ACWA LAUNCHES STRATEGIC PLAN TO STRENGTHEN NSW CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE SECTOR

Wednesday 18th June 2025

The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) has officially launched its **Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027**, outlining a focused vision to drive reform and improve outcomes for children, young people, families, kin, and communities across New South Wales.

Developed in close consultation with the ACWA Board and members, the plan lays a clear foundation for leadership, collaboration, and system transformation at a time of growing pressure and opportunity in NSW's child and family welfare sector.

"This strategy reflects our strong commitment to reform that is practical, inclusive, and centred on those who use and deliver services," said Simone Czech, ACWA CEO. "It defines how we will work with government, community, and the sector to build better systems that genuinely serve and protect children and families."

Guided by four key pillars, ACWA will:

- Centre children, young people, families, kin, and communities in all systems and services.
- Strengthen leadership, capability, and innovation across the sector.
- Advance advocacy, collaboration, and cross-sector partnerships.
- Uphold strong governance, transparency, and evidence-informed practice.

"The ACWA Board fully supports this Strategic Plan as a clear and purposeful roadmap for strengthening our sector," said ACWA Chair Nigel Lindsay. "We believe it lays the foundation for meaningful, lasting reform, and will help build a system that listens, learns, and evolves, where policy and practice are shaped by lived experience, and where services are culturally safe, accountable, and effective."

The release of the Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027 comes at a critical time, as the sector faces complex challenges including workforce shortages, career decline, rising demand, and persistent inequity, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

ACWA will continue to work closely with the Minister for Families and Communities, The Hon. Kate Washington MP, and the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to support the design and delivery of responsive and sustainable reforms.

A key component in delivering the strategic plan is ACWA's training arm, the Centre for Community Welfare Training (CCWT), which plays a pivotal role in building workforce capability across NSW. By delivering accessible, evidence-based training tailored to the needs of frontline workers and leaders, CCWT helps equip the sector to respond to emerging challenges, supporting cultural safety, trauma-informed care, and long-term sustainability.

"This strategy is about creating a stronger, more connected sector, one that is equipped with the skills, tools, and partnerships to deliver real and lasting change," Ms Czech added. "We are committed to turning this vision into action through collaboration, best practice and collective effort."

Click here to access the **ACWA Strategic Plan 2025–2027**

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Notes to Editors:

- *The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) is the peak body representing non-government organisations providing services for vulnerable children, young people, and families in NSW.*
- *ACWA's training arm, the **Centre for Community Welfare Training (CCWT)**, delivers professional development and capacity-building programs across the sector.*
- *As of March 31, 2024, there were **12,352 children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC)** in NSW.**
- *Between 2018 and 2023, the number of authorised carers in NSW fell by 14.9%, with annual new carer applicants declining by 9.7%. This downward trend has persisted into 2024 and 2025.**
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to be significantly overrepresented in the OOHC system in NSW. As of June 30, 2024, there were **6,312** Indigenous children in OOHC placements in NSW, accounting for **45%** of all children in care in the state. ***

Visit **acwa.asn.au** for more information.

* Office of the Children's Guardian

** National Indigenous Times