# The Guiding Principles Yarning Circle to serve as State-wide Advisory Group

**The Guiding Principles Yarning Circle (GPYC) will serve as the state-wide Advisory Group to oversee the implementation of the *Guiding Principles* across the state.**

As outlined in the *Guiding Principles for Strengthening the Participation of Local Aboriginal Community in Child Protection Decision Making[[1]](#footnote-1)* the state-wide Advisory Group’s role is to:

* Oversee the implementation of the guiding principles across NSW
* Ensure that the guiding principles operate within the boundaries of relevant legislation and may comment on the effectiveness of legislation in achieving the best interests of Aboriginal children and improve processes to ensure effectiveness
* Determine methods of effective monitoring and evaluation of the guiding principles
* Produce an annual statement to report on their activities and outcomes
* Provide advice and information to the relevant FACS Executive District Directors to inform the work of Local Advisory Groups
* The GPYC will meet monthly, with Suellyn Tighe (GMAR) as Chair.

The second GPYC meeting was held on 18 October 2016, in Coonabarabran and was attended by representatives from GMAR NSW, AbSec, the NSW Ombudsman and FACS.

Key outcomes from the meeting included discussion on:

* The launch of the GMAR NSW promotional video at the 2016 Koori Knockout which can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/1q-Q5_RrEIw>
* Strengthening FACS’ complaints processes to ensure it is culturally responsive and doesn’t provide barriers to the community being able to voice their concerns. This work will be captured under the *Aboriginal Case Management Policy* currently under development.
* The role of the NSW Ombudsman to monitor and review the delivery of community services, including the implementation of the Guiding Principles; and to investigate and resolve complaints about FACS and funded services.
* The need to clarify the role of advocates and support people.
* The need for the sector to improve its practice when working with Aboriginal children and families.
* Meeting with various communities to promote the *Guiding Principles*, to discuss establishing Local Advisory Groups (LAGs) and to learn from communities who have made progress in this area. Several areas have been identified for initial meetings where GMAR NSW will meet with local community and FACS District executives. The areas include:
* Dubbo (Western NSW)
* Ballina (Northern NSW)
* Macksville/Kempsey (Mid North Coast)
* Wyong (Central Coast)
* Mount Druitt (Western Sydney)

The next scheduled meeting will be held at AbSec on 15 November 2016.

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.* See http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/file/0003/373233/gmar\_facs\_guiding\_principles\_Nov2015.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)