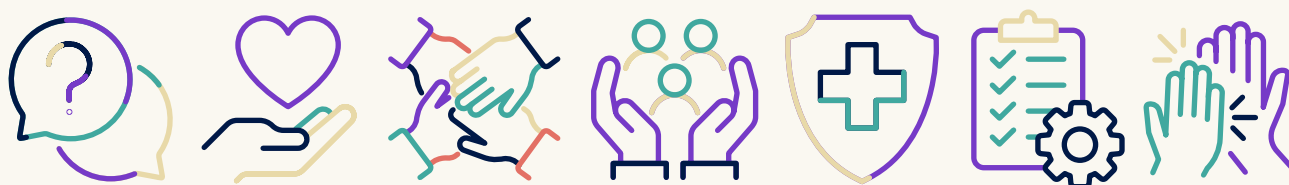


SEPTEMBER 2026

Bright Lives: The Roadmap to Uplifting Care

Our strategy for transforming services and supports for children and young people in Care

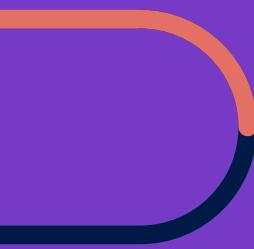


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Acknowledgements

Acknowledgment of Country

In recognition of the deep history and culture of this island, we acknowledge and pay our respects to Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the traditional owners of the land. We recognise Tasmanian Aboriginal people's continuing connection to Land, Sea, Waterways, Sky and Culture, and pay our respects to Elders, past and present. We are committed to working in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal people to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in Care, ensuring they are safe and supported to live culturally rich and thriving lives.

Acknowledgement of victim survivors

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges the trauma that continues to affect people with lived experience of child abuse. We are committed to being sensitive to this trauma as we use the learnings from past wrongs to protect the rights of current and future generations of children and young people, and keep them safe from harm.

Reporting child abuse

We all have a responsibility to ensure children and young people are safe.

If you have ANY concerns about the safety of a child, you must report it.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact 000 for urgent police or medical help.

Visit the Tell Someone website for more information about spotting the signs of child abuse: [TellSomeone.tas.gov.au](https://tellsomeone.tas.gov.au)

Tasmanian Government workers engaging with children are required to report concerns, information and incidents of child abuse. Further information is available in the [Step by Step Guide](#).

Child abuse trauma support

Exposure to information and content about child abuse and child sexual abuse will impact us all differently, and at different times. This may be influenced by our own life experiences and circumstances.

It is important we prioritise our own safety and wellbeing, and know how to support others when managing the impacts of child abuse and trauma.

If you need support, a range of completely free and confidential support services are available by phone, online or in person.

You may also wish to seek help from your GP, another professional or a counsellor.

If you need someone to talk to, you can contact:

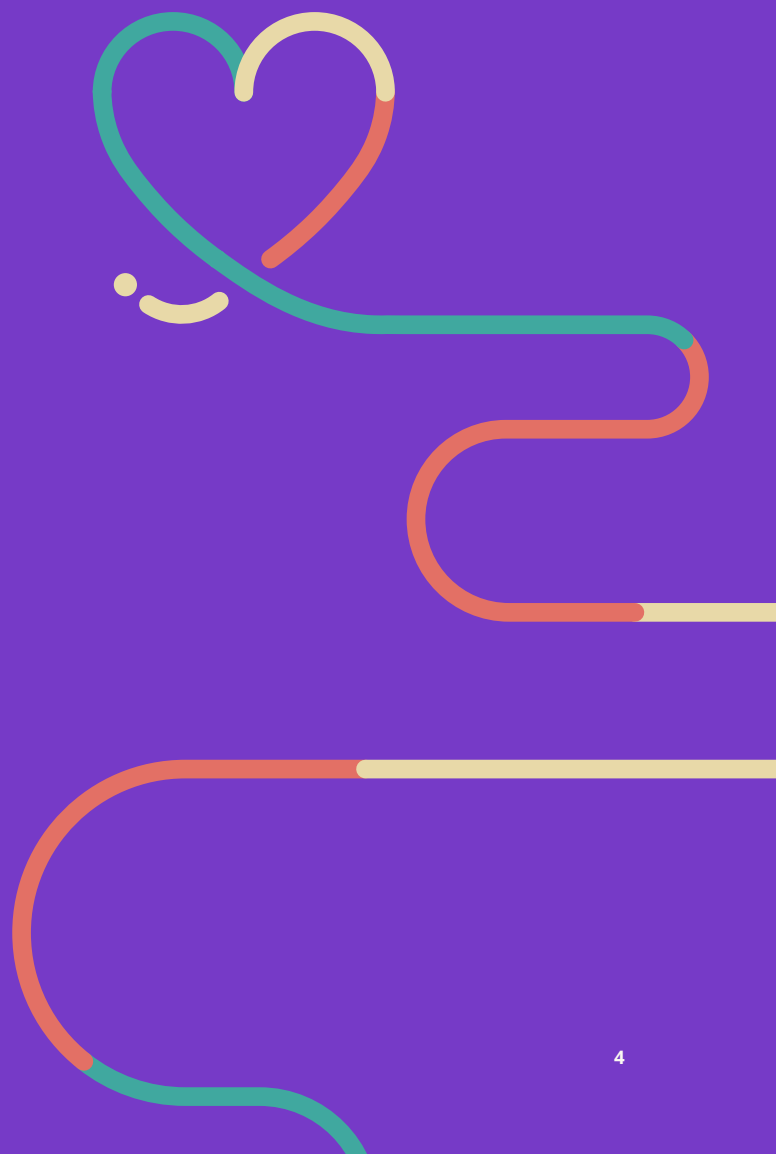
Children and Young People support options:

Tell Someone website — [Support for children and young people](#) — [Tell Someone](#)

Adult support options:

Keeping Children Safe website — [Get support | Keeping Children Safe](#)

DECYP employees can access Wellbeing Connect. Search the DECYP intranet for details.



Note on terminology

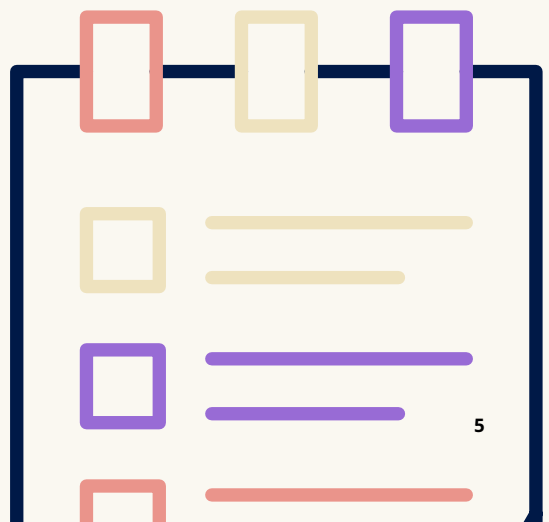
The Uplifting Care program of work as described in this Roadmap uses as much as possible “children in Care”, “services for children in Care” or “Care system” instead of “out of home care”. This is based on feedback from children and young people in Care and staff.

The word “reform” is minimised to more positively frame the improvements to Care and distinguish itself from previous reform work.

Throughout this Roadmap there is a consistent emphasis on recognising and responding to the individual and diverse needs of children and young people in Care. This includes those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, living with disability, LGBTIQ+ and those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, as well as the diverse and individual needs of their families and support networks.

As described in the Department of Premier and Cabinet [Guide to Aboriginal Engagement in Tasmania](#), the original inhabitants of Tasmania were Aboriginal people; and the ongoing custodians of Lutruwita/Tasmania are Palawa/Tasmanian Aboriginal people. For that reason, we use the term ‘Aboriginal’ to describe all First Nations people residing in Tasmania.

Please note that [Appendix two — Terms and Abbreviations](#) provides an overview of the key terms referenced in this document.



Commitment to Tasmanian Aboriginal People

The wellbeing of our children is at the heart of everything the Tasmanian Government does, and we know that growing up connected to community, culture and Country is vital for children's sense of identity, belonging and resilience.

We acknowledge the unique challenges faced by Aboriginal children and young people and the need for a shift in our approach to empower Aboriginal children, families and communities. We support a future that fosters bright lives, positive futures and equitable outcomes for every Aboriginal child and young person — a future where all children are safely connected to their families, communities and cultures, and thrive in their identity, culture and aspirations.

In line with existing government policy at the state and national level, we are fully accountable for, and dedicated to, ensuring Aboriginal people have a genuine voice in strengthening the design and delivery of services and decisions that impact their children, families and communities. We recognise Aboriginal people's rights to

self-determination and autonomy in designing and delivering services that affect them. We are dedicated to supporting an Aboriginal-led transition of child and family support services to Tasmanian Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). At the same time, we will continue to strengthen accountability within our processes and fulfill our legislative roles and responsibilities.

We recognise and value the contribution of Aboriginal people including employees, carers, children, families, organisations and leaders across Tasmania, and the contribution of independent organisations providing critical supports for Aboriginal children and families.

Minister's message

As Minister for Children and Youth, I am optimistic about the opportunities presented by *Bright Lives — The Roadmap to Uplifting Care*.

Ensuring Tasmanian children and young people are safeguarded is my priority and all children and young people have the right to feel and be safe and supported, no matter their circumstances. This is especially important for our most vulnerable children and young people who may need specialised and dedicated support through the Child Safety system to remain safe and thriving.

Our carers who do extraordinary work to provide safety, stability and support are an integral part of our system and your support is deeply valued. Your dedication makes a profound difference. To all our carers — thank you.

Importantly, the *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings* (Commission of Inquiry) has shown that we need to make changes to how we deliver Care (also known as out of home care) services in Tasmania to consistently meet our commitment to children and young people in Care and support strong and safe families and communities.

Strengthening the Care system is one of the best ways to safeguard our vulnerable children and young people. The Tasmanian Government's goal is simple but vital: to ensure that every child and young person in Care is known, safe, well and learning, and supported to heal and thrive. This is a shared responsibility and it starts by establishing the right foundations.

Significant progress has already been made to improve the Care system and The Roadmap builds on this momentum. It sets out a clear

path to create a Care system and practice that truly meets the needs of children and young people and those who care for them. It places children, young people and families at the centre of planning and decision making, which is where they belong.

To ensure we focus effort in the right places, we have made sure to listen first. We know the best Care system is child-centred and rights-based. And we know it must also support our carers, workforce and non-government service providers.

We also recognise that Aboriginal children and young people remain overrepresented in the Care system and must be supported in culturally safe and appropriate ways. We know Aboriginal people are best placed to design and deliver services that affect them, and we are committed to doing this in a meaningful way. The Roadmap reflects the voices of children, young people, carers, workers and Tasmanian Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and service providers, and responds to the findings from the Commission of Inquiry.

By taking a phased approach and building a shared understanding through genuine collaboration, we can work together with those most affected to ensure Care system improvements meet their needs. We owe it to the children and young people in the Care system to get this right. As the Tasmanian Minister for Children and Youth, I am committed to leading this important work so that children and young people in Care have the best possible opportunity to have bright lives and positive futures.

The Hon Jo Palmer MLC

Minister for Children and Youth

Executive summary

Every child and young person has the right to grow up in a safe, stable and nurturing environment, regardless of the circumstances they are born into.

Bright Lives: The Roadmap to Uplifting Care sets out how the Tasmanian Government, in collaboration with our stakeholders and partners, will transform the Tasmanian Care system so that all children and young people in Care are known, safe, well and learning, and supported to heal and thrive.

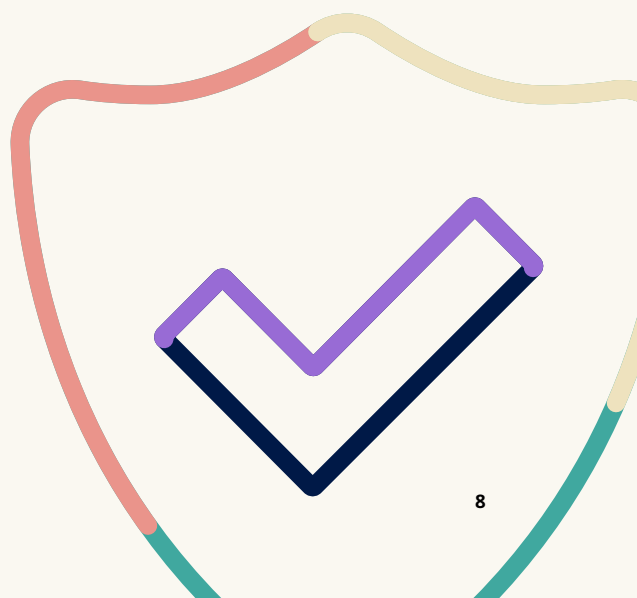
This Roadmap has been developed in partnership with the Tasmanian Care sector, with consultation primarily through the Uplifting Care Governance and Advisory model. **It reflects:**

- **the voices of** children, young people, carers, workers, Tasmanian Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOS) and service providers
- **the findings from** the *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings (2023)* and various other reviews.

