



# ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

LOOKING AFTER  
OUR KIDS

## AbSec News

Issue 17 July 2014

### CEO Report

Hope everyone had a terrific NAIDOC week and enjoyed the celebrations across the state. It was great to see our children, young people and elders participating at events during the week and really enjoying themselves.

AbSec has been very busy with continuing to work with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to support the transition of Aboriginal children and young people to the NGO sector. This work is extremely important to ensure our children and young people are cared for in culture, identity and a safe and secure environment. I would like to congratulate all our Aboriginal agencies caring for our children and young people and acknowledge their hard work and dedication. The role our agencies play in keeping kids safe and secure is underestimated at times.

We recently farewell a number of AbSec staff, Tracey Keevers-Keller, Julie Power, Deborah Skinner, Julie O'Brien, Barry Duroux and Noeleen Timbery. We thank you for your hard work and dedication to supporting Aboriginal children and young people and wish you well for the future. We also welcome Daniel Walsh, Julie Welsh, Dakota Torrens and Robert (Rocky) Roberts to AbSec and look forward to working with them.

These are exciting times with our disability project starting to make progress, we excited about the opportunities this project will have in opening the doors to additional avenues of support for Aboriginal people with disability.

There are a number of events coming up and don't forget on Monday 4 August is **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day**, this year we are celebrating **Kids in Culture - Strong, Proud, Resilient**. What a great theme to celebrate, our kids and ensuring they are raised proud and strong in their culture. This is very important to our kids in care...

Angela Webb  
Chief Executive





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## Transition News

The AbSec Transition team continues to work with and support the NSW Aboriginal OOHC sector.

We would like to **congratulate** the Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre (Abcare) on their full accreditation June 2014. Abcare have been working for some years in developing their service and are now well underway in delivering foster care services.

We are pleased that Newcastle now has its second accredited Aboriginal service with the provisional accreditation of Muloobinba Aboriginal Corporation. Muloobinba is an established service in the Hunter that already runs a range of child related services including family support and child care. Muloobinba expects to start taking placements in the very near future.

We congratulate these services on their work and achievement and look forward to their continued presence in this important work.



left to right: Tracy Mayo (CareSouth OOHC Manager) Deb Tozer (CareSouth CEO) Antoinette House (Cummbeyan Board Member)

Important partnership work is occurring in several areas. Two significant partnership developments are underway in Queanbeyan and Western Sydney.

In Queanbeyan a new service: 'Jullagung Children's Service' is being developed between Cummbeyan Aboriginal Health Services and CareSouth. The service is currently recruiting for Aboriginal staff and work has commenced on identifying placements.

In Western Sydney Gaba Yula has partnered with Uniting Care Burnside to start developing an Aboriginal OOHC service in Western Sydney. Recruitment has commenced and placements have been identified for this partnership.

These partnerships are an important development in building up the capacity of the Aboriginal OOHC service sector and will result in new stand-alone organisations in coming years.

Signing of Cummbeyan and CareSouth for Jullagung Children's Service Partnership





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## AbSec Says Farewell and Welcome....

The AbSec Transition team has had a couple of staff changes recently

AbSec said farewell Ms Julie Power, Practice and Accreditation Officer in May 2014. Julie has left AbSec to take up a permanent role as a Senior Accreditation Officer with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian. Julie previously worked on providing accreditation and practice support, and assisted many agencies to improve their casework practice as well as assisting some agencies through the accreditation processes.

We would also like to thank Ms Noeleen Timbery for her hard work and efforts in the transition team especially in supporting new partnerships which is integral to the success of transition of Aboriginal children and young people to the NGO sector.

Welcome, Ms Julie Welsh, Policy Officer, joined the transition team in June 2014. Julie comes to AbSec after a number of years at World Vision and comes with vast knowledge and experience in the Social Justice area.

So farewell and welcome...



**SAVE THE DATE**



**NSW 44th Annual Aboriginal Rugby League  
Knockout**

**3-6 October 2014**

**Lakeside Oval, Raymond Terrace**



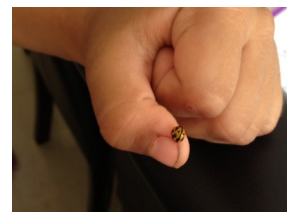


# ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

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## OUR KIDS NEED ABORIGINAL CARERS!

**Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC need Aboriginal foster/  
kinship carers.**



Aboriginal foster carers play a vital role in the lives of Aboriginal kids. By giving these children safe, caring homes, you'll help ensure their wellbeing and change their lives for the better.

An Aboriginal child's cultural identity is an important part of who they are. Children who are strong in their culture have higher self-esteem, confidence and expectations of what they can achieve.

As a carer, you'll get free phone advice and support and can join an Aboriginal carer support group. There are also a number of resources to assist Aboriginal carers, such as the [Raising Them Strong booklet, and DVD](#) which give information and tips about caring for Aboriginal children.

If you know of someone that you think would make a great foster carer, please let them know and encourage them to contact us for further information **AbSec on 1800 888 698**

**Be part of the solution in caring for our children and young people .....**





# ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

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## Claims of a New Stolen Generation

The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) believes the care and protection of Aboriginal children and young people is a priority.

AbSec has been working with the NSW Government to support the transition of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) to the non-government sector, more importantly to Aboriginal organisations.

AbSec's role was to build capacity in the sector for Aboriginal non-government organisations to care and support Aboriginal children and young people in foster/kinship care arrangements.

AbSec believes it is essential for the NSW Government to invest in early intervention programs (such as Intensive Family Based Services and Protecting Aboriginal Children Together) for Aboriginal families and communities especially since the recent care and protection reforms, embodied in the *NSW Child Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2014*, emphasise keeping children safe within their own families. They are seen as an improvement on past systems that haven't necessarily engaged our communities and families in a positive way.

The reforms particularly focus on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) models, such as Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing (AFGC), as a means for constructive engagement of parents and family to address risk issues. As a sector, we need to respond to this opportunity to better the system for Aboriginal families and communities.

Ms Angela Webb, CEO, AbSec stated "Aboriginal communities need to be empowered with support, services and information. We need to take responsibility for our children and young people."

AbSec acknowledges there is a lot of work to do in the sector to decrease the number of Aboriginal children and young people who are in care, but not at the expense of their wellbeing and right to live in a safe and stable environment.

"Caring for Aboriginal children and young people requires a whole of government response and AbSec calls on the State and Federal Governments to ensure adequate funding is allocated to supporting Aboriginal communities and their right to self-determination" said Ms Webb.





The Stolen Generations Council NSW/ACT and AbSec organised a healing workshop in Eden (NSW) and was the second for all Stolen Generations members of the council who come from many of the NSW Homes that the Council represents. Workshop held on 19 to 23 May 2014 at Two Way Motel and at Jigamy Farm – Two Fold Bay, Eden.

At this cultural workshop our Chairperson, Ms Matilda House, organised for Elder Uncle Ossie Cruise to perform Welcome to Country and assisted in the Smoking Ceremony at the Cultural Centre. Uncle Ossie welcomed all of us to his country, and told us that he was very honoured to have us all together in his community.

After the Welcome to Country, Mr Warren Foster and the Wallaga lake Dancers performed their Traditional Dancing and welcome, followed by smoking Ceremony which all was invited to walk through the special circle to be smoked and cleansed.

At lunch time, Uncle Ossie, Elders from Eden and the staff of Jigamy Farm treated us to a delicious bar barque and seafood lunch. The participants had the opportunity to meet and yarn up with Elders from the Sapphire Coast. The Elders talked about the Mini Olympics that happen each year in Nowra and encourage and invited our members to participant. It was excellent day enjoyed by all.

The events for the week were explained to the participants with a summary of the program.

*Day one* - Travelled to Eden. Arrived just before dinner and participants were introduced to the Facilitator and Counsellor Antoinette House.

*Day two* - Aboriginal Cultural Visit to Jigamy Farm for Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony and traditional Dancers.

*Day three* - Was Cultural Awareness, DVD Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls' Training Home – Centenary of Commemoration 1912 – 2012, Yarn Up, Debriefing and Rest Time.

*Day four* –We all attended Jigamy Farm for Yarn Up with Elders again. There as a Presentation from Solicitor Lucinda Knapp from Shoal coast Community Legal Centre Inc – who spoke about the importance of Wills and other Legal Issues that would assist the members.

