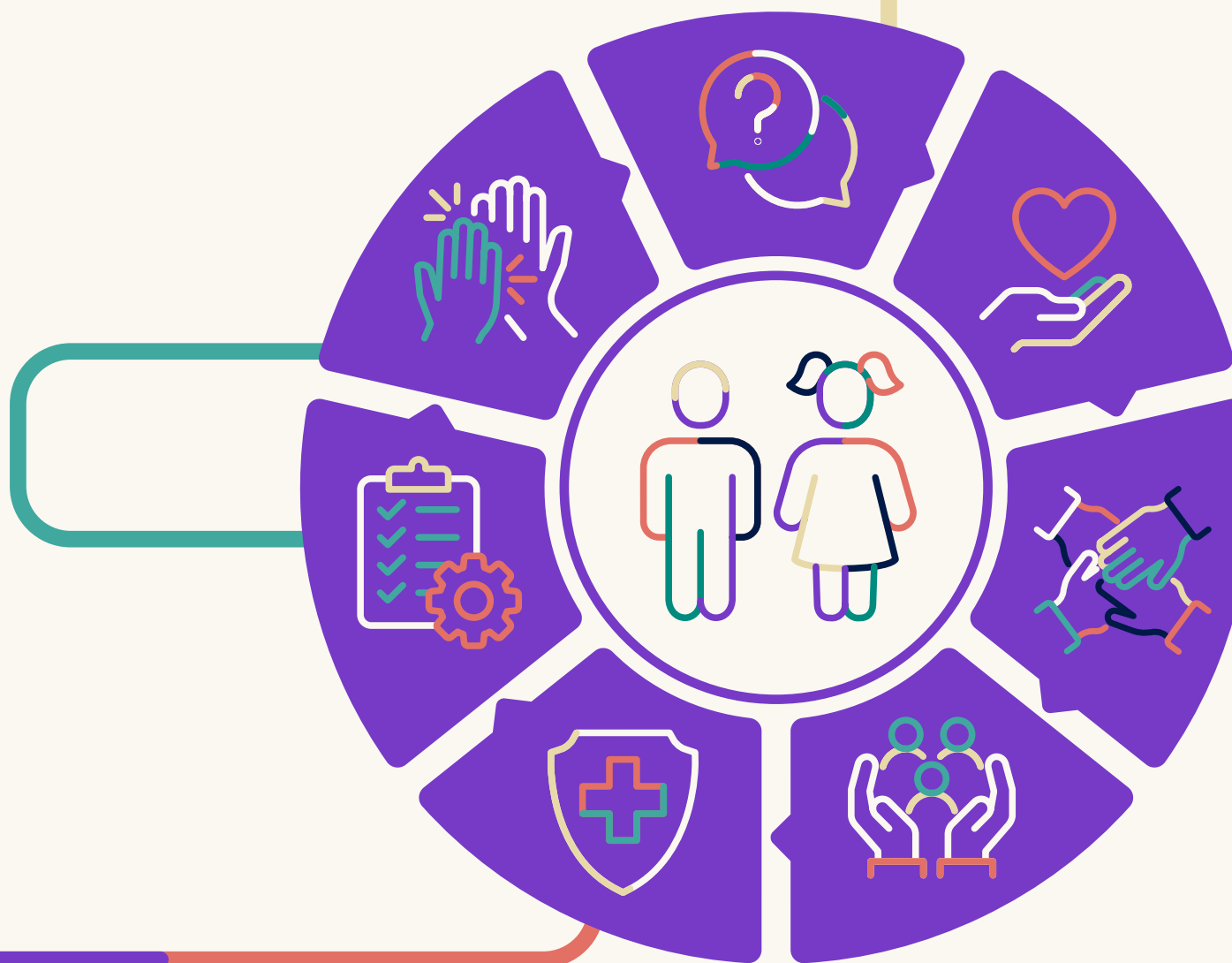


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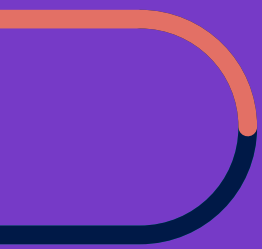
Bright Lives: The Roadmap to Uplifting Care

Phase 1 Action Plan to reset
our foundations (2025–2026)



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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 or wellbeing of a child or young person, you must report it to the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line on 1800 000 123.

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 to Wellbeing Connect. Search the DECYP intranet for details.



About this action plan

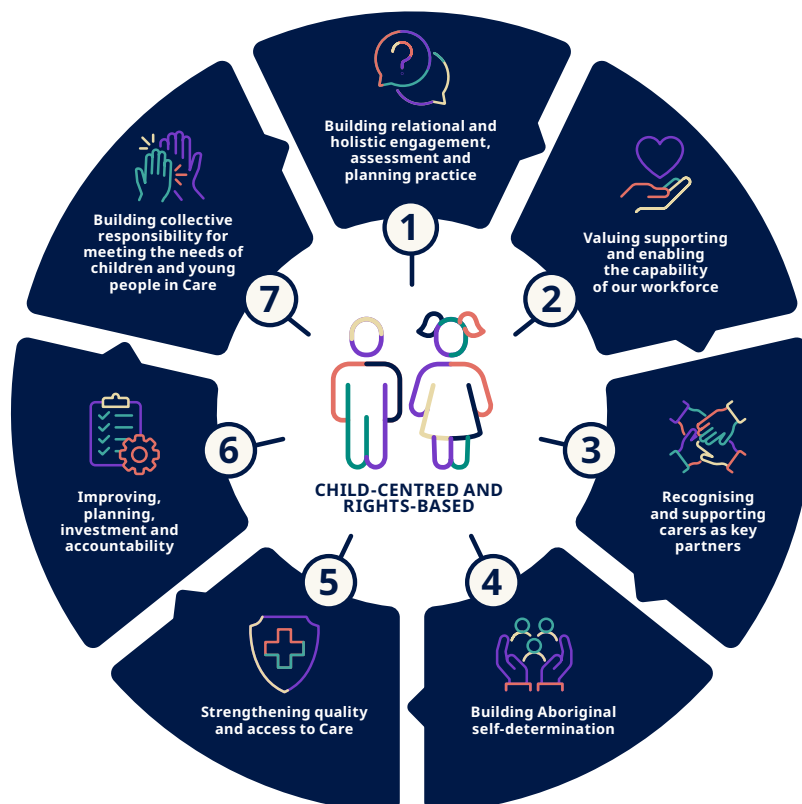
The Tasmanian Government is committed to uplifting the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people in Care (also known as out of home care) by ensuring the system and services it governs are child-centred, rights- and evidence-informed, and reflective of contemporary evidence-based practice.

