

## An example of a Cultural Support Plan.

This cultural support plan is only provided as an example. The information outlined below represents some, not all, of the information that could be included in a cultural support plan - each plan should be tailored to the identified needs and the available resources within the family and community.

### Cultural support plan

Is the subject child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander  Yes  No

If Yes is selected, please check the relevant person record to ensure the Indigenous status has been updated and create a recognised entity participation form.

Does the child belong to any other cultural community?  Yes  No

#### **Name of clan / language group / ethnic group or cultural group / island or other cultural community group the child belongs to?**

Community 1. Julie Smith belongs to Barkindji clan group in NSW. She has an extensive extended family network in the town of Bourke. Her grandparents have maintained their connection with extended family and community.

Community 2. Julie currently lives and participates as an Aboriginal person in the Mt Gravatt community.

#### **Name of mob / community and / or island group, clan group, language group and skin group the child's siblings, mother and father belong to?**

Julie's Mother, Tennille Smith, belongs to Barkindji clan group in Bourke NSW. Miss Smith is currently residing in the Mt Gravatt area.

Julie's Father, Bruce Willy, is a member of the Wakka Wakka people and is currently residing in the Cherbourg Community.

#### **What activities will the child be involved in to support and preserve their sense of cultural identity and links? What help do they need to take part in these activities?**

It is strongly recommended that Julie is supported to travel interstate to help establish and maintain her links to her traditional country, relationships and networks with extended family and community members. It is recommended that the department support an annual visit to NSW and that this be

maintained in the future.

It is recommended that Julie attend age appropriate local, state and national cultural events. This will support Julie to identify with the local Aboriginal community and provide an avenue where she can participate in cultural expression in both traditional and contemporary forms. These events include NAIDOC, Dreaming Fest and any other local cultural events that are recommended by the Identified CSSO or family group meeting.

It is important for Julie to learn about and understand her cultural heritage and identity. This will help her to grow up strong and proud, knowing who she is, where she comes from and how she fits into her community. This is a way of keeping Julie connected to her family, community and culture.

Julie's family has identified there are several extended family members that reside in NSW that would be beneficial for Julie to have a relationship and contact with to maintain connection to extended family. Julie's carer is willing to facilitate this process so that Julie can develop a relationship with her extended family networks.

The CSSC, family group meeting, family and carer to develop a life booklet with photos and stories of Julie's family this will ultimately support Julie to build an understanding of her family and cultural connection.

**What support does the child's carer need to maintain and support the arrangements and activities for the child? What support and help do they also need to feel comfortable and confident in attending and participating in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other cultural community events?**

The CSSC Manager to approve payment of financial costs for the carer and child to travel interstate.

The approval of this travel for Julie is important because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Communities are very different and have their own unique histories, beliefs and values. It is respectful to recognise that each culture has its own identity and Child Safety Services must ensure that Julie is given the opportunity to connect with the histories, beliefs and values of her family and community in NSW.

Child Safety to request that the family group meeting and other relevant community agencies support Julie in gaining her Aboriginality certificates and the development of a genogram/family tree.

Julie will be able to learn about her Aboriginal culture through language, dancing, music, fishing, bushwalking and many other cultural events. Julie should be supported by her CSO and carer attend family get-togethers or other community events and cultural activities such as NAIDOC.

It is recommended that the CSO and family group meeting meet with Julie's carer to identify supports that will help her to maintain Julie's connections with her family, community and culture. These supports might include:

- An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander mentor, such as another carer, a worker from the family group meeting or an identified Child Safety Support Officer
- Provision of books, artwork, information from the internet that relates to the specific cultural groups of that child or young person

- Someone attending community events with the carer for the first time
- Introducing her carer to key community members
- Providing the carer with training/foster carer support from the Placement Services Unit
- Helping the carer understand the history, culture and current issues
- Providing the carer with an annual events calendar
- Providing the carer with a list of local indigenous services and contacts
- Ensuring the local community elders are identified in the cultural support plan
- Providing a map of Aboriginal Australia and information about the groups of people in a particular region

