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## *Our Way* strategy & *Changing Tracks* Action Plan:

## DCSYW 2019-20 Budget initiatives

## What is the *Our Way* strategy?

[*Our Way, a generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-2037*](file:///C:/Users/mxmclind/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/U8RCH30K/our-way.pdf), developed in conjunction with Families Matters, is an ambitious 20 year commitment to:

* reduce the gap in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young peoples and families, and
* eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system by 2037.

The *Our Way* strategy aims to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture. It is a key initiative under the Government’s 10 year *Supporting Families, Changing Futures* reform program.

*Our Way* is aligned to the Government’s *Thriving Communities* agenda, heralding a new partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. *Our Way* also contributes to achieving the *Advancing Queensland Priorities* of ‘A Great Start for All Children’, ‘Keep Queenslanders Healthy’, and ‘Keep Communities Safe’.

## What has been approved?

A further $14.6 million over four years, plus other investments, have been allocated to implement new and enhanced initiatives under the [*Our Way* strategy](https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/campaign/supporting-families/background/strategy-action-plan-aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-children-families) and the *Changing Tracks* Action Plans. This builds on the $162.8 million committed so far to implement the *Our Way* strategy.

## What was achieved in the first Changing Tracks Action Plan?

There are 35 actions in the first *Changing Tracks*  [Action Plan 2017-19](file:///C:/Users/mxmclind/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/61FR4HRF/changing-tracks.). The first report on [*Progress against the Action Plan*](file:///C:/Users/mxmclind/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/61FR4HRF/changing-tracks-progress-report.pdf) indicates that 23 were completed or being embedded by the end of 2018 and the remaining 12 actions are on track to be completed in 2019. Key achievements to date include:

* As at 30 June 2018 and 31 December 2018, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care stabilised - ending 14 consecutive years of increases in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation in the tertiary child protection system.
* The establishment of the [Queensland First Children and Families Board](https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/campaign/supporting-families/background/queensland-first-children-families-board) - to guide, oversee and advise on the implementation of Our Way and associated action plans and to hold government and partners accountable to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
* The roll out of 33 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services making it easier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to access support to strengthen social, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing, and safely care for and protect their children.
* The *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017*, commenced in October 2018, and:
  + supports the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination
  + enables family-led decision making
  + embeds the five elements of the Child Placement Principle
  + places greater emphasis on culture as a protective factor and ongoing connections, and
  + enables the Chief Executive to delegate functions or powers to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community controlled service or agency.
* Initiatives to strengthen connections with and voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, parents and kin, to support community-controlled sector practice leadership and development, and to develop the cultural capability of the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW) .

## Why more investment?

Whilst considerable reform effort and investment is being committed to addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care, more needs to be done.

In Queensland, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people comprise 8% of the population aged 0-17 years, yet as at 31 December 2018, represent 42% of all children in care, up from 39% in the year prior to child and family reforms starting (30 June 2013) and up from 31% ten years ago (30 June 2008). While this has stabilised, continued effort is required to eliminate the disproportional representation in the child protection system.

The 3 year *Changing Tracks Action Plans*, overseen by the Queensland First Children and Families Board, include a focus on enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to provide evidence based, early intervention, prevention, reunification and transition initiatives that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, and getting a more balanced investment.

The second Changing Tracks Action Plan 2020-22 currently under development will consolidate and build on what has been achieved to date under the first Action Plan. It will prioritise actions that enable continued transformational change.

## What is the further investment for?

The further $14.6 million investment by DCSYW for *Our Way* initiatives includes:

* $2.1 million over 3.5 years from January 2020 to:
  + support 5 specialist Domestic Violence workers in Family Wellbeing Services.  These positions will assist affected family members with safety planning and active referral to specialist domestic and family violence services; and
  + work with 4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop locally-led domestic and family violence action plans, including community initiatives and redesign of services to meet identified community needs.
* $2.9 million over 2.5 years to implement the October 2018 amendments to the *Child Protection Act 1999* which enable responsibilities of the department’s Chief Executive in relation to an child to be delegated to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entities.
* $2.5 million over 2.5 years to enhance Family Participation Program from 1 January 2020 to enable increased access to family led decision making at significant decision points, such as where a child will live, how to get them home and transition to adulthood.
* $300,000 over 3 years to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reconnection and kinship care enhancement projects that can support efforts to recruit Aboriginal kinship carers and undertake family and kinship mapping for Indigenous children in care who are not already connected to family and kin.
* $1.4 million over 2 years to support service reform projects in remote and discrete communities providing greater community control over the services delivered to residents and ensuring accountability to the community. Mornington Island is the first site with two more to be determined in consultation with communities.
* $3.4 million over 4 years in sector development. This includes:
  + continuing investment of $500,000 per annum for the next 3 years to enable Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) to continue sector development for Family Wellbeing Services;
  + $300,000 per annum for next 3 years to support increasing the role of the sector in foster and kinship care and enhance support across Northern Queensland;
  + $180,000 recurrently to support adolescent practice development.
  + $280,000 per annum in scholarships to support up to 26 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child, youth and family workers to undertake the Griffith University Graduate Diploma program.
* $480,000 over four years to support Queensland First Children and Families Board to oversee and guide the *Our Way* strategy.
* $600,000 over four years for the monitoring and evaluation of the Our Way strategy and associated action plans, as well as for targeted research projects to build the evidence base.

Other DCSYW investments in 2019-20 and beyond that contribute to the *Our Way* strategy include:

* $6.38 million over 2 years for 31 Youth and Family Workers in Indigenous Family Wellbeing Services to provide family focused support to adolescents in the youth justice system.
* Empowering Families Innovation Grants to support initiatives that keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safe, well and connected to family, culture and country.
* $3.487 million over 3 years for the *Connected to Kin, Culture and Community* project with a focus on development of an Aboriginal Kinship Care Program, developing service readiness of community accountable organisations to deliver and increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care of their kin.
* $2.5 million over 3 years to enhance *Next Steps* after care services and partnerships from 1 January 2020. This will include a focus on community-controlled services and cultural capability of services delivered to young people transitioning from care.
* $2.3 million over 4 years to continue the state-wide *Strengthening Health Assessment Pathways Project* including the digitised health pathway and support 7 communities of practice involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services, DCSYW, Queensland Health, Primary Health Networks and other local services.
* $840,000 contribution to the expansion, in conjunction with Queensland Health, of the *Navigate Your Health* pilot for children in care to young people involved with youth justice plus expansion to 2 more locations by August 2020.

Information about *Our Way* related initiatives by other Departments will be provided separately.