

# Aboriginal Foster Carer Recruitment Manual



Assisting Aboriginal OOHC Agencies to  
Recruit Aboriginal Foster Carers for our kids

The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (NSW) (AbSec), Training and Support Team contextualised this manual to support Aboriginal Out of Home Care (OOHC) agencies in the recruitment of Aboriginal Carers within NSW. This manual is available on the AbSec website [www.absec.org.au](http://www.absec.org.au)

AbSec would like to acknowledge that significant sections of this document have been sourced from the ACWA document titled: *Recruiting Foster Carers: A Manual for Foster Care Agencies* developed in 2013 as part of the Fostering NSW campaign. This document is available from the ACWA website:

<http://www.acwa.asn.au/FCRC/Downloads/RecruitingFosterCarersManualforFosterCareAgencies.pdf>





## Foreword

The number of Aboriginal children and young people in the care of the Minister for Family and Community Services, NSW is still too high and this has been the case for too long.

Aboriginal children should be raised in a safe environment, connected to community and culture. That's why the Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (AbSec) is working hard to increase the number of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) who will support and care for Aboriginal children and young people in transitioning them to the non-government sector.

It's important that Aboriginal communities take responsibility for caring for our children and protecting them, giving them access to opportunities otherwise not afforded to them and raising them with a sense of identity and connection to culture.

The important work by Aboriginal Foster Carers is underestimated; their role in shaping our future generations is to be commended and valued.

AbSec is committed working with the NSW Government to ensure Aboriginal children and young people are cared for in a loving environment and strong in culture. AbSec continues to stressing the importance of the role extended family and community play in keeping Aboriginal children and young people safe and connected.

Angela Webb

CEO AbSec

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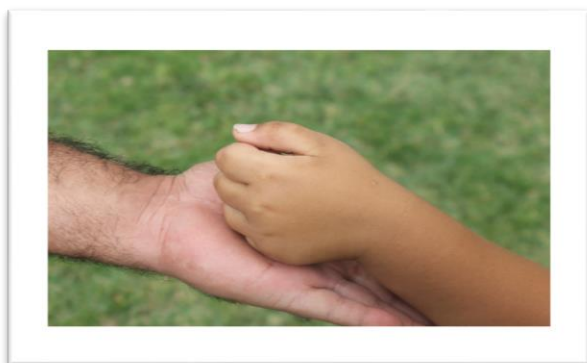
## Introduction

This manual was developed as a guide to assist Aboriginal Out of Home Care (OOHC) agencies in the recruitment of Aboriginal foster carers.

Throughout the manual there are ideas and steps to help in the recruitment of foster carers for Aboriginal children in OOHC in NSW. It is now apparent that the recruitment and retention of foster carers requires not only specialist skills and knowledge, but also creativity, flexibility, intuition, empathy, passion, and the engagement of current foster carers in the process.

This guide aims to provide a framework for recruitment efforts, practice wisdom, food for thought, and practical tools for staff whose work involves the recruitment of foster carers. When it works best, foster care recruitment is a whole-of-agency activity that is likely to include chief executive officers, media and communications staff, managers, team leaders, case workers and volunteer foster carers. The changing nature of technology and the advancement of social media as a means of communication, means Aboriginal OOHC agencies need to be innovative and flexible in their approach to recruitment in the 21st century.

Everyone will gain something different from this manual. Promoting foster care is unlike promotions or marketing of any other kind. Foster care will change the lives of the people you recruit, perhaps forever, and for many it will be a big commitment for years of their life.



## Chapter 1: Your Recruitment Strategy

*Being an Aboriginal foster carer is an incredible experience of nurturing and caring for a vulnerable Aboriginal child in need.*

In your Foster Carer recruitment strategy the aim is to promote, while remaining realistic about the support foster carers receive, the experience of being a volunteer, being a part of your agency's team, and the whole foster care 'lifestyle'. Foster care, unlike any other form of volunteering, will affect each and every part of the volunteer's life.

As part of the strategy, consider how the actual experience of fostering with your agency relates to the needs and wants of those who are applying to be a foster carer.

Ask yourself:

- What is their motivation for wanting to provide care?
- How can you make their experience of fostering for your agency more in line with this motivation and therefore more positive?
- How can you make your agency appealing to potential foster carers?

The answers to these questions are the key to retaining new foster carers.

**There are four key elements to this process:**

1. **Assess need** – Consider who is your target audience before embarking on a recruitment campaign to raise awareness of the need for foster carers, take time to do a thorough analysis of your current carer pool and compare this with a snapshot of the referrals your organisation is receiving (six or twelve months works better, any less may mean you aren't seeing the big picture).

This process will identify any gaps, the number of foster carers you need, what type of carers you require, and the location in your catchment area.

2. **Target** – Use the information in Step 1 to set clear goals for your recruitment campaign. Is there a primary as well as a secondary target group? Are there target groups in your area that are under-represented in the carer pool?

Be as specific as you can be about your audience to develop the recruitment strategy. Try using goal-setting, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound goals. Even if you plan to run a continuous recruitment campaign you should set and review clear goals on a regular basis e.g. to recruit five carers to provide respite care for children with disabilities within the next 6 months.

3. **Promotion** – Take into account the demographics, geographical location, attitudes, awareness levels, plus any barriers when deciding upon strategies to reach your target audience. Also consider which communication channels and types of media are most used and trusted by your target audience.

Combining with other providers in your local area will maximise the amount of awareness you are able to generate in the local community about the need for foster carers.

Linking together for joint recruitment promotions that highlight particular shortages of foster carers in your area can be more effective than a series of smaller agency-based campaigns. Make contact with other agencies providing foster care in your target area to see if they would be interested in collaborating or pooling resources.

Sharing the legwork and administrative burdens involved means you will have more time to focus on other important recruitment elements such as talking with potential carers.

Individual agency efforts can also be directed into longer term strategic marketing, including creating a positive local profile in the community – What is it that your organisation offers foster carers that is unique? What type of programs do you run and what type of children do you care for?

4. **Where and When to recruit foster carers** – This element is critical, as foster care is all about local communities – local Aboriginal people helping care for local Aboriginal children and young people in need. Review the strengths and weaknesses of your previous recruitment campaigns, and other recruitment campaigns with similar goals.

You need to think about ways in which you can make becoming involved in foster care locally as easy as possible.

Organisations need to remember that this recruitment may be different from one community to another, what works well in one may not work in another.