It acknowledges **the challenges** the system faces to address identified **system constraints**. These challenges mean our current system cannot improve the experiences, safety and outcomes of children and young people in Care without strategic, coordinated action.

Our approach to driving change is child-centred and rights-based, embedding **participation, cultural safety and trauma-informed practice** across all services.

We recognise that government cannot do this alone. Continuing to build a high-quality, safe, stable and accountable Care system depends on strong partnerships with carers, non-government service providers, ACCOs and other organisations who provide support services to children and young people in Care.



The Roadmap will be delivered through three phases, guided by seven strategic directions (shown in Figure 1, below):

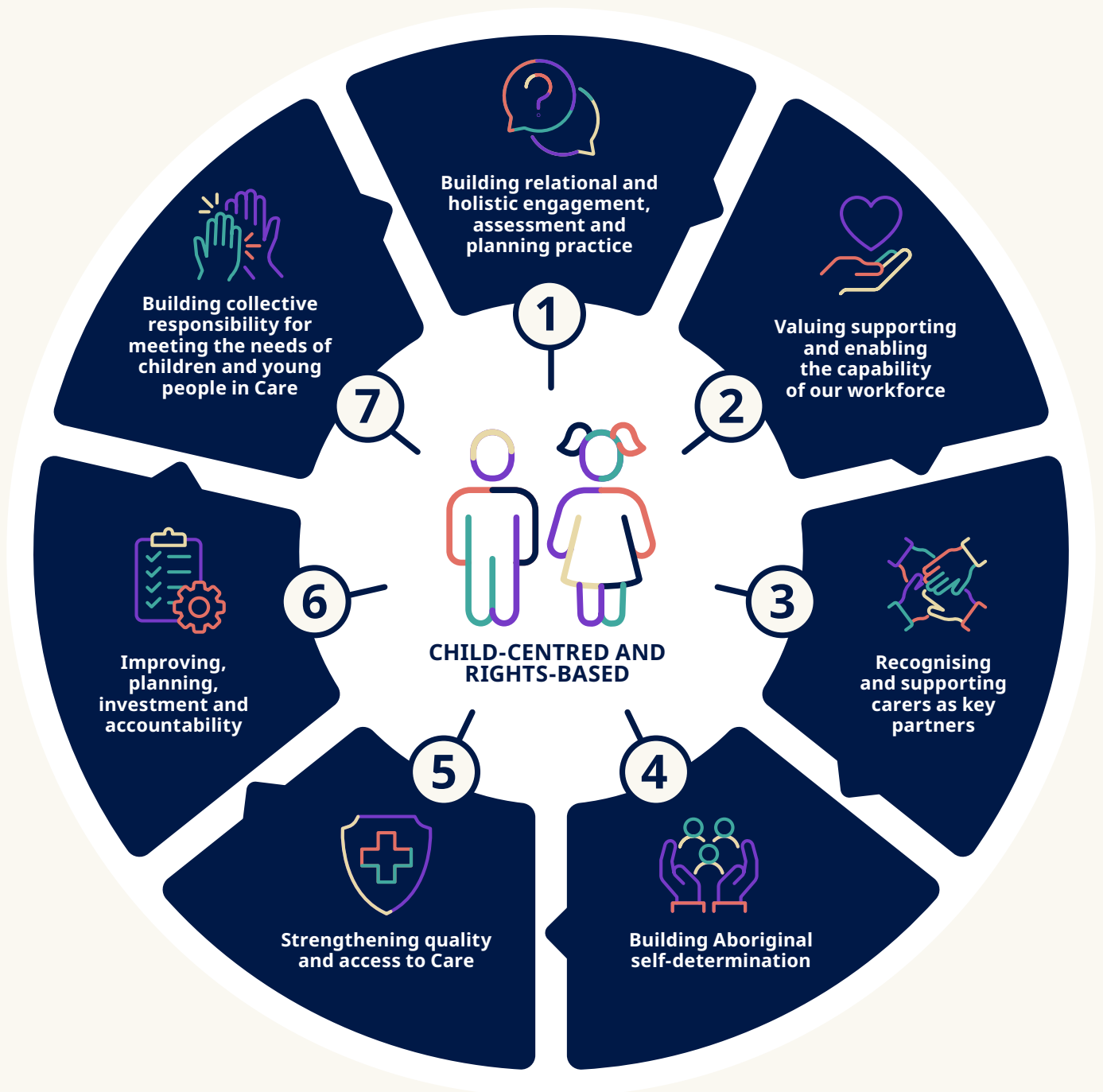


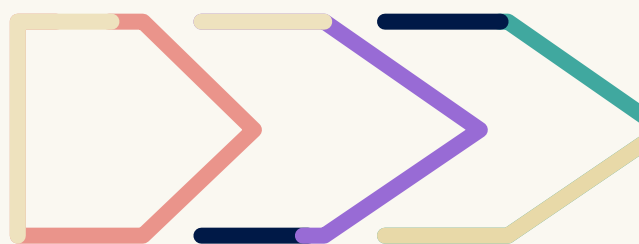
Figure 1: Our Strategic Directions

Implementation of The Roadmap will occur through rolling action plans that set out our approach, strategic directions and priority actions for driving system change. It will be supported by strong governance and accountability measures.

Progress will be monitored through independent oversight and transparent reporting. Over its lifespan, the Roadmap's key objectives are to build and strengthen a contemporary Care system that:

- protects, promotes and upholds children and young people's rights
- is safe, stable and accountable
- understands and meets the therapeutic and wellbeing needs of children and young people
- prioritises family-based Care and supports and retains carers to provide this care
- provides quality placements that meet the differentiated needs of children and young people
- is inclusive and promotes Aboriginal self-determination
- values and supports its workforce, carers and service providers
- directs investment to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.

To jump to the detail of The Roadmap, please read pages 26 through 45, or click on the following link: [Bright Lives: The Roadmap to Uplifting Care](#).



Roadmap to Uplifting Care at a glance

OUR GOAL

All children and young people in Care are known, safe, well and learning, and supported to heal and thrive.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

These address challenges our system is experiencing and builds a high-quality and accountable Care system.



OUR PHASED IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH



Figure 2: The Roadmap to Uplifting Care at a glance

Introduction

Children and young people have a right to be safe, cared for and listened to wherever they live, and have all their rights upheld.

We want all children and young people to be safe in their parent's care and for parents to be supported to be the best parents they can be.

The Tasmanian Government strives to keep children and young people with their families but acknowledges that sometimes remaining with family is not always possible. When this is the case, we need to make sure that safe and responsive Care arrangements are available for children and young people so they can be cared for and nurtured, until it is safe to return home. If family restoration is not possible, the Care system must also support timely transitions to stable, long-term living arrangements that provide security, belonging and opportunities to thrive.

The Care system is made up of the skills, knowledge, practices and processes of the people who work with children and young people, along with the supporting services and environments that meet their needs. The "people" element of the system is what makes the most difference to the experience and outcomes of these children and young people.

To best support children, young people and their families, we must provide high-quality, safe and accountable Care that upholds their rights and supports them to heal and thrive. This requires continuous improvement of the Care system's core elements, including the:

- skills and knowledge of the workforce
- practices and processes applied by workers, carers and service providers
- standards for service delivery
- oversight and accountability mechanisms to monitor the quality and safety of services.

We have heard that we need to improve the experiences, safety and outcomes of children and young people in Care, through:

- the [*Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse \(2017\)*](#)
- the [*Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings \(2023\)*](#) (COI)
- 22 other reviews or reports¹ from the year 2000 onwards.

Bringing core services for children and young people together through the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) creates a unique opportunity to deliver more integrated and consistent support for children and young people throughout their lives. This is why the delivery of the Tasmanian Government Roadmap is being led and coordinated by DECYP.

The Tasmanian Government commits to work for and with children and young people to implement recommended system reforms in a unified way that recognises and understands the need for collaboration, collective responsibility and value-based partnerships with our carers and service providers. This Roadmap outlines the Government's commitment and our approach.

¹ Refer to Appendix five — References for further information

Purpose and objective

Bright Lives: the Roadmap to Uplifting Care ('the Roadmap') outlines the Tasmanian Government's strategic direction and phased approach to achieve our goal that all children and young people in Care are known, safe, well and learning, and are supported to heal and thrive.

It provides the framework to improve how we uphold the rights and increase the safety and wellbeing of children in Care through the provision of services that are child-centred, rights-based and reflective of contemporary evidence-based practice.

This Roadmap will be implemented via the delivery of rolling action plans that outline priority actions for driving system change. The first being *Bright Lives: the Roadmap to Uplifting Care: Phase 1 Action Plan to reset our foundations (2025–2026)*.

The Roadmap builds on the strengths of our current system in our committed practitioners, carers, service providers and communities, as well as recent significant system reform through Strong Families, Safe Kids.

The Roadmap was developed based on:

- engagement with children and young people with Care experience, Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), the non-government organisation (NGO) sector, peak body organisations, DECYP Child Safety and Out of Home Care staff, and other industry bodies, regulators, researchers and subject matter experts — primarily through the [*Uplifting Care Governance and Advisory model*](#) throughout 2025
- the analysis of previous system review findings, including the COI

- research on contemporary evidence-based best-practice Care systems nationally and internationally²
- previous consultation with key stakeholders that has informed reforms over the past decade
- consideration of relevant international/national/Tasmanian child safety and health and wellbeing Legislation, Principles and Standards, as outlined in [*Appendix 1 – What guides us.*](#)

² Refer to Appendix five — References for further information



Objectives:

Over its lifespan, the Roadmap's key objectives are to build and strengthen a contemporary Care system that:

- protects, promotes and upholds children and young people's rights
- is safe, stable and accountable
- understands and meets the therapeutic and wellbeing needs of children and young people
- prioritises family-based Care and supports and retains carers to provide this Care
- provides quality placements that meet the differentiated needs of children and young people
- is inclusive and promotes Aboriginal self-determination
- values and supports its workforce, carers and service providers
- directs investment to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.

Our commitment to a child-centred and rights-based approach

Central to this Roadmap is our commitment to a child-centred and rights-based approach. This approach recognises and upholds the rights of children and young people under the [*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*](#).

This commitment is the foundational ethos that informs and underpins all aspects of system design, policy development, decision making and professional practice. The rights, voices

and lived experiences of children and young people are not merely considered, they are integral to the Roadmap.

The areas for improvement and aspirations articulated within this Roadmap are inextricably linked to, and must be understood within the context of, this foundational commitment.

To help us assess the impact of key reform initiatives delivered under this Roadmap on children's rights and wellbeing, we will use the [*Child Rights Impact Assessment tool*](#), developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Participation and empowerment

We must keep children and young people, and their families and caregivers at the centre of all decision-making processes when designing and providing Care services and supports.

To uphold children's rights, we must ensure that children and young people understand those rights and feel confident in exercising them, and that the important people in children and young people's lives — including family, carers and people working with them — also understand these rights. It is crucial not only to protect and promote those rights within systems and practices, but also to ensure that children and young people themselves are fully informed and empowered. The [*Participation and Empowerment Strategy*](#) (COI 9.6) will lay the groundwork for embedding children and young people's voices in all aspects of decision-making, at the system and individual level.

Decades of research demonstrates the importance of children in the Care system participating in processes and decisions that affect them. By fostering a culture of respect for children's rights, we create a more supportive and empowering environment for all children and young people in Care, as well as better outcomes. Children, young people and families are integral to planning and decision making, and this should be embedded in system-wide processes and our ways of working. Importantly, this helps to build relationships and trust.

Additional foundational work to support the Roadmap

The Roadmap is supported by two other key foundations for reform:

- *Putting Children First: Our Child Safety Approach*
- *Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice Outcomes Framework.*

Our system approach

*Putting Children First: Our Child Safety Approach*³ ('Our Child Safety Approach') is Priority 6.2 of the Phase 1 Action Plan (Develop and implement an operating philosophy and service delivery model for Child Safety and Care). It outlines the vision, principles, service and system design to deliver child-centred, therapeutic, culturally safe, collaborative and timely support to children and young people, their carers and families. This Roadmap outlines our pathway to achieving key components of Our Child Safety Approach for the Care system.

