



OUR BOORIS
our way

Our Booris, Our Way

Press Release

Embargoed until 1 August

The 4th of August is National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day and the Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee (the Committee) would like to celebrate the collective power and strength of our children and young people who are the future of our ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. We would particularly like to recognise those children and young people who may have experienced, or be in, child protection arrangements.

The Committee have an important responsibility to advocate for ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families to be safe and strong - in culture and community.

The Committee is committed to ensuring recommendations from the Final Report are properly implemented by the ACT Government. Comprehensively implemented, these recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entering care; improve their experiences while they are in care; and increase opportunities to exit care through restoration to their families and community.

There are currently 253 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children now in out-of-home care (data as at March 30, 2022) in the ACT. To put this in context, the Report on Government Services shows the ACT has the third highest rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children aged 0-17 in out-of-home care in Australia (Rate per 1000 children aged 0-17 years in population). While Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children are 3% of the 0-17 years population, they make up 29% of the out-of-home care population in the ACT. There has been little change in the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system since the Minister announced the Our Booris, Our Way review in June 2017.

The Committee has been working closely with the ACT Government on the implementation of the recommendations from the review. We are advocating for immediate changes so that we can uphold our children's rights and cultural security.

We know systemic change takes time; this has taken too long. We need radical change as a matter of urgency.

We are tired and frustrated by the lack of progress and feel disappointed that 2.5 years after the final report, only one recommendation has been fully implemented. We are particularly disappointed that key recommendations from the final report that addressed the need for targeted early support programs aimed at helping keep our families together have not been funded or delivered.



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We are not yet confident that the government has followed through on their repeated commitments to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with action and new investment. The ACT Government needs to demonstrate their ability to listen to our community and not choose only the easiest changes to implement. The lack of progress is partly due to the reluctance of the ACT Government to fully resource the implementation of the recommendations that are interlocking and reinforcing. We are extremely disappointed that there has been poor progress against the key preventative and systemic recommendations that go to the heart of the nature of the child protection system and could deliver transformative change.

Alongside commitments to Voice, Treaty, Truth, the ACT must confidently act on the voices of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and organisations, on what needs to happen to improve outcomes for our families, communities and protection of our children and culture.

We remain committed to creating a better future for our children so they will grow up self-determined, proud, resilient, and strong in their identity.

About the Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee

The Our Booris, Our Way review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children involved in the ACT child protection system commenced in 2018, with the final report being presented to government in December 2019. There were 28 recommendations that addressed systemic issues impacting Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander families in the ACT involved in the child protection system.

The Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Committee has been established to provide advice and hold the ACT Government accountable for the implementation of all recommendations from the review.

Key resources

- Our Booris, Our Way Review: https://www.strongfamilies.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1457813/Our-Booris-Report-FINAL-REPORT.pdf
- Family Matters Report: <https://www.familymatters.org.au/>

For further information:

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