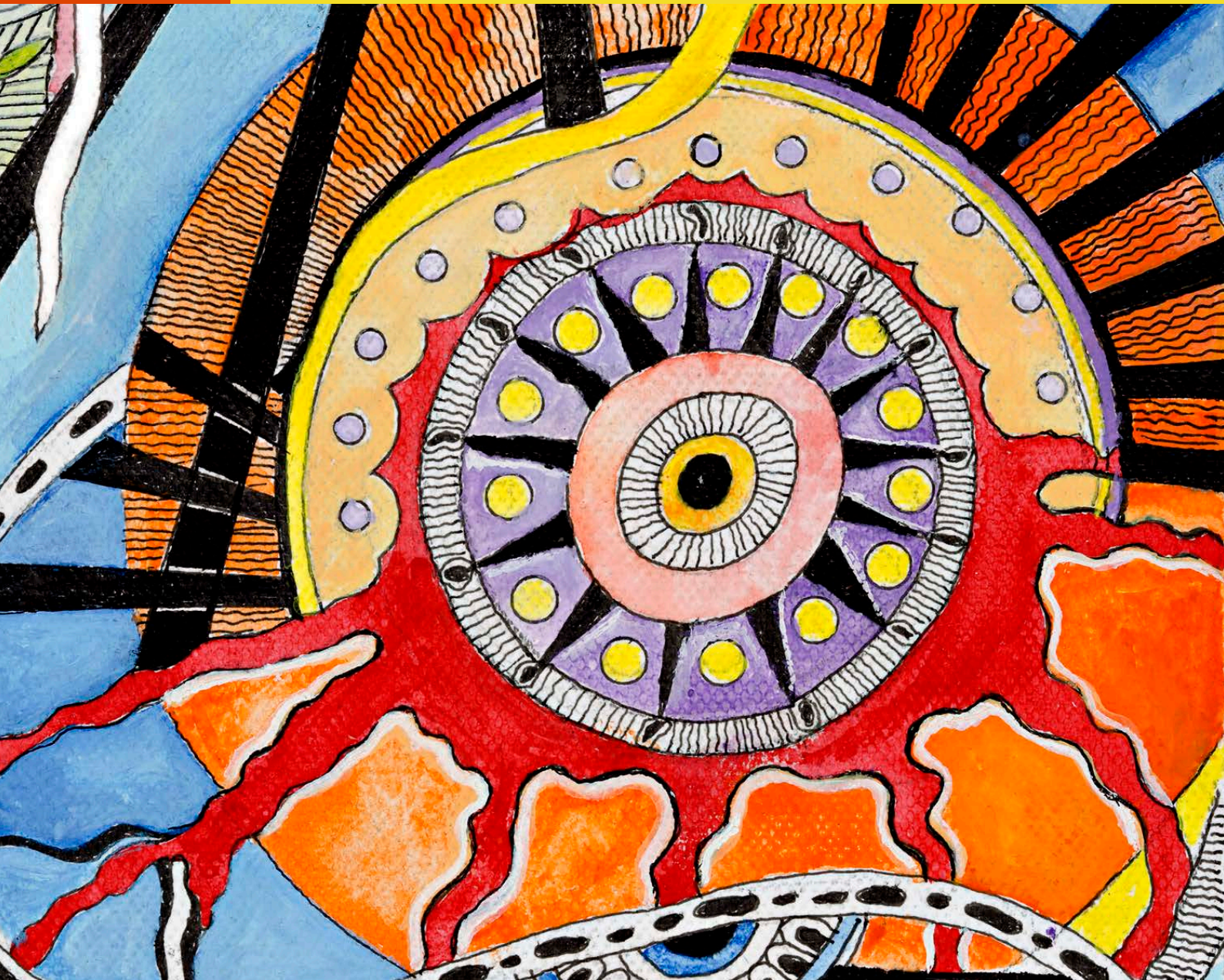




Family &
Community
Services

Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework 2015 – 2018



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Message from the Secretary

For many years, Aboriginal people have told government departments how their needs and interests can best be served. To better respond to the aspirations of Aboriginal people and their communities, FACS has developed the Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework (ACIF) 2015 – 2018.

At the heart of the ACIF is the message that Aboriginal voices will be heard and included. We must do this, and do it well. We need to be curious, ask questions and listen to what Aboriginal people say about what's important to them and their communities.

Ensuring Aboriginal people, families and communities have better outcomes is everyone's business. We will put Aboriginal people at the forefront of our thinking in policy, program and service design and build meaningful partnerships by engaging Aboriginal people.

Our department has pledged to lead the NSW Government in developing an Aboriginal NGO capacity building strategy as part of the NSW Aboriginal Affairs Plan, OCHRE (Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment). But our work does not stop there; we have accountabilities for Aboriginal service delivery, participation in local decision making, and fostering genuine partnerships with Aboriginal people and communities.

