



The development of a new kinship care service system in Victoria.

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State of Victoria Stats

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- June 2010 Population:
 - Victoria = 5.5 million
 - Victorian children <18 years = 1.2 million
- Indigenous (Aboriginal) population = 30,120
 - of whom 14,316 (47%) <20 years
- 3.9 million in greater metropolitan Melbourne area

Out of home care in Victoria

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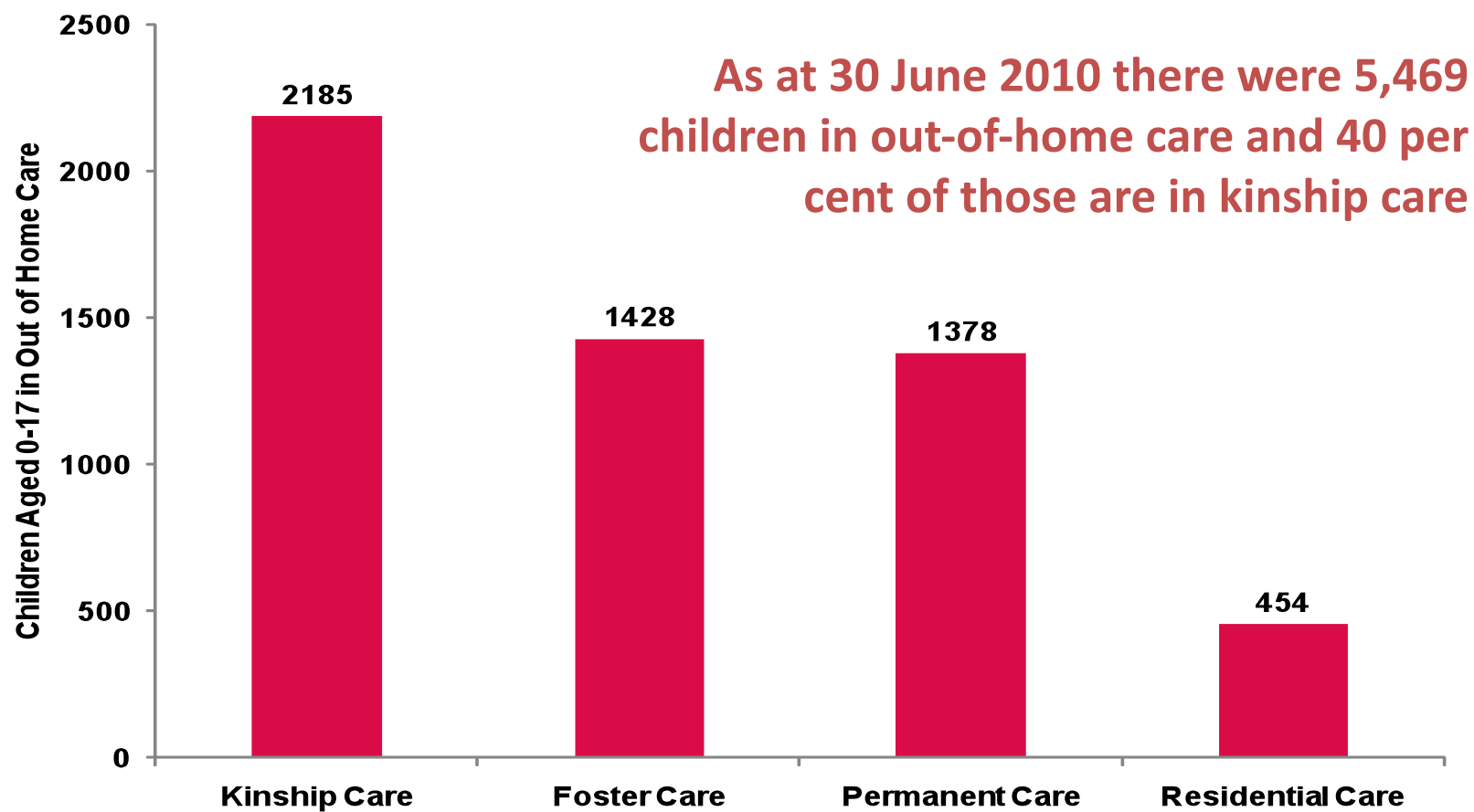
- 30 June 2010 - In Victoria 4.4 per 1,000 children 0-17 years in out of home care
 - [Australian average rate 7.0 per 1,000]
- **Victorian Aboriginal children - 53.7 per 1000**
- 91% of Victorian children placed in out of home care are in home based care:
 - **40% in (statutory) kinship care**
 - 26% in foster care
 - 25% in permanent care (legal guardianship alternative to adoption)
- 8% are in residential care
- less than one percent are in independent and non-standard care options

