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CONFIDENTIAL

# WA Child Protection Pathway Project

PREPARED FOR THE WESTERN  
AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNITIES

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University of  
South Australia

Australian Centre  
for Child Protection

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, the Western Australian Department of Communities (Communities) established the Specialist Child Protection Unit (SCPU) to steward the child protection sector to improve outcomes for children, young people, and their families through adopting best practice and embedding system-wide continuous improvement. This unit was developed within the context of widespread Department reform which saw the government functions of Housing, Disability Support and Child Protection coming together in one larger Department of Communities. This change brought with it new opportunities for work within the child protection sector in WA but is not without its challenges. The establishment of the SCPU presents an opportunity to consolidate the many often related but disconnected reforms in various stages of planning, design or implementation.

Alongside completion of existing reforms, there is a need for Communities to continue to reform and play a key leadership role in related reforms across government to address systemic factors impacting on child protection practice, to reduce entry into out-of-home care, and sharpen focus and responsiveness to meeting the needs of Aboriginal children, families, and communities given their current gross overrepresentation in the OOHC system. The focus must be on both direct service provision and extend through to sector stewardship if there are to be any real gains made to improve the lives of the State's most vulnerable children and young people. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the WA State Government's Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy provide critical whole of government strategy to inform this work, and the cultural lens that it must take to achieve meaningful change.

This report represents stage one of a longer term reform vision for Communities and includes a review of current and planned Communities' strategies, development of a system Blueprint to guide progress, and creation of an Implementation Framework to support reform efforts for the current WA Child Protection System. It is envisaged that this project and subsequent material produced (including recommended actions for change) will inform stage two which is the creation of the 10-year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Out-of-Home Care (to be developed in a separate project).

Whilst Communities' is focused on a longer term reform vision, the ideal system Blueprint seen at **Error! Reference source not found.** has been designed to ensure current and future strategy and reform pieces are aligned.

# WA Child Protection System Blueprint

Shifting focus to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children; knowing that if we get it right for Aboriginal children, we get it right for all children

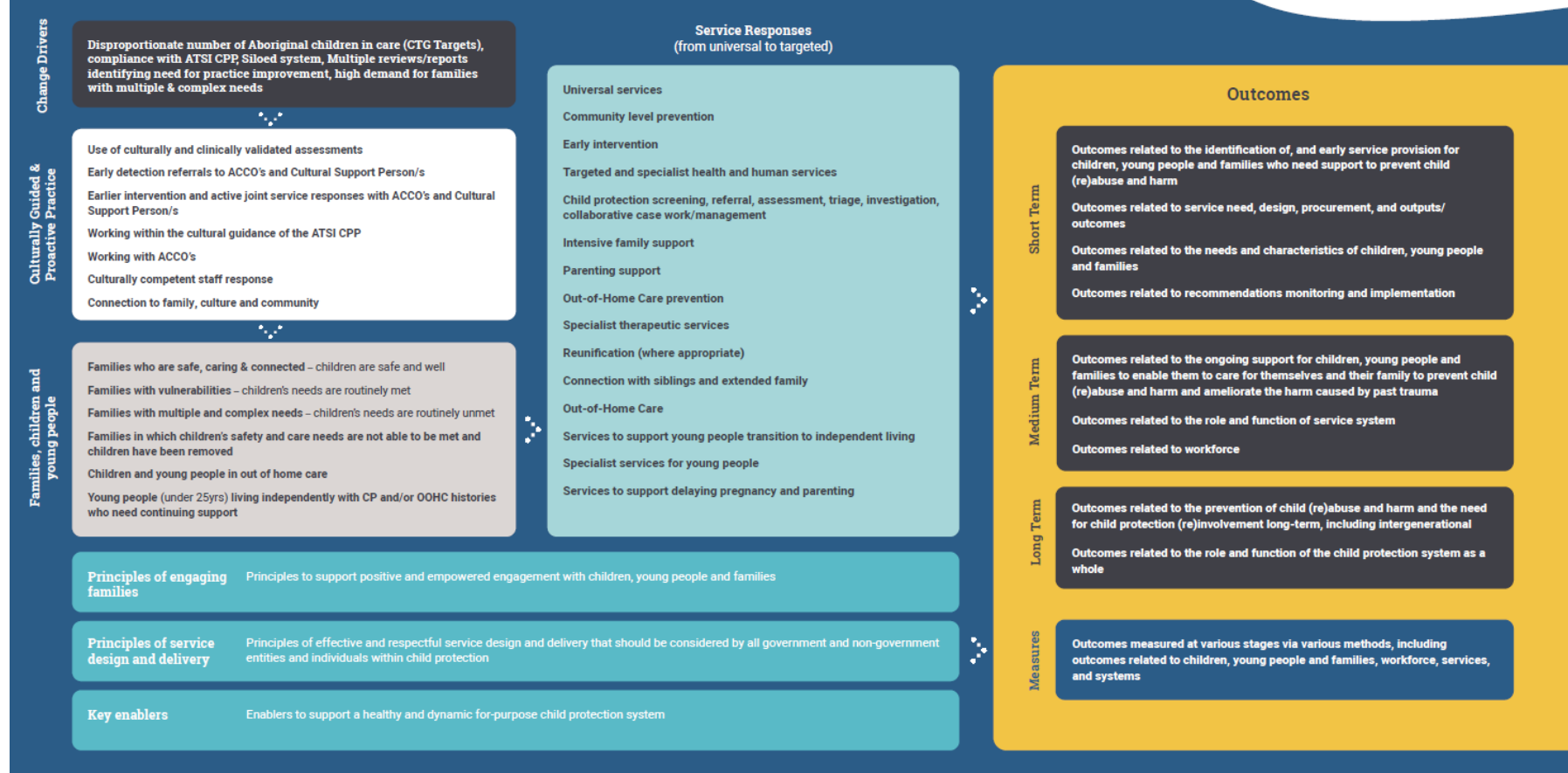


Figure 1: WA Child Protection System Blueprint

Whilst this Blueprint provides an organising framework to better understand current strategies within a broader vision, given the enormity of current system reforms and strategies being implemented across the WA child protection service system, there is urgent need for consolidation and review before moving forward. We have noted 30 recommended actions across the next 24 months with clear priorities. See **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

Nine urgent actions have been made for attention within the next three months in order to mitigate significant risk that has been identified through this process. Overall there are three critical areas of greatest need that Communities must focus on:

1. Adoption of a robust Implementation Framework that has a clear governance structure including Aboriginal cultural governance and principles of practice;
2. Development of a system with strong stakeholder engagement, workforce capability, an outcomes framework, access to timely and accurate data, a risk management framework and capacity to respond in an agile manner; and
3. Revision of current Commissioning Plans in order to more effectively align with the development and implementation of the 10-year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Out-of-Home Care.

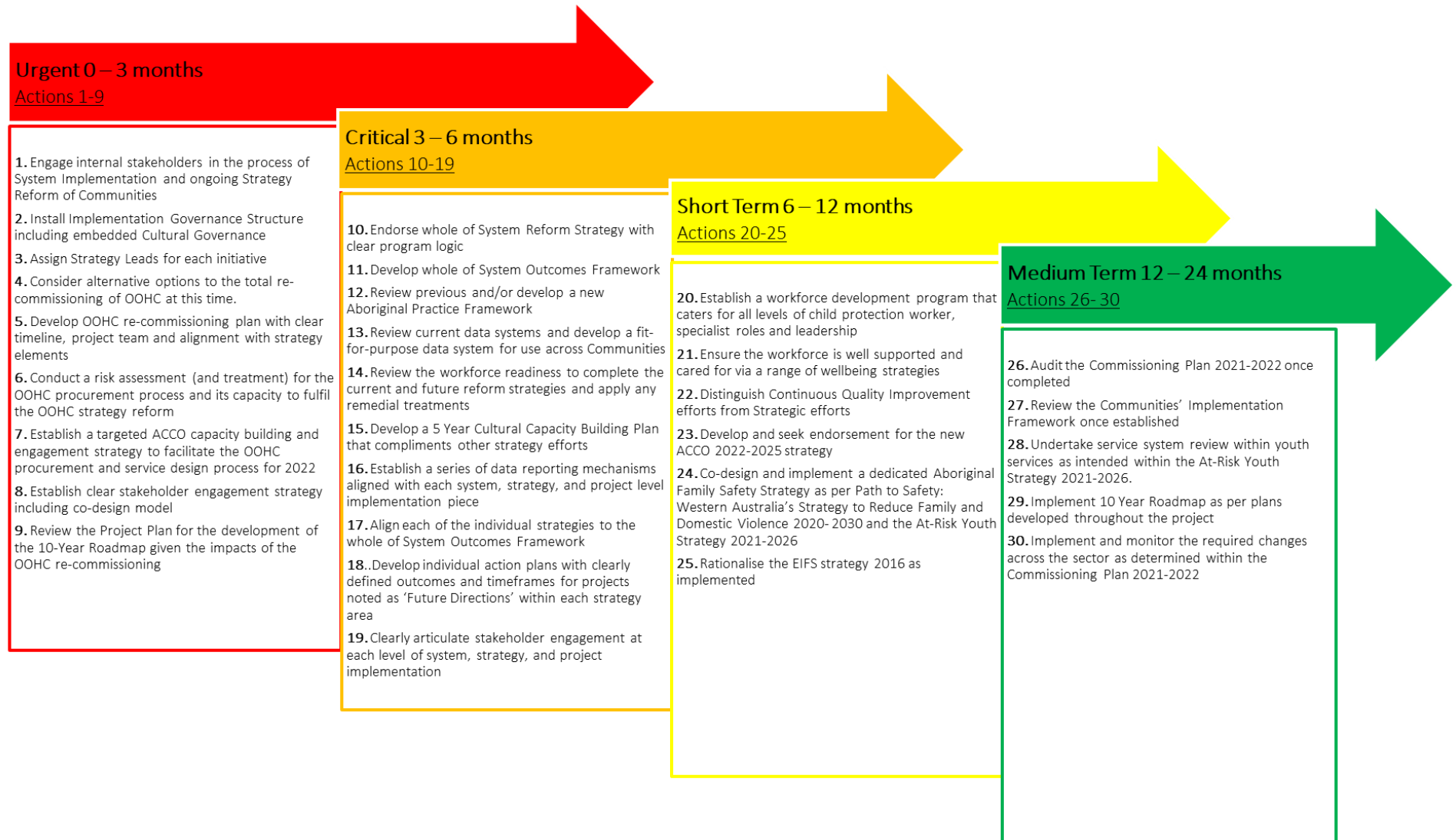


Figure 2: Summary of Recommendations in order of priority

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

There have been significant learnings for Communities from internal and external reviews and reports over the past four years. These have driven the approximately 30 child protection reform or strategy projects being undertaken across Communities at present; each with their own resources, outcomes, and timeframes. With daily service pressures increasing, the ongoing nature of reviews, and National child protection reforms continuously impacting State activities, there is an identified risk for Communities in losing traction in key reform areas and being diverted from its primary focus without a cohesive pathway forward.

This project was designed with the specific purpose of mapping out the various reform areas occurring across Communities to develop a cohesive overarching direction and plan for the SCPU and broader Department moving forward. Appendix A provides a detailed project overview, including methodology and theoretical background.

## SECTION 1. WA CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM BLUEPRINT

The development of a visionary Blueprint was designed to provide internal direction and program logic for Communities ongoing strategy and reform projects and any future Implementation. It has been designed as the first step in the longer-term Child Protection reform that will be carried forward with the creation of the 10-year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Out-of-Home Care (10-yr Roadmap).

This Blueprint is an 'ideal', evidence informed piece that centres on creating a culturally responsive child protection system for the WA environment shifting focus to design reforms to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children first; with the guiding principle that 'if we get it right for Aboriginal children, we get it right for all children'. It is designed as a discussion starter within the agency to begin to guide internal vision setting and future reform and strategy development by the agency. The Blueprint requires further consultation with a range of stakeholders both internal and external to Communities and should be considered a thought piece to guide current Strategy activity, implementation governance and future reform pieces including the 10-year Roadmap.

The Blueprint builds upon existing pieces of work and incorporates new evidence and areas of policy and practice that have emerged since that time (e.g., the Home Stretch campaign for young people leaving care, increased recognition of importance of addressing the needs of families with inter-generational trauma and multiple and complex needs). The Blueprint was developed alongside early conceptualisation of current strategy documents provided by Communities and with the creation of Strategy Maps (see SECTION 2 and Appendix B) and has informed the work of the Implementation Plan and recommended actions (see SECTION 3).

The Blueprint, whilst informed by current reform and strategy activity within Communities, has been developed from a top-down, high-level approach that maps out elements of an effective child protection system against key target cohorts. Existing areas of reform can then be matched back to this Blueprint to allow for greater visibility of strategy gaps and alignment of areas that cross over when planning future reforms and continuous improvement initiatives.

Initial conceptualisation of the Blueprint was to visually represent broad areas of reform and how they link to target groups across the service continuum, recognising that there are critical elements to system success both within design and implementation. This was then refined further after internal Communities consultations to include mapping to short- medium- and long-term outcomes and example measures.

The Blueprint has been presented in three versions for future use by Communities. **Error! Reference source not found.** below is a styled representation of the Blueprint, conforming to traditional conventions and one of three designs provided (see Appendix C for variations). Following this, a more detailed narrative of the sections within is provided.

# WA Child Protection System Blueprint

Shifting focus to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children; knowing that if we get it right for Aboriginal children, we get it right for all children

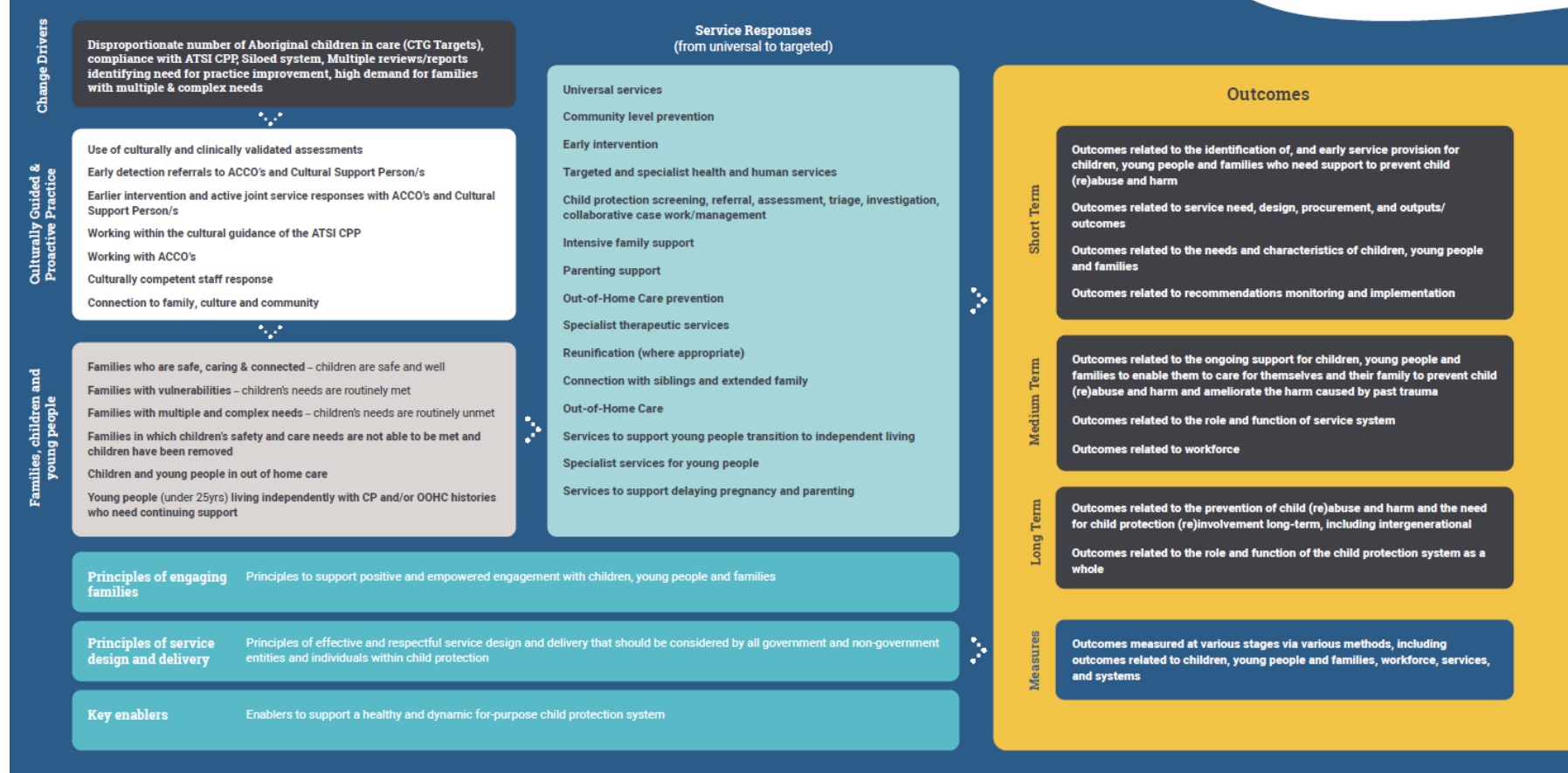


Figure 1: WA Child Protection System Blueprint

## 1.1 Blueprint Narrative

### 1.1.1 Change Drivers

There are several critical issues within the WA community and child protection system that are providing the impetus for change and continuous improvement efforts within the system to support children, young people, and families. Whilst these change over time and reflect government and community expectations current drivers influencing the child protection system calling for change are:

- A disproportionate number of Aboriginal children in care (currently reported at over 57%)
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap targets
- Adherence to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP)
- An increasing 'siloes' system within the Department of Communities and those related to Child Protection
- Recent reviews from oversight bodies which identify the need for practice improvement
- An increasing demand for secondary and tertiary child protection services including out-of-home care placement (which outstrips supply) and an increasing number of children, young people and families presenting with multiple and complex needs within an already burgeoning system.

### 1.1.2 Who the System is Designed For - Children, Young People, and Families

There are six distinct yet overlapping groups that any child protection system must be designed for. With regards to the WA child protection system, it is critical to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within each group are at the forefront of service design and delivery due to the inherent vulnerability and overrepresentation of this group within the system. It must be recognised that the reasons for this overrepresentation are complex and are connected to the lasting and devastating impact of colonisation, the legacy of forced removal policies, intergenerational effects of previous separations from culture and family, poor service design and delivery, a lack of understanding regarding cultural differences in child-rearing practices and family structures, a higher likelihood of living in lower socioeconomic areas, and the layers of intergenerational trauma that developed as a consequence<sup>1</sup>. The six groups are:

1. Families who are safe, caring and connected – kids are safe and well
2. Families with vulnerabilities – kids' needs are routinely met
3. Families with multiple and complex needs – kids' needs are routinely unmet
4. Families in which children's safety and care needs are not able to be met and children have been removed
5. Children and young people in out of home care
6. Young people (under the age of 25 years) living independently with child protection and/or OOHC histories who need continuing support

### 1.1.3 Culturally led practice

Embedded throughout all facets of an effective child protection system are culturally guided and proactive practices, such as:

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<sup>1</sup>Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. (1997). *Bringing them home: Report of the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.*  
[https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social\\_justice/bringing\\_them\\_home\\_report.pdf](https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf)

- Earlier intervention and joined up service responses focused on working with ACCOs, early detection and referrals to appropriate services
- Culturally competent workforce response that is inclusive of dedicated roles such as a Cultural Support Person, Aboriginal Practice Lead, or other cultural specialist
- Connection to family, culture, and community
- Active joint case management between designated child protection Case Workers and Cultural Supports (as above)
- Working always within the cultural guidance of the ATSICPP
- Use of culturally and clinically validated assessments to ensure underlying issues are assessed appropriately

#### *1.1.4 Principles of engaging families*

There are some key guiding principles that support positive and empowered engagement with children, young people, and families. These are critical given the vulnerable nature of many within the child protection system:

- Always seek the family's narrative first
- Take a trauma informed approach recognising the devastating impacts of intergenerational trauma and the impacts of our stolen generations
- Take the lead from the child and family – they are the experts in their life and their voice must be heard
- Children are valued and their rights are upheld
- View the child within a family, within a community, within a culture
- Be honest and transparent
- Take a holistic view of the family strengths and needs.

#### *1.1.5 Principles of service design and delivery*

Likewise, there are principles of effective and respectful service design and delivery that should be considered by all government and non-government entities and individuals within the child protection space:

- There should be services that are Aboriginal governed and led
- Program effectiveness is significantly enhanced where programs models are clearly articulated and there is a theory of change that specifies target population, program activities and intended outcomes.
- Interagency and multidisciplinary practice within and outside government is critical
- There needs to be both internal and external oversight and accountability mechanisms
- Funding and procurement models must embed capacity and capability building to support the ongoing development of the ACCO sector
- Consideration should be given to effective regional, and place based responsive services that meet the needs of diverse populations
- Services should be designed and governed within a culturally informed and validated evidence based best practice framework to ensure high quality services that are safe and effective
- Services should be accessible, transparent, and inclusive
- Services must include robust Continuous Quality Improvement mechanisms
- Services should contribute to the overall system goals and be accountable to an outcomes-based program logic with measurable key performance indicators

#### *1.1.6 Key enablers*

Similar to principles that support a strong service system there are several key enablers that if effectively in place support a healthy and dynamic for-purpose child protection system:

- A culturally competent and highly skilled workforce that has access to ongoing learning opportunities, supervision, and support, recognising that practice proficiency and cultural competence is an ongoing journey of learning, reflection, and feedback
- Strong, knowledgeable, and cohesive leadership team/s that both supports the workforce and is well supported
- Facilitative organisational structures such as dynamic and streamlined human resources, procurement, financial and CQI functions
- A transparent governance structure with a well detailed authorising environment with adequate and equal parts control and devolved power and decision making
- Effective structures and processes to enable coordinated cross-agency/service responses and information sharing
- A system environment that is culturally informed, safe, and guided by evidence-based practice, movement toward a common goal and clear outcomes directed toward that end.

#### 1.1.7 *Service responses (from universal to targeted)*

Effective child protection systems have service responses that sit both across agencies and within singular agencies; services range from universal, offered to all at a broad community level, and those that are targeted, specialised and offered to client cohorts based on need. Often universal services are seen within a community as essential and a right of an individual, family or community. Within a child protection system, they should be seen just as essential as more targeted and specialised services. Examples of the types of services and programs that are commonly recognised across the spectrum of need are noted below:

- Universal services (e.g., affordable housing, schools, primary health care, childcare, safe communities, supports for families, public health campaigns, mother's groups, sports, and recreation, etc.)
- Community level prevention and early intervention programs such as vaccination programs and early learning
- Targeted and specialist health and human services (e.g., housing services, disability support for parents and children, early intervention and prevention, income support, mental health care for parents and children, GPs, OTs, speech therapists, education support, drug and alcohol, domestic violence, general and specialist policing, etc.)
- Child protection screening, referral, assessment, triage, investigation, collaborative case work/management
- Intensive family support, parenting support and other targeted Out-of-Home Care prevention programs
- Specialist therapeutic services (e.g., for violence, abuse and neglect and other tertiary services for adults and children across developmental stages, grief and loss support for families who cannot remain together, support to prevent or delay subsequent pregnancy or parenting)
- Out-of-Home Care services including kinship and foster care
- Intensive reunification services to enable children to return to their family's care in a safe and meaningful way (if deemed appropriate)
- Services and supports to maintain connection with birth parents, sibling, extended family and community.
- Specialist services for young people (e.g., delaying pregnancy, young parenting programs, at risk youth services, Home Stretch, transition to independent living)

#### 1.1.8 *Outcomes*

Outcomes are mapped in terms of short, medium, and long term outcomes across the service system and will be measured at various stages, via various methods. Examples of short, medium and long term outcomes at the child, young person and family level and the system level are provided below.

- Short Term:
  - Children, young people, and families:
    - Children, young people, and families receive culturally appropriate and timely identification, assessment, and referral to appropriate supports
    - Children, young people, and families can access a range of evidence informed, place-based, culturally safe, and responsive universal and targeted services to meet their holistic needs, support vulnerabilities and prevent child (re)abuse and harm
  - System
    - Services are co-designed with community, based on culturally safe and evidence-based practices, and procured within a robust and sustainable funding model
    - Service outputs and outcomes are measurable and align with overarching child protection goals
    - The needs and characteristics of families are continuously monitored to inform system design and service improvements
    - Recommendations from evidence, reports and reviews are continuously monitored and implemented
- Medium Term:
  - Children, young people, and families
    - Children, young people, and families can heal, learn new skills, make positive change, overcome vulnerabilities, (re)connect with family, culture, and community, and provide the best possible care to themselves and their family to prevent child (re)abuse and harm, and ameliorate the harm caused by past trauma
  - System
    - The service system is integrated and developed such that it is responsive and able to meet the dynamic needs of children, young people, and families
    - The service system comprises a skilled and well supported, culturally competent, and experienced workforce
- Long Term:
  - Children, young people, and families
    - Children, young people, and families can care for themselves and their families in a safe way that prevents child (re)abuse and harm and the need for child protection (re)involvement, long term
  - System
    - The service system is culturally competent and able to support the varied needs of children, young people, and families

#### 1.1.9 Measures

Outcomes will be measured at various stages via various methods; initially following a program logic model of.

