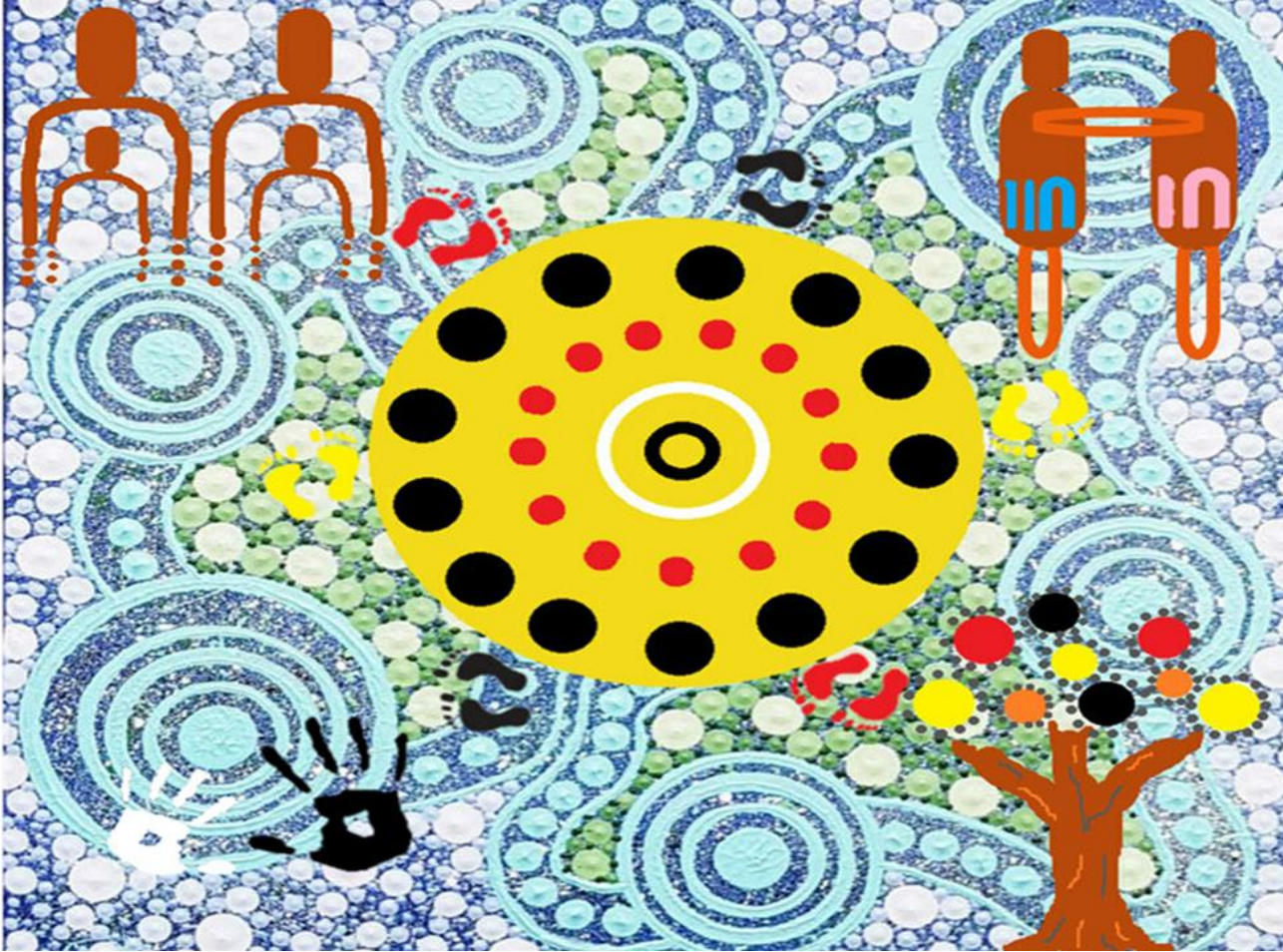


Family Preservation Foundational Elements Paper Briefing

Briana Jurgeit, Director, Family
Preservation & Child Protection

5 February 2025

Acknowledgment of Country



We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Nations Peoples of NSW and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and future.

