



Family &  
Community  
Services

# Safe Home for Life

CHILD PROTECTION REFORMS



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# What is the Safe Home for Life reform program?



# What is the **Safe Home for Life** reform program?

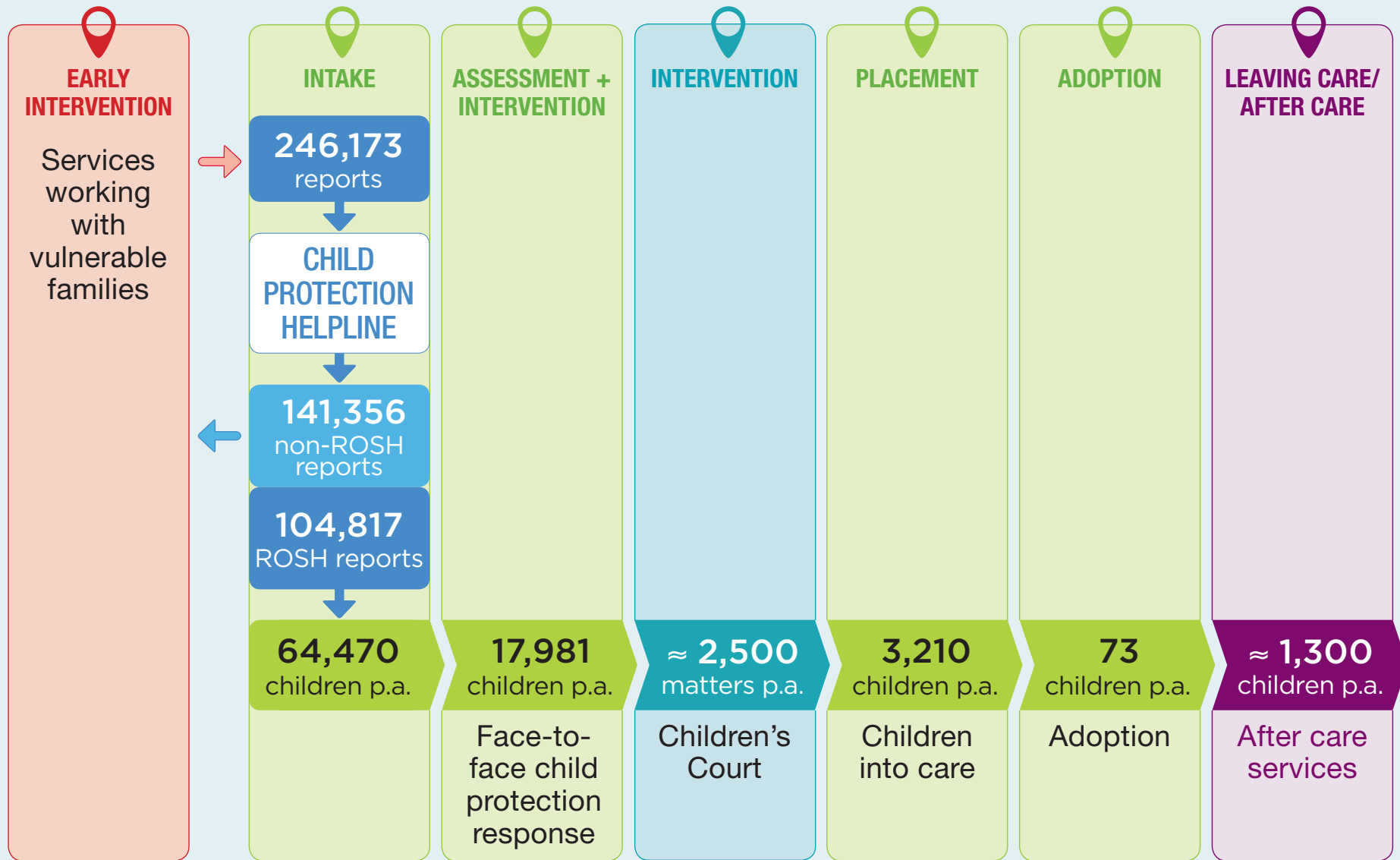
Safe Home for Life brings together:

Child Protection Legislative Reforms that will be proclaimed on 29 October 2014

The Family and Community Services (FACS) budget enhancement of \$500 million over four years announced in June 2014

Commitment to build on the achievements and opportunities of Keep Them Safe

# Child protection and out-of-home care service system



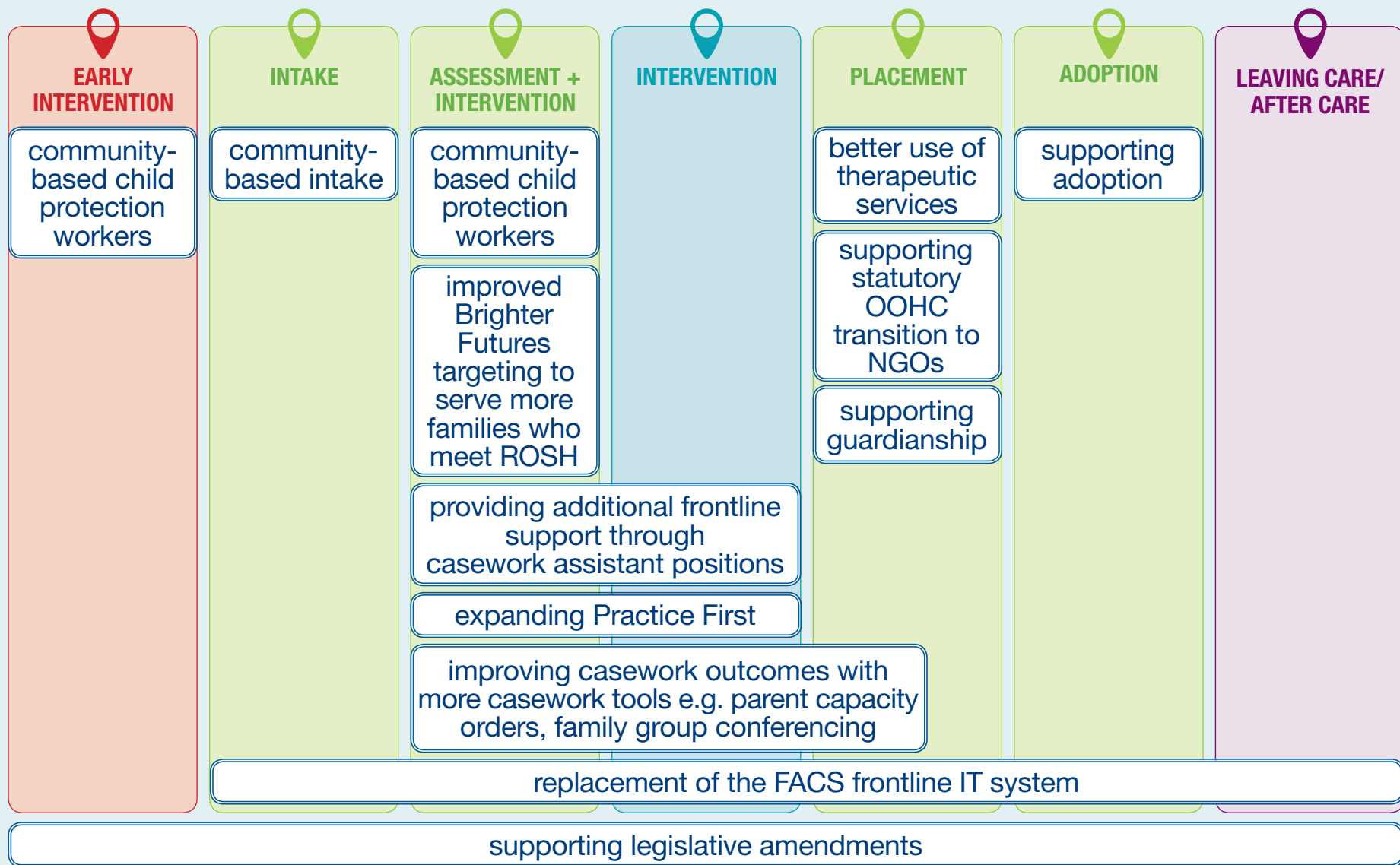
# What is the **Safe Home for Life** reform program?

**more** services and better outcomes  
for **more** children at risk and in care

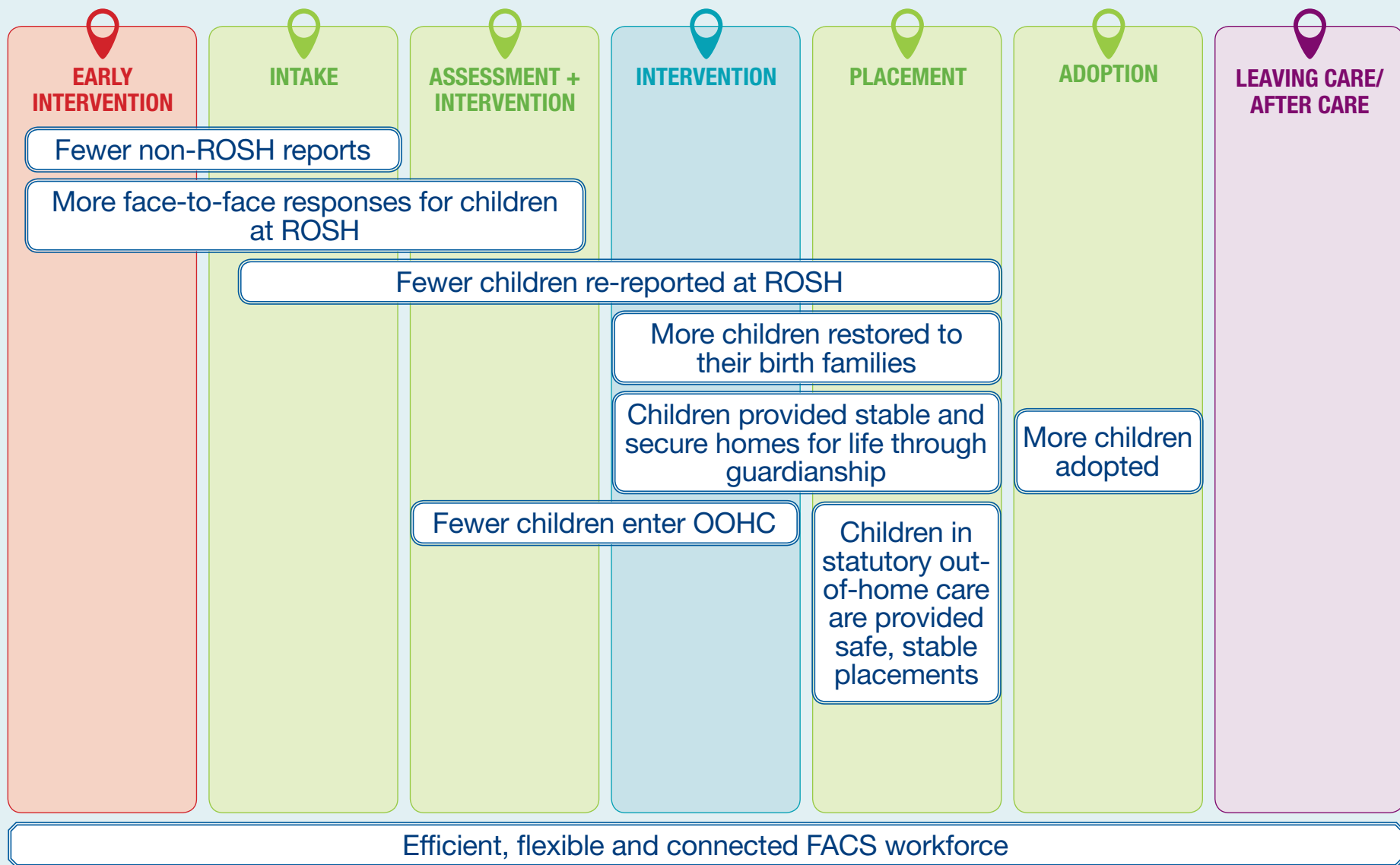
Safe Home for Life is about:

- building on services that we know are effective and make a difference for children at risk of significant harm (ROSH) and families in crisis.
- solving problems in local service systems to improve services for vulnerable children and families
- using the right data and measures to assess the impact our work is having with children and families.

# Safe Home for Life initiatives



# Safe Home for Life objectives





# Safe Home for Life **work streams**

## Safe Home for Life Program Board

### District governance

#### Stream 1

##### Child protection legislative reform

- legislative changes
- planning
- proclamation
- implementation into practice

#### Stream 2

##### District led service co-design

- co-design process
- local ideas and solutions
- whole-of-sector (NGOs and Government)
- prototypes

#### Stream 3

##### Child protection system impact

- Brighter Futures to ROSH
- community-based intake
- improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our work
- Practice First expansion
- exceptions governance

### ICT governance

#### Stream 4

##### Frontline systems replacement

- stabilise current IT systems
- resolve urgent frontline IT problems
- design and develop future-state IT systems

Safe Home for Life reform team

Districts

# Implementing the Safe Home for Life reform program



CPLR projects	Primary aim
<b>Parenting resources</b> Parent Capacity Orders, Parent Responsibility Contracts	<p>Providing more tools to assist caseworkers engage parents/carers and support them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep their children safe at home</li> <li>• have their children return safely to their care</li> </ul>
<b>Permanency and adoption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• securing placement permanency and stability</li> <li>• creating a clearer and more timely path to open adoption</li> </ul>
<b>Guardianship and supported care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing a stable secure home for life for children not able to live at home</li> </ul>
<b>Common contact framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing a common framework to guide decisions regarding contact</li> <li>• managing contact arrangements through case planning</li> </ul>
<b>Alternate dispute resolution, including family group conferencing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resolving contact disputes outside the court system as much as possible</li> <li>• supporting families to plan and make decisions in the best interest of their child</li> </ul>

**What the introduction of new casework tools means for families:**

- FACS can apply for a parent capacity order from the Children's Court which requires parents to attend services that are accessible and right for them
- FACS can enter into a Parent Responsibility Contract with a parent or expectant parent for up to 12 months

**What the introduction of new casework tools means for non-government service providers:**

- that non-government service providers will work with parents and children as part of a parent capacity order or parent responsibility contract
- that FACS caseworkers and non-government services will work together to support parents actively participate in services

### What permanency means for families:

- the safety and wellbeing of children will be achieved through identifying a safe and stable permanent placement
- the permanent placement principles will guide casework goals that best meet the needs of children

### What permanency means for non-government service providers:

- non-government caseworkers may be required to support a care application to the Children's Court through the provision of information and evidence
- non-government agencies will provide out of home care case management where an order is made that allocates parental responsibility to the Minister



### Permanent placement principles:

The principles set out the order of preference for the permanent placement of a child or young person as:

- family preservation or restoration
- guardianship
- open adoption (for non Aboriginal children)
- parental responsibility to the Minister and placement in foster care.

### Permanent placement for Aboriginal children:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles continue to apply.
- Where restoration is not considered possible and an Aboriginal child is unable to live with relatives or kin, a placement with a non-related person in the Aboriginal community or a suitable person may be considered in line with the child's best interests and in consultation with the Aboriginal community.
- Adoption is not usually considered suitable for Aboriginal children, however legislation allows for the adoption of Aboriginal children as a final preference following parental responsibility.

