

**Michael Daley**  
Attorney General



**David Harris**

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing,  
Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Central Coast

## Media Release

# Groundbreaking approach for Aboriginal families in care proceedings to help Close the Gap

**Friday 8 September 2023**

A new approach to Children's Court matters relating to Aboriginal families involved in care proceedings has commenced in Dubbo.

The Winha-nga-nha List (pronounced 'Wi-nun-ga-na') is a dedicated court list that aims to provide a culturally competent and safe court process for Aboriginal families involved in care and protection proceedings.

Key features of the model include allocating more time to listen to the family and identify solutions, and scheduling cases to reduce waiting times at court. Courtroom procedures will be less formal, and child protection caseworkers will attend court more often to improve communication and accountability.

The Children's Court has co-designed the list in collaboration with the Aboriginal community in Dubbo and key stakeholders, including the NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (AbSec), the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS), Legal Aid NSW, the NSW Law Society, the Department of Communities and Justice, the Department of Communities and Justice – Transforming Aboriginal Outcomes – Care and Housing, and Justice Units.

The Winha-nga-nha List is the Children's Court response to the Family Is Culture Review Report – Independent Review of Aboriginal Children and Young People in Out of Home Care, Recommendation 125. The list also implements recommendations 10 and 18 from the 2017 NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into Child Protection.

Winha-nga-nha is a term from the Wiradjuri language meaning 'to know, think, remember'.

### **Quotes attributable to NSW Attorney General Michael Daley:**

"The Winha-nga-nha List is a significant step forward in the Children's Court of NSW.

"The Winha-nga-nha List will provide more time to listen, talk and think about what is important for children and will encourage family and community members to support the parents and children involved."

"Importantly, this list will ensure cultural considerations are embedded in the court process."

"The aim is that, over time, this approach will improve outcomes for children and reduce the number of cases that result in the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in long-term out-of-home care."

“It also aims to improve the engagement of extended family members and the community with the Children's Court and improve confidence and connection with the court system by improving transparency.”

**Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty David Harris:**

“Culturally safe spaces such as this help move the dial towards more equitable outcomes for Aboriginal children and families.”

“This initiative is an important step towards Closing the Gap in NSW, which is a top priority for the Minns Labor Government.”

“We know that when we involve Aboriginal communities in the design of programs and initiatives that impact them, we get better outcomes, every time.”

**MEDIA**

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