Our Community Service Organisations

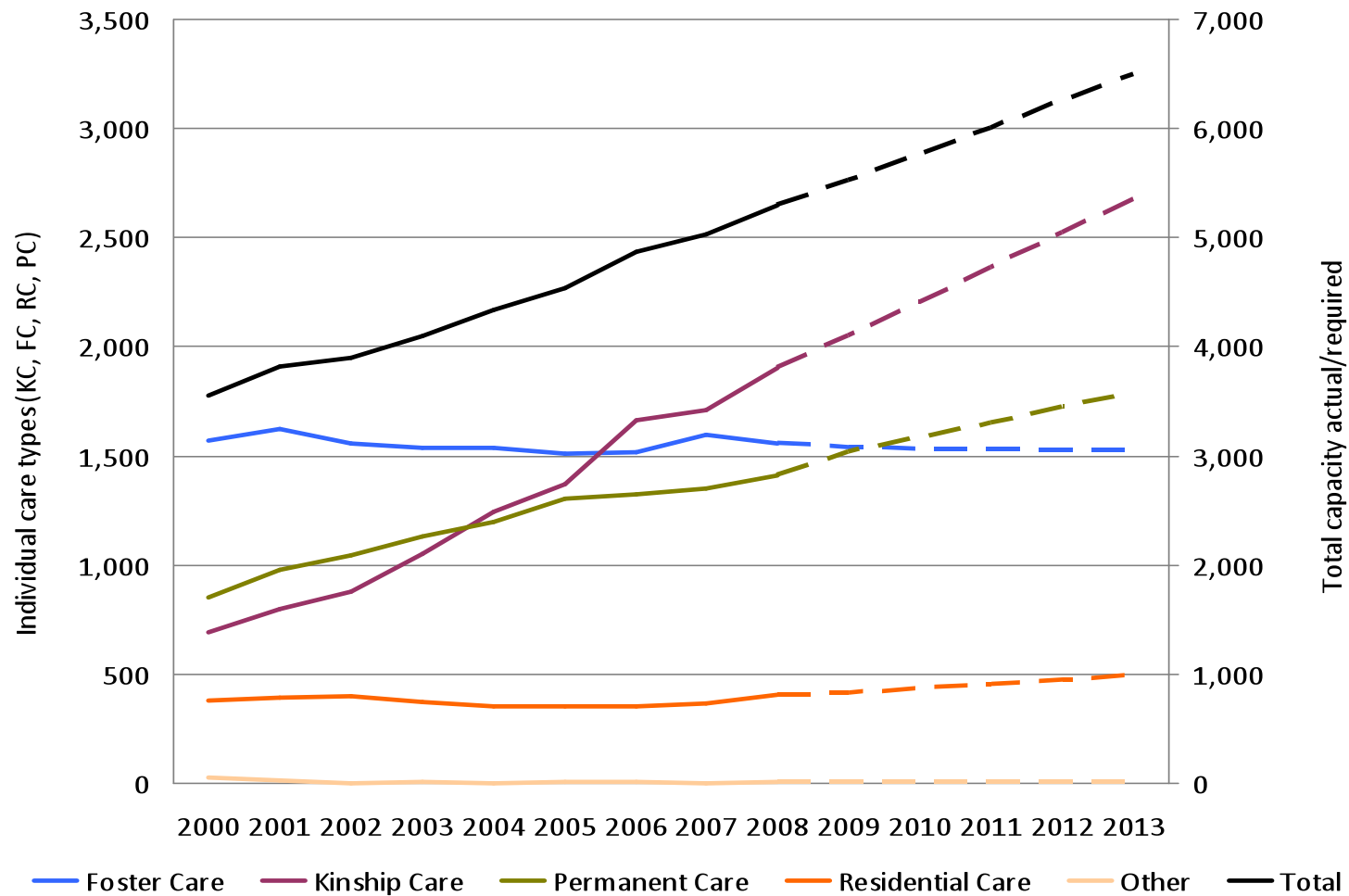
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- 82 Community Service Organisations provide out of home care services
- Including 13 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO's)
- The department funds and monitors most of the services provided by CSO's