We also acknowledge that family is the cornerstone of Aboriginal culture, spirituality and identity.

Through our work we will strive to ensure Aboriginal children and young people grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.

Introduction



Facilitator: Briana Jurgeit, Director Family Preservation and Child Protection.

Today's forum is a briefing session on the recently released *Finalising the Family Preservation foundational elements* paper.

We will be using the Slido platform to capture questions and discussion points.

The Family Preservation microsite will be updated post forum with information presented today, including a recording of this briefing and the slide deck.

We are aware of new AI tools being used by some organisations that can be integrated with Microsoft Teams and enable features such as meeting recording. Please be mindful of these features being automatically enabled. Family Preservation's protocol is to remove AI bots from the meeting.

Today's briefing on the Family Preservation foundational elements paper

Item	Agenda
1	Background and overview
2	Design elements: Happily compromise and explore
3	Design elements: Keep and refine
4	Design elements: Further work and collaboration required
5	Next steps in recommissioning Family Preservation

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Background and overview

Briana Jurgeit

Background and overview



In April 2024, we set out a vision for the Family Preservation system in the *Redesigning Family Preservation in NSW Discussion Paper*, asking 40 consultation questions of the sector.

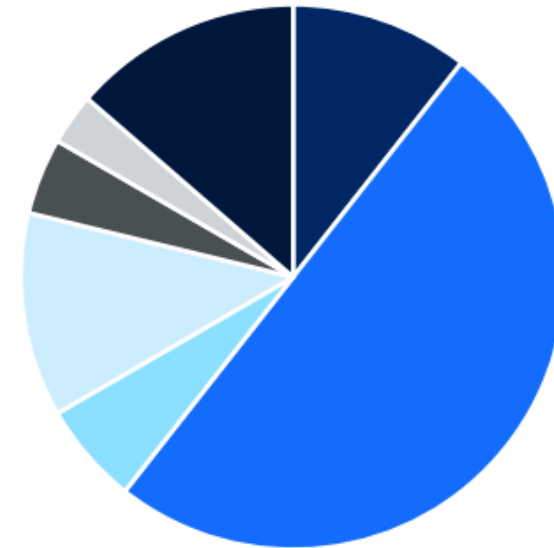


DCJ analysed responses and used this to shape the future Family Preservation service design and determine our next steps.



In December 2024, we published the *Finalising the Family Preservation foundational elements paper* which provides a summary of submissions to the Discussion Paper and outlines the final foundational design elements required ahead of procurement.

66 submissions



- ACCO service provider
- DCJ central office
- Peak body
- Other organisation

- Non-ACCO service provider
- DCJ district
- Other government department

Key insights into the sector

Through our analysis we identified some key insights into the sector which helps contextualise the specific feedback on the 40 discussion questions:

Enthusiastic but anxious about the expectations and scale and pace of change

Fragmented perceptions with our stakeholders interpreting proposals differently

Concerns about early intervention and prevention

DCJ operational pressures impacting capacity to implement proposals.

Concern about the level of service and funding

Key insights into the sector

We also gained a thorough understanding of the level of consensus and the feasibility of each of the proposed design elements. We grouped the sentiments for each element into three categories:



Happily compromise and explore



Keep and refine



Further work and collaboration required

Happily compromise and explore

Family Preservation guiding principles



We proposed

Based on extensive engagement with DCJ staff and service providers, we proposed eight guiding principles for Family Preservation



We heard

There was strong support for the inclusion of ‘Evidence-based’, ‘Culturally safe and responsive’, and ‘Transparent, fair, and accountable’ guiding principles.

Much of the sector advocated for a guiding principle centred around upholding a family’s dignity, building on their strengths, and resilience

Feedback also highlighted the importance of community and greater focus on the voices of children, young people, and families.

Family Preservation guiding principles



Happily compromise

Listening to feedback, we have made changes to some of the guiding principles and included the principle ‘Strengths-based and dignity driven’.

