



FAMILY MATTERS

Kids safe in culture, not in care

Western Australian Recommendations		Responsibility	Timeline
1.	Recommendations for government		
1.1	The workforce		
1.1.1	Provide Aboriginal cross cultural training to departmental staff including the application of a cultural lens so the values and beliefs inherent in non-Aboriginal culture are not imposed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.		
1.1.2	Ensure cultural competencies are being met for workers and carers and that workers are equipped with practical skills, knowledge and tools to engage with Aboriginal families.		
1.1.3	Review and improve communication and relationships between child protection workers and Aboriginal families.		
1.1.4	Recruit more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (50D positions) within the department to liaise with children and families and foster community development opportunities.		
1.1.5	Increase the proportional representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in higher decision-making positions		
1.1.6	Develop a sector wide strategy for workers and non-Aboriginal carers which includes training, professional development and secession planning.		
1.1.7	Deliver cross-cultural training for non-Aboriginal carers as a pre-requisite for looking after Aboriginal children.		
1.2	Policies and practices		
1.2.1	Examine and remove systemic racism from policies and procedures and adopt more culturally appropriate approaches with longer time frames, less formal engagement and soft entry points.		
1.2.2	Ensure there is no anomaly between policy and practice in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in decision-making and introduce mechanisms so that extended family members are also involved.		
1.2.3	Implement mechanisms to monitor consistent application of the Signs of Safety Framework and include it as part of staff performance management processes.		
1.2.4	Utilise the role of Aboriginal Practice Leaders to promote and support best practice with Aboriginal families and continue to use Aboriginal Practice Networks to provide advice and problem solve with departmental staff about local issues.		
1.2.5	Start a process of transferring Aboriginal case management to Aboriginal community controlled agencies.		
1.2.6	Share statutory responsibilities for care with Aboriginal controlled organisations as they do in other parts of the world with Indigenous populations.		
1.2.7	Establish a Circle of Elders to provide guidance to the department on cultural security and intervention.		

1.2.8	Introduce a new approach to consider generational Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in child protection decision-making and in the development of prevention and intervention strategies.		
1.2.9	Implement opportunities for policy officers from the department to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations when they are developing policy.		
1.2.10	Encourage greater involvement of Aboriginal people in child protection decision-making.		
1.3	Kinship carers		
1.3.1	Speed up the process for the assessment of kinship carers, implement more flexible screening processes and put in place risk-management strategies to ensure kinship carers aren't excluded based on previous criminal records.		
1.3.2	Implement a review of significant out-of-pocket expenses of kinship carers and amend policies and practices to ensure they receive the same amount of financial support as foster carers.		
1.3.3	Provide greater support for kinship carers and ensure that the child placement principle acknowledges and respects cultural responsibilities, but not label this as a 'family arrangement' so that carers are eligible for financial and emotional eg: Centrelink payments – grandparent payment.		
1.4	Non-government funding		
1.4.1	Fund NGO's to provide innovative, prevention and early intervention programs that are outcome focussed, evidence based with trauma informed service delivery.		
1.4.2	Include the criteria of 'Demonstrated Cultural Competency' in contract tendering processes.		
1.4.3	Provide 10-15% additional funding to NGO's for external evaluation of programs including qualitative and quantitative data and culturally safe ethical guidelines.		
1.5	Participation, representation and advocacy		
1.5.1	Involve Aboriginal people in decision-making and recognise that families, children and young people often hold unique insights and solutions to their own problems. Place more onus on families to come up with solutions (rather than the Department mandating different forms of counselling, rehabilitation programs etc).		
1.5.2	Offer choices and options of agencies that Aboriginal people could engage with to obtain support, prevention and intervention services.		
1.5.3	Increase representation and advocacy for Aboriginal families, inform them of their rights, advise them of support services available (eg, Family Inclusion Network of WA) and promote the department's complaints procedures particularly in remote communities.		
1.5.4	Consult with Aboriginal families, children and young people on the cultural appropriateness and effectiveness of the Signs of Safety (evaluation being conducted by University of South Australia).		
1.5.5	Incorporate consultation with Aboriginal children and young people in any future evaluations of the Viewpoint program.		

