ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP)

Appendices: Needs Analysis Tools

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Urquhart, R. (2017). ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis Overview Report December 2017: Appendices

A1 Report of focus group discussions

August-September 2017

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NGO Sector PSP Needs Analysis

E-mail to members - confirming participation in a focus group

Dear Member,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group to tell us your caseworker practice needs for working towards permanency.

Please find attached a **participant information shee**t which outlines:

- What will happen on the day
- Why we need the information you will tell us, and
- How we will treat what you share with us.

This **short video** explains the changes under the Permanency Support Program and their aims: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6sxb4PEphg. We have also attached a **brief presentation**, which provides a helpful overview of the Permanency Support Program. FACS is currently undertaking a redesign of the Case Management Policy and Guidelines, and we have attached a **summary** of the consultation process to date.

About the Permanency Support Program

ACWA is conducting a statewide needs analysis to help guide decision making on the implementation of the Permanency Support Program.

The Permanency Support Program is the name for changes FACS will be making to child protection and out-of-home care from **1 October 2017**.

The main change is a shift from a 'placement-based' service system to a child- and family-centred service system that focuses on individual needs and helping families to change.

This will give more children and young people safe and stable homes in which they can thrive, and reduce the number of children who enter or remain in statutory care for long periods.

The changes have four main components:

- Permanency and early intervention principles built into casework
- Working intensively with birth parents and families to support change
- A new approach to the recruitment, development and support of guardians, adoptive parents and other carers
- Intensive Therapeutic Care system reform.

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You can also find a series of **infographic sheets** to help illustrate these four components at the Permanency Support Program webpage:

http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/about-us/permanency-support-program/resources

Look forward to seeing you at the focus group,

Best regards,

Attachments: Participant Information Sheet;
"PSP Presentation – Short_External 2017.pptx"
"Information_Sheet_2_Response_to_discussion_paper.pdf"

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ACWA NGO Sector PSP Needs Analysis

Information Sheet for Participants in Focus Groups

1. We need your help – the Permanency Support Needs Analysis

ACWA has been commissioned by FACS to conduct a needs analysis prior to the implementation of the Permanency Support Program. We are keenly interested in your views on this and thank you for agreeing to participant. The focus group you are participating in one of a series of metropolitan and regional focus groups we are conducting this month. Our FACS and AbSec colleagues are also conducting similar exercises. We feed the important information you tell us back to FACS.

ACWA will also conducting a state-wide online survey in October/November. What you tell us in the focus group will help us to crystallise and refine the questions we ask the Sector. For that reason we would like to ask your permission as a participant to take notes and also to audio record the discussion. We **will not identify** any individuals or agencies in any of our reporting.

What is a needs analysis?

A need can be defined as the gap between "*what is*" and "*what should be".* Need analysis focuses on the *future*. It is an assessment of what *should* be done, rather than on *what was done* in the past, as is the focus of most program evaluations.

FACS has asked ACWA to seek your views on what the Department needs to do to best support caseworkers under the Permanency Support Package. Without the comprehensive detail provided by the needs analysis, based on the views of frontline staff, and how local circumstances can be factored in, as a sector we risk having gaps in casework practice that can't be satisfactorily resolved, or support needs that can't be addressed. This means that the focus of our discussion will be **your caseworker practice needs for working towards permanency.** We will be asking you to tell us what you see as:

1. **The critical gaps in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities**
2. **How you rank them in priority to be addressed, and**
3. **What you think the possible support solutions are.**

What does Permanency Support mean for NGO service providers?

The Permanency Support Program, funding packages and targeted support packages will focus on the individual needs of every child or young person, rather than their placement.

The Department has flagged *new expectations of NGO service providers* stemming from these changes, which can be distilled to some key areas:

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1. Working towards permanency from the time a child or young person comes into contact with the child protection system and for those children who enter care, continued review of alternate permanency outcomes.
2. Accepting referrals for immediate placements
3. Collaborating more closely with FACS and other services and supports to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people The need to have an oversupply of carers and to be able to target different types of carer for different types of care (e.g. prospective guardians and adoptive parents, short-term carers, carers willing to work with families to support restoration)
4. For foster care service providers, running an active foster carer recruitment strategy to help meet demand

As you may know there has been a separate consultation process conducted by FACS for case management policy and procedures. As your peak body we have already given your feedback on that, so that is an issue that may come up but is not the focus of our discussion (except where it helps us to understand how you need to be better supported to achieve permanency outcomes).

Also AbSec have been leading the development of an Aboriginal Case Management Policy, working with communities and Aboriginal Service Providers across the continuum from early intervention.

Some resources on the Permanency Support Program have been provided in the covering email for you to peruse prior to the focus group discussion.

2. Some ground rules for the group discussion

As practitioners we all know that it can be quite challenging to self-assess our practice support needs, and it can be a skill in itself.

Often we lack a suitable external reference point and it may even leave us feeling vulnerable to identify where we need more support - but it is important if we are to learn as practitioners and more generally to improve the relevance and nature of permanency support that is made available. For that reason we see the group discussion as part of our reflective and ethical practice as practitioners and managers.

