



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Michael Pettersson MLA

Reference: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle/Community Services Directorate

Hearing: 18 February 2025

In relation to: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

Question received: 24 February 2025

Answer Due: 3 March 2025

In the last review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, it was identified that the community sector needed adequate funding and autonomy to meet the needs of First Nations families, especially with regard to early intervention, prevention, support and training of kin carers, provision of out-of-home care, and reunification of First Nations children with their families.

1. What has the ACT Government done to give effect to these recommendations?

Michael Pettersson MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The Community Services Directorate (CSD) values the approach of ACT Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACT) in delivering integrated, holistic services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and families via a child-centric, family-focused approach.

In 2023, CSD established the Aboriginal Service Development Branch (ASD) to support and work in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, new and existing Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and government partners to deliver on various aspects of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-28 and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector.

By investing in ACCOs and supporting them to build their organisational capacity and capability, we collectively work to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Canberra.

Under Next Steps for Our Kids 2022-2030:

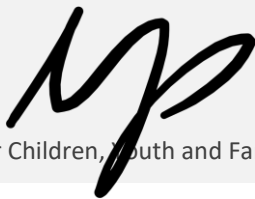
- The Community Services Directorate (CSD) is progressing a new service system to shift focus and investment to improve support for families and keep children and young people safe at home

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- Part of this is the Children Young People and Families Panel, a new way of delivering children and family support services in the ACT.
- The Panel looks beyond the statutory care system to provide increased prevention and early support, to strengthen families and help more children and young people remain safe at home.
- The Panel is made up of appropriately qualified and experienced non-government organisations including Aboriginal and Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).
- Under the Panel:
 - Active efforts are being made to support a sustainable Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) sector and enable the transition of case management responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children to one or more registered ACCOs.
 - A focus on transfer of proportional funding aligned to the level of over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the system is also a fundamental element of the change. The investment in building the ACCO sector to manage for this is also critical. Building relationships across all providers will also build cultural competence and cultural safety underpins the move of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander families and children within the system.
 - In line with ACT Government commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028*, the Territory is targeting for up to 30 per cent of the child protection, out of home care and support services procured through the Request for Proposal GS3925427 Children, Young People and Families Panel (RFP) to be delivered by ACCOs. The Territory has also made a commitment to transfer up to 100 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families to ACCOs.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:



Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Michael Pettersson MLA

Date:

3/3/25