Together the Roadmap and Our Child Safety Approach provide the direction and plan for how Care can be improved now, while we work to reorganise and restructure our services to deliver on a future vision for children, young people and families.

Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice Outcomes Framework

*The Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice Outcomes Framework*⁴ ('Outcomes Framework') defines measurable outcomes for these sectors in Tasmania. It will support monitoring progress towards meeting long-term outcomes for the system and the Roadmap's goal.

Supporting reforms

The Roadmap, Our Child Safety Approach and the Outcomes Framework are implemented within the context of the wider reform environment being driven across the Tasmanian Government, including the reform of youth justice, the implementation of the COI recommendations through the *Change for Children strategy*, health system reforms and the new and developing regulatory environment.

Alongside this are the significant reforms required to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in the Child Safety and Care systems and move towards a future where Aboriginal people are in control of decisions made about their children and families. The *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* — Target 12 and the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2026 under *Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031* are key drivers of these reforms at a national level. At a state level, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) has translated this into *Nukara*⁵ — its strategy and action plan for transferring responsibility for child safety to the TAC.

The Roadmap will be implemented alongside *Nukara, Tasmania's Plan for Closing the Gap* and partnerships built with other ACCOs to provide services for Aboriginal children and young people across Tasmania and fully implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.

³ Putting Children First: Our Child Safety Approach is available at <https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/safe-children/guide-to-tasmanias-child-safety-services/our-child-safety-approach/>

⁴ The Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice Outcomes Framework is available at <https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-frameworks/child-safety-care-and-youth-justice-outcomes-framework/>

⁵ Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, 2025. *Nukara strategy: Weaving a wise, bold and strong basket to safely hold Aboriginal children and their families.*



Figure 3: Reforms improving outcomes for children and young people within Tasmania.

The current Care system

Care (also known as out of home care) is the system of formal Care provided to children and young people assessed by the Child Safety Service as being unable to live safely with their birth parents due to concerns for their safety and wellbeing.

The Tasmanian Legislative Framework

DECYP is the Tasmanian Government agency responsible for administering and facilitating the Care system under the [Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997](#) (the Act). The Act provides for the department's role in the care and protection of children at risk in a manner that:

- maximises a child's best interests
- recognises that a child's family is the preferred environment for their care and upbringing
- recognises that the responsibility for the protection of a child rests primarily with the child's parents and family.

The Act aligns with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and outlines principles to be upheld when working with children, young people and their families.

The Act makes provisions for custody and guardianship of children and young people who cannot live safely at home to be transferred to the Secretary of the department — transferring responsibility for daily control and decision making (custody) and the rights, powers,

duties, obligations and liabilities as a birth parent (guardianship). There are circumstances where custody of a child or young person may transfer to the department, but guardianship remains with the birth parents.

Additionally, a small number children and young people in Care are also supported by the Youth Justice system in accordance with the [Youth Justice Act 1997](#).

Delivery of the current Care system

The Tasmanian Care system is delivered by both the Tasmanian Government (family-based Care, including foster and kinship Care) and non-government service providers (family-based foster and kinship Care, salaried and residential Care and therapeutic interventions). As well as family-based and residential/salaried Care, some children and young people on Care and Protection Orders facing homelessness access youth accommodation services, or some who are interacting with the Youth Justice system access custodial services. Note: for further information on Care types refer to [Appendix two — Terms and abbreviations](#).

The Commissioner for Children and Young People (CCYP) and the Child Advocate provide independent, individual and systemic advocacy and oversight for children and young people in Care.

The [Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor](#) provides independent oversight of the implementation and effectiveness of the COI and other reform recommendations (refer to the [Accountability section](#) for further context).

Who are the children and young people in Care?

In the **2025-26** financial year the daily average number of children and young people in Care was **1,010**.

In **2024-25**, **8.7** Tasmanian children and young people per **1,000** were in Care.

Numbers peaked in **2019-20** with more than **1,500** children and young people in Care.

In **June 2025**, approximately **44.8%** of children and young people in Care identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

In **June 2025**, approximately **61.3%** of the children and young people in Care were between 5 and 14 years old.

In **June 2025**, there were slightly more boys (**52.0%**) in Care than girls (**48.0%**).

Generally, biological sex distribution is almost evenly divided.

In the **2025-26** financial year, **55.7%** of children and young people in Care were in the **South**, **24.3%** were in the **North** and **20%** were in the **North-West**. This is consistent with the distribution of the general population of children by region.

As at **30 June 2026**, approximately **49.0%** of family-based carers were supported by NGOs.

DECYP is the agency that supports the remainder of family-based carers.

In **June 2025**, **45.6%** of children and young people were living in family-based foster Care, **43.5%** in kinship Care, **10.8%** in residential Care.

The above data was derived from internal DECYP reporting and AIHW Child Protection data tables.

Outcomes and needs of children and young people in Care

International and national data shows that children and young people with an experience of Care are more likely to have ongoing lifelong challenges compared to their peers, including physical health, mental health, educational achievement outcomes and being more likely to enter the Justice System (Lima et al. 2018; Jakob and Anderson 2022; Brännström et al. 2017; Miller and Alla 2024; Sariaslan et al. 2021; Brownell et al. 2024; Gypen et al. 2017).⁶

Tasmanian data shows trends are consistent with international and national data.

For example, over the past five years there has been a consistent rise in referrals to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (now Child and Youth Mental Health Service). We also see lower rates of school enrolment and attendance for children and young people in Care, lower achievement in assessments like NAPLAN⁷, and higher rates of disability adjustments. At the same time, some children and young people in Care indicate a higher level of connectedness with their school. Further Tasmanian data is available in [Appendix three — Our Care system data](#).

Current challenges for the Care system

The Care system in Tasmania, like other jurisdictions, is responding to a continuous demand for placements for children and young people.

An increasing demand for Care services for children and young people across Australia is primarily driven by a rise in substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect. Notifications to child protection authorities that have been substantiated have grown significantly across Australia from around 30,500 in 2001-2002 to 45,400 in 2022-2023 (AIHW 2003; AIHW 2023). This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, often linked to factors such as family violence, parental substance abuse, mental health issues, poverty and intergenerational trauma.

Additionally, all jurisdictions are struggling to gain and retain adequate numbers of suitable carers. Various reports across jurisdictions⁸ have outlined many factors contributing to this decline, including reduced resources and time, changing priorities and changing living and working situations (ACWA and CCWT 2024; FCAV 2024; QFCC and PeakCare 2024; Feagan 2021; CFECFW 2023; Miles and Lee 2023; Low 2025). The lack of support for carers, particularly amidst the cost-of-living crisis and during the COVID-19 pandemic, have also had an impact.

In Tasmania the local context is relatively unique, with the population having an above-average level of socio-economic disadvantage and being one of the most regional and dispersed populations of any Australian state or territory (ABS 2025). Nationally, children and young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those from very remote areas are more likely to experience abuse (AIHW 2024).

⁶ Refer to Appendix five — References for further information

⁷ NAPLAN — The National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy.

⁸ Refer to Appendix five — References for further information

Increasing demand and complexity of needs of children in Care that has outpaced system capacity to respond has meant that there are several key challenges that impact on making positive sustainable change in our Care system – similar to the experience of jurisdictions across Australia.

These challenges have been consistently highlighted through the reviews of our Care system, and have also being reinforced through the lived experience of children and young people in Care, as well as insights from sector partners shared during Roadmap consultations.

For further information on the research findings cited above refer to [Appendix five — References](#).

Child-centred and rights-based approaches

We have heard from children, young people, families and carers that there are inconsistent practices and processes to actively involve them in planning and decision making, and processes for raising complaints and the management of them are not child-centred. We have also heard past process or system improvements have not been informed by the lived experiences of children and young people. This impacts all aspects of a child or young person's Care experience, their ability to know and exercise their rights, the supports they receive and their wellbeing. It also means that children and young people are not always active participants in decision making and ensuring their rights are upheld.

This Roadmap aims to address these shortcomings by actively listening and working collaboratively with our partners – particularly those with lived experience – to guide and implement the right changes to the Care system.

What we have done so far:

Since the release of the Commission of Inquiry (COI) final report ('the COI Report')⁹, one example of how we are addressing this

challenge includes the establishment of the DECYP Child and Youth Empowerment and Complaints Management and Oversight teams. This improvement supports children and young people, families and carers' voices to be heard, to better understand how their needs are not being met, and to understand where the Care system needs to be improved.

Aboriginal children and young people in Care

Aboriginal children and young people are overrepresented in Care and better structures need to be in place to support Aboriginal-led decision making, practice and culturally safe placements and connection.

The COI and previous system reviews have found systemic racial bias faced by Aboriginal people in the Tasmanian Care system contributes to Aboriginal children and young people being overrepresented in Care.

What we have done so far:

Work undertaken since the release of the COI to address this challenge includes grant funding through the Tasmanian Government's *Closing the Gap Capacity Building Fund* to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC), to develop a strategy and action plan for the transfer of responsibility for keeping Aboriginal children and young people safe in the care of their families. The resulting *Nukara* strategy was launched in July 2025. This strengthens the conditions for meaningful partnership and reflects the Tasmanian Government's commitment to enabling Aboriginal organisations to lead decision-making for Aboriginal young people.

⁹ Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Report, August 2023), *Who was looking after me? Prioritising the safety of Tasmanian children, Volume 1: Summary, recommendations and findings*.

Provision of timely, child-centred practice

Policies, processes and practices do not always support consistent, timely and holistic assessments to understand and respond to the diverse and individual needs of children and young people. This can lead to ineffective therapeutic and child-centred responses and Care for children and young people. As Tasmania is a small state, with a significant portion of our population dispersed across rural and remote geographies, there are challenges for service providers to deliver quality Care consistently across all regions, which contributes to system pressures.

Our smaller size presents opportunities. This Roadmap aims to address this gap by promoting stronger collaboration across the Care sector to build the capacity and improve effectiveness of Care services in Tasmania to meet the needs of the community across the state.

What have we done so far:

Since the release of the COI Report, the work actioned to address this challenge includes improvements in practice guidance through the release of *Feel Safe. Are Safe. Our Practice Approach*.

Feel Safe. Are Safe. brings together critical elements of the legislative, professional and organisational frameworks within which we deliver services, expressed as a set of Practice Standards supported by descriptions of how these apply to daily practice and a series of reflective prompts. *Feel Safe. Are Safe.* will continue to be reviewed and updated to keep pace with the evolving reform agenda.

Availability of differentiated quality placement options

Nationally, the demand for Care placements in all jurisdictions has been mirrored by:

- a disproportionate growth in the costs of providing Care, compounded by the increasingly complex needs of children in Care
- responses to adverse findings of numerous inquiries into Care that have taken place in Australia over the past decade
- the ability to provide placements as the availability of carers declines.

These system pressures are contributing to less suitable placement options and decisions, which can lead to unstable placements and difficulty in building safe, positive attachments for children and young people.

What we have done so far:

Work undertaken since the release of the COI Report to address this challenge includes trialling new Care types, such as intensive supported foster Care. Intensive supported foster Care provides a child or young person the opportunity to live in a family home while receiving therapeutic support. It provides them with the chance to build real and meaningful relationships, in an environment that supports stability and responds to complex trauma needs.

Carer and workforce shortages

Our Care system is experiencing staff and carer attrition and shortages. This significantly impacts our ability to take a relational approach to fully support and respond to the increasingly complex and diverse needs of children and young people.

Workforce shortages and staff attrition are largely a result of not having the capacity to attract and retain people with the necessary qualifications, as well the growing support and development needs of staff in challenging frontline roles.

Carer attrition and shortages is a trend both nationally and in Tasmania. There is a range of contributing factors, including changing demographics (ageing and increased engagement in the workforce), inconsistencies in the level of support and capability building for carers and the increasing regulation, risk and liability associated in providing Care for children and young people.

What we have done so far:

Work undertaken since the release of the COI Report to address this challenge includes:

- release of the *DECYP Workforce Strategy 2025-2030*, as well as DECYP's *Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Workforce Action Plan*
- implementation of the DECYP Conduct and Behaviour Standards Policy
- delivery of the *Foster Care — the Difference is You* campaign from late 2023
- release of *Who Can Say Ok In Tasmania – a Reference Guide for Carers*.
- continued increase to the base rate of the foster and formal kinship carer allowance

- commitment to employ up to 48 additional staff to ensure every child and young person in contact with the Child Safety system has an allocated Child Safety Officer
- continuation of actions to attract and retain frontline Child Safety staff.