In order to lead to better permanency practice it is important to reflect on things that may not be going so well, as well as where things are already working well. If we are able to share those experiences, we can all learn from that, and then explore solutions. In turn this can lead to better practices and better support in the future.

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With that spirit of openness, collegiality and critical self-reflection, there are a few basic ground rules that we will suggest the group agrees to when they meet:

- Everyone is expected to be an active participant.
- There are no "*right*" or "*wrong*" answers.
- Speak freely but please remember not to interrupt others while they are talking.
- Note taking and recording are for reporting purposes only and will be used for analysis.
- Names and agencies are not attached to the notes.
- All feedback today will remain anonymous. In order to maintain anonymity, I just ask that anything that is said during our session today is not repeated outside of our session.
- Anything else the group sees as important to encourage free participation.

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Questions for the group to consider

A. Identifying critical gaps in case worker practice – where do we need uplift in support to achieve better permanency outcomes? *(45-60 minutes)*

Interactive exercise (warm up)
One way to see the Permanency Support Program is as another tool for your toolkit – notably a service and funding model that builds on the legislative framework**. Think about the different ways that focussing on permanency has impacted on your practice and your team. Write down the first two or three words that come to mind when you think of yourself and your colleague's practice**.

Group exercise
Your facilitator will ask you to take some time to list **what you see as some of the critical gaps in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities to achieve good permanency outcomes.** We ask you to focus on changes that are needed in caseworker practice and the support you will need to do that – we are mindful there may be broader cultural and system level changes that are also needed and will take note of them so we can have the correct context, but this is not the focus of our discussion.

Please be as specific as possible. For example, what practice specifically around Family Preservation do you need assistance with? Is this working with birth parents, responding to domestic violence/substance abuse, or attachment/parenting support? What information, assistance or support is lacking?

Later on in the session, we will ask you as a group to rank, which are the most critically important gaps, and then to work together on possible solutions to your top ranked gaps. In order to do that, we need the group to be very clear what precise gaps in caseworker practice we are voting on and what it is we are suggesting solutions for.

<u>Topics to be explored</u>

Overall questions:

- What are the gaps in supporting your agency caseworkers practice, skills and capabilities to achieve good permanency outcomes?
- What do we need to train, build skills and capacity for NGOs to step into the family preservation, restoration, guardianship and adoption fields more confidently?
- Where do we need to better share practice expertise and support each other?
- Where do we still need to train, develop skills and grow capacity in foster care services and ITC?
- Where are the gaps in supporting good practice in leaving care and after care?

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- Other things you may want to tell us, e.g. any experiences you may have had in the family preservation and restoration space, where things have worked well - and why you think that is so?

Where are these gaps are demonstrated – e.g. areas where agencies will have new expectations on them when working in a permanency paradigm

- Working towards permanency from the time a child or young person enters care, or as soon as possible after a review for those already in care.
- Accepting referrals for immediate placements
- The need to have an oversupply of carers and to be able to target different types of carers for different types of care (e.g. prospective guardians and adoptive parents, short-term carers, carers willing to work with families to support restoration)
- Collaborating more closely with FACS and other services and supports to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- For foster care service providers, running an active foster carer recruitment strategy to help meet demand

B. Which of these identified gaps are the most important to you as a group? *(5-10 minutes)*

- Work through the above identified gaps with the group.
- Check they are clearly expressed and sufficiently specific to be able to be meaningfully ranked.
- **Rank them in order of importance as a group in order 1,2,3**…

5. What you think the potential solutions would be, looking forward? *(40-50 minutes)*

- Select the top 2-3 ranked problems by the group.
- **Take some time to discuss and agree on the optimum support solution to ameliorate/address the gap.**
- What critical collaborative work is needed with FACS at the local level?
- If is a training need, what modes would be useful - F2F, hybrid, online, coaching, mentoring, communities of practice? Should this be jointly undertaken with FACS and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations?
- Please express your suggested solution in a concise statement agreed by the group (including the precise need/gap in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities you have identified and exactly how you think it is best to address it).
- Make your statement in a form that we could potentially include in the online state-wide survey

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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.

4. The critical needs in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities	**Skills** • External legal support needed – currently very expensive and difficult to access in this region • Building a more collaborative relationship between FACS and NGOs **Practice** • 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 is 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 unable to access Intensive Foster Care option to care for highly complex children and young people **Capabilities** • Support to conduct carer assessments due to time constraints especially if significant travel is required.

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	• Improve support and capacity to accept immediate or emergency placements and maintaining a carer pool • 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
5. How you rank them in priority to be addressed	**Key issues raised by multiple agencies:** • 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
6. What you think the possible support solutions are	• 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 (eg 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 (eg 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

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	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, self determination etc) • 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'

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ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 2: Northern Scoping exercise (Lismore) 30 August 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and solutions NGOs conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform at a scoping event at Lismore (additionally on the same day at Ballina 2 informal interviews were undertaken with other NGO agencies). Participants were asked to rank the priority of need relating to each of the needs. This information was primarily gathered on Wednesday 30 September from 23 people representing primarily 1 agency (and supplemented by information from the 2 other interview at Ballina) the participants represented a wide variety of roles including; clinical staff, managers, caseworkers, intake, care recruitment, house leaders and assessors. No Aboriginal controlled agencies were interviewed. 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 PSP reform.