- outputs (e.g., service access and dosage),
- behaviour change (both within the recipient of the service and on aligned service demands – e.g., decreased demand for more intensive Child Protection services),
- child, young person and family wellbeing, workforce competence and wellbeing (e.g., cultural competence, caseloads, etc.), and
- system change (e.g., reduction in number of reports of harm, reduction of demand on tertiary services such as OOH, increase in numbers of safe reunifications and placement with family etc).

## SECTION 2. WA CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM REFORM ACTIVITY

Over recent years there has been significant activity across Communities with regards to various Child Protection reform pieces. Many of these have been developed in response to increasing critical pressures on the system, such as, increasing numbers of Aboriginal children entering care, increasing demand on child protection services, operational costs in a tight fiscal environment, and increasing client complexity and need. It is critical to better understand the current child protection system within WA and the various and significant pieces of strategy reform already underway both within Communities and within other government agencies. Five key areas of reform/strategy have been noted as currently underway:

- Out-of-Home Care Reform (Reform Program Roadmap) 2019-2023
- Enhancing Child Protection Practice
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Strategy to 2022
- Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030
- At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026

A series of Strategy Maps have been created to consolidate existing information, documents, resources, reform projects, and reports relating to these areas of child protection reform in WA to better understand their connectedness, future directions, and potential gaps.

The Strategy Maps include information (where available) on the purpose, goals, vision, guiding principles, outcomes, broad areas of focus/priority, activities and projects, and responsibility/oversight. Other state and national plans, frameworks, and strategies that the key reform/strategy areas built upon, or were aligned with, were also included in the Strategy Maps. Activities and projects falling under each broad area of focus/priority within each Strategy Map were separated into 'completed', 'underway', and 'future directions' to allow Communities to track progress.

The individual maps are located in Appendix B. To ensure the maps are dynamic, links to the individual maps via the diagramming web application Lucidchart, are provided below for each map in Appendix B, for editing and sharing purposes. Further information about Lucidchart can be accessed [here](#). In addition, for quick reference, the future directions from the five key areas Strategy Maps have been consolidated into a table (see Appendix D) with key reform areas summarised below.

In addition to the five key strategy areas currently underway, there are two further significant reform pieces that are imminent and will impact on the broader child protection system reform, and individual strategy implementation and success:

- Creation of a 10-Year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Out-of-Home Care
- Communities Commissioning Plan 2021-2022

And two national strategy pieces which will guide current and future efforts of reform:

- National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031

### 2.1 10- Year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Out-of-Home Care

The 10-year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Out-of-Home Care (10-Year Roadmap), has been discussed throughout this project, and appears in various Strategy Maps as a key strategy of Communities to set the scale and scope of reform in child protection for the next 10 years.

First committed to by the Hon. Simone McGurk, Minister for Child Protection, in September 2019 this Roadmap is currently being commissioned and is likely to begin in November 2021. It is intended to be developed in partnership with the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). It is intended to:

- Guide future efforts to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care,
- Identify opportunities to prevent the entry of Aboriginal children into the OOHC system before they are placed at risk, and
- Focus on supporting Aboriginal young people as they transition out of care and into adulthood.

The project to design the 10-Year Roadmap is co-sponsored by the SCPU and Aboriginal Outcomes, working in collaboration with other business units within Communities and will involve genuine co-design and implementation with Aboriginal people across all regions of WA. The 10-Year Roadmap will be Communities' key document/strategy to outline how they will change the current trajectory for Aboriginal children and their families and contribute to achieving the Closing the Gap target 12.

The 10-Year Roadmap will align closely with national and state initiatives that prioritise actions in protecting and improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal children, families, and communities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- Aboriginal Family-Led Decision-Making pilot
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy
- A Path to Safety: WA's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030
- Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031
- Out-of-Home Care Strategy Reform

The 10-Year Roadmap will also set the foundation to improve adherence to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle by embedding the application of all five elements of the Principle – prevention, partnership, placement, participation, and connection into its development.

### *2.1.1 Implementation review*

The Project Management Plan provided by SCPU for the 10-Year Roadmap, outlines a clear Implementation Plan with project deliverables, outcomes, program logic, project management structure, timeline, risk management plan and stakeholder engagement and communication plan. Although timelines are behind schedule this document outlines a clear process to execute the development of the 10-Year Roadmap. Current projections suggest that the 10-Year Roadmap will be delivered toward the end of 2022; therefore, it is likely that the 10-Year Roadmap will outline a plan for 2023-2033.

Despite sound planning for the development of this initiative there are concerns with regards to the implementation of the project particularly in the areas of:

- Applicability and capacity for authentic engagement within the WA Aboriginal community, including genuine co-design, and
- Impact of the OOHC re-commissioning process and outcomes:
  - The co-design of both the OOHC re-commissioning (see below) and the 10-Year Roadmap will occur at the same time and rely on engagement with Aboriginal people and organisations from the same communities
  - The OOHC re-commissioning will potentially see OOHC service contracts locked in for the first five years of the 10-Year Roadmap, thereby limiting scope for genuine system change during the first half of the plan, in a major service area

- Risks associated with the OOHC re-commissioning (including lack of current ACCO capacity/willingness to take up service offerings), will have a negative impact on the development of the 10-Year Roadmap.

## 2.2 Communities Commissioning Plan 2021-2022

On 23 September 2021 (toward the end of this project), Communities released information about their proposed commissioning approach for four key priority areas:

- Family and Domestic Violence
- Out of Home Care
- Homelessness
- Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services

Commissioning across these areas is planned to conclude at the end of 2022 and represents a substantial sector reform piece in itself due to the number of contracts, services, community sector organisations, locations, community groups, workforce and children, young people, adults, and families that will be involved and ultimately impacted.

It is envisaged that through this iterative, responsive and capability building process of commissioning, Communities will align changes with the Closing the Gap Targets, incorporate lived experiences into service design, move towards an outcomes-based framework for service delivery, build innovation and continuous improvement into services and reduce the administrative burden in reporting. Information provided to the sector via a briefing session outlined principles of the overall commissioning plan:

- Building collaborative partnerships to deliver innovative services.
- Embedding a consistent commissioning approach, grounded in outcomes.
- Planning and designing place-based services that respond to user needs.
- Prioritising the leadership of Aboriginal people and organisations in the planning, design, and delivery of services.
- Shifting focus towards early intervention and prevention.
- Strengthening monitoring, evaluation, and review of services

### 2.2.1 Family and Domestic Violence

Contracts for recurrently funded Family and Domestic Violence Services across WA will expire on 30 June 2022. The commissioning plan for this area notes that this is a timely opportunity to ensure that services procured after this date are aligned to the related Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030. Specifically, it is hoped that new commissioning can increase ACCO market share, include Co-design elements to build on what has been 'learned and heard' via previous trials and consultations, and that services can move to outcomes focused contracts and reporting.

### 2.2.2 Out-of-Home-Care

Current service agreements across the OOHC sector will end on 31 December 2022. As with the Family and Domestic Violence space, this is seen as an opportunity to implement large scale reform across the service sector by developing a suite of new service models that better fit the OOHC service system and promise to deliver a more consistent, supported and culturally appropriate and family connected care service for children and young people. Key reform objectives of the commissioning process are to ensure that the service system is transformed to be: Needs driven, focused on early reunification, keep siblings together, focus on cultural connection, have

young people leave care prepared, build on community strengths, be a flexible service system, Aboriginal led and have improved accountability.

The commissioning process has a series of design labs scheduled for 2021 to develop a blueprint for commissioning of services.

### *2.2.3 Homelessness*

Although focused long term on the transition of the current homelessness service system to a place-based person-centred approach, this commissioning plan is taking a different approach. The Commissioning Plan indicates that Communities are developing plans for a South West trial site of the new model for two years from June 2022 to June 2024. The trial will be evaluated and inform future procurement prior to broad system reform and service change. The remainder of existing services will have their current contract agreements extended to be aligned with the end of the trial in June 2024.

### *2.2.4 Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services*

The Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services (CSATS) contracts and commissioning have come under scrutiny over recent years due to being continually extended for short contracting periods. This commissioning plan outlines a revamp of the service system to better align with the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse recommendations:

- Ensuring services are using evidence based, fit for community service models
- Outcomes based contracting
- Improved capacity and capability to address Harmful Sexual Behaviours
- Culturally informed and culturally secure for Aboriginal people

Current service contracts have been extended to allow a process of co-design for the new service model and commissioning of future contracts via workshops throughout 2021/2022.

### *2.2.5 Implementation review*

The above commissioning piece is ambitious and if executed perfectly could yield significant results for children, young people, adults, and families across WA who receive and rely on these services, there are overwhelming risks in undertaking a system wide reform of this magnitude across such a complex service system.

Undertaking one area of recommissioning as outlined above would be burdensome for both Communities' and the organisations involved who provide the services but doing all four at the same time may prove to be extremely challenging for many organisations. Particularly those who are smaller and do not have dedicated roles able to focus on contracting and procurement opportunities. With some organisations in the sector providing services across all four areas this represents a large investment over the 2021/2022 years to engage meaningfully in workshops and consultations, advocate for their clients, services, staff, and community, and prepare responses to tenders, all the while maintaining day to day operations.

There is also a significant risk that ACCOs, Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal people, in particular may become fatigued with the sheer volume of consultations, co-designs, and commissioning activities they will need to undertake to be competitive in this space. Given the extremely tight timelines this will be further problematic and has the potential to lead to ineffective and/or minimal consultation and a lack of genuine co-design of service models.

The service sector landscape within WA will undoubtedly be very different at the end of the commissioning period. Some organisations may be unable to maintain a market share in certain areas that would make them viable as an ongoing concern.

Whilst the commissioning plan is still in its infancy, if it progresses as planned it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on the service system, organisations providing the services, the communities in which they operate and ultimately the children, young people, adults, and families who receive the service.

It is recommended that Communities takes a cautious approach with the Commissioning plan across each area but particularly with regards to OOHC where the greatest risk and vulnerability lies. Further it is suggested that the OOHC commissioning plan be reviewed, and slowed down to ensure:

- there is time for genuine co-design of new and innovative models of care
- organisations are not overburdened by numerous simultaneous commissioning processes
- organisations within the sector (both ACCOs and non-ACCOs) are given time to prepare genuine partnerships with transition plans (in the case of moving toward Aboriginal led services), and scale up capacity as needed
- a considered, therapeutic, trauma informed and culturally led approach can be taken to ensure that children are not displaced and further traumatised in the process of any large-scale contract movements across the service sector.

### 2.3 Out-of-Home Care Strategy

The Out-of-Home Care Strategy is summarised in two maps. The first map provides an overview of the key reform areas identified by the Building a Better Future: Out-of-Home Care Reform in Western Australian 2016. Three priority areas were identified:

1. Preventing children entering OOHC,
2. Reunifying children with parents, and
3. Stability and connection planning (where reunification is not possible).

The bulk of the actions identified are categorised into four broad foci under the permanency planning focus. These actions have largely been completed, and actions identified as carried over into the Out-of-Home Care Reform (Reform Program Roadmap) 2019-2023 are identified.

The second Out-of-Home Care Strategy Map summarises the Out-of-Home Care Reform (Reform Program Roadmap) 2019-2023, which extends the work of the 2016 reform package. Following the machinery of government changes in 2017, the Out-of-Home Care Reform (Reform Program Roadmap) 2019-2023 uses a commissioning model to focus on reforming existing contracts for provision of out-of-home care services by Community Service Organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Four workstreams were identified in the 2019-2023 Reform Program Roadmap:

1. Workstream 1 - commissioning and implementing Out-of-Home Care services,
2. Workstream 2 - existing service model changes and contract variations,
3. Workstream 3 - internal redesign to support implementation of Out-of-Home Care, and
4. Workstream 4 - strategic direction and management of Out-of-Home Care program.

The majority of actions are identified under Workstreams 1 and 2. Workstreams 3 and 4 are highlighted as managing and supporting the implementation of the actions identified under Workstreams 1 and 2. Twelve of the actions are identified under Workstreams 1 and 2. Several are flagged as largely complete and incorporated into business as usual, where future actions are flagged under the remaining areas, many of which are reported as due to be completed in line with the recommissioning of services.

There was crossover between the Out-of-Home Care Strategies and the activities and projects related to young people leaving care, which was initially a separate map. To avoid duplication the young people leaving care map was removed and the activities consolidated into the out of home care map.

### 2.3.1 Implementation review

Whilst this is a robust strategy with detailed workstreams there seems to be some issues with consistent implementation of activities and alignment of activities across Communities that have a direct impact on this strategy. It also appears that some projects within the strategy are noted as completed with the delivery of a commissioned report (e.g., Industrial Relations and Design and Negotiate changes to existing service models) rather than being completed when the issue (that prompted the report being commissioned) is resolved. For example it is not always clear what recommendations from various associated reports have been actioned and implemented and what ones are still outstanding.

As noted above during this project the recommissioning of OOHC services was announced to the sector amongst commissioning plans for four other service areas. Concerns regarding the implementation of the OOHC Strategy therefore include the potential impact of the impending OOHC procurement processes. In particular, there needs to be consideration given to the capacity of ACCOs to participate and the resource requirements to support participation by ACCOs in the OOHC procurement processes. Many of the actions identified in the strategy map are slated as to be completed in line with recommissioning or to be completed to inform recommissioning.

In addition to those recommended next steps noted above (under Commissioning), others include:

- Review recently completed projects and ensure they are genuinely completed and that any outstanding recommendations related to commissioned reports are resolved and/ or implemented
- Review the current commissioning plan and undertake a risk audit against the OOHC strategy to ensure risks to strategy implementation are mitigated

## 2.4 Enhancing Child Protection Practice Strategy

The Enhancing Child Protection Practice Strategy Map incorporates strategic and continuous quality improvement elements relevant to child protection, including:

1. Population and practice monitoring,
2. Training, support, and development,
3. Leadership and advocacy,
4. Stakeholder engagement and collaboration,
5. Strategic reform and practice projects, and
6. Research, evidence, and evaluation.

These elements primarily fall under the oversight of the SCPU and the Service Design and Operation Improvement Team. In addition, oversight of implementation of recommendations arising from reviews and evidence also sit under this Strategy Map which to date includes:

1. Ombudsman fatality reviews and coronial inquests,
2. WA response to Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and
3. Cultural competency audit of child protection staff and foster carer assessment and adoption manual report.

Specific groups/teams, for example, the Reviews and Recommendations Oversight Group and the Royal Commission Team are responsible for the implementation of these recommendations. A full list of Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommendations, and Western Australia's response to these, have been tabulated in Microsoft Excel to allow the Department of Communities to track progress against these. This spreadsheet has been provided to the SCPU as an electronic file along with this report.

The elements sitting under this Strategy Map intersect with other frameworks and legislation at both the national and state levels, including Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031.

#### 2.4.1 Implementation review

There are several discrete projects and activities (e.g., review of unendorsed placements) that fall under this Strategy Map, many of which are listed as completed or underway, with a number also being planned as future directions. In addition, there are long term ongoing activities (e.g., critical case reviews, interpret data trends) which will likely not be considered 'complete', but instead are an ongoing process of continuous monitoring and improvement as part of business as usual for the Department.

The projects and activities currently listed under 'future directions' are primarily high level and do not contain specific detail, including resources and timeframes which will need to be considered. Except for specific teams responsible for implementation of review recommendations, it is currently unclear who will be responsible for which elements of practice change.

To successfully embed practice change, a strong process for practice implementation will be required. This includes creating the authorising environment for high level practice changes and development as well as participation of staff from a range of operational contexts. Multi-agency relationships and commitments will also be required to support implementation of outcomes of key reviews and recommendations. Monitoring and tracking the impact of practice change over time will also be required but there are significant limitations in the current data systems available including a fit for purpose client management records system.

Next steps recommended for the Enhancing Child Protection Practice Strategy include:

- Consider separating out larger strategy initiatives from those Continuous Improvement activities within this map. Those determined as Continuous Improvement should be moved into a business-as-usual frame rather than an Implementation focus
- Examine underway activities and projects to recommend next steps for these (e.g., completion, evaluation, or extension)
- Determine specific activities and project plans for activities listed as 'future directions' including resources and timeframes
- Determine who is responsible for which elements of practice change
- Determine alignment of all actions with a whole of system outcomes framework
- Review limitations of current data systems (including case records) relevant to this strategy and the ongoing operations of the SCPU and develop a plan to resolve this; noting this is a broader Communities issue noted in several reviews and throughout this report.

## 2.5 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Strategy to 2022

The Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Strategy to 2022 is designed to increase opportunities for ACCOs to deliver contracted child protection and earlier intervention and family support services to their communities, and facilitate innovation in the community services sector by investing in services that support ACCO capacity building, collaboration and partnership between existing ACCOs, and collaboration and partnership between ACCOs and mainstream community sector organisations. The key objectives of the Strategy are:

1. Co-design (co-design is prioritised and utilised when developing services to be delivered to Aboriginal children, families, and communities),
2. ACCO procurement (utilise restrictive procurement processes that prioritise ACCOs when tendering for services to be delivered to Aboriginal children, families, and communities), and

3. ACCO capacity building (facilitate greater opportunities for ACCOs to deliver contracted child protection and family support services to their communities). The Strategy intersects with other frameworks and legislation at both the national and state levels.

There are two versions of this Strategy, an interim strategy developed by the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and a new strategy developed by the Department of Communities to increase the strategy scope and responsibilities, and to enhance availability of resources. The Strategy Map reflects activities from both versions of the ACCO Strategy. There are several activities that have been completed under this strategy, with others that are underway and noted for future directions.

#### 2.5.1 Implementation review

Achieving the goals of the ACCO Strategy is a high priority for Communities to position the Department – and the broader community – to succeed in reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal children in child protection and out of home care services..

There are significant barriers to the implementation of the ACCO strategy;

1. The likely impact of the impending Communities Commissioning Plan 2021/2022, (particularly the OOHC procurement process) on engagement with ACCOs given the proposed procurement process which does not appear conducive to the key objectives of the ACCO strategy:
  - a. Limited time for authentic co-design with ACCOs and Aboriginal people to develop new innovative models of care for Aboriginal children and families.
  - b. Potentially significant resource requirements for current WA ACCOs to scale up to allow them to be independently competitive in the procurement. In addition, where there is a partnership with a non-ACCO, the procurement process must include sufficient time and resources to ensure that there is clear articulation and contracting capacity to transfer control for contracts to the ACCO partner during the life of the contract. These are potentially complex legal issues that are not currently addressed in the OOHC procurement proposal and will have significant impacts on the ACCO strategy intent if not resolved.
  - c. Challenges related to ACCOs' capacity and willingness to enter the OOHC market as highlighted in the OOHC Market Analysis<sup>2</sup>.
2. Lack of a current Aboriginal Practice Framework.

Given this there are some critical recommended next steps for the implementation of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy to 2022:

- Develop and implement a process for supporting ACCOs throughout the broad Commissioning Plan of 2021/2022 and specifically for the OOHC Reform procurement process that is aligned with the current ACCO strategy intent and objectives
- Design and commence implementation of the new ACCO Strategy 2022-2025 (or as required to support OOHC Procurement process) and aligned to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Targets and the WA Closing the Gap Implementation plan 2021
- Review previous (Aboriginal Services and Practice Framework 2016-2018) and/or develop a new Aboriginal Practice Framework to guide both child protection practice, service design, policy development and strategy implementation
- Align all current projects and actions with a whole of system outcomes framework

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<sup>2</sup> PwC (2021). *Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) Market Analysis*.

- Finalise all completed work and communicate to stakeholders

## 2.6 Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030

The Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030 is a whole of government and community plan for reducing and responding to family and domestic violence, with a particular priority of family safety for Aboriginal women, children, and men<sup>3</sup>. While this strategy was not noted in the reform areas provided as an addendum to the procurement, nor was documentation provided for the purposes of this project, this strategy was deemed highly relevant to child protection and was therefore included as a Strategy Map. The Strategy has four focus areas:

1. Working with Aboriginal people to strengthen Aboriginal family safety,
2. Act now to keep people safe and hold perpetrators to account,
3. Grow primary prevention to stop family and domestic violence, and
4. Reform systems to prioritise safety, accountability, and collaboration.

The Strategy was developed based on research and evidence and through state-wide consultations with people, community organisations and groups in Western Australia as well as specialist expertise from the field. The Strategy is informed by independent commissions and intersects with several other plans, frameworks, and initiatives at both the national and state levels, including: The National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031, and At-Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026.

Three Action Plans will support the implementation of the Strategy. The First Action Plan runs from July 2020 to June 2022 with a focus on responding to COVID-19, consolidating existing efforts and partnering for change<sup>4</sup>. The second and third action plans are scheduled for implementation in 2022-2026 and 2026-2030, respectively. These subsequent action plans focus on building on the foundations and innovating for progress, and measuring impact, sustaining change and planning for the future. The Strategy and the First Action Plan have been publicly released.

### 2.6.1 Implementation review

A clear first action for implementation noted in the 2020-2022 plan is quarterly reporting of key data. Whilst this will facilitate implementation the governance structure and authorising environment that surrounds the plan is not fit for purpose or robust and therefore this is a potential implementation barrier. The Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030 is a multi-agency strategy that requires work across government Departments (Communities, Health, Police, Education), non-government organisations and community. The multi-agency nature of the strategy poses an inherent challenge for data collection and reporting across agencies. Data collection and not fit-for-purpose data systems (including client records management systems) continue to be a potential barrier across a range of strategies but may be more challenging in those (such as this one), that require data and reporting to occur across multiple agencies.

The timeframe for the current 2020-2022 plan requires both short term and sustained action and the tracking of these actions over time requires shared data and cross agency reporting and action.

As with other strategies, this one is linked to the ongoing success of the ACCO strategy and building the strength of ACCOs and Aboriginal communities to design and deliver culturally appropriate services and responses for

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Communities (2020). *Path to Safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030*. Government of Western Australia.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Communities (n.d.). *Path to Safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030, First Action Plan 2020-2022*. Government of Western Australia.

Aboriginal people. With other strategies also competing for ACCOs and Aboriginal community involvement there is potential risk of creating competing priorities for this cohort without provision of additional resources and support.

Whilst this strategy appears to have robust cross agency mechanisms in place, external reporting requirements to anchor implementors and multiple stepped action plans, there are still some recommended next steps to ensure Communities' contribution to this strategy stays on track:

- Ensure current activity aligns with the first action plan for implementation
- Map Communities' initiatives under this strategy to a whole of system outcomes framework
- Whilst the co-design of a dedicated Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy is reportedly underway, this is a critical action and continues to require focus and resource to ensure its completion; given context in other areas and demands on ACCOs and Aboriginal community this may need additional support and resourcing to ensure its successful completion
- Aligned with other strategies, the lack of appropriate data systems (inclusive of client level records management) in place within Communities and between agencies in WA remains a critical risk; it is highly recommended this be reviewed and resolution sought urgently to ensure impact of strategies such as this one is not compromised by poor data.

## 2.7 At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026

Although not endorsed in its current form the At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026 is a targeted initiative for young people aged 10 to 24 years with multiple and complex needs who are at risk of harm and increased vulnerability of experiencing poor life outcomes. This includes at risk young people with repeated contact with the child protection and youth justice systems, vulnerable Aboriginal young people, young people in out-of-home care and care leavers, young parents and young people experiencing homelessness. The Strategy draws on research and evidence and was developed in consultation with stakeholders including at risk young people, the community services sector, ACCOs, Commissioner for Children and Young People, and government agencies and peak bodies. The Strategy outlines four focus areas:

1. Partnerships, collaboration, and integrated responses,
2. Targeted initiatives to improve long term outcomes,
3. Strengthening the service system for at risk youth, and
4. Services and support for Aboriginal young people.

Key outcomes for each of the focus areas are also noted. The Strategy intersects with several other plans, frameworks, and initiatives at both the national and state levels, as well as being informed by independent commissions, for example: The National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031, the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) Strategy to 2022, and the Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030.

There was crossover between this Strategy and the activities and projects related to young people leaving care, which was initially presented on a separate strategy map. To avoid duplication with the At-Risk Youth Strategy, the young people leaving care map was removed.

