



Their  
Futures  
Matter



# Working together to improve outcomes for children, young people and families

## Progress Report

December 2018



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# 1. Introduction

**Their Futures Matter (TFM) is a landmark reform to overhaul the coordination and delivery of services to vulnerable children, young people and families.**

TFM was established in November 2016 in response to the Independent Review of Out of Home Care (OOHC), led by David Tune AO, which examined the state of out-of-home care in NSW.

## Why do we need the reform?

Over 10 years to 2016, the number of children and young people in out-of-home care doubled\*

Evidence shows that the longer a child remains in care, the poorer their life outcomes

The system is confusing and difficult for families to navigate

Many services continue to be crisis-driven and are not integrated or coordinated across government agencies

\*Over the two years to 2017/18 the number of children entering out-of-home care in NSW has fallen by 44.5%<sup>1</sup>.

The Review found that:

- Services were crisis-driven and delivered in government agency silos
- There was no oversight of what the NSW Government spends on people who need extra support
- Data was collected but not coordinated across government or used to best effect
- The total expenditure by Government to support children and families was unknown
- The lack of oversight of services was not keeping children safe and improving their health, education, wellbeing and their life course.

Despite ongoing efforts of government and non-government agencies to implement evidence-based preservation programs, strategies and initiatives, the system is still disproportionately focused on crisis and risk.

A transformational, whole-of-government reform began in November 2016 to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families.

The TFM Implementation Unit was established by Government to lead reform of the child and family system. In two years, TFM has made measureable headway in shaping a new, outcomes-focused system that will achieve lasting change.

TFM's work strengthens multi-agency efforts to increase the impact and effectiveness of the child and family system. It provides evidence that helps agencies to understand the needs of the populations they serve and to inform the design and selection of responses. Over time, this will help to redirect investment and efforts from crisis-driven responses to early intervention and prevention.

<sup>1</sup> [NSW Family & Community Services, Annual Report 2017-18](#) 18 – VOLUME 1: PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES REPORT

## 2. Reform priorities

**Our priority is to deliver an end to end solution for every child, young person and family needing support, in consideration of their safety, health and wellbeing.**

The future service system will be more child and family focused – it will be easier to navigate and bring together services from across government portfolios. Further evidence will be gathered to better understand and anticipate the needs and aspirations of children, young people and families in order to connect them with the right supports, as early as possible.

Their Futures Matter is delivering this future system by:

- **Building a smarter system together** – investment and evidence prioritised to where the greatest impact can be made as early as possible
- **Delivering a connected response** – access to services is streamlined with easy-to-navigate pathways to help families earlier
- **Supporting families and their needs** – services designed to meet needs, achieve outcomes, aspirations and goals.

**Our vision is to create a coordinated service system that delivers evidence-based, wraparound supports for children, young people and families to transform their outcomes.**

# 3. Key achievements to date

**Their Futures Matter is setting the stage for significant changes to the NSW human services system.**

Key achievements to date include:

- Commissioning of **evidence-based services** to support families to stay together whenever possible, including more than 1000 families being engaged in new family preservation and restoration evidence-based programs.
- Construction of the first **human services cross-agency data set** in NSW. This required extensive coordination between policy, legal and data stakeholders in human services agencies and input from the NSW Data Analytics Centre (DAC). This was a major milestone in NSW data integration work.
- Near-completion of the first stage of **liability and outcomes modelling**. This will deliver unique and powerful insights, enabling improved state-wide responses, aligned cross-agency priorities and more effective service system reforms.
- Commencement of a redesign of the child wellbeing and safety access system (**Access System Redesign**).
- Design and implementation of **wraparound service solutions** for vulnerable cohorts. Implementation of the first wraparound service solution was completed in 2017, and analysis and design of service solutions was completed for a further five vulnerable cohorts in 2018, with service delivery initiated for three of these. Solution design is underway for an additional two Aboriginal cohorts, with staged implementation of services to commence from 2019.



## 4. Building a smarter system together

**Their Futures Matter is connecting all areas of government to build a smarter, integrated service system.**

All human services agencies are part of the reform and play leading roles in planning, designing, commissioning and delivering needs- and evidence-based services. Successful and inclusive collaboration with government and non-government partners is crucial to the success of the reform.

With extensive collaboration and cross-agency support over 2018, TFM is on track to achieve significant changes to the NSW human services system.

