

ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 1: Orange-Bathurst, 22-24 August 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and proposed solutions NGOs conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform during a series of individual and group interviews in with NGO agencies in the Orange-Bathurst region. This information was gathered on between Tuesday 22 August and Thursday 24 August from 6 people representing 3 different agencies in the region. The participants comprised caseworkers or program managers. No Aboriginal controlled agencies or staff members were present. The feedback gathered from participants will inform a statewide survey aimed at refining information already gathered on the needs of the NGO sector relating to the Permanency Support Program reform.

<p>1. The critical needs in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities</p>	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External legal support needed – currently very expensive and difficult to access in this region • Building a more collaborative relationship between FACS and NGOs <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More comprehensive history of child or young person at time of placement with NGO • Clear and realistic expectations for step-down transition from residential care to other options (eg guardianship, adoption or foster care) • Better understanding of 2-year timeframes and processes surrounding these if preferred permanency option is not in place in this timeframe. • Consideration of foster care as an acceptable permanent option for some children and young people • Supporting carers who will not be able to access Intensive Foster Care option to care for highly complex children and young people <p>Capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to conduct carer assessments due to time constraints especially if significant travel is required. • Improve support and capacity to accept immediate or
---	---

	<p>emergency placements and maintaining a carer pool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce capability is precarious in terms of recruitment and retention – currently at full capacity due to staffing constraints in this region • Lack of clarity with policies being developed - NGOs needs will become more apparent as the system evolves
<p>2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed</p>	<p>Key issues raised by multiple agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties in staff recruitment and retention in region • More comprehensive information on the history of the child or young person needs to be provided by FACS to NGOs to ensure better placement and response to their needs • More collaborative trust based relationship between FACS and NGOs
<p>3. What you think the possible support solutions are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of comprehensive understanding of skills set, training, information and resources for restoration work as well as intensive family preservation • Child/young person's information needs to be shared with NGO agencies (e.g. ROSH reports or outline of concerns) for placement matching, to determine child or young person and carer support needs etc. • Communities of Practice be established to meet ongoing and as yet unidentified needs including training and support elements (e.g. mentoring and coaching) • Alignment of NGO/FACS carer assessment processes needed • Inclusion of NGOs in care planning (parents and carers should also be consulted as appropriate) • Strategies to address burnout for caseworkers and carers • Face to face training and support valued as well as podcasts (can be accessed while travelling) • Family Finding training • Risk management training • Clear framework of pay structure, induction, core training required to assist in building capacity of capable PSP workforce • Advocacy and rights based training for children and young people, carers, birth families and caseworkers to properly engage in new landscape (legislation, funding requirements,

	<p>self determination etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practice Framework including training and support components• Online 'clearing house' with information, research articles and best practice resources such as policy and report templates and examples• Communication training (especially given need to hold more robust and potentially confronting conversations with birth families and carers)• Revamp of 'Fostering Handbook' to a 'Permanency Handbook'
--	---