Bright Lives: the Roadmap to Uplifting Care 2024-2029 ('the Roadmap') outlines the Tasmanian Government's phased approach to building a high-quality, safe and accountable Tasmanian Care system and Care sector that understands and is responsive to the needs of children and young people and those who care for them.

Our goal is that **all children and young people in Care are known, safe, well and learning, and supported to heal and thrive.**

We will achieve this goal by focusing on the following seven strategic directions to drive system change:

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.



These strategic directions draw on what a high-quality system looks like according to children and young people, and the evidence. They further embed the:

- [National Standards for out-of-home care¹](#)
- [Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Standards and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety](#).³

Safe. Secure. Supported. Our Safeguarding Framework directly aligns with and supports the implementation of the *Child and Youth Safe Standards* and the *Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety*.

The Child and Youth Safe Standards and Universal Principle can also be seen in our commitment to being child-centred and rights-based, and is central to every aspect of our work from policy development and service design to frontline practice.

Implementation of this Roadmap is via the delivery of rolling action plans that describe what will be done in each phase of reform:

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+)

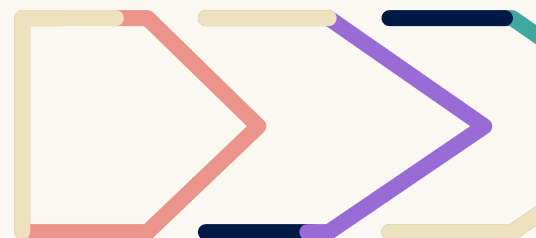
Embedding and sustaining new ways of working, services and supports.

The *Phase 1 Action Plan to reset our foundations (2025–2026)* is the first in the series of supporting action plans. It provides:

- a snapshot of key improvement actions that have already been undertaken
- an overview of priority improvement actions designed to transform services and supports for children and young people in Care.

For further information on the Tasmanian Care system, its current context, the drivers and evidence base informing system change, our strategic directions for system continuous improvement and an overview of governance, monitoring and reporting, please refer to the Roadmap.

Note: The actions in this Action Plan reference Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings recommendations. Where referenced, the Uplifting Care actions will contribute to the implementation of these recommendations.



¹ dss.gov.au/outline-national-standards-out-home-care-2011/national-standards-out-home-care

³ oir.tas.gov.au/about/child-and-youth-safe-standards

Strategic Direction 1

Building relational and holistic engagement, assessment and planning practice

Priorities:

Priority 1.1	Improve the way we understand, plan and support children and young people
Priority 1.2	Improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Care
Priority 1.3	Improve management of complaints and critical incidents



A high-quality Care system must actively involve children, young people, families and carers in planning and decision making and be responsive to their diverse needs, including any risks to their safety or wellbeing.

"I didn't even know my caseworker back then... I don't have one now.

I'm on an order but I don't have one. Child protection have not assigned me a caseworker. I haven't got one, but I've got someone who's higher up trying to fill those shoes but you're not doing the same job because you're not seeing me."

A young person in Care, 'Take notice, believe us and act', 2023.⁴

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

What we have done so far

In line with our commitment to embedding child-centred, rights-based practice, significant progress has been made to ensure children, young people and families are at the centre of planning and decision making. This includes the

release and implementation of *Feel Safe. Are Safe. Our Practice Approach*, alongside our new practice capability building functions within the Office of the Chief Practitioner. *Feel Safe. Are Safe. Our Practice Approach* will be reviewed and updated to ensure that it keeps pace with the evolving reform agenda.

⁴ Moore, T., & McArthur, M., (2022). *Take notice, believe us and act! Exploring the safety of children and young people in government run organisations*. Hobart: Tasmanian Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.

The Tasmanian Government continues to focus on ensuring all children and young people in Care have a current, functioning Care Team and are supported to have their voices heard and needs prioritised. Internal quality assurance processes are helping strengthen case management, Care Team, and Care planning practice. An intensive case management pilot for young people on Care and Protection Orders involved in the Youth Justice system is underway.

We have improved information for those considering third-party guardianship, including the requirements, criteria and process. This information is available on DECYP's website [How to become a third-party guardian](#) and builds on our commitment to support permanent and stable outcomes for children and young people in Care.

Specialised roles have been introduced, including Disability Liaison Officers in Child Safety, to improve service responses and outcomes for children and young people with disability.

A new After Hours Service (AHS) will be launched for clients of Child Safety Services and its initial intake, screening and referral service (currently known as the Advice and Referral Line), subject to a new industrial agreement and rostering provisions.

The Tasmanian Government has established a DECYP Child and Youth Empowerment Team to lead the development of a [Participation and Empowerment Strategy](#). The goal of this strategy is to embed the Tasmanian Government's commitment to uphold the rights of children and young people in all that we do.

All DECYP staff are trained every year to build their skills and knowledge to respond to and support children and young people who need their help. This includes practical information about how to safeguard children and young people from harm, and when and how to report concerns and information about child abuse.

Work has commenced to establish a Harmful Sexual Behaviours Support Unit within DECYP. The Unit will support best practice responses to harmful sexual behaviours across the department, including in Child Safety and Care.

This will result in raised awareness, preventative measures, informative guidance and consistent evidence-informed practice and therapeutic responses to harmful sexual behaviours displayed and experienced by children and young people.

The Tasmanian Government has established a DECYP Complaints Management Oversight Unit and is developing a new complaints management framework to guide best-practice and child-centred complaint handling. This will include a policy, procedure and tailored guidance for Child Safety and Care. An interim improved process for handling complaints for Child Safety and Care was developed and implemented from early 2025.