While the formal Strategy document is still in the final draft stage (as of October 2021) and not yet approved by Government, Community staff consulted, indicated that several actions listed under the Strategy have already been completed, with a number listed as being for 'future directions'. The Strategy document outlines an overarching implementation approach involving a multi-agency partnership approach including government agencies, the community services sector, peak bodies, ACCOs and young people with lived experience. The Strategy document also outlines the plan to establish the At-Risk Youth Reference Group and the At-Risk Youth

Implementation Group to lead and progress the implementation of the Strategy. In particular, the At-Risk Youth Implementation Group will be established to develop the first 12-month Action and Implementation Plan (progress unknown).

### 2.7.1 Implementation review

The At-Risk Youth Strategy is, in places, dependent on other strategies for success (e.g., the ACCO Strategy, the Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy (in the Path to Safety Strategy)). It is noted that some of the other actions are listed as 'completed' under this strategy (e.g., the Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy, and the 10-year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Care) however other strategies (e.g., Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030 and Enhancing Child Protection Practice) list these as either underway or future directions. The needs of young people are also embedded in several other strategy documents (e.g., OOHHC [including leaving care/transitioning to independent adulthood], Enhancing Child Protection Practice).

Recommendations for next steps for the At-Risk Youth Strategy include:

- Seek final approval for the At-Risk Youth Strategy
- Confirm the implementation status of activities and projects noted in the Strategy, including those mentioned in other strategies
- Determine required sequencing of the At-Risk Youth Strategy and related strategies; a more detailed workplan mapping the various pieces would be beneficial
- Consider the crossover of individual activities and projects with other strategies to avoid duplication of efforts
- Determine who will take primary responsibility for activities and projects
- The Home Stretch expansion is a 2021 election commitment, due to be implemented by October 2022. A specific implementation plan for this will need to be developed if this has not already been completed.
- Undertake project planning for strengthening funded services for at risk youth including review of the service mix, service consistency, sector capacity, and best practice across the service types, cultural responsiveness, and agility to respond to emerging areas of service need
- As with other strategies, data systems in this area are fraught, particularly given the cross-agency requirement of responding to youth at risk, and the inclusion of care leavers in this group (where data systems including client management systems are recognised as not fit for purpose in terms of data extraction for performance monitoring purposes).

## 2.8 Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016)

The Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016) was designed to provide a framework for the alignment of the service system to meet the current needs of families most vulnerable to their children entering out-of-home care<sup>5</sup>. This Strategy was a precursor to the Building a Better Future: Out-of-Home Care Reform in Western Australia (2016) and was therefore closely aligned to this strategy. The Strategy had four key focus areas:

1. Delivering shared outcomes with collective effort,
2. Culturally competent service system,

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<sup>5</sup> Department for Child Protection and Family Support (2016). *Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy*. Government of Western Australia.

3. Diverting families from the child protection system, and
4. Preventing children entering out-of-home care.

This strategy appears to be largely at full implementation, with activities and projects falling under this strategy now considered business as usual for the Department of Communities. The Strategy Map is provided in Appendix B, for information.

As the *Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016)* appears to be largely at full implementation, recommended next steps include:

- Determine timeframe and plan for activities and projects noted as ‘underway’, or move these to other strategies for completion, as appropriate
- Finalise reports and outcomes of evaluations, move to operational, ongoing business as usual
- Identify ongoing operational implementation of key completed actions
- Ensure operational resources to support ongoing actions and new programs (including any ongoing evaluation)
- Determine strategy for communicating the finalisation of this Strategy, next steps for embedding ongoing actions in operations, and decisions regarding specific programs piloted under the Strategy.
- Assess and decide whether a continuous improvement lens requires a renewed strategy and reform focus to build upon the completed strategy.

## **2.9 WA Communities Current Reform Strategies Aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Targets**

The objective of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the National Agreement) is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians<sup>6</sup>. The National Agreement outlines four priority reform areas, along with 17 national socio-economic targets across the areas of education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters, and languages:

1. Formal partnerships and shared decision making,
2. Building the community-controlled sector,
3. Transforming government organisations, and
4. Shared access to data and information at a regional level

The alignment of the individual Strategy Maps to the indicators under the National Agreement priority reforms and socio-economic targets was mapped based on the information identified as part of the current project. To date, alignment of the individual Strategy Maps is strongest for priority reform two and three, and socio-economic target 13 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe). It is noted however, that additional strategies and/or information with relevance/alignment to the National Agreement priority reforms and targets may exist and can be considered as identified/appropriate.

## **2.10 WA Communities Current Reform Strategies Aligned with Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021-2031**

Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021-2031 builds upon the preceding National Framework and will target children and families who are experiencing disadvantage and/or are vulnerable. Priority groups under the main target cohort include: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and families with multiple and complex needs, children and young people

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<sup>6</sup> Australian Government. *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*. Retrieved from: <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement>

experiencing, or who have experienced, abuse and/or neglect, including children in out-of-home care, and young people leaving out-of-home care and transitioning to adulthood, and children and young people with disability, and/or their parents/carers with disability. The goal of Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 is to make significant and sustained progress in reducing the rates of child abuse and neglect and its intergenerational impacts<sup>7</sup>. Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 outlines four priority areas:

1. Addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems,
2. A national approach to early intervention and targeted support for children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage (this includes strengthening the interface between services across jurisdictions including disability, early childhood education and care, health and mental health, drug and alcohol, domestic violence, justice, housing, and employment service systems),
3. Improved information sharing, data development and analysis, and
4. Strengthening child and family sector workforce capability

In addition, central to Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 is the National Agreement on Closing the Gap socio-economic target 12 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children are not overrepresented in the child protection system).

As Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 is still in development, specific indicators were not available to map the individual Strategy Maps to. It is anticipated that two 5-year action plans, and an Aboriginal children and families plan will also be developed as part of the broader implementation approach for this framework. Therefore the individual Strategy Maps were mapped to the broad priority reform areas only. Based on the information identified as part of the current project, alignment of the individual Strategy Maps is strongest for priority area four.

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<sup>7</sup> Australian Government, Department of Social Services (2021). *Consultation paper: Implementing the successor plan to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*. Retrieved from: <https://engage.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/dss-engage-discussion-paper-3-june.pdf>

## SECTION 3. SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS: WA CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM REFORM AND STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

With many strategies and actions underway across Communities, there is a need for an overarching implementation approach to enable effective change, embed key practices and programs, monitor progress, and support effective resourcing and decision making. The following section articulates proposed principles and an overarching implementation governance plan that will enable the effective implementation and monitoring of reform strategies now and into the future.

Communities has many system reforms at varying stages of implementation across several strategy areas. A key objective of the proposed overarching implementation governance framework is to support the integration of these multiple reform areas into a consolidated and coordinated agenda. The two overarching Strategy Maps, Strategies aligned to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap outcomes and mapped to Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 offer a broad, whole of system, approach to viewing the current system reform. In addition, the cross-over between the reform/ strategy areas, activities and projects and the Strategy Maps highlights the interrelatedness of the various strategies and their subcomponents (see Appendix G for further detail).

### 3.1 Change Drivers

The Department of Communities' purpose is '*collaborating to create pathways that enable individual, family and community wellbeing*'. Communities has a critical vested interest in resolving the pressing issue of the increasing number of Aboriginal children entering the child protection and out-of-home care system. Addressing this becomes the central catalyst for system change and reform.

Implementation of any strategy or reform within Communities will need to consider the unique challenges for WA services to respond to the needs of children and families in metropolitan, regional and remote communities. The challenges for staffing, resourcing and roll out of central programs in remote areas with a focus on cultural safety, local adaptation and trauma informed approaches will be a key consideration in all activities.

Key change drivers for this Implementation Plan are:

1. Highly skilled and supported workforce with ongoing supervision and learning opportunities
2. Strong and supported leadership
3. Facilitative organisational structures and supports
4. Effective structures and processes to enable coordinated cross-agency/service responses and
5. Effective regulation, authorising environments, and governance.

### 3.2 WA Child Protection Implementation Principles

Adopting high level principles that support the intended outcomes of the reform vision and implementation for where Communities want to take the child protection system in WA will provide a compass for assessing reform efforts and driving positive engagement. The suggested principles below are based on Communities purpose and mission, the implementation science literature, and the specific context of child protection reform in WA.

- 1 **All implementation activities will seek to support the safety and wellbeing of children, families, and communities**
- 2 **Implementation will have Aboriginal cultural governance** as a driving force behind all planning, design, engagement, development, and delivery

- 3 **Implementation will drive cross-agency collaboration and reduce duplication** by intentional design, encouraging knowledge sharing and identifying and addressing projects and initiatives that overlap or create duplication
- 4 **Implementation will be data driven and evidence informed**, responding to data insights and the evidence base in a timely way
- 5 **Implementation will be agile and responsive**, amplifying initiatives that show promise and efficacy and addressing areas where initiatives are not having an impact
- 6 **Implementation will be strengths based and seek to build capacity** internally and throughout the sector and community
- 7 **Implementation will reflect best practice service delivery principles:**
  - o There should be services that are Aboriginal governed and led
  - o Interagency and multidisciplinary collaboration within and outside government is critical
  - o There needs to be both internal and external oversight and accountability mechanisms
  - o Funding and procurement models must embed capacity and capability building to support the ongoing development of the ACCO sector
  - o Consideration should be given to effective regional, and place based responsive services that meet the needs of diverse populations
  - o Services should be accessible, transparent, and inclusive
  - o Services must include robust Continuous Quality Improvement mechanisms, and
  - o Services should contribute to the overall system goals and be accountable to an outcomes-based program logic with measurable key performance indicators
- 8 **Effective implementation will create and strengthen key enablers of a healthy and dynamic fit-for-purpose child protection system:**
  - o A culturally competent and highly skilled workforce that has access to ongoing learning opportunities, supervision, and support, recognising that cultural competence is an ongoing journey of learning, reflection, and feedback
  - o Strong, knowledgeable and a cohesive leadership team that both supports the workforce and is well supported
  - o Facilitative organisational structures such as dynamic and streamlined human resources, procurement, financial and Continuous Quality Improvement functions
  - o A transparent governance structure with a well detailed authorising environment with adequate and equal parts control and devolved power and decision making
  - o Effective structures and processes to enable coordinated cross-agency/service responses and information sharing, and
  - o A system environment that is culturally informed, safe, and guided by evidence-based practice, movement toward a common goal and clear outcomes directed toward to that end.

### 3.3 Implementation Governance Structure

Implementation governance, with clear lines of responsibility, decision making, and reporting pathways is critical to creating an authorising environment for strategy and project implementation. Development of the Strategy Maps identified the need for a cohesive governance structure that supports oversight and co-ordination of the activities across all reform areas.

Implementation of the strategies and associated projects will be dispersed across Communities, have multiple reporting points, and involve multiple government and non-government agencies. This means that a structured approach to implementation governance is critical.

A key decision point for Communities is whether Implementation Governance structures include representatives from other agencies. There are risks and benefits associated with external (inclusive of other government agencies, peak bodies, and Community Service Organisations) involvement and in running the process primarily internally and these need to be canvassed and considered against the principles of the Implementation Plan.

**Error! Reference source not found.** below sets out the proposed model for governance, with overall responsibility for the Child Protection system reform sitting with the Communities Leadership Team (CLT) reporting to the Director General, guided by an overall Implementation Oversight Group, led by the SCPU, with each individual strategy overseen by a Strategy Implementation Group and Project Implementation Teams delivering on individual projects.

This model of Implementation relies on a strong focus on creating a whole of system approach to implementation that is led and championed at the most senior levels.

The model of governance is designed to provide a clear pathway for decision making (see below for detailed information about suggested decision-making points) and a capacity to identify where projects and strategy foci may be better aligned to reduce duplication and strengthen relationships between activities.

This overarching Communities implementation governance framework also enables prioritisation of the most impactful work, purposeful stakeholder engagement, careful and ongoing risk management, timely decision making and development of data frameworks that provide feedback on achievements against outcomes.

The broad scope and range of strategies currently in varying stages of implementation across Communities requires oversight and proactive management. Without a proactive approach to governance, there are risks of issues such as duplication of work, programs/practices that may not work together/actively work against each other, over or under consultation of stakeholders and implementation drift. This governance approach supports the installation and implementation phases of implementation and provides a structured approach to address the organisational and leadership drivers of implementation.

# Implementation Governance

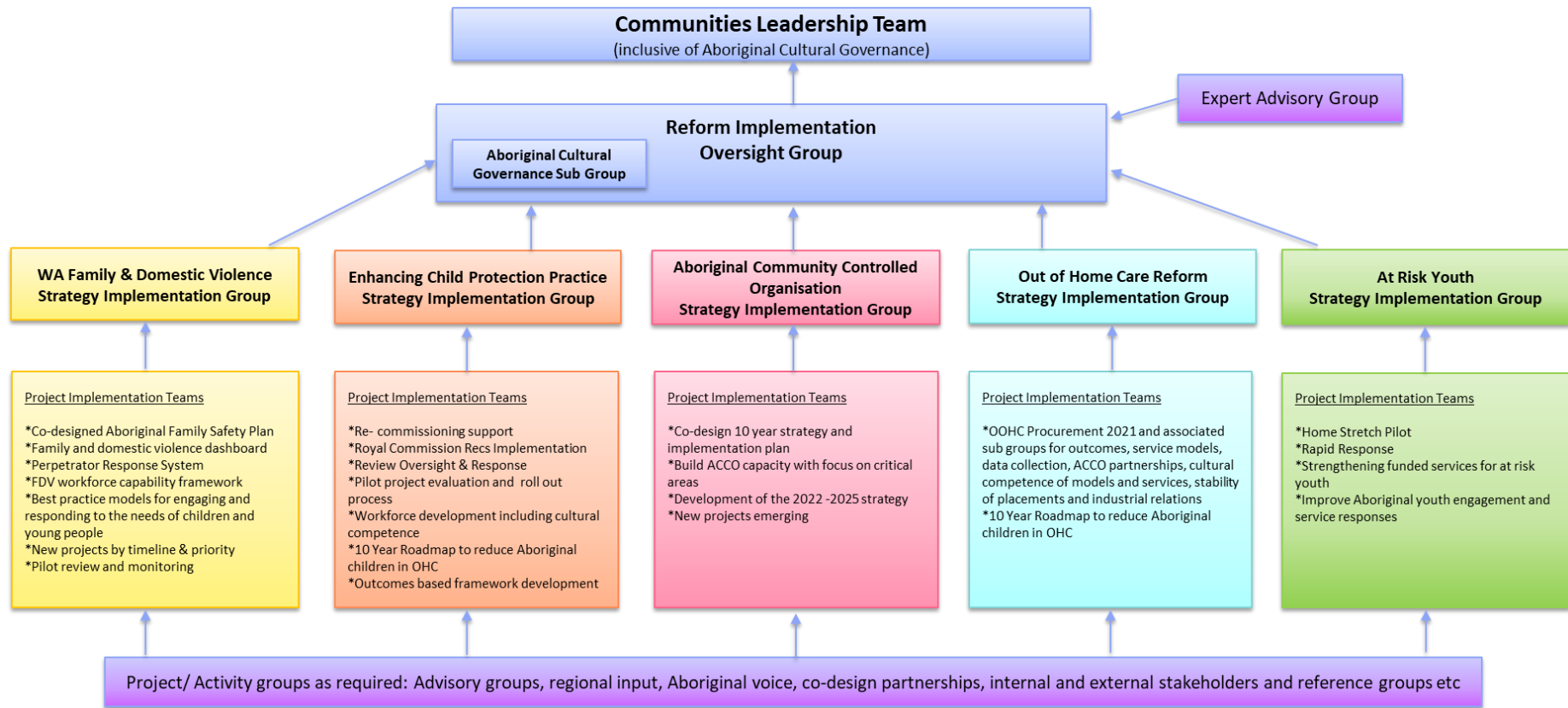


Figure 3. Implementation Governance for WA Department of Communities Child Protection System reform

\*note arrows denote governance and not line management; various teams may already exist within established operational areas

### 3.3.1 Aboriginal Cultural Governance

Aligned with general Implementation Governance, Cultural Governance of the overall and individual strategy Implementation plans is critical. A focus on ‘getting it right’ for Aboriginal children requires authoritative cultural governance for all aspects of the reform implementation. This is a key aspect of creating an authorising environment that creates support for initiatives to be delivered at all levels.

Aboriginal cultural governance is more than stakeholder engagement (although engagement with Aboriginal regional, organisational and sector stakeholders is also required throughout the Implementation process) and will require early attention in the establishment of the Implementation Governance structure. Cultural governance embeds Aboriginal cultural knowledge and beliefs into governing policies and mechanisms; it includes ‘cultural awareness, respect, competency, responsiveness, capability, safety, security, collective values and collective decision making’<sup>8</sup>.

The Implementation Governance structure includes embedding cultural governance in the Implementation Oversight Group and across all aspects of implementation. Communities’ Aboriginal Advisory Committee, the Aboriginal Outcomes Unit, Aboriginal leaders in Communities, community leaders and ACCOs must be central in providing advice and support to determine the way that cultural governance is embedded in the Implementation Oversight Group and across all aspects of implementation.

The Indigenous Voice process<sup>9</sup> and the WA State Government Empowerment Strategy<sup>10</sup>, provide critical strategic platforms for ensuring that initiatives have appropriate cultural governance and that Aboriginal voices are strong and influential. The Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group which advises and works in partnership with government on the Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Strategy, is an example of a purposeful intent to develop regional representative voices. As work progresses in these regional areas and the Aboriginal Health Council of WA progresses its establishment of a second Aboriginal Community Controlled peak body, the Department must develop meaningful and responsive cultural governance structures.

As demonstrated in the Figure 3Figure 5below<sup>11</sup>, cultural governance needs to inform all aspects the work in the implementation of the Blueprint.



Figure 4. Areas of Influence for Cultural Governance

<sup>8</sup> Government of Western Australia (2019). WA Country Health Service Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019–24: 21 [https://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/~media/WACHS/Documents/About-us/Publications/Strategic-plans/Mental\\_Health\\_and\\_Wellbeing\\_Strategy\\_2019-24.PDF](https://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/~media/WACHS/Documents/About-us/Publications/Strategic-plans/Mental_Health_and_Wellbeing_Strategy_2019-24.PDF)

<sup>9</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency. (2020). *Indigenous Voice*. Commonwealth of Australia. <https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/indigenous-voice>

<sup>10</sup> Government of Western Australia. (2017-2021). *Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy – Western Australia 2021-2029*. Government of Western Australia. <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/aboriginal-empowerment-strategy-western-australia-2021-2029>

<sup>11</sup> Figure extracted from Government of Western Australia (2021). WA Country Health Service Cultural Governance Framework 2021: p 5 <https://wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/~media/WACHS/Documents/About-us/Publications/WACHS-Cultural-Governance-Framework-2021.pdf>

Key principles that underpin cultural competence and governance in system and service design, contract management, delivery and ongoing monitoring of service delivery include:

- Culture, lore, language and land and country are at the centre
- Co-design is undertaken in a holistic and locally driven manner
- Aboriginal involvement and leadership are built into all levels of strategies, program and service design and delivery (true co-design)
- There is respect that leads to trust between communities, sector, and government.

A cultural governance approach that is designed with Aboriginal leaders, organisations and communities will be key to ‘getting it right’ for Aboriginal children. Therefore, the Aboriginal Cultural Governance Group unlike the Expert Advisory Group will be embedded in the Reform Implementation Oversight Group as both members and as a subgroup. This group will need to be formed and consideration given to the quantum of members both within the subgroup and the proportion of its contribution to the larger Reform Implementation Oversight Group.

### 3.3.2 Implementation Governance Roles and Responsibilities

#### Department of Communities, Communities Leaderships Team

The CLT has overall responsibility for providing oversight of the effective implementation of the Child Protection system reform inclusive of the various strategies. This provides critical leadership in the organisation and embeds cross-Departmental commitment and collaboration. Decision making regarding any additional resourcing of activities associated with implementation is also provided by CLT as the authorising body.

This group currently leads across the Department and reports directly to the Director General. Given its embedded nature within and across the Department it is an ideal top layer of governance for system wide implementation. This should also be the authorising environment for large scale (in cost, resources, and impact) strategy reform in the future.

<b>Terms of Reference</b>	Department of Communities, Communities Leadership Team (CLT)
<b>Reports to</b>	Director-General – Department of Communities
<b>Role</b>	Oversight, decision making and approval
<b>Key Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorsement of system Implementation Plan</li> <li>• Budget and resource allocation</li> <li>• Risk management</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Membership</b>	Department of Communities CLT
<b>Decision Making Approval Level</b>	Final Approval
<b>Decision Making Remit</b>	All aspects of the Implementation although their focus should be on the Macro of the broader reform implementation rather than the Micro of each strategy
<b>Data Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of the Data Collection &amp; Reporting Framework</li> <li>• Focus on data monitoring</li> <li>• Access to data dashboard</li> </ul>
<b>Other Groups Directly Reporting to this Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Groups as required</li> <li>• Reform Implementation Oversight Group and the Aboriginal Cultural Oversight Subgroup</li> </ul>

Implementation Oversight Group

The SCPU is best placed to lead the Implementation Oversight Group. This Group provides leadership, guidance, and support across the program of work and to individual strategy and projects as required. This Group actively monitors and makes decision on key areas such as: inter-Department and cross agency collaboration, project prioritisation, resourcing, implementation effectiveness.

The Implementation Oversight Group is informed by data analysis and insights that provide a high-level dashboard to support monitoring and decision making.

Cultural Governance is embedded in the operation of the Implementation Oversight Group, and an important role of the Group will be to monitor the cultural governance of all strategies and projects and drive culturally safe practice.

Members of the Implementation Oversight Group and/or SCPU may provide additional support to, and membership of, Strategy Implementation Groups as required, particularly in the Exploration and Installation stages of Implementation.

Given the long-term nature of child protection systems reform, it is envisaged that the Implementation Oversight Group would be a longer-term group with set leadership guiding their work in System Implementation. However, membership of the group is likely to change over time as new strategy pieces are established and others are completed. For example, as the Department commissions the future 10-Year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Out-of-Home Care, the group will need to adjust accordingly.

<b>Terms of Reference</b>	Implementation Oversight Group
<b>Reports to</b>	Communities Leadership Team (CLT)
<b>Role</b>	To lead, monitor and oversee the implementation of the WA Child Protection System reform and associated strategies and projects, including embedding cultural governance at all levels of implementation.
<b>Key Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation Leadership</li> <li>• Oversight &amp; monitoring</li> <li>• Strategy &amp; project prioritisation</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Resource allocation (within available resources)</li> <li>• Implementation risk management</li> <li>• Identification of implementation dependencies, interconnections, and duplication</li> <li>• Progress Reporting</li> <li>• Communication (internal and to stakeholders as agreed)</li> <li>• Evaluation Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Membership</b>	Representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCPU (Chair)</li> <li>• Aboriginal Cultural Governance group</li> <li>• Aboriginal Outcomes Unit</li> <li>• Service Delivery</li> <li>• Strategy Implementation Sponsors</li> <li>• Others as determined</li> </ul>
<b>Decision Making Approval Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation to CLT for resource allocation outside budget, major changes to strategy and implementation plan</li> <li>• Approval of changes to and/or de-implementation of projects</li> </ul>

<b>Terms of Reference</b>	Implementation Oversight Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of strategy implementation plans</li> </ul>
<b>Decision Making Remit</b>	System wide Implementation Plan
<b>Data Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of the Data Reporting Framework</li> <li>Focus on data monitoring</li> <li>Requires a real-time data dashboard, focussing on implementation progress for each strategy and project achievement against goals and timeframes</li> </ul>
<b>Other Groups Directly Reporting to this Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert Advisory Group</li> <li>Strategy Implementation Groups</li> </ul>

Expert Advisory Group

The Expert Advisory Group provides advice and support to the Implementation Oversight Group and acts as a confidential critical reviewer (as needed) of key documents and strategic initiatives.

The Expert Advisory Group may be drawn from Department or other government agencies, academia, community sector, ACCOs and the private sector as needed. Members of Expert Advisory Group may change as implementation priorities evolve and additional or different expertise is required. Therefore, membership of this group will be time limited and have a specific focus or direction. There may also be multiple Expert Advisory Groups in operation at any one time given the complexity and multiple strategies also underway at any one time.