In implementing the ACIF, FACS Districts will establish local engagement arrangements with Aboriginal communities to inform priorities and strategic actions in their Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Plan.

FACS Central divisions will also develop an Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Plan that supports Aboriginal employment and career development, and access to services. We will also implement Aboriginal Impact Statements to make sure we always think about the effect of any changes to policies, programs and services have on Aboriginal people.

The ACIF provides opportunities to deliver practical actions to break the cycle of disadvantage and to work in ways that both support and empower Aboriginal people. There are some things we will do right but we need to acknowledge there are things we need to learn and do better.

The success of the ACIF is a shared responsibility and by working together we can make it a reality.



Michael Coutts-Trotter
Secretary
NSW Department of Family and Community Services

OneFACS

Local. Responsive. Connected.

Introduction

The Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework (ACIF) is an initiative developed by the Aboriginal Strategy and Policy team who were established in January 2014 to implement the *FACS Aboriginal Strategy 2013-2015: Better Outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities*.

Aboriginal Strategy and Policy would like to acknowledge the Awabakal people on whose land our office is located as well as all Aboriginal Nations within New South Wales. We also express our respect and thanks to the many Aboriginal people who provided their cultural insight and knowledge to inform the identification of key result areas and strategic actions.

Purpose

The purpose of the ACIF is to embed Aboriginal cultural inclusion, accountability and monitoring processes to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal people and their families.

Cultural Inclusion

Cultural inclusion for FACS means a commitment to co-design policy, service and programs to be inclusive of the values and expectations of Aboriginal people. Cultural inclusion will be achieved when the inclusion of knowledge, participation and engagement in practical actions achieve better outcomes.

Acknowledgement

The contribution of Aboriginal staff who shared their lived experience, learnings, expertise and knowledge of what can work and what doesn't work has shaped the development of the ACIF.

There has also been extensive engagement and partnership with key Aboriginal stakeholders and Districts in finalising the ACIF. We thank them for their input.

FACS Strategic Statement

The ACIF provides the platform from the Better Outcomes Strategy to the FACS Strategic Statement.

The Strategic Statement establishes objectives to guide FACS to work towards its vision that all people are empowered to live fulfilling lives and achieve their potential in inclusive communities. The objectives set out in the statement are:

Children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect.

People with disability are supported to realise their potential.

Social housing assistance is used to break disadvantage.

People at risk of and experiencing, domestic and family violence are safer.

Aboriginal people, families and communities have better outcomes.

The objective: Aboriginal People, families and communities have better outcomes, has a focus to:

- Improve access to affordable, quality and culturally appropriate housing for Aboriginal people;
- Reduce the number of Aboriginal people who are homeless; and
- Improve the safety of Aboriginal children and young people with child protection concerns.

To achieve this FACS will:

Improve how we work with Aboriginal people to deliver responsive, culturally inclusive services tailored to community needs.

FACS commitment to Aboriginal people

FACS is committed to creating opportunities and developing practical actions to break the cycle of disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal families and communities.

The ACIF will assist FACS to tailor our services to meet local needs and embed cultural inclusion through the following key result areas (KRA):

KRA 1. Aboriginal voices will be heard and included:

Aboriginal people influence strategy, planning and service design.

KRA 2. Sector readiness:

The FACS service sector is accessible, culturally inclusive and delivers quality services to Aboriginal people, their families and children.

KRA 3. Innovative and flexible:

Aboriginal clients and their family are placed at the centre of flexible innovative service delivery.

KRA 4. Aboriginal workforce reform:

Aboriginal people have opportunities to gain employment and develop their careers.

KRA 5. Economic development and employment:

Create opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in the economy.

KRA 6. Choice and control:

Aboriginal people have access to information and are supported to exercise choice and control.

Various parliamentary reports from the NSW Ombudsman, consultation reports of the NSW Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs and the recent *Living Life My Way consultations*, all signal a need for FACS to foster greater partnerships with Aboriginal communities to develop local, innovative and flexible responses – thousands of Aboriginal people participated.

Reform Environment

The NSW public sector is undergoing large scale reform. In the coming years the public sector workforce and service delivery will change significantly and the non-government sector will become the main provider of aged, disability, out of home care services and housing. It is important we prepare for this future and ensure that it is one in which Aboriginal families receive services that are culturally inclusive.

For this to be achieved it means:

- Aboriginal specific services to be delivered by Aboriginal service providers.
- A continued focus on Aboriginal employment across the sector.
- Investment in Aboriginal non-government organisations, businesses and/or contractors by procurement of services.
- Building the capacity of other providers to deliver culturally inclusive services.