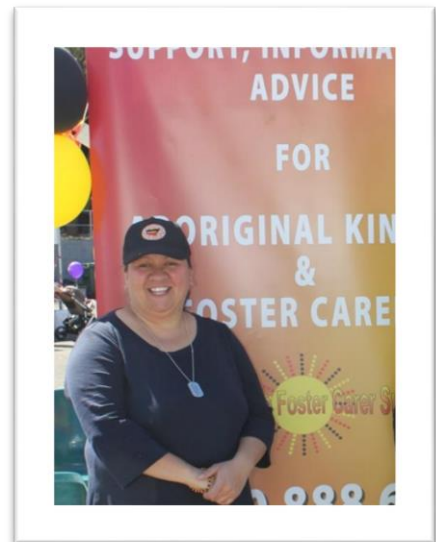
Organisations need to be proactive in attending community events and holding information sessions at venues that Aboriginal communities attend such as the Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS's), community halls, community organisations and Lands Councils.

Organisations should consider utilising pre-organised events, such as NAIDOC week, foster care week, Aboriginal and Islander children's day and any other family friendly community events and celebrations in your area to raise awareness and recruit potential foster carers.

There is no point holding numerous information sessions and training courses in your agency's office if you are attempting to recruit carers who live an hour away.

Remember, you are the one trying to recruit carers, and in order to make it more attractive you have to make it easy to obtain information on becoming a carer and ensure to distribute flyers and promote the need for foster carers and how to get started at local services such as schools, medical centres, libraries, Aboriginal organisations and other services where the community frequent in your local area.

There are already non-negotiable requirements for people to fulfil if they wish to become a foster carer, so don't make it harder than it has to be. Offer information sessions and training courses regularly, and hold them close to where potential carers may live.





## Chapter 2: Foster Care Recruitment Campaign

Having a basic recruitment strategy will help your organisation effectively manage resources in order to achieve your recruitment objectives and with a simple structure you can plan and evaluate your recruitment activities over time, and adjust your strategy accordingly, keeping in mind the resources at your disposal and the outcomes you require to maximise the impact of your work.

Take in to consideration any lessons learnt from previous recruitment strategies (positive and negatives) and aim to learn and improve on any previous campaigns.

A recruitment strategy typically involves the following steps:

### **Step 1 – Assess needs**

We know foster carers are needed to look after our kids, but before we go out knocking on doors and holding stalls, does your agency have the capacity to take on new carers?

Analyse referrals over the previous 6-12 months to establish current and emerging needs. Your funding agreement will also specify certain care types. Audit your current pool of foster carers to identify any gaps.

You should identify:

1. how many carers are needed
2. what kind of carers are needed
3. where in the community they are needed

### **Step 2 – Define target and objectives**

Your needs assessment will help you prioritise a target audience for your recruitment activities as well as define priority objectives.

Consider who the key target group for our recruitment is; are there community members who will be influential in our recruitment process?

As community members we know who can be a major contributor in delivering information to our people – look to inviting these key people to recruitment events to ensure the word spreads thick and fast.

### **Step 3 – Resource needs**

Organisations need to determine what information they need access to attract and recruit carers as this will contribute to the recruitment of carers. The ability to access information that will assist, support and inform carers from a range of locations and services will help you and your organisation to be prepared.

One of your greatest resources in carer recruitment is your agency Aboriginal staff and their ability to headhunt carers as they have the local knowledge, relationships and community connections to be able to target specific individuals and/or families that would be suitable for a particular child in care or know of some families that have a kinship connection to the child.

Use information from other organisations that have already started their recruitment process, or contact AbSec for information as well as assistance in your recruitment campaign.

Develop a budget to ensure that your organisation has funds to develop a recruitment strategy, order any promotional items, and pay for any advertising.

### **Step 4 – Develop a campaign plan**

Take into account the area, the level of support by the wider community and attitude towards Aboriginal OOHC when starting your recruitment drive. You may also want to include any type of local media outlets to ensure you target a broad audience.

When developing your campaign plan, consider and assess need, target, objectives and resources which will assist you to design a co-ordinated, time-limited action plan.

Decide on the promotional mix most likely to reach your target audience, taking into account the key elements.

### **Step 5 – Reviewing**

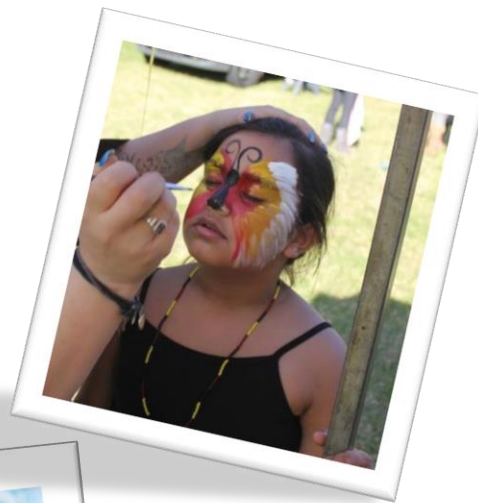
Implement a system to monitor and evaluate activity – set up data collection systems to capture information to measure success against your objectives. For example, record the number and type of enquiries during the campaign period and track how the enquirers heard about your service.

Review the strengths and weaknesses of your previous recruitment campaigns, and other recruitment campaigns with similar goals. This will assist in fine-tuning your current

campaign strategy. Using the objectives you have defined, establish a process by which you expect to be able to evaluate the success of your campaign.

For example, this may be an increase in the number of enquiries, leading through to an increase in the number and type of new foster carers. Evaluation data can include enquiries such as phone calls and emails.

Don't forget to include all the key participants (such as your agency staff, other agencies that you may have linked in with, community elder/s as well as any other key stakeholders within the community) in your campaign to ensure you receive objective, helpful information.



## Chapter 3: The Journey To Becoming A Foster Carer

### *Understanding and responding to the needs of becoming a foster carer*

Becoming a foster carer is not a quick process - making the decision to become a foster carer is a major event not only in the foster carer's life, but also in the lives of their family, extended family and circle of friends.

Potential carers and their families therefore need support and motivation throughout the whole journey, from initial expression of interest through to contacting the fostering agency and eventually through to being an approved foster family.

It is important to be as efficient and supportive as possible during the process and to be able to commence assessments of those who have the right skills and qualities to become good foster carers as soon as possible. The recruitment process requires essential 'reality checking' information, so that unsuitable applicants are screened out.

It can take up to 6 months to process an application from enquiry to becoming a foster carer, it is recommended organisations aim to improve the rate at which each enquiry is processed. Equally important aspect of an agency's recruitment strategy, best practice in supporting potential carers is to respond within 48 hours of their enquiry.

Follow these simple steps:

- A quick response to first contact
- High quality follow-up information package
- Keeping in touch with potential foster carers until they make a firm decision about whether to continue the application process
- Keeping the potential foster carer informed of the progress of their application throughout the whole process
- Invite the potential foster carer along to a carer support group to allow them to link in with other foster carers to share experiences

Support and clear, regular communication are the key to helping your potential carers through the journey to becoming foster carers for your agency.

