National Commission for
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Children and Young People

THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER
MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL COMMISSIONER OPENS PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS FOR PILBARA REVIEW AMID ONGOING CHILD PROTECTION CRISIS IN WA

The National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, Sue-Anne Hunter, has today opened public submissions to inform her *Review of the Regional Child Protection System in the Pilbara* (the Review).

The Review, which was announced in September 2026, will examine whether the regional child protection system and related health, education, housing, police and justice services in the Pilbara realise Aboriginal children's rights through timely responses, coordinated support and clear government accountability. The National Commissioner is expected to deliver the final report from the Review in January 2027.

National Commissioner Hunter said these public submissions will play a critical role in informing the Review's overall findings and recommendations, and will add to what the National Commissioner has discussed with communities, stakeholders, experts and leaders on the ground.

"This is a pivotal moment in this Review. It is not only the first time we, as the National Commission, will be accepting public submissions for an independent Review, but it will also ensure that this Review and its recommendations are informed directly by the community," said National Commissioner Hunter.

"I have always said that our work must be community-led and grounded in the voices and priorities of First Nations communities. We are committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are actively involved in the decisions that affect their lives, their children and their futures. The commencement of this Review and the opening of public submissions demonstrate that commitment in action."

"Decisions made without the input, advice and lived experience of First Nations peoples will not deliver meaningful change for our children."

The public submissions, which can be submitted via the link here, are open to those with lived experience, knowledge, or information relevant to child protection, with a particular focus on the Pilbara. This includes First Nations Elders, children, young people, community members, carers who have supported First Nations children and young people, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and governments.

To ensure accessibility, the National Commission has welcomed submissions in audio, written, and video formats, where support will be provided across all abilities and ages.

Upon conclusion of the Review, findings and recommendations will be published, pressuring governments to commit to adequately upholding First Nations protections in political decision-making and systems going forward.

Eligible participants can lodge their submission to the Review via: https://www.ncatsicyp.gov.au/about-us/ways-get-involved. Submissions close at 12 AM AEDT on Tuesday, 22 December, 2026.

National Commission for
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Children and Young People

For more submission guideline information, visit https://engage.dss.gov.au/review-regional-child-protection-system-pilbara/

ENDS

Media Contact: Dea Burness / dea@steadyground.com.au/ 0402 484 721

About the National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People

The National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People (the National Commission) is an independent body dedicated to promoting the rights, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The National Commission works to elevate First Nations voices, advocate for systemic reform and drive evidence-based policy and practice that supports strong, thriving futures for children, families and communities.