Followed by Paula Andy – Program manager – Two Fold Aboriginal Corporation who spoke to the group in regards to Jigamy Farm and what they have done over the years for their Community.

Lunch: Once again we shared a lovely lunch with Elders and Staff of Jigamy and Two Fold Aboriginal Corporation.

There were occasions when we could just sit around and share our thoughts together. A lot of great things that came out of the cultural workshop and everyone was very much involved.

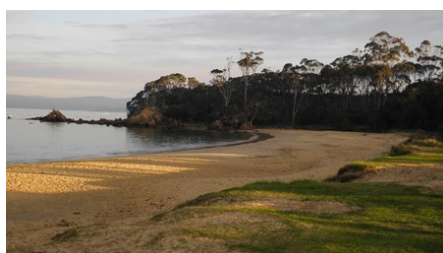
*Day Five:* End of workshop travelled back to Sydney. All participants reported having a wonderful time and especially enjoyed having Yarn Up with the Far South Coast Elders.







## Healing Workshop to Eden





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## Aboriginal Consultation Guide

The Aboriginal Consultation Guide information workshops have finally come to a close after delivering information workshop in May and June 2014, in the following locations:

Tamworth, Bathurst, Dubbo, Wollongong/Dapto, Canberra, Newcastle, Penrith, Marrickville, Bankstown, Campbelltown and Wagga Wagga

Unfortunately due to a lack of numbers a number of the locations were cancelled (Ballina, Griffith, Albury, Nowra, Gosford, Inverell, Coffs Harbour and Kempsey) and therefore those participants from Kempsey and Inverell expressed an interest to do the information workshop via teleconference.

We are pleased that overall 123 people attended information workshops from around the state and 10 via teleconference, with workshop participants were from government and non-government organisations and community members. Over 200 copies of the Aboriginal Consultation Guide have been distributed to a range of services and AbSec hopes that agencies and workers will reference the Guide when working with Aboriginal children, families and communities.

All participants were encouraged to complete an evaluation form post the workshop and the feedback we received has been very positive. Many participants said they found the Guide to be very user-friendly, informative and will use the Guide in their workplace.

Some of the comments from participants;

*"The presentation was well thought out, planned and resourced. Presenter were very insightful, helpful and engaging"*

*"Very informative session"*

*"Thank you for sharing, taking the time and letting me learn more on Aboriginal consultation"*

*"Loved the Guide and the presentation"*

*"I have now gained a better awareness of Aboriginal culture"*

*"Really great to attend – it has opened my eyes"*

You can download a copy of the Guide and its templates from the AbSec website.

AbSec would like to thank all participants who attended a workshop.

If you require further information, please contact Michelle Lester, Aboriginal Consultation Guide Officer on 02 9559 5299 or email [michelle.lester@absec.org.au](mailto:michelle.lester@absec.org.au)







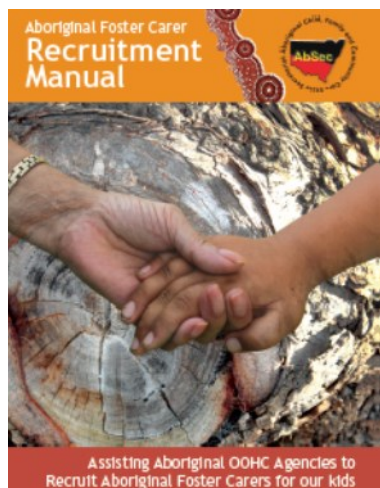
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## TRAINING NEWS

Enrolments are currently underway for the third roll out of the **Diploma for Aboriginal Child and Family Intervention** for Aboriginal Out of Home Care Agency staff. This is a block release mode and will be run from Sydney in 2015. AbSec are in the process of finalising the details and will contact those who expressed interest.

**Aboriginal Foster Carer Recruitment Manual – Assisting Aboriginal OOHCA Agencies to Recruit Aboriginal Foster Carers for our kids** has been developed and is now available on AbSec's website. Copies of this document are being forwarded to AbSec member agencies.



**Carer Recruitment Training** was held in June for staff of Aboriginal Out of Home Care Agencies in the Northern NSW Regions. This was a great opportunity for agency staff to get together and learn about new techniques, reinforcing current strategies as well as learning about new mediums for recruitment such as Facebook and Social Media.

