







FAMILY MATTERS

Strong communities. Strong culture.
Stronger children.

THE FAMILY MATTERS REPORT CARD 2024

COLOUR GUIDE

-  Very poor
-  Poor
-  Promising/improving
-  Stronger practice/outcomes

ABBREVIATIONS

- OOHC: out-of-home care
- ACCO: Aboriginal community-controlled organisation
- ATSICCO: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation
- ATSICPP: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
- AEDC: Australian Early Development Census
- CTG: National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- FGC: Family Group Conferencing
- TPPRO: Third-party parental responsibility order

References to Aboriginal people refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Headline indicator Over-representation in OOHC + TPPRO (rate)		BUILDING BLOCK 1 Universal and targeted services	BUILDING BLOCK 2 Participation, control and self-determination	BUILDING BLOCK 3 Culturally safe and responsive systems	BUILDING BLOCK 4 Accountability
ACT	11.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of over-representation in OOHC decreased from 14 in 2023 to 11.7 in 2024, partly driven by a drop in OOHC admission rate for Aboriginal children (13.9 to 5.5 per 1000)* Decrease in the proportion of expenditure on family support and intensive family support from 12% in 2021-22 to 9% in 2022-23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased investment in ACCOs via Aboriginal Service Development Branch in ACT Government ACCOs beginning to be accredited as Care and Protection Organisations, but only 1.9% of expenditure is currently through ACCOs Community concern over lack of investment in culturally appropriate early support and FGC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Placement Principle now embedded into legislation, active efforts to also become law in late 2024 Third highest placement with Aboriginal kin (38.6%), consistent with previous years Drop in reunification rate to 4.7% for 2021-22, from 13.6% in 2020-21 Continued funding for the Care and Protection Legal Advocacy Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencement of inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner Continued independent Aboriginal oversight body monitors implementation of Our Booris, Our Way review Establishment of Child and Family Reform Ministerial Advisory Council, with Aboriginal membership
NSW	10.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of over-representation in OOHC continues to increase each year, to 10.7 in 2023 514 Aboriginal children subject to unborn reports in 2023, the highest for jurisdictions with available data 13.1% of child protection expenditure on intensive and non-intensive family support in 2022-23, consistent with previous years Community concern over lack of ACCO delivery of Targeted Earlier Intervention services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of development of a Family Is Culture Implementation Plan, despite community calls Community concern about government reliance on FGC, instead of ACCO designed and delivered AFLDM models Community calls for evaluation and monitoring of the Aboriginal Case Management Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fourth highest rate of Aboriginal children on long-term orders (62.2 per 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the general population) Lowest reunification rate at 2% for Aboriginal children in 2022 Legislating active efforts requirements has commenced, however significant implementation in partnership with ACCOs required One of the few jurisdictions to adopt out Aboriginal children, all of which to non-Indigenous adoptive parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No dedicated Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People Ministerial Aboriginal Partnership Group established No meaningful progress on establishing an independent Child Protection Commission in line with Family Is Culture Review 2024 Audit Office report found DCJ lacks effective monitoring of casework decisions for Aboriginal children
NT	12.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Aboriginal children in OOHC has decreased by 23.5% from 2017 to 2023 (number of non-Indigenous children also decreased by 24.1%) Over-representation still remains relatively high, however a drop from 14.8 in 2022 Increasing proportion of expenditure on intensive and non-intensive family support (32.9%). ACCO investment data not provided for 2022-23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planting the Seeds Action Plan (2023-25) released by the Children and Families Tripartite Forum, with commitments for ACCO investment No AFLDM model implemented despite commitment 5 years ago Child Wellbeing and Safety Partnership Framework legislated in 2023, but community concern over whether this leads to real change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second lowest placement with Aboriginal kin (23.8%), highest placement with non-Indigenous non-relative carers (69%) Continued use of purchased home-based care despite commitment to phase it out Investment in eight Aboriginal Carer Services to support Aboriginal kinship and foster carers, though greater authority and investment is still needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No dedicated Commissioner for Aboriginal children and young people Tripartite Forum with Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT membership guides government reform No peak body for Aboriginal children and families Concerns over the lack of data and transparency on leaving care plans
QLD	9.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steady increase in OOHC entries, and a 13% increase in the rate of over-representation since 2021 Proportion of investment in ATSICCOs is static and insufficient: 18% of investment in family support and 25% of investment in intensive family support 33% of children received family support from an ATSICCO and 70% of children received intensive family support from an ATSICCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegated authority for child protection functions to ATSICCOs expanded from two to 13 sites Small increase in funding allocated to Family Participation Program services, but level of investment remains inadequate Rapid investment transfer to ATSICCOs, with a 245% increase in funding provided for care services for Aboriginal children in OOHC, however more work is needed for self-determination in investment processes and workforce development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second highest placement in residential care (15.8%) but review underway has seen 140 Aboriginal children transition out of residential care Third lowest proportion of children placed with Aboriginal kin (24.5%) Funding negotiations for the Family Caring for Family program progressed, but no commitment to statewide implementation Amendments to Working with Children Check scheme will remove one barrier to Aboriginal people applying to become kinship carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No dedicated Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, but commitment made in April 2024 to establish one Partnership Agreement has been developed to guide implementation of the Breaking Cycles Action Plan of the Our Way Strategy New data collection system for collection of cultural information about children and families to assist application of ATSICPP, however it is unclear how data will be shared with ATSICCOs