Services for Children, Young People and Families within DECYP has been implementing the *Wellbeing in Care Policy and Procedure* since early 2023. Oversight of the response, assessment and management of risk and safety concerns in Care environments has been strengthened with the appointment of a dedicated Practice Manager. This will also enable a greater focus on strengthening practice through this process and greater identification of areas of risk and concern for children and young people.

What we will do next

Priority 1.1 – Improve the way we understand, plan and support children and young people

1.1.1 Focus on **three key practice priorities**:

- a. **Deepen relational connection**, supported by:
 - i. setting practice expectations and increasing data availability to support staff to engage with children, young people and families
 - ii. developing resources to support home visits.

b. **Strengthen planning** (COI 9.22, 9.26), supported by:

- i. developing an implementation plan for Care Teams and Care planning that draws on findings from internal quality assurance review processes and incorporates strategies to address identified risks of abuse, including but not limited to child sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviours
- ii. reviewing and updating available resources to promote participation of children and young people in general casework
- iii. reviewing and updating best-practice policies and guidance, including for family group conferencing to enhance family-led decision making.

c. **Improve safety**, supported by improving safety planning processes and resources that differentiate between immediate safety planning and longer-term risk mitigation in families.

1.1.2 Improve the approach of Child Safety and Care to holistic assessments in collaboration with the Department of Health by **strengthening the assessment framework and tools** (COI 9.22, 9.23).

1.1.3 Improve DECYP's approach to coordinating and implementing supports by:

- a. **Providing active case management** for children and young people involved in Youth Justice (COI 9.27) by:
- i. developing case management plans for those involved in Youth Justice services (COI 12.19)
 - ii. implementing revised processes for case management within community and custodial Youth Justice, including a multidisciplinary response

iii. ensuring integrated throughcare for young people entering and transitioning from services to facilitate this transition (COI 12.24)

iv. ensuring there is an allocated Child Safety Officer for all young people under statutory guardianship involved in Youth Justice

v. establishing arrangements for information sharing with the Commissioner for Children and Young People about admissions to youth detention

vi. evaluating the Youth Justice Intensive Case Management pilot.

b. **Continuing to develop and enhance our practice** to achieve stable and permanent outcomes for children and young people in Care (COI 9.21, 9.25) by:

i. continuing to implement the *Permanency and Stability Policy* and supporting material, including through embedding it into staff training modules

ii. developing and publishing guidance to support placement matching

iii. prioritising resourcing to process third-party guardianship applications

iv. investigating opportunities to build workforce capability in family finding by partnering with external organisations

v. investigating opportunities to work in partnership with non-government organisations, including Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOS), to undertake family finding

vi. investigating opportunities for increased placement preservation services.

Priority 1.2 – Improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Care

1.2.1 Commence work to **develop an updated framework of practice policies and guidance to support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Care** (COI 9.8.L) by:

- a. **establishing a new team in the Office of the Chief Practitioner** to provide strategic leadership, governance and policy development to support high quality, evidence and trauma-informed practice
- b. **developing and implementing an improvement plan** for updating our framework of policies and procedures.

1.2.2 Continue to deliver the **Child's Rights Campaign and associated training and resources to the Child Safety Services and Youth Justice workforce** through the Tasmanian Government's *Participation and Empowerment Strategy* (COI 9.06 and 12.08).

1.2.3 **Implement changes to the Youth Voice Survey tool** following the pilot evaluation for children and young people in Care in 2024.

Priority 1.3 – Improve management of complaints and critical incidents

1.3.1 **Develop and implement a department-wide framework for managing complaints across all DECYP services, which includes Child Safety Service and Care** (COI 9.31), as well as a complaints policy, procedure and resources.

1.3.2 Establish **practice issues and risk escalations processes in the Office of the Chief Practitioner.**

Centralised complaints and incident reporting system (COI 9.31.2) with an implementation date of 2026.

The actions supporting the realisation of Priority 1.3 outcomes will be delivered by the Tasmanian Government through agency-wide DECYP initiatives, with a focus on all DECYP service areas.

Strategic Direction 2

Valuing, supporting and enabling the capability of our workforce

Priorities:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Priority 2.1 | Retain and recruit the right people |
| Priority 2.2 | Build the capability and capacity of our workforce to respond effectively to the needs of children and families |



A high-quality Care system must have a strong workforce — built through staff feeling valued, a positive culture, clear roles and expectations, provision of training and supports, and strong leadership.

“With so many different situations, one size cannot fit all. Just being trauma informed is not enough. Being trauma informed requires understanding, and relatability between workers and young people – relate to the young people”

Uplifting Care Youth Advisory Group member

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

What we have done so far

A new Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Portfolio within DECYP has been established, with a Deputy Secretary appointed in December 2024. A new structure for this portfolio was agreed in April 2025 and is being implemented. The new structure integrates new and existing functions across the Child Safety and Youth Justice areas to better organise services around children, young people and their families.

Improvement actions to support the building of a sustainable workforce, including wellbeing

supports, will be delivered through the DECYP overarching *Workforce Strategy 2025-2030*.

This strategy shows the department’s shared commitment to building a workforce that is safe, supported, capable, valued and achieving. The strategy’s ‘services that support’ focus area includes several targeted actions to enhance physical, psychological and cultural safety and wellbeing supports.

The Workforce Strategy includes priorities to deliver actions specific to Child Safety and Care. These are set out in the *DECYP's Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Workforce Action Plan* ('the Workforce Action Plan').

It features the following goals: sustainable workforce; child-centred; skilled, knowledgeable, capable; strong leadership and culture, and evidence-based management and strategy.

The Workforce Action Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains evidence-based, reflective of the current and future situation, aligned with the work of the broader agency, effective and fit for purpose.

The first Workforce Action Plan is largely focused on DECYP, while recognising that the best outcomes for children and young people require a strong partnership between government and non-government organisations, with a particular focus on the role of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). This partnership approach is the centrepiece of the Child and Youth Workforce Roundtable, which first met in May 2025.

