



# Australian Centre for Child Protection - WA Child Protection Project

[As at 15 September 2022\]](#)

The Department of Communities (Communities) commissioned the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) to undertake research to inform and assist Communities in the development of a Western Australia (WA) child protection reform roadmap and implementation plan (the report).

The ACCP commenced the project on 4 June 2021 in partnership with PwC Indigenous Services, which ensured the work was grounded with a strong cultural perspective.

The ACCP project team reviewed and analysed over 100 documents and reports, conducted targeted internal consultations and overlaid their work with expertise and learnings from child protection research and projects undertaken by Professor Leah Bromfield at the ACCP.

The ACCP report is designed to guide internal project setting and future reform and strategy development.

The report includes a draft 'blueprint' – this was designed by ACCP to provide a program logic for strategy and reform projects and future implementation. The draft blueprint contains the following elements:

- vision – 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
- change drivers – 'problem statements'
- key cohorts
- service responses (from universal to targeted)
- short term, medium-term, long-term outcomes and measures.

The draft 'blueprint' is underpinned by principles of engaging families, service design and delivery, being culturally guided and proactive practice.

### **Next steps**

The work undertaken by the ACCP has highlighted three critical areas that Communities should focus on:

1. Adoption of a robust Implementation Framework for Child Protection Reform that has a clear governance structure including Aboriginal cultural governance and principles of practice
2. Development of a child protection system with strong stakeholder engagement, workforce capability, a whole-of-system outcomes framework, access to timely and accurate data, a risk management framework and capacity to respond in an agile manner
3. Ensuring the current Commissioning Plans align with the development and implementation of the 10-year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Care (the Roadmap).

Communities has partnered with SNAICC to support the development of the Roadmap which aims to:

- provide a long-term vision and reform actions to reduce the rate of Aboriginal children and families in contact with the child protection system and to improve their safety and wellbeing outcomes
- outline how the Communities will work towards achieving Target 12 in the National Agreement to Closing the Gap.

The development of the Roadmap will bring the WA Aboriginal community and key stakeholders together to guide future work and initiatives to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care, and will identify opportunities to strengthen early intervention work to prevent entry into the system well before children are placed at risk.

The ACCP report will inform the development of the Roadmap and will continue to inform Communities commissioning work.

As suggested by ACCP relevant documents will be provided to SNAICC to test and refine as part of the Roadmap process.

A robust Implementation Framework for child protection reform projects will be developed with clear governance and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.

The summary below outlines how this work has been and will be used by Communities to inform reform projects. This work is ongoing and iterative.

No.	Action and link to ACCP Recommendations	Initiatives that will address key action	Comments
<b>Theme Area 1: General systems and specific strategy actions – priority one</b>			
<b>Key Action 1</b>	Engage internal stakeholders in the process of System Implementation and ongoing Strategy Reform of Communities	Communities Project Management templates and processes	<p>Communities will continue to engage internal stakeholders in the process of implementing pilot and reform projects and development of strategy including internal regional stakeholders.</p> <p>For example - Webinars or practice clinics were held on out of home care commissioning and legislative amendments in 2021-2022.</p> <p>The engagement of internal stakeholders will also be included within the governance structure (see below)</p>
<b>Key Action 2</b>	Install Implementation Governance Structure including embedded Cultural Governance	Communities Project Management templates and processes	<p>Communities will continue to develop project management plans for all projects, the plans will include information about proposed governance and include cultural engagement and governance</p> <p>A robust Implementation Framework for child protection reform projects will be developed with clear governance and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.</p>
<b>Key Action 3</b>	Assign Strategy Leads for each initiative	Communities Project Management templates and processes	<p>Communities will continue to develop project management plans for all projects, the plans will include information about proposed engagement and leads for the project and implementation.</p> <p>A robust Implementation Framework for child protection reform projects will be developed with clear governance and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate.</p>
<b>Key Action 4</b>	Consider alternative options to the total re-commissioning of OOHC at this time	Communities Commissioning Plan	<p>Communities considered all options, based on the number of extensions already provided to services and the extensive co-design work previously undertaken it was determined to proceed with commissioning work at this time.</p> <p>It is noted that each of the four streams currently being commissioned have different procurement approaches and timelines, this mitigates the risk of one organisation needing to participate in multiple tender processes at any one time.</p>

