



STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
MICHAEL PETTERSSON MLA (CHAIR), JONATHAN DAVIS MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), PETER CAIN MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Elizabeth Kikkert MLA:

In relation to: Functional Family Therapy-Child Welfare and Family Group Conferencing

In hearings, the minister mentioned a small increase in funding for Family Group Conferencing. How much has the ACT Government spent each year on Family Group Conferencing, from the commencement of the pilot till the present?

- a. For each of these years, how many families/children have participated with Family Group Conferencing?
- b. How much has the ACT Government spent on funding Functional Family Therapy-Child Welfare, from the commencement of the pilot till the present?
- c. For each of these years, what has been the financial contribution of OzChild and Gugan Gulwan?
- d. For each of these years, how many families/children have participated with FFT-CW?
- e. In hearings the minister stated that OzChild is expanding its provision of FFT-CW through ACT Together. Can she please provide the details about this, including who will be targeted, how much the provision will be expanded, and how much this expansion will cost?
- f. In hearings the minister stated that there is 'ongoing consideration' for expanding both FFT-CW and FGC. Can she please provide more information about what has been discussed, what is in process, and so forth?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

Family Group Conferencing commenced in 2018. Under the More Support for Families and Inclusion – Family Group Conferencing initiative, funding expenses for each year is as follows:

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Expenses	\$348,000	\$356,000	\$515,000



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- a. The table below outlines the number of families and children who have participated in a Family Group Conference (FGC) over the last three years financial years to 7 April 2021:

Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Families	17	12	7
Children	46	21	13

The number of families participating in a FGC notably decreased in the second half of the 2019-20 financial year and 2020-21 reporting period. During these reporting periods, a decrease was seen in referrals and there were challenges in business continuity amid the COVID-19 related impacts of delivering the services within the pre COVID-19 business model.

In July 2020, a range of policy documents were updated, including the FGC procedure, the ACT FGC Model and the Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) Staff Information Sheet, to incorporate the policy of offering all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families a FGC. It is important to note that FGC is a voluntary process; and although CYPS staff can refer a family, it is voluntary for a family to participate.

Significant work is being undertaken by the FGC team in identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and early engagement with these families in understanding the FGC program and what it can offer. This is being achieved by identifying families through the evolving data capability in Child and Youth Record Information System (CYRIS) and active follow up the operational arm of the service.

- b. The Community Services Directorate entered contract arrangements covering the agreement period 1 June 2018 to 30 June 2021. As at 25 March 2021, the ACT Government has paid the contract value of \$1,481,060.50 for the delivery of Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare to support families at risk of becoming involved with the child protection system.
- c. At the time of the proposal, OzChild indicated that their contribution to the initial pilot would be \$350,000.00. Since this time, the Community Services Directorate understands no further funding has been contributed by OzChild or Gugan Gulwan.
- d. Since implementation of the Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare (FFT-CW) Program in November 2018 to 15 March 2021, Oz Child and Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation have received 83 referrals (families) to the program. Of this number, 55 families (involving 166 children and young people) consented to engage in the program.

Of the 55 families, 36 families (112 children) have successfully completed the FFT-CW program. The remaining families continue in the program.



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- e. OzChild has commenced delivery of FFT-CW as part of an expanded response for children and young people in out of home care. It is intended that FFT-CW under the Continuum of Care contract will provide services to 55 families for the period 1 February 2021 to 30 June 2022. The intention is that:
- 12 families will be engaged to support restoration of children and young people on short-term orders in kinship and foster care arrangements; and
 - 43 families to be supported to stabilise children and young people at risk of placement breakdown and support restoration to kin for children and young people on long term orders.

A total of \$300,000 was included in the contract with Barnardos. These funds are to assist with recruitment and training of staff to support the establishment of Functional Family Therapy within the Continuum of Care.

- f. The ACT Government has committed funding in the out years for these initiatives – refer to the tables below.

Family Group Conferencing (FGC)

2018-19 FY	2019-20 FY	2020-21 FY	2021-22 FY	2022-23 FY	2023-24 FY
\$348,000	\$356,000	\$515,000*	\$528,000*	\$531,000*	\$538,000*

*Includes additional funding as part of the Our Booris, Our Way initiative to strengthen FGC

Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare (FFT- CW)

2019-20 FY	2020-21 FY	2021-22 FY	2021-2022 FY
\$670,000	\$1,030,000	\$1,316,000	\$1,357,000 (Provisioned)

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:

Date: 28/5/21

By the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA,