



AbSec Strategic Plan 2023–2026

Executive Summary

AbSec – NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (AbSec) is the peak organisation for Aboriginal children, young people and families in NSW working to empower Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities impacted by the child protection system, as well as support a quality Aboriginal community-controlled child and family sector to deliver needed supports in Aboriginal communities across the state.

AbSec is a not-for-profit incorporated Aboriginal controlled organisation. The AbSec Board is appointed by our members.

AbSec was established in 1999 as part of a need to bring all funded Aboriginal out-of-home care agencies together on a monthly basis to form a network of agencies. Since that time, AbSec has emerged as a strong Aboriginal child and family peak organisation that supports the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to deliver quality services to

Aboriginal children, young people, families, communities, carers and people with a disability.

AbSec continues to play a leading role in Aboriginal sector capacity building and advising governments of alternate solutions and policies to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal children and families. AbSec provides child protection and out-of-home care policy advice on issues affecting Aboriginal children, young people, families and carers, and are informed by our membership base and community to ensure that Aboriginal perspectives are included in government policy and reform directions.

Our work aims to shape the Aboriginal sector into the future, engage and deliver for Aboriginal children, young people and families, and inform governments of Aboriginal perspectives with the view to providing greater self-determination in our communities.





AbSec Governance

AbSec is overseen by a dedicated Aboriginal governing board, with an Aboriginal Chief Executive Officer. Our corporate structure means that we have both representatives of Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal individuals sitting on the board.

Additionally, the AbSec Board of Directors appoints the AbSec Chief Executive Officer as the Managing Director for the AbSec Learning and Development Centre, a subsidiary organisation predominantly focused on the delivery of nationally accredited training. The AbSec Learning and Development Centre is solely owned by AbSec – NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation.

The AbSec Board of Directors establishes the strategic directions for both AbSec and of AbSec Learning and Development Centre. In this regard, we work to implement our Strategic Plan through our Annual Business Plans, and showcase this through our Annual Reports and public communications.

Our vision

Our vision is that all Aboriginal children and young people are looked after in safe, thriving Aboriginal families and communities, raised strong in spirit and identity, with every opportunity for lifelong wellbeing and connection to culture, and surrounded by holistic supports.

Our objectives

- ③ Work towards achieving self-determination for all Aboriginal people and communities, and build a safe, secure and caring environment for their children and young people, surrounded by culture
- ③ Support Aboriginal organisations to deliver quality, holistic supports for all Aboriginal children, young people, families and carers
- ③ Provide and support opportunities for continual learning, growth, improvement and change, for organisations delivering Aboriginal child and family supports
- ③ Represent the interests and inform government and key stakeholders of the issues facing Aboriginal children, young people, families, carers and communities
- ③ Advance Aboriginal workforce development to ensure a strong and capable workforce that is ready and equipped to meet the support needs of Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities

Principles that guide us

- ③ **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RESPECT** – we will acknowledge the diversity of all Aboriginal nations and respect traditional owners of the land, with our actions being informed by the voices of Elders and the cultural knowledge of communities.
- ③ **PROFESSIONALISM AND INTEGRITY** – we will act with the highest of professionalism for our communities, ensuring our integrity will not be compromised in striving for the provision of quality, culturally-responsive and culturally-accessible supports.
- ③ **SELF-DETERMINATION** – we will ensure that our focus is underpinned by the rights of Aboriginal people to make decisions that impact their lives; recognising the interests of Aboriginal children, young people, families and carers, and communities in all that we do.
- ③ **INDEPENDENCE AND SOLUTIONS-FOCUS** – we will serve the interests of Aboriginal children, young people, families, communities and the organisations that support them to deliver holistic approaches to issues affecting them.
- ③ **TRANSPARENCY AND COMMITMENT** – we will remain committed to our Aboriginal children, young people, families and organisations in everything we do, ensuring their interests are promoted at every opportunity, and that our actions towards achieving this is always clear and transparent.