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			<p>Communities continues to provide support to the out of home care sector and ACCOs to participate in the commissioning process including opportunities to provide direct feedback to service specifications and procurement approaches.</p> <p>Engagement and communication with the out of home care sector has been regular and ongoing, with opportunities provided for discussion, questions and information sharing.</p>
<b>Key Action 5</b>	Develop OOHC re-commissioning plan with clear timeline, project team and alignment with strategy elements	Communities Commissioning Plan	<p>Communities has developed an out of home care commissioning plan that includes clear timeframes which has been communicated to the sector since mid-2021.</p> <p>Regular updates are provided to sector on the progress of this work, and the Commissioning website is regularly updated to ensure all information is easily accessible to current and future service providers.</p> <p>The Request for Tender for out of home care Services was released mid-June 2022 on Tenders WA. The tender was open for 8 weeks and closed on 11 August 2022. The Request for Tender represents the strengthening of our OOHC system and supporting better outcomes for children and young people in care.</p> <p>The future out of home care system will deliver a suite of care arrangements that provide different levels of support to children with different and changing needs.</p>
<b>Key Action 6</b>	Conduct a risk assessment (and treatment) for the OOHC procurement process and its capacity to fulfil the OOHC strategy reform	Communities Commissioning Plan	<p>The commissioning work is based on extensive sector engagement and consultation over the last eight years – including the establishment of a cross-sector Independent Reference Group and resulting report 'Care and Protection System Co-Design Report.</p> <p>This work has continued to inform each stage of the commissioning work including refinement of service types and the development of service level outcomes and evaluation framework. The risks associated with all four commissioning streams have been presented to Communities Leadership Team</p>

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			<p>The commissioning process is the first stage of broader OOHC reforms that will occur.</p>
<p><b>Key Action 7</b></p>	<p>Establish a targeted ACCO capacity building and engagement strategy to facilitate the OOHC procurement and service design process for 2022</p>	<p>Communities Commissioning Plan</p> <p>Communities ACCO Strategy 2022-2032</p>	<p>A key priority of the commissioning of out of home care services is to increase the number of ACCO's delivering out of home care services.</p> <p>To support this work, an EOI was released in early 2022 to seek interest from ACCOs in delivering out of home care services. 44 ACCO's registered their interest, with representation from each region of WA. A follow up webinar was held on 3 March 2022 to provide information on the care types and proposed procurement approach.</p> <p>Following this, one on one meetings have been held with each ACCO to understand any barriers to them participating in the procurement process. Aboriginal Outcomes is supporting ACCOs with identifying any support that Communities can provide to assist their participation in the process.</p> <p>Through this engagement, it is evident ACCO's have already undertaken consultation within their organisations and communities about the local, placed-based needs of their children and young people, which will inform the proposed service model.</p> <p>Communities is also progressing with a direct procurement approach for ACCOs. Non ACCO's will be required to respond to an open tender.</p> <p>Communities has provided a grant to Yorganop to develop a transition plan for Aboriginal children in care and also offered their assistance to new ACCOs entering the out of home care space by sharing their experiences and considerations as the only current ACCO delivering out of home care services.</p> <p>The ACCO Strategy seeks to improve Communities' commissioning and delivery of services to Aboriginal children, families and communities, and to support ACCOs to increase their capacity to deliver place-based, culturally appropriate services across WA.</p>