SA	11.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greatest increase in the number of Aboriginal children in OOHC between 2019 to 2023 (33.5%) Third lowest proportion of expenditure on intensive and non-intensive family support (9.1%), but second highest expenditure per child on intensive family support (\$122.37) Relatively low proportion of investment in ACCOs for family support and intensive family support (9.8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only two gazetted Recognised ATSICCOs, both metropolitan-based and with limited scope Investment in FGC is promising, but not delivered through ACCOs The recent statutory review of the <i>Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017</i> fail to include AFLDM. While provisions for FGC are strengthened, decision-making powers remain with the Department for Child Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed legislative amendments to require active efforts to uphold the Child Placement Principle, however caveats undermine compliance Commissioner identifies increased funding announced for Safer Family Services as inadequate Highest proportion of Aboriginal children in residential care (16.6%) Highest rate of Aboriginal children on long-term orders (86.6/1,000) Second lowest reunification rate for Aboriginal children (3.8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencement of community-controlled peak body for Aboriginal for children and families - Wakwakurna Kanyini - formed through a statewide Aboriginal-led design process Fully legislated independent Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, recent completion of Inquiry report <i>Holding on to Our Future</i>
TAS	5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowest over-representation in OOHC, however an 8% increase in the Aboriginal OOHC population since 2019 Proportion of funding to ACCOs remains very low at 0.7% in 2022-23, and funding to Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) for family support was only \$273,110 in 2023-24 Reported high investment in intensive and non-intensive family support (25.4%), but this is inflated due to family violence counselling services included in expenditure figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued funding to ACCOs as part of Closing the Gap Capacity Building program, including funding to develop a community-led strategy to transfer child protection decision-making to TAC No Aboriginal FGC facilitators employed despite government commitment under Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy In 2023, Child Safety Service established a decision-making forum where organisations and family can provide input on child protection decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowest placement with Aboriginal kin (17%), and highest placement with non-Indigenous non-relative carers (38.5%) Since 2019, near doubling of placement with Aboriginal relatives and carers to 24.6% in 2023 Lowest rate of Aboriginal children on long-term orders (34.1/1000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to appoint a Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People by 2026 Commitment to appoint Executive Director for Aboriginal Children and Young People within the Department for Education, Children and Young People Children recorded with 'unknown' Aboriginal status reduced to 0 in 2023 data, down from nearly 30% in 2018. However, concerns remain over unknown Aboriginal status of carers
VIC	17.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second highest over-representation in OOHC Highest removal rate of Aboriginal children into OOHC (35.3/1,000) Second highest proportion of expenditure on family support and intensive family support (26.9%) Highest likelihood of Aboriginal children in continuous OOHC for two or more years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Protecting Boorais program enables two ACCOs to conduct investigations AFLDM and Aboriginal specialist advice programs statewide require child protection authorities to consult with ACCOs on significant decisions Large proportion of Aboriginal children in OOHC managed by Aboriginal agencies (47-49%) though growth is stalled and requires renewed efforts Highest proportion of expenditure on ACCOs (7.4%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest placement with Aboriginal kin (40.4%) Lowest proportion of Aboriginal children in residential care (4.5%) Second highest rate of Aboriginal children on long-term orders (84.5/1,000) Highest reunification rate for Aboriginal children (24%) Expansion of ACCOs participating in the Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care program, but concerns about low investment in prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing partnership with ACCOs through the Aboriginal Children's Forum and Wungurilwil Gagapduir, but lack of adequate resourcing to ACCOs Government response to Yoorook Justice Commission recommendations unsatisfactory, with only 4 of 46 recommendations supported Dedicated Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People but the role is not in legislation
WA	20.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest over-representation in OOHC Lowest proportion of expenditure on family support services and intensive family support services (4.3%), and a reduction in the amount of expenditure from the previous year (5%) Commitment to recommission Early Intervention and FSSs to ACCOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Representative Organisation program showing signs of success, and five new contracts have been awarded to ACCOs for OOHC services 2024-25 budget commitment for AFLDM, but expansion beyond pilot form that began in 2021 has not occurred The role of ACCOs in the child protection system is still constrained by lack of funding and limited authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third highest placement with Aboriginal kin (39.5%) Fifth highest rate of Aboriginal children on long-term orders (57/1000), but highest rate ratio (19.1) Community concern with ensuring connection with family, culture and Country for Aboriginal children in care. Significant concerns with quality and transparency of cultural support plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than a year after WA 10-year Roadmap to address over-representation was completed through state-wide community design, government has not responded nor committed to implementation No dedicated Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People No Aboriginal child and family peak body resourced for state-wide leadership

Note on data: The reference date and source for data is often excluded in this abbreviated table but is available in the relevant sections of the report. The headline indicator is based on children in OOHC and on TPPROs.

* As the total number of children in care in the ACT is small relative to other jurisdictions, even slight changes in the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entering and exiting care will cause a significant change to the over-representation rate ratio