

The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP  
NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet  
52 Martin Place  
Sydney NSW 2000

27 February 2020

## **Re: Urgent reforms needed to child protection system for Aboriginal children in NSW**

Dear Premier

Aboriginal children and young people continue to be tragically over-represented within the out-of-home care system in NSW, with most recent data indicating more than 7,000 Aboriginal children within the system, at a proportion of 40% when compared to non-Aboriginal peers. I am sure you agree that this must change, and the status quo of the NSW child protection system cannot continue.

In 2017, the NSW Government via former Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, commissioned an independent review into 1,144 Aboriginal children and young people removed from their families by the Department of Communities and Justice (formerly Family and Community Services). This review was chaired by Professor Megan Davis and explored the systemic and practice failings within the system with the intention of providing a roadmap for genuine change.

In November 2019, the Hon. Gareth Ward, Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services released the findings of this landmark independent review, presenting 125 recommendations for legislative, policy and practice reforms that aim to turn the tide in how this system is destroying Aboriginal families and communities. Importantly, these recommendations are about ensuring the NSW child protection system is accountable to Aboriginal people and communities, and genuinely enables Aboriginal self-determination. The Minister gave the commitment to release a government response in the first half of 2020.

After decades of devastation to Aboriginal families and communities caused by the NSW child protection system, Professor Megan Davis, through the *Family Is Culture Report* provides the NSW Government with a clear roadmap for reform and change. This is now over to you to demonstrate real action, real change for the thousands of Aboriginal children and young people impacted by the NSW child protection system. We cannot continue to stand by and witness the NSW Government continue to destroy the lives of Aboriginal children, families and communities.

We are calling on you to ensure that implementation of all 125 recommendations in the *Family Is Culture* report commences from 1 July 2020, and as such, call on your government to demonstrate this by allocating resourcing in the 2020/2021 NSW Budget. We ask that you make a significant financial commitment to drive implementation of this vital reform on behalf of Aboriginal communities that are so disproportionately represented in your Government's Stronger Communities Cluster. This is about starting from 1 July 2020 with immediate actions based on Professor Davis' recommendations, as well as respectfully laying the foundations with Aboriginal communities for long term reform.

Premier, we stand in unity to call on you to make serious, meaningful and genuine change – to uphold and support all 125 recommendations made in the *Family Is Culture* report. We call on you to demonstrate this commitment by making an immediate budget investment to support the implementation of the report's recommendations.

Please note that the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Jodi McKay MP, has also been sent a copy of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

## Campaign supporters

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Tim Ireland, CEO



Karly Warner, CEO



Richard Weston, CEO



Steve Kinmond, CEO



Tim Leach, Executive Director



Julie Hourigan Ruse, CEO




Katherine McKernan, CEO



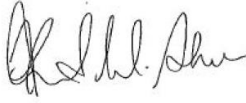
Joanna Quilty, CEO



**ABCARE**  
OWIN HOABOR ABORIGINAL FAMILY COMMUNITY CARE

  
Garry Matthews, CEO

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Distinguished Professor  
Larissa Behrendt, Chair of Indigenous  
Research Director Research and  
Academic Programs



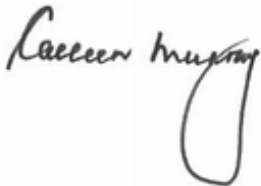
Jo Grant, CEO, Katungul Aboriginal  
Corporation Regional Health and  
Community Services



Tangerene Ingram, CEO



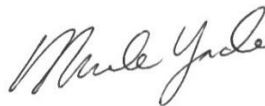
Christine Robinson, Coordinator,  
Wiringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's  
Legal Centre



Colleen Murray, Manager,  
Woomera Aboriginal Corporation



A SAFE PLACE FOR WOMEN



Nicole Yade, General Manager

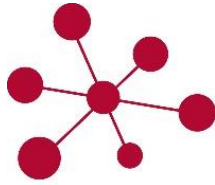


Jo Toohey, CEO



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Jane Titterington, Principal Solicitor



public interest  
ADVOCACY CENTRE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jonathon Hunyor'.

Jonathon Hunyor, CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tania McCurley Muchitsch'.

Tania McCurley Muchitsch, Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dixie Link-Gordon'.

Dixie Link-Gordon, Senior Community Access Worker

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Helen Campbell'.

Helen Campbell, Executive Officer