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			<p>The ACCO Strategy aligns directly to a number of Priority Reform Areas and Socio-Economic targets identified within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and will assist Communities in meeting its commitment as a signatory to the Agreement. Communities is the lead agency for the Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan and the ACCO Strategy will identify, build capability and develop opportunities for ACCOs to provide services to Aboriginal people across these areas.</p> <p>The ACCO Strategy focuses on three key pillars; cultural safety and governance, respectful partnerships and economic opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Key Action 8</b></p>	<p>Establish clear stakeholder engagement strategy including co-design model</p>	<p>Communities Commissioning Plan</p> <p>Communities Partnership Framework</p>	<p>Communities has developed an out of home care commissioning plan that includes clear timeframes this has been communicated to the sector since mid-2021. Regular updates are provided to sector on the progress of this work, and the Commissioning website is regularly updated to ensure all information is easily accessible to current and future service providers.</p> <p>Communities has developed and adheres to the Communities Partnership Framework</p> <p>Communities has also committed to the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy</p>
<p><b>Key Action 9</b></p>	<p>Review the Project Plan for the development of the 10-Year Roadmap given the impacts of the OOHHC re-commissioning</p>	<p>Communities Commissioning Plan</p> <p>10-year Roadmap to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care</p>	<p>Communities decided to conduct the two projects during 2021/22</p> <p>Clear communication protocols will be established to ensure any learnings from either project can be shared and updated as required. The Executive Director of the SCPU will oversight and lead both projects to ensure that all synergies are maximised.</p> <p>Communities has partnered with Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) – National Voice for our Children through a grant agreement to develop a Roadmap and first Action Plan, which will provide a long-term vision to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care with a focus on culturally responsive, effective and sustainable solutions.</p> <p>The Roadmap will outline how the State Government will address Target 12 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and Western Australia's (WA)</p>

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			<p>responses to Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031.</p> <p>Hearing the voices of Aboriginal children and their families will be central to the Roadmap's development later this year. SNAICC will subcontract local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations with knowledge of the diverse WA Aboriginal community, child protection history, policy and practice to conduct culturally safe state-wide consultation forums across WA.</p> <p>The solutions will be identified by Aboriginal people and communities, in partnership with the Department, other government agencies and sector partners through governance groups established to provide input into and oversee development of the Roadmap and Action Plan.</p> <p>The Roadmap will build on the reforms, initiatives and pilots already underway and which are having an impact, and propose ways to embed cultural changes and new ways of working by Communities and across Government.</p> <p>The Roadmap is due for completion in mid-2023.</p>
<b>Theme Area 2: General systems and specific strategy actions – priority two</b>			
<b>Key Action 10</b>	Endorse whole of System Reform Strategy with clear program logic	Communities Project Management templates and processes	Communities will continue to develop project management plans and processes to capture child protection reform projects. A robust Implementation Framework for child protection reform projects will be developed with clear governance and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate This work will be coordinated by the SCPU team and will also consider Communities commitments under Closing the Gap
<b>Key Action 11</b>	Develop whole of System Outcomes Framework	Communities Outcomes Framework	Communities will continue to develop project management plans and processes including outlining how projects deliver on the Communities outcomes framework  A robust Implementation Framework for child protection reform projects will be developed with clear governance and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate

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<b>Key Action 12</b>	Review previous and/or develop a new Aboriginal Practice Framework	Supported	The review and refresh of the Framework to be considered
<b>Key Action 13</b>	Review current data systems and develop a fit-for-purpose data system for use across Communities	A business case is being developed to seek Office of Digital Government funding for the replacement of the ageing Child Protection System known as Assist.	Internal funding has been allocated to develop a business case to support a full bid to the Office of Digital Government - Digital Capability Fund for a replacement to the current Child Protection System (Assist). The current system is over ten years old and is limited in the provision of statistical data and report extraction. As part of the development of the requirements for a new system, agency wide consultation will occur together with a thorough review of existing data availability to identify the full data and client/child information requirements for the new System.
<b>Key Action 14</b>	Review the workforce readiness to complete the current and future reform strategies and apply any remedial treatment	SCPU Workplan	<p>A robust Implementation Framework for child protection reform projects will be developed with clear governance and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate</p> <p>SCPU to consider and establish a small project management team to coordinate and support child protection reform work across Communities</p>
<b>Key Action 15</b>	Develop a 5 Year Cultural Capacity Building Plan that compliments other strategy efforts	Aboriginal Cultural Capability Reform Program (ACCRP)	<p>The Aboriginal Cultural Capability Reform Program (ACCRP) was established by Communities to respond to the findings of the IPS Report.</p> <p>Between early 2020 and July 2021, functional reviews of all Communities divisions resulted in divisional and work realignment. The ACCRP renewed its focus on driving a department-wide cultural reform agenda, aimed at improving whole of life sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal children, people, and families, through improving Communities cultural competence and capability across the department</p>
<b>Key Action 16</b>	Establish a series of data reporting mechanisms aligned with each system, strategy and project level implementation piece	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	<p>Communities commenced development of an integrated monitoring and evaluation framework (IMEF) and supporting tools to measure the progress and effectiveness of Communities-led whole-of-government strategies. The framework and supporting tools will provide Communities with oversight on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress made towards implementing the strategy</li> <li>• progress made towards achieving the strategy outcomes</li> <li>• the planned actions and how they link to the strategy outcomes</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of subsequent action plans and areas of focus</li> </ul> <p>The principles, tools and processes established by IMEF will improve the consistency of the department's approach to executing strategies, including coordination and collaboration with other strategies and sector partners. Through the development of logic models and monitoring and evaluation plans linked to whole of government outcomes, indicators and measures, Communities will be better able to communicate the intended impact of its activities, investments, methods employed for identifying success factors (community/sector engagement) and processes for the review and amendment of the strategies and their corresponding action plans. A key principle of the IMEF was to ensure all strategies were guided by the voices of those with lived experience across all phases of development, implementation, and evaluation.</p> <p>The IMEF sets the foundation for improving the quality and transparency of reporting against the progress and impact of Communities led strategies, upon which a comprehensive Strategy Reporting Lifecycle can be built</p>
<b>Key Action 17</b>	Align each of the individual strategies to the whole of System Outcomes Framework	Communities Outcomes Framework	<p>Communities will continue to develop project management plans and processes including outlining how projects deliver on the Communities outcomes framework</p> <p>A robust Implementation Framework for child protection reform projects will be developed with clear governance and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<b>Key Action 18</b>	Develop individual action plans with clearly defined outcomes and timeframes for projects noted as 'Future Directions' within each strategy area	Communities Project Management templates and processes	<p>Communities will continue to develop project management plans and processes, such plans to include actions and outcomes</p> <p>A robust Implementation Framework for child protection reform projects will be developed with clear governance and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<b>Key Action 19</b>	Clearly articulate stakeholder engagement at each level of system, strategy and project implementation	Communities Project Management	<p>Communities will continue to develop project management plans and processes Stakeholder engagement strategies to be developed as part of the project planning process for each project</p>

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		templates and processes	<p>Note to include internal and external stakeholders</p> <p>A robust Implementation Framework for child protection reform projects will be developed with clear governance and engagement with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate</p>
<b>Theme Area 3: General systems and specific strategy actions priority three</b>			
<b>Key Action 20</b>	Establish a workforce development program that caters for all levels of child protection worker, specialist roles and leadership	Future plans for a Workforce Strategy	<p>SCPU to work with Aboriginal Outcomes, LDC, SDOI and Strategic HR and universities to develop a frontline workforce development strategy, incorporating governance structure, process and workplan to embed continuous improvements. The strategy will capture all levels of child protection workers, specialist roles and leadership.</p> <p>Communities has established an Aboriginal Employees Network</p>
<b>Key Action 21</b>	Ensure the workforce is well supported and cared for via a range of wellbeing strategies	Injury Prevention and Wellbeing team	Injury Prevention and Wellbeing team and their portal which provides health and wellbeing resources for staff.
<b>Key Action 22</b>	Distinguish Continuous Quality Improvement efforts from Strategic efforts	Communities Project Management templates and processes	Communities will continue to develop project management plans and processes
<b>Key Action 23</b>	Develop and seek endorsement for the Implementation plans to support the new ACCO Strategy 2022-2031	ACCO Strategy 2022-2032	<p>Communities ACCO Strategy 2022-2032 was launched on the 3 August 2022. The ACCO Strategy aims to transform the way that Communities' services for Aboriginal people are designed, funded and procured, and its implementation will focus on effective co-design with a broad representation of ACCOs from across WA.</p> <p>The ACCO Strategy acknowledges the pivotal role played by Aboriginal Organisations in delivering culturally secure services to Aboriginal people across the State. It recognises outcomes are better when Aboriginal people are provided place-based, locally led and culturally safe services to Aboriginal people.</p>

