



MEDIA RELEASE

## Transitioning to Aboriginal community-controlled care

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Carers of Aboriginal children and the service staff who support them came together in Penrith today to discuss the ongoing transition project.

Transition involves shifting the support of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care from non-Indigenous organisations to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

As AbSec CEO John Leha explained, it is partly about self-determination but mostly motivated by a desire to see Aboriginal children and young people supported by those who understand their culture needs and ensuring their connection to community.

“One of the greatest harms done to the Stolen Generations was severing their links to community, culture and kin,” Mr Leha said.

“We don’t want to see those mistakes repeated; we’re not talking about statistics here, these are the lives of individual people.”

Most of the session involved questions from the audience, answered by a panel of sector experts that included Larissa Johnson, a director for Office of the Children’s Guardian.

“Aboriginal children do better when they’re connected to culture and we want to support that,” Ms Johnson said.

Heidi Bradshaw is CEO of Narang Bir-rong, one of the Aboriginal community-controlled organisations that cases are being transitioned to.

“This is not just our job, it’s a cultural and personal responsibility,” Ms Bradshaw said, adding that it will be a consultative process.

“We will be led by the carers, the kids and the current case workers to decide what is best for the children.”

According to Casey Ralph, Kari CEO, the top priority for all stakeholders was the welfare of the children.

"It's all about having their needs met, that's what this is all about," Ms Ralph said.

"We just want to make sure informed decisions are being made and that supports are in place."

Maree Walk, ACWA CEO, had an encouraging messaging for all carers of Aboriginal children and young people who are considering the transition.

"You'll get two villages," Ms Walk said.

"You won't lose your current village and you'll get another one."



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