



# Permanency Support Program

Impact on Aboriginal families



**AbSec conference 2017**

Coffs Harbour

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# Why permanency?

Permanency promotes:

- a healthy sense of identity
- a sense of belonging
- unconditional love
- lifelong healthy relationships.

**It's essential to child health, development and dignity.**



# Out-of-home care history

- Children and young people in care almost doubled over a 10 year period.
- The OOHC population increased from 10,623 in 2006 to 15,171 in 2016.
- Children and young people spend 12.5 years on average in OOHC.



# Aboriginal children and young people

- Aboriginal people are 5.4% of the NSW 0-17 year old population.
- But they made up 37% of the OOHC population in 2016.
- They represent 38% as at 30 June 2017.

**The Permanency Support Program is an important platform for changing lives.**



# Vision for change

Aboriginal children and young people in care have poorer outcomes than their peers.

Pathways to permanency now must include family-led decision-making and culturally appropriate solutions.



# Vision for change

Aims of the Permanency Support Program:

- Stop entries into OOHC.
- Reduce time spent in care.
- Provide higher quality care.
- **Improve long term life outcomes.**



# Sector change

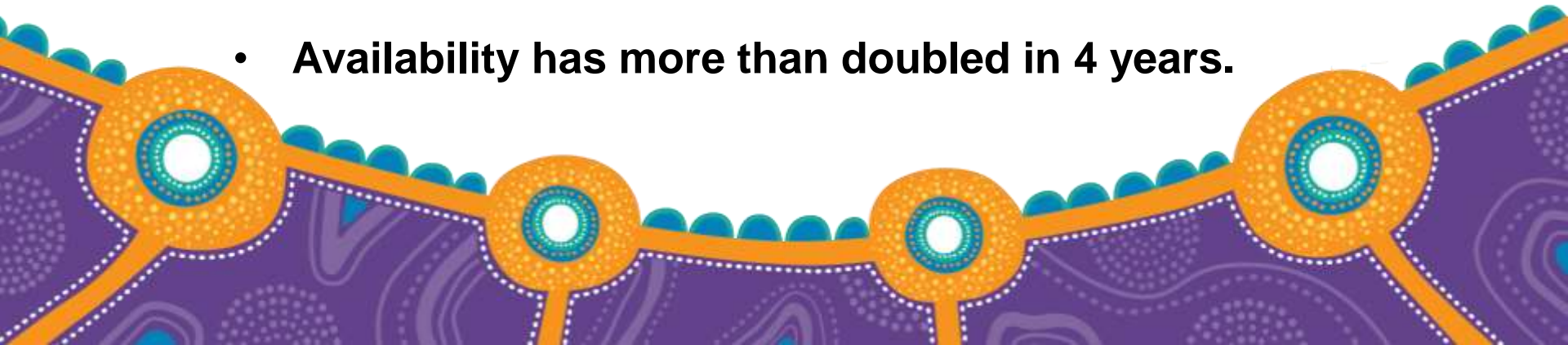
- FACS is shifting OOHC to the non-government service sector.
- This is a 10-year transition for Aboriginal children and young people.
- The process began in 2012 and ends in 2022.



# Sector change

The OOHC transition expands Aboriginal NGO capacity to deliver services.

- In July 2013 there were 564 OOHC places with Aboriginal providers.
- As at July 2017, there are 1,401 places.
- **Availability has more than doubled in 4 years.**





# New Aboriginal case management policy

The new Aboriginal policy and practice guidance is intended to:

- support practitioners/staff to engage early with families
- support family-led decision making
- promote integrated, tailored case management.



# New Aboriginal case management policy

The policy and guidance also empower and support families to:

- reduce the incidence of harm
- address identified risks.

**The goal is to support Aboriginal children and young people to thrive.**



# FACS Aboriginal outcomes strategy

## Goals

1. Increase access to early intervention.
2. Reduce overrepresentation in OOHC.
3. Increase socio-economic outcomes for housing clients.
4. Increase Aboriginal staff in FACS
5. Increase engagement with disability services.

## Two of the five goals:

1. Increase access to early intervention.
2. Reduce OOHC overrepresentation.

## What does this mean?



# Aboriginal outcomes targets

## Early intervention:

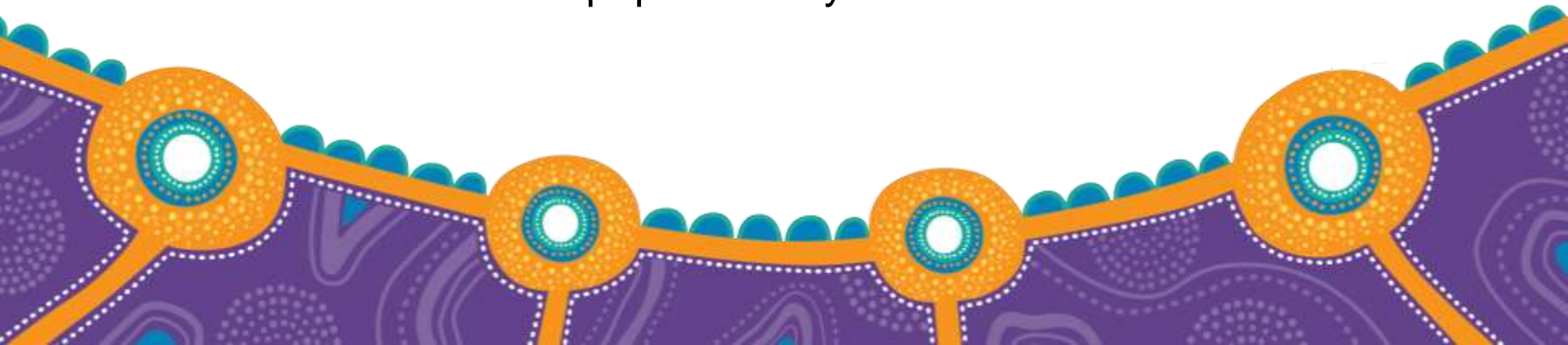
- 30% of funding for TEI has been committed for Aboriginal families by 2021.
- 50% of 900 places for preservation and restoration have been dedicated to Aboriginal families.