Targeted recruitment campaigns were rolled out nationally in Spring 2024 and Autumn 2025 to market the sector as an employer of choice. This resulted in the largest single intake of new staff experienced in Child Safety and Care in recent times. The recruitment campaign was supported by the introduction of the Tasmanian Government Workforce Incentive Package to attract and retain Child Safety staff. Negotiation of the Child Safety Service Agreement has commenced with relevant unions.

The Social Work Student Placement Program has been strengthened to attract students and provide them with real-world experience working in our service. As a result, we have welcomed more graduates from student placements into our workforce and we will continue to build on this successful program.

In August 2025 DECYP introduced the new and expanded staff wellbeing program — Wellbeing Connect, offering staff a wider range of support

services. This initiative is designed to help create a workplace that is physically, psychologically and culturally safe, where everyone feels supported and capable.

DECYP has implemented the [*DECYP Conduct and Behaviour Standards Policy*](#), which clarifies the standards of conduct and behaviour required to work within DECYP.

DECYP is in the early stages of procuring a professional development program for staff in Government-funded residential Care homes. "The aim of this training is to educate and empower staff working in government-funded residential care homes with children and young people who have a heightened risk of presenting with harmful sexual behaviour.

A Child Safety Supervision Framework has been developed and training has been rolled out along with a suite of supporting resources.

What we will do next

Priority 2.1 – Retain and recruit the right people

2.1.1 Implement DECYP's *Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Workforce Action Plan* to build and maintain DECYP's valued and capable workforce, which has the knowledge, skills and capacity to help children, young people and their families enjoy bright lives and positive futures (COI 9.10).

2.1.2 Work with the Child and Youth Workforce Roundtable to **expand DECYP's Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Workforce Action Plan to a whole-of-sector strategy**, in consultation with sector stakeholders (COI 9.10).

2.1.3 Implement a Recruitment and Retention Scholarship program, including a pilot Master of Social Worker internship program, scholarships and incentives to attract social work graduates to the service, and to provide support for existing staff to complete social work qualifications and transition to Child Safety Officer/Youth Justice roles (COI 9.10).

2.1.4 Commence the review of the Conduct Standards for DECYP Child Safety and Out of Home Care staff (COI 9.19) that support application of the DECYP *Conduct and Behaviour Standards Policy* and sit alongside other standards for workers in schools and Child and Family Learning Centres, and standards for workers in residential Youth Justice settings.

2.1.5 Continue to implement the new Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Portfolio structure reflecting the changing needs of children, young people and families as needed, including recruiting and appointing senior leadership roles (COI 9.4).

2.1.6 Establish the new Office for the Chief Practitioner Professional Practice, including recruiting of the Chief Practitioner, designing roles and functions, and establishing the team within the Office (COI 9.17).

Priority 2.2 – Build the capability and capacity of our workforce to respond effectively to the needs of children and families

2.2.1 Develop a model of case allocation, which provides a structured approach to allocation decisions and a phased approach to its implementation (COI 9.16).

2.2.2 Undertake negotiations on the Child Safety Agreement, incorporating appropriate caseloads for Child Safety Officers (COI 9.16).

2.2.3 Review and implement the *Child Safety Supervision Framework*, including training for staff on the procedure, practice advice and supporting documents (COI 9.13).

2.2.4 Implement the *External Professional Supervision Policy*, specifically provision of funded professional supervision for Child Safety Officers with an external supervisor to build practice capability through reflection and provide an additional protective support to mitigate vicarious trauma (COI 9.13).

2.2.5 Implement the Frontline Mind Leadership Program for Child Safety and Care Leaders (COI 9.13).

2.2.6 Review *Feel Safe. Are Safe. Our Practice Approach* to ensure alignment with the *Children, Young People and Families Putting Children First: Our Child Safety Approach* ('Our Child Safety Approach').

2.2.7 Implement the *Child and Youth Participation and Empowerment Guide*. This Guide will set the standards for the workforce's obligation to include and engage children and young people in decisions that affect them. It will support a child-centred and rights-based approach to upholding the child participation principle of the *Children Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*, which is underpinned by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

2.2.8 Update training modules on *Child Participation: Principles Into Practice*. This training helps people to understand and implement models of child participation when working and engaging with children and young people.

Strategic Direction 3

Recognising and supporting carers as key partners

Priorities:

Priority 3.1 Build a culture of respect and support for carers and their role

Priority 3.2 Provide clear expectations, capability building and development for quality Care



A high-quality Care system must value and support our carers to provide high-quality Care for children and young people that is responsive to their unique needs.

“Workers and carers need to integrate training with the needs of the individual child.”

Uplifting Care Youth Advisory Group, 2025-26 member

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

What we have done so far

The Foster Care – *The difference is you* campaign ran from December 2023, resulting in raised community awareness on the issue. The campaign is still available via DECYP’s website, with a range of resources to attract new foster carers, including stories from current carers.

An independent review of the financial model of support for family-based carers was undertaken by Wise, Lord and Ferguson to consider opportunities to improve financial support for carers in their role. The findings of this review are under consideration.

The [*‘Who Can Say Ok in Tasmania’: A Reference Guide for Carers*](#) was released by DECYP in 2024. The Guide provides information about decisions

carers can make for children and young people in their care and decisions that must be made by the Child Safety Service.

The [*Becoming a Foster Carer in Tasmania*](#) booklet was also made available in late 2024. This information kit provides an idea of how foster Care in Tasmania operates and answers frequently asked questions about how to become a foster carer.