Family Action Plan for Change (FAPC) and referrals



We proposed

Requiring DCJ caseworkers completing a face-to face assessment and a FAPC prior to making a referral, which would enhance information quality and sharing.



We heard

The sector acknowledged that while a complete FAPC would improve the quality of referrals, it would significantly compound DCJ's current operational pressures

Family Action Plan for Change (FAPC) and referrals



Happily Compromise

We will not link the FAPC to allocated referrals. Service providers will not be involved in how DCJ makes referrals, however DCJ will need to provide a minimum level of information via the referral form.



Next Steps

We will work with the sector to embed best practice case planning, review minimum information referral requirements, and explore introducing a standard Family Preservation Case Plan.

Families Together - Service duration and allocated hours



We proposed

We proposed 200 hours of service per family over 12-months, delivered with different levels of intensity throughout the year to suits the needs, characteristics, and circumstances of the family.



We heard

Peaks and non-ACCO service providers had mixed feelings about a 12-month service duration – some were supportive, and others said it should be longer or flexible. Overall, the non-ACCO sector said 200 hours per family is insufficient to support families, especially larger families. There was also some anxiety that DCJ's payment mechanisms would be strictly linked to hours of delivery

Families Together - Service duration and allocated hours

Happily Compromise



We will retain the 12 month service duration for *Families Together* and develop a mechanism for extending the duration, where needed. We will introduce block funding, instead of allocated hours. Contracts for non-ACCOs will specify the required annual number of families that must receive support.

Next Steps



We will develop guidelines for larger families to occupy two places, to ensure the right and sufficient support is provided.

Aboriginal Family Preservation Framework core components



We proposed

The *Aboriginal Family Preservation Framework* to include the same five standard core components as the *Families Together* framework, with ACCOs co-designing additional core components



We heard

AbSec and ACCOs overall supported the core components approach, proposing they act as an iterative guide that can evolve as culturally appropriate evidence grows. AbSec said therapeutic healing and cultural healing need to be separated.

Aboriginal Family Preservation core components



Happily compromise

We will decouple Healing from the Therapeutic support core component and will support ACCOs delivering Family Preservation to co-design a Healing core component and an Advocacy core component.



Next Steps

We will work with AbSec to scope and develop the Implementation Strategy for the *Aboriginal Family Preservation* framework.

Aboriginal Family Preservation - Service duration and allocated hours

We proposed



We did not propose introducing a service duration in the Discussion Paper. Instead, ACCOs can collect data through infoShare and refine service duration as culturally sound evidence builds as part of codesign.

We had proposed service duration and allocated hours for the *Families Together* framework only. Many ACCO respondents used this proposition in their responses for *Aboriginal Family Preservation*.

We heard



AbSec said a 12-month duration with 200 hours per family was not reflective of how ACCOs work with Aboriginal families. Some ACCOs said 12 months seemed reasonable, while others said service duration should be up to two years or be driven by milestones. There was some appetite for a minimum number of hours, but a cap was not supported.

To gather feedback, AbSec and DCJ held consultations with ACCO CEOs and leaders. Consensus was reached on ACCOs having a 12-month service period and allowing large families to occupy two places.

Aboriginal Family Preservation - Service duration and allocated hours

Happily compromise



We will introduce block funding with contracts that specify the number of places that ACCOs can use to confidently support families each year. We will not introduce a service duration under the *Aboriginal Family Preservation* framework as a starting point. Instead, ACCOs can collect data through infoShare and refine service duration as culturally sound evidence builds as part of codesigning Family Preservation models with their communities. We will also allow large families to occupy two places.



Next Steps

- Prepare guidance for large families can occupy two places, if needed.
- DCJ will outline the number of places expected to be provided by ACCOs and provide support to capture data through infoShare.

Keep and refine

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Family Preservation Eligibility



We proposed

Simplifying eligibility across Family Preservation and slightly narrowing to families with children suspected to be at Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) to better target a finite resource.