### 2018 Achievements

Establishment of a new human services data set, linking de-identified data from across six NSW clusters

Insights used to set priorities and inform the redesign of the child wellbeing and safety access system (Access System Redesign)

Delivery of two external evaluation reports on the Family Preservation and Restoration Programs (MST-CAN® and FFT-CW®) and LINKS Trauma Healing Service

### 4.1 Investment approach

TFM is developing an investment approach which will direct funding, effort and resources to the children, young people and families with the greatest need. This approach is based on the construction of a New South Wales Vulnerability Data Set (NSWVDS).

### 4.2 New South Wales Vulnerability Data Set (NSWVDS)

This human services data set, with integrated, de-identified data from across six NSW clusters – Health, Education, Justice, FACS, Industry and Treasury – will enable detailed planning into what investment and resources are needed in the future, and where effort should be prioritised.

The information from the NSWVDS will help Government understand and predict demand for services, make evidence-based investment decisions, reduce long-term costs and improve results against existing Government priorities.

## 4.3 Evidence, monitoring and evaluation

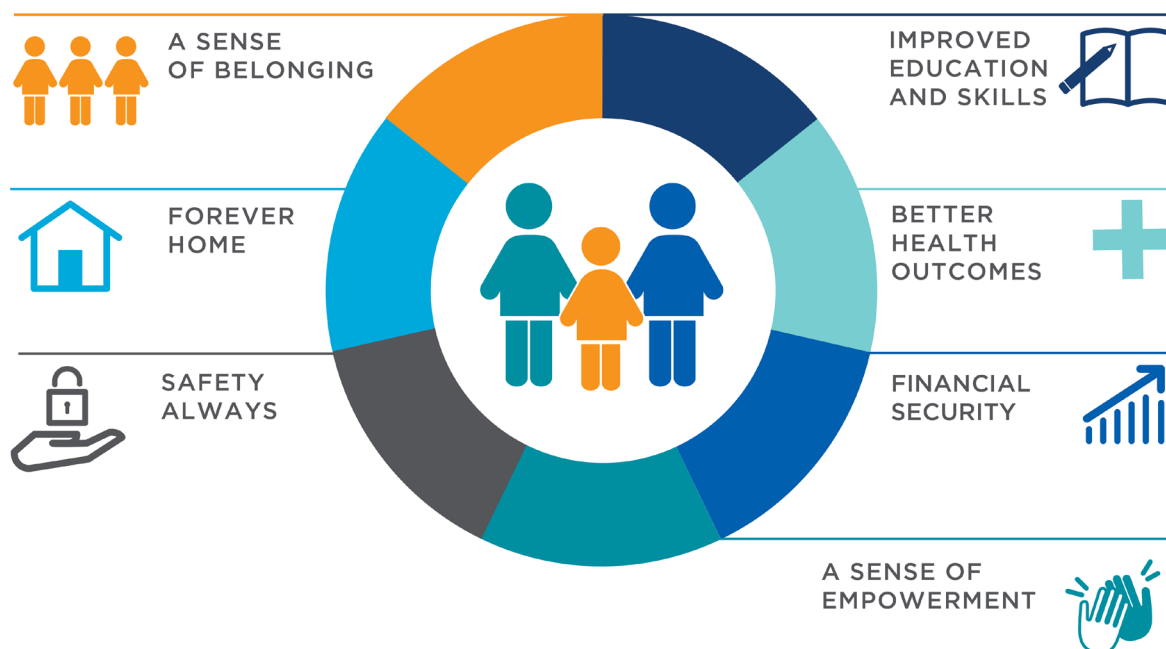
**Evidence, monitoring and evaluation drive continuous improvement across all areas of system response and service delivery.**

Building an evidence base through the embedment of routine data collection and ongoing monitoring and rigorous evaluations are essential components of the reform's rollout. TFM has established a systematic and robust approach to gathering data and evidence across the reform.

At the end of 2018, TFM delivered its first two external evaluation reports on the Family Preservation and Restoration Programs (MST-CAN® and FFT-CW®) and LINKS Trauma Healing Service. These reports provided rich insights into the implementation of these evidence based programs, and identified concrete recommendations to continuously improve these services to vulnerable families in NSW.

Throughout 2018, TFM has embedded a core set of standardised evidentiary data collection instruments to measure changes in individual outcomes. Complete data collection of client outcomes enables robust evaluations that inform strategic decision making and resource allocation by the NSW Government.