<b>Terms of Reference</b>	Expert Advisory Group
<b>Reports to</b>	Provide confidential advice to the Implementation Oversight Group
<b>Role</b>	To provide confidential expert advice, support, and critical review of the implementation of the WA Blueprint for Child Protection and associated Strategies and Projects as requested by the Implementation Oversight Group.
<b>Key Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation plan and strategy review</li> <li>Identification of gaps/ issues</li> <li>Advise on evidence/ subject matter/ process</li> <li>Provide critical reflection on key documents as requested</li> </ul>
<b>Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBC but will include advisors from a range of areas. Membership may change from time to time to reflect implementation priorities e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages, and communities</li> <li>Child protection research (including out-of-home care, youth at risk and family support)</li> <li>Trauma informed, culturally safe services for Aboriginal children, families, and communities</li> <li>Working with culturally diverse children, families, and communities</li> <li>Community and stakeholder engagement</li> <li>Effective responses to child sexual abuse</li> <li>Working in regional and remote areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	- Child protection workforce development
<b>Decision Making Approval Level</b>	Recommendations to Oversight Implementation Group or to specific Strategy and Project groups as requested.
<b>Decision Making Remit</b>	Advice only
<b>Data Reporting</b>	As required depending on focus during the implementation process
<b>Other Groups Directly Reporting to this Role</b>	NA

### Strategy Implementation Groups

Strategy Implementation Groups should be established for each of the current strategies underway and for any new strategies as they come online (e.g., 10-Year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Out-of-Home Care). Therefore, initially there will need to be five Strategy Implementation Groups established.

- Enhancing Child Protection Practice Strategy
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy to 2022
- Path to Safety: Western Australia’s Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030
- Out-of-Home Care Reform (Reform Program Roadmap) 2019-2023
- At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026

The Strategy Implementation Groups operate for the life of the Strategy and may evolve in terms of scope and membership as the strategy implementation progresses through the stages of implementation. For example, a strategy in the Exploration Stage of implementation may require additional support from the SCPU, or additional cultural oversight and support to ensure the foundations for strong implementation are set.

Each Strategy should also have an allocated Strategy Implementation Sponsor from the Implementation Oversight Group to ensure information sharing between the governance levels regarding the strategy is smooth. This also allows for information related to other parallel strategies to flow easily into the Strategy Implementation Groups. This person may be aligned with the service delivery area but may not necessarily have line management of staff or teams implementing the various projects.

<b>Terms of Reference</b>	Strategy Implementation Groups
<b>Reports to</b>	Implementation Oversight Group
<b>Role</b>	Drive implementation of strategy, including project implementation
<b>Key Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project plan oversight – focus on project measures and any interdependencies with other projects</li> <li>• Monitor the status of each project within the reform area – assess state and capacity to proceed to implementation / progress of implementation</li> <li>• Problem solving, resource management</li> <li>• Prioritisation and resource recommendations to Implementation Oversight Group</li> <li>• Strategy evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy Implementation Sponsor</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the Implementation Oversight Group and SCPU as required</li> <li>• Aboriginal Outcomes Unit</li> <li>• Subject Matter Experts (TBC)</li> <li>• People &amp; Culture representative</li> </ul>
<b>Decision Making Approval Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation to Implementation Oversight Group for Strategy budget</li> <li>• Recommendation to Implementation Oversight Group for changes to strategy implementation plan, including change of priority, de-implementation of projects/programs</li> <li>• Approval of project implementation plans</li> </ul>
<b>Decision Making Remit</b>	Strategy Implementation
<b>Data Reporting</b>	Data analysis to translate information collected by Project Implementation Teams into insights, Strategy Implementation Plan progress reports, Strategy outcome reports and insights into enablers and blockers to implementation
<b>Other Groups Directly Reporting to this Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Implementation Teams</li> <li>• Advisory groups as required</li> </ul>

### Project Implementation Teams

Each major project associated with a Strategy should have a Project Implementation Team. The size and scope of these teams will be commensurate with project scale, organisational and implementation complexity, priority and impact. Project Implementation Teams will be time limited and vary considerably with and between strategies in the system reform implementation governance. Some may be localised to a region where there is a pilot project operating, and may include both government and non-government members, particularly where the pilot project is being delivered by a Community Service Sector partner. Other Project Implementation Teams will be larger and involve only Department staff, for example those related to legislative amendments that support strategy actions. Major Project Implementation Teams should be determined by the Implementation Oversight Group, whereas smaller ones requiring less intensive resource allocation can be commissioned by the Strategy Implementation Groups.

Each Project Implementation Team will have a Project Sponsor who is a member of the relevant Strategy Implementation Group; similar to the level above, this allows for a streamlined approach to information sharing.

<b>Terms of Reference</b>	Project Implementation Teams
<b>Reports to</b>	Strategy Implementation Group
<b>Role</b>	Drive implementation of Strategy, including project implementation
<b>Key Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project plan oversight – focus on project activities, measures, and any interdependencies with other projects</li> <li>• Monitor the status of the project capacity to proceed to implementation / progress of implementation</li> <li>• Problem solving, resource management</li> <li>• Prioritisation and resource recommendations to Strategy Implementation Group</li> <li>• Development and implementation of project evaluation</li> </ul>

<b>Membership</b>	As needed, but including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Sponsor</li> <li>• SCPU (for large projects)</li> <li>• Aboriginal Outcomes Unit</li> <li>• Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>• Delivery partners where appropriate</li> <li>• Regional Directors and others involved</li> </ul>
<b>Decision Making Approval Level</b>	Approval of project Reports  Recommendation for changes, resource allocation, change in priority, de-implementation of project to Strategy Implementation Groups.
<b>Decision Making Remit</b>	Project plans and activities
<b>Data Reporting</b>	Data collection that reports on activities, progress against outcomes and emerging trends/ issues in project implementation.
<b>Other Groups Directly Reporting to this Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Groups including project partners/ stakeholders as required</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement and participation is a critical element of public policy and system reform and program implementation. There are elements of stakeholder engagement embedded across the various system reforms, including co-design processes and more generalised consultation with organisations, sector leaders, communities and children and young people.

Stakeholder groups identified for co-design, engagement and consultation across the strategies that sit within the Child Protection system reform include (but are not limited to):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities
- ACCOs
- Service providers delivering services such as family support, out-of-home care, supporting young people at risk
- Community service sector – peaks and organisations
- Children and young people in/leaving care
- Families (particularly vulnerable families)
- Department of Communities staff across all business areas
- Other government Agencies

Within the Exploration and Installation stages of implementation in particular, stakeholder engagement is prominent. This can be seen as a strong implementation driver as it allows stakeholders to develop a sense of ownership and familiarity with the impending change, creating support for the change and for tolerance of any discomfort this new *thing* or way of working may present. It also allows for clarity and fine-tuning of the ‘problem’ trying to be solved by the change, and likely outcomes (both positive and negative) of the vehicle for change (whether that be a program, policy, or practice change). Unfortunately, this can also be a significant barrier to implementation if done poorly, not as intended or not in line with stakeholder expectations.

For future implementation plans, particular focus at the system, strategy and project level must include review of the stakeholder engagement intent, type, and plan. This should be done in the Exploration phase of implementation when the project scope, intent and outcomes are being determined.

The Spectrum of Public Participation developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), shown in Figure 4, is an internationally recognised tool for understanding and determining engagement and participation approaches.

## IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Figure 5. The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation<sup>12</sup>

This model shows the spectrum and matches the purpose of engagement with the 'promise to the public' (i.e., stakeholder group). Engagement activities (such as information campaigns, workshops, co-design processes) are then designed to reflect the purpose of the process and the level of intended impact on decision making.

The Implementation Oversight Group will oversee engagement and consultation to ensure the way stakeholder engagement is designed, delivered, and reported reflects the outcomes, aspirations and commitments to cultural governance and cultural safety.

It is important to note that stakeholder engagement with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations is undertaken in addition to the broader commitment to cultural governance and should be in alignment with the cultural governance approach designed for the system implementation.

In an effort to align the various strategies within the Department, it is apparent that stakeholder engagement or 'consultation', co-design and other activities occur at varying levels within many contexts. For example, some strategies explicitly call for co-design or partnerships in development of various system solutions. Whilst a co-design effort is most desirable, this is a term that is sometimes viewed along a continuum from 'Collaboration through to Empowerment'. For example, the Out-of-Home Care Strategy suggests that there should be a co-

<sup>12</sup> International Association of Public Participation: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation <https://iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum/>

design process with the Community Services Sector with regards to development of care types. A collaborative approach to co-design would involve a partnership, where the advice and counsel of the community services sector was sought and included within the development of a final care model. However, an Empowered approach would involve the Department taking direction from the community services and designing the care model according to their wishes. Both would involve consultation, but one carries an expectation that the opinions are equal whereas the other has a clear power differential. Misalignment of stakeholder expectations from co-design can have a detrimental impact on implementation.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Implementation Oversight Group consider the levels, frequency and nature of consultation and stakeholder engagement within each strategy and across the System Reform to ensure engagement is meaningful, genuine, respectful, and aligned with strategy needs and consumer expectations.

To support meaningful and purposeful engagement in the System Implementation, each Strategy Implementation Group and Project Team will need to identify the purpose of any proposed engagement groups or activities (internally or externally focussed), map the type of engagement required, the 'promise to the public' inherent in the process and identify appropriate activities that reflect the intent of the engagement. This process should be included in Project Implementation plans.

Strategy Implementation Groups will have the added responsibility of identifying where engagement has not occurred in alignment with the 'promise' of the engagement style and where there may be overlap and duplication in process. Attending to engagement processes that have not delivered on their 'promise', are duplicative or likely to overlap will assist in reducing engagement fatigue and prevent inadvertent alienation of stakeholders.

### 3.5 Workforce Readiness Capability and Support

Selecting staff with the right skills, aptitude, competencies, and qualities, providing appropriate induction, training and ongoing skills development/ coaching is critical in the implementation of new programs and initiatives<sup>24</sup>. In the broader context of reform implementation, workforce readiness and capability across Communities (and to an extent, partners) is a key area for attention.

Within Communities' reform strategies and projects, specific workforce initiatives or requirements have been identified. However, there is a broader need to consider the larger context for workforce development and how the different requirements of the workforce can be assessed, clarified, planned, and implemented.

Several Communities reviews have identified areas for workforce development. For example the summary of recommendations identified from the Cultural Competency Audit of Child Protection Staff and Foster Care and Adoption Manual Report review provided by the Department of Communities as part of this project<sup>13</sup> highlighted the urgent need for cultural capacity building among staff (based on concerningly low levels of capability identified through the review's assessments) and increased support for Aboriginal staff (including training and development, practice guidance, role clarity and a culture of respect). The need to develop or strengthen their Aboriginal Employment Strategy was highlighted, as was the critical need to increase the number and expertise of Aboriginal staff at all levels.

The Department of Communities Agency Capability Review<sup>14</sup> highlighted the need for a structured approach to workforce development including developing a whole of agency capability framework and reiterated the urgent need for supporting and investing in Aboriginal cultural responsiveness.

Case reviews and other activities have further identified specific areas for workforce assessment and development, particularly, child protection assessment, investigation, and practice skills. Staff supervision and

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<sup>13</sup>Department of Communities. (2021). *Summary of the recommendations identified from the Cultural Competency Audit of Child Protection Staff and Foster Care and Adoption Manual Report completed by Indigenous Psychological Services in 2019*. Document provided as part of the WA Pathways Project.

<sup>14</sup>Nous (2019). *Agency Capability Review*. Department of Communities

broader wellbeing programs have also been identified as a priority. Several of these reviews echo the specific issues raised by the Westerman review relating to cultural capacity (at all levels) and the need for significantly improved cultural awareness and cultural competency.

To implement the broader reform plan and achieve the outcomes of each of the strategies and projects that are currently underway or planned, workforce assessment (including current state and readiness for planned change) and development is required. It should be noted that much of this work *may* (this project was provided a summary of this document only) have been undertaken by Dr Tracy Westerman in her 2019 report (inclusive of the Child Protection Cultural Competency Profile) but may require review given the time since this work was undertaken.

Workforce assessment:

- Readiness for reform
- Practice and capacity
- Cultural awareness, competency, and capacity

Workforce development:

- Developing change capability
- Whole of agency capability, with alignment to roles
- Role aligned induction, training and development, supervision, and coaching
- Practice tools and learning
- Cultural awareness and capacity training and ongoing development

Workforce capacity to deliver effective practice that realises the Department of Communities values and principles is also impacted by workforce wellbeing and the extent to which they too are supported to be safe and well. This is particularly significant in areas of work like child protection where work demands are very high, and carries a high level of emotional labour and risk for vicarious trauma. Investment in supporting the wellbeing of the workforce needs to occur alongside workforce development and capability building.

### 3.6 Taking an Outcomes Focus

An outcomes focus provides a critical basis for effective implementation of policy reform and practice change. In the context of a large-scale reform with intersecting layers, programs, and projects, developing a cohesive, aligned set of outcomes for the overall reform process and each program, project, practice initiative is vital. In a review of quality and effectiveness of child protection frameworks Finan, Bromfield, Arney and Moore<sup>15</sup> highlighted the importance of an aligned approach to program theory in child protection frameworks, and evidence emerging from the literature of a positive link between programs that explicitly linked practice to program theory and program outcomes to a positive effect in reducing child abuse and neglect.

Where there are multiple implementation efforts occurring concurrently, as is the case with Communities, a layered approach to developing an outcomes framework such as that in [Figure 5](#) below, where each lower-level activity feeds into the high system level activity, is required.

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<sup>15</sup> Finan, S., Bromfield, L., Arney, F., & Moore, T. (2018). *Assessing the quality and comprehensiveness of child protection practice frameworks*. Adelaide: Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia.

# Layered Outcomes Approach

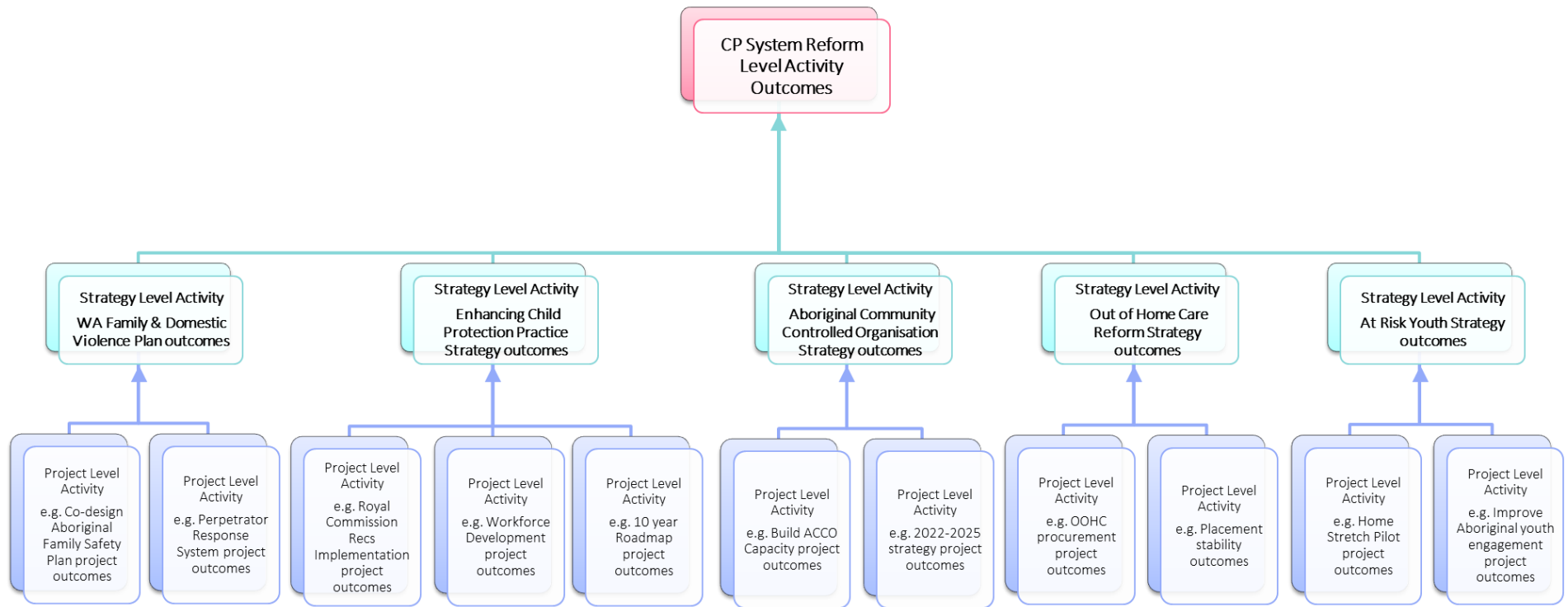


Figure 6. Layered view of outcomes within a System Level Reform

### 3.6.1 *Aligning Outcomes*

The overarching strategy maps aligning various strategies to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap targets and Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 allows for a unifying model for alignment and an opportunity to review each Strategy to identify priorities, any strategic conflicts and address duplication. Once finalised and adopted as an Agency level vision for a reformed child protection, there will be merit in aligning outcomes to the child protection system blueprint.

Alignment of the objectives and outcomes of the strategies currently in an implementation phase (and any future work) to the longer-term outcomes of the overall system reform is critical to increase impact, reduce duplication and support the outcome focus.

A well thought out program logic and outcomes framework for the whole system and each individual strategy piece will help guide future work, show gaps, and highlight future opportunities for change.

Developing a set of outcomes, with short-, medium- and longer-term markers for the system reform as a whole, for each strategy and for each program/project will result in great cohesion of effort. This can ultimately help to decrease the likelihood of duplication of effort and activity, make areas for collaboration between programs/projects more explicit and create a strong framework for monitoring and evaluation – and ultimately for delivering change.

An overall program logic, which sets out the following elements provides a framework for developing and linking outcomes. The key elements of a program logic model include:

- Problem or issues to be addressed
- Target population
- Key program components/activities
- Inputs (what is needed to support the program, e.g., workforce capability)
- Theory of Change (including evidence)
- Outcomes

In their review of child protection frameworks, Finan et al<sup>13</sup> noted that a workforce assessment (i.e., what skills, capabilities and competencies were required to achieve the outcomes) is a critical element of logic models in child protection frameworks.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies checklist for program logics provides guidance in assessing the completeness and appropriateness of program logic in the child welfare context. The checklist<sup>16</sup> includes the following elements:

- Background – key elements influencing the development of the program
- Is the model truly logical? Do the inputs, outputs and outcomes link together and make sense?
- Is there research, experience, or evidence to suggest that the activities will engage the intended participants?
- Is there research, experience, or evidence to suggest that the outputs will lead to the short-term outcomes, and that the short-term outcomes will lead to the medium and long-term outcomes?
- What might be the unintended or negative outcomes?

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<sup>16</sup> Australian Institute of Family Studies. *How to develop a program logic for planning and evaluation*. Retrieved from <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/expert-panel-project/program-planning-evaluation-guide/plan-your-program-or-service/how-develop-program-logic-planning-and-evaluation>

- Are the inputs suitable for the activities?
- Does the outputs or activities column make it clear what the program will actually do?
- Is each outcome truly an 'outcome'? It can be easy to confuse outputs with outcomes
- Are the outcomes realistic and attainable?

The Strategy Implementation Oversight Group should ensure that each strategy and individual project has a clear program logic model mapped to intended outcomes, and that these link to a higher order program logic that represents the broader system reform change that is designed.

The WA Child Protection System Blueprint provided for the Department as a part of this project (see SECTION 1) may be used to form the foundation of a larger program logic model. It maps the theory of change in an ideal child protection system designed to improve outcomes for children, young people, and families with a particular focus on Aboriginal children.

### 3.7 Data Driven Implementation

Data is critical not only for tracking outcomes through the later implementation stages but also to provide clarity in the reform Exploration stage in defining the problem, impact, context, etc. The importance of data systems to underpin decision making in implementation has been highlighted by the implementation science literature. In the context of a major reform program with a mix of policy, program and practice initiatives, data systems that enable data collection, reporting and analysis across the range of initiatives for individual projects and the larger program overall is required.

Data systems are an element of the organisational drivers required to support implementation. Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman and Wallace<sup>17</sup> highlight the critical role of data systems in the implementation of policy, programs, and practice initiatives. These systems should provide:

*Frequent, user-friendly reports of process and outcome data, provide guidance for decision making at the policy levels and practice levels of organisations and help keep whole organisations on the path toward continuous improvement.*

For data systems to be effective, they need to be integrated into program design and have reporting capacity that provide ongoing insights into the implementation process, the way resources are mobilised (e.g., staff allocation) and insights on the outcomes of reform initiatives (policy, programs, and practice).

From an implementation governance perspective, data systems and reporting provide accountability and transparency and drive decision making that is responsive to trends, issues, and emerging concerns. A data system that supports decision making should include information for each project:

- Outcome measures at the initiative, project, program, and reform levels (short-, medium- and long-term outcomes expressed in the program logic)
- Process measures relating to:
  - Implementation resources
  - Implementation governance
  - Actions and outputs
  - Quality measures
- Fidelity measures (i.e., whether the practice/actions are aligned to the chosen methodology)

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<sup>17</sup> Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature* (FMHI Publication No. 231). Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, National Implementation Research Network.

Reporting and analysis should be available to each level of the process to enable reflection on practice, agile and responsive project management and action, risk management and opportunities to celebrate success. Data systems should feed into ongoing work but also into overall evaluation of the reform effort. Client level data monitoring the impact of reforms is ideally readily extractable from client record management systems.

### 3.8 Risk Management and Agile Responding within Implementation

Whilst considerable effort and resources must be dedicated to system implementation, the system will not stand still while new processes, practices and programs are being implemented. On the contrary it is highly likely, particularly within the Child Protection context, that daily ‘business as usual’ critical issues will continue to emerge from internal and external sources. These challenges have both the potential to present a significant risk to the successful implementation of system reform, as key implementers can have their focus detained elsewhere, but they can also be at risk of being overlooked in a context where key implementers are also responsible for critical service delivery. Therefore, a robust risk management framework that allows for recognition of challenges and critical risks will ensure that implementation can progress whilst the system around it can be agile to emerging concerns as they occur.

Hudson, Hunter and Peckham’s<sup>18</sup> analysis of the key risks associated with policy implementation offer a sound framework for implementation risk management. The framework outlines four key elements that can lead to policy failure: overly optimistic expectations, dispersed implementation governance, inadequate collaboration in policy planning and the impact of external factors such as the political cycle. They highlight the need for intentional implementation support to counter these risks in policy implementation, particularly in complex policy areas such as child protection.

Some of the key risks identified in this type of complex, multi-level reform effort and potential risk mitigation strategies are listed in the table below.

Risk Area	Mitigation Strategies (examples)
<p><b>External factors derail efforts</b></p>	<p>Full risk assessment of external factors that might impact on each policy/program/practice prior to implementation (including factors that may support implementation if engaged). This includes political, regulatory, contractual, sector and other risks that intersect with the reform area.</p> <p>Regular review of risks and identification of emerging issues that may impact – building in agility of response to emerging issues.</p> <p>Engagement of external stakeholders in risk assessment, development of policy/programs/practice where appropriate.</p> <p>Use of external advisory structures to provide technical expertise, leadership (e.g., sector leadership), regular feedback and support to the implementation program.</p> <p>Investing resources to support efforts to align implementation strategies with external needs to build support for implementation.</p>

<sup>18</sup> Hudson B., Hunter D., & Peckham S. (2019). Policy failure and the policy-implementation gap: can policy support programs help?, Policy Design and Practice, 2:1, 1-14, DOI: 10.1080/25741292.2018.1540378

<p><b>Internal forces derail or distract implementation efforts</b></p>	<p>Engagement of all policy partners internally in policy development, planning and implementation to identify competing interests, duplication and program roll out challenges (e.g., timelines).</p> <p>Use of internal advisory groups to provide technical expertise and leadership in planning and implementation.</p> <p>Cultural governance is clearly defined and engaged.</p> <p>Clearly defined, accountable structures to support implementation<sup>19</sup> – this may include central implementation support programs<sup>18</sup>, implementation teams and implementation champion.</p> <p>Implementing a clear and regular ‘practice-to-policy communication loop’<sup>24</sup> –feedback from practitioners and implementors on the experience ‘on the ground’ of implementation and new issues emerging that could impact the capacity to implement or result in deviation from agreed models/practice.</p> <p>Use of ‘rapid cycle problem solving’<sup>20</sup> in implementation teams to prevent implementation from stalling or drifting in the face of emerging issues/problems.</p> <p>Establishment of clear outcomes for each policy/program and monitoring of progress.</p> <p>Creating a supportive authorising environment for change at all levels (the leadership driver and the organisation driver).</p> <p>Ensure internal systems support implementation (the organisation driver).</p>
<p><b>Ill-defined programs</b></p>	<p>Incorporate program definition into implementation planning for all aspects. Fixsen et al<sup>24</sup> outline the elements of program definition required to support implementation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear description of the program – including philosophy, values, principles, inclusion and exclusion criteria</li> <li>2. Clear description of essential elements of the program</li> <li>3. Operational descriptions of essential elements – clarifying the way core elements look in practice</li> <li>4. Assessment of performance – elements that could be assessed to demonstrate performance</li> <li>5. Definitions of the evidence that shows the program is effective when used as intended (outcomes)</li> </ol> <p>Highlighting issues with program definition in practice-to-policy loops.</p> <p>Implementation of supervision and performance monitoring (leadership driver).</p>
<p><b>Workforce capacity/capability</b></p>	<p>Workforce assessment against key skills required.</p>

<sup>19</sup> Metz A., Bartley L., Ball H., Wilson D., Naoom S., and Redmond, P. (2015). Active Implementation Frameworks for Successful Service Delivery: Catawba County Child Wellbeing Project. Research on Social Work Practice 2015, Vol. 25(4) 415-422

<sup>20</sup> Metz Et al (2015) op cit.:p 416

	<p>The use of the leadership driver to select staff with appropriate skills and capacity to implement.</p> <p>Using the leadership driver to define, supervise and monitor performance and implement quality improvement.</p> <p>Identifying implementation champions to support work units and practitioners.</p>
<b>Sustaining implementation</b>	<p>Working through the implementation drivers to identify areas where there is change of performance or decreased engagement.</p> <p>Performance monitoring to identify emerging workforce change/ issues</p> <p>Regular outcome monitoring – identification of short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes to support ongoing embedding of practice.</p> <p>Resource planning and support – identifying ongoing professional development, quality improvement and other systems that will support (the organisational driver).</p>
<b>Outcomes are unclear</b>	<p>Use of the leadership driver to establish the key outcomes.</p> <p>Set expectations with the explicit identification of short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes.</p> <p>Use of program logic for each program/project to identify the key outcomes and how they relate to the overall goal and the specific program.</p> <p>Development of data systems to support data collection, analysis and monitoring within the implementation governance model.</p> <p>Regular outcomes reporting and analysis.</p>

### 3.9 Sequencing Efforts and Recommended Actions

To create an implementation environment that will drive Child Protection System Reform and better outcomes, there are areas requiring immediate attention to support planning and risk management in implementation.