## Chapter 4: Preparing Your Agency

Prior to starting your campaign, you need to ensure your organisation is prepared as hundreds of enquiries aren't going to be a benefit to your organisation if you don't have the capacity to answer the phones, or your website can't support the increase in work. To ensure your organisation is ready; the following guidelines will assist you in preparing for your campaign.

### ***Internal communication strategy***

When planning a recruitment campaign it is extremely important to ensure your whole organisation is aware of the campaign and the work involved. It is just as important for your receptionist to know about your campaign as your CEO, and both will be vital to your success.

Develop an internal communication strategy to ensure staff within your organisation are aware of the campaign, what is expected of them, and receive regular updates about the campaign's progress through a variety of communication channels. Set a date for an organisational briefing – perhaps at a staff meeting and also at a board meeting.

Team leaders and program managers who will have to make extra staff available to prioritise completing carer assessments, should be fully briefed and given rough timeframes.

### ***Project timeline***

Create a basic project timeline, including who is responsible for what and when, and distribute it to all the staff in your organisation who will be involved, even in a minor way.

### ***Review and update processes***

Ensure your organisation has the capacity and support needed to process potential carers in a timely manner when they respond to your campaign, as one way in which to lose and frustrate potential carers is to promote the need for volunteer carers and then be unable to respond promptly to their enquiry, nor to train or assess them for twelve months.

Ensure your enquiry, application and assessment tools are up to date and that sufficient staff resources are allocated to responding to potential carers. Set dates in advance for information sessions and training courses that will complement your recruitment activities.

You will also need a clear system for logging and responding to enquiries: who does what and when. You should be aiming to maximise opportunities for prospective carers to

connect directly with someone in your agency, and preferably to come into contact with an experienced foster carer as soon as possible.

When logging enquiries, a suggested minimum data set can be found in Appendix B. Creating a flowchart may be helpful to depict what should happen when a potential carer contacts your organisation.

Finally, assemble a pool of staff who are willing and able to be a key contact, or focus worker, for a group of potential carers. Enquirers don't need to be assigned a focus worker the moment they get in touch with your organisation, but you should set a threshold – for example attendance at an information session – and each person who reaches that threshold should be assigned their own focus worker straight away.

See Appendix A for a campaign checklist.



## Chapter 5: Review And Update Your Website

Agency websites should have a page dedicated to recruit carers.

On the webpage use clear, consistent language across your site, ensuring it is easy to navigate, outline at the beginning that your aim is recruiting foster carers and reassure people at each step of the way that their application is important to your agency, and someone will be contacting them soon to follow up.

Your agency website should include:

- A welcome message for potential foster carers
- Information about your program and the types of care that your agency offers
- If your agency has an information package for carers, consider making this available for download
- A brief outline of the process of becoming a foster carer with your agency, and how long the assessment process is likely to take
- What support your agency provides for foster carers
- Who to call and a contact number or email for more information

### *Logging enquiries*

To ensure your decision-making regarding recruitment is based on factual information and not perception, recording demographic and other data relating to your foster care enquiries is critical for quality improvement and reporting.

The more information you are able to record the better, but at the end of the day it's up to your agency how much data you feel it is necessary to record, especially from an initial enquiry. It is suggested that at a minimum you record the information shown in the table in Appendix B.

This form can then be printed and used as the cover page for the household's carer file as desired. You may also like to have this or an abbreviated enquiry form on your website for potential carers to give you their details.

## Chapter 6: Working With The Media

Local media is one of your best assets when it comes to recruiting foster carers. Why?

- Editorials and radio interviews are free
- Papers are delivered to thousands of people in specific geographic areas, allowing you to tailor your message to local communities and remind readers that foster care is a local issue, not just something that happens elsewhere
- People who read local newspapers or listen to community radio stations are likely to be community-minded
- They also love ‘feel good’ stories and ‘local crisis’ stories – both of which you can supply
- If you are successful in having an editorial written on your issue, you can then follow-up with letters to the editor commenting on the story for additional free exposure
- You can share the link to the article or radio interview widely on social media, such as Facebook, where you can link with the Fostering NSW page to help spread the word

Here are some ideas that may help you successfully utilise the local media in your recruitment efforts:

### *Develop foster care ambassadors*

Regardless of the media outlet, they will almost always want to speak to foster carers, so let them. Keeping a regular roster of foster carers who are confident speakers with an interesting story to tell is easy, and will save you a lot of stress when you receive a call from a journalist who needs to file their story an hour later. Use the foster carer media profile included in Appendix C to record ready-to-go information on foster carers who are willing and able to assist you.

You should ensure that any carers you plan to use for this purpose are fully briefed when you collect their information for the profile, and again just prior to any time you provide their details to a media outlet. Avoid using the same foster carer/s more than once with the same media outlet wherever possible. Remember to check that they are not subject to any current allegations or complaints.



Ensure that the foster carer ambassadors are available within the campaign timeframe, as well as being available to attend when required and remember to think about the transport needs for foster carer ambassadors to attend functions.

It would be good if your foster carer ambassador has good ties within the community and is an experienced foster carer.

### *Be prepared*

When you approach the media make sure that you take control of the direction of the story from the outset. You want them to report the story that you want the public to read. To do this you need to ensure that you have as much relevant local information on your topic as you can at your fingertips before you approach your media contact. They will appreciate this, as they will generally be extremely time poor. Ensure that any statistics or quotes you provide them with are properly referenced, factually correct, and have links to the source material where possible.

The other element to being prepared is making sure you or the relevant staff have the time available to handle the work involved in seeing a story or interview through to publication or broadcast, and that you have the capacity necessary to quickly process enquiries from potential foster carers as a result of the publicity you will receive.

### *Media releases*

Written media releases can be sent to your media contacts as a follow-up to a phone call explaining the story. This is free publicity and they usually consist of stories about people, or events that are happening in local communities, or statistics being published or a national awareness week or month. If you have a great case study, such as foster carers who are very passionate, who have lots of stories to tell and aren't afraid of talking to the media, consider approaching your local newspaper and seeing if they want to interview them. See Appendix D for an example media release.

Newspapers love to have pictures with their media releases, so have a photo idea in mind that can accompany the story. Supplying your own photo ideas will also help you control the direction, look and feel of the story. If possible, include a headshot of the person or people quoted in your release but ensure that person has provided written approval for any media release.

*Pitch stories people can connect with*

One of the most frustrating elements of foster care recruitment is that in many ways we have a highly attractive product – almost everyone agrees that it is good to help children in need and ideally wishes to do their part. We should have no trouble telling stories with which people feel a real personal connection but the trouble is we are legally unable to tell the stories and show the photos of children and young people in care due to confidentiality concerns.

However, there is a solution by creating a composite, merging together the stories of two or three children you can portray an accurate picture of what foster care is all about, while protecting the identity of individual children in care.



