ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S WELFARE AGENCIES STATEMENT

The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) acknowledges the announcement by the Office of the Children's Guardian regarding the cancellation of Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation's out-of-home care accreditation.

The safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people must always be the highest priority in the child and family sector. ACWA supports Minister Washington's clear focus on accountability across the out-of-home care system. When concerns arise about the quality, governance or delivery of services to children and families, it is essential that appropriate regulatory processes are followed and that agencies are held to the standards expected of them.

ACWA also acknowledges the importance of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and their vital role in supporting Aboriginal children, young people and families. Strong accountability and quality practice are fundamental to maintaining confidence in the sector and ensuring culturally safe, effective services are available to the communities they serve.

ACWA supports strong accountability, transparency and oversight across the out-of-home care system. Accreditation and regulatory frameworks play a critical role in ensuring children and young people receive safe, high-quality care and that providers meet their obligations to children, families, carers and communities. Maintaining public confidence in the system requires clear standards, robust monitoring and timely action where those standards are not met.

Our immediate concern is for the children and young people affected by this decision, along with their foster and kinship carers, families and the staff supporting them. It is essential that all agencies involved work collaboratively to ensure any transition is carefully managed, minimising disruption and maintaining continuity of care, important relationships, cultural connection and ongoing support for children and families.

This development also comes at a time of significant change across the out-of-home care sector. Many ACWA members are already navigating substantial uncertainty associated with the NSW Government's out-of-home care reforms, including contract transitions, workforce pressures and future service delivery arrangements. While accountability and quality standards must remain paramount, it is equally important that transition processes are carefully managed to maintain stability for children, young people, carers and the dedicated workforce supporting them during a period of considerable sector-wide change.

We will continue to engage with government, regulators and the sector as further information becomes available and to support efforts that prioritise the safety, stability and wellbeing of every child and young person affected by this decision.