# Aboriginal outcomes targets

## Reducing OOHC overrepresentation:

- 20% fewer children and young people entering OOHC.
- 1,500 children restored to their families.
- 1,200 children transitioned to guardianship orders.
- 10% lower OOHC population by 2020.



# Guardianship and adoption

Both guardianship and adoption are provided for under NSW laws.

## **Guardianship:**

- recognises parents
- retains contact between a parent and child
- mandates a cultural care plan for Aboriginal children and young people.



# Guardianship and adoption

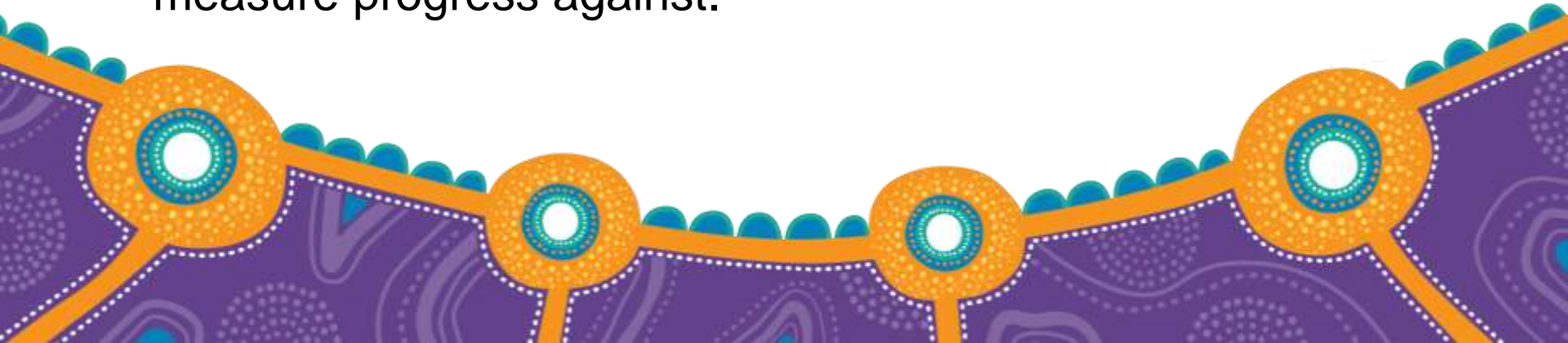
For Aboriginal families, **adoption**:

- is the least preferred option
- must be discussed with, and have the consent of, birth family
- requires an Adoption Plan agreed by all parties
- should only be considered after other options, if at all.



# Summary

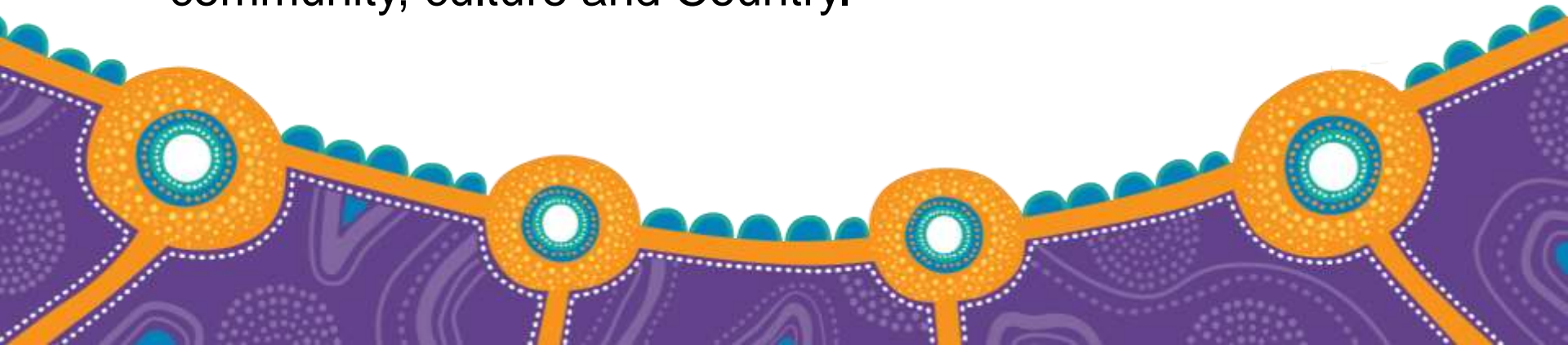
- Permanency is in the best interests of the child or young person.
- The Permanency Support Program strengthens recent changes to law, such as the introduction of guardianship orders in 2014.
- FACS' Aboriginal outcomes targets provide something to measure progress against.





# Summary

- Aboriginal case management policy and guidance enable a tailored, integrated response for families.
- The Permanency Support Program fosters a child's ability to feel a sense of belonging and home – and stay connected to community, culture and Country.



**Thank you**

