

Aboriginal **Outcomes** Strategy



2017 to 2021

**Family and
Community
Services**

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Nations people of New South Wales and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the ongoing connection Aboriginal people have to this land and recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of this land.





Secretary's message

The Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy sets out a bold new approach for delivering quality outcomes for Aboriginal people over the next five years.

This strategy is part of the FACS wide delivery plan for how we're creating the futures our clients and staff want.

We recognise the work we do often has a significant, but not always the best impact, on Aboriginal lives. To put it simply, we want our actions at FACS to mean Aboriginal children, families and communities have a better life.

This strategy sets out how we'll do this.

We've developed bold targets to strengthen our accountability to delivering outcomes across the FACS cluster, including early intervention, out of home care, social housing, workforce, and disability inclusion.

The FACS Cultural Capability Framework and Aboriginal Impact Statements will support this work, improve our cultural capability and improve the experience Aboriginal clients have with FACS.

We're committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal people, communities and staff to ensure that our actions meet diverse needs and aspirations in a culturally sensitive way.

Implementing the Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy won't be easy but we're committed to making this work and seeing positive changes and improved and quality outcomes for all Aboriginal people.

Michael Coutts-Trotter
Secretary

About the artwork

The artwork on this Strategy was created by Aboriginal artist and Wonaruah woman Saretta Fielding. The artwork represents FACS services and strategies that target Aboriginal clients.

A new approach

Better outcomes for Aboriginal families and communities

Many Aboriginal people are living fulfilling lives however there is still a high number of Aboriginal children, families and communities who do not share the same life outcomes as the broader Australian community. Many of these Aboriginal people are Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) clients.

Aboriginal people are overrepresented across all FACS service streams and a significant number of Aboriginal people are multi-service FACS clients. The evidence tells us that if we continue along the same path, life outcomes for Aboriginal people will continue to worsen. The target established in the Premier's Priorities identifies commitment from the NSW government to strive for better outcomes for Aboriginal people. This new approach to have targets for achieving Aboriginal outcomes over the next five years represents the contribution of FACS towards this commitment.

The Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy (AOS) endorsed by the FACS Executive Board represents a bold new approach that FACS will embrace over five years to improve its performance in delivering better outcomes for Aboriginal people and measure our efforts where it counts. The Strategy, to be implemented from 2017 to 2021, will ensure transparency and accountability across the organisation in how we are working to make a positive difference to the lives of Aboriginal people in NSW.

Changing our focus

Priority areas

The AOS is focussed on reversing the poor outcomes experienced by Aboriginal clients by setting clear expectations and specifying priorities, goals, targets, timeframes and accountability to provide a transparent and cohesive response to FACS efforts to deliver better outcomes and client experience for Aboriginal children, families and communities.

FACS has committed to organisational targets across five key priority focus areas over five years (from 2017 to 2021) to:

1. Increase access to early intervention for Aboriginal families.
2. Reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home-care.
3. Improve economic and social outcomes for Aboriginal social housing clients.
4. Increase the number of Aboriginal staff in FACS.
5. Increase engagement with disability services.



Targets

Organisational targets

Over the next five years FACS will work with Aboriginal communities to meet the following targets:

District targets

The organisational targets have been broken down into district targets. This allocates responsibility for a portion of the targets to each District. These lower level district targets together will contribute to achieving the overall organisational targets.

	Focus areas	Targets		
1	Increase access to early intervention for Aboriginal families	30% of Targeted Early Intervention Reform funding committed for Aboriginal families by 2021	50% of additional 900 preservation and restoration places for Aboriginal families	
2	Reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home-care	Eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home-care by 2040 . (<i>Family Matters target</i>)	Over the next five years FACS will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of Aboriginal children and young people entering OOHc by 20% • Transition 1200 Aboriginal children and young people to guardianship orders • Restore 1500 Aboriginal children and young people to their families 	10% reduction in the number of Aboriginal children and young people in OOHc by 30 June 2020
3	Improve economic and social outcomes for Aboriginal social housing clients	20% increase in positive exits from social housing by 2021	20% reduction in negative exits for social housing tenants by 2019	Increase level of priority Aboriginal public housing tenancies sustained for at least 12 months to 85% by 2019
4	Increase the number of Aboriginal staff in FACS	7.5% Aboriginal employment across FACS by 2018	Double the current number (as at 2017) of Aboriginal people in senior leadership roles by 2020	Benchmark Aboriginal staff engagement and establish year on year improvements.
5	Increase engagement with disability services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of Aboriginal people with a disability who achieve an outcome through Ability Links to 25% by 2017/18 		