Taking action to address these areas as detailed above will be critical in creating the right conditions to respond to the significant, long term program of work and associated risks such as change fatigue amongst the workforce, leadership, and stakeholders; implementation drift or the development of reform ‘silos’.

Given the strategy pieces currently underway, and the extensive recommissioning that is about to commence within the out-of-home care space, actions have been grouped into four categories:



There are 30 recommended actions across both the general system and individual strategy areas currently underway within Communities. Given the ongoing nature of system reform currently being undertaken by Communities many areas require immediate resolution. The sequencing of actions has been carefully considered to firstly highlight those pieces that require immediate attention due to the inherent risk associated with not completing these. The risk in not completing some actions may relate to barriers to implementation or required sequencing of other actions where a failure to complete earlier ones will result in subsequent failure of others.

Other actions may take longer term effort to complete, are dependent on earlier actions and/ or relate to future focus pieces and ongoing improvements to Communities' capacity to implement with success. Given this, for many actions the sequencing chosen represents the starting point recommended rather than the suggested completion.

Below is a comprehensive list of required actions extending that presented in the Executive Summary at **Error! Reference source not found.**

<b>Urgent (0-3 months)</b>
<b><u>General System Actions</u></b>
<p><b>Action 1:</b> Engage internal stakeholders in the process of System Implementation and ongoing Strategy Reform of Communities including internal Regional stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Pathway Project Team in partnership with SCPU hold two (including video conferencing capacity) internal information sessions on the Pathways Project (including scope, method, findings, and suggested implementation plan).</li> <li>○ SCPU consult with District and Regional Director's to identify options for regional involvement in implementation governance to ensure strong connectivity between policy and practice and feasibility factors in frontline service delivery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 2:</b> Install Governance Structure for the System Reform including embedded Cultural Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure adequate consultation regarding the governance structure is undertaken with internal stakeholders including at a regional level.</li> <li>○ Include adoption of suggested Implementation Principles to guide plans</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 3:</b> Determine what role, or unit within Communities has carriage of each strategy area currently underway.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Give consideration for workload and resources required to effectively lead various strategy and reform pieces, e.g. the OOHCC Commissioning represents a significant piece of work over the 2021-2022 period if it goes ahead as intended.</p>

**Specific Strategy Actions**

**Action 4:**

Consider alternative options to the total re-commissioning of OOHC at this time.

- This could include a staged approach rather than a system wide commissioning, particularly considering ACCO capacity, impacts on the development of the 10-Year Roadmap, and the numerous other commissioning pieces planned
- Implement a Co-design of services approach with a trial site
- Stagger with other significant projects across the sector

**Action 5:**

*(Regardless of commencement date)* Develop OOHC re-commissioning plan with clear timeline, project team and alignment with strategy elements – identifying those elements within the current strategy that will be completed within this process.

- Critical issue to be considered is reconfirming commitment to ACCO led or ACCO partnered service delivery within OOHC re-commissioning
- Aligned with the National Agreement on the Closing the Gap targets.

**Action 6:**

Conduct a risk assessment for the OOHC procurement process and its capacity to fulfil the OOHC strategy reform as intended; provide risk treatment options and consider parallel implementation of these.

**Action 7:**

Work alongside the SCPU and the OOHC strategy reform groups to establish a targeted ACCO capacity building and engagement strategy to facilitate the OOHC procurement and service design process for 2022.

- Ensure the OOHC Strategy Implementation Group has considerable membership from SCPU and the Aboriginal Outcomes division.
- Undertake a process to review the ACCO strategy with regards to risk considering the current OOHC procurement process. i.e.
  - what impact does that have on the ACCO strategy success with regards to ACCO capacity and moving towards more Aboriginal led service delivery
  - what impact does it have on the National Agreement to the Closing the Gap targets

**Action 8:**

Establish clear stakeholder engagement strategy with clear definition of level of co-design to be used for the service design elements associated with the OOHC recommissioning.

**Action 9:**

Review the Project Plan for the development of the 10-Year Roadmap given the impacts of the OOHC re-commissioning. Give particular consideration to:

- The ability of the project design to meaningfully engage with the WA Aboriginal community in its current form and planned partnerships,
- Engagement of the WA sector and particularly Aboriginal people at the same time as significant engagement with the OOHC re-commissioning which also includes co-design of service models, and

- Genuine system changes available to the plan within the first 5 years of the 10-Year Roadmap given the OOHC procurement design.

**Critical (3-6 months)**

**General System Actions**

**Action 10:**

Endorse whole of System Reform Strategy with clear program logic that indicates short-, medium- and long-term outcomes.

- This may include adoption or adaptation of the visionary Blueprint following appropriate consultation

**Action 11:**

Develop whole of System Outcomes Framework

**Action 12:**

Review previous (Aboriginal Services and Practice Framework 2016-2018) and/or develop a new Aboriginal Practice Framework to guide both child protection practice, service design, policy development and strategy implementation

**Action 13:**

Review current data systems and develop a fit-for-purpose data system for use across Communities that supports monitoring and can more easily integrate with other agency systems and align with current reform strategies.

- This will include both granular client management system data, Human Resources data and broader contracting and service delivery data systems.
- Changes to the data systems will support decision making at all levels, support implementation efforts, and provide appropriate reporting to track progress and outcomes at multiple timepoints throughout implementation and ongoing.

**Action 14:**

Review the workforce readiness to complete the current and future reform strategies and apply any remedial treatments to ensure there is adequate capacity (wellbeing, capability, resourcing) at each layer of system, strategy, and project implementation.

**Action 15:**

Review Communities Cultural Capacity and develop a 5 Year Cultural Capacity Building Plan that complements other strategy efforts.

- This may involve review of previous reports commissioned in 2019 by Dr Tracey Westerman
- Due consideration should also be given to linking such a plan to a current Strategy, i.e., it could sit within the current ACCO Strategy, Enhancing Child Protection Practice, or be elevated to the level of Strategy and development of subsequent Implementation supports.

<b><u>Specific Strategy Actions</u></b>
<p><b>Action 16:</b> Establish a series of data reporting mechanisms aligned with each system, strategy, and project level implementation piece.</p>
<p><b>Action 17:</b> Determine alignment of the individual strategies to the whole of System Outcomes Framework</p>
<p><b>Action 18:</b> Develop individual action plans with clearly defined outcomes and timeframes for projects noted as 'Future Directions' within each strategy area; being sure to assess for projects that crossover, those that duplicate and those that may be complementary.</p>
<p><b>Action 19:</b> Review and/or define and clearly articulate stakeholder engagement at each level of system, strategy, and project implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Where this does not currently exist, this should be developed at the Strategy Implementation Group level and form part of their Strategy Implementation Plan that is regularly endorsed by the Reform Implementation Oversight Group.</li> </ul>

<b>Short Term (6-12 months)</b>
<b><u>General System Actions</u></b>
<p><b>Action 20:</b> Establish and maintain through continuous improvement a workforce development program that caters for all levels of child protection worker, specialist roles and leadership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This will likely require a review of current training provided internally through Learning and Development and within local/ regional areas. Include (at a minimum) in the review the learning outcomes, recent reviews and staff feedback, frequency and mode of delivery, relevance to competency within roles, uptake of the training, need for revision and resources required to achieve this.</li> <li>○ This may also include development of a purposeful Learning and Development Improvement Plan that provides timelines, costs (including resource type), and scope of acute and ongoing training development and reviews.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 21:</b> Ensure the workforce is well supported and cared for via a range of wellbeing strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This should include a review (inclusive of consultation with various groups) of the needs of Communities and the unique and diverse roles, with particular consideration for regional and remote workers.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This may also include revision of caseloads, role capacity and resource needs, particularly in an environment with significant staffing shortages across all levels of service provision.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Specific Strategy Actions</u></b></p>
<p><b>Action 22:</b> Within the Enhancing Child Protection Practice strategy, consider activities that should be re-defined as Continuous Improvement efforts rather than strategic efforts that require implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This may require development of a suitable model (or adopt one that currently exists within Communities) for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) that can be used for the SCPU to guide its work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 23:</b> Develop and seek endorsement for the new ACCO 2022-2025 strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finalise the 2022-2025 strategy; giving particular regard to the 10-year Roadmap process that will begin in 2022 and will have an impact on this strategy; and the OOHC strategy and impending procurement process</li> <li>○ Ensure this strategy aligns with the targets of Close The Gap.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 24:</b> Co-design and implement a dedicated Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy as per Path to Safety: Western Australia’s Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020- 2030 and the At-Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026.</p>
<p><b>Action 25:</b> Review and submit to CLT a proposal to consider the EIFS strategy 2016 as implemented and move any outstanding projects to other strategy areas as has been captured by the five main strategy maps presented.</p>

<p><b>Medium Term (12-24 months)</b></p>
<p><b><u>General System Actions</u></b></p>
<p><b>Action 26:</b> Undertake an appreciative inquiry style audit of the Commissioning Plan 2021-2022 once completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure learnings are implemented in future commissioning pieces</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action 27:</b> Review the Communities Implementation Framework to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Governance Structure is in place and operating effectively</li> <li>○ Clear workplans are in place and operational for every strategy area</li> <li>○ Any new reform pieces are integrated into existing areas</li> </ul>

- The Principles of the Implementation Framework are being practiced and embedded in each strategy piece.

**Specific Strategy Actions**

**Action 28:**

Undertake current service system review within youth services as intended to better identify service need and gaps for future investment within the At-Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026.

**Action 29:**

Implement 10 Year Roadmap as per plans developed throughout the project, ensuring appropriate Implementation Governance that aligns with suggested frameworks.

**Action 30:**

Implement and monitor the required changes across the sector as determined within the Commissioning Plan 2021-2022.

## APPENDICES

Appendix A: Project Background Information

Appendix B: Strategy Maps

**Error! Reference source not found.:** Strategy Maps Future Directions Quick Reference Table

**Error! Reference source not found.:** Blueprint Style Variations

Appendix E: Reform Areas Provided as An Addendum to The Procurement

Appendix F: Documentation Received for Each Reform Area

Appendix G: Cross-Over Between the Reform/ Strategy Areas, Activities and Projects and the Strategy Maps

## APPENDIX A: PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

#### 1.1 Project Purpose

There have been significant learnings for Communities from internal and external reviews and reports over the past four years. These have driven the approximately 30 child protection reform or strategy projects being undertaken across Communities at present; each with their own resources, outcomes, and timeframes. With daily service pressures increasing, the ongoing nature of reviews, and National child protection reforms continuously impacting State activities, there is an identified risk for Communities in losing traction in key reform areas and being diverted from its primary focus without a cohesive pathway forward.

This project was designed with the specific purpose of mapping out the various reform areas occurring across Communities to develop a cohesive overarching direction and plan for the SCPU and broader Department moving forward. Four key priority areas have been identified through this process:

1. Consolidate existing reform and strategy driven projects into a whole-of-agency framework for implementation and monitoring, with potential for realising implementation efficiencies through the coordination of these projects
2. Identify any reform gaps or inconsistencies between reform projects that may impact Communities' realisation of its objectives
3. Coordinate initiatives to ensure the implementation of reforms are appropriately prioritised and sequenced to maximise impact and the realisation of the objectives and
4. Undertake the project in partnership with the SCPU to strengthen Communities' internal child protection expertise and professional practice.

#### 1.2 Project Scope

The Project Scope was set out in the Request for Tender issued by the Department of Communities in April 2021. Slight variations were made to part of the initial scope following early consultations and discussions with the Hon. Simone McGurk, Minister for Child Protection, Director General Department of Communities Mike Rowe, and other senior Communities' Executives. These variations did not materially change the scope or deliverables of this project, though did change the project from being an externally visible Reform Roadmap, to an internally focussed and evidence-based guide to build a more effective and culturally responsive child protection system.

The revised project scope was as follows:

1. Review and consolidate existing information, documents, resources, reform projects and reports relating to child protection reform in WA
  - a. Use this information to develop a series of Strategy Maps that show reform area interconnections, recent past work, current projects, and future directions
2. The Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) with Pricewaterhouse-Coopers, Indigenous Consulting (PIC), develop alongside Communities, the SCPU, an Implementation Plan to guide the many areas of reform and strategy in a cohesive and integrated manner; including noting priority projects, projected timelines (noting sequencing), required activities, stakeholder involvement and identification of project leadership where appropriate and able

3. Undertake limited consultations as required to ensure proposed frameworks, strategy connections and suggested priority themes have been discussed and tested with key cohorts and stakeholders where needed
4. Build an Aboriginal cultural lens into project processes and deliverables and seek to address systemic issues including workforce development and capacity building, and mechanisms to support ongoing organisational culture change that is culturally nuanced and responsive
5. Recognise the project target cohorts including:
  - Children who are experiencing or have experienced abuse and/or neglect including children in care, Aboriginal children, young people leaving out-of-home care and transitioning to adulthood and their families
  - Aboriginal children, young people and families who are significantly overrepresented in the child protection space and whose children are entering OOHC at an alarmingly increasing rate
  - Children and families with multiple and complex needs, who are most at risk of coming into contact with the child protection system (for example, young parents who were in care themselves or have children in care; parents involved in pre-birth planning)
  - Foster and family carers
  - Frontline service delivery staff, and
  - Community Services Sector (Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)) who provide services to the Department and
6. ACCP with PIC, develop alongside Communities, in particular the SCPU, an effective child protection system Blueprint that can be utilised as a discussion starter within the agency to begin to guide internal vision setting and future reform and strategy development by the agency.
7. Finalise the project within a 4-month timeline with final delivery end October 2021.

### 1.3 Project Team

The Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) was established in 2004 as a joint initiative between government and academia to reduce the gaps between research, policy, and practice in Child Protection and to ultimately transform the lives of children. As a national organisation, the ACCP has offices in Adelaide and Perth and our team comprises leading Western Australian, national, and international expertise and experience in child protection systems and their reform, cultural expertise and leading communications and design experience. ACCP's staff have worked across and overseen more than 200 projects in the field of child welfare across Australia. In addition to the ACCP's research and evaluation across policy and practice, it has particular specialism in the support of Inquiries and Royal Commissions and in the development of child protection solutions fit for the Australian context. The ACCP has designed and delivered formative, summative, process, fidelity, impact, outcome and hybrid evaluations and utilised implementation frameworks to determine the impacts of interventions and reform in Child Protection.

PwC's Indigenous Consulting (PIC) was established in 2013 as a national majority Indigenous owned, led, and staffed consulting firm. PIC has completed more than 960 projects, engaging with, and working alongside and in partnership with over 680 communities, delivering Indigenous knowledge led solutions across sectors such as education, child protection, health, economic development, and justice. PIC brings a philosophy and optimism about how to effect change to realise Indigenous potential across its work. Across the project the PIC team provided specialist child protection system advice and review of draft documents and advice about Indigenous community and organisational stakeholders in WA.

The WA Pathway Project Team included a substantial number of specified personnel from the ACCP and PIC. Together our specified personnel brought a rich breadth and depth of expertise and experience in child protection and the ability to apply a leading cultural lens to ensure the project was culturally responsive. The Project Team has extensive experience and expertise in analysis, consolidation and synthesis of a large amounts of information and documentation; experience in stakeholder consultation; ability to engage with key stakeholders in a culturally appropriate and responsive manner and apply a cultural lens; experience in similar projects to drive systemic change, particularly within the child protection portfolio; and a successful track record of partnering with government on the development and implementation of culturally responsive child protection reforms.

ACCP Deputy Director Practice **Ms Amanda Paton** was the Project Lead and Manager. Ms Paton was responsible for project management and liaison with Communities, contributing to and developing project deliverables, coordinating the Project Team, and ensuring the project plan delivery and quality assurance on all aspects of the project. Ms Paton also chaired the Internal Project Advisory Group, conducted various consultations, and convened the Project Partnership team which included members of the SCPU.

**Professor Leah Bromfield**, Director ACCP was Chief Project Advisor. Professor Bromfield was a member of the Internal Project Advisory Group, provided thought leadership and supported the Project Team to develop and document the Blueprint, Strategy Maps, and Implementation Plan.

Critical members of the Project Team, **Dr Sarah Cox**, Research Fellow and **Dr Stewart McDougall**, Research Assistant at the ACCP completed the document review, extraction, consolidation of records and development of Strategy Maps. They also contributed to the development of the Blueprint and other Implementation documents.

**Ms Karen Bevan**, Consultant for the ACCP undertook to synthesise Project information, Strategy Maps, and the Blueprint into an overarching Implementation Plan.

**Ms Mandy Gadsdon**, Consultant of PIC (through her Aboriginal owned company- Think Culture), and **Ms Jenny Scott**, Principal of PIC, acted as Project Advisors providing a cultural lens and Aboriginal led contextual knowledge and oversight to the project. Both were members of the Internal Project Advisory Group and provided thought leadership and feedback on the development of the Blueprint, Strategy Maps, and Implementation Plan with a particular focus on cultural responsiveness.

**Associate Professor Melissa O'Donnell**, Deputy Director Research, ACCP also acted as a Project Advisor providing additional WA contextual knowledge to the Project Team.

The core ACCP **Internal Project Advisory Group** (IPAG) met weekly with Advisors attending as available, and meeting with the Project Lead where needed; this Group provided guidance, direction and advice to the research fellows and associates, reviewed project progress and deliverables. The Group also ensured the cross-fertilisation of knowledge across the Project Team and a coordinated and integrated approach to project delivery. The IPAG included Professor Leah Bromfield, Amanda Paton, Dr Sarah Cox, Dr Stewart McDougall, Karen Bevan, Mandy Gadsdon and Jenny Scott.

The broader Partnership Project Team (PPT) inclusive of SCPU met fortnightly to discuss the development of various project elements, provide consultation and direction, and general oversight for the Project. The PPT membership included the members of the IPAG and Mark Burgess, Audrey Lee, and Amanda Dickson.

## **2. PROJECT METHOD**

The following section outlines how the Project Team carried out the review and developed the various elements of the project.

### **2.1 Document Review and Thematic Analysis**

The document review and thematic analysis involved consolidation of existing information, documents, resources, reform projects and reports relating to child protection reform in WA.

A rapid analysis of the 38 reform areas provided as an addendum to the procurement (see Appendix E for full list), indicated that the current reforms could be categorised along the child protection practice continuum and/or by target population. From this the Project Team received 136 documents relating to the Reform areas (see Appendix F for full list). Additional reform/project areas and documentation were also identified during the course of the project. Documents ranged in complexity, target audience, scope, authorship, and intent. The Project Team research fellow and assistant undertook rapid coding by title, to group documentation into preliminary thematic areas by continuum of service delivery and specific target populations. Each was then allocated specific thematic groupings of documentation for a process of rapid familiarisation, from which they developed the initial more detailed coding frame for reform areas.

Documents were then reviewed again and coded against this coding frame. To maximise efficiency, the approach to document review included comprehensive review of 1-2 key documents in the reform area to gain an understanding of the practice context and concerns. For subsequent documents, the team reviewed the executive summary in full and then a rapid review of the remainder of the document focussed on the extraction of reform content.

Twice weekly Internal Project Advisory Group meetings during this coding and thematic analysis phase ensured cross-fertilisation and shared learnings across coding areas; expertise from advisors regarding child protection systems and reforms also contributed to the consolidation of reform areas into thematic groupings. This was supplemented with fortnightly consultations with the SCPU project team to identify any additional reform areas, other relevant documents and identify early system gaps and present high level thematic groups for review.

### **2.2 Development of Strategy Maps**

As a secondary part of document review and analysis a series of Strategy Maps were created to show interconnections, recent past work, current projects, and future directions within each thematic area.

During the initial document review, the Project Team identified several key reform/ strategy areas, along with discrete projects. It became apparent that the discrete projects nested underneath many of the key reform/ strategy areas and that crossover between key reform/ strategy areas existed. To represent this, a series of Strategy Maps depicting the key reform/ strategy areas were created using the diagramming web application Lucidchart, including:

- Enhancing Child Protection Practice
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Strategy to 2022
- Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030
- Out-of-Home Care Reform (Reform Program Roadmap) 2019-2023
- At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026

The Strategy Maps included information (where available) on the purpose, goals, vision, guiding principles, outcomes, broad areas of focus/priority, activities and projects, and responsibility/oversight. Other state and national plans, frameworks, and strategies that the key reform/ strategy areas built on, or were aligned with, were also included in the Strategy Maps. Activities and projects falling under each broad area of focus/priority within each Strategy Map were separated into 'completed', 'underway', and 'future directions' to allow the Department of Communities to track progress against these. SECTION 3 provides further detail on each of the Strategy Maps.

Crossover between the reform/ strategy areas, activities and projects provided as an addendum to the procurement and the Strategy Maps was tabulated in Microsoft Excel (see [Appendix G](#)). The individual strategy maps were then used to determine existing alignment to two key national frameworks, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031, to guide planning and adherence to targets and priorities.

Other Strategy Maps developed during this project, but were subsequently removed include:

- **Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016)** - this strategy has been completed, with activities and projects now largely being considered business as usual for the Department of Communities. The Strategy Map was therefore removed from further analysis, but is provided in Appendix B, for information
- **Child Wellbeing Strategy** – a decision was made early in the project to remove this Strategy Map due to this strategy being outside the remit of child protection (i.e., sitting on the periphery of child protection)
- **Leaving Care** – there was crossover between the activities and projects forming the leaving care Strategy Map and both the At-Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026 and the Out-of-Home Care Reform (Reform Project Roadmap) 2019-2023 Strategy Maps. To avoid duplication, the leaving care Strategy Map was removed from further analysis
- **Early Years** – this Strategy Map includes the Early Years Initiative, Connecting Early Years Networks, and Early Years and Parenting. These initiatives were deemed to be outside the remit of child protection (i.e., primary prevention) and therefore this Strategy Map was removed from further analysis.

### 2.3 Development of the Child Protection System Blueprint

A Blueprint of an ideal, evidence informed, and culturally responsive child protection system has been created for the WA environment. It is designed as a discussion starter within the agency to begin to guide internal vision setting and future reform and strategy development by the agency. The Blueprint builds upon the existing vision that was set for the child protection and family support streams of the Department as the functions sit within a single agency and incorporates new evidence and areas of policy and practice that have emerged since that time (e.g., the Home Stretch campaign for young people leaving care, increased recognition of importance of addressing the needs of families with inter-generational trauma and multiple and complex needs). The Blueprint was developed alongside early conceptualisation of the document reviews and Strategy Maps and has informed the work of the Implementation Plan.

The Blueprint, whilst informed by current reform and strategy activity within Communities, has been developed from a top-down high-level approach that maps out elements of an effective child protection system against key target cohorts. Existing areas of reform can then be matched back to this Blueprint to allow for greater visibility of strategy gaps and alignment of areas that cross over when planning future reforms and continuous improvement initiatives.

Initial conceptualisation of the Blueprint was to visually represent broad areas of reform and how they link to target groups across the service continuum, recognising that there are critical elements to system success both within design and implementation. This was then refined further after consultations to include mapping to short- medium- and long-term outcomes and suggested measures.