## What adoption means for families:

- adoption is one of the permanent placement principles
- parents and others with significant relationships will be encouraged to participate in planning when children are to be adopted
- adoption is not considered culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

## What adoption means for non-government service providers:

- non-government agencies will be able to be dually accredited to provide out-of-home care and adoption services
- accredited non-government agencies will be able to dually authorise carers and prospective adoptive parents
- under the reforms, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principles continue to apply

### What the introduction of guardianship and changes to SCNO means for families:

- children over 12 years and with capacity must give consent when a new guardianship order is made
- Guardians will assume parental responsibility for a child or young person until they are 18 years of age
- from November 2014 Guardians will receive the new guardianship allowance
- supported care no order care arrangements will not exceed two years in length

### What the introduction of guardianship and changes to SCNO means for non-government service providers:

- children where a relative or kin has sole parental responsibility will transition to guardianship on 29 October 2014
- NGO caseworkers may work with families, carers and FACS caseworkers to determine the best long term placement for children
- non-government caseworkers may be required to support a care application to the Children's Court through the provision of information and evidence

### What the development of a common contact framework will mean for families:

- contact arrangements with family and kin will be a part of case planning
- contact arrangements will be reviewed regularly to make sure they continue to meet the individual needs and circumstances of the child

### What the development of a common contact framework will mean for non-government service providers:

- the common contact framework will provide guidance for caseworkers when making decisions regarding contact arrangements
- case planning will include contact arrangements that reflect the individual needs and circumstances of the child



### What the expansion of alternate dispute resolution means for families:

- more families will be supported to resolve disputes outside court
- more families will receive the expert help of a Family Group Conference facilitator to make a plan that helps keep their children safer

### What the expansion of alternate dispute resolution means for non-government service providers:

- non-government out-of-home caseworkers will be able to refer to alternate dispute resolution services

### What the additional supporting legislative amendments mean for service providers and families

- child death reporting now included in legislation
- identified private health professionals to be included on the list of prescribed bodies regarding Chapter 16A information exchange e.g. general practitioners, registered nurses, and registered occupational therapists
- the obligation to report children aged under 16 years who are living away from home without parental consent is clarified to require commercial accommodation services e.g. refuges, hotels; rather than family
- there is greater clarification that the identification of children in care proceedings/on final orders is prohibited, including social media
- special medical treatment no longer includes psychotropic drugs but administration needs to occur in the context of behaviour management plan

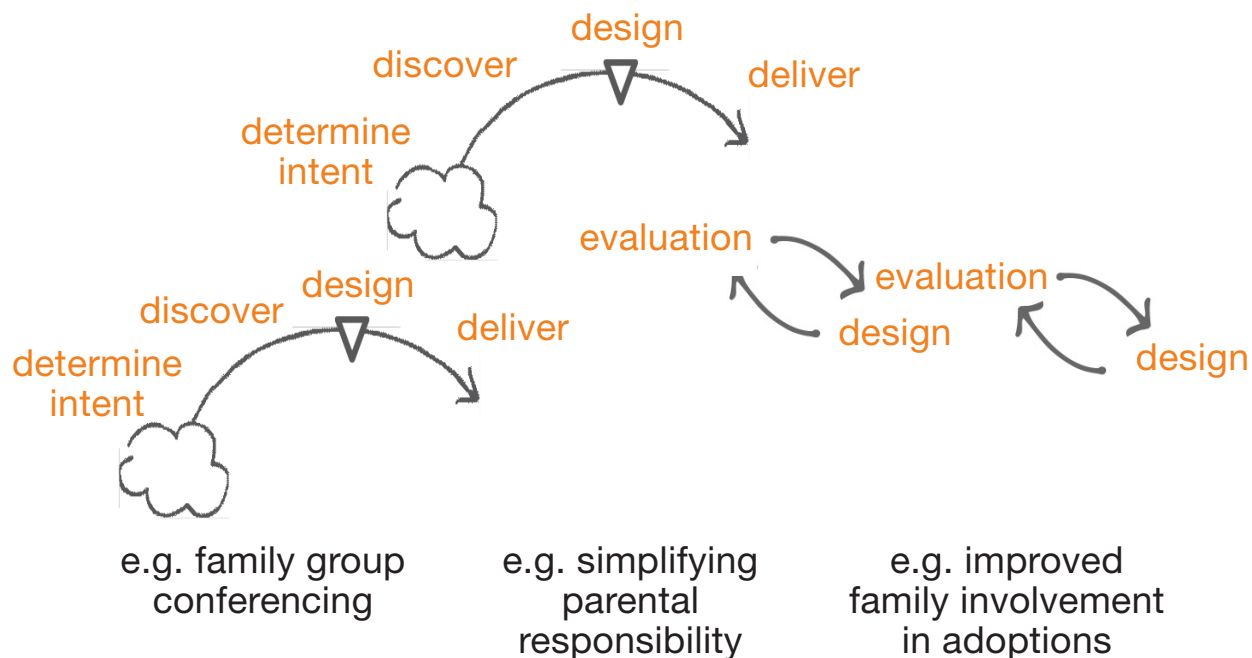
### What is this work stream?

