV.

**Recommendation 21**

Supported in principle, subject to appropriate funding and legislative reform, noting the significant reform in practice required and IT system support.

**Recommendation 22**

Supported in principle, subject to appropriate resourcing.

**Recommendation 23**

Supported. New investment through 2025 Budget allocation.

#### **Recommendation 24**

Supported through existing resources and new investment through 2025 Budget allocation. DoC confirm that the criteria for entry into the DFV FVP has been amended, such that prisoners on remand are able to undertake the program (in both Darwin and Alice Springs Correctional Centres). DoC have reduced the sentence length eligibility criteria for entry into the RAGE program from 24 or more months to serve, to 12 or more months to serve, increasing program accessibility. Further, DoC are now also delivering the RAGE program in Alice Springs Correctional Centre in addition to the Darwin Correctional Centre meaning offenders no longer need to transfer to Darwin to undertake the program.

DoC have employed Aboriginal Program Facilitators who work alongside clinicians to deliver the RAGE program to improve the cultural responsiveness of DFSV programs.

#### **Recommendation 25**

Supported through existing resources and new investment through Budget 2025 allocation.

#### **Recommendation 26**

Supported. A new throughcare / end-to-end case management model is currently being developed aimed at increasing successful rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into the community after their release from custody. The model will consider this recommendation in its development.

#### **Recommendation 27**

Supported in principle, excluding point (iv). New investment through 2025 Budget allocation.

Recommendations i) to iii) are underway through implementation of the NT Health DFSV Clinical Guideline for culturally safe response to DFSV, developed by and for clinicians and health workers, with input from a range of government and non-government stakeholders and those with lived experience.

#### **Recommendation 28**

Supported in principle through existing resources. ALOs are employed in a number of NT Public Sector agencies, and their remuneration reflects responsibilities and role descriptions. There are currently 55 Full-Time Equivalent ALO positions in NT Health - of these 39 are filled and 16 are vacant.

#### **Recommendation 29**

Supported. New investment through 2025 Budget allocation, alongside existing resources and National Partnership Agreement funding.

#### **Recommendation 30**

Supported in principle. New investment through 2025 Budget allocation to DCF Primary Prevention programs.