1. The critical needs in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities	**Skills** ➢ Need a timely and respectful review process of children and young people's needs as new behaviours arise/become apparent to ensure they can be met ➢ Birth family casework skills and support for carers ➢ Caseworkers need skills in assessing safety/risk assessment ➢ Training needed for contact supervisors using therapeutic models such as Circle of Security ➢ Need training in effective use and engagement with ChildStory platform ➢ Legal report writing ➢ Assessments including; capacity, risk, carer etc. ➢ Need benchmarked best practice guidelines on meeting the needs of traumatised children and young people ➢ Need risk and safety assessment training (ROSH and mandatory reporting etc.) ➢ Cultural care case planning

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	Practice ➢ Safety of children and young people a significant concern – how to ensure safety of 4 young people with sexually harmful behaviours placed together due to contractual expectations and demands – who will be responsible in these circumstances? This will be an unacceptable risk unless adequate staffing to provide support required ➢ Working relationships between NGOs and Permanency Coordinators need to be clarified – roles and responsibilities need to be outlined and an understanding of their competencies and understanding of therapeutic care ➢ Understanding the service system framework – how different components are expected to fit together and provide seamless support across spectrum of services (including MST, FFT and ITTC) as well as the KPI's/outcomes expected of NGOs ➢ Caseloads need to be smaller to enable work with birth families including allowance for geographical spread of family members and travel required to work with them ➢ Need to have confidence in therapeutic approach of other service providers (e.g. drug and alcohol) and government departments (e.g. education) ➢ Need comprehensive information sharing – this is currently not occurring ➢ Need detailed training on Chapter 16A of the Act ➢ Need to understand FACS view of program integration – service system framework and how component fits and works together ➢ Need clarification of reporting scheme and KPIs for NGOs ➢ Clarity needed on different supports available for adoptions such as guardianship and adoption and how different forms of support can be accessed (e.g. can the Intensive Foster Care allowance be provided to Guardians?) ➢ Clarity needed on how children and young people's needs be assessed and reviewed **Additional needs** ➢ Support needed for step-down in this area of PSP Transition from

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	residential care to other options (e.g. guardianship, adoption or foster care) ➢ Support needed to provide innovative and effective models of care with continued support ➢ Intermediary needed to provide independent oversight and grievance processes ➢ NGOs need an insurance scheme to cover risks associated with new system requirements or FACS should bear liability for risks inherent in service provision constraints ➢ Family Group Conferencing (FGC) needs to financially supported by FACS, as this is not built into child needs packages and should be conducted at every point of case review with same FGC practitioner throughout the child or young person's journey (across spectrum from preservation through to restoration or other permanency options) ➢ Kinship care – often working with very disadvantaged families and intergenerational abuse who have been given provisional authorisation as carers but not supported or followed up after this ➢ Need support and training for carers (train the trainer)
2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed	1. Birth family work – helping caseworks and carers 2. Assessments 3. Therapeutic step down models 4. Ongoing good quality reviews
3. What you think the possible support solutions are	➢ FACS to work with NGOs to liaise with, and advocate to other government departments on behalf of children and young people such as Department of Education as power imbalance for NGO's is untenable ➢ Joint FACS/NGO training ➢ NGOs having access to similar resources to FACS e.g. training provided by the OSP ➢ Communities of practice ➢ Ensuring the service system is adequately funded

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ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 3: Hunter New England Scoping exercise (Maitland) 31 August and 1 September 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and solutions NGOs conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform at an agency visit and an additional informal meeting with a second service provider. Participants were asked to rank the priority of need relating to each to the PSP. This information was gathered on Thursday 31 August and 1 September from 2 different agencies representing a statewide service and an agency based primarily in New England. The participants comprised of a diverse cross section of workers including senior agency or program managers, both foster and residential caseworkers, team leaders, house leaders, recruitment, communications and assessors. No Aboriginal controlled agencies were interviewed. 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 PSP reform.

1. The critical needs in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities	**Skills** ➢ Need to start work with birth family at earliest opportunity (e.g. from time of removal or before) to strengthen connection and build relationships as well as the ability to challenge unnecessary removals ➢ Frontline caseworkers need skills in assessing safety/risk assessment ➢ Training also need to assist carers to successfully engage with birth families ➢ Skills to work with new systems e.g. ChildStory ➢ Training needed in legal report writing – especially Section 82 reports- to ensure consistency and benchmarked standards ➢ Need training on intake assessments - identifying and assessing short term carers ➢ Restoration, preservation and investigative interviewing techniques ➢ Cultural care case planning ➢ Assistance to work with and empower Aboriginal families and

