

Apology

On this very important, and very significant day I acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Nations people of New South Wales and pay my respects to Elders past and present. I acknowledge the ongoing connection Aboriginal people have to this land and recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of this land.

On behalf of Family and Community Services, I affirm my apology to the Aboriginal people of New South Wales. I especially apologise to those from the Stolen Generations, and to their families, and their descendants.

The mistreatment of Aboriginal people and the lasting repercussions of previous welfare policies continue to have an effect on many lives across the country, and although government policies have since changed, many Aboriginal people continue to live with the legacy of the injustices.

We are deeply sorry for the pain and suffering separating children from their families and communities has caused, and for Family and Community Services' involvement in those separations.

We cannot undo past wrongs. We cannot make up for the childhoods lost and the damage caused to individuals, families and cultural connections.

In looking to the future we need to understand how we arrived at where we are today and ensure that we do not repeat the past injustices earlier performed against Aboriginal people.

As an agency, Family and Community Services has a significant role in protecting children and young people and we are committed to doing our very best to influence and improve the long-term outcomes for Aboriginal children in New South Wales.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal children learn at an early age the kinship ties that exist within their community and their place culturally in the community. We recognise the significance that family and community play in providing children with a sense of safety, belonging and resilience.

We will be judged by what we do.

Our FACS Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2017-2021 has clear targets for improvement, especially giving more Aboriginal families support to help children thrive at home and reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care.

We will work in partnership with Aboriginal families, communities and staff to ensure our actions and responses are effective, respect the diverse needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people, and support Aboriginal children to grow up strong in family and culture.



Michael Coutts-Trotter
Secretary
NSW Department of Family and Community Services

