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Media Statement

Racism Review - NT Police: Resourcing & Cooperation Needed

It has been reported that the NT Anti-Discrimination Commission (ADC) is urgently investigating or conducting a review on systemic racism within the Northern Territory Police Force (NTPF). This is misleading and incorrect.

The Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Jeswynn Yogarathnam, has been approached by the Attorney General to undertake a racism review. However, for the past few months, he has been in negotiations with the Attorney General's Department, the Attorney General and the Minister for Police concerning the necessary resources to conduct such a review. To date, the funding put to the ADC does not stretch to enable the set-up of a designated project team with carriage of such a review for its full cycle.

In addition to resourcing, such a review can only proceed with cooperation from the NTPF. The ADC has been actively attempting to engage with the NT Police Commissioner and is looking forward to developing an MoU or similar governance framework to coordinate such a review. Considering the Government's 2024 Budget invests \$570 million into police, with \$445 million over five years for an additional 200 officers, it is timely that NTPF consider investing in a racism review with the ADC.

It is not uncommon for a police service to commission an independent statutory body to lead a strategic and coordinated review on systemic issues. For example, in Queensland, the Queensland Police Service (QPS) engaged the Queensland Human Rights Commission to carry out the QPS Diversity and Inclusion Review. In light of the recent *Northern Territory Police Review (March 2024)*, where it was reported that staff do experience and observe racism, and following the evidence which has emerged from the Inquest into the death of Kumanjayi Walker, the ADC is hopeful that any imminent racism review of NTPF will be conducted with full cooperation of NTPF. The expectation is that ADC is resourced adequately to avoid funding for failure but importantly, as Commissioner Murphy said, to ensure the force is committed to changing, and will "peel the scab back" on racism within the organisation.

Jeswynn Yogarathnam

Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Northern Territory

Media contact: josie.short@nt.gov.au