This places us in a strong position to action meaningful change, supported by a shared understanding of our collective priorities.

Strategic oversight and specialist expertise

Departmental governance structures are not fully keeping pace with the rapidly changing and complex needs of children and young people in Care. Effective oversight and advice often require specialised clinical expertise, which is not always readily accessible outside of operational service settings.

We have heard from people with lived experience that organisational and structural changes impact governance structures, oversight, direction clarity and monitoring and evaluation of progress towards clear goals and key performance measures for standards of Care and service delivery.

What we have done so far:

Work undertaken since the release of the COI to address this challenge includes the establishment of specialist leaders and teams within DECYP's Child Safety and Youth Justice Portfolio, including the Office of the Chief Practitioner, as well as Care and Custodial Services. This strengthens collaboration between senior leaders, clinical specialists, and operational teams, supporting timely, well-informed and appropriate service responses to children and young people in Care.

Roles and responsibilities

The Tasmanian Government often has several roles to fulfill as a funder, regulator, enabler and service provider of Child Safety and Care services. Working closely with service partners in the non-government sector providing Care services can, at times, be complicated and conflicting.

What have we done so far:

Work undertaken since the release of the COI to address this challenge includes building a partnership approach with non-government service providers to consider future approaches to the provision of Care by the non-government sector. This is important in developing a shared and common understanding of priority improvements, and agreement on how we will achieve desired changes together.

Regulatory requirements

Our non-government service partners are working in an environment characterised by workforce and carer shortages. This is further intensified by challenging market conditions, growing regulatory obligations, and increased exposure to risk and liability in providing Care services. The cumulative impact of these pressures is limiting the sustainability of some providers, ultimately reducing the services available for children and young people.

What we have done so far:

Work undertaken since the release of the COI Report to address this challenge includes the establishment of a DECYP Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships team to manage and build relationships with non-government providers. This allows dedicated resources to focus on formal partnership arrangements and support the non-government sector to a greater level.

Planning and investment challenges

The increasing complexity of the Child Safety system and the children, young people and families it supports — combined with rising costs, greater oversight and accountability, and expanding regulatory requirements — is influencing system pressures and contributing to leadership and staffing turnover rates. These pressures, together with the focus required on daily operational demands, have made it challenging to adopt and implement a strategic, planned approach to continuous improvement.

Barriers relating to data sharing, management processes and systems, impact effective planning, oversight and monitoring of the services delivered to children and young people in Care. This can make it difficult to accurately measure and evaluate to what level the Care system is meeting the needs and upholding the rights of children and young people.

What we have done so far:

Work undertaken since the release of the COI Report to address this challenge includes significant investment over multiple State budgets to meet the cost of all Care types, and to support planning, coordination and delivery of improvements to the quality of Care provision as recommended by the COI.

This demonstrates the Tasmanian Government's commitment to invest in strategic planning to support the development and implementation a strategic, planned approach to continuous improvement for the Tasmanian Care system.

Our continuous improvement approach

The Tasmanian Government is committed to improving safety and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people. The 2016 [*Strong Families, Safe Kids*](#) reforms saw significant investment, which led to the establishment of the [*Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line \(ARL\)*](#), as well as reformed ways of working, including new practice guidelines, approaches and training for child safety and Care, launch of pilot programs in Care and Youth Justice, the expansion of child and adolescent mental health services, and the establishment of new channels to support child and youth empowerment.

The Government remains committed to improving the Care system to ensure vulnerable children and young people receive the right support at the right time to build strong lives and positive futures.

It is timely to review and reset the Government's approach to ensure that ongoing as well as emerging challenges are addressed through a contemporary, evidence-informed approach.

What does a high-quality Care system look like to children and young people?

Research tells us that many of the challenges experienced by the Tasmanian Care system are not unique to our state, but are common in Care systems globally. Addressing these challenges, however, requires solutions that are specific to the Tasmanian context.

Evidence, reports and consultations reflecting the voices and Care experiences of Tasmanian children and young people have suggested the following key elements are central to a high-quality Care system:

Child-centred and rights-based

A child-centred approach elevates the rights of the child, puts their best interests at the centre and is responsive to their individual needs, identities and vulnerabilities.

It prioritises child-centred care for all children, while supporting a system where:

- every child enjoys their rights equally (non-discrimination)
- their best interests are paramount in any decisions or actions taken that affect them (best interests)
- they are protected from harm and are given opportunities to grow and thrive (survival and development)
- they have the right to express their views, contribute ideas and be part of decision-making processes (right to participation).

Children and young people must be central to decision making at all levels, with their lived experiences shaping policies and service design. By embedding their perspectives into the design and delivery of services, the system can better respond to their individual needs and support them to thrive.

Connection

Strong, trusting, consistent and supportive relationships with caseworkers and carers who treat them as part of the family have been identified by children and young people as critical. This includes feeling supported in building and maintaining friendships, as these relationships shape their sense of being valued and understood. Where caseworkers are inconsistent or uninvolved, children and young people feel disconnected from key decisions about their care, health and future.

For many children and young people, maintaining connections with siblings is fundamental to their wellbeing, stability and sense of identity. Siblings often provide a unique source of emotional support, shared experiences and belonging. Some children and young people describe their siblings as the only people who truly understand their experiences. Children and young people have also expressed the need to remain connected in their communities, with peers and family. Maintaining these connections maintains the strong, trusting relationships children and young people want and need.

Children and young people have also expressed the importance of preserving their sense of identity through connection to culture. This includes opportunities for growth and learning, and support in navigating family relationships in ways that align with their needs and preferences, and enable them to maintain connection with their community, culture and country.

Accountability

An accountable system provides transparency in decision making and supports action from commitments made. It provides a mechanism for timely actions through ongoing communication, monitoring and review, and that processes for reviewing decisions, raising concerns or feedback are open and transparent. It matters because accountable systems build trust, stability and reliability for children and young people, as well as for the staff and partners who work within them.

Children and young people have expressed how important clear and proactive communication is to them, especially about placement changes, transitions and major decisions affecting their lives, rather than being left out of the process. They have also expressed that they want to understand the decisions being made about their Care and be able to trust that those decisions are being made fairly and equitably.

Safety, stability and wellbeing

Children and young people have consistently highlighted that safety and stability are essential aspects of their wellbeing. 'Safety' is not only in the physical sense but in terms of emotional security, belonging and access to support services.

Stability is particularly important, with children and young people expressing the need to remain in their communities, stay connected to their peers and family, and avoid unnecessary placement disruptions. Where children and young people feel stable in their Care journey and aren't feeling uncertain or worried about the future, this can enhance the feelings of emotional safety and belonging.

Children and young people have also highlighted the need for access to extracurricular activities, education and mental health support, noting that support should not only be provided in times of crisis but as a proactive measure to promote safety, identity, culture and wellbeing.

Individualised, therapeutic and trauma-informed

A high-quality system is responsive to the individual needs of children and young people, through ensuring their safety, stability, belonging and wellbeing. It prioritises and understands the health, developmental stage, cultural identity, emotional and psychological wellbeing, and education needs of children and young people. This includes recognising the importance of relationships within family, social and community networks which children value.

Trauma-informed practice relies on a deep understanding of the impacts of trauma on the brain, body, mind, spirit and relationships of children, young people, families and communities in Care. A system that supports the creation of therapeutic Care environments is one in which the systems, carers or staff, routines, rules and responses provide a space which is caring, non-traumatising and supports and enables healing, and a strong, capable and skilled workforce is supported to enable this.

This evidence and views of children and young people are reflected in the Roadmap and supporting action plans.

Bright Lives: The Roadmap to Uplifting Care

Our goal

All children and young people in Care are known, safe, well and learning, and are supported to heal and thrive.

We will achieve our goal by ensuring the Care system is high-quality, safe and accountable and understands and is responsive to the needs of children and young people and those who care for them.

Our approach

The Roadmap places children and young people at the centre and recognises that stability, connection and healing through safe relationships and evidence-informed services are at the heart of a trauma-informed system of Care.

This approach places children and young people at the centre and recognises the influence of relationships and connection within the settings of the family, carers, our workforce, the community and the environment.

These relationships are at the core of our Care system and need to be reflected and valued through our governance, leadership, culture and workforce settings, with lived experience integrated into design, implementation and continual improvement.

By placing children and young people at the centre, we can ensure that their perspectives guide the design and delivery of policies, programs and services that affect them, and align with their experiences, rights and needs.

By focusing on an informed and relational approach, we can ensure our supports are tailored to the unique needs of each child or young person and family.



Figure 4: An ecological model illustrating the importance of relationships within a high-quality Care system¹⁰

¹⁰ Adapted from Ecological Models of Human Development research — Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2007

Delivering on our Roadmap

This Roadmap strongly sets the foundation for continuous improvement in our commitment to being child-centred and rights-based. This foundational commitment is underpinned by seven strategic directions to address the challenges our system is experiencing.

Our strategic directions draw on what children and young people and the evidence say a 'high-quality system looks like' and are consistent with the:

- [*National Standards for Out of Home Care*](#)
- [*Child and Youth Safe Standards*](#).

Delivering on our Roadmap is supported through:

- **structural and leadership changes to the DECYP Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Portfolio** that will be responsible for delivering much of this Roadmap over the long term
- **a governance model that has been established to inform the work and build relationships with our system partners who are integral to achieve our goal**, including children and young people, Aboriginal people, carers, service providers, DECYP staff and experts in the field

- **a comprehensive legislative review** to ensure applicable legislation supports our Care service system and provides an enabling environment to enact any changes required to support high-quality and evidence-informed best practice
- **our commitment to being responsible and accountable for our actions** and the independent oversight bodies that have been established to ensure we uphold this accountability, including the Child Safety Reform Independent Monitor.

The Roadmap will be delivered through **three phases:**

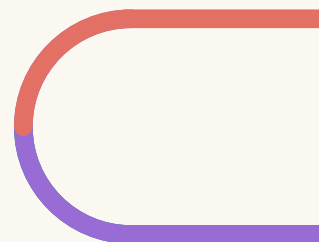
- 1 Resetting our foundations (2025-2026)**
Resetting our relationships with our system partners and establishing foundations for improvement.
- 2 Building on our foundations (2027-2028)**
Working in partnership to design and implement improved service delivery and capability.
- 3 Strengthening and sustaining (2029+)**
Embedding and sustaining new ways of working, services and supports.

By the end of Phase 1 the changes we expect to see from our improvement actions include:

- initial improvements in practice, including how we plan and support children and young people's needs and allocate case workers, leading to improvements in the experience of children and young people in Care
- the introduction of clear and transparent policies, procedures and processes to respond to harmful behaviours and improve how we manage complaints across all DECYP services, including the Child Safety Service and Out of Home Care
- solid partnerships and ways of engaging with children and young people in Care, carers, ACCOs, NGOs, peak bodies, other government agencies and other key stakeholders
- improvements in staff support, recognition, career development pathways and identification of core training to support staff in their role
- some improved supports for carers and more information available to them to help them carry out their role
- clear and agreed pathways in place to build Aboriginal-led and shared decision making
- less reliance on high-cost salaried Care arrangements, more Care options becoming available and clearer commissioning and contracting arrangements being established
- system oversight and accountability mechanisms under development which also consider how independent monitoring and transparent reporting will be delivered
- a clear understanding and articulation of sustainable investment strategies to deliver a quality and responsive service.

The changes we expect to see by the end of Phase 2 will build on our Phase 1 outcomes and are outlined in [*Appendix four: Our Roadmap to Uplifting Care — Theory of Change*](#) and at the end of each of our **strategic directions** for driving change (refer to the next section, *Our Strategic Directions*).

The long-term changes we expect to see by the end of Phase 3 will be informed by the *Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice Outcomes Framework*.



