

Bayside Peninsula Area Decision Making Framework for Aboriginal Children

Purpose: To strengthen decision making in Bayside Peninsula Area, Child Protection pertaining to Aboriginal Children with the following focus areas:

- Planning for unborn Aboriginal children
- Planning for responding to those Aboriginal children where Intake have received a report and assessed that an investigation is required
- Planning and intervention for those Aboriginal children where a substantiated decision is made and potential for a Protection Application
- Ensuring every effort is made to keep Aboriginal children in their community if they are placed in OOHC

Guidelines below to be embedded into daily practise in relation to decision making for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who currently reside in OOHC and/or at risk of entering care. This will provide a higher level of oversight and shared decision making to ensure that appropriate steps are taken for them to return to family and/or ensure the work completed is culturally sensitive.

Unborn Phase:

- A pre-visit consultation to occur that includes that PP, PL, DAOM, Lakidjeka and the AFLDM co-convenors.
- Wherever possible Aboriginal unborn reports will be prioritised for early allocation.
- When mother is contacted by Child Protection, she will be encouraged to have a community representative/s at the visit with Child Protection.
- Information to be obtained at the first visit with the mother about services she is working with and consent for contact.
- Unborn children must be prioritised for the VACCA FPRP program.

Investigation and Assessment Phase:

- Lakidjeka, Cultural advisor, Practice Leader Case Planning, DAOM and PP involved in developing the pre-investigation plan wherever possible.
- As part of the investigation the practitioner must ask the family which services are involved and seek consent to contact these services.
- The Cultural Snapshot must be completed with the family and recorded on CRIS. This will ensure that any future work is completed in a culturally sensitive way and ensure the child remains connected to their culture and family.
- Case Planning PL will maintain oversight of all Aboriginal children to ensure appropriate and timely decision making and ensure collaborative practice.
- Substantiation decision making to occur in consultation with Lakidjeka, DAOM/PP and Case Planning PL.

Protective Intervention:

- AFLDM referral to be completed within 24 hours of substantiation. Ideally the primary case plan meeting is held as an AFLDM and will be supported and overseen by the Case Planning PL.
- A Care Team (including parents and nominated community rep) must be established for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This meeting should not occur at a departmental office unless there are safety concerns for a member of the care team.
- DOAM/PP to approve a decision for a Protection Application.

Out of Home Care:

- When it's not safe enough for Aboriginal children to remain with their parent/s and the children need to be placed out of parental care – Child Protection will contact the services involved with the family to seek kinship options if none are identified by the parents and/or VACCA.
- When Aboriginal children are not placed in Aboriginal care a planning meeting must be held within 7 days that includes Aboriginal Community representatives to determine family options.
- Child Protection will make a referral to the kinship finding program if kinship care has not been identified.
- Case Planning PL will oversee CSP development.

Developing cultural competency in Child Protection Practitioners:

- All staff must participate in the Cultural awareness training and needs to be a part of their PDP.
- Aboriginal Community of Practice to be established within CP BPA.
- Ensuring cultural SELF-assessment is undertaken Within all teams in CP.
- Ensure Child Protection are actively involved/leading Wirrigirri across BPA DFFH