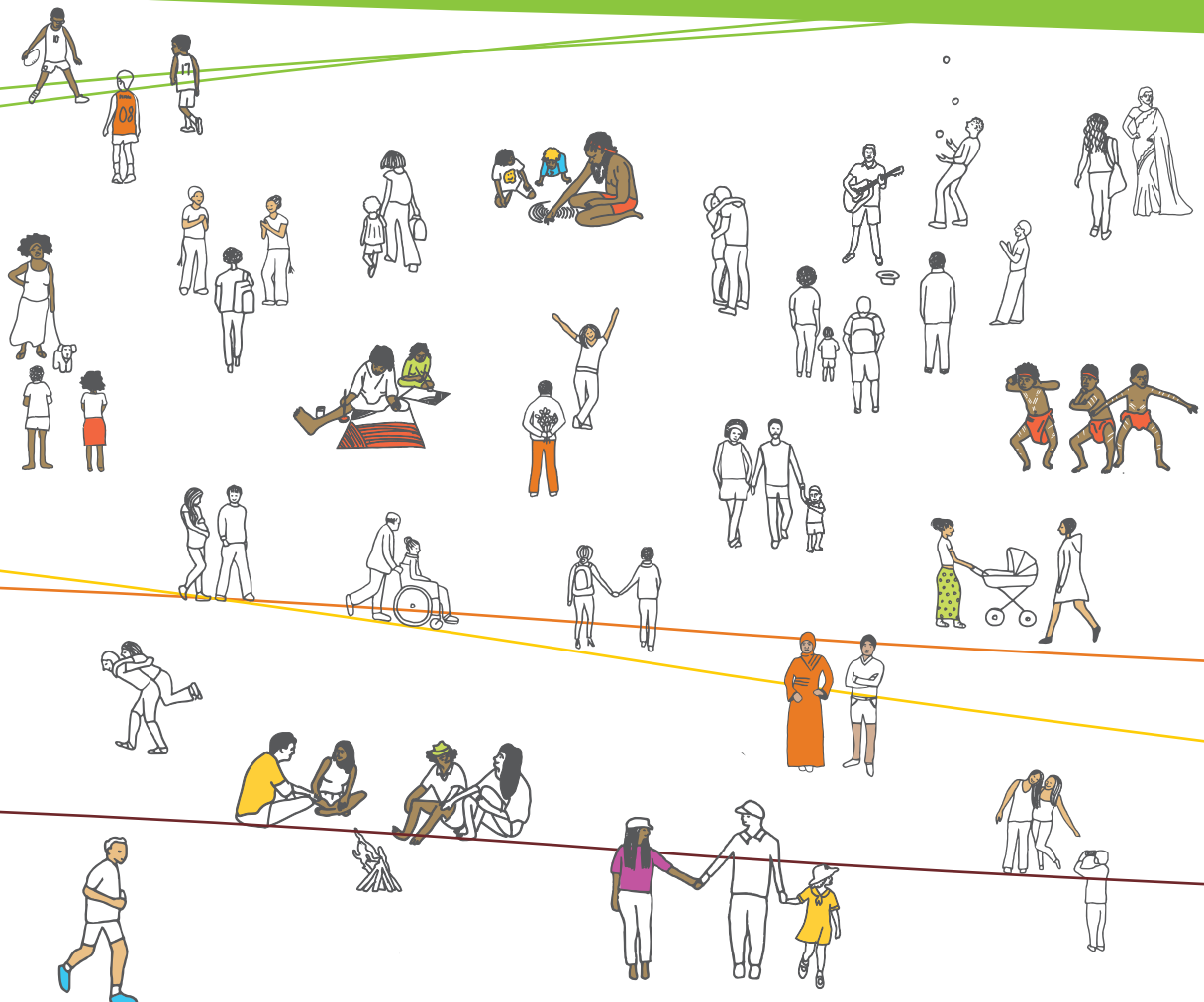




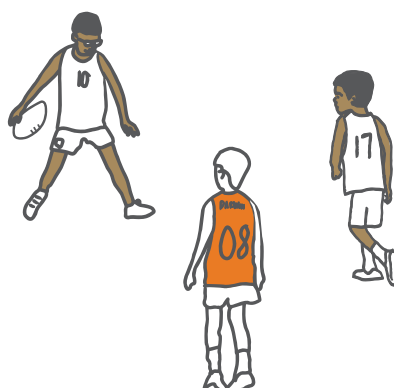
TERRITORY FAMILIES STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2020



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the very first Territory Families Strategic Plan.

Developed through comprehensive consultation with our Territory Families staff and non-government stakeholders, this document is much more than words on a page, it's a roadmap for the next three years.



This plan defines our key strategic activities, where we will focus our efforts, and how we measure our achievements to ensure we deliver quality outcomes for Territorians.

Territory Families was established by the Northern Territory Government to bring together a range of policy, advocacy and frontline service delivery functions that work together to deliver a whole of life approach to supporting children and families across the Territory.

Our vision is to empower families and communities for a safe and better future. To help build stronger families in stronger communities, where children are safe, healthy and happy; women and men from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds have equal opportunities; and senior Territorians are appreciated and respected.