## Chapter 7: Advertising For Foster Carers

Overall research tells us that ‘word of mouth’ and ‘local approaches’ are the most effective strategies for attracting new foster carers. However, advertising certainly plays its part. There are several issues to take into consideration:

- the majority of current foster carers report that the main reason they become interested in being foster carers has to do with their commitment to children and families and to ensure Aboriginal children are connected to community and country
- foster carers believe that the messages to potential carers should be honest
- the profile of children and young people requiring care needs to be considered as part of any comprehensive marketing and promotion of foster care
- a consistent concern is the length of time taken between an enquiry being lodged and the first placement being made, so advertising must take into account the realities of timelines

Advertising campaigns that clearly target Aboriginal people have been found to attract enquiries from potential Aboriginal carers more effectively. Mainstream advertising often does not engage with our people. Therefore it is essential that the messages you deliver, and the method you use to communicate them, are carefully chosen to engage with the community you are targeting in your campaign.

Also keep in mind that many potential foster carers will look for information on fostering online. Websites such as AbSec (<http://www.absec.org.au>) or Fostering NSW (<http://www.fosteringnsw.com.au/>) are invaluable tools to help interested individuals and families gain an understanding of what is involved, self-select, and find information on how to contact agencies in their local area. Also ensure the appropriate information on recruitment is accessible via your own agency website’s home page.

Continuous campaigns have been found to be more effective than periodic or ‘as-needed’ campaigns, so if you have an advertising budget, consider spreading it across the whole year rather than spending it all in one fortnight.

Given that most organisations offering foster care have extremely small budgets for recruitment, why not focus your advertising efforts on one smaller or niche medium that will give you excellent rates, such as a local radio station or local press? This is likely to be more effective than one-off advertisements across several outlets.

## Chapter 8: Social Media

The recent exponential growth in the use of social media by people of all ages, and from all walks of life, provides a wonderful opportunity for many types of organisations to provide information and, more importantly, engage in conversation with their target audience.

Don't be too afraid to use social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, because of a lack of knowledge or familiarity. The key to social media engagement is to remain authentic, log-on regularly and use common sense. It can be a powerful tool to grow awareness of the good work your agency is doing and can engage potential carers, directing them to your agency website.

There are a number of generic online tools available to get you started, such as Dell's social media toolkit for small to medium businesses (see: <http://en.community.dell.com/dell-groups/small-business/p/socialmediatoolkit.aspx>). Engaging with social media need not cost very much money, but it will involve an investment of time. A specific staff member who is already familiar with social media may be the right person to engage on behalf of your agency.

One of the main traps you can fall into when trying to spread your message via social media is that it is not the same as traditional marketing: it is more a dialogue with your followers and/or potential foster carers.

Two-way communication is transparent and credible. Choose which platform you are going to focus your energies on, say Facebook and Twitter, set up accounts, link in with colleagues other agencies and carers, and start a conversation.

In the beginning, it may be a good idea to spend a little time watching how others interact on the various platforms, and listening to the way those conversations take place. That way you will begin to understand the way people are communicating and accurately determine how to involve your agency in the conversation.

However, remember that whatever you post on Facebook or Twitter, or any other social media channel for that matter, is in the public domain and will not only be seen by your target audience but also the media.

Be prepared for information you circulate on social media to end up in the hands of a journalist, so before you post make sure what you have written isn't controversial, doesn't have the potential to spark negative debate and isn't defamatory in any way. If in doubt, leave it out – this is a key message when using social media.

You will need to monitor the engagement of others with your social media platforms. We have all heard the horror stories of nasty things being posted on agencies unmonitored Facebook pages and it sitting there for weeks creating negative feedback for the agency.

### *Facebook and Social Media*

Facebook is the largest social networking site in the world, and has over a billion users. You might be surprised how many people in our communities use Facebook and other social media as a way of keeping in contact with family, community and finding out what is going on. The good news is that you can harness this potential to meet your recruitment goals for little cost, and as little effort as a few ten-minute periods a week.

Develop a Facebook page to tell people about events that you are running, information sessions that are being held locally and make sure you follow this up with posts about how successful it was. You can use Facebook to engage directly with potential foster carers through private messaging, and also to drive traffic to your own website by signposting people to particular pages that host a wealth of information or new items that are being featured on the site.

Facebook is an integral part of any contemporary recruitment campaign and should not only support, but reflect, what activity is happening across the board in your agency through pictures, posts and videos. The same goes for Twitter, which you can link with your Facebook page to make posting easier.

Standard Facebook ads are comprised of a small image and a short sentence of text. The higher you bid per click and the larger your overall budget is, the more frequently your ads will appear to Facebook users. The biggest advantage of Facebook advertising is that it uses highly advanced targeting methods that allow you to market your message, or different messages, to very specific groups of individuals.

Facebook lets you determine who will see your ads by filtering users according to age, gender, location, interests, education level, workplaces, hobbies, political views, relationship status and more. This means that you can create one ad with a message specifically for same-sex couples, and another for families specifically in one town, all with a few clicks of your mouse. Use Facebook advertising to run micro-campaigns that target population subsets with very specific messages.

### *Traffic*

You can send traffic directly to the foster care recruitment section of your website, which is particularly effective if you have a form which potential foster carers can use to enquire online. However, it is best practice to keep users within the social environment (e.g. on Facebook). They haven't come on to Facebook to sign up to be a carer so when you grab

their attention with your adverts you need to ensure you are able to grab their data within the platform if possible.

This will minimise bounce rates on your website (the number of users who click off immediately without viewing the content) and Facebook also rewards you with lower CPCs (cost per clicks) for keeping the users on the platform.

### *Headline*

Facebook ads are small, so you must use your space wisely. Your headline (25 characters) should seek to grab the attention of your target audience and make it clear that you are talking directly to them – this is made easier by Facebook’s capacity for targeting. Some examples include:

- Koori Carers Needed
- Become A Foster Parent for our mob
- Foster Carers – Blue Mountains
- Thinking About being a Koori Foster Carer?
- Caring For Koori Teens - Dubbo

### *Body and image*

The body of your ad can include up to 90 additional characters that you can use to list a phone number, a few details about foster care, or why the person viewing your ad might be the perfect carer. You also have the option to upload an image which you should do each and every time. Facebook users are very image driven (it’s the largest photo sharing site in the world) and the visual graphic you choose will make or break an ad. If possible, use a good picture of a child or young person (these can be purchased through stock photo websites such as [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)). If for some reason this not an option then the logo of your agency is better than no photo at all.

It is best practice to run multivariate campaigns (using a number of different images, titles and body text) and optimising the adverts based on what your target audience is responding to. Tracking the impact of individual variant advertisements will help you gain a deeper insight into your demographic on Facebook and also help you achieve a better return on your agency’s investment.