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	communities ➢ Safety planning ➢ Working with birth families at the time of removal **Practice** ➢ Consistent therapeutic practice across the sector ➢ Permanency Coordinators roles need to be clarified ➢ Need comprehensive information sharing – this is currently not occurring ➢ Need detailed training on Chapter 16A of the Act ➢ Need to understand FACS view of program integration – service system framework and how component fits and works together ➢ Clarification needed regarding children and young people already in the system (OOHC) in comparison to children entering system now – will they be considered differently - together or separately? ➢ Need clarification on outcomes based measures ➢ Clarity needed on different supports available for adoptions such as guardianship and adoption and how different forms of support can be accessed (e.g. can the Intensive Foster Care allowance be provided to Guardians?) ➢ Clarity needed on how children and young people's needs be assessed and reviewed **Additional needs** ➢ Support needed to provide innovative and effective models of care with continued support ➢ Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms need to be adequately funded and utilised early to ensure less people come into care ➢ Need the ability to update genograms – currently only provided as a pdf format ➢ Follow up support once permanency goal has been achieve, no matter what has been achieved (e.g. restoration, guardianship, adoption etc.) ➢ Need support and training for carers (train the trainer)

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	➢ Need template and examples of policy and reports – online clearing house
2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed	1. Permanency work in order of priority – e.g. working with birth families, restorations, guardianship, adoption etc. 2. Up skilling of Legal work 3. Carer training 4. Clarity of PSP roles and responsibilities
3. What you think the possible support solutions are	➢ Using mechanisms already established (e.g. FACS training) to be open it up to NGOs, because they already have robust training and it would not have to cost anymore. This would also help facilitate good relationships and networks within the sector. ➢ Joint FACS/NGO Training ➢ Giving NGOs appropriate time to change their practice and resisting any reactionary policy shifts.

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ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 4. ACWA OOHC Reforms Forum 6 September 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and solutions NGOs conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform at the ACWA OOHC Reforms Forum meeting. Participants were also asked to rank the priority of need relating to each of the needs. This information was gathered on Wednesday 6 September at the ACWA OOHC Reforms Forum meeting from 16 people representing 14 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.

1. The needs in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities	**Skills, Practice and Capabilities** • Building competence in conducting different levels of risk assessment and mitigation across the spectrum including child protection and safety when working unaccompanied; • Need to improve knowledge and skills in Child Protection /SARA /Mandatory Reporting: ➢ What you are looking for and asking to check things and the confidence to do this; ➢ where and how to raise concerns and what level of presentation/reporting is required? • Need to learn SDM tools for a variety of tasks such as restoration analysis; • Need clarity and consistency in providing information to the Children's Court especially as restoration matters progress; • Need to understand and use consistent common language between NGOs and FACS; • Need to upskill caseworkers to handle social work responsibilities; ➢ Will be working across the spectrum of issues and risks such as substance abuse/drug and alcohol issues - eg. will caseworkers need to conduct substance testing or provide referrals for this?

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	➢ Also working with mental health, domestic and family violence, disability issues etc – OOHC caseworkers have not traditionally worked in direct support roles around these issues and will need relevant skills to respond and provide support around these issues; • Preservation/Restoration practice knowledge and skills including: ➢ Working intensively with families prior to removal; ➢ Identifying where preservation ends and day one of restoration work begins (for children and young people at risk); ➢ What level of preservation is expected? ➢ Who will 'hold' the parents on removal? ➢ Working with difficult to engage or evasive parents; • Develop and embed best practice in working with Aboriginal children, families and communities; • Incorporating Family Group Conferencing and Family Finding into practice; • Case Plan goal – NGOs will come to FACS - new entry pathway; • Need clarity and consistency regarding role and expectations (such as report writing) in relation to the Children's Court especially as restoration matters progress; • Need process for immediate placements that enable both timeliness and appropriate consideration; • Need to build trusting relationships and transparency between FACS and NGOs regarding emergency placements especially in terms of risk mitigation and contract management and negotiating and building the system at the same time; • A collaborative approach is required prior to removal of children and young people – communication and pre-planning essential • Clear parameters of care • Multi-tracking • Need to empower caseworkers to take a lead role earlier in tasks such as case planning processes such as determining goals and actions; ➢ New child allocated to CSC - if preservation is case plan goal there needs to be a way to escalate as you should (eg Family Group Conferencing); ➢ If removal goes ahead need to have permanency goal to provide to court (need a chance to collaborate) ➢ Need regular touch points;

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	➢ Need to be able to engage in local systems to resolve dissenting views or changes to Plan; ➢ Using good standardised documentation for placement matching • Need to develop skills as confident and capable advocates and negotiators • Understanding and skills in core processes including court reporting • Learning to embed new therapeutic framework and principles into practice and achieve cultural change to support this – how does it link with training and what it looks like for staff across the system (including residential care and carers)
2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed	• Court reporting – clarity and consistency • Negotiation and advocacy skills • Embedding new therapeutic framework and principles into practice and achieving cultural change in the sector
3. What you think the possible support solutions are	• Establishing Communities of 'Best' Practice; • Develop joint training across FACS and NGOs; • Clear timeframes for clarity of process re permanency and wellbeing (and needs analysis?) priorities • Standardised documentation • Agreed commitment to placement matching • Showcase examples of best practice models of agency structures to meet children and young people's needs through PSP lens including scope for different specialisations • Rebuild collaborative relationships between FACS and NGOs to enable open communication and respect for NGO advocacy for children's best interests • Cultural competence and skills working with Aboriginal children, families and communities • Family Group Conferencing and Family Finding training

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ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 5: ACWA Best Practice Unit State-Wide Reference Group (BPU SWRG) 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.

