Communique #5

The Steering Committee for the Our Booris, Our Way Review held its sixth meeting on 2 July 2018. The meeting was held at Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Service.

Leading up to the meeting, two Steering Committee Members attended the National Child Protection Forum in Darwin, Northern Territory. The Committee heard about some good practice examples benefiting First Nations families in both Australia and New Zealand. These included:

- The work being done in Victoria to move more decision making to the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector
- ‘First Nations Homelessness Project’ in Western Australia, helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families maintain their housing tenancies
- ‘Cultural Connections’ in Western Australia and their dedicated Kinship group conducting family finding activities
- The Family and Child Commission in Queensland, moving control to the community sector

The Steering Committee reviewed the work of the Chairperson and noted she had met with many members of the Community in the past month about their experiences with the Child Protection System. The Committee is keen to explore ways to open more avenues for Community members, who wish to talk about their experiences.

The Review Team continued to review the files of the first cohort of children and young people. The Reviewers are now contacting families from this cohort to see if they would like to talk about their experience. Based on this feedback, the Reviewers will make records and generate information regarding systems and practice issues.

All personal information is treated as highly confidential. If a participant in a Review interview changes their mind after talking to anyone from Our Booris, Our Way, all records of the conversation will be deleted. Our first priority at all times is the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

The Steering Committee provided advice to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB) regarding draft recommendations for child protection matters. The Committee emphasised the importance of:

- Reporting to Community
- Aboriginal-led decision making
- Early Intervention for families
- Funding Aboriginal controlled organisations that are already providing intensive support for families

The Steering Committee continued working on the Interim Report this month, and reiterated their commitment to designing the report to be read by Community. The goal is to release the Interim Report to Community on the same day it goes to the Minister.
Next Meeting:

At the next meeting, the Steering Committee is hoping to finalise the Interim Report for Our Booris, Our Way, expected to be released late August 2018.

If you wish to reach out and speak with the Committee, please email:

ACTreview@act.gov.au

This email address is monitored only by the Review Team to keep your information private and confidential.