Where we are now

Baseline

Focus areas	Baseline
Increase access to early intervention for Aboriginal families	14.05% of TEI was invested in Aboriginal service delivery as at May 2017
Reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home-care	1058 Aboriginal children and young people entered care in 2016/17
	103 Aboriginal children were transitioned to guardianship orders in 2016/17
	256 Aboriginal children and young people were restored to their families in 2016/17
	7152 Aboriginal children and young people were in OOHC as at 30 June 2017
Improve economic and social outcomes for Aboriginal social housing clients	258 Aboriginal households had a positive exit from social housing in 2016/17
	214 Aboriginal households had a negative exit from social housing in 2016/17
	83% of priority Aboriginal public housing tenancies were sustained for at least 12 months in 2016/17
Increase the number of Aboriginal staff in FACS	6.2% of FACS non-disability workforce identified as Aboriginal as at June 2017
	6 Aboriginal people were in senior leadership roles as at June 2017
	2017 People Matter Employee Survey results indicated that respondents who identified as Aboriginal (6%) had an engagement score of 62%
Increase engagement with disability services	22.8% of Aboriginal people with a disability achieved an outcome through Ability Links during Quarter 4, 2016/17

Guiding Principles

FACS Executive Board Commitment

The FACS Executive Board will be guided by a set of principles developed by and for FACS senior executives:

“These have been developed to strengthen our leadership, culture and commitment to deliver on key priorities and embed consideration of outcomes in everyday business for our primary clients - Aboriginal children, families and communities. It outlines the behaviours that are critical to strengthen our leadership culture and position the department so that we:

- 1. Are bold in our approach to achieving outcomes for Aboriginal clients*
- 2. Practice informed decision-making that delivers a positive impact and outcomes for Aboriginal clients*
- 3. Are aware of the historical and present day impact of our work on Aboriginal children, families and communities*
- 4. Provide, enable and facilitate Aboriginal people’s rights to self-determination*
- 5. Are united as a leadership team and willing to make the hard decisions and ask the difficult questions*
- 6. Show a commitment to an organisational culture that values Aboriginal clients and the contribution of Aboriginal staff*
- 7. Build genuine partnership with Aboriginal people and doing it right with Aboriginal people.”*

FACS Executive Board



Building Blocks - Family Matters Campaign

In addition to the FACS Executive Board principles the AOS will be guided by the four Building Blocks of the national **Family Matters** campaign:

1. All families enjoy access to quality, culturally safe, universal and targeted services necessary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to thrive.
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations participate in and have control over decisions that affect their children.
3. Law, policy and practice in child and family welfare are culturally safe and responsive.
4. Governments and services are accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Guiding Principles for strengthening the participation of local Aboriginal community in child protection decision making

The **Guiding Principles for strengthening the participation of local Aboriginal community in child protection decision making** inform collaboration and cooperation between FACS and Aboriginal communities on child protection matters. They highlight the role of Local Advisory Groups through which local Aboriginal communities can participate in decision making regarding the care and protection of Aboriginal children.

The Principles were developed by the Grandmothers Against Removal (GMAR) with the New England FACS District Office and the NSW Ombudsman's Office.

Actions to achieve targets Working with Aboriginal people to achieve goals

Delivery plans for each target focus area have been developed centrally outlining a range of overarching initiatives to meet the organisational targets. Districts will develop local implementation plans that identify a range of actions to be undertaken to meet their local targets. These will vary from district to district to best reflect local community needs.

