

**Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study:**

**Outcomes of Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care in NSW**

**Culturally Diverse Children in Out-of-Home Care: Safety, Wellbeing, Cultural and Family Connections**



**SSI acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and recognise their continuous connection to Country.**



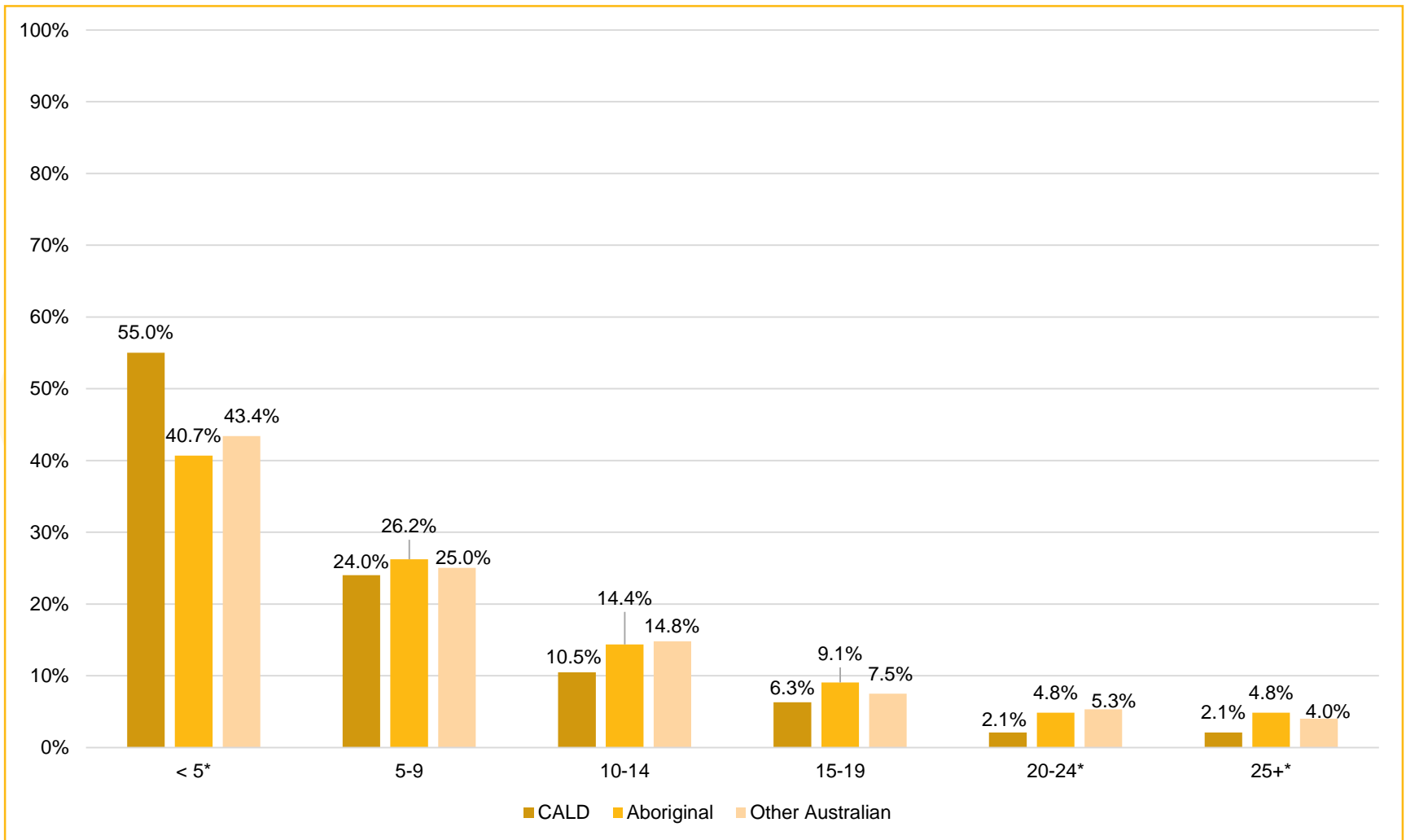
# Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study: Outcomes of Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care