Please remember that our **Agencies need more Aboriginal carers for our kids** - if you know of someone that you think would make a great foster carer, please let them know and encourage them to contact us for further information – we can put them in contact with an Aboriginal Out of Home Care Agency.

**Membership of AbSec** is open to all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Carers of Aboriginal children. Membership is free to Carers, and you will receive newsletters, Carer updates and information about events. If you would like to request an application form, please contact Vicki Barton on 02 9559 5299 or via email [vicki.barton@absec.org.au](mailto:vicki.barton@absec.org.au)

## EVENTS

Foster Care Week 2014 will be held from 14 - 20 September inclusive. The Annual Foster Care Picnic Day will be held on Sunday 14 September in Sydney. This is a free event for Carers and their families to enjoy together, as well as acknowledging the wonderful work and commitment of Carers. There is also a poetry and colouring in competition for children and young people to enter. Details for the event will soon be distributed to Carers in the mail, alternatively check our website for updates.





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## CARER NEWS

AbSec are saddened to advise that our Peer Support Program will no longer operate, it ceased on 30 June 2014. Our Regional Carer Support Workers farewelled Carers over the last month during Carer Support Groups held across NSW.

AbSec would like to say farewell to Training and Support staff, Ms Tracey Keevers-Keller, Ms Debbie Skinner, Ms Julie O'Brien and Mr Barry Duroux who have been an integral part of our team supporting Carers of Aboriginal children and young people across NSW, and will be sadly missed, not only by AbSec but by the Carers that they have supported over the years.

AbSec wish Tracey, Debbie, Julie and Barry all the best in future endeavours and are confident of seeing them again in the future.

AbSec will continue to operate the **Carer Support Line on 1800 888 698**, which is available Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm.

There will be a small number of Carer Support Groups that will continue to operate after 30 June 2014, please check our website for details.



L-R: Julie O'Brien, Barry Duroux, Tracey Keevers-Keller and Debbie Skinner.



Update from Fostering NSW



## ***Continuing to Focus on Aboriginal Foster Care Recruitment***

***from Sharon Broady***

This period saw the launch of the **Aboriginal Foster Carer Recruitment Manual**, a guide containing ideas, practice wisdom, food for thought and practical tools for OOH agency staff whose work involves the recruitment of Aboriginal foster carers. This manual, which can be accessed on AbSec's website was also successfully used in training provided by AbSec in Kempsey. Fostering NSW attended this training session and provided social media training for Out of Home Care agency workers.

Social media is continuing to grow as a communication tool for Fostering NSW, with its Facebook page reaching 30,000 'Likes' in June. A post promoting NAIDOC week in early July was liked by 350 people and shared 100 times, which represents increasingly successful engagement with a growing online community of carers and prospective carers.

Throughout May and June, Fostering NSW achieved an impressive click through rate via digital adverts with creative specifically targeted at an Aboriginal audience. In addition, the community service announcement based on the Aboriginal recruitment video 'Our Carers Our Kids' continued to air on NITV.

In upcoming news, Barry Lenihan, Transition Team Senior Manager at AbSec, will speak at the ACWA conference in mid August on the topic of 'Aboriginal Children in Out of Home Care: The Journey of Transition'. Finally, ACWA and Fostering NSW are proud to be sponsoring the highly anticipated AbSec-coordinated **"Kids in Care Cup"** Aboriginal footy event, which takes place at the end of Foster Care Week (September 14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>). The day-long event, which will also be supported with a state-wide media and promotional campaign by Fostering NSW, aims to raise awareness about the need for more Aboriginal foster carers by reaching out to the wider Aboriginal community through its love of football.





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## ABORIGINAL FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING (AFGC)



Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing (AFGC) provides Aboriginal families, who are currently case managed by the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), with an opportunity to discuss what needs to be done to achieve improved safety and protection of their children and young people.

The purpose of AFGC is to encourage relevant family members and others to meet and work toward an agreed way forward in order to address any risk and or safety concerns as advised by FaCS.

AFGC is about involving appropriate family members in the development of a 'Family Plan' which is agreed to by the family and FaCS. A Conference is organised to assist in the development of this Family Plan.

All Conferences involve an independent facilitator who is employed by AbSec.