FACS is developing an NGO Strategy which will encompass the need to build the capacity of Aboriginal NGOs and contains specific deliverables:

- A FACS wide Aboriginal Service Delivery Industry Development Plan linked to a broader Industry Development Strategy; and
- A guide for cultural competence, cultural safety and supporting Aboriginal service providers as part of the development of a FACS wide Commissioning Strategy.

How the ACIF will operate

The key result areas will drive the strategic focus for better outcomes through the development of Aboriginal cultural inclusion plans. Strategic actions will ensure our efforts are best placed to become culturally inclusive.

Annual cultural inclusion plans will be developed in partnership with Aboriginal people to drive appropriate responses at the District and Central office levels.

At the District level local solutions to local circumstances can be addressed in strategies, initiatives and planning.

At the Central level social policy reforms can be addressed in service design and policy development.

The Standing Committee on Better Outcomes will provide high level advice and guidance on social policy, and legislative reforms and their impacts on Aboriginal people.

District Level

Districts in partnership with local Aboriginal inclusion committees and stakeholders are to develop an Aboriginal Cultural inclusion plan to address each of the six key result areas and strategic actions.

The plan will identify key priorities and building blocks on how these will be achieved over the four year timeframe.

Central Level

A program of work will be developed against the six key result areas and strategic actions, ensuring alignment with the FACS Strategic Directions, to guide Aboriginal specific business across the OneFACS operating model.

In addition the implementation of Aboriginal Impact Statements will ensure the needs of Aboriginal communities are addressed and Aboriginal stakeholders have the opportunity to influence better policy making and service design within FACS.

Headline Indicators

Data indicates that Aboriginal people continue to have higher than expected access rates in involuntary services and poorer than expected in the voluntary. The following snapshot highlights that as at 30 June 2013, Aboriginal people represented:

- 35.4% of children and young people in out-of-home care;
- 20.7% of children and young people were reported as at risk of significant harm;
- 8% of clients accessing disability services;
- 24.6% in specialist homelessness services;
- 7.8% are experiencing homelessness;
- 12.4% of social housing tenants.

The following headline indicators will be used to measure our success over four years.

Increase	Decrease
Participation rate of Aboriginal people receiving individualised and community care support packages.	Over representation of Aboriginal people who are homeless and/or experiencing repeat homelessness.
Investment in viable Aboriginal non-government organisations, businesses and/or contractors.	Over representation of Aboriginal children and young people who are at risk of significant harm.
The proportion of Aboriginal employment in FACS.	Over representation of Aboriginal children in out of home care.

Monitoring and Review

FACS Aboriginal Strategy and Policy will implement a robust review and reporting process which will align to the FACS Strategic Statement. The headline indicators, measures and outcomes will be integrated into FACS-wide business planning and reporting.

The Districts will have the opportunity to report on their outcomes to their local communities and to their Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion committee.

This level of accountability will improve our ability to report to the Aboriginal community on delivering culturally inclusive tailored services. This process will also assist FACS to respond to the NSW Deputy Aboriginal Ombudsman on our implementation of relevant OCHRE strategies.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the ACIF will occur on an annual basis.

Key Result Area

Strategic Actions

ABORIGINAL VOICES WILL BE HEARD AND INCLUDED:

Aboriginal people influence strategy, planning and service.

1

- ◀ Foster and maintain partnerships with Aboriginal stakeholders in the development, implementation and review of Aboriginal Cultural inclusion plans.
- ◀ Engage with Local Decision Making committees in the development of Accords and innovative responses to place based needs.
- ◀ Work with Aboriginal families to build their capacity to engage in services.
- ◀ Foster and maintain partnerships with Aboriginal Advisory structures to strengthen cultural inclusion in service delivery. (e.g. community working parties, circles of influence or other steering committees).
- ◀ Provide Aboriginal staff opportunities to actively engage with Aboriginal communities and influence service design and Aboriginal workforce.

SECTOR READINESS

The FACS service sector is accessible, culturally responsive and delivers quality services to Aboriginal people, their families and children.

2

- ◀ Build the capacity of the NGO Sector to meet service standards and accreditation and deliver culturally inclusive services.
- ◀ Develop streamlined approaches such as red tape reduction, flexibility and pooled funding (ie Local Decision Making).
- ◀ Develop career pathways for Aboriginal staff across FACS and non-government organisations to promote integrated skill, practice and service design.
- ◀ Develop and implement strategies for mainstream service providers to deliver services that are culturally inclusive.
- ◀ Build the capacity of FACS staff to deliver culturally inclusive services.

Key Result Area

Strategic Actions

INNOVATIVE AND FLEXIBLE:

Aboriginal clients and their families are placed at the centre of flexible innovative service delivery.