In determining the best actions to meet these targets FACS is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal people and ensuring Aboriginal voices guide what needs to be done and what needs to improve or change.

While the AOS supersedes the Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework (ACIF) the foundations set by the framework will continue to underpin the implementation of the AOS.

Building relationships and working with Aboriginal communities in districts and centrally are priority principles of the FACS Executive Board, ACIF, the **Family Matters** campaign and the **Guiding Principles for strengthening the participation of local Aboriginal community in child protection decision making**. Adhering to these principles is key to the successful development and implementation of actions to achieve targets at a local and organisational level.

Governance and accountability

Responsibility for monitoring progress

The Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy is being led from the top with the FACS Executive Board driving accountability for organisational performance against the five target areas.

The Board has established the Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy Sub Committee to monitor progress and report to the Board. The Committee is chaired by a Deputy Secretary and membership includes senior executives from across FACS including Executive Directors responsible for each target.

Reports detailing performance against targets at the organisational level and the District level will be provided to the FACS Executive Board every quarter. The Committee Chair will report to the Board regularly on AOS progress and the work of the Committee.

Aboriginal led evaluation

How will we know we are making a difference?

While the targets send a clear message about FACS expectations and what we need to do to deliver outcomes for Aboriginal people, it is equally as important to know how our efforts are making a difference where it is needed most.

An Aboriginal Outcomes Evaluation Framework is being developed and will be used to evaluate the impact of FACS reform on achieving Aboriginal outcomes.

Initiatives identified in the delivery plans for each target will be audited against Aboriginal Impact Statements to identify where we could do better in working with the Aboriginal community and sector.

The results of the evaluation process will be used to directly inform the commissioning of services and programs so that meaningful outcomes are achieved for Aboriginal clients.

Community feedback

Listening to the community

The FACS Executive Board, senior executive and staff are committed to getting this right. To do this we will be getting out into communities regularly, and listening and talking to the Aboriginal community about:

- What we're trying to do.
- How we are progressing.
- Whether we are focussed on the right things.
- What is and isn't working.
- What we need to change.
- What else we could do.

Aboriginal client satisfaction

How do Aboriginal clients feel about the services FACS provide?

In moving towards being a client focussed organisation, it is important to recognise and understand not only the outcomes people achieve, but also the service they experience. Client satisfaction for Aboriginal people and families is important to us and will help influence how we can continuously improve our services to meet Aboriginal community needs and deliver better outcomes. Developing and conducting client satisfaction surveys is central to the success of the strategy.

Initiatives to support implementation

Building FACS cultural capability

FACS recognises that it will take more than targets and goodwill to achieve outcomes. Supporting staff to build their cultural capability is central to building meaningful relationships with Aboriginal families and communities and ensuring long term change.

The Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework and Aboriginal Impact Statement are initiatives aimed at building the cultural capability of individuals and FACS as an organisation. These initiatives will support the implementation of the AOS.

Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework

The Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework was developed with the advice of Aboriginal staff in FACS, other state and federal agencies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and Aboriginal people in the wider community and will be implemented from 2017 to 2021.

FACS Aboriginal clients face additional challenges and barriers to effective service delivery, often due to cultural misconceptions and misunderstandings. To address this the Aboriginal Cultural Capability Framework has been developed to facilitate FACS staff to better develop their understanding of Aboriginal cultures and assist staff to build strong relationships with Aboriginal people, organisations and communities in their districts.

- The FACS Board agreed that this will be led from the top with clear accountabilities throughout the organisation.
- A mandatory program of online and localised face-to-face Aboriginal cultural capability training for staff across FACS.
- A mobile app to share resources and facilitate staff engagement and relationship building with Aboriginal people and communities.
- Measures to increase Aboriginal staff in FACS, improve Aboriginal staff retention and make FACS a culturally safe place for Aboriginal people to work.

