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Over two years since NT Royal Commission and there has been limited progress for young Indigenous people

Over two years on from the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory participants joining the Law Council's Indigenous Incarceration webinar this week heard that several key recommendations are yet to be implemented.

More than 200 people from across the country listened to panelists, David Woodroffe, principal legal officer of NAAJA and president of the Aboriginal Lawyers' Association of the Northern Territory, Olga Havnen, advocate and CEO of Darwin's Danila Dilba Health Service, and Mick Gooda, prominent advocate for the rights of First Nations Australians for the past 30 years, call for State and Territory Governments to listen and engage more with the Aboriginal community.

While the panel, chaired by Law Council President, Pauline Wright, acknowledged that there had been an overall reduction in the numbers of children in detention in the Northern Territory, First Nations children were still overrepresented in the justice system.

"We are still hearing how children on remand are being incarcerated and sent to Don Dale, including children from as far away as Alice Springs," Ms Wright said.

"This is a facility that the Royal Commission recommended closing."

"All panelists pointed to the bail system as being problematic, and the need for greater support for families to help children comply with bail conditions, including the provision of safe and appropriate bail accommodation."

"We heard of cases where children were overloaded with charges, ensuring that they would be locked up rather than let out on bail due to a fear that they would fail to appear," Ms Wright said.

"Overwhelmingly the panel called on governments to listen to and engage with First Nations communities and agreed that there needed to be systemic and transformative changes to the system if we are going to see any reduction in incarceration rates."

"This includes raising the age of criminal responsibility from ten; supporting First Nations-led solutions; and repealing mandatory minimum sentencing."

"Elders want to take responsibility for their children and power must be given back."

"A genuine therapeutic approach is needed, this is often the cheaper option for government," Ms Wright said.

You can watch a recording of the [webinar here](#).

Contact: Dr Fiona Wade, P. 0403 810 865 E. Fiona.Wade@lawcouncil.asn.au

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