



An Introduction to the South Australian child protection system



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Department for Child Protection

This artwork depicts **'The Journey'**. The Journey that DCP takes alongside its partners, alongside the children, parents, grandparents and caregivers. The meeting place in the middle is surrounded by children to show that they are the centre and light of everything, that they are what everyone is working so hard for and the meeting place is their destination and where the Journey lines meet.



Surrounded by the inner meeting place are smaller meeting places/waterholes representing the individual Journeys of the children, families and workers alike connected through more Journey lines. The smaller waterholes represent the many different places and areas the children are from.

Throughout this piece there are many Kangaroo and Emu footprints representing DCP in their Journey moving forward and never backward. The bottom of the piece has the symbol for rainbow which represents Hope. The Vibrant colours are used to represent each individual's story and that everyone's story matters and is always seen.





Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal people as the state's first people and Nations, and recognise Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the South Australian land and waters.

We recognise that Aboriginal children and young people have the right to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment where their connections to family, community, language, culture and country are supported, respected and celebrated.

DCP's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle artwork by Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara artist Elizabeth Close, in collaboration with Ochre Dawn Creative Industries.



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Purpose and learning outcomes

By the end of today's session, our aim is for you to develop an understanding of:

- a brief history of child protection
- child protection in South Australia
- Department for Child Protection services
- child protection reviews, enquiries and relevant legislation
- working in child protection
- different perspectives of children, young people, families and communities
- the importance of your wellbeing



Brief history of child protection

1874

First wave of child rescue movement in USA & UK

- First child protection services with a legal mandate to intervene to protect children from abuse and neglect

1890

Australian Developments

- Increased child abuse public awareness
- 1890 – Establishment of New South Wales Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSWSPCC)

1960's

Battered Child Syndrome

- Led to 'compulsory reporting of suspected maltreatment' introduced in 1969 – only applied to doctors and dentists

1970's

Mandatory Reporting Laws

- Tasmania (1974), South Australia (1975), New South Wales (1977) and Queensland (1980)
- Different perspectives on "family"
- Definitions of abuse expanded
- De-institutionalisation

1980's
&
1990's

Child Protection Act (1993)

- Daniel Valerio's death on 1989 led to mandatory reporting in Victoria
- Recognising impact of neglect and witnessing family violence

2000's
- current

National Child Protection Framework & Updated Legislation in SA

- *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act*
- *Child and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act*
- *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* - new definitions of "children at risk" and "harm", additional neglect and grooming offences
- *Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031*



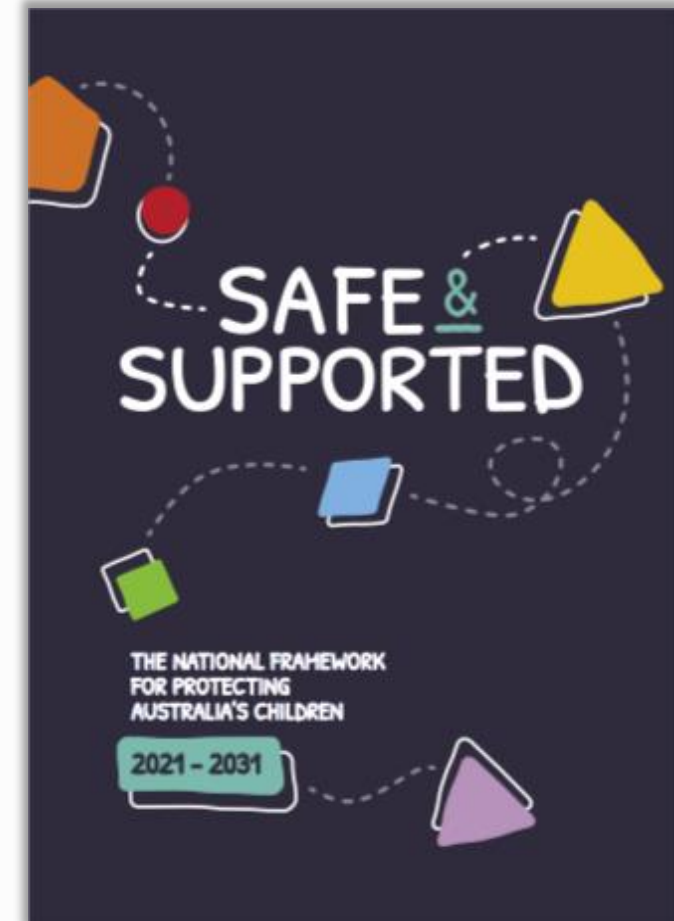
Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 – 2031

The Department for Child Protection co-led the development of the new National Framework and associated action plans

Ten year national framework agreed by governments.

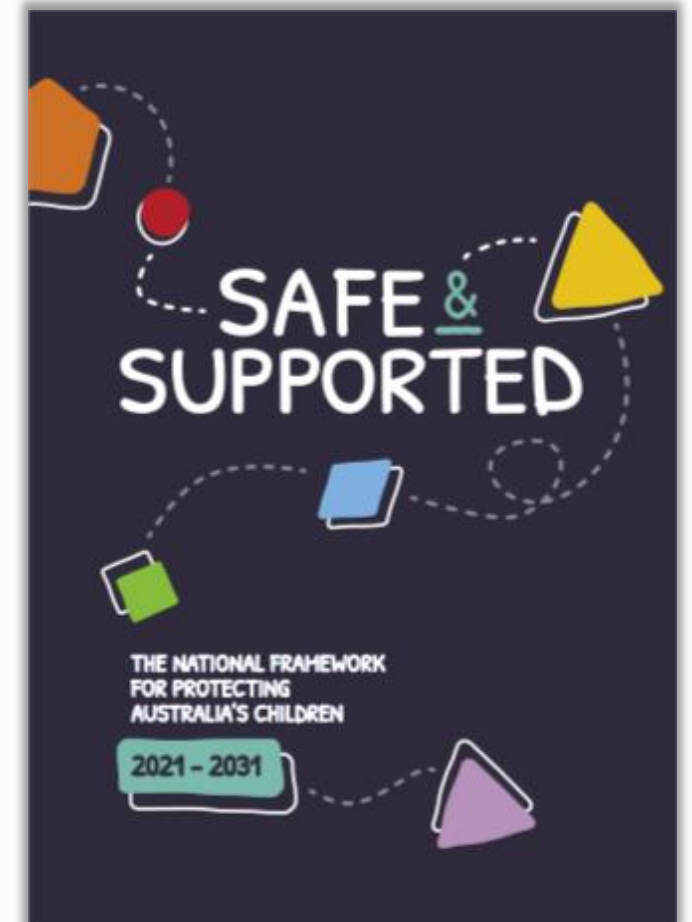
Four priority groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people experiencing disadvantage
- children and families with multiple and complex needs
- children and young people with disability and/or parents/carers with disability experiencing disadvantage of who are vulnerable
- children and young people who have experienced abuse and/or neglect, including those in out-of-home care or leaving care

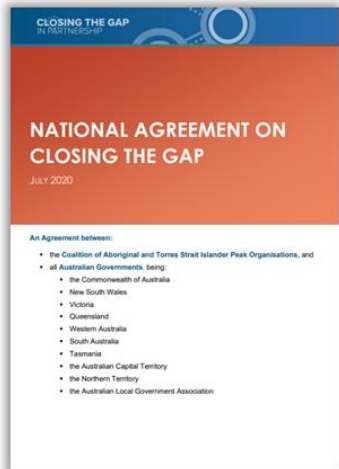


Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 – 2031

- Four focus areas:
 - Early intervention and targeted support
 - Addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems
 - Information sharing, data and analysis
 - Strengthening the sector and workforce.
- Strong alignment with Closing the Gap commitments, particularly Target 12.

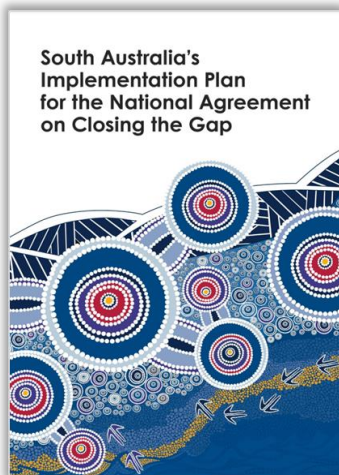
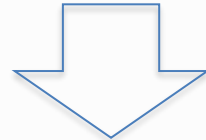


Closing the Gap



Four Priority Reforms

- Formal partnerships and shared decision making
- Building the community-controlled sector
- Transforming government organisations
- Shared access to data and information at a regional level



South Australia's Implementation Plan developed in partnership with the South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON)

Child protection in South Australia



Image source: https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/group-kids-friends-arm-around-sitting-together_2523584.htm



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South Australia's historical background

In South Australia the earliest form of 'care' for children who were deemed destitute or neglected was the government-run Destitute Asylum which also took in adults.