The facilitator (AFGC Officer) works throughout the entire process including the Conference itself and involves working with the family in developing the strategies to be included in the Family Plan.

To be involved in a Conference, families are encouraged to speak with their caseworker from the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) who will explain the process further and how a Conference can be organised or you can contact the AFGC Officers on (details below)

If you would like to request more information please contact AbSec on  
02 9559 5299 .





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## FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING

a collaboration between five institutes of TAFENSW  
Hunter | Illawarra | New England | North Coast | South Western Sydney



Aboriginal  
Learning  
Circle



an opportunity in:

*Community Services*



### Certificate IV in Community Services

#### (Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing)

##### What is it?

This course will:

Enable participants to develop skills and knowledge to undertake a range of tasks associated with the organisation and coordination of Aboriginal Family Group Conference meetings, relative to addressing care and protection issues for Aboriginal children and young people at risk in the community services sector.

##### Who can participate?

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members who have relevant minimum Certificate III level qualifications, and a minimum 3 years of community services industry experience.

##### Training and Support

You will need to attend 4 x 1 week blocks over 4 months during Semester 1, 2015 (Feb; March; April; May). This will be a full time course. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be offered to all participants and additional work outside the block delivery periods will be undertaken by participants.

##### When and where?

This program is proposed to run in the following locations in Semester 1, 2015:

- Port Macquarie

An information session will be held in the week commencing 9 February 2015. Exact block dates will be provided when you register your interest.

For further information or to register your interest please contact one of our Coordinators - Engagement and Personalised Pathways by 4 August 2014:

Leanne Holmes – Lismore  
P: 0409 074 401  
E: [leanne.holmes6@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:leanne.holmes6@tafensw.edu.au)

Kevin Wilson – Coffs Harbour  
P: 0266593359  
E: [kevin.wilson31@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:kevin.wilson31@tafensw.edu.au)

Michelle Laurie – Kingscliff  
P: 0428 332 053  
E: [michelle.laurie4@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:michelle.laurie4@tafensw.edu.au)

Amanda Davis – Taree  
P: 0400810982  
E: [Amanda.davis@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:Amanda.davis@tafensw.edu.au)

Frances Parker – Grafton  
P: 0400891130  
E: [frances.parker@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:frances.parker@tafensw.edu.au)



[aboriginallearningcircle.com](http://aboriginallearningcircle.com)

*building connections that matter*





6-13 July  
**2014** | **SERVING COUNTRY –  
CENTENARY & BEYOND**

NAIDOC Week 2014...

**NAIDOC Week** was held from 6-13 July, which coincided with the second week of the school holidays. There were lots of events around communities and was a great opportunity to join in and celebrate Aboriginal Culture. This year's theme **Serving Country—Centenary and Beyond**.

AbSec staff attended a range of events throughout NAIDOC week,

#### AMS Redfern NAIDOC Celebrations





## Burramatta NAIDOC Celebrations, Parramatta

6-13 July  
**2014** | **SERVING COUNTRY –**  
**CENTENARY & BEYOND**



The Family fun day held on the Parramatta River Fore-shore was a success. It was a great day celebrating Aboriginal culture with a range of activities for the kids and plenty of cultural workshops such as native grass weaving, rock and boomerang painting. Fun was had by all



## Hawkesbury NAIDOC Celebrations



NAIDOC celebrations in the Hawkesbury were held at Richmond Oval. A family fun day with a concert and lots of fun activities for the kids, including a smoking ceremony and plenty of information stalls.







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## DISABILITY CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

AbSec has been funded by Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC) to build capacity in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's (ACCO's) across NSW to provide specialist disability services to the community. Our role will be to utilise our relationships and networks in Aboriginal communities to increase the number of accredited Aboriginal organisations that will provide disability specific services.

The aim of the project is to help build capacity in the sector to offer Aboriginal people with disability greater choice and control over the services and supports they access.

**These are exciting times in the disability sector and AbSec are calling on Aboriginal people who are interested in starting your own Disability specific Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.**

Its time for Aboriginal communities to provide service and support to their people, it is at the heart of self-determination and inclusion for Aboriginal people with disability.