District-led service design will deliver local solutions and service system improvement for local communities with a focus on:

- local intake and assessment levers
- increased face-to-face assessments
- enabling client centred information sharing and collaboration across the sector
- effort across key service priorities including services for Aboriginal children at risk and families in crisis

## Co-design methodology

Invites stakeholders into the generation and ownership of ideas to dramatically improve the relevance and value of solutions created.



### What will we be doing?

Co-design work in four Districts initially.

Intent, discovery and design workshops have been completed in the Central Coast and will mean that:

- a range of multiagency projects will be established over the next 12 months including:
  - Sit Together Solve Together – a project focused on testing a single multi-agency case plan for vulnerable children and families.
  - Mind the Gap – a project about reducing the time taken from initial referral to face to face assessment

Co-design workshops will commence in Nepean Blue Mountains, Western Sydney and South West Sydney from October 2014.



### What district led service co-design will mean for families:

- families will experience services that are more joined-up and responsive to their needs
- services will be easier to access
- initiatives to develop or test new services will always focus on how to improve their experience of service system

### What district led service co-design will mean for non-government service providers:

- non-government service providers will be invited to participate in the design, testing and refinement of local service responses
- greater collaboration and partnership will underpin how we improve services and design new services

### What is this work stream?

The Child Protection Impact work stream clusters a set of initiatives that align with the following Safe Home for Life objectives:

- reduce non-ROSH reports
- increase the number face-to-face responses for children at ROSH
- improved the effectiveness of service interventions
- reduce the number children entering OOHC

### What will we be focusing on?

- establishing 73 casework assistant positions
- expanding Practice First to 13 new sites
- transitioning Brighter Futures to include children at ROSH
- expanding community-based child protection intake and referral

### What child protection impact initiatives will mean for families:

- more children and families at ROSH will experience FACS and non-government services working together to provide coordinated tailored services
- more children and families at risk of significant harm who require a statutory child protection intervention from FACS will receive a face-to-face response

### What child protection impact initiatives will mean for non-government service providers:

- more non-government service providers will work with families and children at ROSH
- non-government caseworkers will have more access to the advice and support of child protection caseworkers

### What is this work stream?

- frontline systems replacement will implement future state IT solutions for more effective and efficient delivery of frontline services.
- the frontline systems replacement work stream will involve extensive consultation and collaboration with caseworkers, Districts, NGOs and other agencies to determine how technology can best support broader FACS reforms

### Our focus areas:

- resolving urgent frontline IT problems and developing information tools for caseworkers and managers
- replacing core systems – particularly for case and contract management
- stabilising current IT systems

### What frontline systems replacement means for families:

- FACS caseworkers will be more mobile and will be able to spend more time with parents and children in their homes
- services will be more integrated and joined-up
- better data quality will mean that services for children and families can be better coordinated and more tailored

### What frontline systems replacement means for non-government service providers:

- service providers will be more connected and will be able to share data more easily
- non-government service providers will be able report more easily on the services they provide.
- services will have access to accurate and timely reports about the impact of their work with families