We recognise that we must do more to address the significant over-representation of Aboriginal people in our youth justice and child protection systems. We are committed to working with Aboriginal peak organisations to increase the number of Aboriginal foster and kinship carers, to improve the support provided to Aboriginal families and to help to grow Aboriginal organisations focused on out-of-home care.

By having the portfolios of child protection, domestic and family violence and youth justice services in a single agency, Territory Families has a unique opportunity to work within a broader framework to deliver early intervention and prevention outcomes for our clients.

This opportunity is for us to do things differently; to keep children on track and to create the pathways that prevent vulnerable children and young people going into care and the youth justice system in the first place.

Our emphasis is on regional service delivery to recognise that local knowledge and working relationships must inform place-based services that are tailored to meet individual client needs. This will be backed up by strong centralised organisational support to ensure consistent and responsible governance, assisting frontline officers to deliver quality services to families.

The success of this strategic plan will be in its implementation and in the way Territory Families engages with its partner agencies, including the Australian Government, and non-government service providers to put children and families at the centre of our decision-making.

We have a large and important program of work ahead of us, and our strategic plan will guide and focus our efforts to ensure that we make a difference to the lives of Territorian families and children.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Davies". The signature is stylized, with a large, looped 'K' and a cursive 'Davies'.

Ken Davies
Chief Executive Officer

ABOUT THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Over the three year term of this strategic plan, Territory Families will lead significant reforms of the youth justice and child protection systems. These reforms will recognise the needs of communities and Aboriginal Territorians, and incorporate the findings of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

This plan seeks to improve the delivery of our core services, and articulates our commitment internally to work together, wherever we are in the organisation.

Territory Families

Territory Families provides a whole-of-life approach to children and family support services through a diverse, yet connected, remit of frontline delivery and advocacy functions.

Our focus is also on improving our practices and implementing services to strengthen families and parenting capacity. We are dedicated to addressing issues of child abuse and neglect, and supporting young people to avoid or successfully transition out of the youth justice and child protection systems.

As one of a cluster of government agencies, Territory Families also leads the Children and Families Standing Committee. The committee represents the commitment of related Territory Government agencies to jointly address priority social issues in the Northern Territory.

Regional boundaries

The Northern Territory presents a unique and challenging environment in which to deliver services.

The demographic, geographic, economic and historical characteristics of the Northern Territory differ significantly from other Australian jurisdictions. With one per cent of

Australia's population living on one sixth of its land mass, and significant distances between regional centres, the Northern Territory's population is highly dispersed.

Territory Families' move towards a regionally-focused structure enables integrated service delivery, direct local oversight, greater responsiveness and solutions that are tailored to place-based need.

Territory Families' Offices

GREATER DARWIN REGION

Darwin Office

Northern Remote Office

East Arnhem Office

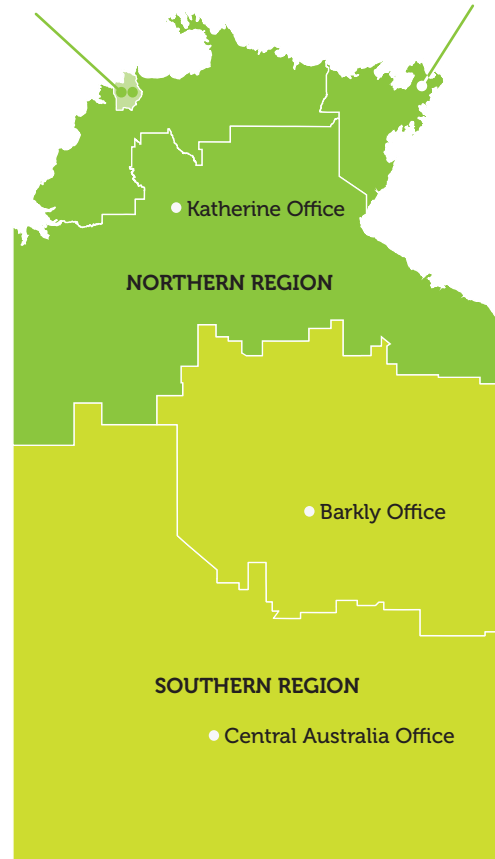
Katherine Office

NORTHERN REGION

Barkly Office

SOUTHERN REGION

Central Australia Office



SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Territory Families' services reflect the diversity of the Territory, and our approach to service delivery takes into account the challenges created by the Territory's distinctive geographic, economic and social context.

The Northern Territory is celebrated for its cultural and linguistic diversity. Around 25 per cent of the Territory's population is Aboriginal compared with the national average of three per cent. Aboriginal people are typically younger than non-Aboriginal people, more likely to live in an improvised home, tent or sleepout, and more likely to have multi-family households. There is a significant wealth divide within the Northern Territory and, in particular, a high degree of concentrated disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal Territorians. Territory Families is committed to developing and delivering services which contribute to reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal Territorians in both the child protection and youth justice systems.

Demand for Our Services

Key data indicators illustrate the high and sustained demand for our key services.

