

Wungurilwil Gapgapduir

Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement Strategic Action Plan

A partnership between the
Victorian Government, Victorian
Aboriginal Communities and the
child and family services sector

Shared responsibility for action

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waters on which we rely. We celebrate that Australia is rich in living Aboriginal culture, based on values of reciprocity and respect for Elders and Country. We pay our respects to ancestors of this country, Elders, knowledge holders and leaders – past, present and emerging.

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Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

Wungurilwil Gapgapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement

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The Victorian Government, Aboriginal organisations and the child and family services sector will work in partnership on all aspects of the design, priority setting and implementation of actions delivered under the *Wungurilwil Gapgapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement*. The strategic action plan will be self-determined and targeted to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities and driven by evidence and learning by what works.

The strategic action plan identifies the three-year priority areas of focus and the initial actions to be undertaken in the twelve-month period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. The strategic action plan will be reviewed and endorsed by the Aboriginal Children's Forum on an annual basis to ensure that activity reflects the current priorities of the forum.

The strategic action plan provides the mechanism for achieving measurable progress towards the agreement's five objectives:

1. Ensure all Aboriginal children and families are strong in culture and proud of their unique identity.
2. Resource and support Aboriginal organisations to care for their children, families and communities.
3. Commit to culturally competent and culturally safe services for staff, children and families.
4. Capture, build and share Aboriginal knowledge, learning and evidence to drive children and family services' investment and to inform practice.
5. Prioritise Aboriginal workforce capability.

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| ACCOs | Aboriginal community-controlled organisations |
| AFLDM | Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making |
| CCYP | Commissioner for Children and Young People |
| CFECFW | Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare |
| CSOs | Community services organisations |
| DET | Department of Education and Training |
| DHHS | Department of Health and Human Services |
| DPC | Department of Premier and Cabinet |
| FSV | Family Safety Victoria |
| OPEN | Outcomes, Practice, Evidence Network |
| RTO | registered training organisation |

Objective 1:

Ensure all Aboriginal children and families are strong in culture and proud of their unique identity

| Over the next 3 years we will: | First steps | Lead and partners |
|--|--|---|
| 1.1 Redesign child and family and services including out of home care, so they are child-focussed, family-centred, strengths-based, celebrate culture and enable families to stay safe and together | 1. Embed healing models in child and family services and program responses incorporating evidence and learning from healing model development in other sectors | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs and CSOs |
| | 2. Co-design and implement a family services and out of home care model that is in the best interests of Aboriginal children and families, which includes a focus on early intervention working with universal services, and embeds systems for managing quality | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs |
| | 3. Embed cultural elements, practice and expertise of Aboriginal organisations into the design and implementation of the local support and safety hubs and establish operating protocols between Aboriginal organisations and the hubs | FSV and DHHS in partnership with ACCOs |
| 1.2 Invest in the development, delivery and evaluation of place-based prevention and early intervention services for Aboriginal children and families | 1. Create a business case to establish an innovation and learning system fund for Aboriginal organisations for early interventions initiatives | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs and CFECFW |
| | 2. Identify a priority list of existing innovations and initiatives to be sustained and scaled up with a focus on place based prevention and early intervention | Aboriginal Children's Forum |
| 1.3 Support Aboriginal organisations to lead and champion child, family and community-focused cultural initiatives | 1. Resource Aboriginal organisations to contribute to the development and implementation of cultural plans | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs |
| | 2. Evaluate and audit cultural plans to determine the extent to which the plans support Aboriginal children and young people to connect with Aboriginal culture and community | DHHS and CCYP |
| 1.4 Strengthen and support Aboriginal children and young people to maintain and grow connection to Aboriginal families, community and culture | 1. Review funding for leaving care services and allocate in proportion to Aboriginal young people's representation in the leaving care cohort | DHHS |
| | 2. Review the circumstance of those young people 15 years and above who are preparing to leave care to ensure they have a recent Aboriginal family led decision making and a Leaving Care Plan | DHHS |
| | 3. Ensure cultural abuse and neglect is identified, managed and addressed through Critical Incident Management System and Quality of Care | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs and CSOs |

Objective 2:

Resource and support Aboriginal organisations to care for their children, families and communities