**People with whom arrangements have been made for contact with the child to support and develop their cultural identity.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
Tenille Smith	Mother	Twice weekly 2hours
Bruce Willy	Father	Fortnightly supervised contact
Elsie Smith	Grandmother	Weekly phone contact
John Smith	Brother	Weekly contact plus phone contact
Mary Willy	Cousin	Monthly contact plus phone contact
Tom Batten - Uncle in Moree	Uncle	Fortnightly phone contact
Debbie Anderson - Aunty in Tweed Heads	Aunty	Fortnightly phone contact
Patricia Smith - Great Aunty live in Taree NSW	Great Aunty	Monthly phone contact
Peter Willy	Uncle	Monthly phone contact
Dr Peter Wallace	CYMHS - Counsellor	Attends 1 hour session after school once a month
Mary Doctor	Indigenous Health Service Woolloongabba –	Attends appointments once a month or as required

## Key concepts

### Aboriginal person

An Aboriginal person is a person of Aboriginal descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1994).

### Compatible

To determine compatibility, whether the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person still maintains a culture connection to community and people, information should be gathered from the following sources:

- Family
- Community leaders and Elders
- Recognised entity staff.

**Example:** Mother of a child is in Doomadgee. Mother's brother (closest sibling) is in Mt Isa and outside of community. Placement with the mother's brother may be a more 'compatible' placement for the child. To determine compatibility there needs to be a level of acceptance and approval from community.

### Cultural diversity

There are two distinct groups of Indigenous peoples in Australia, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. These two groups are ethnically distinct with different histories. It is very important to acknowledge that an individual person has the right to identify with one or more cultures to which they belong.

Child Safety staff have a statutory responsibility to identify Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children to ensure that ongoing intervention reflects culturally appropriate service delivery.

### Culture

Culture consists of accepted and traditionally patterned ways of being and behaving. It is a common understanding shared by members of a group or community, and it includes land, sea, beliefs, spirituality, language, stories, identity and ways of living and working.

### Extended family

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child is not isolated from the rest of the community. Children belong to the whole community, therefore, many adults and children are involved in a child's life and in his or her upbringing. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children are the responsibility of the whole extended family and community. In many communities, the family is biological and classified by 'skin' groupings, which defines responsibilities and obligations.

## **Mob/community group**

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples may belong to more than one community. For example, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person's communities may include where they come from, where their family is and where they live or work. When completing these fields, it is important to record the child's information first, then the parents, recognising that the mother and father may come from different cultural backgrounds to the child.

## **Island group**

Island group refers to coastal groups such as Torres Strait Island groups, Tasmanian Island groups and Australian Island groups, for example, Stradbroke Island (Noonucal), North Keppel (Kanome) Tiwi, Melville.

The Torres Strait Islands are made up of the far western, western, western central, eastern and eastern island groups. For example, Badu Island is western, Thursday Island (Waiben) is central and Murray Island (Mer) is eastern.

## **Clan group**

The clan is a local descent group, larger than a family, but based on family links through a common ancestry, tribe, nation and family/community groups.

## **Language groups**

Language groups are defined by the dialects spoken within different clan groups and community groups. One clan could speak up to four different languages within an Island or language group.

## **Near**

'Near' could mean geographical distance or could mean near in terms of family connection and cultural connection.

**For example:** Burketown and Doomadgee - family groups from Doomadgee may also have family groups in Burketown. The concept of 'near' would be tested with the family, local Elders and the recognised entity.

## **Skin group**

Skin group refers to the 'moity system' where an Aboriginal person is born into a family and given a particular skin group which will follow a maternal or paternal line. In particular, skin groups govern the daily interaction and communication between the differing skin groups and may pre-determine who they can marry and the customs and traditions they will follow and hold in trust to be forwarded down in generational order, which is specially held by their skin groups.

## Torres Strait Islander

A Torres Strait Islander is a person of Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as a Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1994).

## Totems

Totems have particular spiritual religious significance. In some instances it is considered a cultural 'taboo' to note this information. **Under no circumstances** should totems be recorded unless permission has been given by the correct Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person responsible for passing on that knowledge - this may be an Elder or family or community member.