**Supporting Aboriginal People with Disability is about**

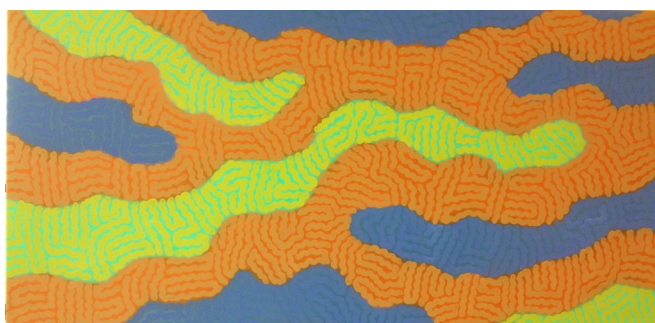
**CHOICE**

**CONTROL**

**ACCESS**

**INCLUSION**

Should you or someone you know be interested please contact Noel Walker on 02 9559 5299 or via email [noel.walker@absec.org.au](mailto:noel.walker@absec.org.au)



Original artwork by Otis Carey © 2014



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## MANA ALLAWAH

The NSW Department of Family and Community Services hosted Mana Allawah, an event to engage local Aboriginal families, children, elders and young people living in the Northern Sydney area.

The Mana Allawah Aboriginal Summit took place on 17 July 2014 at Macquarie University, coinciding with the end of the Guringai Festival – an event celebrating Australia's First Peoples culture in the Northern Sydney Region.

The event included yarning circles with community leaders and services expo's where information regarding employment, health and education services was available, family friendly activities such as a jumping castle, women's sports clinic and an Aboriginal artefacts display.

AbSec had a stall at Mana Allawah to showcase the programs and work undertaken by AbSec. AbSec were happy to be involved in an event such as this, which is the first of its kind to be held in the Northern Sydney area, targeting Aboriginal people Ryde, Hunters Hill, Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Willoughby, North Sydney, Mosman, Manly, Warringah and Pittwater local government areas.







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## LIVING MY WAY

### BEING PREPARED CONFERENCE

*A conference about how you can  
prepare for the changes to the  
disability service system*

Keynote speakers include:

- The Hon. John Ajaka MLC, Minister for Disability Services and Ageing
- Damian Griffis, Chief Executive Officer, First Peoples Disability Network Australia
- Workshop presenters from across the NSW disability sector

**Aboriginal Disability Network  
New South Wales**

**Dates:** 1 and 2 October 2014, 9am–4pm

**Location:**

Auditorium, Western Suburbs Leagues Club  
88 Hobart Road, New Lambton

**Entertainment at the conference dinner:**  
Dale Huddleston and the Riverbank Band

**Registration fees:**

- A: \$395 (inclusive of 1 night accommodation on 1 October 2014)
- B: \$225 (without accommodation)
- Both options include conference dinner with entertainment

**Register by:** 19 September 2014 by filling in attached form

**For further information**

Contact the event manager – Carol Vale, Murawin: 0400 294 331, [carol@murawin.com.au](mailto:carol@murawin.com.au)



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## *Kids In Care Cup 2014*



Following the success of the 2013 Kids in Care Cup which highlighted the need for Aboriginal foster carers across NSW, the Illawarra Titans Aboriginal Rugby League Football Club will be hosting another Cup.

This years event is being held on **Saturday 20 September 2014.**

## **SAVE THE DATE**





## ABORIGINAL CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CARE STATE SECRETARIAT

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### **The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is hosting a forum for people with disability in Sydney.**

People with disability have been invited to attend an important information session in Sydney next month to find out more about the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The session will provide an opportunity for people with disability, families, organisations and advocates to find out more about the Royal Commission and how they can be involved. Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald will provide an overview of the Royal Commission and answer questions from the community. The forum will be facilitated by People with Disability Australia.

**Date:** Monday 11 August 2014

**Time:** 11:00am–12:30pm

**Location:** York Conference and Function Centre (Bowlers Club) Bass Suites, Level 2, 99 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000

**RSVP by Friday 8 August** [stakeholders@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](mailto:stakeholders@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

#### **Contact AbSec**

Phone: 02 9559 5299

Email: [admin@absec.org.au](mailto:admin@absec.org.au)



**The Aboriginal Early Childhood, Support and Learning Inc (AECSL) has moved premises and are now located at AbSec.**

**Please note their contact number is 02 9573 0415.**