1. The critical gaps in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities	**Skills** • Preservation and restoration practice skills including confidence in making assessments such as: ➢ Assessing parents' readiness to change ➢ Weighting and assessing any changes ➢ Assessing and managing risk and parental capacity - SDM tool? • Observation skills – e.g. parents regression from goals • Working with resistant parents – both in terms of change and goals • Working with generational trauma - responding, upskilling and empowering parents; • Balancing support for carer and birth family while maintaining child focus • Focusing on the child – how to keep line of sight • Negotiation skills including advocacy and diplomacy – challenging without being see as obstructive in putting forward an alternate view **Practice** • Understanding the principles behind and supporting each different model of care whether temporary and permanent - respite and kinship care, adoption and guardianship

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	• Quality record keeping and report writing to support clear decision making that is developed flexibly (no silos) • Supporting carers to become confident in: ➢ Work with birth families ➢ Become a guardian • Child development based knowledge and practice • Built-in flexibility across the system to ensure best interests of the child are met • Helping guardians to become confident in managing relationships
2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed	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. 2. Documentation: record keeping, including specific details of how and why a decision was made and report writing. 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. 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. 5. Increased knowledge and understanding of child development (by case managers and foster carers).
3. What you think the possible support solutions are	• Establishing Communities of 'Best' Practice; • Training • Forging stronger links with the family support systems sector – identify where families step down to and support family integration into the community • Developing common language across the sector – e.g. 'therapeutic' at a practitioner level and/or model?

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ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 6: Sydney (OOHC Forum, Telopea) – 12 September 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and solutions NGOs conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform in the Sydney OOHC Forum Focus Group. Participants were also asked to rank the priority of need relating to each of the needs. This information was gathered on Tuesday 12 September at the ACWA OOHC Forum from 26 people representing 11 different agencies. The participants comprised of OOHC caseworkers, team leaders, managers and 2 Health Coordinators. Notably, no Aboriginal controlled agencies were present. The feedback gathered from participants will inform a statewide survey that would gather more information on the needs of the NGO sector relating to the Permanency Support Program reform.

1. The critical gaps in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities	**Skills** • Legal ➢ Affidavit writing and other legal documentation ➢ Legislation relevant to PSP ➢ Working with Section 90s to reach permanency goals (especially in relation to Guardianship Orders) • Having/handling difficult conversations • Risk assessments and tools ➢ SARA and SDM • Working with crisis/emergency placements • Understanding of when to remove and what is an "acceptable" level of risk for restoration/preservation **Practice** • An overall understanding of what casework practice is going to look like under the PSP • Working with birth families ➢ Conversations around permanency (difficult conversations) ➢ Preservation ➢ Restoration ➢ Removal of children ➢ Family Finding ➢ Life story work

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	➢ Working therapeutically • Casework practice – changing carer's exceptions • Working in the new therapeutic model • Understanding the new • Critical training for new and emerging areas of work ➢ Working therapeutically with birth families ➢ Overview of PSP once finalised • Working effectively with Aboriginal agencies and communities • Carer support ➢ Understanding when to engage carers with birth families and how to facilitate a strong relationships **Capabilities** • Trouble shooting during PSP rollout • Identification tools made available to NGOs to make appropriate decisions re families • Education for caseworkers regarding funding packages (outcome based) ➢ Knowing what the expectations are on permanency – individual and global expectations • More understanding on dealing with cases where permanency pathways are not appropriate/clear • Increasing the carer pool ➢ Recruiting for new short term arrangement ➢ Supporting carers to work with birth families • Understanding the new way FACS and NGOs will work together ➢ Clarity of roles ➢ Information sharing • Access to databases and other resources to be able to adequately do life story/family finding/genealogy work/etc. • Capacity and time to work adequately with all stakeholders • Ensuring ongoing health/education needs will be monitored after permanency has been achieved • Pathways and support for step-down services within OOHC • Adequate funding to ensure the child's needs are met
2. How you rank them in priority	1. Carer recruitment awareness across boarder carer training and support/retention continuum

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to be addressed	2. Working with birth families a. Strength and risk measurement tools and other measures b. Therapeutic care when to address trauma and develop therapeutic relationships with birth families 3. Legal training a. Speaking same language in affidavit writing b. Working within the Act c. Report writing 4. Clarification of roles (FACS/NGOs etc.) 5. Collaboration across spectrum of PSP and understanding and information flow 6. Health and wellbeing assessment vs. PSP goals
3. What you think the possible support solutions are	• Joint NGO/FACS training across PSP spectrum • SDM and SARA tool training • Legal training/access to advice • Information hotline • Realistic expectation/timeframes • Large scale advertising campaign for broader community to inform NSW about the changes to child protection • Ongoing training and support for carers (coaching/mentoring skills for case workers) and continuum of support • Online training/feedback – teleconference and communities of practice • Trauma training new models • Access to services • Cultural lens/competency and consultation

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ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 7. ACWA Wollongong Agency Visit 20 September 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and solutions an NGO conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform at an agency PSP planning day. Participants were also asked to rank the priority of need relating to each of the needs. This information was gathered on 20 September from 25 people working in the SWS and Southern Districts. The participants comprised of a diverse range of job roles from across the agency's OOHC programs. 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 PSP reform.

