Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group

Communiqué 13 – June 2026 Meeting



Advisory Group Members, Director General and Communities Leadership Team following the Director General's leadership breakfast held on Day 2 of the June Meeting at Walyalup.

The Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group (Advisory Group) held its second meeting of 2026 in Walyalup (Fremantle) on beautiful Noongar Country on 25 and 26 June 2026. Advisory Group Members were warmly welcomed by Whadjuk/Balardong Noongar woman, Sandra Harben who outlined the significance of a Welcome to Country and reflected on the importance of learning from Elders.

The meeting focussed on Disability and Child Protection & Family Support Services (Child Protection), and their intersections. These topics aligned with the Advisory Group's strategic priorities and guiding principles decided at the March 2025 meeting. This June meeting achieved quorum and generated pieces of formal advice for the Director General.

Day 1: Disability (NDIS, Thriving Kids & intersect with Child Protection)

Member reports

Members provided updates on emerging issues relevant to the Advisory Group's role prompting further discussion, across (often overlapping) themes including homelessness, housing, vulnerable families, and system coordination. A strong emphasis was placed on the need for improved data, clearer referral pathways, culturally appropriate responses, and greater Aboriginal representation in decision-making.

Overview of the Disability System

The Department's Disability Division provided an overview of the teams and functions within the Division as well as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Key themes included eligibility, the NDIS' performance across WA and the experiences of Aboriginal people with a disability when accessing NDIS and other government-provided disability services.

Constructive and robust discussions took place during the session. The session marked the Division's first formal engagement with the Advisory Group, with an intention to establish more regular and sustained interaction moving forward.



Inaugural Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group Members
(L-R) Jodie Clarke, Cheryle James-Wallace, Tracey Brand

Thriving Kids Program

Members were informed that the Thriving Kids Program is being rolled out from 1 October 2026. The State-led program will see the transfer of responsibility for supports for children aged 0-8 with low to moderate needs from the Commonwealth. Discussions took place across the program's gaps and challenges, its phased implementation, navigation support, and a focus on family capacity-building.

Disablity and Child Protection Intersection

Members received a briefing on the work and progress under the co-sponsored Safe and Supported: Child Protection and Disability Intersection Project which aims to strengthen disability capability within child protection, Aboriginal-led program delivery, and improve access to supports. This included disability and children in care data, service gaps, system pressures and workforce capability and support. Members reinforced conversations in the earlier sessions regarding the challenges of balancing access to disability services while maintaining connection to Country and community, recognising that solutions must consider both health and cultural wellbeing.

Day 2: Child Protection and Family Services

On Day 2, the Advisory Group received updates and presentations on:

WA Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (2026-2028)

Representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) provided the Advisory Group with an overview of the newly released WA Closing the Gap State Implementation Plan 2026-2028.

Aboriginal Cultural Capability Reform Program Bi-Annual Update

The Aboriginal Cultural Capability Reform Program team provided a bi-annual update on implementation progress under the Aboriginal Cultural Framework 2024-2034, Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-2026, as well as the finalisation of the Aboriginal Cultural Learning Strategy.

Safe and Supported

The Director of Strategic Policy (Child Protection) provided an update regarding the implementation of Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-31.

Child Protection and Family Support Data Pack

Child Protection leadership provided members with child protection data and trends for discussion. As the agency works towards Priority Reform 4 of the National Agreement (shared access to locally relevant data and information) this has been supported as an ongoing component of Advisory Group meetings to enable members to better understand data trends and enhance the formal advice provided to the Department.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Out of Home Care in the regions

Members discussed current ACCO involvement in out-of-home care, including the ongoing sector aspirations for greater decision-making authority in child protection matters. They specifically reflected on the positive outcomes delivered by initiatives such as Aboriginal Representative Organisations and Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making. Discussions also covered carer assessment and accreditation processes, family carers and care arrangements, barriers to ACCO expansion, future service delivery models, delegated authority, self-determination and truth-telling, healing and acknowledgement of past practices.

The next Advisory Group meeting will be held in Goomburrup (Bunbury), on 17-18 September 2026 focussing on Family and Domestic Violence, Aboriginal Economic Reform and ACCOs.

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