### *Budget*

Facebook advertising works like this: you bid to show your ad to your target demographics and compete to get your ads shown. When you advertise on Facebook you are competing with other advertisers who want to reach the same target group as you. You can choose between a cost per click (CPC) model where you pay only when a user clicks on your ad and is whisked away to the destination of your choice, or a cost per thousand (CPM) model

where you pay for your ad to be shown a certain amount of times. Practice wisdom suggests that the CPC model is slightly more effective for the purposes of promoting foster care.

To start your campaign you must determine a bid per click and daily budget. Facebook recommends a suggested bid and it is best to adhere to this in order to get your advertisements shown. You can experiment with Facebook advertising here: (<https://www.facebook.com/ads>).

### *Google AdWords*

Google AdWords displays your ads to people who are searching on Google. When you advertise with AdWords, you pick words or phrases (called “keywords”) that are related to your product or service, in this case foster care. When a potential enquirer searches Google using the same or similar keywords, your Google AdWords ads may appear alongside or above the search results as a “Sponsored Link,” in response to the keywords searched. Your website (and hopefully your online enquiry form) is now just a click away. Potential keywords include things like: foster care, fostering, adoption, permanent care, kinship care, foster carers, care for children, care for teenagers, and respite care.

For example, let’s say you run a foster care program in Newcastle, and want to attract more carers. You can set your ad to appear to customers in that location, and when someone living there searches Google for “foster care Newcastle”, they will see your ad and can click on it to connect to your agency. Reports on the effectiveness of your keywords are easily accessible online via Google Analytics (<http://www.google.com.au/analytics/>) so that you can make sure your ad is in the first page of search results for as many potential carers as possible.

### *Google Grants*

The best thing about Google AdWords is that, as a not-for-profit, you are eligible for a Google Grant. This means that you can get all the benefits of the largest online advertising program and the second most visited site on the Internet without spending a cent. More information about the excellent Google Grants program can be found here: (<http://www.google.com.au/grants/>). Your organisation must have Deductible Gift Recipient status to be considered.

### *Google Display Network and Remarketing*

The Google Display network includes all of the sites (apart from search sites), where you can buy ads through Google and their “Display Partners” (other advertising platforms and programs) so that when an internet user within your target geographic area is browsing the web (e.g. news websites, gumtree, eBay, forums, etc. - there are millions!), your Google AdWords advertisements will be displayed. For more information on this wider form of targeted advertising, see (<http://www.google.com.au/adwords/displaynetwork/>)

You can also make use of Google AdWords Remarketing which advertises your message to users who have visited your website (so you know they're already interested!) when they are browsing other sites on the Google Display Network. This occurs by you adding a piece of code (remarketing tag) to all the pages of your site. This adds visitors to your remarketing lists, so they can be targeted with further advertisements. For more information on this tool see (<http://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2453998?hl=en> )

### *Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)*

Put simply, search engine optimisation or SEO refers to where the link to your website appears on the list when someone uses a search engine to look up relevant keywords. Google AdWords and Google Grants are excellent ways of increasing the prominence of your website in these listings, but there are also other things you can do. Cross linking between pages of your website in order to provide more links to your most important pages may improve its visibility on search engines. You should ensure that the front page of your agency's website has a link to your foster care page, which should ideally include an online enquiry form for people to register their interest. If your agency works with partner organisations you should also investigate whether or not you are able to place a link to your foster care page on their website as well.

You should ensure that the content on your website includes words and phrases which potential foster carers are likely to enter into a search engine. For example, instead of writing "Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care Secretariat" write "AbSec". Brainstorm the kinds of words and phrases potential carers might use to search for how to become a foster carer in their local area – remember that the vast majority of these people will have no idea about Community Services, regions, catchments, different foster care providers, or anything that we take for granted.

Even if you don't have changes you need to make, it is a good idea to update your content frequently, even in small ways. Every time you update your content it brings your website to the attention of search engines. Doing something as simple as updating the list of your agency's upcoming information sessions once every one to two months can make a big difference to where your site appears in search listings.

Finally, metadata is important. (Now, don't freak out). Make a time to meet with your agency's IT person or with a friend or relative with some skills in the area and ask them about metadata. It includes things like the page title of a website. It is a descriptive name that appears in the title bar of the web browser when the browser is displaying that page, and is also used by search engines.

It is essential therefore that each page has a clear, meaningful title indicating its contents. If your title says "Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care Secretariat", then only people



searching for Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care Secretariat are going to find your information on foster care. Start noticing the titles of webpages you view for ideas. Metadata also encompasses things like keywords embedded in your website. Your IT person will be able to assist you with setting keywords that will attract potential foster carers.



## Chapter 9: Community Based, Local or Grassroots Recruitment

In recruiting foster carers, using community activities at a local or regional level alongside activities coordinated at a state-wide level will ensure the best chance for success. Well-built relationships within local community-minded businesses and other organisations are key for grass roots promotions.

Local need is the key factor that will encourage organisations to assist you by displaying a poster, some business cards or brochures, or possibly sponsoring an event. Business owners want to be seen as contributing to the wellbeing of the local community, and NGOs and government agencies generally also have a local focus.

Here are some places you should consider making contact with:

- Aboriginal Community Based Organisations
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Aboriginal Medical Services
- Schools / P&Cs/Child Care Centres
- Churches
- Community halls and neighbourhood centres
- Offices of Members of Parliament
- Libraries
- Anywhere with a 'community noticeboard' – local shopping centre, supermarkets

*Newsletters* - Lead time: 3-4 weeks

When you approach services such as schools, local Aboriginal organisations, churches, sports clubs you will find them to be willing to support your work with children and young people and they would only be too happy to include a couple of lines about your program in their newsletters/publications.

When targeting school newsletters you should phone the administration office, and for sports clubs you will need to phone the club secretary or president. While you are speaking to them about including a small ad in their newsletter you should also ask if they have capacity to put up a poster in the staff room (for a school) or the clubhouse (for a sports club). However when approaching churches, mosques and other religious institutions you may wish to arrange a visit, as religious leaders are often quite interested in the subject of foster care and may offer you other avenues with which to promote the cause. These can be important relationships to foster within your local community.

Most importantly – don't do all the groundwork and then only do it once! If a school, sports club or religious institution has helped you, re-visit the relationship in another 6 months and see if they will help you again.

*Presenting at Aboriginal organisations and community groups* - Lead time: 9-10 weeks

Aboriginal organisations, clubs and many other community groups are always looking for interesting guest speakers, offering to attend and speak can be a fantastic way of strengthening your program's connection to the community.

Ideally a worker and a foster carer should visit the group together and speak about their experiences of working with local children and young people, remember to take along some promotional materials, and ensure that you provide a few key ways in which the group can help. This may include donations, assisting in recruiting foster carers through their networks, providing free or discounted services to foster carers involved with your program, or becoming foster carers themselves.

