



MEDIA RELEASE

## **AbSec urges parliament to back Family In Culture Bill**

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*Joint press release with the Aboriginal Legal Service.*

The state's peak Aboriginal organisations for children, families and legal services are urging NSW politicians to back the FIC bill, representing long-overdue reforms supporting Aboriginal kids in contact with the child protection system.

The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Family is Culture Review) Bill 2022 has passed the Upper House and is expected to come before the Lower House this week.

The Bill contains many of the legislative reforms recommended in the Family Is Culture Review, a 2019 independent analysis of Aboriginal children and young people's over-representation in out-of-home care.

The review, led by Cobble Cobble woman Professor Megan Davis, uncovered a bureaucratic, ineffective and unaccountable system causing harm to the Aboriginal children it is meant to protect.

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice currently removes Aboriginal children from their families at 11 times the rate of non-Indigenous children. The Family Is Culture Review says "the child protection system today has resonance with historical practices" used against the Stolen Generations.

Quotes from Karly Warner, palawa woman and CEO of the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited:

"Our message to NSW politicians is clear: it is up to every member of parliament to show that they care about Aboriginal children, care about closing the gap, and value the voices of Aboriginal experts. The way they can do that right now is by supporting this Bill.

"The NSW Government has signed onto the Closing the Gap target of reducing over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care. The reforms in this Bill are an evidence-based path to achieving that goal, backed by an independent expert review and supported by Aboriginal organisations.

“Voting for the Family is Culture Bill makes sense, but more importantly, it’s the right thing to do. Our kids deserve no less.”

Quotes from John Leha, Birri Gubba, Wakka Wakka and Tongan man and CEO of AbSec (NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation):

“Our communities have told us that legislative reform to the NSW child protection system is urgently needed to safeguard our children, young people and their families.

“Every year these legislative reforms are delayed, an additional 900 Aboriginal children and young people are likely to be removed from their families.

“The evidence tells us that Aboriginal kids in out of home care are likely to experience long-term and intergenerational harms due to being taken from their families, communities and culture.”

“Our politicians must come together and put the best interests of Aboriginal children and young people before party politics by voting to support this Bill.”



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