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| Transitioning Aboriginal Children and Young People to ACCOs |
| General factsheet |

The Victorian Government, in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and non-Aboriginal Community Service Organisations (CSOs) is committed to advancing Aboriginal self-management and self-determination for Aboriginal people in Victoria.

This includes a commitment to gradually transition the care and case management of Aboriginal children from government and non-Aboriginal organisations to ACCOs.

This change is an important step in achieving self-determination for Aboriginal communities and aims to provide better outcomes for all Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care, by engaging culturally safe and connected supports.

# What is the transition to ACCOs?

Currently, most Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care are case managed or cared for by non-Aboriginal CSOs.

The Victorian Government, in partnership with ACCOs and CSOs, have agreed that ACCOs should be empowered to take on a greater role in the care and case management of these children.

Transferring responsibility for the case management and care of Aboriginal children to ACCOs will enable the Victorian Government to ensure Aboriginal children and young people, their families and carers are receiving culturally appropriate supports and services.

# Who is involved?

The Transitioning Aboriginal Children’s Team has been established within the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) and will work to support the gradual transfer of case management and out-of-home care services for Aboriginal children and young people to ACCOs.

The team will work closely with the departmental divisions, ACCOs, CSOs and Aboriginal families to ensure a transparent and sustainable state-wide framework is developed and delivered. It is the intention of the department that the transition will be managed in accordance with the best interests of each child and the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

# How is this better for Aboriginal children and young people?

Aboriginal children who are cared for by an ACCO have a greater connection to culture, which can lead to better health and wellbeingoutcomes[[1]](#footnote-1). Aboriginal children and young people case managed by ACCOs will have the opportunity to thrive in a culturally safe and connected environment.

This work is part of the Victorian Government’s commitment to self-determination for Aboriginal people and aims to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care. The transition of services is an important step in achieving this commitment for Aboriginal communities and will provide better outcomes for vulnerable Aboriginal children and young people.

# When will this happen?

The timing of the transition will depend on a number of factors including ACCOs aspirations and ability to deliver services, as well as the transfer process of funding and resources to ACCOs. The first transitions will commence in late 2017.

# How is this different to Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care?

The Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care program was developed from Section 18 of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. Section 18 enables the Secretary of the department to authorise the principal officer of an ACCO to undertake case planning and case management responsibilities. It gives ACCOs an opportunity to undertake specified functions and powers for Aboriginal children and young people subject to a Children’s Court protection order.

# More information

Children and parents are encouraged to find out more information from their child protection practitioner or CSO contracted case manager.

Carers are encouraged to contact their support agency or alternatively the Foster Care Association of Victoria can be contacted on 03 9416 4292 or Kinship Carers Victoria on 03 9372 2422.

CSOs and ACCOs are encouraged to speak with their Local Connections Team or contact the Transitioning Aboriginal Children’s Team at transitioningaboriginalchildrensteam@dhhs.vic.gov.au.

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| To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 650 172, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email transitioningaboriginalchildrensteam@dhhs.vic.gov.auAuthorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.© State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services July 2017.Where the term ‘Aboriginal’ is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation. |

1. “Always was, always will be Koori children”, *Systemic Inquiry into services provided to Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home-care in Victoria*, pg. 55-57, October 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)