*Local Councillors and Members of Parliament* - Lead time: 9-10 weeks

Make an appointment to see your local MP, mayor or councillor to present your recruitment campaign and identify clear goals for their electorate – for example '10 new Aboriginal foster care households for vulnerable local children'. Ask them how they could assist you; you may be surprised by their response.

Meeting with local politicians is all about making them passionate about your cause. If you sell it right it shouldn't be hard, your aim is to provide a better life for the most vulnerable children and families they represent.

At the very least they should be able to stock information on becoming a foster carer at their electorate office, although other results have included councillors instituting discounted rate payments for active foster carers, MPs opening recruitment campaigns or participating in media interviews on the subject, and parliamentary mentions of the work of local foster care organisations. Any of these outcomes would help raise the profile of your campaign, at no cost.

*Poster Run* - Lead time: 1-2 weeks

Sometimes the simplest ideas can be the best. Gather a couple of staff or volunteers together and go out to walk the streets of your local shopping strips. Go alone or in pairs and introduce yourself and your agency to the manager and ask if they would be happy to

display a recruitment poster for one month. It's best to go at the start of the month so the 'ask' is very clear. This will reduce the anxiety of shopkeepers thinking they might be committing to having a dog-eared poster remain in their window for the next six months.

If you have business cards be sure to take them with you, and remember to take your own Blu-Tack, sticky tape and scissors so you can put the posters up yourself and save them the trouble. It's important to have a couple of different methods of mounting your posters, as some managers won't appreciate Blu-Tack marks, and others won't want you to use tape. Once the month is over be sure you remember to call or send a letter to thank all the businesses that assisted you. It might seem like a very small favour, but they are asked for this sort of thing all the time and if you thank them in this manner it will help you stand out, and smooth the way for any future requests.

#### *Letterbox Drop* - Lead time: 3-4 weeks

If you are having issues recruiting in a particular suburb or township, or if you are trying to recruit a carer for a specific child in their local community, a letterbox drop can be a great (if time consuming) idea. Take the following steps:

1. Identify a neighbourhood based on your needs – whether it is a lack of carers from this area in general or the need to place a specific child or young person close to their school or local community. Select an area where there are several residential streets close together to minimise the total walking time.
2. Design a basic flyer which speaks to that local community. Mention the specific suburb or township, explain why there is a local need, and include a dot point or two about foster care and the Fostering NSW website for further information. The quality doesn't need to be too glossy, as long as the message is clear and relevant.
3. Organise a group of staff and volunteers who would be able to assist with an hour each of letterboxing in that local area. If it is further away from your office you may want to schedule a two or three hour blocks of time where you carpool and complete some together to maximise your efficiency. One person can complete approximately 180-200 flyers per hour without too much trouble in residential areas. Try to schedule your drops on days where there is not usually junk mail delivered.
4. Be sure to record the number of flyers delivered and the number of enquiries received from that area in the following month and compare it to the previous month. This will help you work out the effectiveness of your promotion and material and refine it for next time.

You can also pay to have your leaflets delivered, however this can quickly become prohibitively expensive and mean that your flyer will be lumped in with all the other advertising material. It also means it will not be delivered to letterboxes marked as 'No Junk Mail', whereas if you hand deliver your flyers you can qualify as a 'community notice' given you are a not-for-profit agency

*Stalls at shopping centres, fetes - Lead time: 11-12 weeks*

Stalls can add quite a lot to your campaign, but can easily become time and labour intensive so it is important to plan extremely well. Start by enquiring with your local council and shopping centres how you can go about booking a stall. Try to make sure that the dates complement any other recruitment activity you have planned.

Once you have a date or an event you can then develop a roster of staff and volunteers to help you staff your stall. If possible, having carers available to answer questions is extremely helpful hopefully someone that has good connections to the local community. Think about making the most of people's time while they are at your stall – what can they do to help engage with community can they offer face-painting bead making or other cultural activities

The next step is to think about the audience for your stall. If it is at a family fete or event you should consider targeting your messages to people who already have children, whereas a shopping centre may have a broader audience. Promotional materials are a good way of getting your agencies contact details taken home with people thinking about becoming a foster carer

You can hand out information packs, but also ask them to fill out their name, postcode, phone number and email to register their interest in attending an upcoming information session. This way you can follow up and ensure they don't slip away.

*Involving current foster carers in recruitment*

If you were thinking about becoming a foster carer, who would you most want to talk to find out more about what is involved? For most people the opportunity to speak to current foster carers is the single most important part of the recruitment process. Speaking to a foster carer is what will make foster care seem real, what will make it seem achievable, and what will inspire people to take the next step themselves.

We've already spoken about featuring the stories of your foster carers in the media, but there are many other ways in which you can include them in your recruitment processes.

Here is a list of methods used by agencies:

- Having a carer staff information stalls at public events or shopping centres alongside a worker from their agency
- Inviting a carer to be a guest speaker at information sessions
- Featuring a 'carer panel' of three or four carers participating in a question and answer session during one session of each training course
- Asking carers to phone potential carers who made an enquiry - but who have not proceeded with the process - to see if they would like to ask any questions
- After potential carers have gone through training, linking them with a carer 'buddy' who can support them as they go through the assessment and accreditation process

Think about other ways in which you can enable foster carers to spread the word about fostering. People will often approach a foster carer they know when thinking about applying to be a carer themselves – carers regularly report being approached in this manner at school, work, and social events, even when they don't know the person who wishes to ask questions! Providing your current foster carers with information about your current recruitment needs and upcoming information sessions enables them to share this information with interested people, and doesn't cost a cent. Make sure you include this information in your carer newsletter so that they can access it easily.

When you are thinking about ways in which you might involve your current carers in the recruitment process, it is extremely important to remember that your carers are volunteers, and that in all likelihood you are already asking them to do an awful lot of unpaid work. Consider offering them incentives for assisting your agency with its recruitment efforts in the form of gift vouchers and reimbursement for travel expenses, as a way of acknowledging their additional contribution.

#### *Recruiting for diverse and complex needs*

Agency experience has shown that a focus on maximising recruitment of the general pool of foster carers has at the same time increased the capacity for recruiting carers for children and young people with diverse and complex needs. Throughout your agency's recruitment process you should be speaking with applicants about the different kinds of care required such as care for children with disabilities, care for adolescents, one-to-one or complex care, and care for sibling groups. Plant the seed early on, and use the time it takes to train and

assess potential carers to demystify specialist streams of foster care and encourage appropriate applicants to try it out.