## 2.4 Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan has been developed alongside other pieces of work and was designed to be viewed alongside the Strategy Maps and Blueprint. Together they outline a framework to guide the many areas of reform and strategy in a cohesive and integrated manner; including priority projects, projected timelines (noting sequencing), required activities, stakeholder involvement and identification of project leadership where appropriate and able.

Informed by implementation science tools and frameworks and our experience in applying these tools and frameworks to support implementation of child protection programs and reforms, development of the Implementation Plan began with the document review process where we identified:

- Status of each reform/ strategy area and project work within – these were categorised according to ‘Completed, Underway and Future Directions’
- The functional area or team within Communities with responsibility for implementation and other areas or teams involved, and
- Reform scale, complexity, and history of the piece of work.

Through further consultation and review of the Strategy Maps and Blueprint with various stakeholders, we expanded our knowledge in the above areas and identified:

- Significant known barriers or facilitators to implementation of these strategies
- Considerations impacting timeframes for implementation, including public commitments, contracting/ procurement pressures and adherence to other reviews and national frameworks or targets
- Resource allocation (e.g., budget and whether internal resource re-allocation, commissioning or recommissioning is indicated or whether external consultants/research partners are likely to be required).

A summary of background information on Implementation Science and its application to system level reform that informs our various recommendations and suggested actions for the Implementation Plan is provided below.

## 2.5 Limited Consultations

Since the project launch various members of the Project Team and Advisory Group have engaged both internal and key external stakeholders in consultations to seek feedback and advice on different aspects of the thematic analysis from document review, development of Strategy Maps, design and development of the Blueprint and included themes/ principles, creation of the Implementation Plan, and alignment of current reform pieces with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap targets and Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021-2031.

Whilst the majority of the consultations have been within the SCPU team and relevant business units for each strategy, other Communities business units and senior leadership have been consulted where appropriate. Although it was intended that further consultations would occur with the District and Regional Directors, due to challenges securing the availability of these stakeholders in a group meeting, and consultations were not able to occur within the given project timeline. A full briefing will be provided to this group at the closure of this project and Action 1.1 recommends that the SCPU use this as the

launch pad for further consultation with this group with regards to the implementation plan, and proposed governance structure with critical focus of how regional implementation can be elevated and supported within the broader child protection system reform underway. The objectives of consultations have primarily been to:

- Sense check and gain feedback on the project plan and relevant pieces as they have been developed
- Identify gaps in reform areas and/or reforms currently being progressed
- Understand organisational readiness for implementation in each area, and barriers and facilitators to implementation and
- Gather information that impacts on timing for implementation and relative priorities.

## 2.6 Aboriginal Cultural Lens

Whilst the safety and wellbeing of all children is critical, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities this must be viewed through an additional cultural lens for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are grossly over-represented in the WA child protection system and OOHC. The reasons for this are complex and are connected to past policies and the legacy of colonisation. Poverty, assimilation policies, intergenerational trauma and discrimination and forced child removals have all contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care, as has a lack of understanding of the cultural differences in child-rearing practices and family structure (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC], 1997; SNAICC, 2016a; Titterton, 2017<sup>21</sup>).

Keeping the principles and underlying intent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle at the forefront of the development of this Blueprint recognises that for Aboriginal children an effective and culturally responsive child protection system means changing the way that the current system operates. This recognition and subsequent required operationalisation are critical to their safety and wellbeing. Our approach to mapping current reform pieces and outlining a way forward for Communities, placed a high priority on supporting the strengths of communities, and on strategies designed to recognise and respect the valuable contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture, as evidence shows that it is imperative that cultural governance and culturally informed approaches must be at the centre of child protection system reform. An outcome of this approach was the principal tenant that if we designed a system Blueprint for Aboriginal children then we would design a system to meet the needs of all children.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/child-protection-and-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-children>

### 3. THE SCIENCE OF IMPLEMENTATION: MESSAGES FROM THE LITERATURE

Robust implementation processes and plans are critical to ensure that services, projects, and system reforms work as intended and maintain gains over the long term. The active process of implementation refers to 'efforts specifically designed to get the best practice findings and related products into routine and sustained use through appropriate change/uptake/adoption interventions'<sup>22</sup>. Implementation Science is most used to guide the practice of implementing a specific program or activity to ensure fidelity and impact. However, this same approach is useful when looking to larger system or sector reform such as that occurring with Communities at present. Assuming that the system changes and chosen strategy reforms to be implemented are based on adoption of best practice products and design, then the task at hand for reform implementation becomes more focused on the drivers that may help or hinder adoption of the products and the function of oversight and governance.

Implementation processes include review of the why, who, what, where, when, and how of the reform, and development of methodical and purposeful plans to ensure that there is readiness, capacity, and opportunity for change to occur, regardless of how small or large the scope of work.

Effective implementation should be seen less as a contributing factor in success but rather as a mitigating factor against internal and external issues that may derail effective installation of a service or system change. Therefore, an essential element in ensuring that outcomes are achieved. The quality of implementation has been shown to play a significant part in achieving intended outcomes<sup>23</sup>, conversely even the most efficacious of programs and interventions will fail to yield the intended outcomes if implemented poorly.

In a fiscally prudent environment where demonstration of system improvements via robust outcomes is critical to show need and value for money, implementation science becomes an integral part of system reform. Moving towards an outcomes-based framework alongside high quality implementation processes will improve likely success and positive change for children, young people, and their families.

Taking the stance of Fixen et al.<sup>24</sup>, that desirable outcomes are achieved only when effective programs are implemented well, the following outlines elements of best practice implementation that relate to system change and strategy implementation.

#### 3.1 Implementation Stages

There are four stages of implementation set out by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) model<sup>25</sup>. This is a widely accepted framework to guide implementation and notes that integration and application of change begins with Exploration, then moves through Installation, Initial Implementation and then Full Implementation. **Figure 6** **Error! Reference source not found.** below demonstrates how this model can be applied to implementation of a System Reform and includes the expected outcomes for each stage.

<sup>22</sup> Curran, G.M., Bauer, M., Mittman, B., Pyne, J.M., Stetler, C. (2012). *Effectiveness-implementation hybrid designs: combining elements of clinical effectiveness and implementation research to enhance public health impact*. *Med Care*. 50(3):217-26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/MLR.0b013e3182408812>

<sup>23</sup> Durlak, J. A. (2011). *The Importance of implementation for research, practice, and policy*. Child Trends research brief. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

<sup>24</sup> Fixsen, D. L., Blase, K. A., Naoom, S. F., & Wallace, F. (2009). *Core implementation components*. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19, 531–540. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1049731509335549>

<sup>25</sup> National Implementation Research Network [NIRN]. (2013-2019). *Active Implementation Hub, Framework 2: Implementation Stages*. <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-1/implementation-stages>

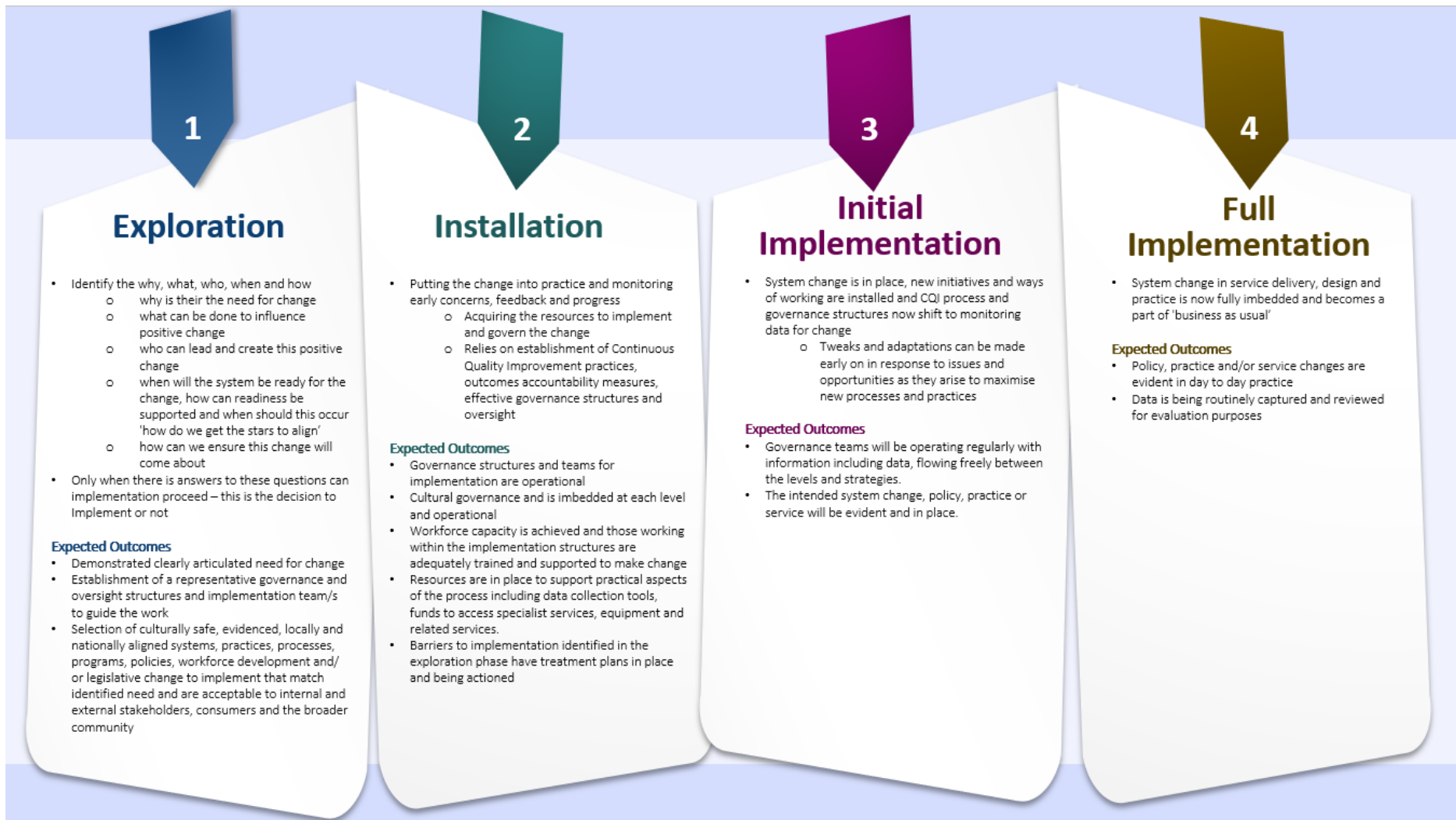


Figure 7: NIRN model of Stages of Implementation and Expected Outcomes applied to System Reform

## Exploration

Exploration is arguably the most significant stage of system reform implementation and may begin long before a team deems that they are 'implementing'. This is also the stage where significant community engagement, and consultation will occur (see section below on this). The exploration phase is often triggered by a critical issue or concern that demands the system respond with change and improvement to achieve an intended outcome; thereby creating the catalyst, e.g., increasing number of Aboriginal children entering the child protection and out of home care system in WA.

Exploration should then begin with the question of 'why', which can only be answered through access to and proper interrogation of data that accurately articulates concerns, need, prevalence and the context/ or specific community within which these occur. This will give clear direction of the concern that needs to change, the target group or community that is involved and the intended/ desired outcomes of any actions. Clarification at this early stage is critical and sets the strong foundation for success or failure of any reform.

Once the 'why change is needed' is set, then the process continues to progress to the 'what'; 'what can be done to bring about the intended outcome'. What systems, practices, processes, capacity, or *thing* can be done, changed, or implemented that will bring about the goal. From a system perspective (and as can be seen from the various Strategy projects currently underway across the Department), this will often include installation of specific programs within a target group, as well as broader organisational, policy, workforce development improvement and legislative changes that compliment or enable targeted programs.

With so many moving parts in a large-scale implementation piece such as system reform, the who, how, and when must not be overlooked in this stage. Even with a clearly defined issue and an evidence-based solution, implementation will fail across a system if these final components are not explored. Child Protection system change involves internal and external stakeholders, consumers at various levels and the broader community who all have a vested interest in success. Getting the balance right can be complex, and a well-thought-out governance structure as outlined in subsequent sections can be critical to ensure that the concerns of detractors are addressed and resolved and the system is ready, enabled (at all levels, inside and out) and supportive of system reform.

And lastly but not least, timing is key. Unfortunately, Child Protection system reform can be influenced by the contractual and political environment which changes over time. Knowing that system reform and implementation can take many years, timing and planning is everything. A review of the local and national landscape is useful to ensure that any proposed implementation plans will be aligned with fiscal constraints, contractual obligations and changes, political movements, and broader strategy developments.

This stage is often the most rushed and holds the greatest risk for any implementation process as there is a tendency to move quickly from decision to installation to resolve or 'fix' a problem with a quick win rather than stepping back, exploring, and preparing the system for reform.

## Installation

Once Exploration is complete and the landscape is well known then the resources can be acquired to do the work ahead. The installation stage is about putting the plan into action, guided heavily by the governance structures and the implementation team who will carry the plan into practice. Ensuring the resources are in place to implement the changes (knowing that they are both programmatic and policy within system reform), involves more than just allocating tasks to current staff or teams. Staff need to be carefully selected (wherever possible), considered, supported, and trained before being allocated to various groups of the implementation governance structure. Relevant tools and practical resources need to be in place to ensure the workforce can carry out their

role. This may include audit and data collection tools, implementation processes, specialised funding, access to specialist services and advice, cultural governance and oversight, physical workspace, and equipment)<sup>26,27</sup>.

### Initial Implementation

Once the exploration, planning and initial set up has been completed then the initial implementation of the change begins. Within Child Protection system reform this may represent a time when a pilot project begins, when a policy change is applied or when a new work practice has been taught and is now being used within context. During this stage change is precarious given the initial application of new skills, ways of working (for both the community and service providers) and responding to need is being changed and this will be novel. This requires a *settle in* period and requires close monitoring, review of feedback, analysis of data and access to CQI systems. This is the most fragile stage where the awkwardness associated with trying new things and the difficulties associated with changing old ways of work are strong motivations for giving up and going back to more comfortable routines (business as usual).

The Initial Implementation Stage is a great challenge. Establishing and sustaining changes to the point of integration into daily work is not likely unless there is external support for change at the practice level (support from coaches)<sup>28</sup>, organization level (support from Implementation Teams)<sup>29,30</sup>, and system level (support from Implementation Teams)<sup>31</sup>.

Research has shown Implementation Teams systematically working to implement each of the drivers and overcome barriers are essential to success (80% vs. 14%)<sup>32,33</sup> during the Initial Implementation Stage. This reinforces the critical need to ensure there is adequate 'stop, think, do' breaks in the earlier stages of implementation to ensure that drivers and barriers right across the system are recognised early and solutions to overcome or install these are developed.

### Full Implementation

Full Implementation within a specific program piece is often identified as being when 50% or more of the intended practitioners, staff, or team members are using an effective innovation with fidelity and good outcomes. This same benchmark can be applied to broader Child Protection System Reform although monitoring of this is less straightforward given the multiple and varying levels of change. Therefore, it is useful to set a target for this early in the installation of each piece of work rather than across the entire strategy. That is, answering the questions: what will this (program, policy, practice change) look like when it is fully implemented? How will I know it is fully implemented (e.g., what outcomes and data measures will I be mapping and looking for)?

<sup>26</sup> Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa, Florida: University of South Florida.

<sup>27</sup> Saldana, L., & Chamberlain, P. (2012). *Supporting implementation: The role of community development teams to build infrastructure*. American Journal of Community Psychology, 50(3-4), 334-346. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10464-012-9503-0>

<sup>28</sup> Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

<sup>29</sup> Aladjem, D. K. & Borman, K. M. (2006). *Examining comprehensive school reform*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.

<sup>30</sup> Nord, W. R., & Tucker, S. (1987). *Implementing routine and radical innovations*. Lexington: Lexington Books.

<sup>31</sup> Schofield, J. (2004). A model of learned implementation. *Public Administration*, 82, 283-308.

<sup>32</sup> Fixsen, D. L., Blase, K. A., Timbers, G. D., & Wolf, M. M. (2001). *In search of program implementation: 792 replications of the Teaching-Family Model*. In G. A. Bernfeld, D. P. Farrington, & A. W. Leschied (Eds.), *Offender rehabilitation in practice: Implementing and evaluating effective programs* (pp. 149-166). London: Wiley

<sup>33</sup> Balas, E. A., & Boren, S. A. (2000). Managing clinical knowledge for health care improvement. In J. Bemmel & A. T. McCray (Eds.), *Yearbook of medical informatics 2000: Patient-centered systems* (pp. 65-70). Stuttgart, Germany: Schattauer Verlagsgesellschaft.

### 3.2 Barriers to Implementation

The development of implementation science over the last 20 years has highlighted the critical role and importance of assessing and addressing barriers to implementation. Implementation of new policy, initiatives and evidence-based programs requires a clear assessment of the organisational environment, across all areas that will influence implementation. This includes organisational administrative, data and other systems, data reporting and monitoring systems and resources, financial and people resourcing, practice and programs (both authorised and evolved), staffing and leadership.

Some common barriers to implementation can include:

- Lack of organisational readiness for implementation.
- Lack of commitment from senior leaders.
- Issues in staff competency to implement new programs, ways of working or confidence in implementing new practices.
- Lack of facilitating administrative systems – for example recruitment, management and data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- Inadequate resources to support implementation of initiatives – for example financial resources to support program implementation, staffing and professional development, data systems and reporting; and
- Lack of capacity and instability within organisations, and poor working relationships and established trust between organisations (particularly relevant with regard to system implementation that cuts across multiple government departments and sector organisations).

### 3.3 Implementation Drivers

Barriers to implementation are addressed largely through the use and development of implementation drivers. Implementation drivers refer to the elements required to develop an underpinning infrastructure that ‘supports competent and sustainable service delivery’<sup>34</sup>. These drivers work together to create the conditions and environments to support effective implementation, a welcoming organisational environment for policy, program, and service reform.

There are three key areas of implementation drivers: Competency Drivers, Organisational Drivers and Leadership Drivers. These drivers are integrated and mutually reinforcing; each driver works together to support and influence implementation and the broader organisational culture. The drivers are compensatory, that is that strengths in one area can address weaknesses or challenges in other areas (see [Figure 8](#)).

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<sup>34</sup> Metz, A., & Bartley, L. (2011). *Active Implementation Frameworks for program success: How to use implementation science to improve outcomes for children*. *Zero to Three*, 32(4), 11–18.

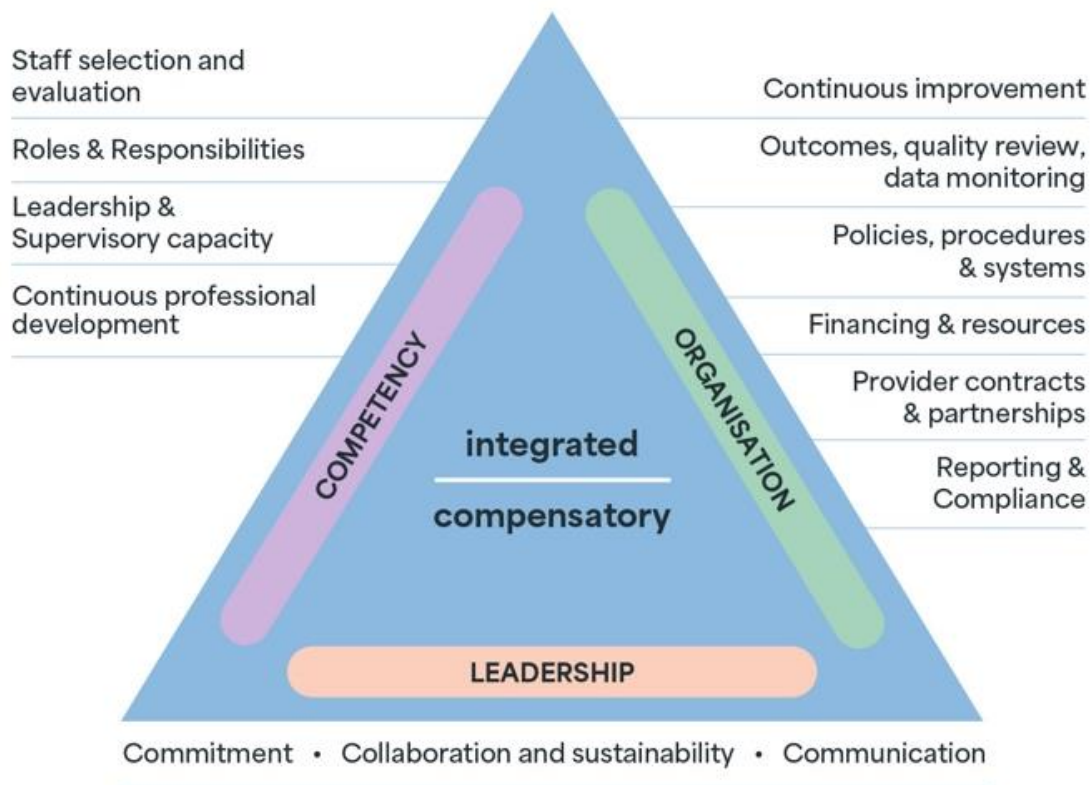


Figure 8. NIRN model Implementation Drivers applied to System Reform

Competency Drivers

The Competency Driver is focussed on staffing to create the competent and confident workforce for implementation. It includes the selection, induction, support, supervision, and development of people to deliver interventions and services as required. To support competency, there needs to be a focus on selecting the right people for the role, having a clear and well understood set of roles and responsibilities, leadership and supervision that attunes to the program(s) being implemented and strategies for continuous improvement.

Organisational Drivers

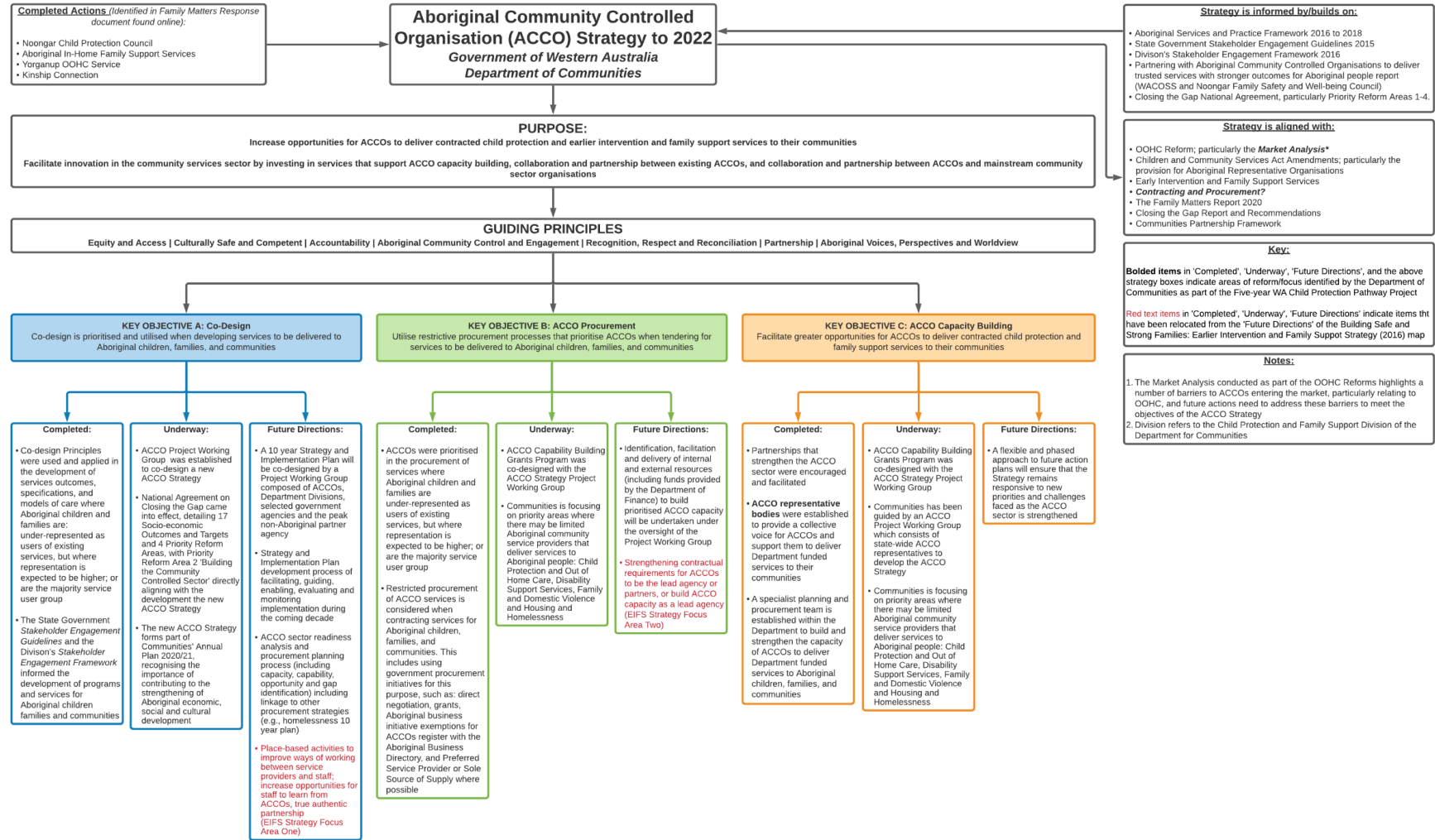
Organisational Drivers relate to the administrative systems and structures in place to support implementation. These include data systems (data collection, review, and monitoring), continuous improvement programs and approaches, clear policies and procedures and reporting and compliance processes. Organisational elements such as finance and resources for implementation of programs/ policies and provider contracts and partnerships are critical to creating the organisational environment that enables implementation.

