Our Booris, Our Way

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith announced a review in June 2017.

The terms of reference and methodology were developed by a wholly Aboriginal Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will play an active role in the analysis, development and recommendations of the review.

The Review team is led by an Aboriginal Senior Clinical Practice leader.

The review will be called Our Booris, Our Way.

Terms of Reference

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the ACT are represented at more than 12 times the rate that they are represented in the community generally in child protection.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are central to this review – their health, education, cultural security, life opportunities and outcomes.

The primary focus of the review will be to inform systemic improvements to child protection systems, policies and practices. The review seeks to understand the reasons for children and young people entering care and to then develop strategies to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people entering care, improve their experience and outcomes while in care, and exit children from care through restorations.

Opportunities for individual case and systemic changes that are identified will be raised immediately with leadership of the child protection system and, through constructive dialogue, will be considered whether these opportunities can be implemented immediately. In this way, the review seeks to affect change in the system incrementally throughout the two-year period.

The review will be overseen by a wholly Aboriginal Steering Committee with strong cultural intellect and capability in holistic service and integrated care, legal and community domains. The Steering Committee is supported by a project team who will undertake the specific case review and is led by skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with experience in child protection.

There will be broad consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, their families, carers and communities, the community sector, and the child protection workforce.

There are high expectations from the community that this review will lead with self-determination and deliver a break in the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage by ensuring children are able to stay connected to culture and community throughout their life.

We will seek to change this system to build strong culture and connection: Our Booris, Our Way.
Scope

The review will consider the experience and cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in a holistic way. The review will consult broadly across the community and gather information and experiences to inform systemic change to influence policies, practices and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children today and into the future.

The review will evaluate relevant legislation, policies and practices and identify and recommend opportunities to improve the effectiveness and application of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

The review will consider two specific cohorts. The first cohort to be reviewed will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people where:

- casework is occurring
- interim orders are in place
- short term final orders are in place.

The second cohort to be reviewed will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who are on long term (permanent) final orders will be reviewed with a view to determine whether appropriate casework and services are in place to support connection to culture and family.

Out of scope for this review are the following: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people reported via a Child Concern Report to Child and Youth Protection Services that is not proceeding to an appraisal.

Reporting

The review will be in two phases with the first phase commencing in early 2018 with an interim report to be delivered in August 2018. This report will focus on early learnings and initial improvements to the system.

The second phase of the review will commence following the delivery of the interim report and provide a final report to government twelve months after the interim report that will focus on major systemic improvement.
Methodology

The review requires a robust methodology to ensure consistency across the review of approximately 350 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people over two years.

The following table describes the different sources of information and knowledge that will be considered during the review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td>Children, families, carers and organisations will be open to presenting submissions or consultations directly with the Steering Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case reviews</td>
<td>350 cases will be reviewed and evaluated across specific decision points, engagement and outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of child protection policy and practice</td>
<td>• Review of relevant legislation, specifically s 513 that describes the nature of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle in the ACT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of child protection policy and practice</td>
<td>• Review of policy and practice guidance documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>• Consideration of similar state and national reviews, their methodologies and outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>• Consideration of recommendations from similar state, territory and national reviews, and an overview of their implementation in the ACT.</td>
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<tr>
<td>System-level data</td>
<td>Data available from child protection information systems regarding the specific cohorts</td>
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