**Communique – Meeting 5 (26 March 2021)**

Meeting 5 was held at the Aboriginal Legal Service and hosted by Mr Jonathon Reid. Mr Reid provided an Acknowledgement of Country to open the meeting. Nine members were in attendance with one apology from Mr Damian Parriman due to weather conditions in the Kimberly region.

Prior to the meeting, members had completed and reviewed a table which captures their feedback and discussion regarding the location trial sites and cohorts.

Members provided their views by ranking the metro sites 1 and 2 in terms of preference and the regional sites as 1st, 2nd and 3rd. There was a slight variation in members’ preferences, and those with differing views were encouraged to discuss and advocate for their views. Once the open discussion had closed, members voted on the location trial sites. The consensus was moved and seconded, with Midwest Gascoyne as the regional pilot site and the selection of a metropolitan district. This decision is based on the support of the management teams within the Districts, the willingness of both Districts to drive cultural change within child protection practice, the key Aboriginal staff who will support the pilot and the strong existing relationships with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

The decisions about pilot site and cohort were followed by presentations that would inform the group of the models undertaken in Queensland, Victoria and Canada with regards to Family Group Conferencing.

Mr Darcy Cavanagh presented the Queensland model and the role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, Refocus, in employing convenors to facilitate the AFLDM external to the Government Child Protection Service.

Mr Paul Ferris from Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) presented on the co-convenor model adopted by Victoria to facilitate AFLDM. Paul’s presentation centred around the process of having a convenor from VACCA and a convenor from the Government Child Protection Service so that decision making is undertaken in the course of the meeting and entered into the child protection case plan concurrently.

Due to time zone difference, the Canadian presenters, Ms Cathy Richardson and
Vicky Boldo presented short videos on Family Group conferencing and response-based practice. They provided an international view on working in a social work context with families having experienced the “60s scoop” which is likened to the Stolen Generations in Australia. The response-based practice is a model based on working with families in the context of Family and Domestic Violence.

Members thanked Mr Cavanagh, Mr Ferris, Ms Richardson and Ms Boldo for their insightful presentations.

The next meeting will be held on the 9 April.