



**KATE WASHINGTON MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**DAVID HARRIS MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND TREATY**

**REPORT CARD 2021 – NSW RANKED POOR OR VERY POOR IN FAMILY
MATTERS REPORT 2021**

The Family Matters Report 2021 has revealed sobering data on the NSW Liberal National Governments inaction on ending the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in out-of-home care. NSW was ranked as poor or very poor across all four building blocks within the report, with the rate of over representation increasing steadily since 2012-13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in NSW are 9.9 times more likely to be removed from their families by child protection services than non-Indigenous children.

The Report has slammed the lack of transparency and accountability within the NSW child protection system and has called for major investment from the NSW Government in community-led solutions.

The four core building blocks included:

1. Universal and targeted services

NSW ranked as poor in this category, with the report noting the NSW Governments commitment to invest 30 per cent of targeted early intervention in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation was not progressing with only 0.66 per cent funding growth in the past three years, bringing the total funding to 14.71% - still less than half the goal.

2. Participation, control and self determination

NSW ranked as poor. The report highlighted that community voices believe that ongoing cycles of Government-led reforms are not working and although there is an Aboriginal peak body funded for policy and sector development roles, 2020 saw large funding cuts.

3. Culturally safe and responsive systems

NSW ranked very poorly in this block, as although there are promising CTG implementation plan commitments for system reforms, there has been no investment to match these plans. NSW was also identified as having the highest use of Permanent Care orders for Aboriginal children, 18.7 per 100, and the second lowest reunification rate, 8.8 per cent, for Aboriginal children in out of home care.

4. Accountability

NSW ranked very poorly for accountability with community voices noting that *Family is Culture* review recommendations have been “*sidelined, watered down, or overlooked*”. The report also noted that while a Deputy Aboriginal Children’s Guardian has been appointed, this role lacks the teeth of a Children’s Commissioner and the role has a narrow focus regarding Out of Home Care system.

The report also found that Closing the Gap targets will not be met without new funding from the NSW Government, who has so far failed to provide any clarity on what – if any – funding will be made available for the 2022-24 NSW Closing the Gap Implementation plan.

NSW Shadow Minister for Family and Community Services, Kate Washington said:

“The findings of this report are deeply disappointing. What is clear is that the most vulnerable children in our society are falling through the cracks as a consequence of the Liberal National Governments inaction.

“This report starkly shows that the Government has been making empty promises, with no tangible action taking place.

“The Government must put their money where their mouth is if NSW is to going to be able to achieve meaningful change for First Nations children.

NSW Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, David Harris said:

“The Government must view this report as a line in the sand and do better.

“They must take active steps to improve across all four blocks or First Nation children will continue to be over represented in the out of home care system.

“The Government must look more closely at Community led models which have a dual focus on early triage and a supportive approach to keeping children safe and at home.

DATE: THURSDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2021

MEDIA CONTACT: KATE WASHINGTON 0408 144 426
DAVID HARRIS 0429 935 114