What we will do next

Priority 3.1 – Build a culture of respect and support for carers and their role

- 3.1.1 Develop a carer recruitment, support and retention strategy** (COI 9.8.h) in collaboration with carers and the non-government sector.
- 3.1.2 Commence design of an updated financial model of support for family-based carers and a phased approach to its implementation.** The updated model will be built around the increased funding provided to uplift the foster and kinship carer allowance. Development of the updated financial model of support will draw on the review of family-based carer support conducted by Wise, Lord and Ferguson, and the recently completed national review of carer payments.
- 3.1.3 Identify opportunities to improve policy and practice across the Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Portfolio to better recognise and respect the role of carers.**

Priority 3.2 – Provide clear expectations, capability building and development for quality Care

- 3.2.1 Undertake work to make information and resources more readily available for carers including by:**
 - a. Working with the Foster and Kinship Carers Association Tasmania (FKAT) to update and launch the Foster and Kinship Carers Handbook
 - b. establishing a web page that contains practical resources, including consolidating available training resources for carers
 - c. establishing mechanisms for regular communications with carers
 - d. making relevant policy documents publicly available.
- 3.2.2 Commence design and development of the Carer Register through a phased approach,** with an initial focus on creating visibility of carers and supporting matching with children in Care. This will be assisted by improvements in carer information to support matching processes along with communication and engagement with carers.
- 3.2.3 Commence developing conduct standards for carers** in collaboration with carers and the non-government sector, setting clear expectations and standards (COI 9.19).

Strategic Direction 4

Building Aboriginal self-determination

Priorities:

Priority 4.1 Building our partnerships with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations providing services to children and young people across Tasmania



A high-quality Care system recognises that strong connection to family and culture are essential for wellbeing, development and trauma-informed care for Aboriginal children and young people.

"I think it's important to keep connected to your culture because then it helps with the sense of belonging. It helps with making the child comfortable in out-of-home care if they have that connection."

A young person in Care, Somebody in Your Corner, 2023.⁵

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: 3

What we have done so far

Work is progressing to align DECYP Child Safety policy documentation, practice advice and training to support the full implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP). For example, *Feel Safe. Are Safe. Our Practice Approach* includes practice expectations and reflective prompts to enable practitioners to understand if they are fulfilling 'Practice Standard 4: Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Families' in their practice across the continuum of Care.

Implementation of the ATSICPP is now included as part of the standard funding agreement with non-government service providers.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) received a capacity-building grant through the Government's Closing the Gap Capacity Building Fund 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 TAC [*Nukara strategy*](#) was launched in July 2025.

⁵ Commissioner for Children and Young People 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.

What we will do next

Priority 4.1 – Building our partnerships with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations providing services to children and young people across Tasmania

- 4.1.1 Build partnerships with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)** providing services for Aboriginal children and young people across Tasmania (COI 9.15).
- 4.1.2 Work collaboratively with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) to support the implementation of the TAC's *Nukara* strategy** (COI 9.15)
- 4.1.3 Work collaboratively with a range of ACCOs to develop place-based Aboriginal-designed and led approaches that implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP)** (COI 9.15).
- 4.1.4 Develop a Child and Family Investment Strategy, in partnership with key stakeholders, that transitions proportional funding to ACCOs for delivery of services to Aboriginal children, young people and their families** (COI 9.15).
- 4.1.5 Work collaboratively with Aboriginal people to establish the Office of Aboriginal Policy and Practice, and recruit the Executive Director for Aboriginal Children and Young People** (COI 9.7).
- 4.1.6 Identify opportunities to bring together ACCOs and other non-government service providers to support implementation of the ATSICPP** (COI 9.15).

Strategic Direction 5

Strengthening quality and access to Care

Priorities:

Priority 5.1 Design and implement a new model of Care service delivery

Priority 5.2 Establish and implement clear standards, effective and specialised oversight and accountability for service delivery



A high-quality system has strong partnerships in place to deliver high-quality, trauma-informed and therapeutic services that are accessible and meet the needs of children and young people. Care providers and environments are safe, supported and equipped to deliver high-quality Care.

“We often see ‘co-design’ used to describe a process of government and service providers working together. Certainly, service providers should be involved in these processes, to leverage the wisdom and experience of their practitioners and to build on their evidence and data holdings.”

Mission Australia Submission to the Commission of Inquiry Recommendations Scrutiny Committee, 2025.⁶

**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

What we have done so far

A Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships team within DECYP has been established to manage and build relationships with non-government providers.

An updated contract management approach, inclusive of quality and safety of services oversight, has been developed with the Office of the Crown Solicitor. All contracts renewed

from July 2025 onwards with non-government organisations include the updated requirements.

New Care types are being trialled, such as intensive supported foster Care, which is being trialled and evaluated through the Care2Thrive pilot program delivered by Life Without Barriers.

⁶ *Mission Australia 2025, Submission to the Commission of Inquiry Recommendations Scrutiny Committee*, page 5.

Intensive supported foster Care provides a child or young person the opportunity to live in a family home while receiving therapeutic support.

What we will do next

Priority 5.1 – Design and implement a new model of Care service delivery

5.1.1 Develop and commence the implementation of a service-level Model of Care for the Care system (COI 9.18) that outlines key elements of:

- therapeutic and trauma-informed care
- the Care ecosystem, including Care types
- how DECYP partners with non-government organisations (NGOs) and carers in delivering Care
- roles and responsibilities
- standards of care and accountability in delivery of Care services.

5.1.2 Review required Standard/s that must be complied with in the delivery of Care in Tasmania.

5.1.3 Scope oversight and accountability mechanisms to monitor quality, safety, performance and outcomes of commissioned Care services.

5.1.4 Work in partnership with carers, non-government service providers and ACCOs to strengthen our approach to the transfer of Care provision to non-government providers and ACCOs (COI 9.2).

Priority 5.2 – Establish and implement clear standards, effective and specialised oversight and accountability for service delivery

5.2.1 Strengthen practice, systems and oversights to reduce our reliance on high-cost salaried Care placements and length of stay, including:

- a. reviewing and improving practice governance and salaried and residential Care referral processes
- b. implementing incremental approval timeframes and delegations
- c. developing and implementing financial management plans for all salaried and residential Care placements
- d. commencing a review of all salaried Care placements and establishing and implementing agreed transition plans.

5.2.2 Execute a contract including the implementation of the 'Material Basics' price model for all residential Care providers.

5.2.3 Develop and implement a roadmap to improve our commissioning processes (COI 9.3) including by:

- a. developing and implementing a Commissioning Framework
- b. moving to tendering processes, including developing clear contract services
- c. developing a price model based on schedule of fees (expenditure guide) for each service type within existing funding allocations to provide clarity regarding service pricing, as well as transparency and equity across the sector.