We heard



- Peaks and service providers strongly opposed narrowing eligibility to families with children suspected to be at ROSH only. They said the requirement for community referrals to be made by a mandatory reporter and in parallel to a ROSH report signifies a loss of investment in earlier supports, encouraging perverse “report to get support” behaviour.
- AbSec and ACCOs said the proposed eligibility would undermine Aboriginal self-determination, threaten the reputation of ACCOs in community. Aboriginal children, young people, and families should be able to access support as early as possible and without coming into contact with DCJ.



We will keep:

Families who are eligible for Family Preservation are:

Families with a child or young person in the home who is 0- 17 who is suspected to be at, or determined to be at, risk of significant harm (ROSH) using the same definition of that provided by s 23 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (the Care Act).



Next Steps

We will collaborate with the sector to develop Community Referral guidelines, and we will develop a Community Referral Form that captures the source of the referral and a family's consent.

Family Preservation referral pathways and prioritisation



We proposed

A notional prioritisation guide to be DCJ allocation (60 per cent), DCJ triage (30 per cent), and community referrals (10 per cent), and only allowing mandatory reporters to make referrals.



We heard

The sector felt this proposal did not strike the right balance. Absec highlighted it did not align with self-determination principles. Most of the sector advocated to allow for all people to make referrals.

Family Preservation referral pathways and prioritisation



We will keep

To give DCJ the best possible opportunity to arrange intensive support for children who are at ROSH, we will keep community referrals at 10% and merge DCJ triage and allocated referrals (90%). Taking on feedback, we will allow community referrals to be made by anyone.



Next Steps

DCJ will collect and analyse data on referral pathways and explore options for trialling higher rates of community referrals. We will develop referrals prioritisation guidelines and mechanisms to request shifting notional prioritisation.



We proposed

Retaining Nabu, Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN) and Functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare (FFT-CW) and introducing the *Families Together* framework and *Aboriginal Family Preservation* frameworks). This means we would no longer be commissioning PSP-FP, IFP, IFBS, Brighter Futures (including SafeCare), Youth Hope, and Resilient Families.



We heard

There is enthusiasm from the sector on the proposed suite, highlighting the importance of implementation and evidence-based approaches. Some parts want to retain SafeCare and Voice and Choices. Resources and implementation challenges were raised on MST-CAN and FFT-CW. AbSec raised the lack of culturally sound evidence.

Suite of Family Preservation



We will keep

The proposed suite, give further thought to SafeCare and Voices and Choices, and develop communications on the retention of MST-CAN and FFT-CW.



Next steps

DCJ will outline the implementation approach, look further into SafeCare and Voices and Choices, and establish professional practice working groups, and Communities of Practice. AbSec will scope an Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework and work with our internal Closing the Gap Priority Reform on Data. DCJ will scope the development of a Cultural Safety Framework

*Nabu is a community-led, developed, and delivered model for Aboriginal families based in Illiwarra Shoalhaven only. It is not a statewide Family Preservation service.

Families Together Core Components



We proposed

The following five core components: Engagement, Case Management, Therapeutic Support and Healing, Family and Parent Support, and Child-Focused Support. We also proposed that some service activities will be required for all families and for all service providers, while other activities will be optional.