| Over the next 3 years we will: | First steps | Lead and partners |
|--|---|---|
| 2.1 Strengthen Aboriginal organisations capacity to provide child and family services including out of home care for Aboriginal children and families | 1. Continue the Transitioning Aboriginal Children project to transfer responsibility, funding and services for Aboriginal children to Aboriginal organisations | DHHS, ACCOs and CSOs |
| | 2. Continue and expand the implementation of Aboriginal Children In Aboriginal care and support ACCOs who wish to be authorised under Section 18 of the <i>Children Youth and Families Act 2005</i> | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs |
| | 3. Utilise new delivery models to strengthen early intervention capability within organisations including reviewing funding for family services and implementing a proportional funding model for ACCOs that is commensurate with demand for services | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs |
| | 4. Support ACCOs to strengthen organisational capability (for example, client information systems, case management, research and evaluation, information technology, human resource, quality and governance) | DHHS, ACCOs and CSOs |
| 2.2 Develop flexible and longer-term funding arrangements for Aboriginal organisations that support locally designed and tailored responses | 1. Implement the new child and family services funding model and prioritised funding | DHHS |
| | 2. Engage Aboriginal child and family organisations in the redesign of longer term flexible funding options that articulate capability to fund cultural activities and approaches | DPC DHHS |
| 2.3 Build on existing structures to develop Victorian Aboriginal children and young people as leaders to, provide cultural leadership, policy advice and advocacy | 1. Develop an options paper for ways to engage Aboriginal children and young people in policy and program development, design and review within the child and family services system | DHHS in partnership with Koorie Youth Council |
| | 2. Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People to convene an annual forum with children and young people in out of home care supported by a series of regional forums | CCYP |
| | 3. Build the evidence base for the effectiveness of culturally specific youth mentoring programs | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs and Koorie Youth Council |
| 2.4 Strengthen the support for Aboriginal parents, foster and kinship carers | 1. Identify and utilise new delivery models to increase prevention, early support and intervention community- based services for Aboriginal families | DHHS, ACCOs, CSOs and DET |
| | 2. Scale up Aboriginal-based reunification programs across the state, where reunification of an Aboriginal child or young person with their birthparent(s) is the case plan goal and intensive support is required | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs and CSOs |
| | 3. Continue implementation of the new model of kinship care, including the Aboriginal kinship placement identification and support program and the development of the Aboriginal reunification support program model | DHHS, ACCOs and CSOs |
| 2.5 Strengthen the support for non-Aboriginal foster and kinship carers | 1. Identify barriers to carers transitioning to ACCOs | DHHS and CSOs |
| | 2. Actively support the development of cultural training and supports for non-Aboriginal foster and kinship carers | CSOs in partnership with DHHS and ACCOs |

Objective 3:

Commit to culturally competent and culturally safe services for staff, children and families

| Over the next 3 years we will: | First steps | Lead and partners |
|---|---|-------------------|
| 3.1 DHHS programs and funded services for Aboriginal children and families to demonstrate that they meet Human Services and Child Safe standards for cultural competency | Require external auditors to employ or contract Aboriginal persons, organisations or businesses to assess compliance with cultural competency standards | DHHS and CSOs |

Objective 4:

Children and family services operate as learning system to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and families

| Over the next 3 years we will: | First steps | Lead and partners |
|---|---|--|
| 4.1 Establish a Centre for Aboriginal child and family welfare knowledge and culturally-based practice | 1. Scope the parameters for the creation of a centre which has Aboriginal people setting the research agenda and operates in line with related evidence and evaluation reforms | CFECFW in partnership with ACCOs and DHHS |
| | 2. Establish a partnership with Outcomes Practice Evidence Network (OPEN) | DHHS, CFECFW and Aboriginal Children's Forum |
| | 3. Develop Aboriginal evidence informed practice principle and approaches to guide program design and evaluation | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs |
| | 4. Strengthen and resource research and evaluation capacity within Aboriginal organisations, including options around funding and procurement | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs |
| 4.2 Support the design, delivery and evaluation of services and initiatives for Aboriginal children and families | 1. Document and build the evidence base of Aboriginal practices or programs for submission to the Menu of Evidence-informed Practices and Programs | ACCOs in partnership with DHHS and CFECW |
| | 2. Build evidence describing the value of investing in Aboriginal early years services and programs | DHHS in partnership with ACCOs and DET |
| | 3. Expand the evidence base of what works for improving outcomes with Aboriginal children and families by undertaking program evaluations and prioritising the inclusion of evaluation in program funding | DHHS, ACCOs and CSOs |

Objective 5:

Capture, build and share Aboriginal knowledge, learning and evidence to drive children and family services' investment and to inform practice

| Over the next 3 years we will: | First steps | Lead and partners |
|---|--|---|
| 5.1 Support the development and expansion of the ACCO Aboriginal workforce | 1. Develop Aboriginal child and family sector workforce strategy to respond to growth demand, and employment conditions | ACCOs in partnership with DHHS, CSOs, CFECFW, FSV and DET |
| | 2. Support workforce planning in Aboriginal child and family organisations through the implementation of the Aboriginal health and human services workforce strategy | ACCOs in partnership with DHHS, CSOs, CFECFW FSV and DET |
| | 3. Develop more scholarship, training, and traineeship options to build the Aboriginal workforce and ACCO capability including student placements in CSOs and DHHS | ACCOs in partnership with DHHS, CSOs and DET |
| 5.2 Leverage existing education and training structures to strengthen culturally professional learning and development opportunities | 1. Establish a professional body for Aboriginal students and professionals in child and family services | VACCA, Alliance and CFECFW |
| | 2. Have Aboriginal registered training organisations or Aboriginal organisations partnering with mainstream RTOs deliver community services qualifications | ACCOs in partnership with DHHS, CSOs and DET |
| | 3. Work with professional bodies and societies and education providers to recognise Aboriginal knowledge systems and practices within existing community services qualifications | ACCOs in partnership with DHHS, CFECFW and DET |