# Aboriginal Community to Play a Key Role in Child Protection Matters

**The Guiding Principles Yarning Circle (GPYC) has been created to ensure, improve and support Aboriginal community participation in decision making regarding the care and protection of Aboriginal children across NSW.**

The main priorities of the GPYC will be to:

* provide leadership on the promotion of the Guiding Principles to local communities, Family and Community Services (FACS) Districts, and other relevant stakeholders
* track the progress of the implementation of the Guiding Principles across the state
* identify and share good practices.

Launched by the Minister on 9 November 2015, the *Guiding Principles for Strengthening the Participation of Local Aboriginal Community in Child Protection Decision Making[[1]](#footnote-1)* were developed by Grandmothers Against Removal (GMAR) with the NSW Ombudsman and FACS Hunter New England District.

The Guiding Principles provide the basis for proposed Local Advisory Groups (LAGs) in places where local Aboriginal communities express a need for them. LAGs will provide an opportunity for Aboriginal communities to have their say on child protection matters relating to Aboriginal children and young people. This can include:

* compliance with the Aboriginal placement principles
* ensuring appropriate Aboriginal cultural plans are in place
* referral of families into early intervention models to prevent entries into care, and
* sourcing of suitable relative and kinship carers.

The first GPYC meeting was held on 13 September and was attended by representatives from GMAR AbSec, the NSW Ombudsman, Aboriginal Legal Service, Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, and FACS.

Key outcomes from the meeting included:

* establishing LAGs based on community needs and driven by the local Aboriginal community
* supporting the establishment of LAGs in areas such as Bourke, Mudgee, Tenterfield and Lightning Ridge (as these areas have already approached GMAR for assistance)
* developing a series of *Guiding Principles* Roadshows/Symposiums so that GMAR can reach out to local communities and the districts to discuss the *Guiding Principles*
* by the end of 2016, work will be underway to meet with the various communities across the state interested in establishing LAGs, and;
* supporting a move to increase funding for early intervention, family support and preservation models.

The next scheduled meeting will be held in Coonabarabran on 18 October 2016. GMAR members will be the official chairs of the GPYC meetings.

Both the Minister Brad Hazzard, and FACS Secretary Michael Coutts-Trotter will be invited to attend future GPYC meetings.

More information:

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1. Grandmothers Against Removal, NSW Ombudsman, Family and Community Services-Hunter New England; Version 7, August 2015. *Guiding Principles for Strengthening the Participation of Local Aboriginal Community in Child Protection Decision Making.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)