2.	Recommendations for the non-government sector		
2.1	Cultural awareness		
2.1.1	Establish cultural support groups for non-Aboriginal carers so they can share their experiences and develop cultural knowledge from Aboriginal community leaders (yarning cards could be used to start conversations on Aboriginal child rearing practices).		
2.1.2	Deliver cross-cultural training for non-Aboriginal carers as a pre-requisite for looking after Aboriginal children.		
2.1.3	Introduce mentoring to foster care services and programs where an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is linked to a non-Aboriginal carer to support the development of their cultural competence.		
2.1.4	Support Aboriginal children being placed with Aboriginal families within their local community (not necessarily family) so the children keep connected to their country.		
2.2	Sector development		
2.2.1	Establish stronger partnerships between non-Aboriginal organisations with Aboriginal controlled agencies.		
2.2.2	Establish a peak Aboriginal controlled organisation to support the NGO sector involved in Aboriginal child protection, deliver prevention and intervention services, undertake case management and provide advocacy.		
2.2.3	Establish an Aboriginal healing and rehabilitation organisation.		
2.2.4	Create opportunities to collaborate, develop partnerships and share information across services.		
2.2.5	Develop more outreach services and programs that address domestic and family violence.		
2.2.6	Build capacity of local Aboriginal organisations to deliver prevention and intervention services.		
2.2.7	Introduce a model and establish collective partnerships between Aboriginal and mainstream non-government organisations to share resources and tendering opportunities.		
2.2.8	Invite Yorganop to mentor other Aboriginal controlled organisations delivering child protection and prevention and intervention services.		
2.3	Policy and practices		
2.3.1	Introduce mediation with couples to reduce family and domestic violence.		
2.3.2	Encourage young people to have a voice in decision-making impacting on their lives.		
2.3.3	Liaise with key non-government stakeholders, draft a joint statement and present it to the Police advocating a more effective and culturally appropriate approach to family and domestic violence intervention (Fitzroy Crossing).		
2.3.4	Lobby for bipartisan support and long term funding commitment to address Aboriginal disadvantage.		
2.3.5	Lobby to rescind the legislation around the 'three strikes and you are out' from Homeswest housing, which is putting children and families on the streets and at risk of child removal.		
2.3.6	Review implementation of recommendations relating to child protection (Bringing them Home, Gordon Enquiry, Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody, Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse and hold government accountable for outstanding recommendations.		

2.3.7	Lobby universities to include in their Reconciliation Action Plans compulsory Aboriginal history and cultural awareness units in areas of study where there is significant Aboriginal disadvantage such as social work, health, and education.		
2.3.8	Liaise with universities and education providers about making provision for the entry of Aboriginal people in areas with a high proportion of Aboriginal clients such as law and social work.		
2.3.9	SNAICC to publish a report card on federal, state and local funding allocations for child protection.		
3.	Community		
3.1	Aboriginal people need to step up and step forward in relation to improving service delivery to community and understand that the statutory side of DCPFS are not the only jobs available.		
3.2	Educate young people about fertility, contraception and the challenges of parenting both from a financial and emotional perspective.		
3.3	Seek out and build relationships with Aboriginal people in the same leisure groups, work groups, choirs, and sporting associations. Ask who's your mob? Share part of yourself and once you start sharing there will be a connection.		
3.4	Talk and teach non-Aboriginal people about Aboriginal child rearing practices.		
3.5	Promote and make Aboriginal culture more visible in the community eg: in the naming of streets and parks.		
3.6	Encourage and support Aboriginal community and family members to get help and engage in services to reduce the possibility of contact with the child protection system.		
3.7	Support local community leaders to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal families.		