The outcomes measured are in keeping with the NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework (HSOF). The HSOF provides a standardised platform for how outcomes are measured across domains including:



### NSW Human Services Outcomes Framework domains

This approach places children and families at the centre and helps to identify where improvements can be made to better meet a person's needs and have the greatest impact on their life outcomes.

## 5. Delivering a connected response

**Their Futures Matter and partner organisations have delivered comprehensive re-designs of service systems for vulnerable children, young people and families. Their Futures Matter is also working with partner organisations to redesign the child safety and child wellbeing intake, assessment and referral system - referred to as the 'Access System'.**

Through co-design work and collaborative analysis of the child safety and child wellbeing intake, assessment and referral system, Their Futures Matter will deliver a future system where the balance of investment is reoriented toward early intervention and prevention. It brings together government agencies, non-government organisations and the community to deliver the right supports to vulnerable children and families at the right time, to improve whole of life outcomes.

### 2018 Achievements

Conceptual design of a new child wellbeing and safety access system

Design of wraparound service solutions to meet the needs of vulnerable cohorts using innovative co-design techniques:

- Non-Aboriginal vulnerable young parents aged 25 years and younger (Thriving Families NSW)
- Children aged 0-5 years of non-Aboriginal vulnerable young parents (Thriving Families NSW)
- 10-17 year olds in contact with the juvenile justice system (A Place to Go)
- 14-16 year olds in out of home care in contact with the justice system (Resilient Teens)
- Children aged 5-12 years with complex behaviours (Starting Strong, Growing Strong)

### 5.1 Child wellbeing and safety access system (Access System Redesign)

TFM is leading a process of designing an evidence-based Access System that effectively facilitates the early identification and assessment of protective factors, need and risk, and engages families to connect with appropriate services and supports to meet their needs before circumstances escalate to the point of crisis. This includes looking at how best to:

- strengthen the entire human services sector's capacity to provide appropriate and timely responses to vulnerable children, young people and their families
- build capability to offer multi-disciplinary evidence-based supports earlier to children, young people and families
- empower the community to provide support and resources.

TFM is leading a redesigned Access System – a multi-agency and evidence-based system able to respond to all areas of need, as early as possible and with a focus on the needs of the children, young people and families.



In 2018, to inform the redesign, early work focused on reviewing the available evidence and convening stakeholder workshops to better understand the current system's strengths and weaknesses.

This involved:

- Evidence-led reviews: seven expert reviews, two design workshops, desktop research (including a review of more than 300 documents), and participation in more than 20 meetings with service providers and other jurisdictions.
- Stakeholder consultations: more than 300 stakeholders engaged in more than 20 workshops across NSW. This work validated some findings from the research literature and challenged others. It enabled stakeholders to provide feedback on initial conceptual frameworks.

A discussion paper - [Moving the system from crisis to early help: connecting children, young people and families to the right supports at the right time](#) - will be published in early January 2019 to invite feedback from the service sector to support the detailed design of the Access System.

## 5.2 Wraparound service solutions for vulnerable cohorts in the NSW population

TFM's service solution for its first cohort (68 children under 12 years in residential out-of-home care who are not co-located with a sibling) continued to deliver better results and improved outcomes. Since September 2017, the number of children in this cohort in residential settings has fallen by 46 per cent and four children have been restored to their families.

**Thriving Families NSW** commenced in September 2018, providing integrated supports for non-Aboriginal vulnerable young parents (25 years and under) and their young children 0-5 years. Operating in Western Sydney, a suite of wraparound services address familial needs including health, education, employment and accommodation.

**A Place to Go** commenced in September 2018, which supports children and young people aged 10-17 in contact with the juvenile justice system, with a focus on children and young people in remand. New service solutions are being implemented in stages, and include a multidisciplinary court-based team with officers from Education, FACS and the Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network, a community-based multidisciplinary youth health team, and access to therapeutic, trauma-informed short-term and transitional accommodation.

**Thriving Aboriginal Families** aims to work with Aboriginal communities to enhance local service systems supporting families experiencing vulnerability. Communities are co-leading the design with TFM, placing the lived experiences of families at the centre of the work. Service design will be place-based and embedded in the local service system to improve access for families displaying early signs of health, educational and social vulnerability.

**Starting Strong, Growing Strong** is a wraparound service solution for children 5-12 years in out-of-home care with behavioural or psychological needs and/or a disability and may be in contact with the justice system. The TFM Implementation Board endorsed the high level design of wraparound service solutions in late 2018. Solutions focus on improved health assessments, diagnosis and treatment, and cross-agency service responses that better meet the child's behavioural and educational needs.