Strategies proven to be successful include:

- Asking applicants to identify what types of care they would consider, rather than what types of care they would most like to do, thus reducing the number of applicants who immediately rule out certain kinds of care
- Featuring current foster carers who are providing specialist forms of care prominently in recruitment and training activities
- Providing promising applicants with a carer mentor who is providing a specialist form of care
- Encouraging new carers to try providing respite for a child or children with special care needs, thus 'testing the waters'
- Start a newsletter which is distributed to all your applicants and use it to highlight the current needs of your program – provide profiles of foster carers and profiles of de-identified children requiring care
- Prioritise the training and assessment process for potential carers who identify as willing to provide specialist forms of care and let potential carers know that this is your policy
- Looking within the existing networks of specific young people requiring care and identifying and supporting potential carers
- Looking within your current pool of general carers for suitable carers who with extra training and support may be able to take up the challenge of caring for a child with complex needs.

Another successful method involves recruiting a young person who was formerly in a specialist stream of foster care to attend training or information sessions and speak of the benefits having capable foster carers has had on their life. Finding an appropriate and willing young person can be a challenge, but the value of this approach cannot be underestimated. Don't forget to provide compensation for their time and effort.

## Chapter 10: Conclusion

Aboriginal family structure has remained throughout the years – extended family members have a vital role in caring for our children, and it's not just about the nuclear family. Aunties, Uncles, Nan, Pop and cousins all have a role in our families. There is an increasing trend of women who are entering or remaining in fulltime work and extended family help out with bringing up our children. The internet has developed into an incredibly powerful and pervasive force in our everyday lives.

Our recruitment methods therefore have to be both strategic and responsive to these technology changes in our society. Devising a way of keeping up with the advances of the 'Koori Grapevine' and using it to our advantage to recruit foster carers, as well as creating new and engaging ways for the public to learn about foster care.

When thinking about recruitment it is important not to fall into the trap of merely increasing the number of enquiries made to your agency. All too often agencies fail to maintain a stable, diverse carer pool because they ignore the importance of supporting potential foster carers through their journey up to and beyond their accreditation as foster carers.

Here are eight practical things that you can do to maximise your chances of meeting your recruitment objectives.

### *1. Be customer-friendly in your approach*

Without foster carers we are unable to provide care for the children and young people for whom we are responsible. How you treat potential carers will determine whether they continue with their application and become a foster carer. Put yourself in their shoes – how would you like to be treated? Potential carers are, like other consumers, expecting a certain standard of service. If your agency doesn't meet this standard, you will find that your conversion rate will suffer accordingly.

### *2. Know the characteristics and needs of the children and young people*

Speak optimistically but honestly about children and young people who require care. As potential carers go through the training and assessment process, provide them with reliable information to make informed decisions, including all relevant information regarding the children, their needs and the circumstances of their birth families. Respect applicants and give them the opportunity to explore areas where they may have doubts. Trust their ability to make good decisions for themselves.

### *3. Be knowledgeable about all aspects of the caring role*

Potential carers will look to you to answer their questions – and there will be many questions! Be prepared to answer them with confidence when answering the phone,



providing training, or during an assessment home visit. If you don't know the answer, promise to get back to them and follow through in a timely manner.

#### *4. Work to rule people in, not out*

It is important to remember that the most ordinary, and sometimes unusual people regularly turn out to be amazing foster carers with the appropriate training and support. The vast majority of the time when people apply to become a foster carer they do so for an altruistic purpose, full of passion and emotion. Your work is to maintain that passion and leverage it into informed and sustained commitment to vulnerable children and young people.

#### *5. Be time sensitive*

The longer it takes to move from step to step in the recruitment process, the less likely you will be to retain potential carers. However, if applicants are treated well and helped to feel like part of a team early on they are more likely to stay the course. It is important to be honest about the reasons for delays when they occur and to maintain contact with applicants during this time. Consider the possibility of inviting them to agency events or putting them in touch with a carer support group.

#### *6. Embrace social media and information technology*

The Internet is here to stay, and whether we like it or not, it is now the single best way of reaching potential foster carers. It is cost effective, efficient, and provides us with the opportunity to broadcast our message to the world in both general, and specific ways. If your agency is not yet using the Internet as a foster care recruitment tool, start today.

#### *7. Use your community networks*

Remember to use the networks you have in the community, the connections you have with families and staff to promote your recruitment needs and tap into potential carers. The Koori Grapevine is one of our most important assets that we have in distributing information to our communities.

#### *8. Empower your carers*

Some agencies are so afraid of what their current carers may say to potential applicants that they actively try to keep them from any situation where they might speak about their experiences lest they say something inappropriate or negative – even up to monitoring their online comments! If you feel that this is necessary, then perhaps it is time to examine the practice of your agency, or the appropriateness of your current carers for the role. Help your carers feel proud about what they do, and encourage them to share it with the world. They are one of your greatest assets!

We hope you have found this recruitment manual helpful and practical. AbSec will continue to work with member agencies providing out of home care in NSW to identify the best ways to improve the recruitment and long term retention of quality carers.

Through our work with member agencies, we aim to support a robust foster care service system in NSW. AbSec looks forward to continuing to support member agencies in their valuable role of creating brighter futures for Aboriginal children and young people in NSW.

If you would like any further information or support in the recruitment of Aboriginal carers for our kids please contact AbSec on Ph: (02) 9559 5299

Good luck!

Insert your logo here

## Appendix A

### Campaign Checklist

1.	Analysis of referrals (previous 6-12 months)	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Types of carer audit	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Identify targets and objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Assess available resources, including budget	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Liaise with key stakeholders including current carers and community	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Incorporate learnings from previous campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Liaise with other agencies in the area to see where you can collaborate and pool resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Develop a campaign plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Develop an internal communications strategy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) general staff briefing:</li> <li>ii) ask for volunteers and ideas:</li> <li>iii) notify reception staff of protocol for managing enquiries from potential foster carers and the campaign message</li> <li>iv) ask CEO if they are happy to appear in the media</li> <li>v) find out the correct protocol for managing media enquiries</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Create and distribute project timeline	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Review and update processes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) set dates and book venues for information sessions and post-campaign training</li> <li>ii) set up system for logging enquiries</li> <li>iii) develop and distribute flowchart for responding to enquiries</li> <li>iv)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Review and update agency website	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Set evaluation process	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix B

Insert your logo here

### Carer Enquiry Form

Date of enquiry      /      /

Name of worker \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Method of enquiry	<input type="checkbox"/> Call Centre	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency Website
	<input type="checkbox"/> Fostering NSW Website	<input type="checkbox"/> other

Name of enquirer			
Address			
Suburb		Post Code	
Home phone:		Mobile Phone	
Work phone		Email	
Email address			
Date of birth of enquirer			
Age of enquirer	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 55 & over		
Cultural background of enquirer			
Would you consider	<input type="checkbox"/> Respite care <input type="checkbox"/> Short term care <input type="checkbox"/> Long term care <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency care		
Would you consider caring for	<input type="checkbox"/> A child with a disability <input type="checkbox"/> an adolescent <input type="checkbox"/> a sibling group		
Where did you find out about the service?	<input type="checkbox"/> TV <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Local Newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> Koori Mail / NIT <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
Other Information you would like to add?			