Leadership Drivers

Leadership Drivers provide a critical base for implementation. Research highlights the critical role of senior leadership in driving implementation<sup>34</sup>, although leadership is needed at all levels. Leadership supports the ongoing commitment to the implementation process and outcomes, provides the authorising environment that supports decision making and is an important conduit for communication. Core elements of the leadership driver are technical leadership (such as subject matter expertise, systems capability) and adaptable leadership to respond to the myriad of challenges that arise during implementation (especially required where barriers to implementation progress are not technical but cultural or organisational).



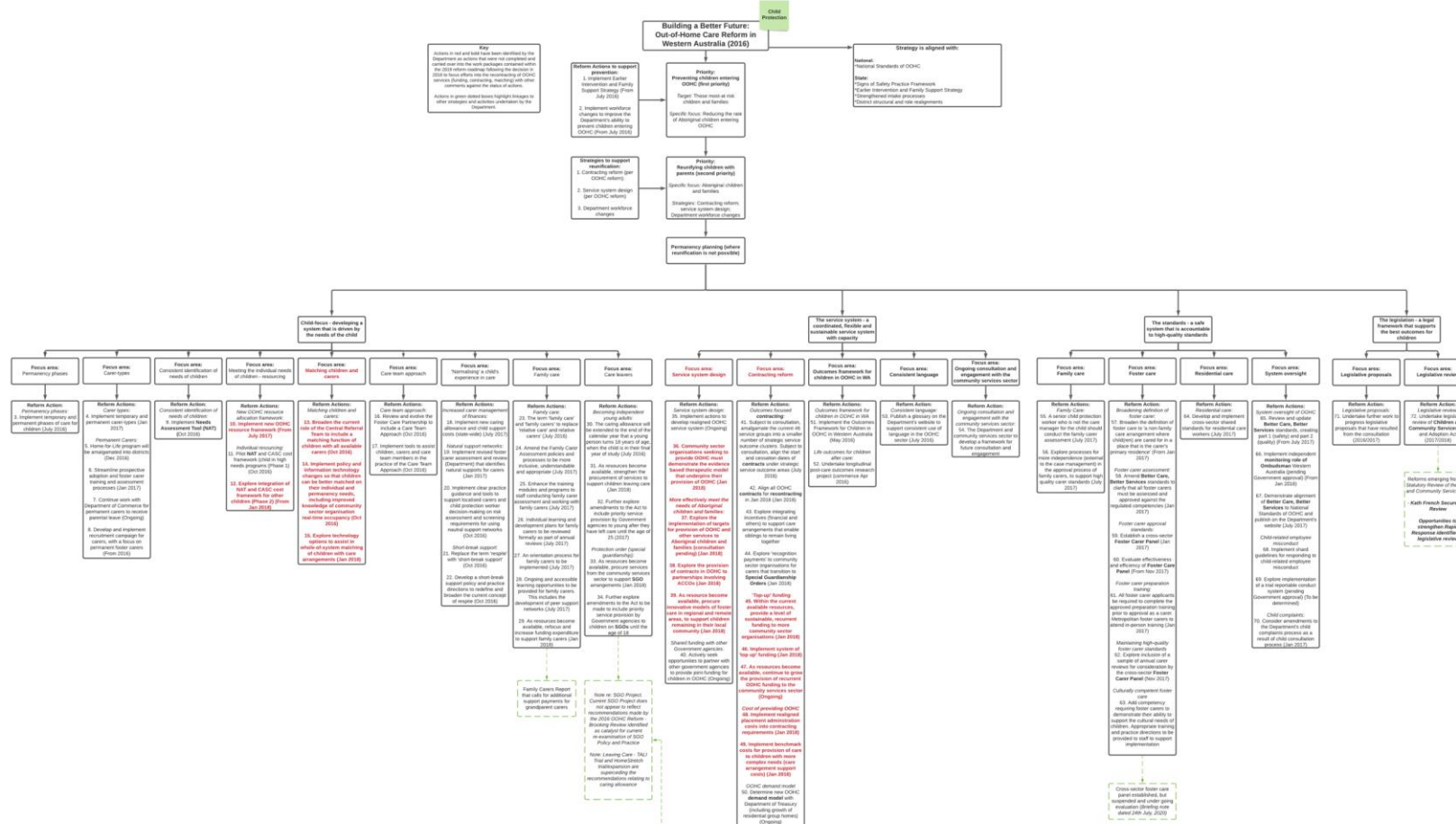
## Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Strategy to 2022 Strategy Map



The editable version of this Strategy Map can be accessed via Lucidchart [here](#).



# Out-of-Home Care Reform (2016) Strategy Map

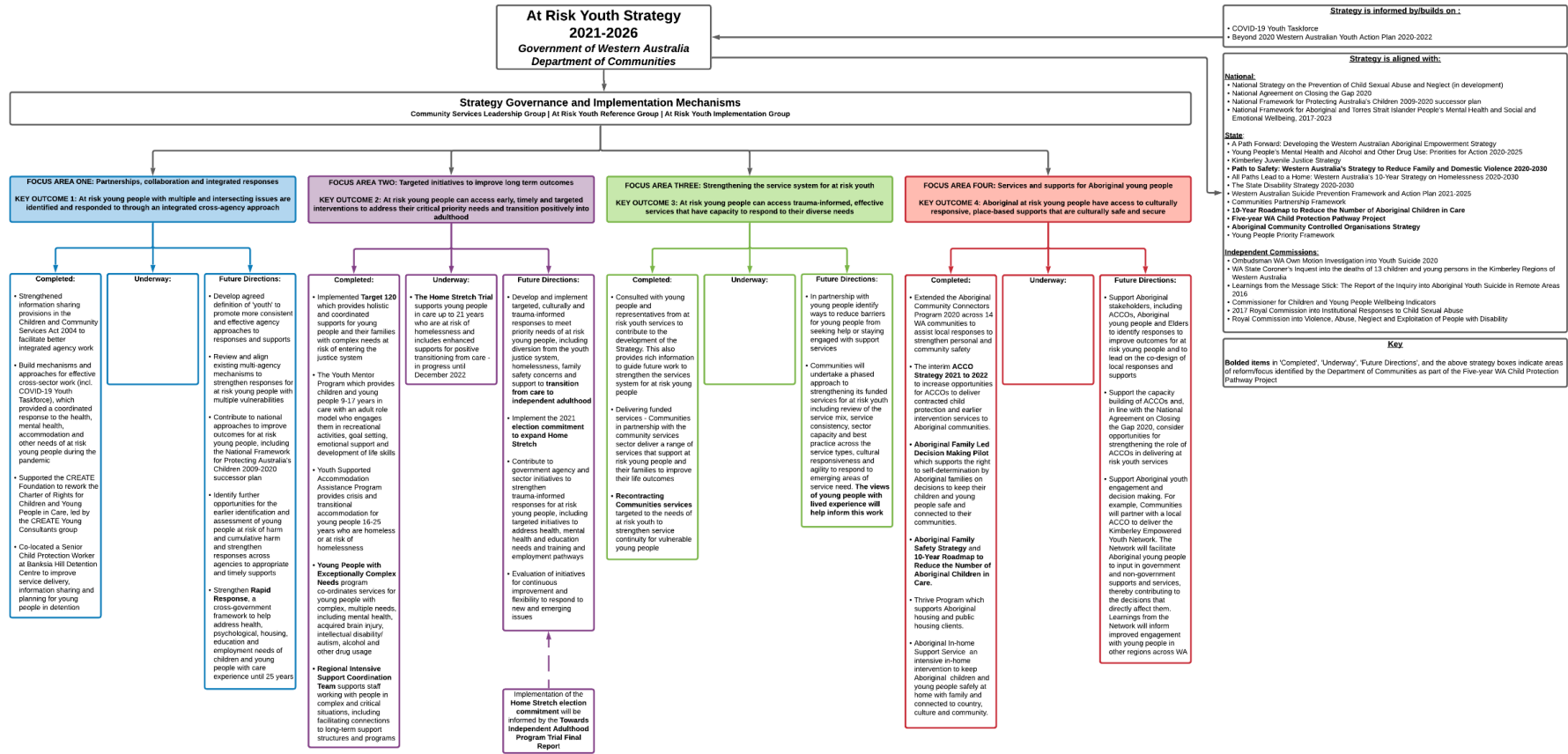


The editable version of this Strategy Map can be accessed via [Lucidchart here](#).

**Improving the lives of vulnerable children.**



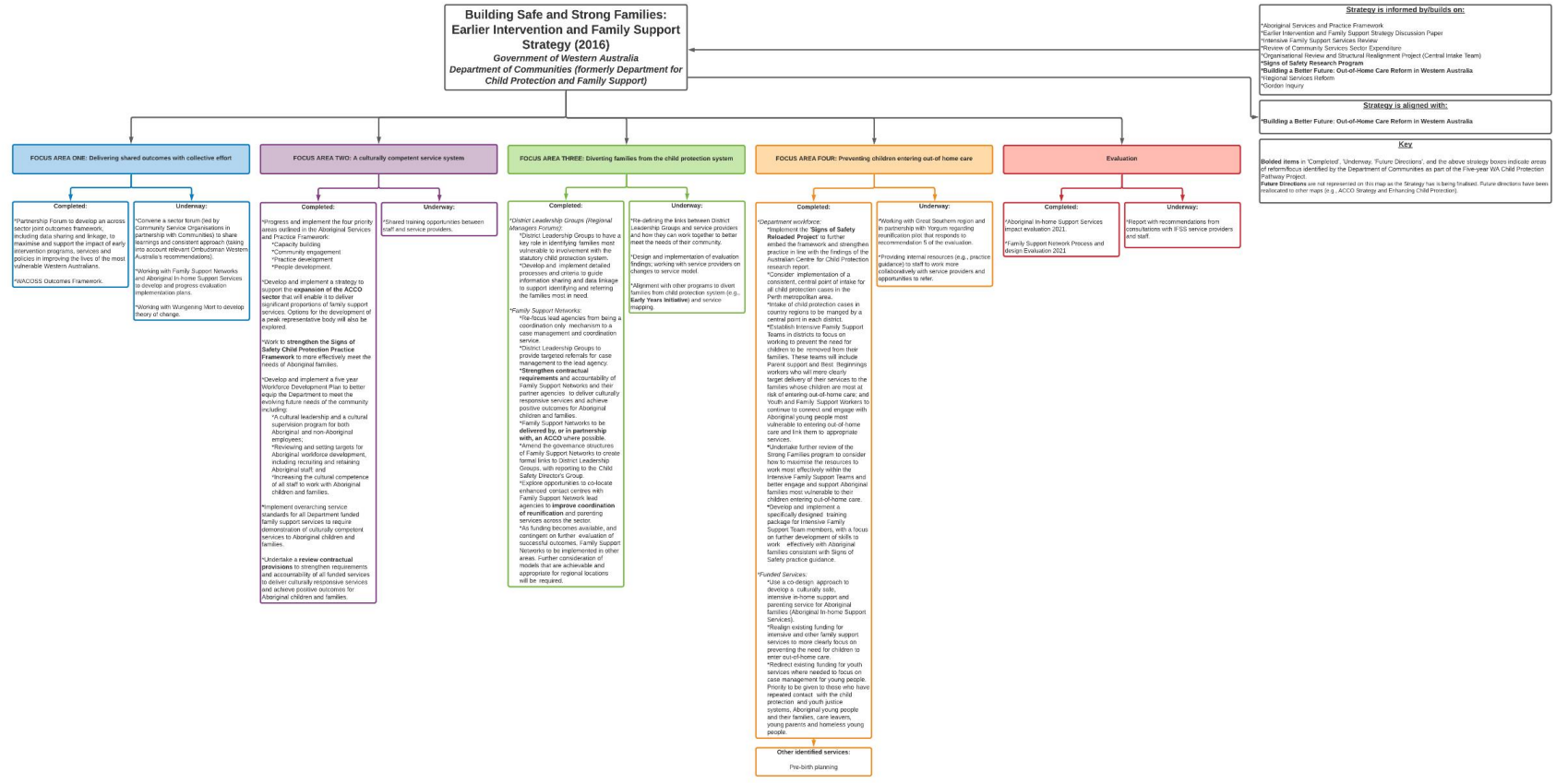
At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026 Strategy Map



The editable version of this Strategy Map can be accessed via Lucidchart here.

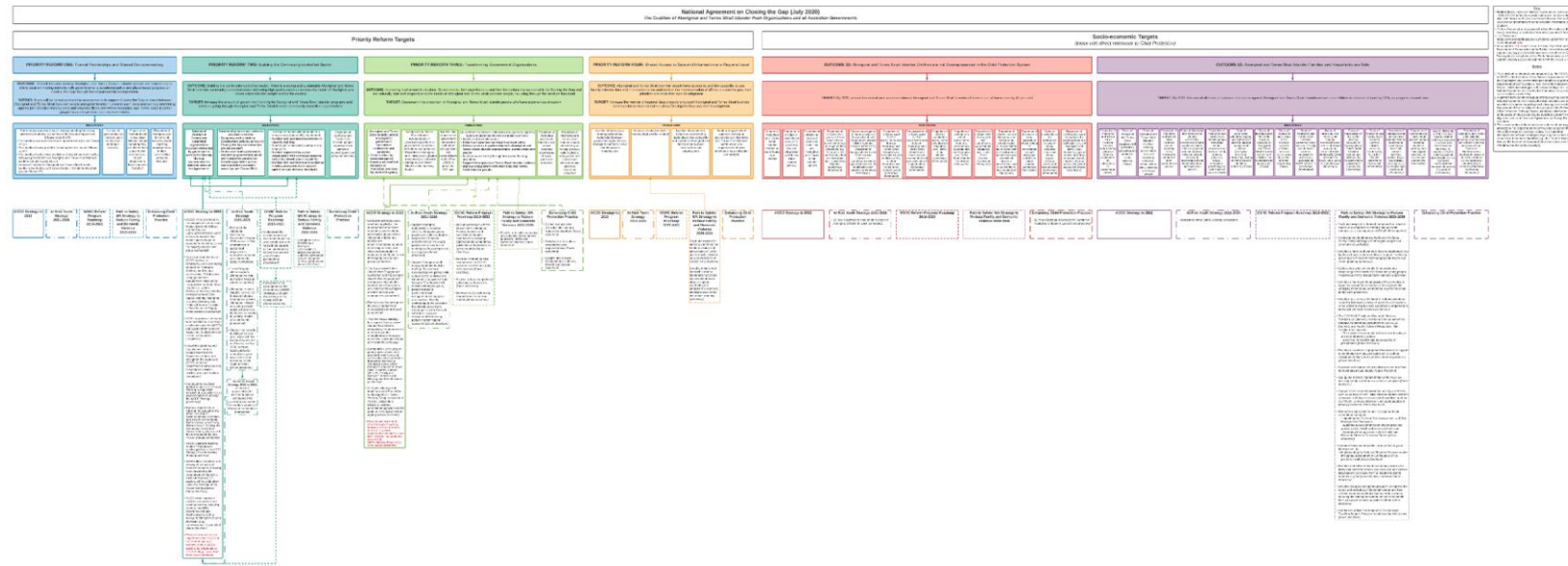
Improving the lives of vulnerable children.

# Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016) Strategy Map



The editable version of this Strategy Map can be accessed via Lucidchart [here](#).

# The National Agreement on Closing the Gap Alignment Map

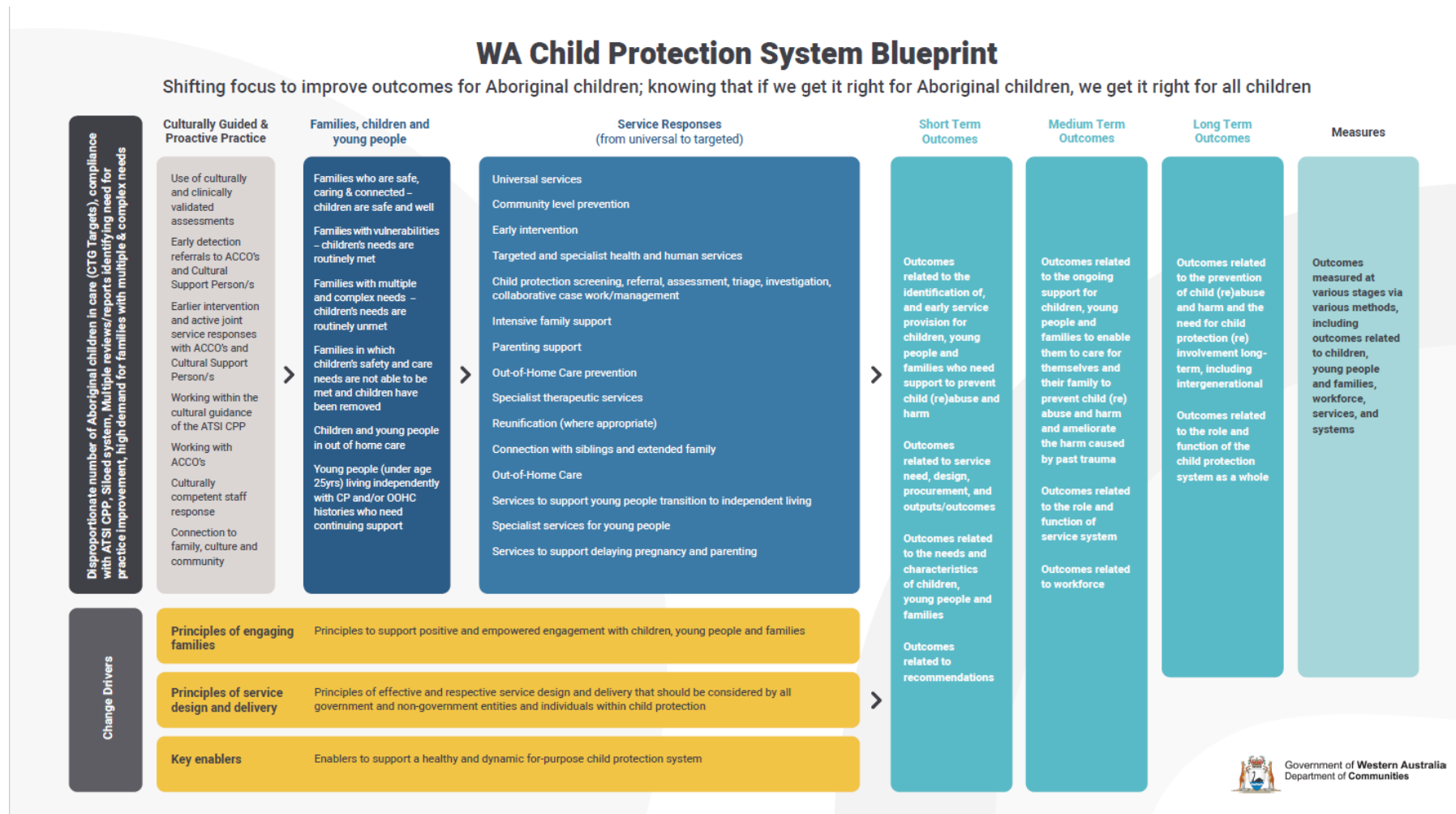


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## APPENDIX C: BLUEPRINT STYLE VARIATIONS

Blueprint Alternative Style Option – conforming to Communities brand

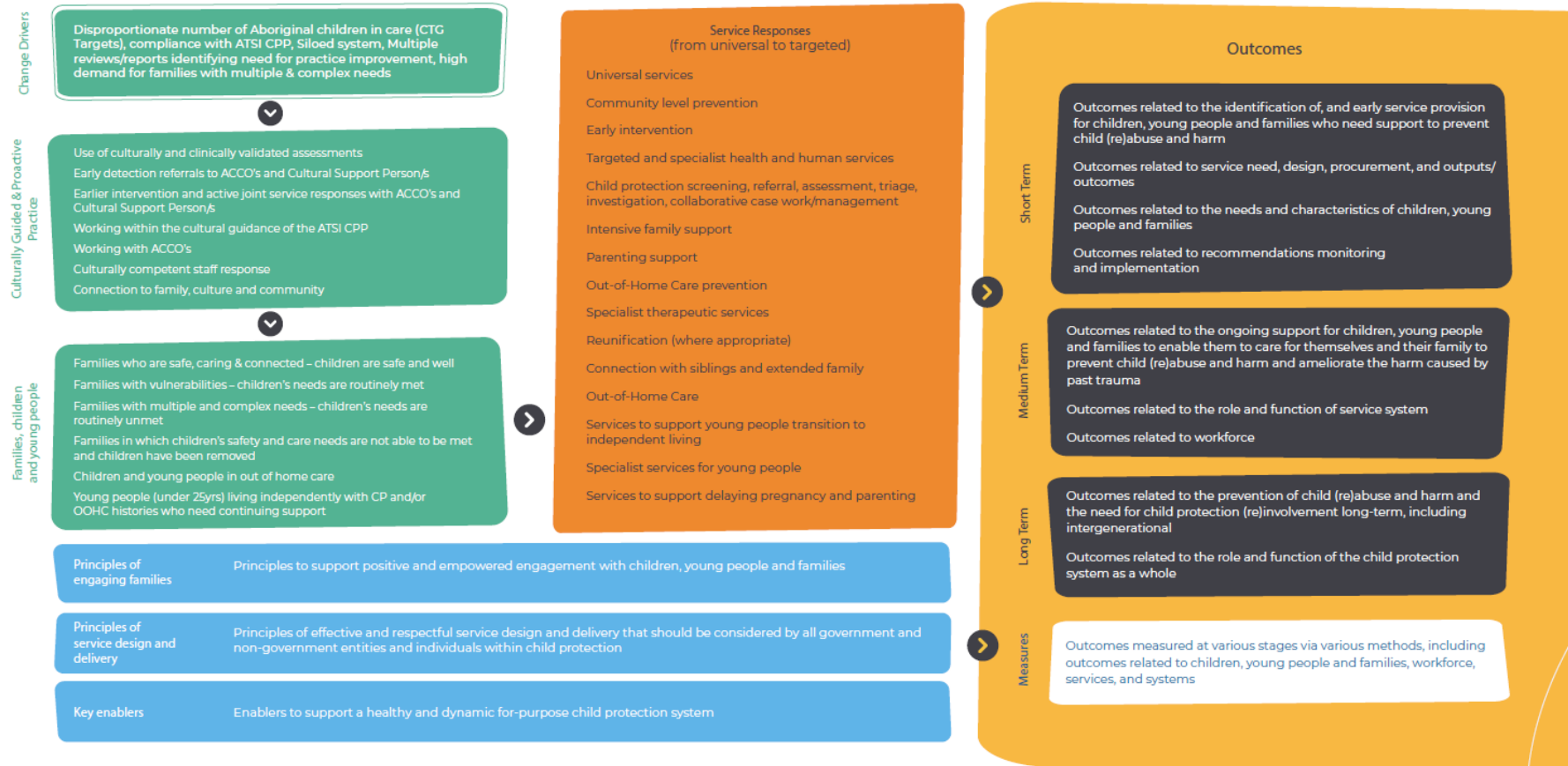


Blueprint Alternative Style Option – non-conforming to Communities brand



# WA Child Protection System Blueprint

Shifting focus to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children; knowing that if we get it right for Aboriginal children, we get it right for all children



## APPENDIX D: STRATEGY MAPS FUTURE DIRECTIONS QUICK REFERENCE TABLE

Strategy	Focus Area	Future Directions			
Enhancing Child Protection Practice	Population and Practice Monitoring	Examine system wide trends			
		Review of child protection training			
		Interpret data trends			
	Training, support, and development		Embed and promote culturally informed and responsive practices		
			Model and build cultural competence and responsiveness		
			Support and elevate Aboriginal and culturally diverse staff		
			Embed social work and other theoretical models of practice		
			Child protection practitioner pathways		
			Deepen senior leadership understanding of child protection		
			Supporting child protection leadership during critical incidents and through capacity building		
			Advocate for front-line staff		
			Promote exemplary practice		
			Senior practitioner appointment		
			Development of a cultural framework within services (EIFS Strategy: A culturally competent workforce)		
			Considerations from service providers to enhance practice guidance for staff (EIFS Strategy: preventing children from entering OOHC)		
			Leadership and Advocacy		Western Australia Child Protection system leadership role
					Strategic advisory role to Government, Minister and Senior leadership
	Establish and manage governance mechanisms				
	Driving system change to keep child protection frameworks current and evidence-informed				

