

# ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

## Report 5: ACWA Best Practice Unit Statewide Reference Group, 7 September 2017

This report identifies the critical gaps and solutions NGOs conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform at the ACWA BPU SWRG meeting. Participants were also asked to rank the priority of need relating to each of the needs. This information was gathered on Thursday 7 September at the ACWA BPU SWRG meeting from 4 people representing 4 different agencies from across NSW. The participants comprised predominantly senior agency 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><b>1. The critical needs in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities</b></p>	<p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservation and restoration practice skills including confidence in making assessments such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assessing parents’ readiness to change</li> <li>➤ Weighting and assessing any changes</li> <li>➤ Assessing and managing risk and parental capacity - SDM tool?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Observation skills – e.g. parents regression from goals</li> <li>• Working with resistant parents – both in terms of change and goals</li> <li>• Working with generational trauma - responding, upskilling and empowering parents;</li> <li>• Balancing support for carer and birth family while maintaining child focus</li> <li>• Focusing on the child – how to keep line of sight</li> <li>• Negotiation skills including advocacy and diplomacy – challenging without being seen as obstructive in putting forward an alternate view</li> </ul> <p><b>Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the principles behind and supporting each different model of care whether temporary and permanent - respite and kinship care, adoption and guardianship</li> <li>• Quality record keeping and report writing to support clear decision making that is developed flexibly (no silos)</li> <li>• Supporting carers to become confident in:</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with birth families</li> <li>➤ Become a guardian</li> <li>• Child development based knowledge and practice</li> <li>• Built-in flexibility across the system to ensure best interests of the child are met</li> <li>• Helping guardians to become confident in managing relationships</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Caseworkers need to be able to facilitate a range of assessments including birth parents readiness for change. Caseworkers often exhibit a lack of confidence in using structured decision-making tools.</li> <li>2. Documentation: record keeping, including specific details of how and why a decision was made and report writing.</li> <li>3. Keeping a child-centred approach across the system including Caseworkers being able to support carers and birth family to also keep the child focus.</li> <li>4. 'Working with adults to keep the child safe.' Caseworkers need to engage and communicate with a wide variety of different people involved in the child and parents life. Caseworkers often lack the confidence to advocate for the child with certain stakeholders including parents.</li> <li>5. Increased knowledge and understanding of child development (by case managers and foster carers).</li> </ol>
<p><b>3. What you think the possible support solutions are</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing Communities of 'Best' Practice</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Forging stronger links with the family support systems sector – identify where families step down to and support family integration into the community</li> <li>• Developing common language across the sector – e.g. 'therapeutic' at a practitioner level and/or model?</li> </ul>