3

- Aboriginal families and children are able to access early intervention support when required.
- Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness or at risk of being homeless receive housing assistance.
- Aboriginal clients with a disability receive individualised package support and/or direct funding.
- Develop options to support integrated service delivery strategies.
- Develop strategies that are flexible, localised and support place based services to meet the needs of Aboriginal clients.

ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE REFORM:

Aboriginal people have opportunities to gain employment and develop their careers.

4

- Increase the percentage of Aboriginal workforce across all grades and professions, to promote the delivery of culturally inclusive, flexible and innovative services for Aboriginal people and communities.
- Improve Aboriginal employment outcomes and workforce capability, such as recruitment, career progression and transition to NGO sector.
- Aboriginal employment participation is reflective of the number of potential Aboriginal clients.
- Deliver location based employment initiatives which include structured mentoring and skills development.
- Support Aboriginal staff to participate in forums such as cultural camps, gatherings, networks, focus groups and reference groups.

Key Result Area

Strategic Actions

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT:

Create opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in the economy.

5

- ◀ Develop innovative strategies for building work readiness skills of Aboriginal families.
- ◀ Generate employment opportunities for young Aboriginal People participating in Opportunity Hubs; such as construction, group homes and new program growth.
- ◀ Utilise the Supply Nation and the Aboriginal Participation in Construction Guidelines to procure the services of Aboriginal suppliers and contractors.
- ◀ Procure Aboriginal venues and services for specific Aboriginal events, consultation forums and meetings.
- ◀ Build the capacity of Aboriginal people to establish small businesses to provide disability and community care services.

CHOICE AND CONTROL:

Aboriginal people have access to information and are supported to exercise choice and control.

6

- ◀ Develop specific marketing and communication strategies that target Aboriginal people.
- ◀ Develop capacity of Aboriginal tenants to sustain their tenancies and exercise their rights as tenants.
- ◀ Develop supports for older Aboriginal people to plan for future needs, such as access to appropriate services, developing wills and obtaining a seniors card.
- ◀ Encourage Aboriginal people living with a disability to seek access and support from Ability Linkers.

Contact

To obtain further information or clarification of the ACIF please email

FACSAboriginalStrategyandPolicy@facs.nsw.gov.au

Details for the Supply Nation is on the following link on the FACS intranet http://intranet.facs.nsw.gov.au/internal_services/asset-management-and-procurement/procurement/what_method/sourcing_rules/supply_nation

Glossary of Terms

The glossary of terms explains further the meaning of words or terms that are used throughout the ACIF or are useful to know.

Culture	Knowledge, practice, a unique world view and a way of living. It may manifest in knowledge about artefacts, tools and art, connection and knowledge of places and people. It may also be considered as a way of living which we learn and teach to our children. ¹
Cultural Connections	Cultural connection refers to both the relationships with community and kin and also the inner relationship to culture. It may be close ties with undergoing cultural practices and maintaining relationships between self, kin and community. ²
Trauma	The psychological result of pain felt related to and experience that is outside normal experience. Trauma may manifest itself in physical or emotional violence, abuse and addiction. ³
Intergenerational Trauma	Effects of trauma suffered by an older generation passing on or sharing the experiences through stories or enactment to the next generation in a way that results in traumatic experience in the younger generation. ⁴
Healing	Is a journey not a destination. ⁵
Identity	Aboriginal identity is not static or measured by the colour of skin, but rather from the individual's shared connection, spirituality and belonging to a particular Aboriginal group and/or identification with and recognition by other Aboriginal people.
Control	Means the individual has meaningful choice and is responsible for their own decision making and are empowered to exercise that choice.
Cultural competency	Incorporates cultural awareness, cultural respect, cultural safety and cultural responsiveness and extends them further into all dimensions of practice.
Ability Linkers	Work with people with a disability to develop links in their local and extended communities.
Building capacity	Given the necessary skills and tools to realise potential and able to participate in decision making.

1-5 Adopted from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation



Artwork by Colin Wightman – Passages

The Story of Passages by Colin Wightman

Aboriginal people always return home, to their safe place. The home is where it all begins.

The meeting place, community gathering, getting together and supporting each other. You knew where you were if you used these “marker” trees.

Positive and loving relationships are the foundation of our next generation. Parents standing and walking together on a positive path.

The sun as a life source, is an important symbol to Aboriginal people. We rely on the sun to provide us comfort and warmth and grow our foods, herbs and medicines. The roots are streaming down grounding the community, providing them stability, support and structure.

Growing up our elders taught us kids important lessons, stories and cultural customs and we taught elders things as well. This cross learning is important to the functioning of our community and the continuation of our culture.

The best time to go fishing is by the full moon.



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