## Appendix C

### Foster Carer Media Profile



Name of Carer:			
Please state if carer is willing to have his/her full name used in the media			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No
Age (approximate)		Nationality/Heritage:	
Suburb			
Agency			
Years of Care provided		Household Type	
Current Placements		Own Children	
Type of Care provided			
Total number of placements			
Briefly describe a story or hook relating to this carer that may interest the media			

Contact person and phone number for stories relating to this carer	
--	--

## Appendix D

### Media Release

*Media Release* (INSERT DATE HERE)

Insert your logo here

#### **Aboriginal Carers for Aboriginal Kids**

(Your Agency Name Here) is running one of the biggest ever recruitment campaigns for Aboriginal foster carers in (Your District).

Our campaign will be officially launched by (NAME) at (INSERT PLACE) on (INSERT DATE) with the aim of recruiting new Aboriginal carers and raising awareness.

“We want to raise awareness of foster care in the community and encourage people (Insert Campaign slogan)”, find out more and give it a go.

“Being a foster carer is a challenging but incredibly rewarding role that can help change the life of an Aboriginal child or young person.”

“We need Aboriginal foster carers in areas to help our kids remain connected to Country and to community. We need to ensure that Cultural ties are maintained.”

Within NSW Aboriginal children make up nearly a third of the number of children in foster care. This campaign will focus on recruiting Aboriginal foster carers to look after these children, to keep our kids connected with their culture.

“As the campaign states, we want people to open their heart and consider becoming a foster carer.

“We need more Aboriginal foster carers from all walks of life – singles, couples, straight and same sex couples, older people, younger people, and religious backgrounds.

“Over the coming weeks we will be hosting foster care information sessions and would encourage people from <INSERT AREA> to come along and find out more.”

Individuals, couples and families who are interested in finding out more about foster care or becoming a carer should (Insert your website) for further information or call (Insert your phone number).

For media enquiries or to arrange an interview of phone contact:  
(INSERT CONTACT DETAILS HERE)

## Appendix E

Insert your logo here

### Template letter to Local Members of Parliament

(INSERT DATE HERE)

Dear (Insert Name, eg Politician etc)

I am writing to ask for your support with a very important initiative aimed at raising awareness of foster care and the need for more Aboriginal carers.

There are approximately (insert number) of Aboriginal children and young people within (insert local area) who are unable to live with their own family and require a safe and supportive home. Aboriginal foster carers provide Aboriginal children and young people with a safe and secure place for our kids in need.

(Insert information about your organisation and foster care programs here)

As a (insert role of person you are writing to), you are in a position to inform the local community about the need for more Aboriginal foster carers and encourage them to find out more about the role of foster carers.

Enclosed you will find some valuable information about our current recruitment campaign and a copy of our promotional poster. I ask that you raise awareness of the need for more Aboriginal foster carers by displaying the poster and sharing the information with your constituents.

I thank you for your help with this incredibly important task – finding safe and supportive Aboriginal foster carers to look after Aboriginal children in need.

Please contact (insert name and contact details here) for further information or additional materials. You can also find out more about the campaign by visiting the fostering NSW website on [www.fosteringnsw.com.au](http://www.fosteringnsw.com.au) or your organisations website (insert your organisation website here) and you can include AbSec's website [www.absec.org.au](http://www.absec.org.au)

Yours sincerely

(Insert CEO signature)

(Insert CEO Name)  
Chief Executive Officer

## Appendix F

### Recruitment Campaign Work Plan

Project Components	Time Frame	Strategies	Outcome
<p>Assess Need – who is your target audience. Analyse your current carer pool. Compare this with a current snapshot your organisation has received within the last 6-12 months</p>			
<p>Define Target – Use the information in Step 1 to set clear goals for your recruitment campaign. Is there a primary as well as a secondary target group? Are there target groups in your area that are under-represented in the carer pool?</p>			
<p>Promotion – Take into account the demographics, geographical location, attitudes, awareness levels, plus any barriers</p>			



<p>Where and When to recruit foster carers – Review the strengths and weaknesses of your previous recruitment campaigns, and other recruitment campaigns with similar goals.</p>			
<p>Resource Needs – Staff Promotional</p>			
<p>Internal Communication Strategy</p>			
<p>Project Timeline</p>			
<p>Review and Update your website</p>			
<p>Logging Enquires – Develop an Enquiry sheet</p>			

Working With Media Ads, Editorials, Foster Care Media Profiles			
Foster Carer Ambassadors			
Social Media Facebook, Twitter, online forums Google Grants, Google AdWords etc			
Community Based, Local or grassroots recruitment for eg Aboriginal Community Based Organisations, Land Councils, AMS's, etc.			

## Appendix G

### **Kids in Care Cup – a case study for planning media around a big event**

The Kids in Care Cup Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout competition was run for the first year in 2013 at WIN Stadium in Wollongong. The event raised awareness of the need for more Aboriginal carers for Aboriginal children and young people. Public relations (PR) outreach was undertaken at a local level as well as at a state-wide level, with PR outreach for this event achieved more than 30 media hits across print, television, online and radio.

The Kids in Care Cup team developed an event poster to raise awareness of the campaign and event, while Aboriginal out-of-home care agencies were supplied with the poster one month prior to the event with a request that they display it in their agency and around their local community.

A key messages document was developed for the Kids in Care Cup, which was helpful when ‘pitching’ the story to journalists and writing media releases, and briefing key spokespeople.

Each rugby league team provided a team spokesperson as did AbSec, ACWA and Community Services. Each spokesperson was briefed on the key messages over the phone, provided with the briefing sheet and were ‘on call’ to answer any media enquiries that came through.

Media outlets from each rugby league team’s local town were contacted two weeks prior to the event. The media was encouraged to highlight their local team’s involvement in the state-wide initiative and raise awareness about the need for more carers locally.

A media invitation was sent to print, radio and television outlets in the Illawarra region, along with Indigenous outlets such as National Indigenous Times and NITV a week prior to the event, with a time blocked out for interviews with key spokespeople.

Because timeliness is so important to the media, regionally specific and tailored media releases were sent out the morning after the event. We increased the chance of the media reporting on the event by including a link to download photos from the day and the competition results and making sure that the heading mentioned the team name and region, and the relevant spokesperson was quoted.

Social media was used to amplify the event with Facebook posts and updates in the lead-up. The Kids in Care Cup Facebook page was able to increase its reach by linking in with the Fostering NSW Facebook, which has more than 24,000 followers. This involved reciprocal sharing of posts, as well each page commenting on and ‘liking’ the other’s Facebook posts.

A photographer and videographer were hired to record the event. The footage was then shared on social media, uploaded to the Fostering NSW YouTube channel and included in a resources DVD which was provided to Aboriginal agencies.