AbSec Theory of Change

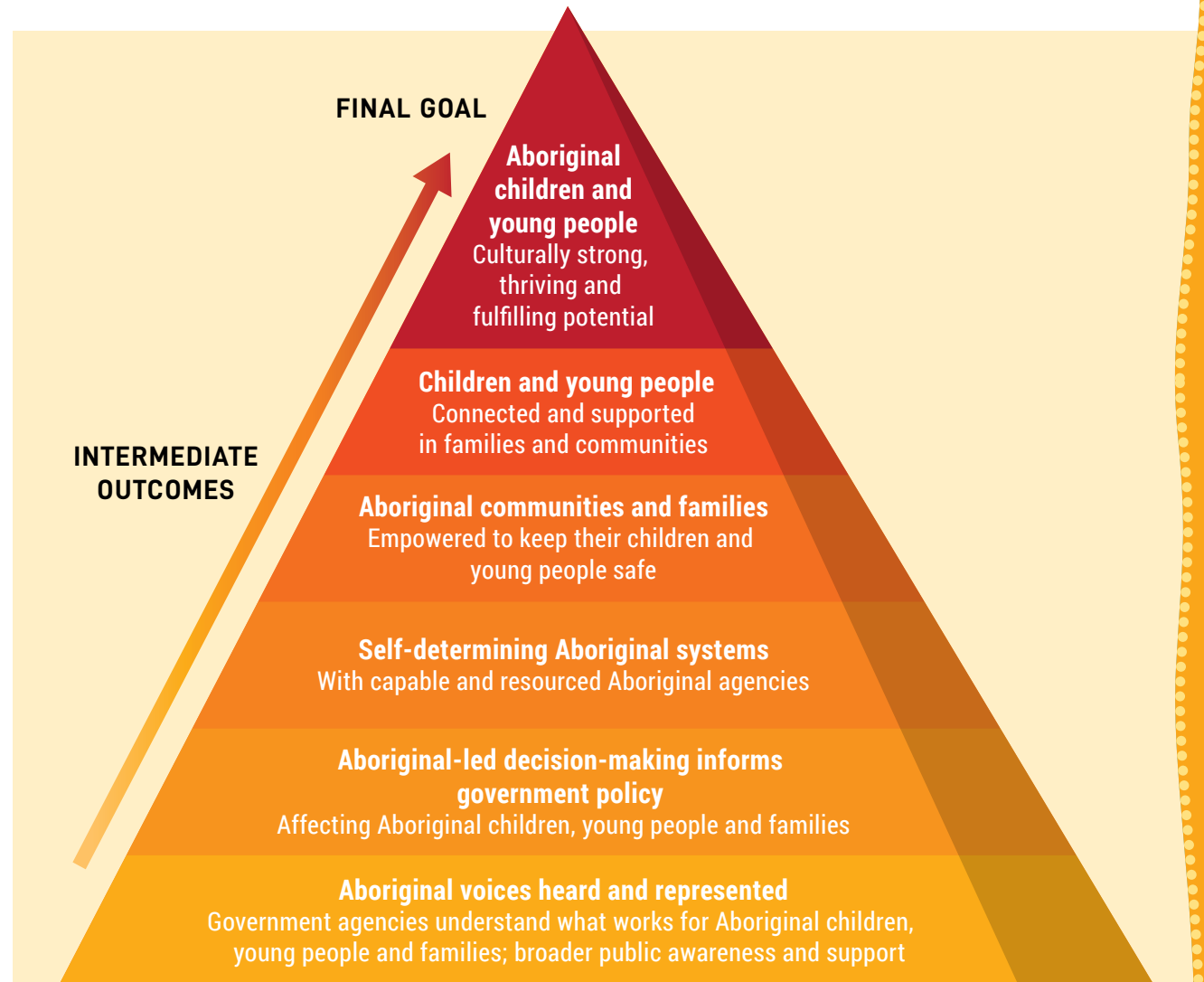
AbSec's theory of change has been established to present key focus areas and their outcomes, as we work towards the ultimate goal of seeing Aboriginal children and young people culturally strong, thriving and fulfilling their potential.

AbSec exists to see Aboriginal children and young people culturally strong, thriving and fulfilling their potential. AbSec embodies a holistic approach to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are raised strong in spirit and identity, with every opportunity for lifelong well-being and connection to culture.

For this to occur, evidence shows that Aboriginal children and young people must be connected and supported in their families, kinship groups and communities, and that families and communities must be empowered to keep their children and young people safe.

Self-determination is at the base of fostering sustainable change. AbSec advocates for Aboriginal-led services and social systems, with Aboriginal agencies that are capable and appropriately resourced.

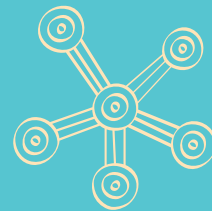
To reach this outcome, Aboriginal voices must be heard and represented in society, leading to a broader community understanding of the need for Aboriginal-led decision-making to ensure genuine improvements in the lives of our kids and families. And similarly for government policies to be informed by Aboriginal-led solutions for what works best for Aboriginal children, young people and families.



AbSec Strategic Directions 2023-2026

To achieve our theory of change, we have determined five strategic directions.

1



Progress self-determination for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities

Self-determination — the collective right to make our own decisions and carry them through to meaningful actions — is at the base of fostering sustainable change. We need to lead and control our own solutions for our Aboriginal children, young people and families. Self-determination is based on Aboriginal communities having innate strengths and the ability to solve their own problems when given the right support and trust.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations provide the most effective and culturally sensitive support to Aboriginal people in need.

2



Grow our Aboriginal community-controlled sector

Our aim is to build and strengthen our Aboriginal community-controlled sector, providing tools to foster genuine Aboriginal-led solutions that are creative and forward-thinking, and will deliver better outcomes for our children, young people and their families. In line with our view that self-determination is at the base of fostering sustainable change, we work to ensure that Aboriginal agencies are adequately resourced and equipped to provide optimal care to our children, young people and their families.

