Victorian Aboriginal Children & Young People's Alliance

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Inc.

MEDIA RELEASE

PEAK BODIES UNITE IN CALL TO FURTHER EMPOWER ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS

6 December 2016

Victoria's peak Aboriginal health, child and family services bodies have joined together in a call to further empower Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations (ACCOs) by prioritising the needs of Aboriginal children in state care.

Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos has led reforms in the sector through significant ACCO funding support.

Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance Member CEO Karen Heap said while there had been considerable progress, there was still much to do to improve tangible outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

"Change is slow to move operations to ACCOs", she said.

"While local innovations are being taken seriously by government, they need to be applied flexibly across Victoria with a strong focus on early intervention and prevention."

"The pace of transferring Aboriginal children to ACCOs needs to increase and that means government departments sharing relevant information with service providers."

The Always was, always will be Koori children report, informed by Taskforce 1000, was presented recently to the Aboriginal Children's Forum.

The report assessed nearly 1000 cases of Aboriginal children in state care.

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare CEO Deb Tsorbaris said there were some Taskforce 1000 recommendations that stood out as essential.

"Like the need for area-based teams to manage Aboriginal child protection," she said.

"We also need culturally appropriate services for children who have been victims of family violence and greater Aboriginal inclusion in the child protection workforce."

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The report found that:

- Aboriginal early years services were not adequately resourced to meet demand
- Government departments did not fully comply with cultural support planning requirements
- There were significant gaps in Aboriginal cultural safety across government and the child services sector
- The child protection system lacked Aboriginal input at the executive level

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