- 1860s children began to be accommodated separately in a number of government-run and/or church run institutions.
- From as early as the 1860s-1870s, boarding out (an early term for foster care) was favoured by the government.
- South Australia was the first state to introduce boarding out as an alternative to institutional care.



South Australia's historical background

1844

Aboriginal Orphans Act

1866

Destitute Persons Relief Act

1895

State Children Act

1911

Aborigines Act

1925

Adoption of Children Act

1936

Children's Protection Act

1962

Aboriginal Affairs Act



South Australia's historical background

1972

Family and Community Services Act

1988

Adoption Act Act

1993

Children's Protection Act

2016

Child Safety (*Prohibited Persons*) Act

2016

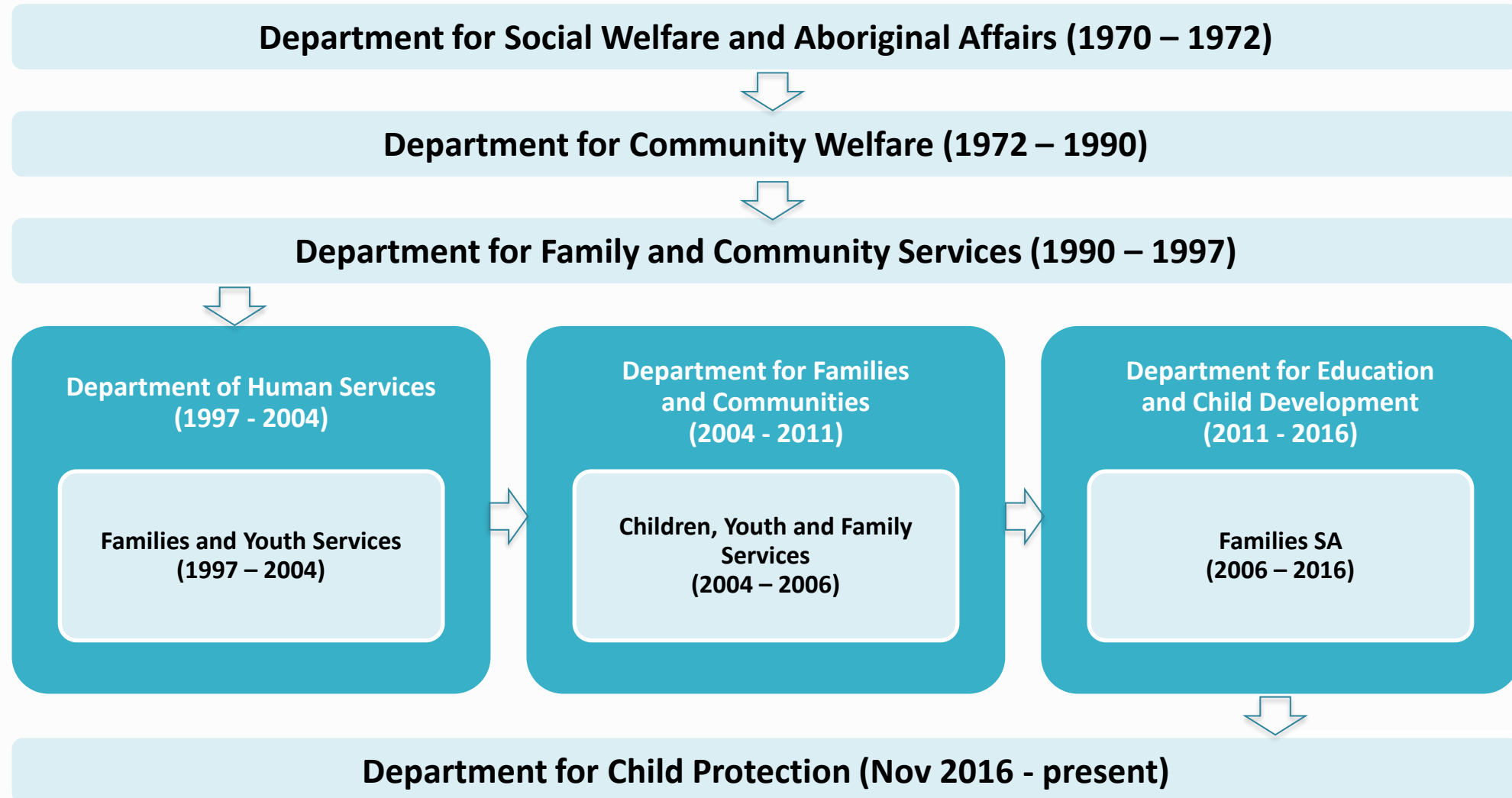
Children and Young People (*Oversight and Advocacy Bodies*) Act

