



# Kimberley Regional Group Communique

18 February 2022

## ABOUT THE KIMBERLEY REGIONAL GROUP

The Kimberley Regional Group (KRG) is an alliance of the four Shires of the Kimberley, being the Shire of Broome, the Shire of Derby West Kimberley, the Shire of Halls Creek and the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley. Collaboratively the group seeks to support outcomes for the region through improved social, economic and cultural outcomes.

The Kimberley Regional Group has held a series of meetings with State Government Ministers and officials in relation to the current crime wave in the Kimberley and strategies to address family dysfunction, over-crowded housing, alcohol abuse and the low school attendance rates which are being experienced across the Kimberley.

Meetings included the:

Hon Tony Buti	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Racing and Gaming.
Hon Paul Papalia	Minister for Police.
Hon Simone McGurk	Minister for Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence, Community Services.
Hon John Carey	Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness and Local Government.
Hon Sue Ellery	Minister for Education and Training.
Hon Bill Johnston	Minister for Corrective Services.

Whilst the many barriers within the current legislative framework were highlighted, the meetings were largely constructive. The Ministers were more open to consideration of alternatives and innovative ideas than had been previously been experienced by the Kimberley Regional Group deputations.

Discussions included:

On-country facilities for family healing, diversion activities and potentially for youth custodial sentences, noting the current legislative barriers.

Funding of safe houses, with Minister's noting the challenge of picking up children from the streets when they were not in the act of anti-social or criminal behaviour. The Shires were clear that children and youths are likely to head to a safe-area voluntarily if it provided a better outcome than the situation they were in at the time.

The effectiveness of the Banned Drinkers Register and pathways to add problem drinkers was raised by Shires, with reference given to the Northern Territory model which can immediately target perpetrators of alcohol related harm.

Overcrowded housing and the negative consequences for families and children was discussed with Minister Carey MLA. Further discussions will be required as the Minister indicated that any significant construction will wait until the current boom conditions have



passed and better value for money can be achieved. The Shire Presidents strongly believe action should be taken immediately due to the chronic problems being experienced.

School attendance was a key cross-portfolio topic, the issues of over-crowded housing, domestic violence and shaping the education system to meet local needs was front and centre of the discussion. One of the key calls was to stop the silo approach to data flows and allow cross agency and cross stakeholder data access to enable holistic solutions in relation to funding allocations. Given the demographics of the Kimberley, it was also emphasised that we should not exclude young people on the basis of race from government funded programs.

The four Shire Presidents remain united in their commitment to better outcomes for the Kimberley, the abatement of the current crime issues and longer term solutions being put into place and will return to Perth later in the year to follow up with Ministers.

The State Government is thanked for their immediate increase in the Police presence and broader commitment to continuing to work with the KRG on new and expanded solutions to this complex matter.

Comments attributable to the Kimberley Regional Group Chair, Cr David Menzel:

- The recognition by senior state government Ministers of the immediate and long term issues being faced in the Kimberley is welcomed.
- We hope that the current focus will continue and be expanded to the delivery of more on-the-ground services throughout the Kimberley.
- Safehouses, on-country facilities, family healing, a reduction in alcohol related harm and improved education outcomes will remain major priorities for the four Shires going forward.

Cr David Menzel  
Chair Kimberley Regional Group  
President Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley

Cr Geoff Haerewa  
Deputy Chair Kimberley Regional Group  
President of the Shire of Derby West Kimberley.

Cr Malcolm Edwards  
President Shire of Halls Creek.

Cr Harold Tracey  
President Shire of Broome.