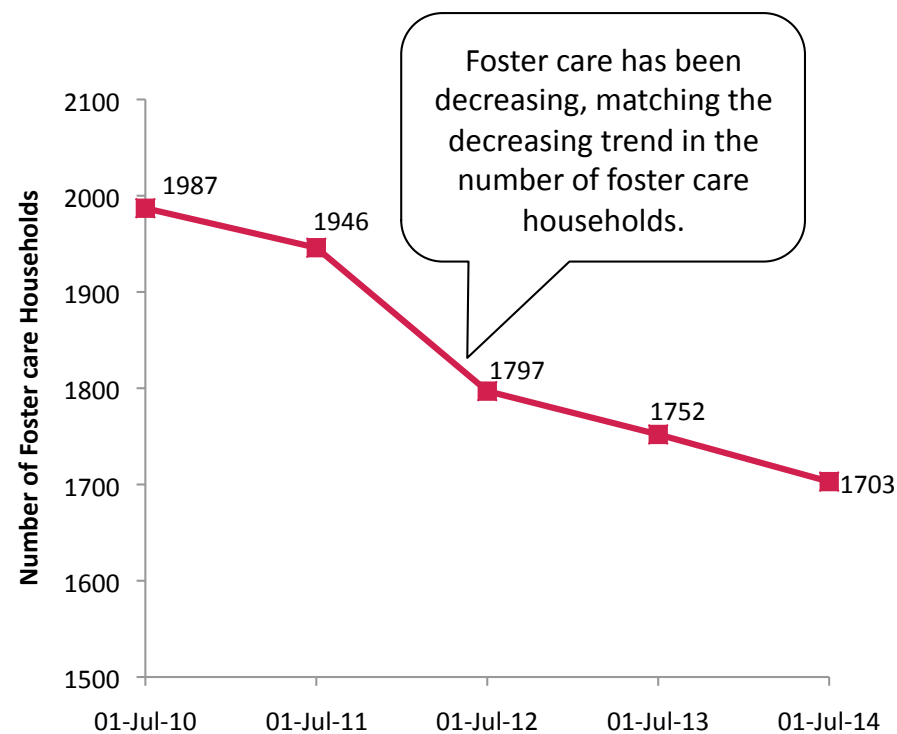
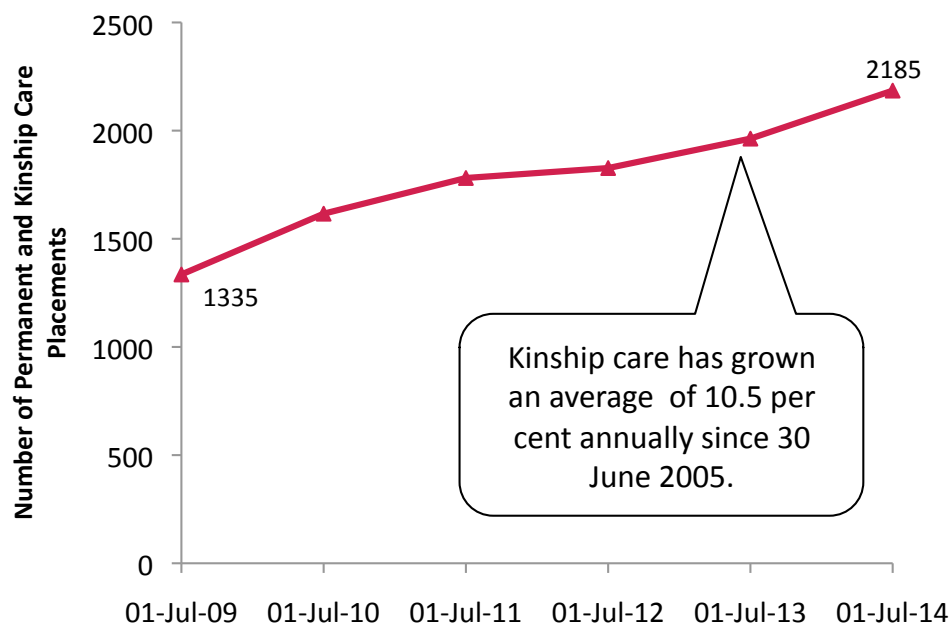
Out of home care statistics