1. Identified areas of for further development of caseworker practice, skills and capabilities	**Skills** • How to develop strong/clear case plans in context of PSP. • Recruiting, support and training carers – especially short term carers • How to quickly build relationship between foster carers and birth families • Working through section 90s in the context of permanency goals (esp. guardianship) • How do you work with a child therapeutically as well as the biological parents / carers with good attachment has occurred? • Knowledge about what services are available to work with restoration/permanency plans • Assessment tools to assess level of appropriateness (SARA) (SDM) and process must be systemic • Case manager training on legal work and documentation and need more legal support throughout the decision making process • Crisis placement and related case management expertise • Risk assessments – e.g. understanding levels of risk related to removals

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	• Therapeutic work, life story work and understanding/identifying when the time is right for children and young people to deal with trauma. • Difficult conversations relating to permanency • Legislation relevant to permanency • Negotiation skills • Being critically and analytical • Increasing the carer pool • Educating the wider community/carers about this reform • Joint case management – what will this look like? • NGO's involvement in development of care/case planning process for changing plans • Family finding training • Understanding how care orders work and what needs to happen before they expire **Practice** • Working with birth families – casework practice shifts and conversations around permanency – supporting restoration/preservation and potential mentor to biological/adoptive parents. • Effectively communicating the needs of the child or young person to FACS • Working with Aboriginal carers/children/agencies • Ability/time for adequate communication between all stakeholders involved (NGO, FACS, carers etc.) • Early information sharing between all parties involved • Understanding the new funding mechanisms e.g. how to get appropriate funding for children's needs? • Working with FACS and clearly understanding the different roles between FACS and NGOs • Ongoing monitoring of child's health needs - how will this be work once PRM is removed? • Developing a big picture understanding of how PSP is going to work. • Understanding how the relationship between FACS and NGOs is going to work • Information sharing between FACS and NGOs

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	• Identification and understanding of cases where permanency pathways are not appropriate and mechanisms to resolve disagreements in views between FACS and NGOs • Caseworkers understanding new funding packagers (and the 'outcomes' based model) • Trouble shooting during role out
2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed	1. Working with birth families – casework practice shifts and conversations around permanency 2. Recruiting, support and training of carers 3. Legal work
3. What you think the possible support solutions are	• Access to the same resources to FACS • Joint training with FACS and other NGOs • Clear ongoing messaging about PSP • Hubs to troubleshoot PSP issues as they emerge • Clearly articulated facts sheets on NGO and FACS casework roles and responsibilities. • Mapping the current service system across all PSP initiatives • Access to government databases to find family members

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ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 8: Western, Far Western and Murrumbidgee

21 September 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and solutions NGOs conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform at a videoconference. Participants were asked to rank the priority of need relating to each to the PSP. This information was gathered on Thursday 21 September from 3 different agencies. The focus group participants comprised OOHC managers and casework specialists from services operating across the Western, Far Western and Murrumbidgee regions. No Aboriginal controlled agencies were interviewed. 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 PSP reform.

1. The critical needs in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities	**Skills** ➢ Frontline caseworker skills in assessment and evidence informed decision making for safe restoration ➢ Understanding the appropriate evidence base for family preservation and family restoration work ➢ Engaging with families and parents (and extended families) – carers need training to engage and workers need to model this from the moment children enter care. ➢ Work around supporting guardianship with non-Indigenous family members (where this is an appropriate outcome) ➢ Grasping expectations of permanency particularly when the available permanency outcomes don't seem to fit (this work would need to be informed and guided by the views of Aboriginal leaders in the sector) ➢ Assessing (and re-assessing) carer motivation **Practice** ➢ Appropriate post-order support for guardians (advocacy and support services at times of elevated need) ➢ Adoption – what are the likely trigger points for difficulties for

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	children with a background of complex trauma? What are the opportunities to touch base and receive additional services? ➢ Support around contact (which is more generally an increased area of expectation for carers and guardians) particularly when birth parents may be remote or have an adversarial relationship ➢ Need comprehensive information sharing – this is currently not occurring ➢ Training/support of long-term carers to reorient them towards openness and changing language (some may already have begun working with an agency for 10-15 years in earlier models with different expectations) ➢ Developing a pool of prospective adoptive parents ➢ Clarity on roles when gathering evidence for Court-directed case plans (when NGOs are best placed to know what is happening and inform the Magistrate) ➢ Clarity needed on how children and young people's needs be assessed, monitored and reviewed post-restoration **Additional needs** ➢ Concerns about potential impact of new financial arrangements (abatements) on good placement matching ➢ Helping carers manage multiple contact arrangements ➢ Recruitment of appropriately qualified staff in rural areas
2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed	1. Assessment 2. Carer recruitment to the new model 3. Working effectively with birth families (when there may be a paucity of information)
3. What you think the possible support solutions are	➢ Using coaching, mentoring, training courses and joint FACS/NGO training to support practice change (working effectively with birth families). ➢ Building on existing work in Family Finding. ➢ More ready availability of FGC facilitators and services in regional areas. ➢ Funding for specialist birth parent support worker positions. ➢ More informal events/opportunities to enable networking