- 5.2.4 Integrate reporting obligations for all contracted providers to ensure compliance with the Child and Youth Safe Standards, ongoing improvement, relevant data collection and further oversight of services** delivered by non-government partners (COI 9.3).
- 5.2.5 Develop a Child Safety contract management approach** (COI 9.3).
- 5.2.6 Refine auditing process for contract arrangements** (COI 9.3).

Strategic Direction 6

Improving planning, investment and accountability

Priorities:

Priority 6.1	Ensure that existing investment is directed effectively
Priority 6.2	Develop an operating philosophy and service delivery model for the Child Safety and Care system
Priority 6.3	Establish system oversight and accountability mechanisms
Priority 6.4	Review legislation to ensure it supports the reform of our service system and practice



A high-quality Care system has robust governance and system accountability structures and processes in place, and is underpinned by contemporary legislation that enables it to meet the safety and wellbeing needs of children and young people in Care.

“Proactive and reactive are probably the two words I use most in this agency. We do nothing proactive; we only react and, as a lot of other good people have said before, all we deal with is emergencies.”

A Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) member, A Place at the Table, 2023.⁷

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

What we have done so far

The Tasmanian Government remains committed to supporting diverse Care types, including foster and kinship Care, respite and salaried Care and Special Care Packages.

The establishment of a dedicated team within the Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Portfolio in late 2024 is responsible for leading planning, coordination and delivery of the COI recommendations relating to Care reform.

⁷ Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania 2023, *A Place at the Table: An investigations into a change to the case management of children and young people in care in Tasmania*, page 58.

The 2026-27 Budget reflects the Tasmanian Government's ongoing commitment to implementing the COI recommendations with the following funding directed at supporting children and young people in Care:

- Investment to strengthen baseline funding for the Care system.
- Provision of up to 48 additional Child Safety Officers, so that every child and young person in Care has an allocated Key Worker.
- Investment into Child Safety Workforce Incentives for the attraction and retention of frontline workers in children and youth services.
- Continuation of the uplift of foster and kinship Carer allowances.

DECYP has also established the Uplifting Care governance model, designed to support implementation of system reform through deep and coordinated engagement with children and young people with Care experience, carers, Tasmanian Aboriginal communities, the NGO sector, peak body organisations, DECYP Child Safety and Care staff, and other industry bodies, regulators, researchers and subject matter experts.

As part of the establishment of the Uplifting Care governance model, DECYP set up an Uplifting Care Youth Advisory Group (YAG) comprised of young people with Care experience. While this group currently plays a role within the governance structure of the Uplifting Care work program, it will transition to have an ongoing role to inform system design and delivery.

A new Executive Committee structure within DECYP has been established which will support the development and implementation of appropriate governance structures to monitor children's safety and wellbeing, system performance and practice across the Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice systems.

An internal *Quality Assurance Framework for Child Safety and Out of Home Care* has been developed, which establishes a direction and standard for the quality of service delivery. It seeks to ensure that structures, systems and processes are in

place to require and foster safe, quality service delivery and ongoing improvement.

DECYP has recently finalised a department-wide outcomes framework. This framework describes what success looks like under the [*Strategic Plan 2024-2030*](#).

DECYP has commenced a comprehensive review of the *Youth Justice Act 1997*.

What we will do next

Priority 6.1 – Ensure that existing investment is directed effectively

6.1.1 Develop, release and commence implementation of *Bright Lives: the Roadmap to Uplifting Care* and the first in a series of accompanying action plans (the first being this Phase 1 Action Plan) outlining our approach to establishing a holistic system delivering caring, compassionate, child-centred, rights-based and evidence-informed Care (COI 9.8).

6.1.2 Develop the Phase 2 Action Plan for the *Bright Lives: the Roadmap to Uplifting Care* (COI 9.8).

Priority 6.2 – Develop and implement an operating philosophy and service delivery model for the Child Safety and Care system

6.2.1 Develop Our Child Safety Approach – an operating philosophy and service delivery model for Child Safety and Care that consolidates a trauma-informed and therapeutic future vision and provides an overarching approach for how services across the continuum are delivered, under a single operating philosophy (vision, values and principles).

- 6.2.2 Commence implementing the operating philosophy and service delivery model** through the next phase of the Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Portfolio restructure, development of policy and practice guidance and service and program development and delivery.

Priority 6.3 – Establish system oversight and accountability mechanisms

- 6.3.1 Establish a model for a quality and risk committee in the context of DECYP governance structures to monitor system performance of the Care sector,** including children's safety and wellbeing in Care and implementation of agreed Standards (COI 9.5).
- 6.3.2 Develop and implement an Outcomes Framework for Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice** and supporting resources in consultation with key stakeholders (COI 9.9).
- 6.3.3 Develop a reporting framework and data capability** to report against the Outcomes Framework (COI 9.9 b, c.).
- 6.3.4 Establish a Quality Assurance Team and core functions within the Chief Practitioner Professional Practice Office,** headed up by a Principal Quality Assurance Practitioner, with core functions including:
- quality assurance processes
 - practice issues and risk escalation
 - practice quality and risk governance.
- 6.3.5 Develop a coordinated approach to managing quality assurance processes** including complaints management, the new policy and process to respond, assess and manage risk and safety concerns in Care environments, and serious event review mechanisms.

Priority 6.4 – Review legislation to ensure it supports the reform of our service system and practice

- 6.4.1 Commence the review of the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*** (COI 9.15, 21.9).

The below actions supporting the realisation of Priority 6.3 outcomes will also be delivered through whole-of-government initiatives, led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet:

Appointment of Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People (COI 9.14)

Independent Community Advisor Scheme; Child Advocate (COI 9.34)

Complaints to the Ombudsman by Child Advocate (COI 9.35)

Establish independent advocacy and oversight (COI 9.36, 9.37, 9.38)

Strategic Direction 7

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

Priorities:

Priority 7.1 Building partnerships across Government agencies

A high-quality system has collaborative structures in place across Government to support and keep children and young people in Care safe and well.