2017

Children and Young People (*Safety*) Act



Development of the Department for Child Protection SA



Department for Child Protection services

The department:

- protects, cares for and empowers children and young people at risk and in care
- recognises Aboriginal people as Traditional Owners and occupants of Land and Waters in South Australia
- works with key partners to respond to abuse and neglect, keep children and young people safe from further harm
- works with service partners and alongside the community to improve outcomes for children, young people, carers and families
- commissions and delivers services to meet the needs of children and young people in care to help them heal from trauma and reach their full potential
- respects and values carers as vital partners in keeping children and young people safe and well

For further information view DCP organisational chart: [DCP organisational chart \(childprotection.sa.gov.au\)](https://childprotection.sa.gov.au)



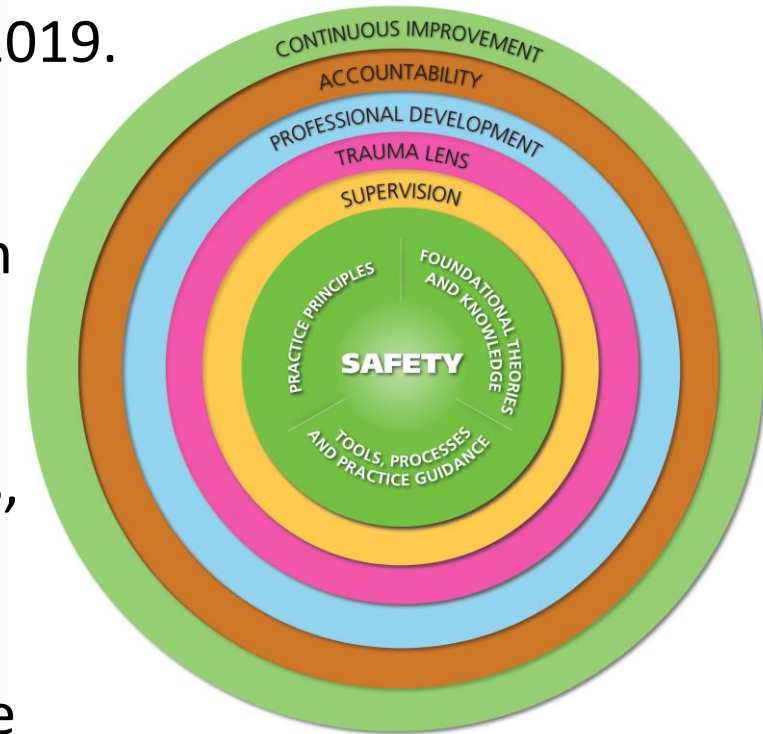
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The DCP Practice Approach

The DCP Practice Approach became operational on 1 December 2019.

The DCP Practice Approach:

- is an integrated and contemporary approach to child protection practice
- is unique to South Australia's legislative and cultural context
- was developed in partnership with staff, young people, families, carers and service providers
- supports DCP staff and other stakeholders to work together to ensure safety and best outcomes for children and young people



The DCP Practice Approach includes:

- Practice Principles
- Foundational theories and knowledge
- Tools, processes and practice guidance
- Elements that support best practice

Supporting best practice

Key components of the Practice Approach that support best practice and requirements of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017:

- Manual of Practice (MoP)
- Assessment Framework
- Practice Papers
- Workplace learning sessions



Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (ACPP)

- Embedding the elements and precursor in DCP's practice is crucial to achieve meaningful change and improved outcomes

- Active effort prompts are included in the MoP
- Key ACPP element identified for workplace learning



Disability and Development Program - established 2018

- Provides a strengthened focus on children with disability and developmental delay in care
- Over 1200 children and young people in care have an NDIS plan
 - Approximately 25% of all children and young people in care, over 5% of all SA children on the scheme
 - majority in family based care