Out of home care trends



Trends in out-of-home care – Kinship, Permanent & Foster Care populations



Kinship care

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Our definition:

- Kinship care is the care provided by relatives or a member of a child's social network when a child cannot live with their parents.
- Aboriginal kinship care is provided by relatives or friends to an Aboriginal child who cannot live with their parents, where Aboriginal family and community and Aboriginal culture are valued as central to the child's safety, stability and development.
- This definition is in line with the national Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

Statutory or private

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- Statutory kinship placements are out of home care arrangements made or maintained as a result of Child Protection involvement
- Private kinship care (informal or non-statutory kinship care) are arrangements made by the child's family without any Child Protection intervention.

Our current Kinship profile human. services

- In 2010, in Victoria, our best estimate is that ~10,000 children <18 yrs are growing up in kinship care.
- We believe approximately 20% are in statutory kinship placements.

Drivers of new kinship model

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- Significant growth in statutory kinship placements in last decade – expected to continue
- More statutory kinship placements than foster care and residential care combined
- Increasing complexity of most vulnerable children in statutory kinship care with extremely limited supports
- Growing recognition of the unmet support needs of all kinship carers
- Ensuring the safety, stability and positive development of children growing up in kinship care

Some Issues

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- Is kinship care out of home care or family care? Is kinship care a distinct service response?
- Do all kinship carers require formal support services? Normalising?
- Risks of under-supported statutory kinship care for most vulnerable **verses** importance of early intervention and strengthening care capacity
- What is the nature and extent of an effective service response?
- Budget realities and priorities
- Roles of Child Protection, community based services and informal and universal services?
- Promoting family decision-making
- Concurrent but separate development of mainstream and Aboriginal program models

Model development process

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- 2006-2008 Kinship project – extensive consultation with kinship carers and other stakeholders
- Initial kinship funding in State budget 2008-09
- Development of 'A new kinship program model for Victoria' in 2008-09
- Development of new Aboriginal kinship care model 2009-10

Objectives of new kinship model

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1. To more effectively harness the capacity of extended family networks to provide the best possible kinship care arrangements for children unable to live with their own parents.

Objectives of new kinship model

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2. To assist more kinship carers to provide ongoing normative age appropriate life experiences for the child with the minimum level of professional intervention from the formal service system, building on their informal supports and other available community resources.

Objectives of new kinship model

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3. To ensure that the kinship care placements arranged for the most vulnerable children as a result of child protection involvement are more effectively established, supported and monitored to ensure that they meet each child's ongoing safety, stability and developmental needs

Different target groups

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- Children in statutory kinship care:
 - first 6 months
 - long term kinship care care (>6 months this placement, long term court order, planned as long term kinship / no active family reunification)
 - other kinship care >6 months, (eg waiting on court outcome/ stability plan, planned for family reunification or non kinship placement)
- Children in private kinship care, their carers and extended family network members
- Community members including professional groups, other service providers and support networks needing advice and information
- Children in permanent care with kinship carers as legal guardians

Kinship care service continuum

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Least
intensive

Intensity of response

Most
intensive

- Informal and mainstream supports
- Kinship advice and information including facilitating kinship carer groups
- Kinship family service
- Child Protection case management
- Carer payments
- Kinship placement establishment support
- Other Child Protection accessed placement support
- (Contracted) kinship placement support:
 - Transitional support
 - Ongoing support