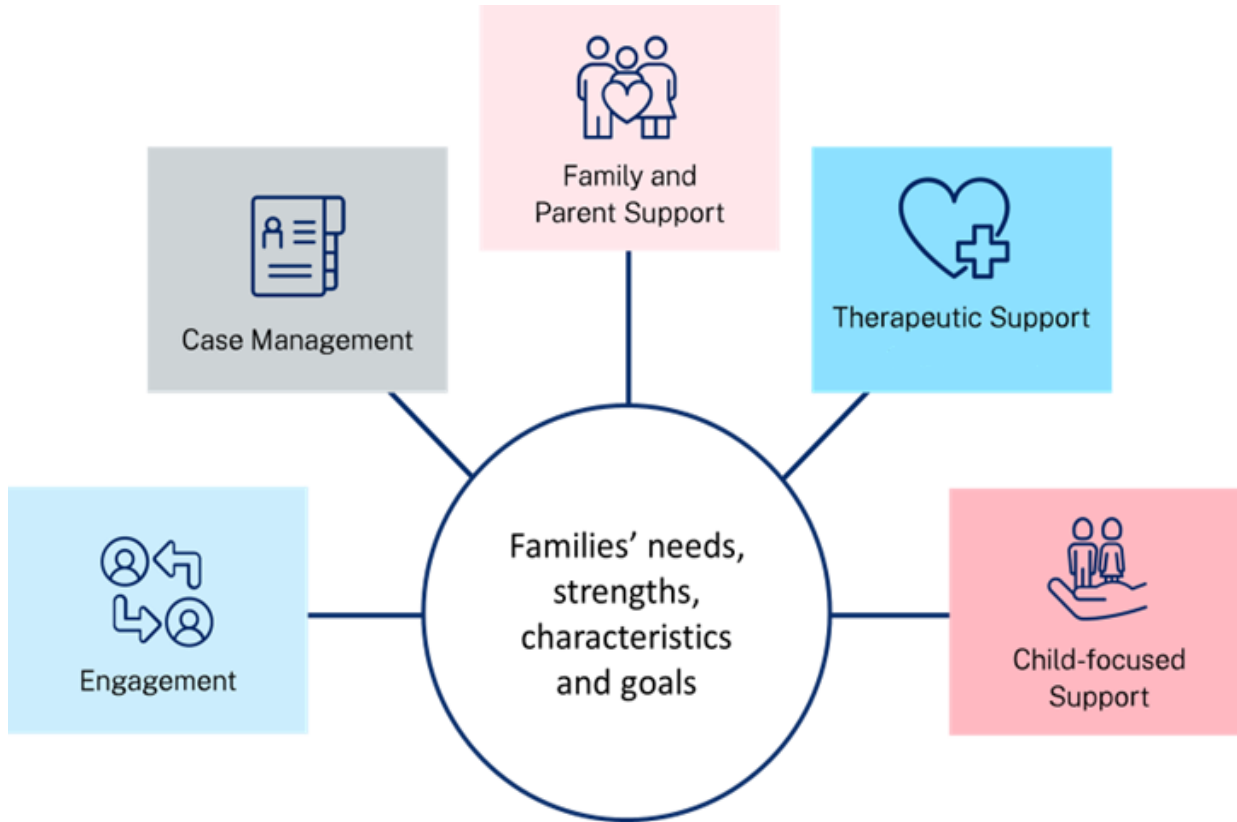


We heard

The sector has confidence in the proposed core components, with need for more information and an implementation strategy. Challenges were raised in delivering therapeutic support.

AbSec said Therapeutic Support and Healing are fundamentally different and that healing supports should only be delivered by ACCOs

Families Together Core Components



We will keep

We will keep the proposed five core components and decouple 'Therapeutic Support and Healing'. We will work with ACCOs to co-design a 'Healing' core component within the *Aboriginal Family Preservation* framework, to be delivered by ACCOs only.



Next Steps

DCJ will consult on the evidence-informed required service activities, communicate plans for improvements and implementation approach.

Further work and collaboration required

Family Preservation suitability



We proposed

We want to ensure families are referred to services that match their needs, strengths, characteristics, and circumstances, we are proposing introducing suitability guidance to support referrers



We heard

There is support for a suitability guidance concept but there is scepticism about its development, and its application, Readiness for change was considered an important factor amongst other factors. AbSec raised that a guide would need to be co-designed.



Further work required

DCJ will develop high level guidance outlining suitability and communicate limited circumstances in which a family would be unsuitable/ineligible. We will establish a sector Family Preservation Suitability Working Group

Keeping allocated cases open for up to three months



We proposed

Keeping allocated cases open for up to three months to facilitate better collaboration, information sharing, transparency, and risk management between DCJ and service providers.



We heard

Feedback expresses concern that this proposal may place further strain on DCJ operational pressures, with some agreement that keeping DCJ allocated cases open could improve family engagement and foster collaboration. There is an understanding that clear roles and responsibilities are needed for this proposal to succeed.



Further work required

DCJ will establish a Family Preservation Engagement Working Group to scope a workplan, analyse resourcing, explore risk management mechanisms, analyses on potential reduction in re-reports, and develop options that may include keeping allocated cases open.

Next steps

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