

AbSec / FACS co-design Plan on a Page for Aboriginal Children and Young People 2015-2021

Vision	Strong safety-net of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations that effectively meet the needs of Aboriginal children, families and communities through holistic and individually tailored Aboriginal child and family services across NSW, working towards child safe communities and reducing the over representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home-care and providing for better outcomes over time				
Context	<p>Following a partnership approach for more than eight months in 2014 and 2015, AbSec, Aboriginal agencies, FACS, other NSW Government agencies and bodies were engaged in a co-design process to explore and develop high-level concepts for the future state of the Aboriginal sector to address the alarming overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in care, while also recognising the need for strong support for those Aboriginal children in need of this alternate care. This process ended with the development of a co-design report for the future Aboriginal sector placing Aboriginal children and young people at the heart of this sector and recognising the need for greater wrap around supports for families.</p> <p>Additionally, in recognising the work put into co-design with FACS, Aboriginal children and young people continue to be overrepresented in the NSW child protection system, being 7.3 times more likely to be receiving child protection services, 8 times as likely to be the subject of a substantiation, and 9.7 times more likely to be in OOHC – what is happening now, is not working to curtail this overrepresentation. That is, 1 in 8 Aboriginal children receive a child protection service compared to 1 in 53 of their non-Aboriginal peers, and 1 in 14 Aboriginal children are in OOHC (up from 1 in 39 at the time of the Bringing Them Home Report (1993 data), compared with 1 in 136 non-Aboriginal children. A new approach is needed to promote the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people, guided by international research demonstrating the importance of Aboriginal community control.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“When [Indigenous peoples] make their own decisions about what development approaches to take, they consistently out-perform external decisions makers on matters as diverse as governmental form, natural resource management, economic development, health care, and social service provision.” – Harvard Project on American Indian Development</i></p> <p>The over-arching purpose of this plan is to promote child safe communities and reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care through a sustainable safety-net of Aboriginal agencies tied to local Aboriginal community governance, ensuring Aboriginal community ownership, accountability and control in meeting this challenge with Government and other stakeholder support through partnerships.</p>				
Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aboriginal children and young people showing improved outcomes across domains, including education, health, justice, transition to employment/ education etc. 2. Aboriginal children in the child protection and out-of-home care systems are connected to family, community, culture and country, and are safely supported in environments that are suited to their best interests 3. Tailored, child and family-centred, holistic supports that are delivered as needed, not just at crisis, as a package of supports across the continuum, rather than through a programmatic design creating inflexible practice 4. A robust (good governance, well-resourced, sustainable) network of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations delivering quality services in community 5. Aboriginal kids in out-of-home care are supported by Aboriginal community-controlled organisations 				
Levers for change	Driving Cultural and Good Practice through Implementation of the Aboriginal Children and Young People Placement Principles	Enhancing the Existing Aboriginal Sector	Establishing Aboriginal Policy Driven by Stakeholders	Building a Safety-net of Aboriginal Agencies Across NSW	Delivering on the Immediate Transition of Aboriginal Children and Young People
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and report on a sample of cases regarding Aboriginal children and young people, including examination of compliance with or implementation of the ACYPPP and Cultural Support Plans. • Develop Cultural Practice Standards, driven by AbSec and FACS, that are mandated for all services working with Aboriginal children, spanning from first report EI/ Prevention (incl. non-ROSH) through Intensive support/OOHC and beyond, supported by government and the Children’s Court. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing and retrospective genealogy for Aboriginal children and young people ○ ongoing monitoring and reporting of compliance, ○ AbSec Aboriginal Consultation Guide (reviewed) ○ Decision-making framework for Aboriginal family and community participation (s.11 and 12 of the Act) ○ Supported by a network of Aboriginal Cultural Practice Advisors • Develop a data system and cultural practice standards reporting framework to facilitate monitoring and reporting of compliance, clearly establishing the metrics in reporting compliance against a minimum benchmark standard to resolve compliance concerns going forward. • Pursue continuous improvement for compliance – aspiration to achieve 100% compliance with ACYPPP, and develop quality assurance safeguards to facilitate compliance against Cultural Practice Standards for supporting Aboriginal Children and Young People and compliance with the ACYPPP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive change management agenda to guide transition of Aboriginal agencies from OOHC specific agencies to holistic Aboriginal child and family services, supported by