65% male



35% female

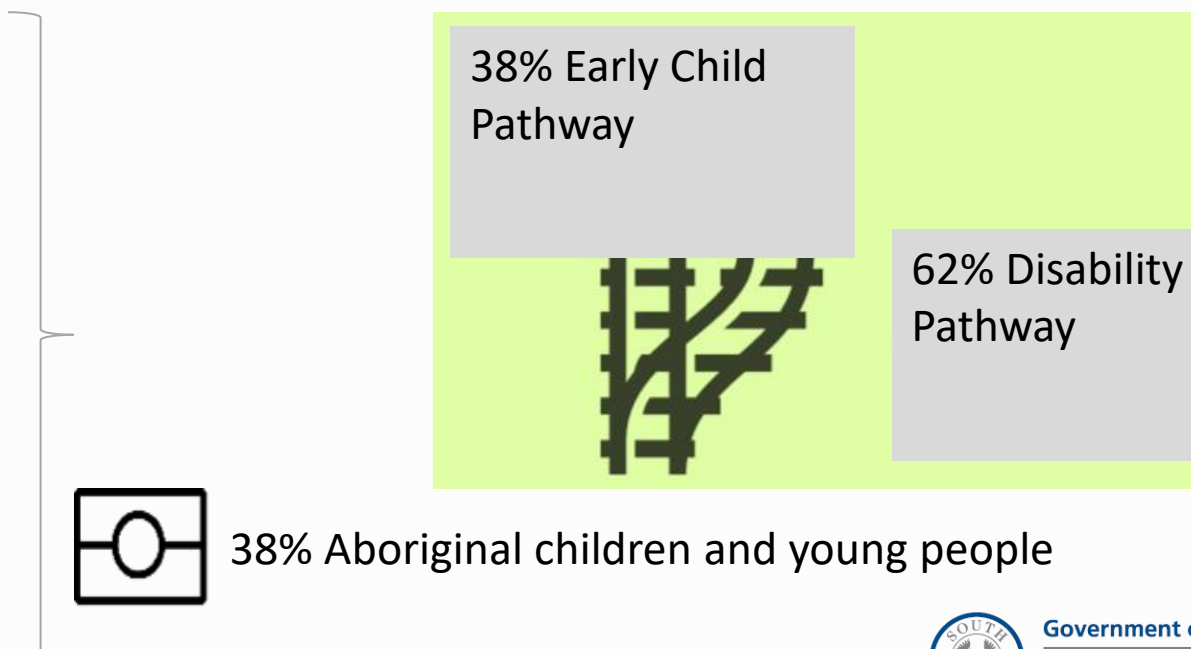


Most common diagnoses

36 % Autism

27 % Intellectual disability

17 % Global developmental delay



Number of children in care - 30 June 2017 to 30 June 2022

Trend data	30 June 2022	30 June 2021	30 June 2020	30 June 2019	30 June 2018	30 June 2017
Total children under 18 years in care	4740	4646	4370	3988	3695	3484



Child protection reviews, enquiries and relevant legislation



Image source: https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/court-hammer-books-judgment-law-concept_8760889.htm



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Events impacting the child protection system

Significant and catastrophic events can trigger enquiries, reviews and coronial inquests leading to changes in systems, policy, procedure and legislation.

Discussion

Can you identify some of high profile Commissions and Inquiries within the last 20 years?



Child protection and relevant legislation

- Legislation is one of the most important instruments of government in organising society and protecting citizens
- It determines the rights and responsibilities of individuals, organisations and authorities
- It sets rules, standards and consequences

Discussion

What legislation is relevant to your role?



Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

- The *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* is the governing child protection legislation in South Australia, this underpins our business, policies and procedures.
- It shapes the work that we do – and provides the authority (or mandate) for our role in the lives of families.
- It includes a range of provisions to share information with a broad range of people and agencies where there is a legitimate reason to do so.
- It states the general placement principles of children and young people with specific considerations for those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.



Guiding principles and purpose of the Act 2017

Safety of children and young people is paramount

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children

Positive and inclusive outcomes for Aboriginal children



Child placement principles

[Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017:](#)

Part 3 (11) (1) on general placement principles

- all children and young people who have been removed from the care of a person under this Act should be placed in a safe, nurturing, stable and secure environment
- the preferred option in relation to such placement of a child or young person is to place the child or young person with a person with whom they have an existing relationship
- approved carers are entitled to be, and should be, involved in decision-making relating to children and young people in their care.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

[Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017:](#)

Part 3 (12) (2) on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

- (a) maintaining connection with family and culture
- (b) enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in the care and protection of their children and young people
- (c) for State authorities to act in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, families and communities in regards to the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as well as reducing the incidence of removal.

