

AbSec Gala Dinner to Celebrate Culture, Leadership and Sector Progress in 2024–2025

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AbSec – the NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Organisation – will host its annual Gala Dinner and 2025 *NSW Aboriginal Child and Family Awards* night at the Murrook Culture Centre on Worimi Country, celebrating the outstanding achievements of Aboriginal leaders, carers, organisations, allies, and advocates who are driving better futures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families across NSW.

The event follows a year of mixed progress across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family sector in NSW. Following years of sustained advocacy by AbSec and other Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), we are delighted that the NSW Government committed to expanded investment in Aboriginal-led family preservation approaches and long overdue increases in allowances for foster and kin carers in 2025.

However, we also have seen a significant increase in Aboriginal children coming into care, ever decreasing numbers of Aboriginal children that have been removed being restored to their families and increasingly intrusive approaches by the NSW Government in how ACCOs manage their services. For instance, demanding that ACCOs seek approval for low-value asset purchases. This is against a backdrop of scathing reports about how the NSW Department of Communities and Justice mismanages the child protection system.

This tells us that there is much more to do. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the solutions. We know what secures the best outcomes for our children and young people and the 2025 *NSW Aboriginal Child and Family Awards* will celebrate those organisations and individuals who are showing up and showing us all the way.

AbSec Chair Petrice Manton said the Gala will be a celebration of excellence, cultural pride and collective progress.

"This year has seen encouraging steps forward for our sector. There is growing recognition that Aboriginal-led solutions deliver better outcomes for our families."

"The Gala is an opportunity to honour the leaders, carers and organisations who are making a real difference, with courage, determination and cultural strength."

AbSec CEO John Leha said the night will spotlight the tangible impact of community-led work across the state.

"Our vision is unwavering; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people safe and together with their families, supported and strong in culture," Mr Leha said.

"The achievements we will celebrate and show what is possible when families, communities and services are empowered to lead."

"Together, we are building a system that prioritises culture, supports families earlier, and creates pathways for children to thrive."

The evening will feature cultural performances, storytelling, and awards across categories including advocacy, frontline excellence, innovation and cultural leadership, honouring the past, empowering the present and shaping the future. Leading advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle will speak to these themes in her dinner address and will present the awards to this years' recipients.





AbSec

NSW Child, Family & Community
Peak Aboriginal Corporation

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

Carina Stokes
Manager, Communications & Memberships

Carina.Stokes@absec.org.au
0493 165 759

**AbSec is the peak organisation dedicated to the welfare of Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander 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.