



MEDIA RELEASE

NSW Government Failing Aboriginal Children: Urgent Action Needed

Published Friday, 14 March 2025

The latest Productivity Commission data confirms what Aboriginal communities have been saying for years—governments are failing our children, young people and families. While New South Wales (NSW) has seen a slight improvement in Closing the Gap Target 12 (reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care), it remains far off track. It is set to miss the 2031 target of a 45% reduction by a significant margin.

AbSec, the peak body for Aboriginal children, young people and families in NSW, calls on the NSW Governments to urgently expand investment in Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), particularly in early intervention and family preservation services.

“Governments continue to pour money into non-Aboriginal organisations but not in the solutions our communities have been leading for generations and that actually work to keep our children safe and together with their families,” said John Leha, CEO of AbSec.

“The numbers might look slightly better, but this is not success. The system is still broken, and Aboriginal children are still taken from their families at unacceptable rates and not reunified with their families when they are.”

A System That Still Takes and Keeps Our Children

A deeper look at the data paints a stark picture:

- The number of Aboriginal children and young people restored to their parents has [dropped by 34% since 2019](#).
- The number of Aboriginal children and young people on guardianship orders has [increased by 20%](#).
- The number of Aboriginal children and young people exiting out-of-home care (OOHC) has remained stagnant, with [just over 1,000 per year since 2019](#).

“We can’t fix this system without much better transparency from the NSW Government,” John Leha said.

“We are calling for urgent public reporting of the data needed to track what is happening. Right now, fewer Aboriginal children and young people, are being restored to their families, and more are being placed on long-term orders. That is not progress—it is another form of removal.”

The Solution Is Clear: Invest in ACCOs Now

The only way forward is for the NSW Government to fully implement the Priority Reforms under the Closing the Gap Agreement:

1. **Formal partnerships and shared decision-making** – Aboriginal people must have decision-making power in child protection.
2. **Building the ACCO sector** – Increased, sustained funding for Aboriginal-led child and family services.
3. **Transforming government institutions** – Addressing systemic racism and bias in the child protection system.
4. **Transparency and data sharing** – The NSW Government must provide clear, publicly accessible data.

“Governments know what they need to do. They signed the agreements committing to work differently,” John Leha said. “We have the solutions. We just need the resources to implement them. Every day they delay, another child loses connection to their family, community, and culture. That is not just a policy failure—it is a moral failure”

A Call for Urgent Action

AbSec is calling on the NSW Government to:

- Immediately increase investment in ACCOs delivering family preservation and early intervention services.
- Provide full transparency by making data on Aboriginal children in OOHC publicly accessible.
- Fully implement the Priority Reforms to Close the Gap.

“We are done waiting. The NSW Government must act now to ensure Aboriginal children remain with their families and communities, where they belong,” John Leha concluded.

[Click to read our latest submission](#)



Please direct all media inquiries to the
AbSec Communications Team at media@absec.org.au

Carina Stokes
Manager, Communications & Memberships
0493 165 759