For further information, refer to SNAICC – National Voice of our Children:

[SNAICC - National Voice for our Children](#)



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Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

Five core elements and precursor



Identification: Ensuring that Aboriginal children are identified at the earliest possible point of child protection involvement – a precursor and prerequisite to the application of the Principle



Prevention: Aboriginal families are actively supported to access culturally responsive supports to mitigate the need for statutory intervention



Partnership: Aboriginal people, communities and organisations lead the delivery of child protection services and practice for Aboriginal children and families



Placement: Prioritising placement in care in accordance with the placement hierarchy



Participation: Ensuring the participation of Aboriginal children and families in child protection decision making

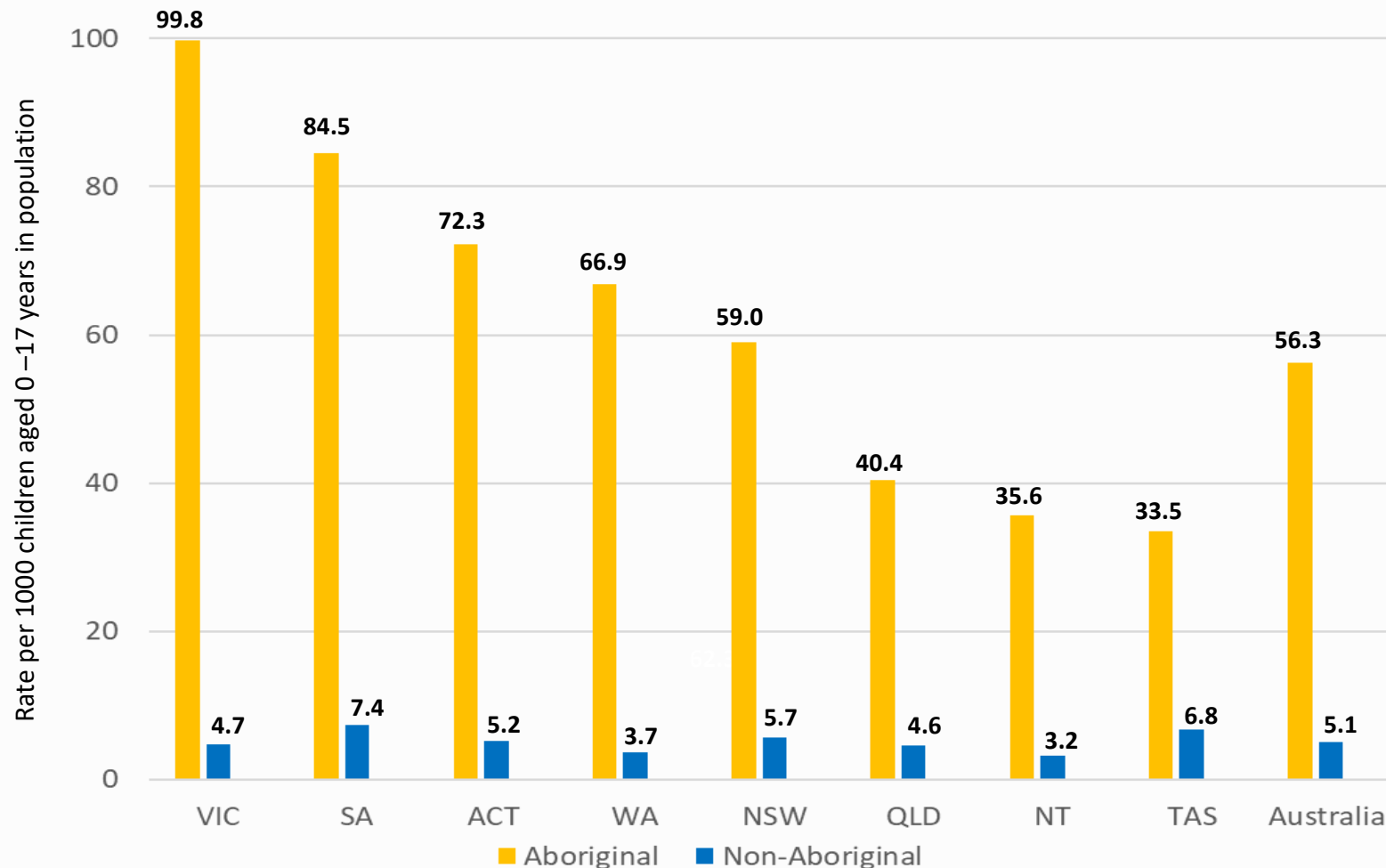


Connection: Maintaining and supporting connections to family, community, culture and country



South Australian Aboriginal children and young people in care

Aboriginal children and young people in care aged 0-17 years are over-represented



