

Shocking new figures show Indigenous child removal crisis is getting worse

February 4 2015

New figures from the Productivity Commission show a huge spike in the number of Indigenous children being removed from their families by child protection agencies across Australia.

The figures are detailed in the latest Productivity Commission: Report on Government Service Delivery report, released on Thursday 29 January.

The number of Indigenous children in "out of home care" increased by more than 1000 children between 30 June 2013 and 30 June 2014.

Padraic Gibson, Senior Researcher from the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology Sydney, has extensively documented the contemporary child removal crisis, including providing support to many Aboriginal families who have had their children removed.

"This is the biggest increase in removals since the dramatic spike that accompanied the NT Intervention in 2007," Mr Gibson said.

"Approximately 15,000 Aboriginal children are now in 'out of home care', these numbers are far higher than any time during the Stolen Generations of the 20th Century."

Latest Productivity Commission report key figures include:

- On June 30, 2013 there were 13,914 Indigenous children in "out

of home care".

- On June 30, 2014 there were 14,991 Indigenous children in "out of home care".
- This is an increase of 1,075 children in just 12 months.
- The rate at which Indigenous children are in care also increased, from 4.81 per cent of the national Indigenous child population to 5.14 per cent.
- Over the course of the 12 months from 30 June 2013 to 30 June 2014, a staggering 17,573 Indigenous children had at least one placement in "out of [home care](#)." This is more than six per cent of the Indigenous child population nationwide.
- Almost every jurisdiction experienced significant increases in removals, except for South Australia and Tasmania, where there was a very slight decrease.
- Victoria had a very bad year, with a 32 per cent increase in the number of Indigenous kids in care – from 922 to 1,308. The Northern Territory also had a 25 per cent increase in numbers, with 774 Indigenous children in care on June 30 2014, more than three times the numbers before the NT Intervention.

"I have worked extensively with families affected by child removal and seen first-hand how the discriminatory and paternalistic attitudes of child protection agencies leads to the persecution of Aboriginal families," Mr Gibson said.

"In cases where there are crises within families that need addressing, this is often the result of poverty and the absence of meaningful support services. Sadly these conditions are set to get worse, with cuts coming down from the Federal Government to badly needed Aboriginal controlled services already struggling to deliver."

"Jumbunna is supporting the national campaign of 'Grandmothers Against Removals', families directly affected by the current crisis, who

are demanding a national process of restoring Aboriginal children to their families, and self-determination for Aboriginal people within the welfare system.

"The only solution to this crisis is putting resources and control in the hands of Aboriginal people themselves. We will be in Canberra on February 12 and 13 to support the meetings and rally being organised by the Grandmothers."

Provided by University of Technology, Sydney

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