“Proactive and reactive are probably the two words I use most in this agency. We do nothing proactive; we only react and, as a lot of other good people have said before, all we deal with is emergencies.”

A Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) member, A Place at the Table, 2023

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

What we have done so far

There is stronger cross-government collaboration recognising shared responsibility for children in Care. The Sure Start escalation process has been implemented, enabling local-level issues to be escalated through inter-agency and Secretary-level Care Teams as needed.

DECYP has worked with the Department of Health on new models of Care for children in the paediatric and mental health systems. Kids Care Clinics are being rolled out statewide to provide thorough, holistic health assessments for children entering Care. These clinics offer paediatric medical and short-term allied health services to children experiencing

social vulnerability who may face barriers in accessing current mainstream health services.

Protocols between the Child Safety Service and the Magistrates Court have been strengthened to ensure a departmental representative supports young people appearing in the Youth Justice Division. A new after-hours service supports this outside regular business hours.

A Service-Level Agreement with Homes Tasmania (Building Tasmania from 1 July 2026) is being implemented to prioritise the housing needs of children and young people in Care.

What we will do next

Priority 7.1 – Building our partnerships with other government agencies

7.1.1 Continue prioritising the delivery of the Sure Start program, including through:

- a. establishing Regional Care Teams in each region (South, North and North-West) comprised of senior representatives of relevant agencies to work collaboratively to address barriers that prevent achievement of care plan goals that are beyond the capability of an individual Care Team.
- b. investigating opportunities to continue providing children and young people in Care with additional education, training and literacy supports.

7.1.2 Across agencies, **establish governance and partnership arrangements to prioritise and support the needs of children and young people in Care**, including:

- a. Department of Health (COI 9.23).
- b. Homes Tasmania (Building Tasmania from 1 July 2026).
- c. Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.
- d. National Disability Insurance Agency

7.1.3 Work across DECYP to **identify opportunities for joined-up and place-based responses to the needs of children and young people in Care through the establishment of groupings of schools**. This will be actioned through the establishment of clear escalation, risk and complex case pathways to support children and young people at all levels of need. The following will support this:

- a. **School Support and Wellbeing Teams** (SSWTs) provide in school support to identify concerns using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework for early identification, response and intervention, utilising the collective expertise of Professional Support Staff (PSS), School Health Nurses, Safeguarding Leads and Support Teachers and other relevant support personnel.
- b. **School Groupings**⁸ will have access to specialist senior Student Support staff, including Senior PSS, Inclusive Practice Leads, School Health Nurse Managers, Student Support Coordinators and Student Response Coordinators. These staff work directly with SSWTs to provide high-level support, coordination and collaboration across Child Safety, Youth Justice and Schools and Early Years.
- c. **A case management approach** will be applied in responding to the needs of children and young people not engaged or at serious risk of disengagement. This may include support from Safe Home Safe Families, Interagency Student Support Team, Back on Track and access to a school-based flexible provision and in a last resort a referral to a T4 Engagement Program.

⁸ [*Day one of Tasmanian Multi-School Organisations and School Groupings – Department for Education, Children and Young People*](#)

Actions at a glance – Phase 1

Our Strategic Directions	Our Priorities	Our Actions	*COI Rec
1 Building relational and holistic engagement, assessment and planning practice 	1.1 Improve the way we understand, plan and support children and young people	1.1.1 Focus on three key practice priorities: a. Deepen relational connection; b. Strengthen planning; c. Improve safety	9.22, 9.26
		1.1.2 Improve the approach of Child Safety and Care to holistic assessments by strengthening the assessment framework and tools	9.22, 9.23
		1.1.3 Improve DECYP's approach to coordinating and implementing supports by: a. providing active case management for children and young people involved in Youth Justice services b. continuing to develop and enhance our practice to achieve stable and permanent outcomes for children and young people in Care	9.27, 12.19, 12.24, 9.21, 9.25
	1.2 Improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Care	1.2.1 Commence work to develop an updated framework of practice policies and guidance to support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in care	9.8.L
		1.2.2 Continue to deliver the Child's Rights Campaign and associated training and resources to the Child Safety Services and Youth Justice workforce through the Tasmanian Government's <i>Participation and Empowerment Strategy</i>	9.06, 12.08
		1.2.3 Implement changes to the Youth Voice Survey tool	
	1.3 Improve management of complaints and critical incidents	1.3.1 Develop and implement a department-wide framework for managing complaints across all DECYP services	9.31
		1.3.2 Establish practice issues and risks escalations processes in the Office of the Chief Practitioner	

*Commission Of Inquiry (COI) Recommendations – where referenced, the Uplifting Care actions will contribute to the implementation of these COI recommendations.

Our Strategic Directions	Our Priorities	Our Actions	*COI Rec
2 Valuing, supporting and enabling the capability of our workforce 	2.1 Retain and recruit the right people	2.1.1 Implement DECYP's <i>Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Workforce Action Plan</i>	9.10
		2.1.2 Work with the Child and Youth Workforce Roundtable to expand DECYP's Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Workforce Action Plan to a whole-of-sector strategy	9.10
		2.1.3 Implement a Recruitment and Retention Scholarship program	9.10
		2.1.4 Commence the review of the Conduct Standards for DECYP Child Safety and Out of Home Care staff	9.19
		2.1.5 Continue to implement the new Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Portfolio structure	9.4
		2.1.6 Establish the new Office for the Chief Practitioner Professional Practice	9.17
	2.2 Build the capability and capacity of our workforce to respond effectively to the needs of children and families	2.2.1 Develop a model of case allocation which provides a structure approach to allocation decisions and a phased approach to implementation	9.16
		2.2.2 Undertake negotiations on the Child Safety Agreement, incorporating appropriate caseloads for Child Safety Officers	9.13
		2.2.3 Review and implement the <i>Child Safety Supervision Framework</i>	9.13
		2.2.4 Implement the <i>External Professional Supervision Policy</i>	9.13
		2.2.5 Implement the Frontline Mind Leadership Program for Child Safety and Care Leaders	9.13
		2.2.6 Review <i>Feel Safe. Are Safe. Our Practice</i>	
		2.2.7 Implement the <i>Child and Youth Participation and Empowerment Guide</i>	
		2.2.8 Update training model on Child Participation: Principles into Practice	

*Commission Of Inquiry (COI) Recommendations – where referenced, the Uplifting Care actions will contribute to the implementation of these COI recommendations.