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	(which can be difficult in rural/regional areas) ➢ Reciprocal invitations to team meetings to FACS staff to facilitate information exchange and discussing "out-of-the-box" solutions ➢ Podcasts (an accessible format when long drives between locations are part of the job) ➢ Mechanisms to encourage recruitment and retention of carer assessors (once trained) in regional areas

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ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 9: Southern and Shoalhaven

21 September 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and solutions NGOs conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform at a videoconference. Participants were asked to rank the priority of need relating to each to the PSP. This information was gathered on Thursday 21 September from 3 different agencies. The focus group participants comprised a group of OOHC managers and team leaders from youth and family services operating across the Southern and Shoalhaven regions. No Aboriginal controlled agencies were interviewed. 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 PSP reform.

7. The critical needs in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities	**Skills** ➢ Frontline caseworker skills in engagement with families ➢ Risk assessment with families ➢ Understanding the appropriate evidence base for family preservation and family restoration work ➢ Assessment of carers who can support restoration ➢ Assessment of worker safety when visiting families **Practice** ➢ Some really good things happening on the ground with reforms. Not losing focus on the child during a period of transition in the sector. Not expecting a long-term change in culture and practice of restoration work to manifest on October 1. ➢ Managing step down from ITC into intensive foster care (where due to age carers may be difficult to find, and other pathways like guardianship/adoption unlikely; and/or the young person prefers restoration because they see it as less restrictive in regard to educational/behavioural expectations). ➢ Assessment when young people self-place with other adults (relatives or friends) and an authorised carer is not in place –

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	when/if can that person be a carer? ➢ Support to guardians/adoptive parents when needs may become elevated. **Additional needs** ➢ The challenges of contact when receiving referrals from FACS that are out of area and may be very far from their home – the difficulties of engaging the family out of area at the same time as supporting young people's engagement at school. Managing complex transport logistics, availability of contact supervision. ➢ Addressing the perception of foster carers that they may have been shuffled aside, and their voice marginalised by the reforms (but still needed as a permanency outcome for some children and young people – need to value them) ➢ Likewise avoiding marginalising the critical role of ITC in permanency support – "*people need to be respectful of everyone working in OOHC*" ➢ Handling power imbalances between the service provider and the funder by being appropriately assertive about what agencies need to know and why (information sharing a big challenge – there is a struggle for basic information). The need for good documentation takes time. Relationship building is also key.
8. How you rank them in priority to be addressed	1. Restoration 2. Being part of the case plan direction when young people are out of area and contact 3. Supporting good practice in leaving care/after care (at times this area feels separate/left out of the reform process – additional staff are needed but few dollars have been attached). Some geographic locations lack funded after care services.
9. What you think the possible support solutions are	➢ Fostering communities of practice ➢ Coaching and mentoring support ➢ Podcasts ➢ Ongoing consultations and training opportunities from ACWA/CCWT

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A2: Online survey Questionnaire

Improving Permanency Outcomes: What are your support needs?

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Improving Permanency Outcomes: What are your support needs

Thank you for participating in this survey

ACWA is conducting a needs analysis of the sector in relation to the Permanency Support Program.

If you would like to familiarise or remind yourself about the Permanency Support Program before you complete this survey, you can visit the FACS Permanency Support Program website and watch a brief video explaining the changes here.

The survey is divided into 3 main parts;

1. Establishing casework practice 'needs' for achieving successful permanency outcomes
2. Ranking your needs in order of priority
3. Proposing solutions for improving and supporting your permanency day-to-day practice

Participation in this survey will provide ACWA and FACS with critical insights into the best ways to implement the Permanency Support Program and influence decisions on training and support.

By submitting a completed survey you will be in the running to **win 1 of 6 places** in a CCWT permanency related two-day workshop of your choice.

This survey is entirely confidential. Your honest and thoughtful responses are greatly appreciated.

