



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### NSW Government continues to score poorly in new report

The NSW Government is failing across five out of seven measures to support Aboriginal children and families, according to a new report card released on the 11th anniversary of the Apology.

The second annual report produced by AbSec, the NSW peak body for Aboriginal children and families, measures the performance of the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) between 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2017, using the most recent data made available to the public. It identifies seven important indicators for Aboriginal kids receiving child protection services.

- 18,200 Aboriginal children are reported at Risk of Significant Harm. This has increased by 6.7%.
- 5,580 Aboriginal children receiving an intensive family support. This has fallen by 3%.
- 256 Aboriginal children returned home. This has decreased by 3%
- 7,152 Aboriginal children in out of home care. This has increased by 2.6%
- 39.2% of Aboriginal children placed with Aboriginal family/kin. This has fallen by 0.9%
- 1,058 Aboriginal children entering out of home care. This has decreased by 19.7%

Paul Gray, Acting CEO at AbSec, acknowledged that fewer Aboriginal children entered care in 2017.

“While many will no doubt welcome this, there needs to be greater clarity and transparency to understand what is behind this reduction.

“Overall, the findings are worrying and need to be considered and assessed. As it shows that there is still a lot of work to be done to address the gaps in the system.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are now over ten times more likely to be removed from their families than non-Indigenous children and the number of Aboriginal children in the out of home care system has increased every year.

The experiences of Stolen Generation Survivors show forced removal and separation from family, community and culture not only last throughout a lifetime, but impact the lives of their children and grandchildren.

Unless governments pursue a new approach, the number of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care is expected to triple over the next 20 years.

“We are calling on governments to put an immediate end to the old failed policies of permanent removal, and to embrace our solutions, Aboriginal-led solutions, as part of a rights-based Aboriginal child and family system. This was the promise of action within the Apology, and it is long past due.” Mr Gray, added.

The report card is available at <https://www.absec.org.au/images/downloads/AbSec-NSW-Government-FACS-Report-Card-June-2017.pdf>.

AbSec expects to publish its next report card once data for last financial year is released.

Spokespeople are available for interview opportunities.

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