Our Strategic Directions	Our Priorities	Our Actions	*COI Rec
3 Recognising and supporting carers as key partners 	3.1 Build a culture of respect and support for carers and their role	3.1.1 Develop a carer recruitment, support and retention strategy	9.8h
		3.1.2 Commence design of an updated financial model of support for family-based carers and a phased approach to its implementation.	
		3.1.3 Identify opportunities to improve policy and practice across the Child Safety and Youth Justice Operations Portfolio to better recognise and respect the role of carers	
	3.2 Provide clear expectations, capability building and development for quality Care	3.2.1 Undertake work to make information and resources more readily available for carers	
		3.2.2 Commence design and development of the Carer Register through a phased approach	
		3.2.3 Commence developing conduct standards for carers	9.19
4 Building Aboriginal self-determination 	4.1 Building our partnerships with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOS) providing services to children and young people across Tasmania	4.1.1 Build partnerships with ACCOs providing services for Aboriginal children and young people across Tasmania	9.15
		4.1.2 Work collaboratively with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) to support the implementation of the TAC's <i>Nukara</i> strategy	9.15
		4.1.3 Work collaboratively with a range of ACCOs to develop place-based Aboriginal-designed and led approaches that implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP)	9.15
		4.1.4 Develop a Child and Family Investment Strategy in partnership with key stakeholders that transitions proportional funding to ACCOs for delivery of services to Aboriginal children, young people and their families	9.15
		4.1.5 Work collaboratively with Aboriginal people to establish the Office of Aboriginal Policy and Practice, and recruit the Executive Director for Aboriginal Children and Young People	9.7
		4.1.6 Identify opportunities to bring together ACCOs and other non-government service providers to support implementation of the ATSICPP	9.15

*Commission Of Inquiry (COI) Recommendations – where referenced, the Uplifting Care actions will contribute to the implementation of these COI recommendations.

Our Strategic Directions	Our Priorities	Our Actions	*COI Rec
5 Strengthening quality and access to Care 	5.1 Design and implement a new model of Care service delivery	5.1.1 Develop and commence implementation of a service-level Model of Care for the Care system	9.18
		5.1.2 Review, agree and communicate required Standard/s that must be complied with in the delivery of Care in Tasmania	
		5.1.3 Scope oversight and accountability mechanisms to monitor quality and safety, performance and outcomes of commissioned Care services	
		5.1.4 Work in partnership with carers, non-government service providers and ACCOs to strengthen our approach to the transfer of Care provision to non-government providers and ACCOs	9.2
	5.2 Establish and implement clear standards, effective and specialised oversight and accountability for service delivery	5.2.1 Strengthen practice, systems and oversights to reduce our reliance on high-cost salaried Care placements and length of stay	
		5.2.2 Execute a contract including the implementation of the 'Material Basics' price model for all residential Care providers	
		5.2.3 Develop and implement a roadmap to improve our commissioning processes	9.3
		5.2.4 Integrate reporting obligations for all contracted providers to ensure compliance with the Child and Youth Safe Standards, ongoing improvement, relevant data collection, and further oversight of services delivered by non-government partners	9.3
		5.2.5 Develop a Child Safety contract management approach	9.3
		5.2.6 Refine auditing process for contract arrangements	9.3

*Commission Of Inquiry (COI) Recommendations – where referenced, the Uplifting Care actions will contribute to the implementation of these COI recommendations.

Our Strategic Directions	Our Priorities	Our Actions	*COI Rec
6 Improving planning, investment and accountability 	6.1 Ensure that existing investment is directed effectively	6.1.1 Develop, release and commence implementation of <i>Bright Lives: the Roadmap to Uplifting Care</i> and the first <i>Action Plan</i>	9.8
		6.1.2 Develop the Phase 2 Action Plan for the <i>Bright Lives: the Roadmap to Uplifting Care</i>	9.8
	6.2 Develop an operating philosophy and service delivery model for the Child Safety and Care system	6.2.1 Develop <i>Our Child Safety Approach</i> – an operating philosophy and service delivery model for Child Safety and Care	
		6.2.2 Commence implementing the operating philosophy and service delivery model for Child Safety and Out of Home Care	
	6.3 Establish system oversight and accountability mechanisms	6.3.1 Establish a model for a quality and risk committee in the context of DECYP governance structures to monitor system performance of the Care sector	9.5
		6.3.2 Develop and implement an Outcomes Framework for Child Safety, Care and Youth Justice	9.9
		6.3.3 Develop a reporting framework and data capability to report against the Outcomes Framework	9.9 b, c
		6.3.4 Establish a Quality Assurance Team and core functions within the Chief Practitioner Professional Practice Office	
		6.3.5 Develop a coordinated approach to managing quality assurance processes, including complaints management	
	6.4 Review legislation to ensure it supports the reform of our service system and practice	6.4.1 Commence the review of the <i>Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997</i>	9.15, 21.9

*Commission Of Inquiry (COI) Recommendations – where referenced, the Uplifting Care actions will contribute to the implementation of these COI recommendations.

Our Strategic Directions	Our Priorities	Our Actions	*COI Rec
7 Building collective responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people in Care 	7.1 Building our partnerships across Government agencies	7.1.1 Continue prioritising the delivery of the Sure Start program, including through: a. establishing Regional Care Teams in each region (South, North and North-West) b. investigating opportunities to continue providing children and young people in Care with additional education, training and literacy supports	
		7.1.2 Work with other agencies to establish governance and partnership arrangements to prioritise and support the needs of children and young people in Care	9.23
		7.1.3 Work across DECYP to identify opportunities for joined-up and place-based responses to the needs of children and young people in Care through the establishment of groupings of schools	

*Commission Of Inquiry (COI) Recommendations – where referenced, the Uplifting Care actions will contribute to the implementation of these COI recommendations.



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