Strategy	Focus Area	Future Directions
		One service system with flexibility to better meet family needs (for Diverting families from the Child Protection System)
	Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration	Establish strategic partnerships, internally and with sector Strengthen external stakeholder collaboration and communication Collaborative approach to training and workforce development of partner agencies Across jurisdictional collaboration Establish research partnerships
	Strategic Reform and Practice Project	Strategic reform projects including: 5-year WA Child Protection Pathway Project and the 10-year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Out of Home Care Consider intersect and align with child protection and other government strategies Working with Wungening regarding reunification pilot that responds to recommendation 5 of the evaluation
	Research, Evidence, and Evaluation	Translate evidence into contemporary practice Inform critical decision-making including policy, HR, investment, and program management Establish research agenda Pilot measures, indicators, and outcomes with Wungening for contract service reporting Conduct impact evaluation (of Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy Focus Area Three: Diverting Families from the Child Protection System) Impact evaluation Build evidence base (informed by evaluations, research by sector agencies) Develop monitoring framework for IFS, EIFS Translate evidence into contemporary practice

Strategy	Focus Area	Future Directions
	Oversight of Implementation of Recommendations Arising from Reviews and Evidence (WA Response to Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse)	<p>Implementation of legislative amendments concerning mandatory reporting, working with children checks and reportable conduct</p> <p>Continuing to oversight delivery of recommendations within Communities, including: OOHC reform; and implementation of National Principles for Child Safe Organisations</p> <p>Working with Commonwealth, States and Territories to jointly deliver initiatives under the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse that require national focus and effort</p>
Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Strategy to 2022	<p>KEY OBJECTIVE A: Co-Design</p> <p>Co-design is prioritised and utilised when developing services to be delivered to Aboriginal children, families, and communities</p>	<p>A 10-year Strategy and Implementation Plan will be co-designed by a Project Working Group composed of ACCOs, Department Divisions, selected government agencies and the peak non-Aboriginal partner agency</p> <p>Strategy and Implementation Plan development process of facilitating, guiding, enabling, evaluating, and monitoring implementation during the coming decade</p> <p>ACCO sector readiness analysis and procurement planning process (including capacity, capability, opportunity, and gap identification) including linkage to other procurement strategies (e.g., homelessness 10-year plan)</p> <p>Place-based activities to improve ways of working between service providers and staff; increase opportunities for staff to learn from ACCOs, true authentic partnership (EIFS Strategy Focus Area One)</p>
	<p>KEY OBJECTIVE B: ACCO Procurement</p> <p>Utilise restrictive procurement processes that prioritise ACCOs when tendering for services to be delivered to Aboriginal children, families, and communities</p>	<p>Identification, facilitation, and delivery of internal and external resources (including funds provided by the Department of Finance) to build prioritised ACCO capacity will be undertaken under the oversight of the Project Working Group</p> <p>Strengthening contractual requirements for ACCOs to be the lead agency or partners, or build ACCO capacity as a lead agency (EIFS Strategy Focus Area Two)</p>

Strategy	Focus Area	Future Directions
	<p>KEY OBJECTIVE C: ACCO Capacity Building</p> <p>Facilitate greater opportunities for ACCOs to deliver contracted child protection and family support services to their communities</p>	<p>A flexible and phased approach to future action plans will ensure that the Strategy remains responsive to new priorities and challenges faced as the ACCO sector is strengthened</p>
Out of Home Care Reform Program Roadmap 2019-2023	District Care Homes	Apply evaluation recommendations to new service models
	Development of cultural competency guidelines, protocol, and service requirements	Deliver workshops with the Department's Aboriginal Practice Leaders and identified community members to co-develop agreed cultural competency guidelines and protocols for service models
		Develop minimum service requirements for OOHC services to deliver culturally safe services
		Publish guidelines and protocols
	Stability for children	Develop with CSOs, and communities district offices (the Districts), exit and transition guidelines to transition children and carers to new care arrangements and/or CSOs
		Establish mechanisms to provide support and guidance to transitioning carers
Individual plans for children and carers to be completed in line with recommissioning and actioned upon contracts being awarded (As required)		
Funding Components	Co-develop solutions to address industrial relations requirement	
Service model design	Co-design with the community services sector how the service model will best achieve outcomes for children and address local need in metropolitan and regional locations	
	Develop service model requirements	
	Service model requirements drafted requiring further work to refine and incorporate Royal Commission recommendations, industrial relation requirements, findings from District Care Home pilot (evaluation), outcomes, partnership requirements as well as alignment to practice and policy changes that have occurred since 2019 (Stability and Connection, legislative amendments)	

Strategy	Focus Area	Future Directions
	Capacity building and ACCO partnerships	Participate in the development of the Department's ACCO Strategy and apply the strategy to the OOHC Reform
		Develop ACCO partnership requirements for service models
	Reporting against outcomes	Develop data recording tools and systems
	Care Team Approach	<i>No future directions noted</i>
	Needs Assessment Tool (NAT) embedment and support	<i>No future directions noted</i>
	Industrial Relations	<i>No future directions noted</i>
	Design and negotiate changes to existing service models	Participate in negotiations for contract variations
		Implement contract extensions
		Unclear on the implementation of the recommendations of the interim solutions report
	Contract extensions and variations (Leaving Care)	Redesign the leaving care service system; subcontracting leaving care services, etc. (From At-Risk Youth Strategy)
Participate in the Young People Leaving Care working group to implement recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General, with input from the OOHC Reform Team (IRG)		
Implement contract extensions		
Participate in negotiations for contract variations		
At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026	FOCUS AREA ONE: Partnerships, collaboration, and integrated responses	<p>Develop agreed definition of 'youth' to promote more consistent and effective agency approaches to responses and supports</p> <p>Review and align existing multi-agency mechanisms to strengthen responses for at risk young people with multiple vulnerabilities</p>

Strategy	Focus Area	Future Directions
		<p>Contribute to national approaches to improve outcomes for at risk young people, including the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 successor plan</p> <hr/> <p>Identify further opportunities for the earlier identification and assessment of young people at risk of harm and cumulative harm and strengthen responses across agencies to appropriate and timely supports</p> <hr/> <p>Strengthen Rapid Response, a cross-government framework to help address health, psychological, housing, education and employment needs of children and young people with care experience until 25 years</p>
	<p>FOCUS AREA TWO: Targeted initiatives to improve long term outcomes</p>	<p>Develop and implement targeted, culturally, and trauma-informed responses to meet priority needs of at-risk young people, including diversion from the youth justice system, homelessness, family safety concerns and support to transition from care to independent adulthood</p> <hr/> <p>Implement the 2021 election commitment to expand Home Stretch</p> <hr/> <p>Contribute to government agency and sector initiatives to strengthen trauma-informed responses for at risk young people, including targeted initiatives to address health, mental health and education needs and training and employment pathways</p> <hr/> <p>Evaluation of initiatives for continuous improvement and flexibility to respond to new and emerging issues</p>
	<p>FOCUS AREA THREE: Strengthening the service system for at risk youth</p>	<p>In partnership with young people identify ways to reduce barriers for young people from seeking help or staying engaged with support services</p> <hr/> <p>Communities will undertake a phased approach to strengthening its funded services for at risk youth including review of the service mix, service consistency, sector capacity and best practice across the service types, cultural responsiveness, and agility to respond to emerging areas of service need. The views of young people with lived experience will help inform this work</p>
	<p>FOCUS AREA FOUR: Services and supports for Aboriginal young people</p>	<p>Support Aboriginal stakeholders, including ACCOs, Aboriginal young people and Elders to identify responses to improve outcomes for at risk young people and to lead on the co-design of local responses and supports</p> <hr/> <p>Support the capacity building of ACCOs and, in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020, consider opportunities for strengthening the role of ACCOs in delivering at risk youth services</p>

Strategy	Focus Area	Future Directions
		Support Aboriginal youth engagement and decision making. For example, Communities will partner with a local ACCO to deliver the Kimberley Empowered Youth Network. The Network will facilitate Aboriginal young people to input in government and non-government supports and services, thereby contributing to the decisions that directly affect them. Learnings from the Network will inform improved engagement with young people in other regions across WA
Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence Strategy 2020-2030 Strategy Map	FOCUS AREA ONE: Work with Aboriginal People to Strengthen Aboriginal Family Safety	Strengthen role of ACCO's and Aboriginal communities to design and deliver culturally appropriate service responses for Aboriginal people-
		Flexible, culturally responsive, and culturally secure actions to prevent Family and Domestic Violence
	FOCUS AREA TWO: Act Now to Keep People Safe and Hold Perpetrators to Account	Immediate, early, and ongoing access to safety and recovery-
		Long-term recovery and wellbeing of children-
		Tailored responses that consider diversity and intersecting needs-
		Timely, evidence-based interventions for perpetrators
	FOCUS AREA THREE: Grow Primary Prevention to Stop Family and Domestic Violence	Grow capacity to deliver primary prevention
		Collaborate across government on policies and actions to address inequality
		Support and implement primary prevention program
		Partner with groups and organisations from the community and private sectors
	FOCUS AREA FOUR: Reform Systems to Prioritise Safety, Accountability and Collaboration	Improve data collection and information sharing-
		Refocus systems to prioritise victim safety
		Collaborate across the service system and with community leaders
		Build specialist and mainstream workforce capability

## APPENDIX E: REFORM AREAS PROVIDED AS AN ADDENDUM TO THE PROCUREMENT

No.	Reform Area
1	Aboriginal Representative Organisations
2	Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy
3	Aboriginal Cultural Capability
4	Reducing Aboriginal Kids in Care Roadmap
5	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy
6	Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making pilot
7	Children in Care/ Young People Representation
8	Family Carers
9	Self-selected placements
10	Foster Care Panel
11	Stability planning
12	Special Guardianship Orders
13	Rapid Response
14	Foster Carer Refresh

No.	Reform Area
15	Out of Home Care Reform
16	Homestretch Trial
17	Family Finding
18	Kids with very high needs (have assumed in OOHC)
19	Needs Assessment Tool Review and Care Arrangement Support Cost Review
20	Kath French Secure Care Review
21	Office of the Auditor General Young People Leaving Care
22	Early Intervention and Family Support Strategy
23	Signs of Safety Reload
24	Regional Intensive Support Coordinator Model
25	Reunification of Children
26	Family and Domestic Violence Review + Work Plan
27	Early Years Initiative
28	Early Years Network
29	Early Years + Parenting Policy

No.	Reform Area
30	At Risk Youth
31	Target 120
32	Youth Suicide Inquest / OWN Motion
33	Bill Amendments
34	Contracting
35	Royal Commission work + Work Plan
36	Child Wellbeing Strategy
37	Cost + Demand Model
38	Specialist Child Protection Unit
39*	Towards Independent Adulthood Trial
40*	Better Care, Better Services Standards
41*	Pre-birth Planning
42*	Therapeutic Court

Note. \*Additional reform/project areas and documentation identified during the project

## APPENDIX F: DOCUMENTATION RECEIVED FOR EACH REFORM AREA

Reform Area	Reform Area	Documentation Received
1	Aboriginal Representative Organisations	1. Understanding and applying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle: A resource for legislation, policy, and program development
2	Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy	1. CONFIDENTIAL Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy: Project management plan
3	Aboriginal Cultural Capability	1. Summary of the Cultural Competency Audit of Child Protection Staff and Foster Care and Adoption Manual Report completed by Indigenous Psychological Services - FYI document
4	Reducing Aboriginal Kids in Care Roadmap	1. Family Matters Report 2020: Measuring trends to turn the tide on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in out-of-home care in Australia (SNAICC) 2. Project management plan (10-year roadmap) - Final draft
5	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy	1. Partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver trusted services with stronger outcomes
6	Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making pilot	1. Briefing Note 2. Briefing Note 3. Project management plan (Aboriginal Family-Led Decision-Making Pilot) 4. Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making webpage
7	Children in Care/ Young People Representation	1. Viewpoint six-monthly report July to Dec 2019 - child responses (5-7 years) 2. Viewpoint six-monthly report July to Dec 2019 - Symbols Questionnaire (5-12 years) 3. Viewpoint six-monthly report July to Dec 2019 young person responses (8-17 years) 4. Viewpoint six-monthly report July to Dec 2020 (5-7 years) 5. Viewpoint six-monthly report July to Dec 2020 - Symbols Questionnaire (5-12 years) 6. Viewpoint six-monthly report July to Dec 2020 young person responses (8-17 years) 7. Profile and pathways of children who enter care - first quarter 2019 8. Exploring outcomes for young people who have experienced out-of-home care

Reform Area	Reform Area	Documentation Received
8	Family Carers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Fairer Future for Grandchildren: Understanding the Impact of the Caring Role on Grandparents raising their Grandchildren</li> <li>2. Media release by Labor Government</li> </ol>
9	Self-selected placements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing Note</li> </ol>
10	Foster Care Panel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing Note</li> </ol>
11	Stability planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Policy draft - Stability and Connection Planning</li> <li>2. Stability and connection planning SharePoint page</li> </ol>
12	Special Guardianship Orders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protection Order (Special Guardianship) Project Scope Document May 2021</li> <li>2. Roadmap - Special Guardianship Order Review Project</li> </ol>
13	Rapid Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rapid Response Project</li> </ol>
14	Foster Carer Refresh	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foster care refresh report - implementation plan May 2021</li> <li>2. Service design and support foster care refresh steering group terms of reference 2021</li> </ol>
15	Out of Home Care Reform	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence Base for Out-of-Home Care Reform in WA - A review of the Research and Statistical Evidence</li> <li>2. Industrial Relations Implications for WA Out of Home Care Services</li> <li>3. Out-of-Home-Care (OOHC) Market Analysis</li> <li>4. OOHC Interim Service Solutions Project</li> <li>5. Building a Better Future: Out-of-Home Care Reform in Western Australia</li> <li>6. Building a Better Future Out-of-Home Care Reform Program Roadmap 2019 -2023</li> </ol>
16	Homestretch Trial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early Insights of the Homestretch Trial</li> </ol>

Reform Area	Reform Area	Documentation Received
17	Family Finding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family Finding Revision One - Implementation and practice manual</li> <li>2. Family finding paper for Signs of Safety Steering Committee</li> </ol>
18	Kids with very high needs (have assumed in OOHC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of the young people with exceptionally complex needs program - Final report</li> </ol>
19	Needs Assessment Tool Review and Care Arrangement Support Cost Review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Care Arrangement Matching - Acceptance, Belonging and Connection</li> </ol>
20	Kath French Secure Care Review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing Note</li> <li>2. Project update table</li> <li>3. Assessor Annual Review 2019/2020</li> <li>4. Evaluation of the Kath French Secure Care Centre - Final report Feb 2019</li> </ol>
21	Office of the Auditor General Young People Leaving Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Western Australian Auditor General's Report: Young People Leaving Care</li> </ol>
22	Early Intervention and Family Support Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building Safe and Strong Families: The Early Intervention and Family Support Strategy</li> <li>2. Aboriginal In-Home Support Service: Summative Evaluation Report</li> </ol>
23	Signs of Safety Reload	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Signs of Safety Child Protection Practice Framework - Monitoring Framework</li> <li>2. Signs of Safety Reloaded Phase 3 - Project Scoping Paper</li> </ol>
24	Regional Intensive Support Coordinator Model	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seeking information regarding the Regional Intensive Support Coordination Program (email)</li> <li>2. Functional review of Dept of Communities - Disability services (Group C - Retaining services in critical areas)</li> </ol>
25	Reunification of Children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Email response to documentation request</li> </ol>

Reform Area	Reform Area	Documentation Received
<b>26</b>	Family and Domestic Violence Review + Work Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family and Domestic Violence Fatality Review</li> <li>2. Quarterly Report: Child Deaths &amp; Family and Domestic Violence Fatalities (Draft)</li> <li>3. Active oversight agency recommendations - child deaths and FDV fatalities (email)</li> <li>4. Active oversight agency recommendations - Ombudsman Child Death and FDV Fatality Reviews</li> <li>5. Status Report: Child Deaths &amp; Family and Domestic Violence Fatalities</li> </ol>
<b>27</b>	Early Years Initiative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early years initiative (EYI) 2021 plan</li> <li>2. Early years initiative (EYI) FAQ</li> <li>3. Early years initiative business case</li> <li>4. Briefing note</li> </ol>
<b>28</b>	Early Years Network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Infographic</li> <li>2. Infographic - duplicate of #1</li> <li>3. Supporting Early Years Networks in WA - Final Project Report</li> <li>4. Transition of the Early Years Networks support role from WACOSS to the Dept of Communities</li> <li>5. Connecting Early Years Networks Resource Kit</li> <li>6. Infographic</li> <li>7. Connecting Early Years Networks webpage</li> <li>8. State-wide early years network directory webpage</li> </ol>
<b>29</b>	Early Years + Parenting Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early years and parenting webpage</li> </ol>
<b>30</b>	At Risk Youth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026</li> <li>2. At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026 Draft Implementation Plan</li> <li>3. Media release by Labor Government</li> <li>4. At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026 Final Draft</li> </ol>




Reform Area	Reform Area	Documentation Received
31	Target 120	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attachment of recommendations</li> <li>2. Target 120 snapshot</li> <li>3. Briefing note</li> <li>4. Briefing note</li> <li>5. Target 120 Evaluation Progress Report</li> <li>6. Target 120 snapshot</li> <li>7. Project management plan</li> <li>8. Briefing note</li> <li>9. Target 120 Evaluation Plan</li> </ol>
32	Youth Suicide Inquest / OWN Motion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing note</li> <li>2. Summary of Coroner's Recommendations</li> <li>3. Briefing note</li> <li>4. 2020 Investigation Recommendation to Communities</li> <li>5. Summary of the 2020 Investigation cohort</li> </ol>
33	Bill Amendments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021 - Summary of Amendments</li> <li>2. Statutory Review of the Children and Community Services Act 2004</li> </ol>
34	Contracting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Western Australian Auditor General's Report: Department of Communities' Administration of Family and Domestic Violence Support Services</li> </ol>
35	Royal Commission work + Work Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Safer WA for Children and Young People 2020 Progress Report</li> </ol>
36	Child Wellbeing Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child Wellbeing Strategy: Position Paper</li> <li>2. Child Wellbeing Strategy: Internal Meeting 2 July 2020</li> <li>3. Email chain re child wellbeing strategy</li> </ol>



















Reform Area	Reform Area	Documentation Received
37	Cost + Demand Model	1. Briefing note
38	Specialist Child Protection Unit	1. Status Report: Child Deaths & Family and Domestic Violence Fatalities 2. Independent Review Tah-Shae Beasley April 2021 3. Quarterly Report: Child Deaths & Family and Domestic Violence Fatalities (Draft) 4. Active oversight agency recommendations - child deaths and FDV fatalities (email) 5. Active oversight agency recommendations - Ombudsman Child Death and FDV Fatality Reviews 6. Specialist Child Protection Unit Placemat 7. Key functions and activities of the Specialist Child Protection Unit
39*	Towards Independent Adulthood Trial	1. Towards Independent Adulthood Trial Evaluation: Final Report
40*	Better Care, Better Services Standards	1. Better Care Better Services district cycle five review 2018
41*	Pre-birth Planning	1. Pre-birth Planning Project Overview 2. Pre-birth Planning Project Interim Evaluation (Draft)
42*	Therapeutic Court	1. Therapeutic Court Pilot Summary 2. A Therapeutic Approach (Pilot Court) for Protection and Care in the Children's Court of WA

Reform Area	Reform Area	Documentation Received
	Other background documentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agency Capability Review Report</li> <li>2. External Review of the Dept of Communities</li> <li>3. Child Death Review - Ombudsman WA Annual Report 2019-2020</li> <li>4. Executive report on child protection activity and performance for the quarter ending 31 March 2021</li> <li>5. Care Team Approach Practice Framework</li> <li>6. Child Protection Activity Performance 2018-19</li> <li>7. Child Protection Activity Performance 2019-20</li> <li>8. Care and Protection System Co-Design report: Moving to Child Safety and Family and Community Wellbeing</li> <li>9. The Aboriginal Services and Practice Framework 2016-18</li> <li>10. Communities Partnership Framework</li> <li>11. The Family Inclusion Network of WA Inc: Annual Report 2020</li> <li>12. Transitioning to Adulthood from Out-of-Home Care: Independence or Interdependence?</li> <li>13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Care-Leaver Experiences</li> <li>14. Speaking Out Survey 2019</li> <li>15. Profile of Children and Young People in WA 2021</li> <li>16. WA Auditor General's Report: Working with Children Checks</li> <li>17. WA Auditor General's Report: Working with Children Checks - Follow-up</li> <li>18. WA Auditor General's Report: Managing Disruptive Behaviour in Public Housing</li> </ol>

		<p>19. Responding to information about children in adversity: Ten years of a differential response model in WA</p> <p>20. A longitudinal Study of Children Reported to the Child Protection Department in Western Australia</p> <p>21. Closing the Gap</p> <p>22. Consultation paper: Implementing the successor plan to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020</p> <p>23. Assessing the Quality and Comprehensiveness of Child Protection Practice Frameworks: A report to the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians</p> <p>24. Election Commitments relating to community services areas</p> <p>25. The National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (draft)</p> <p>26. Roadmap according to the districts</p> <p>27. Elia Change the Story – Senior Leadership workshop #5</p>
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## APPENDIX G: CROSS-OVER BETWEEN THE REFORM/ STRATEGY AREAS, ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS AND THE STRATEGY MAPS

<b>KEY</b>	 Listed under the strategy focus areas/activities	 Aligned with/ builds on	 Both listed under the strategy focus areas/activities and aligned with/builds on	Redundant	Removed
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STRATEGY							
REFORM AREA LISTED	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy to 2022	At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026	Early Years	Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016)	Enhancing Child Protection Practice	Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030	Building a Better Future: OOHC Reform in WA (2016) & OOHC Reform Program Roadmap 2019-2023
Aboriginal Representative Organisations							
Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy							
Aboriginal Cultural Capability							
Reducing Aboriginal Kids in Care Roadmap							
Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy							

STRATEGY							
REFORM AREA LISTED	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy to 2022	At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026	Early Years	Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016)	Enhancing Child Protection Practice	Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030	Building a Better Future: OOHC Reform in WA (2016) & OOHC Reform Program Roadmap 2019-2023
Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making pilot		●			●		
Children in Care/ Young People Representation		●					
Family Carers							●
Self-selected placements					●		
Foster Care Panel							●
Stability planning							●
Special Guardianship Orders					●		● ●
Rapid Response		●					
Foster Carer Refresh							●
Out of Home Care Reform					●		
Homestretch Trial		●					
Family Finding							

STRATEGY							
REFORM AREA LISTED	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy to 2022	At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026	Early Years	Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016)	Enhancing Child Protection Practice	Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030	Building a Better Future: OOHC Reform in WA (2016) & OOHC Reform Program Roadmap 2019-2023
Kids with very high needs		●					
Needs Assessment Tool Review and Care Arrangement Support Cost Review							●
Kath French Secure Care Review							●
Office of the Auditor General Young People Leaving Care							●
Towards Independent Adulthood Trial		●		●			●
Better Care, Better Services Standards							●
Early Intervention and Family Support Strategy							●
Signs of Safety Reload				●	●		

STRATEGY							
REFORM AREA LISTED	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy to 2022	At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026	Early Years	Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016)	Enhancing Child Protection Practice	Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030	Building a Better Future: OOHC Reform in WA (2016) & OOHC Reform Program Roadmap 2019-2023
Regional Intensive Support Coordinator Model		●					
Reunification of Children				●			●
Family and Domestic Violence Review + Work Plan					●	●	
Pre-birth Planning				●	●		
Early Years Initiative			●	●		●	
Early Years Network			●				
Early Years + Parenting Policy			●				
At Risk Youth						●	
Target 120		●				●	
Youth Suicide Inquest / OWN Motion		●					
Bill Amendments		●				●	●
Contracting	●	●		●			●

STRATEGY							
REFORM AREA LISTED	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Strategy to 2022	At Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026	Early Years	Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (2016)	Enhancing Child Protection Practice	Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030	Building a Better Future: OOHC Reform in WA (2016) & OOHC Reform Program Roadmap 2019-2023
Royal Commission work + Work Plan					●	●	
Child Wellbeing Strategy							
Cost + Demand Model							● (OOHC Demand Model)
Specialist Child Protection Unit							
Therapeutic Court					●		



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