## Background

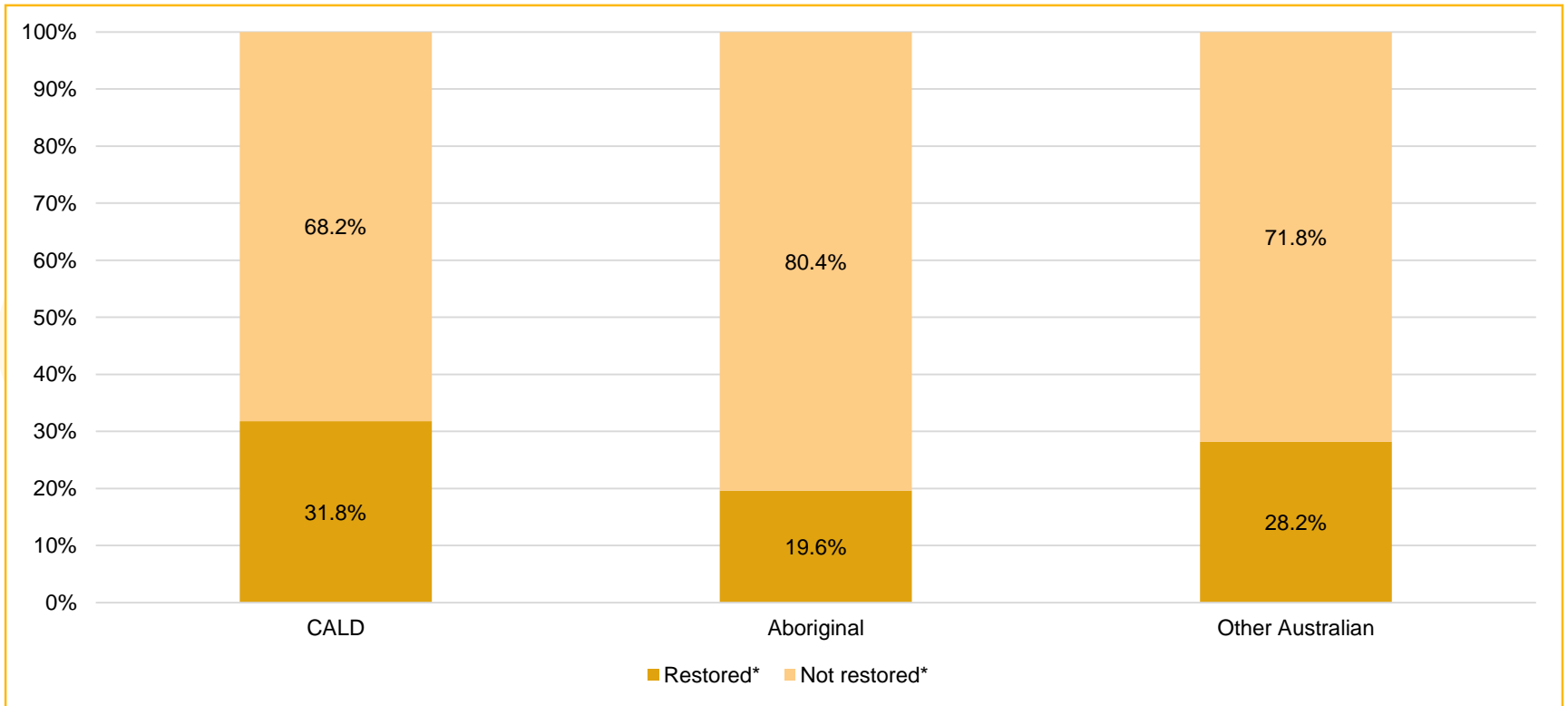
- The Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS) is funded and managed by NSW DCJ. It's the first large-scale prospective longitudinal study of children & young people in OOHC in Australia.
- POCLS collects detailed information about the life course development of children who enter OOHC for the first time
- It links data on children's child protection backgrounds, OOHC placements, health, education and offending held by multiple agencies
- Today, we will provide an overview of findings about CALD children's child protection backgrounds, experiences in care, developmental outcomes, relationships, and connection to their family & culture. And the implications for policy & practice.



# Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) reports prior to entry into OOHC



# Restoration



# Developmental Outcomes of CALD children in OOHC

- **Physical health.** Children's physical health was rated as good to excellent by most carers and similar by cultural background
- **Socio-emotional wellbeing.** There was some evidence that CALD children had better socio-emotional development compared to Other Australian and Aboriginal children

# Cultural identity & connections for CALD children in OOHC

- The majority of carers of CALD children reported being confident about their ability to maintain cultural connections language
- However, carers reported that about a quarter to a third of children did not identify with their cultural background.
- And carers reported that many CALD children were living in OOHC arrangements with little exposure to their birth language, little access to cultural or religious activities or connections to their cultural communities

# CALD children's relationship with carers

- The carer's parental warmth self-rating was similar: carers from all groups generally reported they display a warm style of parenting 'often' or 'always'.
- Children from all groups were similar in how close they felt to members of both their caregiver household & birth family.
- Carers of CALD children-were more likely to say they were 'very close' to the child compared with those of non-CALD backgrounds.



# CALD children's contact and relationship with their birth family

- CALD children were less likely to have contact with both parents than children of non-CALD background.
- CALD children were less likely to have contact with siblings they were not living with than children identified as Aboriginal, Aboriginal-CALD and Other Australian.

# Policy & practice implications

## Early intervention & family preservation

To reduce the number of children entering OOHC

- Connect families with services & supports early e.g. prenatal support; parenting programs
- Culturally sensitive community engagement initiatives to educate parents in CALD communities on stages of childhood development & what a child needs to thrive
- Ensure that early intervention & family preservation services are culturally responsive to the needs of CALD families

# Policy & practice implications

## OOHC care and cultural plans

- Care plans should emphasise the importance of engagement and connections between children & their birth families
- High-quality care planning requires adequate timeframes to allow for permanency planning & consultation with the child's extended family/kin
- Cultural plans should set out how the child's cultural needs will be met e.g. how will they be supported to participate in cultural & religious activities?
- Strategies to engage family/kin of children to build safe connections with their family & culture

# Policy & practice implications

## Establishing placements & training for carers

- Promote placement with siblings & relationships with siblings the child is not living with
- Recruit carers from a diverse range of CALD backgrounds. Requires strong collaboration with CALD leaders & service providers.
- Provide carers with cultural competency training, accurate information & support on the child's family & culture; & link to key members of the child's community who can support connection to culture.

# Policy & practice implications

## Training and development for caseworkers

- OOHC service providers (DCJ & NGOs) should recruit caseworkers from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Strengthening practitioners' shared knowledge of cultural elements in statutory care through group supervision & reflective practice

# Policy & practice implications

## Improving data collection & reporting

- Accurate identification & documentation of CALD families should be a mandatory data field in DCJ data sets so that appropriate supports can be provided
- Routine reporting of cultural diversity within child protection data in districts to enable service planning to address the needs of CALD communities.

# Thank you

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