3



Ensure government hears our voices

Aboriginal voices must be heard and represented in society, driving Aboriginal-led decision-making to ensure genuine improvements in the lives of our children, young people, families and communities. We inform government and key stakeholders on issues facing communities and ways in which better outcomes, supports and solutions can be provided.

Further, government policies must be informed by Aboriginal-led solutions for what works best for our children, young people, their families and communities.

4



Leader in the sector

We are a strong Aboriginal child and family peak organisation that supports our Aboriginal community-controlled sector to deliver quality services to our children, young people, families, communities, carers and people with a disability. We play a leading role in Aboriginal sector capacity building and advising governments of alternate solutions and policies to deliver better outcomes for our children, young people and families. Our work aims to shape the Aboriginal sector into the future, engage and deliver for our children, young people and families, and inform governments of Aboriginal perspectives with the view to providing greater self-determination in our communities.

Our key leadership focus areas include increasing early interventions to prevent out-of-home care, advocating for a stronger voice in the broader sector, and increasing the number of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations in the sector.

5



Strong AbSec

Mandated by our membership and core purpose, we deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities. We will ensure that our governance and processes are robust, our people are well resourced, and that we are true to our values, beliefs and vision to meet our strategic goals. This will ensure we are well positioned and ready to truly represent, and deliver better outcomes for our children, young people, families and communities.

2023–2026 Strategic Priorities & Key Indicators and Measures

Our priorities are aligned against the five strategic directions, to deliver better outcomes for our Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities, and the organisations that support them.

The key indicators and measures of the five areas are informed by AbSec's Theory of Change, and will indicate whether, and how well, we are achieving results.



1. Progress self-determination for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities

PRIORITIES

- Make our own decisions through Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations that are capable and resourced
- Data sovereignty
- Demand an Independent Aboriginal Commissioner
- Ensure strong governance
- Holistic well-being for our community and sector
- Educate and lead the sector including the NSW Department of Communities and Justice on Aboriginal Case Management and Policy
- Mentor Aboriginal youth
- Share knowledge with the sector

KEY INDICATORS & MEASURES

Feedback and continual engagement with Aboriginal children, young people and families will tell us how successfully we are progressing and realising change.



2. Grow our Aboriginal community-controlled sector

PRIORITIES

- Increased funding for sector to reflect proportionate investment
- Increased funding for family preservation and early intervention
- Growth for existing Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, and map gaps in the sector to help set up Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations in those places
- Build the capacity of current Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations' member agencies to be able to take on and transition more children to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations through adequate funding and recommissioning
- Grow early intervention services proportionate to the number of children and young people in out-of-home care
- Aboriginal children and young people are culturally supported by Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, and non-Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations work with us to ensure our children and young people culturally supported

KEY INDICATORS & MEASURES

With such a significant task of influencing the growth and expansion of the Aboriginal community-controlled sector in NSW, it is critical that we remain engaged and deliver upon the expectations of our Aboriginal organisations who support children, young people and families. The level, number and quality of engagement with Aboriginal organisations will tell us how well we are meeting our goals.



3. Ensure government hears our voices

PRIORITIES

- Policy positions developed on key topics and issues pertinent to the sector and our communities.
- Advocacy oversight and support for family preservation as a priority
- Legislative reform that involves our people and culture
- Independent oversight with legislative power
- Promote our role and work as the peak organisation for Aboriginal children, young people and families across NSW
- Transition of our children and young people in carer households to Aboriginal-Community-Controlled Organisations
- Establishment of an Independent Aboriginal Commissioning body.
- Implementation of the Aboriginal Case Management Policy

KEY INDICATORS & MEASURES

Change must be effectively embedded within government policy frameworks to realise genuine and sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families. Our active engagement and influence, and the quality and impact of our policy advice, will demonstrate our success in this regard, as well as the number of times where this has led to a positive result.



4. Leader in the sector

PRIORITIES

- Share our knowledge
- Evaluation to help communities to fill gaps and create members to fill those gaps
- Increased investment into early intervention
- Partnerships and engagement with non-Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations to transition Aboriginal children and young people to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations
- Thought leadership
- Use existing data which shows the current system is not working to keep Aboriginal children and young people out of out-of-home care
- Establish an Accountability Framework
- Embed truth-telling

KEY INDICATORS & MEASURES

Our strong voice through research, policy, advice, advocacy, consultation and capacity building will enable engagement with others to innovate, collaborate and create change for the sector in NSW. Our level and quality of engagement with Aboriginal organisations, stakeholders and partners will demonstrate our success.



5. Strong AbSec

PRIORITIES

- Increased funding
- Increased capacity
- Increased community involvement to inform our priorities
- Hear our voices
- Increased connection with our member agencies to ensure we know what our membership wants us to be working on and to build our knowledge as a peak organisation

KEY INDICATORS & MEASURES

Capability and robust processes and systems support strong accountability to meet our member and community priorities that ultimately deliver better and sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families. Feedback from our members and communities will tell us how well we are representing the needs of Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities.

Acknowledgement

AbSec acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land in which we work and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. AbSec acknowledges the Stolen Generations who never came home.



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