

# Working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team

## Direction to staff

This document provides supplementary information to support Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) staff perform their role when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the term ‘child’ or ‘children’ also refers to ‘young person’ or ‘young people’. The term ‘children in care’ refers to ‘children in out of home care’.

The term ‘Aboriginal’ denotes all Aboriginal Peoples of Australia including Torres Strait Islander people.

## Purpose of this document

This practice guide provides information about the role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team.

## Scope

This practice guide supports CYPS staff who work with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child or young person and their families by providing an overview of the support and guidance available from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team.

## In this document

This document contains the following topics.

Purpose of this document.....	1
Scope.....	1
Consultation.....	2
Referral process .....	2
Mandatory referral .....	3
Panels and Meetings.....	3
Aboriginal cultural planning.....	3
Working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Panel.....	3
Training and Development .....	4

Roles and responsibilities .....	4
Related materials .....	5
Legislation .....	5
Policies, procedures and practice guides.....	6
Other documentation .....	6
Document information .....	6
Version history .....	6
Definitions.....	7

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## Consultation

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team may provide advice and support to CYPS case managers when working with all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families.

This can include provision of cultural advice when a case manager is planning to undertake:

- home visits
- appraisals
- family finding
- cultural plan development
- case conferences
- family preservation
- family restoration
- emergency action
- family and kinship assessment
- referral to a community service
- pre-natal response.

## Referral process

The process for referral to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team is to:

- complete the 'Cultural Services Consultation' form
- create the CYRIS event type 'consultation with the Cultural Services Team'
- attach the referral form
- email the inbox [aboriginalconsultation@act.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalconsultation@act.gov.au), and include the link to the CYRIS referral.

Following referral, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team will arrange a consultation with the case manager.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team will record the referral request and the consultation provided on CYRIS using the event types 'cultural consult request' and 'cultural consult' respectively.

Note: there may be times when it may not be appropriate for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team to be actively involved with children, young people and their

families. Case managers should consult the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team to determine their involvement. The Team may still be able to provide consult to the case manager without physically seeing or speaking to the client.

## **Mandatory referral**

It is mandatory for case managers to refer to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team when:

- an appraisal of an Aboriginal family will occur (after allocation)
- a case manager is preparing a Family Assessment based on the likelihood that a planned application for a Care and Protection Order may occur
- whenever there is a change of care placement (either a planned or unplanned).

## **Panels and Meetings**

A representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team will attend all significant panel and decision-making processes which relate to Aboriginal children including;

- allocations,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Panel,
- Application Review Committee (ARC),
- Linking Panel,
- Preservation Panel, and
- Restoration Panel.

## **Aboriginal cultural planning**

An Aboriginal cultural plan (cultural plan) provides a written guide for supporting and promoting cultural identity and connection to family and community for all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care. The cultural plan is both a plan of agreed actions and a tool for decision making (see the 'Cultural plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children' procedure).

A cultural plan is separate but aligned to a child's care plan. The cultural plan development and implementation is the responsibility of the case manager.

Quality assurance of cultural plans is the responsibility of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team, who will utilise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Panel to review all plans.

## **Working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Panel**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Panel (the panel) is the mechanism for supporting, monitoring, reviewing and endorsing all cultural plans for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

The members of the panel include:

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team leader
- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team officer
- The CYPS Aboriginal Practice Leader
- A member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation

The cultural plan development is to begin within the **first six weeks** of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child or young person entering out-of-home-care. This commences with by submitting a referral to the panel, followed by a presentation to the panel six weeks later (see the 'Cultural plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people' procedure).

Finalisation of the cultural plan after the panel is the responsibility of the CYPS case manager via their team leader and operations manager. All cultural plans must be endorsed by the case manager's operations manager.

The panel will review the cultural plan six months after endorsement. This is to ensure the plan is being implemented effectively, and to help the case manager develop the updated cultural plan which will be required once the child has been in care for 12 months.

## Training and Development

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team will support the CYPS Training and Development team to provide training and education regarding the Cultural Development Education Program. A member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team will support each session to improve the cultural development of all CYPS staff members.

## Roles and responsibilities

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities under this procedure.

Role	Responsibility
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing advice and guidance to case managers for developing a cultural plan</li> <li>• assisting with the developing the objectives and actions in the child's cultural plan</li> <li>• consulting with the child and other key stakeholders, when possible</li> <li>• recording all cultural consult event types on the client management system</li> <li>• assisting with implementing and monitoring the objectives and actions through the Aboriginal Cultural Panel</li> <li>• reviewing the cultural plan at the six monthly and annual review</li> <li>• assist in the presentation of Cultural Development Education Program</li> </ul>

Role	Responsibility
Case manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arranging an appointment time for a comprehensive cultural consultation with the Aboriginal Cultural Panel within the first six weeks of a child being placed in Out of Home Care to developing a cultural plan</li> <li>• developing the objectives and actions in the child’s cultural plan</li> <li>• consulting with the child and other key stakeholders</li> <li>• arranging for CYPS Operational Support staff to distribute the cultural plan</li> <li>• record keeping including recording a service event on the client management system when completed.</li> <li>• implementing and monitoring the objectives and actions</li> <li>• reviewing the cultural plan at the six monthly and 12 monthly review periods.</li> </ul>
CYPS Operational Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• distributing a cultural plan, as directed</li> <li>• recording the cultural plan appropriately on the client management system and in the child’s registry file (if not completed by the case manager)</li> <li>• providing administrative support to case managers.</li> </ul>
Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing advice to staff on legal issues</li> <li>• lodging the cultural plan with the ACT Childrens Court (where this is part of an application for a Care and Protection Order).</li> </ul>
Operations Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• endorsing all cultural plans</li> <li>• providing ongoing case and practice supervision, specifically with working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and families.</li> </ul>
Team Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supporting staff in developing cultural plan objectives and actions</li> <li>• reviewing the proposed cultural plan</li> <li>• providing ongoing case and practice supervision, specifically with working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and families.</li> </ul>

## Related materials

The following materials directly relate to this procedure.

### Legislation

- *Children and Young People Act 2008*
- *Human Rights Act 2004*
- *Information Privacy Act 2014*
- *Territory Records Act 2002*

## Policies, procedures and practice guides

- [Policy: Cultural plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people](#)
- Procedure: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural panel
- [Procedure: Annual review](#)
- [Procedure: Care plans](#)
- [Procedure: Case plans for child protection matters](#)
- [Procedure: Cultural plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people](#)
- [Practice guide: Case management – care plan, case plan and cultural plan](#)
- [Practice guide: Case management – developing a care plan](#)
- [Practice guide: Developing contact arrangements](#)
- [Practice guide: Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people](#)
- [Practice guide: Family Group Conference \(FGC\)](#)
- [Practice guide: Identifying and finding kinship carers](#)
- [Practice guide: Kinship carers and kinship care placements](#)
- [Procedure: Placing a child in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle](#)
- [Practice guide: Placing a child in a care placement](#)

## Other documentation

- [CYPS Practice Standards](#)
- [Form: Cultural Services Consultation](#)
- [Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait and Torres Strait Islander families: Providing culturally responsive practice](#)
- [Working and walking together: Supporting family relationship services to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and organisations by SNAICC](#)

## Document information

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## Version history

The following table details the published date and amendment details for this document.

Date	Amendment details
30/6/2020	First publication of this practice guide.

## Definitions

For definitions of terms used in this document, access the CYPs glossary.