**Resilient Teens** is a wraparound service solution for teenagers aged 14-16 in non-residential out-of-home care and with non-custodial contact with the justice system. The TFM Implementation Board endorsed the high level design of wraparound service solutions in late 2018. Solutions focus on improved health assessments, diagnosis and treatment, and cross-agency service responses that address the criminogenic factors in the young person's life, including building their protective factors.

# 6. Supporting families and their needs

## Their Futures Matter's evidence-based programs are improving lives and keeping families together.

The Independent Review of Out of Home Care highlighted the need to increase investment in evidence-based programs to reduce entries to out-of-home care and improve placement stability for children in care.

TFM programs help families stay together where appropriate, as well as support the wellbeing of children and young people in care and after care.

### 2018 Achievements

More than 1,000 families across NSW receiving therapeutic support to help them safely stay together

Three additional evidence-based services introduced to support children and young people to cope with trauma and emotional distress

Launch of the Aboriginal Evidence Building in Partnership project with five Aboriginal organisations

## 6.1 Evidence-based programs

### Family preservation and restoration programs

In November 2018, TFM, together with FACS, services providers and families, achieved a milestone of 1,000 families across NSW receiving new evidence-based support through two therapeutic models: Functional Family Therapy through Child Welfare (FFT-CW®) and Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN®).

Early results and feedback received from families that have completed FFT-CW® and MST-CAN® give hope to many families. By celebrating and sharing these promising outcomes, TFM also aims to inspire key stakeholders to continue their great work with both programs.

### LINKS Trauma Healing Service

TFM in partnership with Family and Community Services (FACS), continued to implement LINKS Trauma Healing Service. As of 31 October 2018, the service had been delivered to 127 clients.

### Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO)

This is a short-term, evidence-based treatment program commenced in 2018, offering an alternative to institutional, residential and group care placements for children and young people with severe emotional and behavioural disorders. The pilot, operated by OzChild in Campbelltown and Blacktown, will service up to 14 children and young people at any one time.

### OurSPACE

Operated by service partner the Australian Childhood Foundation, OurSPACE promotes placement stability for children under 15 years living in statutory kinship or foster care. Tailored services will be delivered to meet the individual needs of up to 270 children, young people, and 1,500 carers and networks yearly.

### Futures planning and support service model

In June 2018, TFM delivered a business case for a Futures Planning and Support service model to ensure better outcomes for young people who are leaving or who have left out of home care. The aim of the model is to strengthen the system that supports young people as they prepare to leave and transition from care, until the age of 25 years. Detailed design for a pilot in Coffs Harbour was conducted, with services planned for implementation from July 2019.

## 6.2 Aboriginal Evidence Building in Partnership project

### An initiative to support promising Aboriginal programs to embed data collection and evidence building capabilities.

In 2018, TFM launched the Aboriginal Evidence Building in Partnership (AEBP) project. The AEBP project aims to strengthen the evidence base for promising programs that are supporting Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities in NSW. TFM is supporting five promising Aboriginal programs to embed outcomes data collection and evaluation processes.

The next steps for these organisations is to continue data collection and evaluation processes to enable ongoing service improvement; provide a solid foundation for future grants; and build capacity within the organisations to apply what they have learned.

## 7. Partnerships and collaboration

### Whole-of-system reform relies on partnerships and collaboration across all NSW human services agencies and sector organisations.

Their Futures Matter is responsible for the delivery of the reform, working in partnership with all NSW human services agencies and governed by a cross-agency Board. It comprises the Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Treasury, the Department of Family and Community Services, the Ministry of Health, the Department of Education, and the Department of Justice.

TFM works alongside human services agencies and other reforms to improve the service system for vulnerable children, young people and families. This also involves collaboration and engagement with non-government and community organisations to design solutions to address the real needs of children and families.

A collaborative approach ensures meaningful input from stakeholders including frontline practitioners, clinicians, clients and communities. The methodology incorporates 'client-voice' focus groups, client journey mapping and consultations with advisory and advocacy groups.

Continued engagement over 2019 will improve collaboration and inform the design and implementation of system improvements.

# 8. Roadmap for reform

## 8.1 What's next?

**Their Futures Matter will commission service solutions guided by human services liability and investment modelling.**

The next stage of the reform is focused on delivering a liability and outcomes model that can identify vulnerable populations, to guide investment and social policy decision-making.