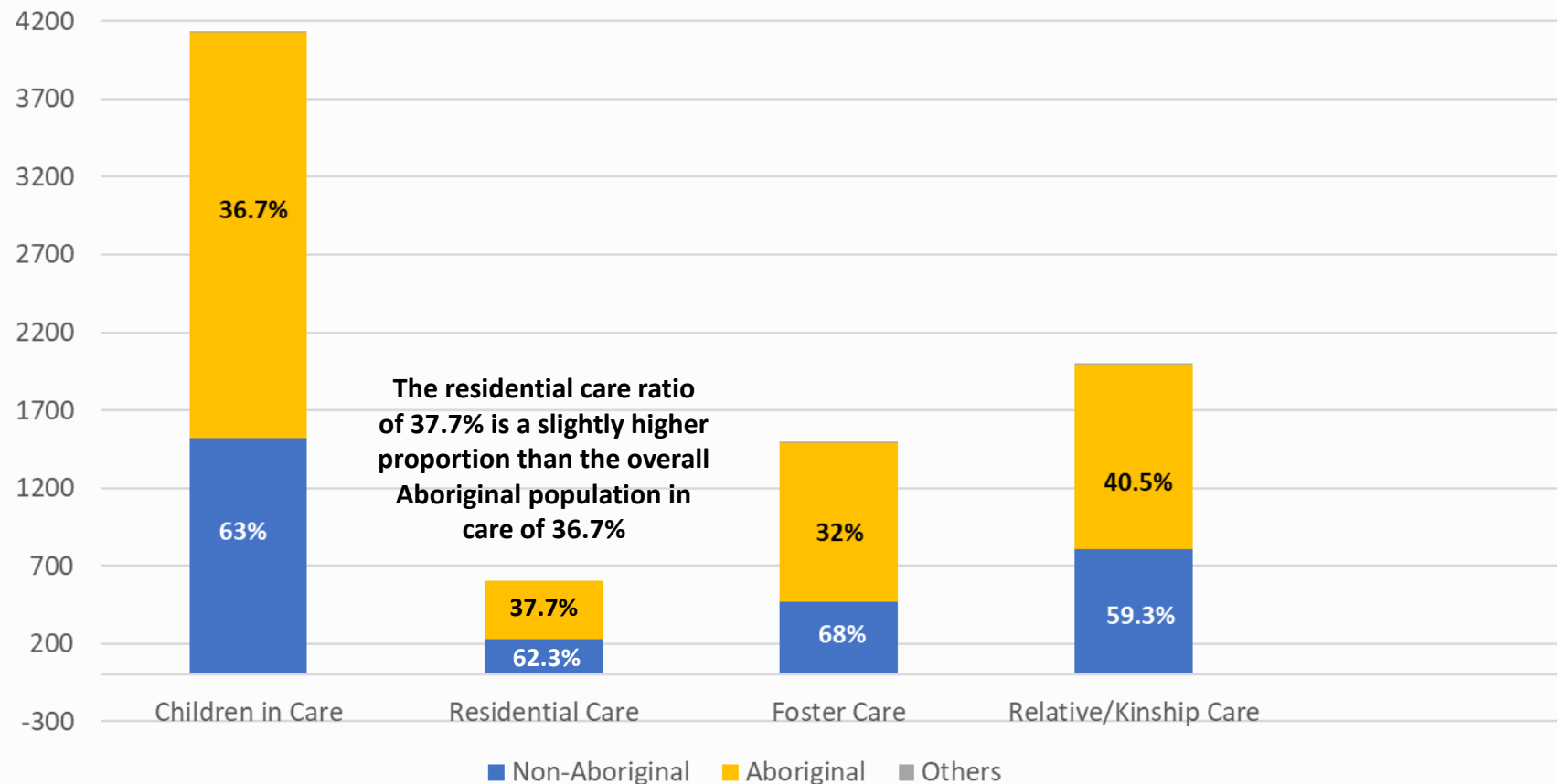
Out-of-home care rates in SA:
84.5 per 1,000, compared to 7.4
for non-Aboriginal children and
young people.

The Closing the Gap Target
requires a **45% reduction by**
2031 with a rate of **46.4 per**
1,000.



South Australian Aboriginal children and young people in care

Aboriginal children and young people in care aged 0-17 years are over-represented



Disproportionality:
Of the 4,136 children and young people in care, 1,519 (36.7%) were Aboriginal



Working in child protection



Roles and responsibilities

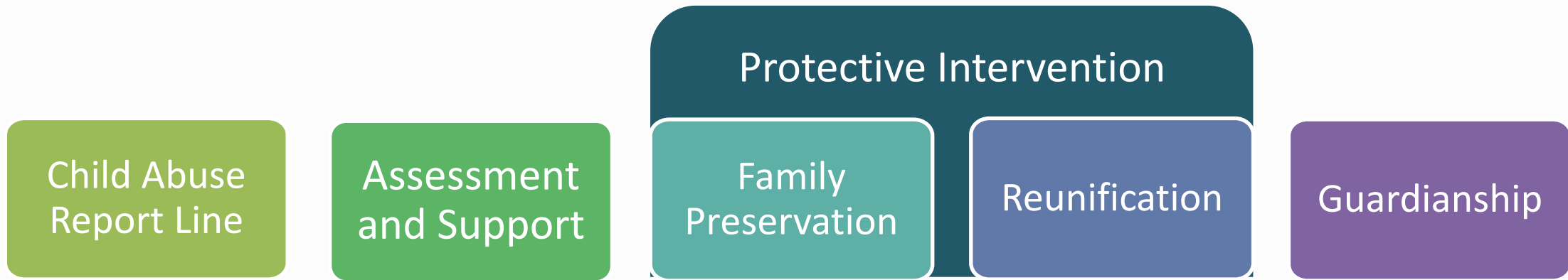
Both in your individual role, and the function of your team, start thinking about and discuss the following in relation to child protection:

Discussion

- What informs our work?
- Who are we working with or for?
- What is expected of us?



DCP case management flow



Child Abuse Report Line

- State-wide notification system responsible for screening all reported concerns and suspicions of children at risk
- First responders
- Conduct Screening and Response Priority Assessments
- Partner with other agencies (e.g. Schools, SAPOL, Health) Operational 24/7 all year



Assessment and Support

- Investigating concerns
- Safety and risk assessment
- Identifying needs
- Working with families
- Partnership and support
- Court applications and orders
- Case planning



Protective Intervention

Family
Preservation

Reunification

- Family preservation and reunification
- Working with parents, carers and extended family
- Engaging other agencies and partners
- Case planning and reviews
- Childs' needs and placement
- Court reports/applications



Guardianship

- Case planning and reviews
- Supporting identity and connection to family, community, culture, land, people, stories and history
- Transition to long-term guardianship
- Reviewable decisions
- Transition to adulthood
- Transition from care plan
- Care concerns



DCP case management flow



Discussion

- What areas might link in with your role?
- How are you connected with or to other areas?
- How does your role and work connect with and impact on children and families?



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DCP Residential Care

Provides 24/7 specialised accommodation, care and support for some of the most vulnerable, at-risk children and young people in South Australia.

Aims to deliver a safe, responsive and nurturing residential care service that adapts to the individual complex needs of vulnerable children through a skilled and resilient workforce

Supports children and young people living in houses located throughout metropolitan and regional South Australia.



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The Sanctuary Model

- DCP is currently implementing the Sanctuary Model of care across its residential care service in partnership with MacKillop Family Services
- It is a trauma-informed therapeutic model of care which embeds a consistent practice approach that is responsive to the needs of children and young people who have a history of trauma and adversity.
- Acknowledges the unique experiences of Aboriginal people, and supports culturally-responsive and culturally-safe practice and care.



Understanding the perspectives of children and young people, families and communities

Discussion

- What is their experience?
- What do they see?
- What do they feel?
- What do they think



Taking care of your wellbeing



This is rewarding and challenging work....

Working in child protection is a complex job, regardless of what area you work in.

The stories we hear and the things we experience can be distressing, scary and emotionally draining. But they can also be rewarding, amazing and full of hope.

The important thing is to make sure you take care of you – none of us can do our job well if we are unwell.



Toolkit for self-care

- Peer-support (build your network)
- Supervisors and Managers
- Work life balance
- Ask for what you need
- Formal support
- Incident debriefing
- Work, Health and Safety



Useful resources

History of Child Protection and Legislation

- [A history of child protection- Back to the future?](#)
- [History of child protection legislation](#)
- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)

Child Protection Statistics

- [Reporting and statistics | Department for Child Protection](#)
- [ROGS-Report-Aboriginal-CYP-in-Care-and-YJ-Detention-2021.pdf \(gcyp.sa.gov.au\)](#)
- [Australia's health 2022 - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

- [Aboriginal children and young people | Department for Child Protection](#)
- [SNAICC - National Voice for our Children](#)



Any questions

Thank you for your time today