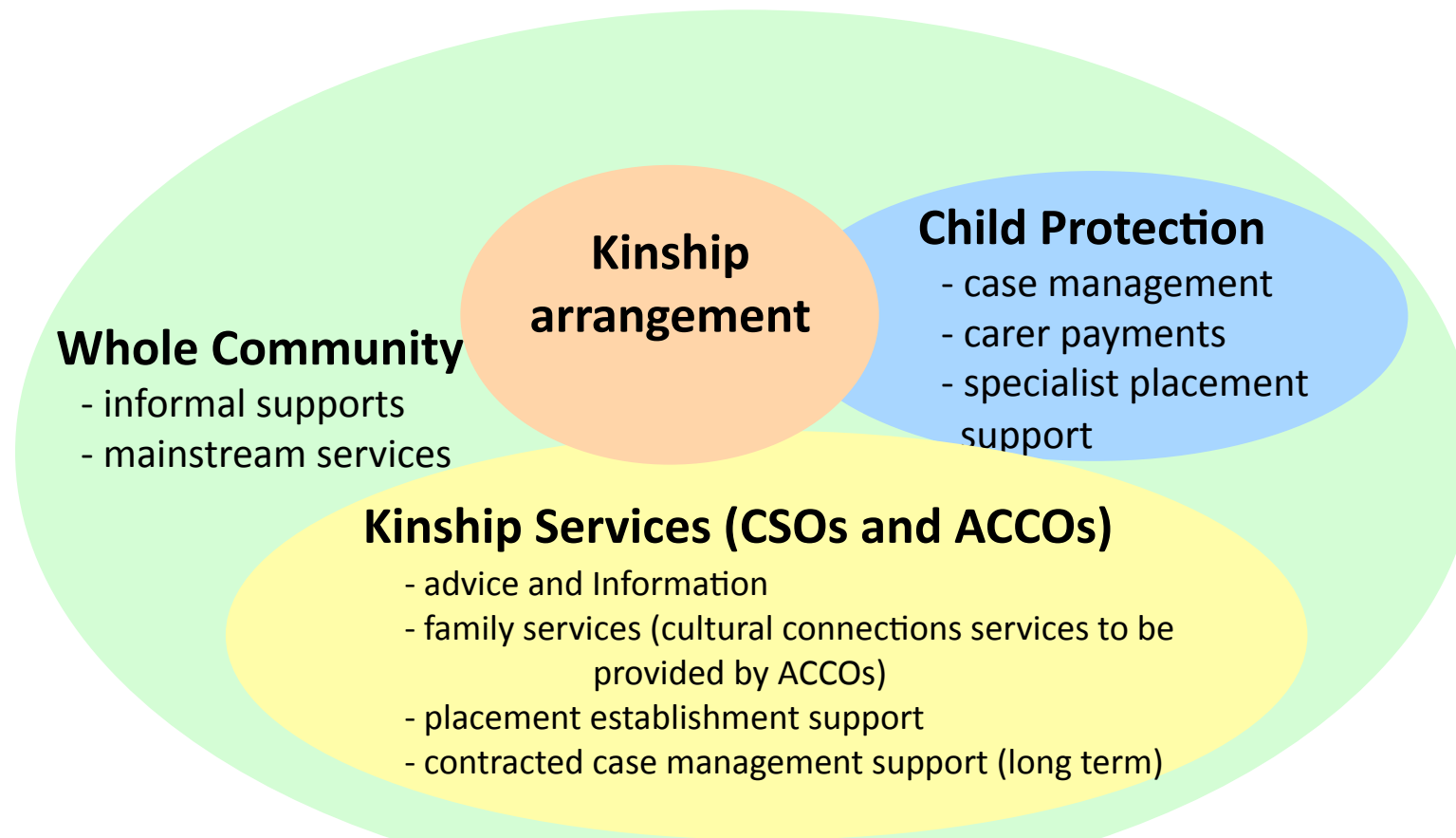
Largest
target
group

Size of target group

Smallest
target
group

Kinship care service responses

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Underpinned by consistent inclusive family decision making

Who does what?

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- Informal and mainstream components – involve the whole community and mainstream service providers
- New kinship service components
 - Funding = DHS
 - Service Provision = CSO/ACCO
- Child Protection components
- Underpinned by consistent inclusive way of working with kinship families – family decision making

Program Design Phase

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- June 2009 - prepared for pilot implementation of 4 mainstream services and 2 Aboriginal services
- September 2009 - additional funding provided for contracting kinship cases → statewide coverage instead of pilots
- January 2010 - 11 kinship providers in 1 rural and 3 metropolitan regions selected and funded

Program Implementation Phase

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- March 2010 - 8 kinship providers in 4 remaining rural regions selected and funded
- March 2010 - 10 ACCOs funded to undertake contracted case management of 120 Aboriginal kinship cases
- May 2010 – completed statewide roll out of \$12+ million pa for new kinship service system
- June 2010 - 19 new mainstream kinship services fully operational and 10 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations commenced contracted case management.

