



# Factsheet for carers

## Aboriginal OOHC Transition

### **What's the purpose of the Aboriginal OOHC transition project?**

In 2012 the former NSW Government committed to ensuring that all Aboriginal<sup>1</sup> children in OOHC would be cared for by carers who are supported by Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs).

In NSW, Aboriginal children make up over 45% of the total OOHC population yet only 20% of these children are cared for by ACCOs. The purpose of the Aboriginal OOHC transition project is to facilitate the process of progressively transferring the case management arrangements for Aboriginal children in OOHC to the most suitable ACCO in their area.

### **Why is it important for Aboriginal carers and children to be supported by ACCOs?**

Aboriginal children in OOHC need strong connections to their kin, community, country, and culture to help them build a stronger sense of identity and belonging, especially as they grow into adults and start exploring who they are and where they come from. ACCOs are best equipped to facilitate cultural connection, safety and support.

Ensuring that Aboriginal children and their carers have access to culturally safe care is a priority for the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), and peak bodies for the OOHC sector, AbSec and ACWA. We are all working closely together to achieve this important goal.

### **Will all Aboriginal children and their carers transfer?**

The current focus is on transferring Aboriginal children and young people in foster care arrangements to ACCOs. This includes statutory foster care and relative/kinship care. As carers, you understand better than most how important it is to reduce the disruption to a child's placement, which is why it's important for carers to transfer with children and young people in their care as soon as it is possible to do so.

### **When will the transfers take place?**

The intention is for all Aboriginal children and their carers to transfer across to ACCOs as soon as possible, but it is important for the transfer process to be carried out in a coordinated and supportive way for children and their carers. It is also important that the transition process is at a pace that suits ACCOs, including the work being done to extend the reach and capacity of ACCOs in some parts of NSW.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document we have used the term Aboriginal to recognise the First Nations people of NSW. However the transition project does aim to transfer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to ACCOs.





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Your agency will discuss the transition process with you and the children in your care, and work with you to develop an individual transfer plan. Your agency will address any questions that you may have about the transition process, and when they're unsure of anything, they will get answers for you.

Your agency will remain in close contact with the ACCOs in your area and will build a strong working relationship with them. At the right time, your agency can also arrange for you to meet or talk with a case manager from any of the ACCOs in your area to help you get to know more about them.

There will be situations where you, the child/ren and the ACCO are all ready to transfer and where that's the case, then a move can happen quickly – the pace of change is set by the readiness of the people at the centre of each transfer.

### **Can I choose the agency to transfer to?**

Your caseworker will talk to you about which ACCOs are offering placements in your area so you know which ones are ready to welcome new carers and children. In some areas, there may only be one ACCO available to take on case management, but where there is more than one, your agency will work with you to decide which agency is the best fit for your child's needs. For example, if you are caring for a child with a disability, then that is likely to be the agency best able to meet your child's specific health and support needs.

In some parts of NSW, work is still being done to establish ACCOs and allow them sufficient time to become accredited by the Children's Guardian. While this is happening, you will continue to receive support from your agency and can participate in all its activities, events, and training to ensure a smooth transfer from one agency to another.

### **Will I need to be assessed again as a carer?**

Every agency has its own assessments and ways of working with children and carers, so there will be an assessment process as part of the transfer to your new agency. DCJ is working to streamline this process to make it as quick and simple as possible while still ensuring that ACCOs are given the best information available to support you and the child/ren in your care. Your agency will explain any further checking processes as part of developing your transfer plan.

### **Will my allowances change or be affected?**

Agencies all provide the same baseline allowances to carers but these do vary based on the age and needs of the child. This will be assessed as part of the transition. You can discuss your individual needs with your current agency case manager and your new ACCO at a suitable time.





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### **Will I still get the same services?**

All children in statutory care will have their rights upheld and decisions will centre on their wellbeing throughout the transition process, including:

- maintaining stability wherever possible
- keeping sibling groups together
- ensuring the right supports are in place for children with additional needs.

### **What can I expect in the transfer process?**

Your agency will explain all the steps along the way. Remember, you are not alone! Once you get to know your new ACCO, they will provide you with all the same type of information you received from your current agency when you started your caring role, including who to speak to in an emergency and how to make a claim for reimbursement. Your new ACCO will also discuss with you how you would like to receive information in future. ACCOs will also let you know about the events and activities you can become involved with to meet other carers and establish additional support networks.

### **When will I find out more about the transfer?**

This factsheet is part of a series of planned communications which will be sent out over the next few months. Your caseworker will also provide you with advice on how the process is rolling out in your area.

### **What if I don't want to transfer to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation?**

We encourage all carers of Aboriginal children and young people to transfer to an ACCO because this is in the best interests of the child and their right to cultural connection, safety and support. We strongly believe that ACCOs are in the best position to foster the development of a positive sense of identity and wellbeing for Aboriginal children.

### **For more information**

If you have any questions or would like to know more about the Aboriginal OOHC Transition project, please speak to your caseworker.





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Accredited Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) currently delivering OOHC services in NSW

The ACCO sector in NSW is growing and new ACCOs are being accredited to deliver OOHC services all the time. This list is current as at 1 June 2023. Check with your case worker to see if there are any new ACCOs in your area closer to the time of transferring.

### Central Coast

- [Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services](#)

### Illawarra Shoalhaven

- [Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation \(Myimbarr\)](#)
- [South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation](#)

### Mid North Coast

- [Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Community Care Centre \(AbCare\)](#)
- [Biripi Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre](#)
- [Burrun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation](#)

### Murrumbidgee

- [Riverina Medical and Dental Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Woomera Aboriginal Corporation](#)

### Newcastle and the Hunter

- [Muloobinba Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Wandiyali](#)





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### New England

- [Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre](#)
- [Biripi Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre](#)
- [Burrun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation](#)

### Northern NSW

- [Ngunya Jarjum Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Community Care Centre \(AbCare\)](#)

### Sydney, South East Sydney, North Sydney, South West Sydney, Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains Districts

- [KARI](#)
- [Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation](#)

### Western NSW District

- [Orange Aboriginal Medical Service](#)
- [Coonamble Aboriginal Health Service](#)

