



AbSec

NSW Child, Family & Community
Peak Aboriginal Corporation

From the Cradle to the Dreaming

Shining a light on Deadly Practice at
Orange Aboriginal Medical Service

September 2025



**Orange Aboriginal
Medical Service**

Acknowledgement of Country

AbSec acknowledge the Gadigal and Wangal People of the Eora Nation, the land on which our office stands, and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the Elders, leaders and advocates within our sector and pay our respects to them as knowledge holders within this space and every space.

AbSec acknowledges the Stolen Generations who never came home and the ongoing impact of government policy and practice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families.

We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which Orange Aboriginal Medical Service operates, the Wiradjuri people, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the lands we serve.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following study report may contain images of deceased persons.



AbSec

NSW Child, Family & Community
Peak Aboriginal Corporation

AbSec is the peak organisation advocating for the rights, safety, and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families, and communities in New South Wales.

As an Aboriginal-led organisation, we champion self-determination and work towards a child and family system that is culturally safe, community-driven, and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

AbSec leads policy reform, strengthens the capacity of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), and ensures that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people remain connected to family, community, and culture. We are a key member of the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO) and the primary organisation responsible for Target 12 under Closing the Gap.

Through advocacy, research, and sector leadership, AbSec works to address the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care and promote holistic, community-led approaches to child and family wellbeing. Our commitment is to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up strong in culture, identity, and connection.

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

In working towards this vision, we are guided by these principles:

- Acknowledging and respecting the diversity and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Acting with professionalism and integrity in striving for quality, culturally responsive services and supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
- Underpinning the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop our own processes and systems for our communities, particularly in meeting the needs of our children, young people, families and carers.
- Being holistic, integrated and solutions-focused through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control in delivering outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities.
- Committing to a future that empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, representing our communities, and the agencies there to serve them, with transparency and drive.

Deadly Practice case study

Executive summary



**Orange Aboriginal
Medical Service**

AbSec is proud to spotlight the Deadly Practice at Orange Aboriginal Medical Service (OAMS), a shining example of what it means to deliver culturally safe, holistic care through an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO). Guided by the principle of caring 'from the cradle to the dreaming', OAMS and its dedicated staff support families through integrated, strengths-based services that uplift health, wellbeing, and cultural connection.

This Deadly Practice highlights:

- The core components of OAMS's early intervention services.
- How families engage with, and benefit from, early support programs.
- The tangible difference that OAMS's diverse services and continuous, culturally safe care make to people's lives.
- Challenges for future planning and service delivery.



Image supplied by OAMS

Additional content

Data privacy and protection

We are committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of individuals involved in our studies and consultations. Any personal data included in this report has been used with consent and in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

Intellectual Property Rights

All content, unless otherwise stated, is the property of Orange Aboriginal Medical Service and AbSec. Unauthorised use of this material without express written consent is prohibited.

Table of contents

AbSec NSW	03
Executive summary	04
Glossary of acronyms	05
Introduction	06
• Key service arms	
• Out and about in community	
• Accessibility and eligibility	
Early intervention focus	09
Impacts and outcomes	11
Conclusion	12

Glossary of acronyms

AbSec	Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat
ABC	Aboriginal Building Connections Parenting Program
ACCHO	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisation
DCJ	NSW Department of Communities and Justice
FDR	Family Dispute Resolution
IMR	Improving Multidisciplinary Response
OAMS	Orange Aboriginal Medical Service
OOHC	Out-of-home care
SEWB	Social emotional wellbeing

Introduction

Founded and incorporated in 2004 on Wiradjuri Country, the Orange Aboriginal Medical Service (OAMS) opened its clinic doors in 2005 with five staff and a mission: to deliver accessible, culturally safe healthcare to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Central Western New South Wales.

Led by Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Jamie Newman—a proud Wiradjuri man and one of the original staff members—OAMS has grown into a major service hub. As of June 2025, OAMS employs more than 150 staff, has six Board Directors and has a wide network that includes business partners, contractors, and volunteers—reflecting its growing impact. The service model extends beyond biomedical care; delivering a wraparound, community-led approach that supports the person and their family as a whole.