Overview of Victorian Kinship Care model components

Informal and mainstream community components	CSO based kinship service components	Child protection provided/ accessed components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Extended family network resources ii. Generalist community services for children, youth and families (services most families use) iii. Mainstream targeted services (services some families use) iv. Kinship carers groups v. Family meetings vi. Family care team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vii. Kinship information and advice service (including coordination/support for kinship carers groups) viii. Kinship family service (brief, occasional and short term support) ix. Kinship placement support (statutory clients only): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement establishment support • Contracted transitional support • Contracted ongoing support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x. Statutory decision-making and implementation processes xi. Assessment and monitoring of suitability of kinship placements xii. Carer payments xiii. Gate-keeping of CP accessed placement support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral/ contract for CSO placement support • Other DHS funded placement support
<p>Underpinning component:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> xiv. Engaging the child’s family and extended family network in all decision- making processes 		

Overview of Victorian Aboriginal Kinship Care model

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Aboriginal Kinship Information and Advice Service	Aboriginal Kinship Family Service	Aboriginal Kinship Placement Support
<p>Brief information and advice to Aboriginal kinship carers: face to face/ telephone</p> <p>Facilitate and coordinate kinship care support groups: Aboriginal kinship carer support/ healing groups</p> <p>Information dissemination about Aboriginal kinship care: to wider Aboriginal kinship carers/ to wider community</p> <p>*Cultural Connections Services: Advice and information to mainstream agencies supporting Aboriginal children in kinship care</p> <p>Carer groups for non-Aboriginal carers.</p>	<p>Brief response (average 10 hours) and short to medium (average 40 hours) for: support to aboriginal kinship carers and families; support to Aboriginal children in kinship care; support to parents of Aboriginal children in kinship placements.</p> <p>*Cultural connections Services: Support to Aboriginal children in kinship care supported by mainstream agencies; support, cultural advice, secondary consultation to assist mainstream agencies develop pathways and linkages to enhance the cultural connections for Aboriginal children and families; Healing groups (for Aboriginal children in kinship placements)</p>	<p>Placement Establishment Support for up to 6 months. Includes: Comprehensive culturally informed assessment and ongoing assessment of safety, security and development; Working with the carer and child to develop individual support plans based on LAC principles; Engaging and involving the family; Managing family contact and reunification work with parents; Placement planning – implementing Cultural Support Plans; Aboriginal identity – working to strengthen children’s cultural connection, e.g. return to country, dreamtime, healing and cultural activities; Carer and cultural placement assessment; Support of carers – ongoing; After hours support.</p> <p>CASE CONTRACTED CASE MANAGEMENT</p>

Underpinning component:

Engaging the child’s family and extended family network in all decision- making processes

Evaluation approach

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- Action/learning evaluative approach to refine and further develop the model based on initial implementation experience
- Evaluation linked to evaluation of legislative change and other out of home care reforms currently being implemented in Victoria
- Placement support using Looking After Children framework - so child outcomes data derived from new LAC Assessment and Progress Records potentially available for most statutory kinship placements eg health, education, emotional and behavioural development, identity etc
- Various performance measures to be examined collaboratively as part of action/learning approach

Possible positive outcomes

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- Looking for:
 - Earlier assessment of kinship placement suitability
 - Decrease in kinship placement breakdowns
 - Earlier stability/permanency planning
 - More timely permanent care conversions
 - Greater compliance with Aboriginal placement principle for Aboriginal children

Some early outcomes

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- Significantly improved support being provided for statutory kinship cases:
 - 116 new statutory placements receiving placement establishment support
 - 657 long term statutory kinship cases contracted:
 - 588 to new mainstream kinship care
 - 69 to ACCOs (as of January 2010)
 - Improved capacity of Child Protection to work with statutory cases not receiving CSO provided placement support
- Additional mainstream kinship services options available and commencing operation – but still early days
- Comparatively easy to recruit skilled workers to new kinship services except in rural/remote areas – some aboriginal services having difficulties
- Considerable enthusiasm about implementing the service model
- Some 'good news stories' about improved decision-making and better outcomes for children in kinship care - but still not enough...

Where we are up to now

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- A peak body for kinship carers has been established
- Addressing some issues identified by the Ombudsman
- Have to bed down and develop our very new service system – many challenges ahead.
- Expecting growth in kinship care and demand, but not in resources

Questions?

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