Our Strategic Directions

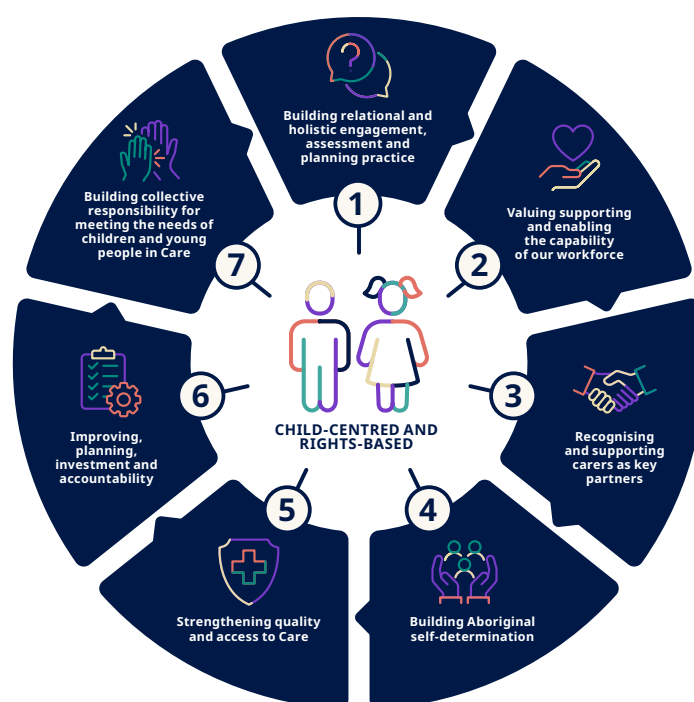
To drive system change, our seven **Strategic Directions** are:

1. Building relational and holistic engagement, assessment and planning practice
2. Valuing, supporting and enabling the capability of our workforce
3. Recognising and supporting carers as key partners
4. Building Aboriginal self-determination
5. Strengthening quality and access to Care
6. Improving planning, investment and accountability
7. Building collective responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people in Care

Our commitment to a child-centred and rights-based approach, together with **our strategic directions** and **improvement actions**, provide a Roadmap for transforming services and supports for children and young people in Care. They provide a clear direction towards the improvements we are aiming for in the medium term as we work towards our long-term goal — **‘All children and young people in Care are known, safe, well and learning, and are supported to heal and thrive.’** This is outlined in the theory of change underpinning The Roadmap outlined in [Appendix four — Our Roadmap to Uplifting Care — Theory of Change](#).

The next section outlines our **Strategic Directions** where improvement efforts will be directed at addressing identified challenges to build a high-quality, safe and accountable Care system, and what we will see in the medium term as we make progress in each of these areas. Longer-term outcomes are articulated in the *Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice Outcomes Framework*.

Figure 5: Our seven Strategic Directions



Strategic Direction 1

Building relational and holistic engagement, assessment and planning practice

What we heard:

“Feeling safe in Care is about ‘... knowing that you belong’.”

Young person in Care, Somebody in your corner, 2023.¹¹

“Conversations help young people build trust. A trusting relationship means young people will be more likely to reach out when they need help.”

This matters to us: Lived experiences insights from children and young people with care experience, 2024-25.¹²

“Prioritise relationships and connection”

An Uplifting Care Youth Advisory Group member, 2025-26.

Child and Youth Safe Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety

National Standards for Out of Home Care: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11



Why are we doing this?

A high-quality Care system, built on a commitment to being child-centred and rights-based, requires more than policy intent alone. Governance structures, policies and practices must ensure children and young peoples' rights are upheld and promote the voices of children and young people in Care.

The Care system must operate in a culture of trained and skilled people who understand and actively promote and support children's safety, wellbeing and rights. We need to ensure that children and young people are fully informed,

supported in developmentally appropriate ways to understand their rights and are empowered to exercise them.

Children and young people exist within the context of their family and community. They are shaped by these connections, which play a critical role in their wellbeing and development. To support them in the best way possible, we must prioritise strengthening these relationships by fostering ongoing connection, collaboration and trust. This means actively engaging families and communities in our decision-making

¹¹ Commissioner for Children Tasmania 2023, *Somebody in your corner: The views of children, young people, carers and care providers on children and young people being stable and safe in out-of-home care*, page 41.

¹² CREATE Foundation 2025, *This matters to us: Lived experiences insights from children and young people with care experience 2024-25*, page 99.

processes and providing the necessary support to enable them to care for their children in ways that are appropriate to their circumstances, values and cultural identities.

Research shows that children and young people in Care often have diverse and complex needs that require comprehensive assessments. Assessments need to be holistic, trauma-informed and therapeutic to enable the trusted, skilled and important adults in the child's life to support them and respond to their wellbeing needs.

Importantly, holistic assessments must include a strong lens on cultural and spiritual wellbeing. For many children and young people, especially Aboriginal children and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, culture and spirituality are fundamental to identity, belonging and healing. Failing to consider these dimensions risks overlooking core aspects of a child's lived experience, wellbeing and identity. Embedding cultural and spiritual safety into assessment practices is essential in upholding children's rights and ensuring that the Care they receive is responsive to their needs and supports them to thrive.

All children and young people in Care have the right to receive comprehensive and holistic assessments, consistent trauma-informed and therapeutic approaches to respond to their wellbeing needs in a manner that is genuine, child-centred and rights-based.

By strengthening our approach to working with children and young people and the important people in their lives, we will embed a Care system that places relationships and connection at its core. A system that promotes child-centred and family-led decision making, ensuring that all responses are tailored to the safety, wellbeing and unique circumstances of all children and young people.

Building Aboriginal child-safe practices is also a key action area for *Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026* and the TAC's *Nukara* strategy.

What we expect to see in the medium-term:

- Inclusive, child-centred decision-making policies, processes and practice guidance are in place and practice elements are being embedded into service delivery.
- All children and young people in Care receive comprehensive and holistic assessments, consistent trauma-informed and therapeutic approaches to responding to their wellbeing needs, in a manner that is genuine, child-centred and rights-based.
- Staff are trained and supported to promote emotional, physical and psychological wellbeing.
- Complaints and harmful sexual behaviour policy and processes are more accessible, child-friendly and timely.

Strategic Direction 2

Valuing, supporting and enabling the capability of our workforce

What we heard:

"I didn't get told about this change, because they are too busy. It is always their excuse."

Young person with lived experience of Care, A Place at the Table, 2023.¹³

"Best workers had clear boundaries and found the balance."

A member of the Uplifting Care Youth Advisory Group, 2025-26.



Child and Youth Safe Standards: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10 and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety

National Standards for Out of Home Care: skilling up our staff to deliver Standards 1-13

Why are we doing this?

For our Care system to be more responsive to the individual and diverse needs of children and young people, staff must be equipped with the necessary skills, supports and leadership to build relationships and provide high-quality Care. It is also crucial that robust mechanisms are in place to support a strong child-safe culture, continuous practice development and accountability throughout the Care system to be embedded.

Meaningful, relationship-based connections between Child Safety staff and young people are essential for delivering person-centred services. These connections are crucial for ensuring the care, safety and best interests of children and families. To support this, the service system must prioritise relationships

by embedding their value into governance, leadership, culture and workforce practices.

Our workforce is fundamental to delivering high-quality, safe and accountable Care services and supports. It is therefore vital that workforce challenges such as staff attrition and staffing shortages are addressed. If we are to build workforce capability and sustainability to effectively respond to the needs of children and young people in Care, our staff need to be valued and supported.

The Care system needs strategies and supports in place to recruit and retain quality staff in sufficient numbers to provide high-quality care that is responsive to the unique needs of children and young people.

¹³ Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania, 2023, *A Place at the Table: An investigation into a change to the case management of children and young people in care in Tasmania*, page 78.

Building Aboriginal workforce capacity and capability is also a key action area for *Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026* and the TAC's *Nukara* strategy.

By focusing on valuing, supporting and enabling the capability of our workforce we will build the capability and sustainability of our workforce to respond effectively to the needs of all children and young people in Care and uphold their rights.

What we expect to see in the medium-term:

- Recruitment strategies attract diverse, skilled professionals aligned with the DECYP values and goals.
- Retention rates improve due to enhanced support, recognition and career development pathways.
- Staff receive targeted training to respond effectively to complex needs of children and families, including trauma-informed and culturally safe practices.
- Professional development is embedded into everyday practice, with clear competency frameworks and mentoring systems.

Strategic Direction 3

Recognising and supporting carers as key partners

What we heard:

"My carer makes my life brighter by existing. She looks after me and cooks for me. Her making me dinner makes my days better."

Young person in Care, This matters to us: Lived experiences insights from children and young people with care experience, 2024-25¹⁴

"We can handle what the kids throw at us, if we know we have support."

Tasmanian carer, Somebody in Your Corner report, 2023.¹⁵



Child and Youth Safe Standards: 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety

National Standards for Out of Home Care: 12

Why are we doing this?

The number of carers is declining nationally and in Tasmania, and there is urgency required to respond.

To grow the number of carers in Tasmania we must prioritise recognising and respecting carers as family for the children in their care. Building the necessary carer supports, training opportunities and a culture of respect for carers into our Care system will ensure carers are well equipped and supported as partners to provide quality care for children and young people.

In the same way that we need to know the children and young people in our Care, we need to know our carers through building respectful, collaborative, trusting relationships and by working together as partners in caring for our children and young people.

Evidence shows that children's relationships with their caregivers and the establishment and maintenance of strong 'family-based' relationships are key to positive socio-emotional outcomes of children in Care (Cashmore and Taylor, 2020). Recognising that for many children in Care, their carers are who they consider to be their family. These relationships are vital to ensure the care, safety and best interests of children and young people.

The Care system must be designed with this in mind and with the necessary conditions for supporting carers' wellbeing, in advocating for their children, recognising their diversity, skills, strength and qualifications, and building their knowledge and capability.

¹⁴ CREATE Foundation, 2025: This matters to us: Lived experience insights from children and young people with care experience, 2024-25, page 23.

¹⁵ Commissioner for Children and Young People (Tas) 2023, *Somebody in Your Corner: The views of children, young people, carers and care providers on children and young people being stable and safe in out-of-home care*, page 16.

This includes placing importance on relationships with carers, acknowledging the impacts of vicarious trauma and ensuring we are taking a trauma-informed approach to supporting, respecting and hearing their views and advocacy in their role.

The COI acknowledged that all carers should have access to professional development, including core knowledge and skills in trauma and trauma-informed care, and ensuring this knowledge and skills are refreshed periodically. Core knowledge includes identifying and responding to child sexual abuse, grooming, harmful sexual behaviours and child sexual exploitation. Additionally, this includes setting clear expectations of high-quality care and ensuring carers are supported to build capability and develop their skills to provide it.

What we expect to see in the medium-term:

- Communication and engagement with carers is timely, consistent, transparent and responsive.
- Clear expectations and guidance empower carers to provide high-quality and trauma-informed care.
- Carers feel valued, respected, supported and are key partners in their child's Care journey.
- Targeted recruitment strategies increase the number and diversity of carers across Tasmania.

Strategic Direction 4

Building Aboriginal self-determination

What we heard:

“One thing is cultural safety. So, I think young people might feel more safe in a place where they can see their culture represented.”

Young person in Care, This matters to us: Lived experiences insights from children and young people with care experience, 2024-25.¹⁶

“I’m an Indigenous person, I should be allowed to have cultural significant religious items in my house if I want them.”

Young person in Care, Somebody in your corner, 2023.¹⁷



**Child and Youth Safe Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10
and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety**

National Standards for Out of Home Care: 3

Why are we doing this?

Aboriginal children and young people are over-represented in Tasmania’s Care system without adequate structures in place to support Aboriginal-led or shared decision making. This can result in inappropriate Care placements for Aboriginal children and a lack of support and connection to community, culture and Country.

As highlighted in the TAC’s *Nukara* strategy:

“There is a need for significant structural change to address the impacts of colonisation and Stolen Generations, including legislating for ACCOs to have decision-making powers in Aboriginal child safety issues, and for the greater involvement of Aboriginal people in designing and delivering the services that affect them.”

This was highlighted more than 30 years ago in the *Bringing Them Home Report*, and there remains significant progress to be made to achieve Aboriginal self-determination in Tasmania.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP) is a key policy mechanism to overcome the inequity faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Care. It focuses on upholding the rights of Aboriginal children to be raised in safe, supportive and culturally connected environments and aims to reduce the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal children in the Child Safety system through a focus on five key elements — placement, connection, prevention, partnership and participation.

¹⁶ CREATE Foundation, 2025. *This matters to us: Lived experiences insights from children and young people with care experience*, 2024-25, page 107.

¹⁷ Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania, 2023. *Somebody in your corner: The views of children, young people, carers and care providers on children and young people being stable and safe in out of home care*, page 36.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap provides the foundation for ATSICPP commitments, requiring governments to work with Aboriginal people to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal people. The continued overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in Care shows that more work is needed to meet national priorities such as [*Closing the Gap, Target 12 — Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.*](#)

Significant changes must be made to our current Care system and its services to improve Care for Aboriginal children and young people. This requires designing and implementing system and governance structure improvements to promote Aboriginal self-determination in decision making, practice and service delivery.

