# Independent Chair of ‘Family is Culture’ meets with the Guiding Principles Yarning Circle

**Professor Megan Davis, Independent chair of ‘Family is Culture’ the independent review of Aboriginal Children and Young People in Care and her research team attended the June 2017 Guiding Principles Yarning Circle (GPYC), held in Dubbo, to update them on its progress and next steps.**

Professor Davis started the meeting by making it clear that the review would not have happened without the advocacy of members of the Grandmothers Against Removal (GMAR) NSW.

Professor Davis advised of the direction and next steps of the review:

* That the review is independent and this is reflected in the review’s Terms of Reference
* Acknowledging the importance of achieving meaningful change for Aboriginal children young people, their families and communities
* The importance of achieving structural change through the review
* The review process will involve a file review, a consultation period, then a public submissions process
* The review team is in the process of finalising membership of the Review Reference Group, comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives from across the community who represent a balance of expertise, experience and perspectives. The Reference Group will play a vital role in monitoring the progress of the review and it’s outcomes. From a grassroots perspective, GMAR NSW members as key members of the Reference Group, will be crucial in bringing Aboriginal communities voices to the review.
* The Chair will provide an update on progress to the Minister in September 2017.

Other important discussion centred on the Office of the Senior Practitioner (OSP) and its role in the review. OSP play an essential monitoring role in individual case reviews, ensuring action to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families takes place in real time.

OSP’s role also extends to providing training and professional development to staff across FACS where support and improvement is required. The meeting was also a great opportunity for the GPYC to discuss other important matters including:

* Defining what ‘the best interest of the child’ means and who is best placed to define this
* Exploring the cultural appropriateness of tools used by FACS and the level of consultation that has occurred around the use of these tools
* Recommendations provided by the recently published, Child Protection Inquiry and in particular recommendation 18 relating to improving Aboriginal self-determination
* Addressing community concerns and complaints.

As agreed, the GPYC meetings will be held across the state to ensure that there is regional visibility by GPYC members, with the next meeting to be held in Ballina in August 2017.

**More information:**

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