



MEDIA RELEASE

New Free Tender Support to ACCOs as \$350 Million Family Preservation Funding Opens

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AbSec, the peak body for Aboriginal children, young people and families in New South Wales, has launched a new initiative providing free, independent consultancy support to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) preparing tenders for the NSW Government's \$350 million Family Preservation funding package.

During the Department of Communities and Justice's (DCJ) eight-week tender window, ACCOs—whether or not they are AbSec members—can now access expert procurement and tender-writing advice to ensure their submissions reflect the full quality and cultural responsiveness of their services.

The model includes five-year block funding contracts, equitable pricing, and a commitment to direct 40% of service delivery funding to ACCOs—a significant shift that reflects a more inclusive, culturally grounded response to keeping children and young people safe and connected.

AbSec CEO, John Leha said: *"We need our ACCOs to be well-equipped and positioned in this process to receive fair access to this unprecedented funding opportunity."*

"ACCOs are primarily the experts in designing and delivering effective and culturally-responsive support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in need."

"But a good policy on paper means little unless our community organisations are genuinely equipped to participate. This support is about fairness—it's about ensuring ACCOs have a real shot."

"These community organisations don't usually have enough resources to dedicate to navigating the bureaucratic process and paperwork that comes with large scale government investment."

"Plainly, too often, resource limitations—not lack of capability—stand in the way of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations winning government contracts"

"Tendering is one of the most important and often most convoluted of these processes."

"We've seen this gap and we're stepping in to help level that field" All NSW ACCOs (regardless of AbSec Membership status) can register now to access this support on the AbSec website: [Tender Writing Support | AbSec NSW](#).

The Family Preservation Framework: A New Chapter in New South Wales Policy

The Family Preservation (AFP) Framework is one of the most important success stories for the Aboriginal child, family and community care sector in recent years.

Since 2021 AbSec's partnership with DCJ and its role in drawing ACCOs in to contribute the co-designing of the program has led to some significant outcomes for the sector and, ultimately, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families caught up in the out-of-home care (OOHC) system.

Most significant was the NSW Government's decision to direct 40% (\$350 million) of Family Preservation funds exclusively toward ACCOs, AbSec CEO, John Leha said at the time: *"This approach is more than a policy shift—it is an act of justice.*

"It restores our communities' right to care for our children and young people in ways that reflect who we are, our values, connections, strengths, where we come from, and what we need to thrive."

But with the funding now moving into competitive tender, Leha warned the process must not repeat the inequities of the past.

"In previous procurement rounds, ACCOs were often made to compete with one hand tied behind their back—stretched on capacity, with little access to specialist support," said Leha.

"That ends now. AbSec is doing what a peak body should: removing barriers and backing community-led success." With this funding now at tendering stage, the real work begins and AbSec's provision of free, independent consultancy support for ACCOs represents another example of practical and positive influence in the sector.

"Our ultimate goal is to significantly reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families entering the out-of-home-care system," said Leha.

"It is a core purpose as the peak organisation to build and strengthen the ACCO sector and ensure Aboriginal voices are heard by the government.

The consultancy support is available to any ACCO in New South Wales, regardless of membership status. Registration is open now via [Tender Writing Support | AbSec NSW](#).

"The Family Preservation model and funding allocation demonstrates what real structural change looks like in policy." said Leha.

"Now the job is to ensure it's carried through into practice, making sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are not only heard in design but embedded in every stage of delivery".



Please direct all media inquiries to the
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AbSec is the peak organisation dedicated to the welfare of Aboriginal children, young people and families in New South Wales.

We advocate for the rights of our little ones and youth to provide crucial support to families, carers and communities. 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.