Improvements to the Tasmanian Care system must be driven by the eight actions of the nationally agreed *Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026*, including delegated authority, investing in the community-controlled sector, data sovereignty, workforce, active efforts, legal supports, accountability and oversight and social determinants of child safety and wellbeing.

To achieve meaningful change, ACCOs require genuine decision-making power and leadership in the decisions made about Aboriginal children and families. Families must also be actively involved and informed in decision making about the safety and wellbeing of their children.

By focusing on targeted actions to build Aboriginal-led decision making, practice and service delivery we will support the establishment of robust relationships and processes necessary to increase Aboriginal cultural safety and self-determination. This will require a phased approach to work with and support ACCOs to take the lead in the design and delivery of services for Aboriginal children and young people.

What we expect to see in the medium-term:

- Formal partnerships with ACCOs are in place to enable Aboriginal-led and shared decision making, practices, Care arrangements and placements.
- Aboriginal-led decision-making structures are embedded in policy and practice, strengthening Aboriginal self-determination in planning and service delivery.

Strategic Direction 5

Strengthening quality and access to Care

What we heard:

"I feel like there's so much miscommunication between carers and agency case workers and actual child protection case workers... So, yeah, I think just miscommunication makes it harder to really find out how the kid's feeling, because so many people are involved all the time, constantly rotating in and out."

Young person in Care, Take notice, believe us and act!, 2023.¹⁸

**Child and Youth Safe Standards: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10
and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety**

National Standards for Out of Home Care: 1



Why are we doing this?

In recent years there has been an increase in spending on the Care system. However, improvement in the quality of Care and the experience and outcomes for children and young people is still needed, including reducing the over-reliance on high-cost salaried Care arrangements, which do not always meet the needs of children and young people.

Underpinning this is a Care system that lacks appropriate and available Care placements to best meet the needs of the children and young people who require them. In addition, as highlighted by the COI, DECYP as a lead agency has a conflicting role as both regulator and deliverer of Care. The Tasmanian Government alone cannot meet the needs of children and young people in Care. Purpose-driven partnerships need to be strengthened with non-government and ACCO providers to ensure that a strong Care system, with a

continuum of Care that meets the needs of children and young people, is in place.

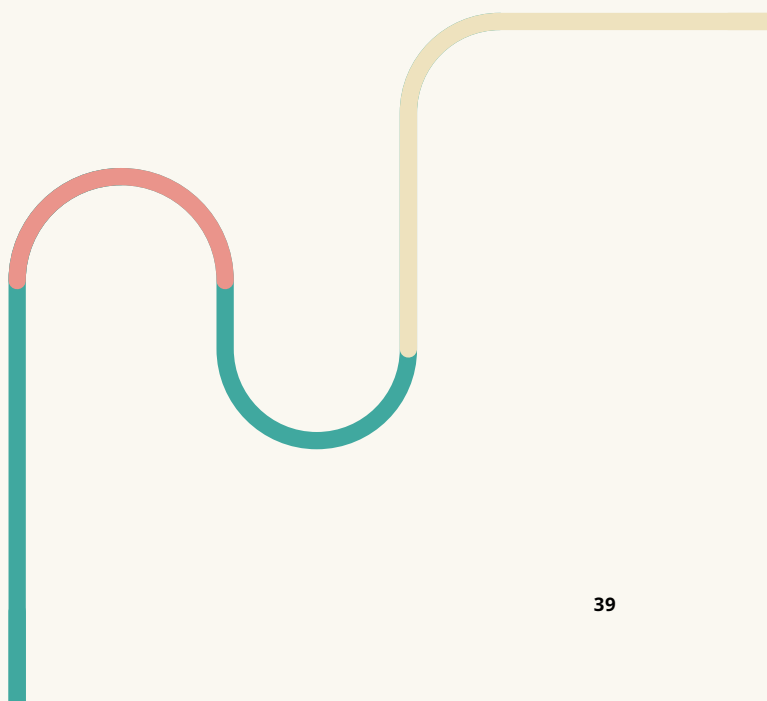
Ensuring that the Care services provided for children and young people are achieving the right outcomes requires the application of consistent, high-quality Care standards across government and non-government service providers, and robust auditing and accountability measures to evaluate whether outcomes for children in Care are being achieved as intended.

By focusing on improvements to strengthen the quality and access to Care, we will see the delivery of high-quality, trauma-informed and therapeutic Care options that are tailored to meet the individual needs of children and young people. We will also be able to measure and improve the quality of these services via effective oversight and accountability mechanisms monitoring service delivery.

¹⁸ Moore, T and McArthur, M, 2023. [*Take notice, believe us and act! Exploring the safety of children and young people in government run organisations*](#), page 46. Hobart: Tasmanian Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.

What we expect to see in the medium-term:

- Consistent standards of Care implemented across all types of Care and Care services, with clear expectations for trauma-informed, culturally safe and child-centred practice.
- Strong partnerships with non-government service providers supporting and enabling co-designed, needs-based service delivery.
- Commissioning processes that are transparent, evidence-informed and responsive to the diverse needs of children and young people.
- Quality assurance mechanisms, including regular audits and feedback in place to monitor and improve service delivery.



Strategic Direction 6

Improving planning, investment and accountability

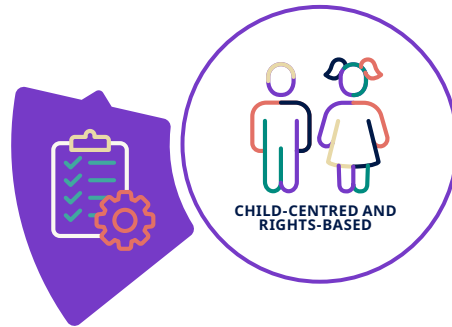
What we heard:

“When the system is under pressure, it is the human element that drops first.”

A member of the Uplifting Care Youth Advisory Group, 2025-26.

“I didn’t get told about this change, because they are too busy. It is always their excuse.”

Young person in Care, A Place at the Table report, 2023.¹⁹



Child and Youth Safe Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9 and 10 and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety

National Standards for Out of Home Care: establishing system foundations to deliver Standards 1-13

Why are we doing this?

The current Care system is experiencing multiple challenges, which require targeted improvements in planning, investment and system accountability. Strategic design and planning is essential to ensure funding and resourcing is invested in the right areas to enable Child Safety and Care services to respond to the safety and wellbeing needs of children and young people in Care.

A clear plan for strategically building a high-quality Care system is required, outlining how Care services will be improved and delivered, including governance and accountability measures as a priority. These governance and accountability measures must be fit-for-purpose.

Strategic design and planning must consider the whole service and Care continuum to ensure it is coordinated and adequately addresses

challenges. At a system level, there must be a robust model of care for Child Safety and Care services implemented with comprehensive strategic oversight and accountability measures in place to monitor and evaluate the needs met and outcomes achieved for children and young people in Care.

To successfully evaluate and monitor these outcomes, strong data management capability, auditing and reporting is crucial. Collection and analysis of meaningful data across the government and non-government sector is an important and significant resource that can support strategic system-level and operational-level decisions (Munro, 2018).

Legislation is an important enabler of implementing the reform agenda, and a review of the relevant legislation is required

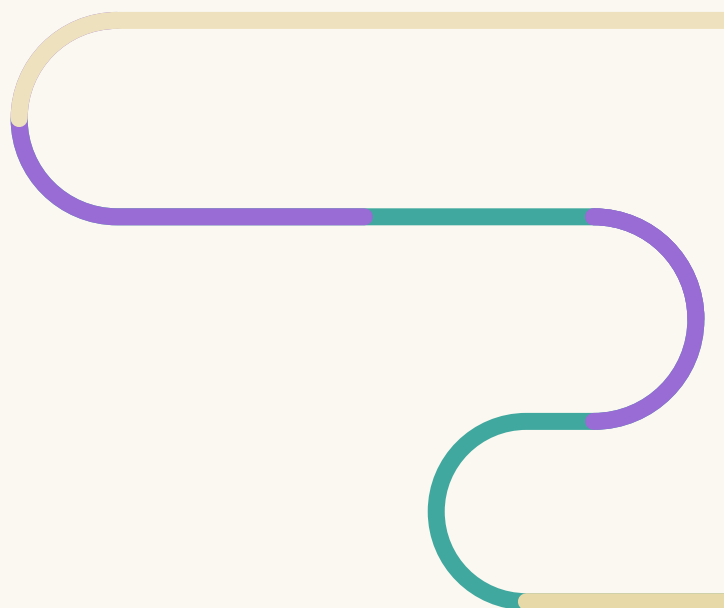
¹⁹ Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania, 2023. A Place at the Table: An investigation into a change to the case management of children and young people in care in Tasmania, page 78.

to ensure that it is contemporary and aligns with system reforms. This will help ensure that any legislative constraints and gaps are addressed to better support our service system and practice to uphold children's rights and meet their safety and wellbeing needs.

By focusing on improving system design, planning, investment and system accountability, we will be able to set a clear strategic direction for building a high-quality Care system. This direction will inform how we plan for and coordinate the investment required to deliver a quality system and establish necessary system oversight and accountability mechanisms.

What we expect to see in the medium-term:

- The experience, views and expertise of children and young people is valued and applied to policy, program and system design.
- A clear, well-communicated plan is in place to guide improvements in system design and service delivery.
- A comprehensive, evidence-informed model of care is in place for Child Safety and Care services, guiding consistent and high-quality practice, Care and services for children and young people.
- System oversight mechanisms are established, including independent monitoring and transparent reporting.
- Performance metrics and feedback are used to inform and further build design, planning, investment and accountability of Care services.



Strategic Direction 7

Building collective responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people in Care

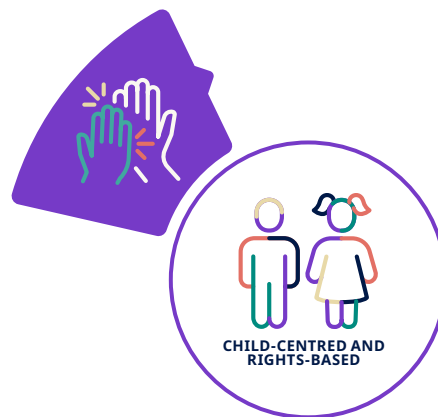
What we heard:

“People and systems accounting for their actions, accepting responsibility and being transparent.”

A member of the Uplifting Care Youth Advisory Group, 2025-26.

Child and Youth Safe Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety

National Standards for Out of Home Care: 4, 5, 6, 7



Why are we doing this?

Children and young people in Care experience significant disadvantage. The Child Safety Service alone cannot lift this disadvantage and meet the needs of children and young people in Care across the wellbeing domains.

Under the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)*, if a child comes into Care, the Tasmanian Government assumes parental responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and, if required, assisting families in fulfilling their responsibilities for the care, upbringing and development of their children. This requires collaboration, responsibility and prioritisation of the needs of these children, young people and their families across all Government services. Prioritising the needs of children and young people in Care across government will require time, collective support, different ways of working and collaborative structures and practices to be in place. An essential element is building a strong, values-led culture across the government workforce, where staff actively

uphold and champion the rights of children and young people in Care.

Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026 and the TAC's *Nukara* strategy also recognise that “genuine, cross-portfolio partnerships between the Aboriginal community and the Tasmanian Government” are required to tackle the root causes of the harmful social determinants that can influence health and wellbeing outcomes and the interaction of Aboriginal families with the Child Safety and Care systems — such as low income, inadequate education and social exclusion. Holistic and multidisciplinary responses that address the needs of children, young people and their families are needed to support some Aboriginal children and young people to thrive.

The Tasmanian Government's focus in Phase 1 to build collective responsibility will be on building partnerships within DECYP to build integrated ways of working between

Child Safety and Education (schools and Child and Family Learning Centres), and with key agencies that have a significant role to play for children and young people in Care.

Through focusing on targeted improvements in the way we work, sharing information and building collective responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people in Care, we will better meet their holistic needs, while at the same time maintaining active accountability and clear roles and responsibilities so that children and young people do not fall through gaps in the system.

What we expect to see in the medium-term:

- Cross-agency collaboration becomes more structured, effective and leads to more cohesive planning that better meets the needs of children and young people in Care.
- The needs of children and young people in Care are prioritised by relevant Tasmanian Government agencies.

