



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING
Mr Johnathan Davis MLA (Chair), Mr James Milligan MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021
QUESTION ON NOTICE

ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA: To ask the Minister for Families and Community Services

Ref: Child Protection, CSD Annual Report 2020–21, pp. 38, 84

In relation to: Updated Out-of-Home Care Strategy

1. In the hearing, it was stated that the updated out-of-home care (OOHC) strategy will not be released for another month or so, with tenders to follow, and that therefore a ‘transition period’ may be necessary. Can the minister clarify what this transition would look like? For example, would contracts with the current OOHC provider (ACT Together) simply be extended for an additional period of time?
2. When is it expected that new contracts will be in place and the updated strategy will be launched?
3. It was stated in the hearing that, ideally, 30 per cent of the spend under the updated OOHC strategy would go to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), though this will not happen at first. Will there be a minimum percentage of the spend that must go to ACCOs from the beginning, and if so, what is that figure?
4. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy has annual targets that, so far, increase each year. Does the updated OOHC strategy include similar increasing targets to help reach the aspirational 30 per cent, and if so, what are they?
5. It was stated in the hearing that the government is looking at handing over some statutory control to ACCOs. Can the minister please elaborate on this goal? For example, is the intention to transfer Indigenous children in child protection to the care and case management of an ACCO, as is currently happening in Victoria under section 18 of their *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*? Something else/more?
6. When is it expected/desired that an ACCO in the ACT might begin exercising statutory functions in the child protection space?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:–

1. The *Next Steps* reform will be implemented using a series of overlapping phases over an eight year period. The first phase, “Transition Phase” will focus on transitioning

the current arrangements to the *Next Steps for Our Kids Strategy 2022 – 2030* with procurement activity occurring around the following programs of work:

- a) Extension of Service Funding Agreements (SFAs):
 - Recommission services for the Continuum of Care and Strengthening High Risk Families service packages and extend the existing SFAs (via Deeds of Variation) for a period of 12 months (1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023). This work applies to the high value / high risk SFAs with extensions taking effect from 1 July 2022.
 - b) New Contracts
 - Recommission services for the Standalone service packages comprising Mothers and Babies, and advocacy services for Birth Parents, Carers and Children and Young People, and establish new 36-month outcomes-based contracts (1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025) for the low value / low risk SFAs. These new contracts will take effect from 1 July 2022.
 - Commission and procure a new provider for the delivery of specialised therapeutic residential care services. Contract award for a new provider is planned for October/November 2022.
2. The Next Steps reform commences with the release of the *Next Steps for Our Kids Strategy 2022–2032*. The draft Strategy is subject to targeted stakeholder consultation and Government considerations. Following endorsement, the Strategy is planned for launch in May/June 2022.
 3. Recommendation 6 from the *Our Booris, Our Way* Report required CSD to undertake a feasibility study on the aspects of the service delivery for an ACCO. This study has identified a range of different service delivery elements including early support and diversion services, which may be delivered by one or more ACCOs.

The Directorate will work with community, including current ACCOs, to co-design the process for supporting the establishment or expansion of one or more ACCOs to deliver services to children and families engaged or at risk of engagement with the child protection system. Subject to this planning, the Directorate is proposing to transfer 30 per cent of current contracts to the ACCO/s, a figure which is proportionate to the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home-care.

A new service or service enhancement (noting there is an existing ACCO delivering the Functional Family Therapy Program), will be established for early support and diversion services from around 1 July 2022. 24/7 services (kinship care, foster care, etc.) will be longer term, with initial service provision targeted for 1 July 2023.

4. No annual targets similar to those contained in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy have been identified. The process to plan and establish

an ACCO /s is subject to a co-designed process with the community including current and future ACCOs.

5. The role and responsibilities of the ACCO/s including planning and establishment activities is subject to a co-designed process. It is anticipated that this role may evolve over time as the capability in the ACCO sector continues to grow. Discussions with community including current ACCOs are planned for late March 2022.
6. As above, the timing for an ACCO to commence exercising statutory responsibilities is subject to a co-designed process with community including current and future ACCOs. A new service or service enhancement (noting the existing ACCO delivering the Functional Family Therapy Program), will be established for early support and diversion services from around 1 July 2022. 24/7 services (kinship care, foster care, etc.) will be longer term, with initial service provision targeted for 1 July 2023.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature:



Date:

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By the Minister for Families and Community Services, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA