# The Guiding Principles Yarning Circle will report directly to FACS Secretary

**The Guiding Principles Yarning Circle (GPYC) was pleased to welcome back Michael Coutts-Trotter, Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services** to the latest GPYC meeting in Sydney. The GPYC took the opportunity with the Secretary to discuss the importance of the Guiding Principles in addressing the high number of Aboriginal children in care. As a result, the GPYC will now report directly to the Secretary.

The meeting was also a great opportunity for the GPYC to discuss other important matters with the Secretary including:

* The success of the partnership between GMAR and FACS to organise workshops for frontline staff across the Hunter New England District
* Opportunities for training and support for all frontline staff across NSW on engaging Aboriginal families and communities
* Raising the FACS delegation for key decisions related to Aboriginal children and young peopleincluding:
  + removing an Aboriginal child from their family
  + placing an Aboriginal child with non-Aboriginal carers
* FACS presenting its responses to public enquiries or reports to the GPYC.

The GPYC was also pleased to welcome Susan Mattick, acting Director of the Review of Aboriginal Children and Young People in Care, to update the group on progress of the Review. The GPYC are keen to provide input into the Review to ensure that outcomes for children and young people, as well as changes to practice by frontline staff, have the greatest impact possible. The GPYC has invited Susan back to future GPYC meetings to ensure members are kept up-to-date on the Review.

As an outcome of the various visits across the state by GMAR NSW and the GPYC’s role in supporting the establishment of Local Advisory Groups (LAGs) under the *Guiding Principles,* the GPYC are to host the LAG Development Workshop in the first week of April in Newcastle. Some GPYC members will present as part of a panel at the workshop, discussing the role of their organisation in supporting Aboriginal families. GPYC members have committed to coordinate further visits to more communities across NSW in future to promote the *Guiding Principles*, the establishment of LAGs and the advocacy work that GMAR NSW provide.

The GPYC has now agreed to a bi-monthly meeting schedule with the next GPYC meeting to be held in Dubbo during June 2017.

More information:

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