Governance and accountability

Governance

The Tasmanian Government's approach to Uplifting Care is supported by a governance and advisory model which has been designed to support implementation of system reform through deep and coordinated engagement with children and young people with Care experience, carers, Tasmanian ACCOs, the NGO sector, peak body organisations, DECYP Child Safety and Care staff, and other industry bodies, regulators, researchers and subject matter experts.

It currently features the following key advisory/reference groups:

The Uplifting Care Independent Expert Panel A consultative group comprised of national and local experts, including Tasmanian Aboriginal people and young people with Care experience.	Who we work with in a consultative capacity as experts providing advice on the alignment of our implementation efforts against national and international standards, and evidence and consideration of the Tasmanian context.
Uplifting Care Youth Advisory Group A group comprised of young Tasmanians with lived experience of Care.	Who we work with in a co-design capacity, providing direction on the system design and implementation approaches required to meet their needs.
Foster and Kinship Carers Advisory Group An advisory group of foster and kinship carers convened by the Foster and Kinship Carers Association of Tasmania.	Who we work with to ensure implementation of Care system reform meets the needs and expectations of Tasmanian foster carers, kinship carers and third-party guardians
Aboriginal Reference Group This group is comprised of representatives with broad experience working with Aboriginal children, young people and their families. Initially, the primary function of this group was to offer guidance on initiatives related to youth justice. The group's scope has been expanded to include the Uplifting Care program of work.	Who we work with to ensure implementation of Care system reform increases Aboriginal cultural safety and self-determination.
Statewide Service Provider Advisory Group An advisory group comprised of family-based care and residential care providers / non-government organisations providing Care in Tasmania convened by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.	Who we work with to ensure implementation of Care system reform meets the needs and expectations of service providers delivering family-based, residential and salaried care in Tasmania.

Other Tasmanian Government agencies have had the opportunity to provide input and advice on specific reform focus areas and projects as work progresses, with further consideration being given to any governance structures required to support this.

Our advisory and network groups are underpinned by the practice expertise and knowledge of leadership and staff across the DECYP's Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Portfolio, including through internal governance and engagement processes.

Opportunities may be identified to join up with or align with governance arrangements established as recommended in the *Nukara* strategy.

Accountability

Accountability is at the heart of *Change for Children*, Tasmania's 10-year strategy for upholding the rights of children by preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse. The Tasmanian Government accepted all COI recommendations.

All whole-of-government formal accountabilities are detailed in the [Change for Children strategy](#).

Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

The Tasmanian Government's commitment to accountability drives its ongoing efforts to ensure strong oversight and continuous improvement in the care, wellbeing and safety of children and young people, which is supported by clear Ministerial oversight and regular reporting to the Minister for Children and Youth.

Reporting on the progress of this Roadmap will occur via the Tasmanian Government's COI Recommendations Reporting Mechanisms, which are published on the [Keeping Children Safe website](#). In addition, supplementary reporting will be undertaken via DECYP internal reporting mechanisms.

The monitoring and evaluation of our improvement actions will be embedded within the broader whole-of-government reporting framework, which will be periodically assessed to ensure alignment with the evolving needs of the children and young people under our care.

The *Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice Outcomes Framework* defines measurable outcomes for Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice in Tasmania. This Framework will also be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Roadmap's actions.

The Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor will play a pivotal role in this process, providing an independent and objective review of the progress made under the *Change for Children Strategy and Action Plans*. The Implementation Monitor will ensure that all stakeholders remain accountable for their roles in implementing the reforms and that any emerging risks or challenges are promptly addressed.

Our approach to the Roadmap's implementation will be adapted as needed. This will enable us to understand its effectiveness and make refinements in response to the evolving needs and feedback of children and young people in Care, their families and carers, service providers, ACCOs and other key stakeholders, as well as contemporary evidence.

Appendix one — What guides us

The voice of children, young people and their families

Children and young people have the right to actively participate and be heard when decisions are made about issues that affect their lives.

We must keep children and young people, and their families and caregivers at the centre of all decision-making processes when designing and providing Care services and supports.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC is an international agreement protecting children's rights. It defines a child as anyone under 18 and ensures all children have rights without discrimination. Key principles include prioritising the best interests of the child, ensuring their right to life and development, and respecting their views in matters affecting them.

By embedding the UNCRC principles in our ways of working we pursue child-safe, trauma-informed practices that put the rights of children and young people first.

The below international, national and state-level agreements also guide and support our ways of working:

UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

The ICERD is an international agreement committed to eliminating racial discrimination.

By embedding the principles of the ICERD in our ways of working we pursue equitable and inclusive practices.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

The UNDRIP is an international instrument detailing the rights of indigenous peoples in international law and policy, containing minimum standards for the recognition, protection and promotion of these rights.

UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The CEDAW is an international agreement that defines what constitutes discrimination against women and commits to ending it.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The CRPD is an international agreement promoting, protecting and ensuring the rights and freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

The ICCPR is an international agreement that protects many civil and political rights.

UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

The ICESCR is an international agreement that protects many economic, social and cultural rights.

Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 (Safe and Supported)

Safe and Supported is Australia's framework to reduce child abuse and neglect and its intergenerational impacts.

National Out of Home Care Standards

The National Framework and Out of Home Care Standards set guidance for Child Safety Services to ensure that children and young people reach their full potential by growing up safe and supported, free from harm and neglect.

Child Safety Services play a central role in protecting children and young people's rights and safeguarding them from harm in a trauma-informed environment outside the family home. Our approach reflects the Framework and Standards in the design and implementation of system initiatives to improve the Care and outcomes for children in OOHC.

National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap aims to reduce inequalities for Indigenous Australians, with the agreement setting 19 targets to improve health, education, employment and other outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This Roadmap is consistent with the principles of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, which outlines priority reforms for the Tasmanian Government.

Tasmania's Plan for Closing the Gap 2025-28

The purpose of Tasmania's Closing the Gap Plan 2025–2028 (the Plan) outlines what the Tasmanian Government has agreed to do in partnership with its Coalition of Peaks partner, Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organisations to implement the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020 (the National Agreement) in Tasmania from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2028.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle* (Child Placement Principle) is a framework designed to promote policy and practice that will reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to fully embedding the Child Placement Principle in Tasmania's transformed Care system, which will in turn reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Care.

Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Standards 2022

Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023

Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997

Our improvement actions and implementation of this Roadmap are guided by child-safe organisations legislation and standards. *The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* give effect to the rights of children, by translating them into organisational standards and practices.

These National Principles are now enshrined in legislation as *Tasmania's Child and Youth Safe Standards*, which protect and promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and prevent abuse and harm.

Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework and Strategy: It Takes a Tasmanian Village

The Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework and Strategy provides a long-term direction for the Tasmanian government to improve the wellbeing of children and young people aged 0-25 years, with a specific focus on the first 1,000 days.

Department for Education, Children and Young People Strategic Plan 2024 — 2030

The DECYP Strategic Plan outlines a shared vision for children and young people in Tasmania and provides strategic direction for the Department. The Strategic Plan is a guide for planning, making decisions and working together to achieve better outcomes for children and young people in Tasmania.

The biggest influence on wellbeing for children and young people is a child's parents, carers and family. Strong families are the best way to achieve child and youth wellbeing. This Roadmap recognises the importance of investing in the wellbeing of our young people and their parents, carers and families. This is reflected in our priority improvement actions to achieve better outcomes for children and young people in Care in Tasmania

Charter of Rights for Tasmanian Children and Young People in Out of Home Care

The Charter of Rights ensures that children in Care are safe, healthy, respected, educated and involved in decisions affecting their lives. It emphasises maintaining family and cultural connections, providing a supportive and nurturing environment to promote their wellbeing and development.

Feel Safe. Are safe. Our Practice Approach

Feel Safe. Are Safe. Our Practice Approach focuses on creating safe, stable, and nurturing environments for children and families.

Our approach embeds these foundational principles for the standards of care for our service system.

Appendix two — Terms and abbreviations

Aboriginal people	The original inhabitants of Tasmania were Aboriginal people, and the ongoing custodians of Tasmania are Tasmanian Aboriginal people. For that reason, the term 'Aboriginal' is used to describe all Australian First Nations people in Tasmania.
Child or children	A person or people under 18 years of age.
Child-centred services	Services that place the needs, interests and rights of the child at the centre of all decision-making and service delivery.
Child safe Organisation	An organisation that consciously and systematically: creates an environment in which children's rights, safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values and actions; engages with children and young people to create conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm; creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying potential harm; and responds to concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse.
Child Safety Service	The role of the Child Safety Service is to work with children or young people and their families to find ways to solve any problems affecting the safety and wellbeing of a child.
Child maltreatment	Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exposure to domestic violence.
Commission of Inquiry (COI)	Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.
DECYP	Refers to the Tasmanian Government agency: Department for Education, Children and Young People.
Foster Care	A formal arrangement — either short or long term — where children/young people live with individuals, couples and families who are not their family. This can include sibling group care. Sometimes used to provide respite periods to the child's regular carer on weekends or holidays.
Intensive supported foster Care	Intensive supported foster Care provides a child or young person the opportunity to live in a family home while receiving therapeutic support. It provides them with the chance to build real and meaningful relationships in an environment that supports stability and responds to complex trauma needs. Currently delivered through the Care2Thrive pilot.
Kinship Care	A formal arrangement where Care is provided by members of the child/young person's extended family or significant adult in their life.

NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme.
Out of home care (OOHC)	Refers to the formal system of alternative living arrangements (temporary, medium or long-term) for children and young people who are assessed as unable to live safely in their family home or with their parents. 'Care' (rather than OOHC) is the term used in this document and in the department.
Relational approach	A relational approach prioritises the building of safe, trust-based relationships as the primary pathway for promoting a child's healing, healthy development and wellbeing.
Respite Care	Respite Care is provided for short periods of time on a regular basis. Respite supports both the carer family and the child in Care.
Safeguard	To protect a person's health, wellbeing and human rights, enabling them to live free from harm.
Salaried Care	Care provided by non-government organisations for children and young people with complex needs that, for a short or longer period, can make it too challenging for them to live in a family home with foster or kinship carers. Salaried Care is in a home setting with Care provided by staff on a rostered basis. Salaried Care includes therapeutic residential Care, which is group-based accommodation and support to older children and younger people with high or challenging needs and where foster/kinship Care is unavailable/inappropriate.
Sibling Group Care	Sibling Group Care is provided on either a temporary or longer-term basis and supports keeping siblings together in Care.
Therapeutic approach	In relation to the Care system and settings, a therapeutic approach frames children and young people as vulnerable and in need of support and healing. It recognises that many children and young people in Care have complex needs arising from their background, environment and experiences of past trauma. They require support through education, social and emotional wellbeing and community connection.
Third-party guardianship	A legal arrangement where a person other than the child's parents is granted custody and the authority to make decisions on behalf of the child, often due to the parents being unable to Care for the child. A court application to make a person or persons other than the Secretary become the guardian/s of a child or young person. This provides the new guardian the same rights, powers, duties, obligations and liabilities as a birth parent of the child or young person would have up until the child or young person turns 18.
Trauma-informed care	A care approach that acknowledges the impact of trauma and integrates this understanding into all aspects of service delivery to avoid re-traumatisation and support healing.
Young person or young people	A child who is or children who are 16 or 17 years old. In the context of Care, this may extend to the age of 21 if a person needs support transitioning into independent living.

Appendix three — Our Care system data

What type of Care are children and young people in?

Figure 1 (below) shows that almost 90 per cent of children and young people in Care in June 2025 were living in family-based foster Care (45.6 per cent) or kinship Care (43.5 per cent) delivered in private homes. A small proportion were living in salaried or residential care (10.8 per cent) or other living arrangement.²⁰ These figures indicate very little change from Care arrangements reported in 2021-2022.

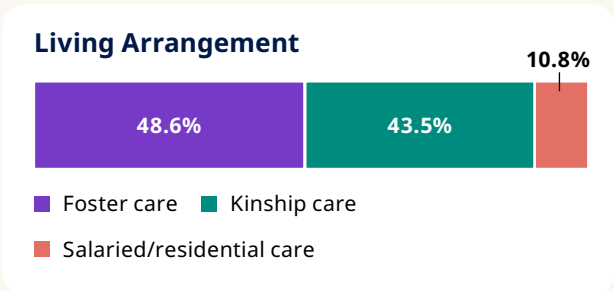


Figure 1: Living arrangements of children and young people in Care (excluding other living arrangements) as of June 2025.²¹

There are also a range of other living arrangements that children and young people under Youth Justice or Care and Protection Orders access, including:

- non-crisis, medium- to longer-term transitional care and accommodation service for young people aged 12 to 15 years who are homeless or at risk of being homeless
- crisis accommodation and care tailored to the specific needs of unaccompanied children who are 12 to 15 years of age
- transitional housing for ages 16 to 24.

Where are the children and young people in Care?

Slightly more than half (55.7 per cent) of children in Care are in care placements in the South and roughly one-quarter (24.3 per cent) are in the North and one-fifth (20.0 per cent) are in the North-West of Tasmania.²²

North	North-West	South
24.3%	20.0%	55.7%

Table 1: Proportion of children in Care by region of placement 2025-26 financial year.²²

²⁰ Please note that the 'Other' category includes independent living and not elsewhere classified. This proportion cannot be published due to the small number of children in this category.

²¹ Child Protection Australia — AIHW — Table 4.4 Child protection Australia 2024-25.

²² Department for Education, Children and Young People data, August 2026.

How old are the children and young people in Care?

While the age of children and young people in Care varies, in general approximately two-thirds of them are between 5 and 14 years old.

Per cent Aboriginal children		
	June 2024	June 2025
<1	2.3	4.8
1–4	19.7	19.4
5–9	30.6	28.5
10–14	30.6	32.6
15–17	16.7	14.8
Unknown	0	0
Total	100	100
Non-Aboriginal children		
	June 2024	June 2025
<1	3.2	3.0
1–4	16.3	17.5
5–9	28.7	26.3
10–14	31.2	35.2
15–17	20.6	18.1
Unknown	0	0
Total	100	100
All children and young people		
	June 2024	June 2025
<1	2.9	3.8
1–4	17.9	18.3
5–9	29.6	27.3
10–14	31.0	33.9
15–17	18.7	16.6
Unknown	0	0
Total	100	100

Table 2: Ages of children and young people in Care as of June 2024²³ and June 2025.²⁴

What biological sex are the children and young people in Care?

Generally, the population of children and young people in Care over the same period is almost evenly divided in terms of biological sex. However, in 2025 there were slightly more boys (52.0 per cent) than girls (48.0 per cent).²⁵

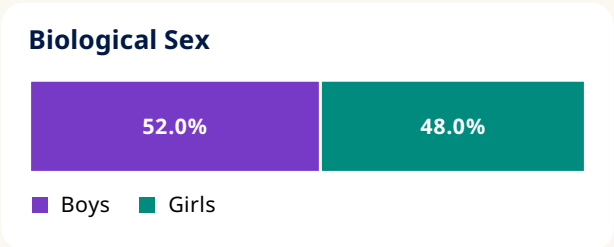


Figure 2: Biological sex²⁶ of children and young people in Care as of 30 June 2025.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Care

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are significantly overrepresented in Care. As indicated in Figure 3 (below), more than two-fifths (44.8 per cent) of children in Care as of 30 June 2025 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This overrepresentation is increasing — from 2021 to 2025 there was an 8.9 per cent increase in the Aboriginal population in Care.

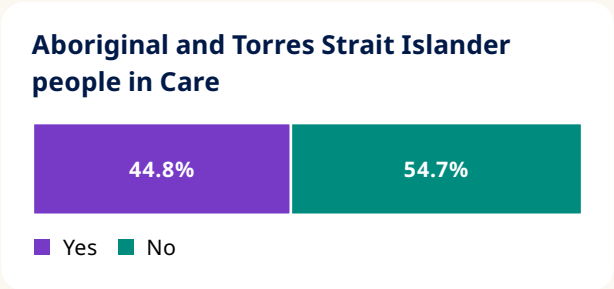


Figure 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Care as of 30 June 2025.²⁷

²³ Child Protection Australia — AIHW — Table S5.5 — Child protection Australia 2023-24.

²⁴ Child Protection Australia — AIHW — Table 4.7 Child protection Australia 2024-25.

²⁵ Child Protection Australia — AIHW — Table 4.7 Child protection Australia 2024-25.

²⁶ Data for gender is child’s biological sex. The Child Protection Information System currently does not collect gender or gender diversity data.

²⁷ Child Protection Australia — AIHW — Table T1.2 Child protection Australia 2024-25.

Children and young people with a disability

Of the children in Care as at 30 June 2025, around one-fifth (22.4 per cent) had a recorded disability; almost half (49.3 per cent) did not have adequate disability information captured, and around one-quarter (28.2 per cent) were recorded as not having a disability.²⁸

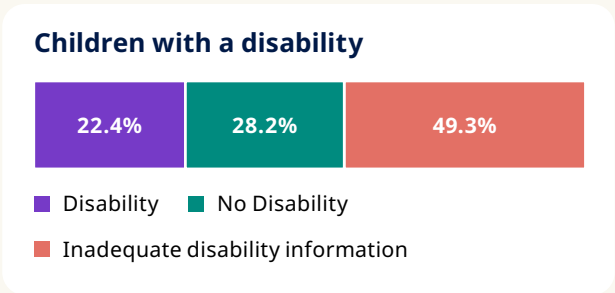


Figure 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Care as of 30 June 2025.²⁷

²⁸ For the children that had not had their disability information completed, this could indicate issues with reporting or identifying disabilities in younger children in care. There may be issues with the data quality of disability status due to this large number of children recorded with an unknown disability status. Moreover, these numbers may not reconcile to the number of children recorded with an NDIS identifier as a child’s disability status can change over time, and some children with a NDIS identifier are recorded as having ‘No disability’ in Child Protection Information System.

Appendix four — The Roadmap to Uplifting Care: Theory of Change

Uplifting Care Goal

All children and young people in Care are known, safe, well and learning, and supported to heal and thrive.

Challenges Drivers for change	Child-centred and rights-based approaches	Availability of differentiated quality placement options	Aboriginal Children and young people in Care
	Provision of timely, child-centred practice	Carers and workforce shortages	Strategic oversight and specialist expertise
	Roles and responsibilities	Regulatory requirements	Planning and investment challenges



Child-centred and rights based							
Strategic directions	1 Building relational and holistic engagement, assessment and planning practice	2 Valuing, supporting and enabling the capability of our workforce	3 Recognising and supporting carers as key partners	4 Building Aboriginal self-determination	5 Strengthening quality and access to Care	6 Improving planning investment and accountability	7 Building collective responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people in Care



PHASE 1 What this means in the short-term	Initial improvements in practice including how we plan and support children and young peoples needs and allocate case workers. Clear and transparent policies, procedures and processes to respond to harmful behaviours and improve how we manage complaints	Improvements in staff support, recognition, career development pathways and identification of core training to support staff in their role.	Some improved supports for carers and more information available to them to help them carry out their role. Solid partnerships and ways of engaging with children and young people in Care, carers, Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, non-government organisation (NGOs) providers, peak bodies, other government agencies and other key stakeholders	Clear and agreed pathways in place to build Aboriginal-led and shared decision making.	Less reliance on high-cost salaried care arrangements, more Care options available and clearer commissioning and contracting arrangements in place.	System oversight and accountability mechanisms under development which also consider how independent monitoring and transparent reporting will be delivered. A clear understanding and articulation of investment strategies to deliver a quality, responsive and sustainable service.	Strengthening partnerships within DECYP — integrating Child Safety with schools and Child and Family Learning Centres — and working closely with key agencies that share responsibility for supporting children and young people in Care.
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PHASE 2 What this means in the mid-term	Inclusive, child-centred decision-making is embedded into service delivery. Children and young people receive comprehensive, trauma-informed assessments and support. Staff are equipped to promote emotional, physical and psychological wellbeing. Complaints and harmful-behaviour policies and processes are more accessible, child-friendly and timely.	Recruitment attracts skilled, diverse professionals aligned with DECYP and CSYJO values and goals. Retention improves through better support, recognition and career pathways. Staff receive training to respond to complex needs using trauma-informed and culturally safe practices. Professional development is embedded through competency frameworks and mentoring.	Communication and engagement with carers is consistent, transparent and responsive. Clear expectations and guidance empowers carers to provide high-quality, trauma-informed Care. Carers feel valued, respected, and supported as partners in each child's Care journey. Targeted recruitment increases the number and diversity of carers in Tasmania.	Partnerships with Aboriginal organisations guide culturally led Care and safe placements. Aboriginal self-determination including Aboriginal-led decision-making is embedded in policy and practice.	Consistent care standards are applied across all Care types, ensuring trauma-informed, culturally safe, child-centred practice. Strong partnerships with service providers support co-designed, needs-based services. Commissioning is transparent, evidence-informed and responsive to diverse needs. Quality assurance processes monitor and improve services.	Children and young people's experiences and views shape policy and system design. A clear, well-resourced plan guides system and service improvements. An evidence-informed child safety and care operating model supports consistent, high quality practice. System oversight are established including independent monitoring and transparent reporting. Performance metrics and feedback inform planning, resourcing and accountability.	The needs of children and young people in Care are prioritised across government agencies. Cross-agency collaboration becomes more structured and effective, improving coordination and planning.
	PHASE 3						



What this means in the long-term	The following long-term outcomes being sought for the Care system are outlined in the <i>Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice Outcomes Framework</i>			
	I am included, known and taken seriously	I am safe and feel safe	I feel healthy in my body, my feelings and my mind, and am supported to grow	I am supported to learn and try new things that suit me and help me to learn and grow
	The important people in my life work together with me and for me	The people who work with me build safe, respectful relationships with me, my family and each other	Services learn from me and improve	

Appendix five — References

The following list of references were utilised to develop the very foundations of the Uplifting Care Roadmap — what we have heard over the past two decades.

Policy context

The Roadmap acknowledges the range of strategies, programs, plans and initiatives and ongoing efforts aimed at improving the lives of children and young people in Care and addressing the Tasmanian Care sector.

The Roadmap enhances current efforts and reflects many reviews and reports submitted to the Tasmanian Government over the past 10 years. Related Strategies, Action Plans, Frameworks, Policies, Reports and websites include:

Official inquiries

Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings — [The Report](#)

Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings — [TAKE NOTICE, BELIEVE US AND ACT! Exploring the safety of children and young people in government run organisations 2023](#)

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse — [Final report | Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#)

Inquiries, Reports and Reviews

[Improving the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children | Australian Institute of Family Studies](#)

[Strong Families Safe Kids Summary Evaluation Report](#)

[luwutina mana-mapali krakani waranta](#)

[Select Committee on Child Protection Final Report](#)
[Report on Child Protection Services in Tasmania](#)
[Review of claims of abuse from adults in state care as children](#)

Tasmanian Government

Tasmanian Government responses:

- *[Keeping Children Safe And Rebuilding Trust](#)*
- *[Tasmanian Government OOHC Response – Report and Action Plan 2020](#)*
- *[Royal Commission Case Study 24 — Response by the State of Tasmania to the areas to be examined](#)*

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS):

- *[New Directions for Child Protection in Tasmania: An Integrated Strategic Framework](#)*
- *[Out of Home Care Reform in Tasmania](#)*

Expert Panels

[Expert Panel advice and recommendations to the Minister for Children and Youth on the essential therapeutic elements required for an improved service system response for Tasmanian children and young people with highly complex needs](#)

Auditor-General Reports

[Accessing services for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people — the Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line](#)

[Special Care Packages for Children in Out of Home Care](#)

[Follow-up of selected Auditor-General reports: October 2009 to September 2011](#)

[Children in out-of-home care](#)

Tasmanian Commissioner for Children and Young People (CCYP)

[A Place at the Table Report — CCYP](#)

[Somebody in your corner — CCYP](#)

[CCYP Monitoring Report No. 1 — The Tasmanian Out-of-Home Care System and “Being Healthy”](#)

[Children and Young People in Out of Home Care in Tasmania — CCYP](#)

[She will do anything to make sure she keeps the girls: Inquiry into the circumstances of a 12 year old child under Guardianship of the Secretary](#)

[Who is listening to the children now?](#)

CREATE Foundation

[This matters to us: Lived experiences insights from children and young people with care experience, 2024-25](#)

Victoria State Government, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

[SAFER children framework guide](#)

The following references inform the research we have done in addition to the fundamental voices we have heard over the past 20 years. It bolsters our evidence base:

Please note: Included within the sources for this Roadmap is a report by Professor Maria Harries commissioned from DECYP. This report has not been publicly released and therefore cannot be included in this list of references to refer to.

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