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Your submission for this review:

Specifically the CALD package: Is paid once, at the time of entry in care, while for First Nations children it is paid annually and at a higher rate. Is paid only to one agency and if there is a change of placement there is no further payments. This means, to do an adequate job of cultural care planning and implementation, subsequent agencies receive no compensation for associated costs. Not considered in case reviews as a result of a placement change. Reflects an assumption that childrens cultural connections are established and maintained at one point in time and that ongoing cultural maintenance is cost neutral for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds but not First Nations children. Lacking consideration to costs associated with updating data on cultural inaccuracies which is not uncommon. Categorises children under the CALD term which contributes to inaccuracies. The label implies a false homogeneity. It does not assist to identify cultural profile elements that can enhance cultural connections. Alternative approaches ie the S.E.L.F cultural framework includes data on Settlement Ethnicity, Language and Faith. Infers resource allocation to recruit foster carers. It is important to note also that this recruitment assumption is not made explicit in the cultural resources allocated for First Nations children.

## **Review of Out of Home Care Cost and pricing**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review of the Out of home Care (OOHC) cost and pricing associated with the NSW OOHC Permanency Support Program.

### **Background**

CulturalWorks is a specialist service driving culturally adaptive strategy, leadership and practice with children, young people, and families. We believe all children have a right to be connected to their family, community and culture.

CulturalWorks partners with organisations, leaders, and practitioners to develop cultural competence, humility and promote culturally responsive, evidence-informed practices in working with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds.

We use the **S.E.L.F.© (Settlement, Ethnicity, Language and Faith)**

Cultural framework to guide information gathering and better understanding of what may be culturally important for children and families from diverse backgrounds.

The **S.E.L.F. cultural framework:**

1. Facilitates curiosity questioning and the implementation of evidence-informed practices with children and families.
2. Informs leadership and teams develop culturally responsive practices and quality safeguards through coaching, learning and development forums including Communities of Practices and program wide monitoring and reporting processes with practitioners, teams, and managers.
3. Guides organisation's strategy to improve data collection to identify children's cultural profiles and approaches that focus on collaboration, partnership, and advocacy that enhance positive wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and families from diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **Submission**

#### **Children's cultural care needs are addressed differently for children from culturally and linguistically diverse family backgrounds.**

The PSP Packages: Eligibility, Rules and inclusions pricing approach takes on a different investment in the cultural support needs of children from diverse cultural and linguistic heritages, as evidenced below.

1. Children who are identified as "CALD" are entitled to a 'CALD package' only once, at the time of entry in care. However, a cultural resource is allocated to a First Nations annually.

2. The cost for cultural care planning for a child from CALD background is resourced significantly lower to a First Nations child.
3. There is no consideration to the cultural care costs for a child who has mixed or multiple heritage and cultures
4. If a child is transferred from one agency to another the second agency is not entitled to a CALD package, even if the new placement is different by way of carer placement (related or non-related and/or culturally matched). This means, to do an adequate job of cultural care planning and implementation, agencies are required to refresh, update and review cultural care activities and receive no compensation for associated costs.
5. This resource deficit issue is replicated for a child where there is a case review as a result of a placement change. The current policy requires that in all circumstances should a child's placement change – between agencies or within an agency moving a child between carers - the cultural care plan needs to be re-visited and updated. The case review needs to consider:
  - What services will assist the child readjust to the loss of care and cultural connections,
  - What services may be useful to develop the carer's cultural knowledge and their culturally responsiveness, and
  - What services may be needed to reconnect and/or maintain the child's cultural connections and relations to ensure their right to cultural connections is respected.
  - Whether a Family Group Conference (FGC), bringing family and community members together to contribute to decision-making and care, is required and, if so, what resourcing, interpreters or planning and engagement activities are required to engage with family members and enhance the potential FGC outcomes and in turn the child's permanency and wellbeing.
6. The current PSP funding formulae assumption infers children from CALD background's cultural connections are established and maintained at one point in time (i.e. when a child enters care) and that ongoing cultural maintenance is cost neutral. This is not an assumption applied to First Nations children.
7. The current PSP formulae does not include costs associated with updating data on cultural inaccuracies which is not uncommon for children coming into care under challenging circumstances. This relates to errors in cultural profiles as well as addressing multiple cultural connections.
8. The CALD terminology is used as an umbrella term implying homogeneity. It does not assist to identify cultural profile elements that can enhance cultural connections. CulturalWorks S.E.L.F cultural framework has been developed from work undertaken with CALD children and families in OOHC. The S.E.L.F cultural framework seeks to collate data on core cultural elements ie Settlement (migrant or refugee), Ethnicity, Language and Faith.

9. The current PSP cultural assumption notes that the current 'CALD package' resource allocation is used to resource service providers to recruit foster carers. This assumption is not inferred for First Nations Children. The assumption undervalues the cultural maintenance activities which is better understood for First Nations' children's connections to culture
10. The one-off funding approach does not consider the importance of the cultural plans as being living documents guiding approaches to engaging with children, their families, their communities and managing the conversations and relationships required to rebuild family and cultural connections over time.
11. A one-off cultural maintenance payment does not acknowledge the necessity to adjust to the evolving developmental changes and/or potential family circumstances of each child.
  - COVID-19 restrictions, messages need to be shared and agreed and repeated in English and in language with community leaders.
  - The importance of better understanding diverse family values and approaches to raising children, family roles and connection to extended community members and cultural conduits.
  - The importance of building credibility and engagement with community members through collaborative partnerships with cultural experts and community leaders as well as PSP providers /DCJ representatives. Building these relationships requires intention and time.

### **Proposed considerations**

1. Equal provision of funding and resources for cultural connections for both First Nations and children from other culturally diverse family backgrounds.
2. Restructure the approaches to data collection by identifying children's cultural profiles using data collection fields derived from the S.E.L.F cultural framework.
3. Improve service providers accountabilities by requesting evidence of:
  - Annual professional development and training that enhances cultural responsiveness for OOHHC professionals and carers
  - Practice evidence of culturally responsive connections for children which includes, at a minimum, ongoing cultural connections with at least one aspect of a child's culture as well as the feedback of children, families and/or carers on the cultural experience
  - Evidence of collaboration with cultural community partners
4. Review the recommendations from the Department of Community *Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study, Report 20*, focused on children from non-Indigenous culturally diverse family heritages, in out-of-home care which includes work that targets:
  - Better data collection to identify children's CALD cultural elements

- Commitment to cultural care consultations and the use of cultural care panels in a similar approach to the case management for First Nations children, reflecting considerations with evidence based cultural measures.
- Providing one off and ongoing cultural responsive training and learning opportunities that carers and practitioners.
- Implementing the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) which guides regular information gathering approaches by caseworkers about each child in OOHC to support and inform their case planning.

For further information please contact:

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