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			<p>The ACCO Strategy seeks to improve Communities' commissioning and delivery of services to Aboriginal children, families and communities, and to support ACCOs to increase their capacity to deliver place-based, culturally appropriate services across WA.</p> <p>The ACCO Strategy aligns directly to a number of Priority Reform Areas and Socio-Economic targets identified within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and will assist Communities in meeting its commitment as a signatory to the Agreement. Communities is the lead agency for the Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan and the ACCO Strategy identifies, builds capability and develops opportunities for ACCOs to provide services to Aboriginal people across these areas.</p> <p>The ACCO Strategy focuses on three key pillars; cultural safety and governance, respectful partnerships and economic opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Key Action 24</b></p>	<p>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 2022-2027</p>	<p>Development of the Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy</p> <p>Development of the At Risk Youth Strategy</p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy</b> The Department of Communities commenced work on the development of the Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy in mid-2021. To ensure the project is driven by Aboriginal voices, an Aboriginal consultant has been engaged to lead the drafting of the Strategy.</p> <p>A comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement process was undertaken to inform the Strategy, with over 550 Aboriginal people consulted across the State.</p> <p>A consultation draft of the Strategy was released for public comment from mid-March to mid-April, which included further targeted engagement with Aboriginal community and stakeholders.</p> <p>The Strategy is anticipated to be finalised and publicly released later in 2022.</p> <p><b>At Risk Youth Strategy 2022-2027</b> The McGowan Government will continue to improve long-term, sustainable outcomes for at risk young people through the development and implementation of an At Risk Youth Strategy.</p>

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			<p>The At Risk Youth Strategy will provide the mechanism for collective effort across government agencies, peak bodies and the community services sector to improve outcomes for highly vulnerable young people.</p> <p>A focus area in the draft Strategy captures the implementation of the 2021 election commitment to permanently extend Home Stretch.</p> <p>The At Risk Youth Strategy 2022-2027 was released by Communities and the Youth Affairs Council of WA (YACWA) on 19 September 2022.</p>
<b>Key Action 25</b>	Rationalise the EIFS strategy 2016 as implemented	Early Intervention and Family Support Strategy	<p>Communities will be undertaking co-design around regional expansion of the Earlier Intervention Family Support Service (EIFSS), and funding pilots of regional models to inform future service delivery.</p> <p>This model will test a more holistic and integrated service model and continuum of services; a lead or equal role for ACCOs in contract partnership; integration of Aboriginal ways of working and more culturally responsive practices; a co-designed Theory of Change and clear program logic and outcomes framework; and flexible and innovate place/region-based design and procurement approach.</p>
<b>Theme Area 4: Medium-term 12 – 24 months</b>			
<b>Key Action 26</b>	Audit the Commissioning Plan 2021-2022 once completed	supported	
<b>Key Action 27</b>	Review the Communities' Implementation Framework once established	supported	
<b>Key Action 28</b>	Undertake service system review within youth services as intended within the At-Risk Youth Strategy 2021-2026	At Risk Youth Strategy	<p>The McGowan Government will continue to improve long-term, sustainable outcomes for at risk young people through the development and implementation of the At Risk Youth Strategy 2022-2027.</p> <p>The At Risk Youth Strategy will provide the mechanism for collective effort across government agencies, peak bodies and the community services sector to improve outcomes for highly vulnerable young people.</p> <p>A focus area in the draft Strategy captures the implementation of the 2021 election commitment to permanently extend Home Stretch.</p>

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<b>Key Action 29</b>	Implement 10 Year Roadmap as per plans developed throughout the project	Roadmap is currently under development	Communities has engaged SNAICC and will work together to undertake a consultative process to develop the Roadmap throughout 2022.
<b>Key Action 30</b>	Implement and monitor the required changes across the sector as determined within the Commissioning Plan 2021-2022	supported	