Image supplied by OAMS

OAMS key service arms include:

Bagaray-Bang: Medical clinic

Delivers comprehensive, culturally responsive, GP-led healthcare to the community. Bagaray-Bang offers bulk-billed services that integrate primary care with allied health, mental health, and chronic disease management.

- **Ngumbaaydyil:** Integrated team care

Provides culturally safe, coordinated multidisciplinary care whilst empowering individuals with chronic illnesses to manage their health and access essential services.

Yirambarranha: Dental clinic

Provides culturally safe, bulk-billed dental care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. This aims to promote better oral health. promoting better oral health through prevention, treatment, and education.



Image supplied by OAMS

The Walu-Win Centre: Physical wellness

A purpose-built physical wellness hub offering culturally safe, GP-referred programs. This includes cardiac rehab, diabetes support, lung health, and strength training. These programs aim to empower clients through holistic, supervised exercise and rehabilitation services.

Miyan Wambinya: Healthy aging and NDIS disability services

Culturally safe, person-centred NDIS coordination, plan management and other services to promote independence, dignity and community connection through the ageing journey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

Mununbul Murungidyal: Holistic healing

Integrated support for social and emotional wellbeing which connects clients to essential services to address housing, financial assistance, family safety, and mental health care needs.

- Bilingarra Bagurany Barraminya: Suicide prevention and aftercare
- Walan Ngay-Ny Dhulubang: Social emotional wellbeing (SEWB)
- Wagirra-Dhiyala: Alcohol and other drug services
- Marang Gunya: Community centre
- Yarruwala Ngulubul: Men's group

Wala-ma-Nha-yali-nya: Early years children and families

Family-centred early childhood programs and mediation services. Wala-ma-Nha-yali-nya also includes the development of a multi-functional Aboriginal Child and Family Centre. The Centre contributes to the positive health, welfare and development of children in the Central West NSW region.

Yiriyirimbang: Out-of-home care (OOHC)

An Aboriginal-led program that supports children and young people in statutory care by strengthening their connection to family, community, and Country through kinship care, cultural planning, and family-led decision-making.

Nginha-Guliya: Community engagement and membership

Fosters inclusive community participation through initiatives such as Confirmation of Aboriginality and membership programs that strengthen cultural identity and empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals to actively contribute to OAMS's mission of holistic, community-led healthcare.

Marrumbang: Facilities, assets and maintenance

Ensures the seamless operation of all OAMS locations by managing infrastructure, equipment, and physical environments, thereby supporting the delivery of culturally safe, high-quality healthcare services across the Central West NSW region.



Image supplied by OAMS

Out and about in community

OAMS maintains a strong, visible presence in the community. Staff proudly represent the service at events and interagency meetings, fostering relationships grounded in respect and cultural integrity. Branded uniforms and vehicles featuring Wiradjuri-designs help community members easily identify and trust the OAMS team.

Accessibility and eligibility

Anyone seeking health, dental, or wellbeing support is welcome at OAMS. While some programs specifically serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, OAMS's inclusive philosophy ensures all community members feel safe and respected.

Referrals come from individuals, families, and other services with consent. If a referral doesn't align with a program, OAMS staff will actively connect individuals to suitable services to ensure relevant support.

Early intervention focus

Central to this Deadly Practice is OAMS's early intervention work with families. OAMS secured funding through the Department of Social Services to deliver the Improving Multidisciplinary Response (IMR) initiative—a proactive service model aiming to keep children out of statutory child protection systems by strengthening families through timely, culturally relevant support.

By addressing root causes (such as trauma, mental health challenges, substance misuse, housing insecurity, and disconnection from culture), OAMS supports families to stay together and thrive.

Wala-ma-Nha-yali-nya *"Care Until Strong, Raise a Child"*

Two flagship programs under this model include:

1. Early Years Child and Family Program
2. First Nations Family Dispute Resolution Program, supported by the Attorney-General's Department

Both programs elevate cultural knowledge, family strengths, and kinship structures. Families set their own goals and are supported to build healthy, stable home environments. Services are holistic, practical, and informed by community-identified needs.

A core feature of Wala-ma-Nha-yali-nya is the community cooking class. Open to all ages and genders, the program reduces isolation, teaches budgeting and nutrition—all within a culturally safe space for people to connect, yarn, and build life skills. Staff support participants beyond the kitchen—offering informal advice, referrals, and encouragement in a culturally safe environment. Childcare is also available to support accessibility for parents. Referrals for additional or continued OAMS services are offered when needed.



Image supplied by OAMS

Case management

Case management at OAMS provides wraparound support tailored to each family's needs. This includes:

- Transport to medical and specialist appointments.
- Housing support and advocacy.
- Court support and assistance navigating systems.
- Family violence safety planning.
- Connections to drug and alcohol, mental and physical health services.

Rather than focusing on deficits, OAMS empowers families by recognising their strengths, fostering resilience, and encouraging cultural connection.



Image supplied by OAMS

Mums and Bubs Playgroup

Designed for children aged 0–5, this playgroup promotes early childhood development through culturally enriched activities such as arts and crafts. Healthy morning teas are shared, creating a space for peer support and connection among mothers. Staff link families with parenting resources, referrals, and social supports, encouraging positive, confident parenting. Referrals for additional or continued OAMS services can be offered when needed.

Youth Yarning Circle

This weekly gathering offers a culturally safe space for young people to connect with peers and mentors— sharing stories and talking through challenges. Staff support young people to lead discussions and strengthen pride in identity and culture, building confidence and leadership. Referrals for additional or continued OAMS services can be offered when needed.

First Nations Family Dispute Resolution program

The Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) program offers culturally safe, trauma-informed mediation for families navigating separation and conflict. The process helps families to reach agreements about parenting and care, with a child-focused, self-determined approach.

The FDR program honours extended kinship systems, recognising Aboriginal concepts of family. 'Community Connectors' serve as trusted first contacts for the program, by conducting needs assessments and delivering the Aboriginal Building Connections (ABC) parenting program, before mediation begins.

Accredited FDR practitioners facilitate respectful, confidential mediation, and their responsibilities include:

- Goal setting and communication support.
- Managing power imbalances.
- Issuing Section 60I certificates when appropriate.
- Recording agreements and providing referrals (not legal advice).

Impacts and outcomes

Impacts and outcomes (as of February 2025)

- FDR facilitated 10 conferences and managed 19 active referrals.

Impacts and outcomes (as of August 2025)

- IMR received 115 family referrals, with 56 fully engaged.
- Successfully diverted 75 percent of families from child protection intervention.

Families reported improved access to health services, transport, and culturally safe programs. Children's health and development were supported through regular check-ups and specialist appointments.

A mother and bub's story

A young mum from Boggabilla was referred to OAMS after giving birth to a critically ill baby in Western Sydney. Alone, far from home and support networks, she faced high-risk concerns.

Despite being out-of-area, OAMS took the referral and supported the young mother through a tailored plan. The plan included support with housing, transport to medical appointments, food and bill support, and participation in parenting programs.

The result? A thriving mum and bub, together and strong. The high-risk concerns were alleviated through OAMS's compassionate, wraparound support. Today, they remain safe and connected to culture and community. Mum and bub continue to access relevant assistance and bub is meeting key developmental milestones.



Image supplied by OAMS



**Orange Aboriginal
Medical Service**

Conclusion

Orange Aboriginal Medical Service demonstrates what is possible when Aboriginal-led organisations are resourced to lead. Their culturally safe, holistic model is a blueprint for early intervention, prevention, and healing.

Their greatest challenge is the uncertainty of funding. Short-term contracts limit their ability to plan, recruit and retain staff, and respond flexibly to complex family needs. Securing sustainable, long-term investment is essential to allow OAMS to continue this life-changing work.

OAMS calls for greater government investment in long-term, Aboriginal-led early intervention programs—because keeping families safe, well, and together is everyone's responsibility.

AbSec thanks OAMS and its incredible staff for their leadership, care, and commitment to keeping First Nations families strong in culture, health, and connection.

Image supplied by OAMS



AbSec

NSW Child, Family & Community
Peak Aboriginal Corporation

AbSec - NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (ICN 8926)

C301-3-2, Level 3, 104 Eveleigh Street, Redfern NSW 2016
(02) 9559 5299 | admin@absec.org.au | absec.org.au