If you would like to speak to someone about the survey, please contact Principal Researcher Dr Robert Urquhart on (02) 9281 8822 or robert@acwa.asn.a

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Permanency Support Program knowledge

1. I am clear on the Permanency Support Program and what it means for my day-to-day practice.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

2. In general, staff across my agency are clear on the Permanency Support Program and what it means for my day to day practice.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

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Skills, Training and Resources Needs

3. Rate your agreement with the following statements

To achieve better permanency outcomes for children, I believe that my agency needs to strengthen casework practice, skills and ability in:

Assessing parents capacity for restoration

Record keeping

Reporting and documenting casework decisions

Working with adults to support the child

Assessing a child's development

Writing affidavits

Providing birth families permanency information

Creating detailed genograms

Locating family members of children in care

Working and engaging with Aboriginal children, families, agencies and communities

Working and engaging with families affected by trauma

Assessing safety and risk concerns

Assessing child wellbeing

Adoption casework resources

(Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; N/A)

4. Are there any other areas not listed above that you consider important in supporting your permanency practice? Please list

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Priority ranking

5. Of these areas I have identified my agency needs to strengthen, I believe the top priority is:

Use the ranking scale where 1= top priority

Assessing parents capacity for restoration

Record keeping

Reporting and documenting casework decisions

Working with adults to support the child

Assessing a child's development

Writing affidavits

Providing birth families permanency information

Creating detailed genograms

Locating family members of children in care

Working and engaging with Aboriginal children, families, agencies and communities

Working and engaging with families affected by trauma

Assessing safety and risk concerns

Assessing child wellbeing

Adoption casework resources

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Solutions

6. I believe that effective solutions to address these priorities should include:

A community of practice to share and communicate best practice at a local level

A mechanism for NGO and FACS managers to meet and discuss local permanency issues

A mechanism for NGO and FACS caseworkers to meet and discuss local permanency issues

A podcast series on current permanency best practice and wider sector reforms

An expert point of contact for managers on tricky permanency related practice issues

Agency specific face-to-face Permanency Support Program information sessions

Access to written Permanency Support Program information

Joint training with FACS and NGOs across all aspects of the Permanency Support Program

Sector wide glossary to support a FACS and NGO common language

Clarification document on the roles and responsibilities of NGO's and government agencies

Access to specialist casework and legal support for adoption

Mentoring for adoption casework

Mentoring for guardianship casework

(Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree; N/A)

7. Are there any other solutions not mentioned above, that you think would address the permanency practice gaps? Please list

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Your Feedback

8. Do you have any other comments you would like to share about the Permanency Support Program or your permanency needs, that were not included in this survey?

9. If you would like to submit a more detailed response to this survey outlining your permanency support needs, please attach document below.

   Allowable file types: PDF, DOC, DOCX, PNG, JPG, JPEG, GIF

   Choose File/No file chosen

Thanks so much, you are very nearly finished! Please continue to the next page....

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About you and your agency

This page asks for some information about you and your agency.

All the information obtained in the survey will remain confidential, no one will know how you responded.

The survey data may be used in reports that will contain the results and interpretation of group data ONLY. Individual participants will not be identifiable.

To say thanks, when you complete the few questions below, you will go into the running to win a free CCWT two-day training workshop of your choice worth $470 (6 prizes to be won).

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10. What is your current job role?

Youth Worker

Residential Support Worker

Caseworker/Social Worker

Senior Case Manager

OOHC Operations Support

OOHC Manager

Senior Management

CEO

Other (please give details)

11. On who's behalf are you answering this survey?

Myself

OOHC team

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12. Select all of the FACS districts that your agency operates in.

Central Coast

Far West

Hunter New England

Illawarra Shoalhaven

Mid North Coast

Murrumbidgee

Nepean Blue Mountains

Northern NSW

Northern Sydney

South Eastern Sydney

South Western Sydney

Southern NSW

Sydney

Western NSW

Western Sydney

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13. Is your agency an Aboriginal out-of-home care agency?

YES

NO

Unsure

14. Is your agency a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) out-of-home care agency?

YES

NO

Unsure

15. Are you currently in a position of management?

YES

NO

If NO, skip to Q 18; if YES go to Q16 & Q17 [Organisation Size]

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Organisation size *(managers only)*

16. In the previous funding model, approximately how many OOHC placements was your service funded to provide per care type? Please specify the range below

Residential Care

Foster Care/Kinship Care

Intensive Foster Care

Supported Independent Living/Supported Family Group Home (SIL/SFGH)

Other

If not known or n/a please specify below

[N/A; 1-10; 11-20; 21-50; 51-100; 101-200; 201-500; 501-1000; 1000+]

17. In the current contract for service provision, approximately how many OOHC placements is your service funded to provide per care type? Please specify the range below

Intensive Transitional Therapeutic Care (ITTC)

Therapeutic Sibling Option Placement (TSOP)

Therapeutic Supported Independent Living (TSIL)

Intensive Therapeutic Care Homes (ITCH)

Foster Care/Kinship Care

Intensive Foster Care

Other

If not known or n/a please specify below

[N/A; 1-10; 11-20; 21-50; 51-100; 101-200; 201-500; 501-1000; 1000+]

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My primary area of work

18. The area I primarily work in is best described as:

Residential Care

Foster Care and Aboriginal Foster Care

Kinship and Relative Care

Adoption and Guardianship

Family Preservation and Family Restoration

Leaving Care/After Care

Other (please specify)

Thank you for completing the survey.

If you would like to go into the draw to win 1 of 6 free CCWT workshop (average value $470) please provide your email address below. There are 6 workshops up for grabs!

19. Preferred email address (please list).

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