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**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

Tabling Statement

**Government Response to the recommendations from the Our Booris, Our Way Review
Implementation Update January to December 2025**

**Presented by
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Minister for Children, Youth and Family
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Mr Speaker, I am pleased to present the tenth progress report on the ACT Government's response to the recommendations of the Our Booris, Our Way Review.

I would like to start by acknowledging the ongoing leadership and commitment of the Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee. The Committee's valuable knowledge, expertise and lived experience remains central to guiding the reform needed across the child protection system. Our aim is to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to grow safe, supported and connected to culture with family and in community. The Committee's partnership with the ACT Government continues to shape and strengthen this work.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people continue to be overrepresented in the ACT's child protection system. This is unacceptable and addressing it remains a priority for the ACT Government. At the same time, we recognise that reform of this scale is complex and requires sustained collaboration, investment, and accountability.

As of 31 December 2025, there were 223 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out of home care, representing a 10 per cent decrease since 30 June 2025.

This decrease was reflected in a 40% decline in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people on long-term orders where the Director-General holds parental responsibility. There has also been an increase of approximately 47% in children and young people placed under third-party parental responsibility orders, highlighting a shift toward permanent, stable homes where carers have full decision-making authority.

We remain firmly committed to the full implementation of the Our Booris, Our Way recommendations. This work continues in partnership with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and aligns with our broader commitments under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028, Next Steps for Our Kids, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031.

These frameworks recognise the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, and the importance of culturally informed, community-led approaches to improving outcomes for children and young people. The voices and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain central to this work.

Mr Speaker, I would like to highlight some of the key areas of progress achieved during the July to December 2025 reporting period.

In response to community feedback calling for improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander oversight beyond initial engagement points, the First Nations Family Response and Engagement Unit has continued to support culturally safe practices across Family Group Conferencing, Family Finding, and Family Connection and Restoration teams.

Improvements to referral pathways and cultural planning processes have also been implemented. A revised Family Group Conferencing referral process is now in place, including direct referrals from the Cultural Planning Team following a child or young person's entry into care to support earlier engagement with families in decision making and cultural connection. An agreement implemented in September 2025 ensures that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child eligible for a Cultural Plan is referred to the

Conferencing team, strengthening consultation, participation, partnership and cultural connection in the development of Cultural Plans.

These initiatives contribute to ongoing reform across legislation, policy, practice and service delivery. They reflect a continued focus on strengthening culturally safe practice, supporting early engagement with families, and enabling greater participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision making.

While progress continues, the Government acknowledges that further work is required to achieve sustained and meaningful change. This includes strengthening early support and prevention efforts to keep children and families together, consistent with the intent of the Our Booris, Our Way recommendations.

The ACT Government remains committed to working in genuine partnership with the Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Together, we will continue to progress the systemic reforms needed to reduce overrepresentation, improve the experiences of children and young people in out of home care, and support those children and young people to maintain strong connections to their family, culture and community.

I thank the members of the Committee, and all those who continue to contribute to this important work, for their ongoing dedication to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families here in the ACT.

Mr Speaker, I commend this progress report to the Assembly and thank you for the opportunity to share the ACT Government's progress against these important recommendations.

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