



AbSec

NSW Child, Family & Community
Peak Aboriginal Corporation

MEDIA RELEASE

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Culture, community and Country first: AbSec urges DCJ to honour its obligations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the wake of Narang Bir-rong decision

AbSec – NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation – acknowledges the decision by the Children's Guardian to cancel the out-of-home care accreditation of Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation, effective immediately. AbSec understands this decision carries serious consequences for 103 Aboriginal children and young people currently in Narang Bir-rong's care and calls on the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to act swiftly to ensure the transfer of case management prioritises local ACCOs and keeps every affected child connected to their family, community and culture.

AbSec's immediate concern is the safety, stability and cultural connection of every child and young person affected. The transition of case management back to DCJ must not result in children being placed further from family, community and Country. The decisions made in the coming days and weeks will have lasting consequences for these children's lives, and they must be made with that gravity in mind.

"We acknowledge the Children's Guardian's decision and the seriousness with which it has been made. Our focus now is entirely on the children and young people in care – 103 Aboriginal kids whose lives must not be further disrupted by what happens next. The responsibility on DCJ to get this transition right cannot be overstated," says AbSec CEO, John Leha.

"DCJ has made clear commitments to building and strengthening the Aboriginal community-controlled sector. Those commitments must be honoured right now, in this moment. Every effort must be made to transfer the care and case management of these children and young people to ACCOs in their local area – organisations that understand their communities, their families and their culture. Placing Aboriginal children with non-Aboriginal providers or moving them away from Country is not an acceptable default. This cannot end with our kids falling through the cracks again." John continued, "the research is unambiguous: Aboriginal children who grow up knowing their culture, their Elders and their Country are healthier, stronger and better supported into adulthood. Every placement decision made during this transition must start from that truth."

AbSec's calls on DCJ

AbSec is calling on the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to:

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- prioritise the transfer of case management to local ACCOs wherever possible, in line with DCJ's stated commitments to the Aboriginal community-controlled sector;
- ensure every placement decision made during the transition fully complies with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle;
- communicate directly and transparently with the children, young people, carers and families affected;
- engage AbSec and relevant ACCOs as partners in the transition process, not as an afterthought; and
- provide a clear public account of how the Principle will be upheld throughout this process.

AbSec also acknowledges the uncertainty facing carers, families and staff during this time. We call on the DCJ to provide clear communication and transparency throughout the transition process.

About the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is the legal and ethical framework that governs the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in NSW. It establishes a clear hierarchy of placement preference – prioritising family, then kinship, then Aboriginal community, then Aboriginal foster care – and requires that Aboriginal people be actively involved in all decisions affecting Aboriginal children. Full implementation of the Principle is a core commitment of AbSec and a cornerstone of the national Closing the Gap agenda.

To read more about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, [visit our website](#).

About AbSec

AbSec is the peak Aboriginal organisation in NSW dedicated to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by advocating for the rights, safety, and wellbeing of our children, young people and families. We build strength and resilience by supporting community-led solutions, shaping policy, and driving reforms that ensure every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and young person grows up strong in culture and identity.

For media enquiries, please email media@absec.org.au or call Kristjan Porm, Communications and Memberships Manager on 0402 158 726.