

PROTECTING ABORIGINAL CHILDREN TOGETHER – PACT



PACT

PACT is an independent Aboriginal specific service that provides specialist advice and case consultation to Family and Community Services (FACS) when a report regarding the abuse or neglect of Aboriginal children and young people is received through the FACS Child Protection Helpline. PACT also provides input into significant decisions and actions in all phases of a child protection and/or out-of-home care intervention.

How will PACT help Aboriginal children and young people?

PACT will assist Aboriginal children and young people a number of ways:

- It will improve case planning and decision-making processes in cases where an Aboriginal child or young person is the subject of a risk of significant harm report to ensure their best interests;
- It will improve Aboriginal families and community members' involvement in supporting Aboriginal children and young people who have been reported to CS Child Protection Helpline;
- It will improve Aboriginal families' and their children's engagement with relevant support services
- It aims to reduce the number of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home-care placements

with non-Aboriginal carers.

Who is involved?

AbSec and FACS will work with selected Aboriginal non-government organisations to implement PACT in two specific locations. AbSec has a lead role in community consultation and engagement with Aboriginal people.



The PACT Referral Process

The referral process to PACT Service is a simple pathway to assist Aboriginal children, young people and families when required, engaging them to ensure the well being and safety of children. PACT encourages consultation between relevant mainstream and Aboriginal NGOs to form meaningful partnerships with an aim of developing capacity. Only new Aboriginal families entering into the child protection system that do not have an open case plan are eligible.

The Referral process begins;

- 1. ENTRY** - A Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) report concerning an Aboriginal child or young person is received by Community Services Child Protection Team. Eligibility is determined by FACS.
- 2.** If **ELIGIBLE**, FACS contacts the PACT Service and provides them with information about the family.
- 3.** A PACT Advisor is **ALLOCATED** to a family and they attend a FACS Pre-Assessment Consultation (PAC) which provides them with an opportunity to read the family history and to discuss the best approach to make initial contact with the family.
- 4. HOME VISIT** - FACS will then seek the family's consent for the PACT Service to be involved. If **CONSENT is not given**, the FACS worker will then give the family information about PACT. If **CONSENT is given**, the PACT Advisor attends a home visit with FACS staff. PACT home visits are generally conducted during hours suitable for staff and families.

6. The PACT Advisor **SUPPORTS COMMUNICATION** and understanding between FACS and the family about risks and other terminology that enables the family to participate in decision making about their child or young person.

6. The PACT Advisor will provide advice on **ABORIGINAL CULTURAL PRACTICES** and the role of extended families to FACS where necessary.

7. After the home visit, the PACT Advisor attends a FACS Assessment-Consultation (AC) meeting to advise and provide FACS with an Aboriginal perspective on **SAFETY AND RISK CONSIDERATIONS**.

8. A **RISK ASSESSMENT** is conducted by FACS within 30 days of the safety and risk assessment which the PACT Advisor contributes to.

9. CASE PLAN – The PACT Advisor assists with the development of case plans by providing advice and information. A quarterly case plan and review is undertaken and a risk re-assessment is also completed.

10. If there is no evidence of further harm and safety risk, the **CASE IS CLOSED**. If there is evidence, the PACT Service continues to work with family otherwise PACT involvement ceases at the time the case is closed.

The PACT Pilot

In partnership, FACS and AbSec have piloted the PACT model in two locations to determine effective ways to keep Aboriginal children and young people safe. Those locations are Shellharbour and Moree. A local Aboriginal NGO has been funded to undertake the implementation of PACT.