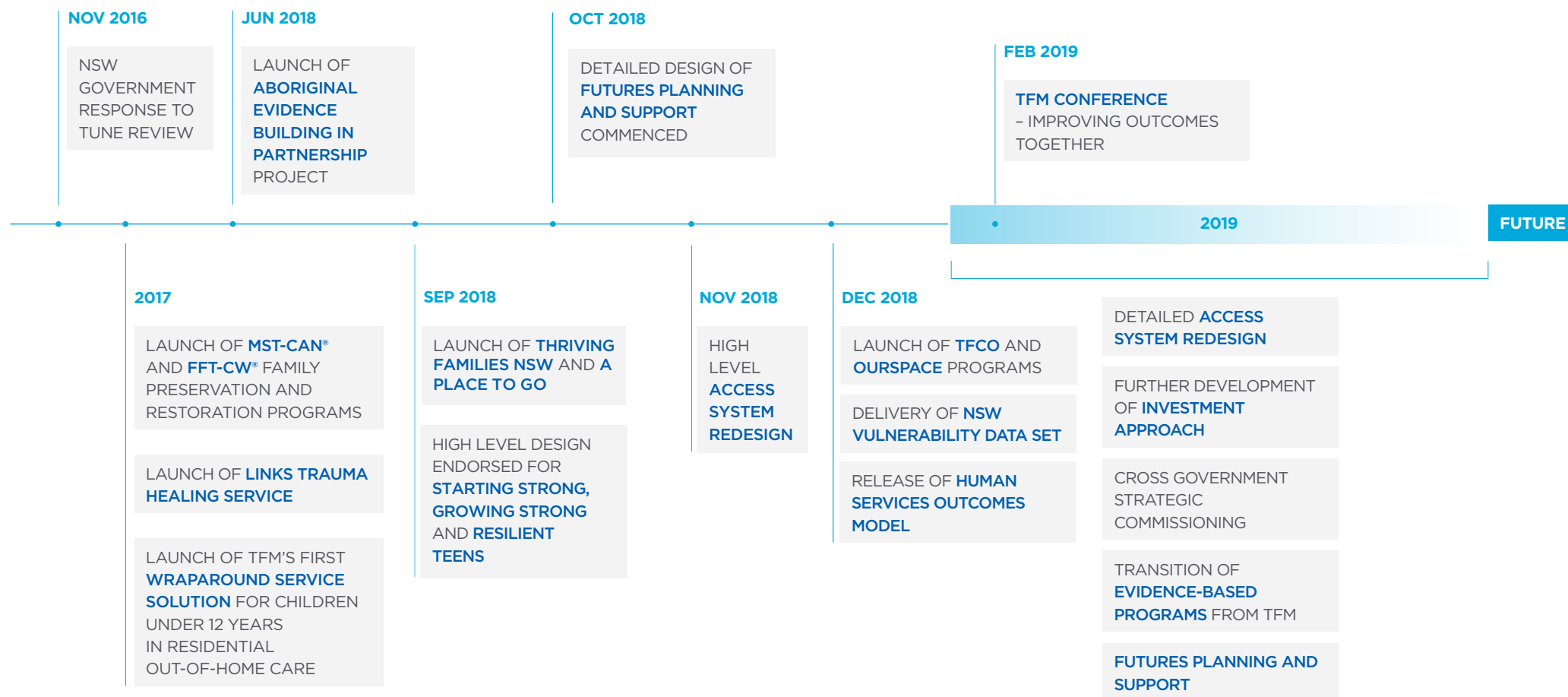
Detailed analysis, together with best available evidence will be used to re-design the child and family system and commission strategic solutions to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

**Their Futures Matter will progress detailed design of the child safety and child wellbeing system - Access System Redesign.**

TFM will draw on responses to the discussion paper [Moving the system from crisis to early help: connecting children, young people and families to the right supports at the right time](#) to inform and develop options for the Access System Redesign. This will include further opportunities to test and refine proposed options particularly with:

- young people, families and communities, to reflect what they really need in the redesign;
- service providers, to build on what's working and address the limitations of the current system;
- experts and peak bodies, to build on evidence of what works and respond to the needs of communities, particularly Aboriginal children, young people and families;
- government agencies, to create a genuinely multi-agency system and facilitate cross-government collaboration.

## 8.2 Their Futures Matter timeline to date







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## Working together to improve outcomes for children, young people and families

Visit [www.theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au](http://www.theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au) to find out more,  
or contact [TFM-info@theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au](mailto:TFM-info@theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au).