resourced change agents to undertake business remodelling. • Evaluate program delivery of existing to inform new pathways and models for supports, supported by reference group (community leaders, sector experts and academics), and convened by AbSec. • MoU between regulators (OCG and Ombudsman), FACS and AbSec to examine systems issues, develop best practice and establish an effective sector support framework. • Support the centralising of back office processes, where appropriate, to streamline organisation delivery, meet compliance, achieve efficiencies and allow frontline to focus more on service delivery. • Produce Aboriginal good practice guides, promoting quality practice and innovation, and supporting implementation of these guides. • Develop annual Aboriginal best practice and innovation awards recognising excellence in the sector and encouraging positive change for Aboriginal children and young people (from frontline to systems, policy and governance). • Establish and implement a Good Practice Support Program (covering governance, regulatory requirements, quality, and safeguards) to support Aboriginal agencies maintain sustainable and viable service provision against required standards/ expectations. • Establish an Aboriginal targeted approach to foster and kinship care recruitment, development and support state-wide/ locally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource a comprehensive Aboriginal-led research program to examine practice and policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish baseline and benchmarks ○ Understand the reasons for Aboriginal children entering care ○ Importance of cultural connectedness ○ Outcomes framework including safety, education, justice, identity/ culture and connection ○ Other areas of research deficiency, including service delivery modelling • Develop differentiated policy across the child protection continuum, informed by the research program, community and led by AbSec in partnership with FACS to address overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and families in the system. • Develop clear positions to inform practice regarding expectations with respect to the Care Act relating to Aboriginal children (best interest principle, permanent placement principle, ACYPPP, participation) from an Aboriginal perspective. • Establish the “Growing Strong into Independence” strategy, led by AbSec in partnership with Aboriginal agencies and FACS, to support Aboriginal young people achieving better outcomes as they transition from care. • Develop a comprehensive NSW Aboriginal Child and Family Strategic Framework; ‘whole of government’ enabling approach, incorporating this plan and the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governance, self-determination, ownership ○ Holistic approaches and design for vulnerability ○ Growing strong to independence ○ Cultural rights and connections ○ Integration and coordination ○ Continuous improvement • Develop funding allocation framework to enable the strategic policy framework and facilitate growth and change across Government/ Aboriginal sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a study to understand what has occurred, or is occurring, in other jurisdictions to establish significant growth and increase of Aboriginal community controlled organisations. • Design service delivery models – holistic and individually tailored Aboriginal child and family services based on existing international and community (building on the concept of community and family decision making) evidence. Implement, evaluate and refine this model in partnership with Aboriginal communities. • Develop and resource a comprehensive Aboriginal workforce strategy to support Aboriginal children, young people, carers and families • Map service supply and need modelling over time for the Aboriginal safety-net, and test this with communities in conjunction with community/ family decision making. • Establish the Aboriginal safety-net in NSW by building Aboriginal agencies to capacity to achieve a positive supply/ demand model for service provision in Aboriginal communities. • Develop and implement local community governance frameworks to guide service delivery, based on community priorities for system level responses, as well as individual need • Maintain strong engaging networks between Aboriginal agencies to promote organisational strength, resilience and sustainability. • MoU between FACS and non-Aboriginal OOHC agencies regarding the transition of Aboriginal children to Aboriginal controlled agencies, and inclusion of contract clauses to facilitate this transition of Aboriginal children and young people to be supported by Aboriginal agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategy for each Aboriginal child, by Aboriginal agencies, in OOHC, whether it is transition to an Aboriginal agency or connecting with relevant Aboriginal agency as part of a leaving/ restoration care plan to inform transition readiness and align with other elements of this plan • Develop and implement transition readiness assessment processes for Aboriginal children and young people, ensuring cultural support plans for every Aboriginal child, and quality case plans to support ongoing support etc. • Stocktake of current capacity of Aboriginal agencies and needs of Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC to support development of agency growth strategies (where required). • Develop a plan for growth and transition over the forward period with contracted (not indicative) numbers outlining growth to support the sector and organisational planning – based on supply/ demand modelling over time (based on safety-net concept). • Develop and implement the Supported Accelerated Growth program for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to meet demand. • Review current partnerships and accelerate independence of Aboriginal community-controlled organisation with support.