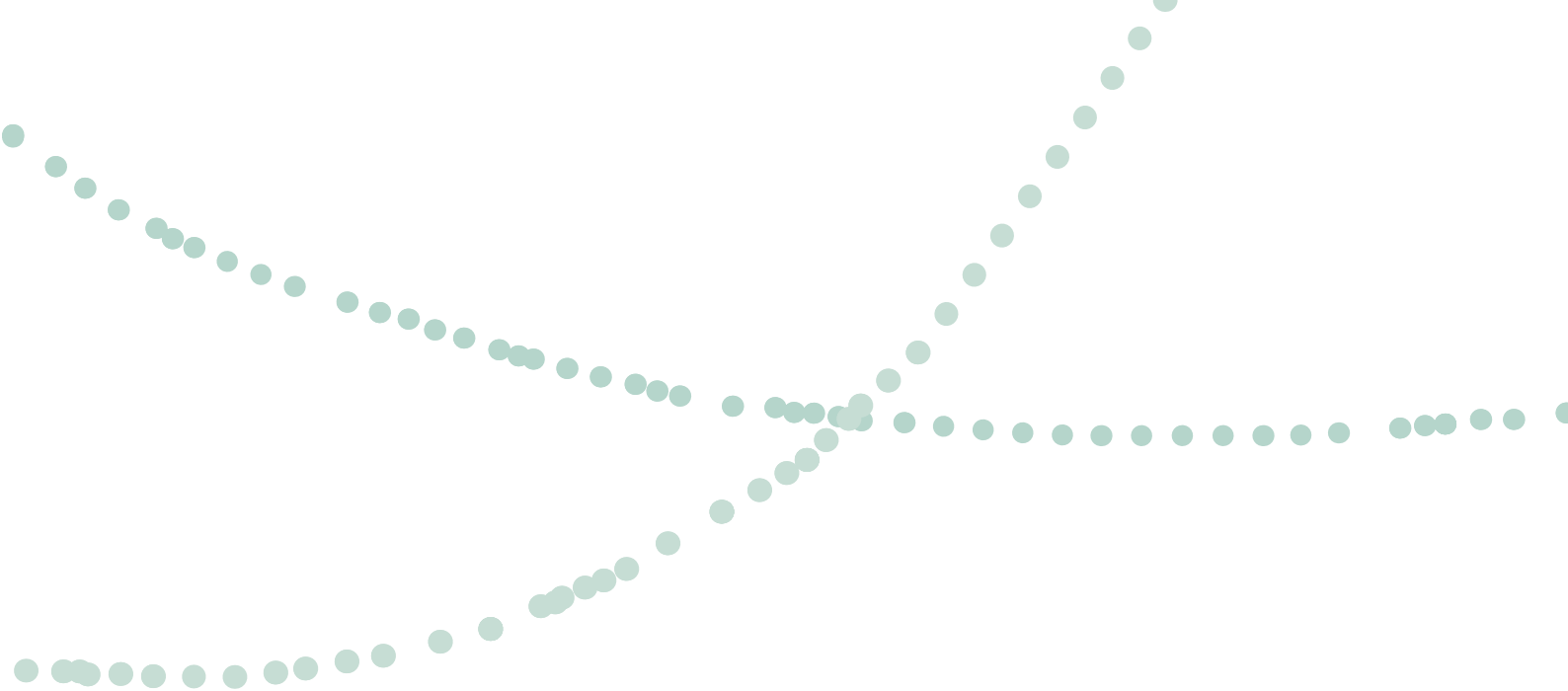


Aboriginal Impact Statement (AIS)

The AIS promotes advanced thinking about how FACS initiatives being developed or revised give consideration to:

- Understanding the diversity of needs and issues experienced by Aboriginal people.
- Engagement and participation of Aboriginal people.
- Impacts on Aboriginal people.

An AIS must be completed for any proposal that is expected to have significant impact on Aboriginal people, families and communities and for all Cabinet Submissions.



Delivering better outcomes for Aboriginal families and communities is the number one priority for all of FACS.



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