In 2015-16:

- Of 20,465 child protection notifications received, 7,862 cases or 38 per cent proceeded to investigation.
- 8,167 investigations were finalised and 1,907 cases substantiated that children were harmed or at risk of harm.
- 315 children were brought into care, bringing the total number in care on 30 June 2016 to over 1,000.
- The daily average number of detainees held in youth detention was 49.
- 89 young people completed an early intervention youth boot camp program.
- 67 women, and 596 accompanying children, escaping domestic and family violence accessed safe houses funded or operated by the agency.
- More than 90 per cent of children and young people in the care of Territory Families are Aboriginal.

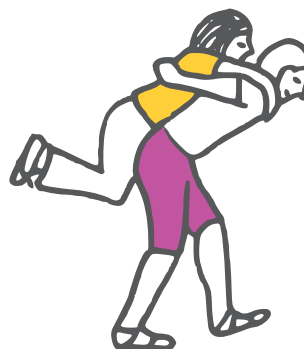
In response to this demand, in 2017-18 the Northern Territory Government will invest about \$287 million in Territory Families' operating budget to support child protection and youth justice services.

Our People

Our work is complex and demanding, with constant pressure to recruit and retain suitably qualified and experienced staff. Our workforce of around 950 is distributed across the Northern Territory and 22 per cent is Aboriginal.

Territory Families has identified the need to increase the numbers of Aboriginal staff across all employment levels. This includes providing professional development opportunities for our existing Aboriginal staff to improve their leadership progression opportunities.

Gender equity within Territory Families is also a focus area for this plan and is recognised through our goal to value and invest in our people.



OUR PRINCIPLES



Territory Families' service delivery will uphold the following principles, with a strong focus on Aboriginal children, families' and communities. These are the attributes that we will display in our every day activity.

CULTURALLY CONSIDERATE

The cultural needs of a child, family or community will be considered and embedded at the centre of all decisions, interactions and practices.

ENABLING AND EMPOWERING

In recognition of the strength and capacity of families and communities to determine their own future, the system will support young people, families and communities to take ownership of service responses.

OUTCOMES FOCUSED

A focus on achieving positive outcomes for children and families will enable the system to be designed on a feasible and sustainable foundation, with clearly articulated outputs and objectives that are tailored towards the Northern Territory's unique context.

SHARED POWER, RESPONSIBILITY AND GOVERNANCE

The responsibility and power for improving outcomes for children, families and communities in the Northern Territory will be equally shared between the government, non-government and community sector.

CENTERED ON SAFETY

All interactions will promote the safety and welfare of children, whilst also preventing the occurrence of any action that may cause harm to a child, their family, the broader community and staff members.

HOLISTIC

The best outcomes for children and young people will be achieved through the adoption of family-focused and proactive wrap-around services that are part of a broader community service system.

RESPONDS EARLIER

The system will move from an intervention model to an early intervention and prevention model which will strengthen the resilience of families to overcome the underlying contributors to child abuse, neglect and youth offending.

REHABILITATIVE AND RESTORATIVE

Through a framework built on a needs-focused, therapeutic, trauma-informed approach, the system will provide the opportunity for children and families to heal, maintain safety and to be prevented from further harm.

EVIDENCE-BASED

A strong emphasis on improving outcomes for families will provide the foundation for a system that works in partnership with the community to develop a local evidence-base that is both informed by, and contributes to, complementary policies, standards and charters.



WE CARE

WE CARE embodies the six individual values which Territory Families staff and stakeholders identified as being fundamental to the work we do and the relationships we build.



Compassionate

We demonstrate empathy through our actions and demonstrate sincerity and fairness in our work with them.

Collaborative

We work in partnership for better outcomes.



Accountable

We are open and transparent and accept responsibility for our actions.



Professional

We are committed to service and operate with courtesy, competency, efficiency and objectivity.



Respectful

We value the perspectives, contributions, knowledge and diversity of others.




Ethical

We demonstrate honesty, fairness and integrity.

MISSION, VISION, GOALS





Providing early support to children,
young people and families at Wadeye

WAVE

At about 6 months babies can do these things and they are ready to start eating foods

Baby can sit with support on a lap and hold head up



Baby opens mouth when food is given



Baby watches, gets excited and may grab food from you

First foods for babies about 6 to 8 months old



Clean water to drink in a cup (boiled then cooled)



Do not add salt or sugar to baby's food or drink



Breastmilk



Soft, mashed foods



Cereals, rice, spaghetti and noodles



Store and bush vegetables



Store and bush meats



Store and bush fruits



health nurse about what to feed your baby



The fun bus mobile playgroup is funded by Territory Families to support parents of young children by providing a safe social environment to play and learn.

PARTNER TO EMPOWER CHANGE

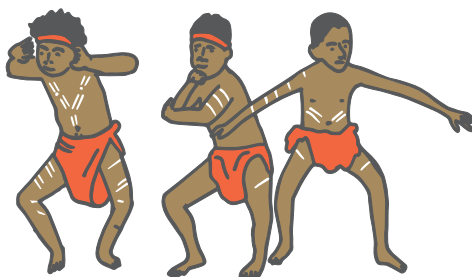
Territory Families will work with families, the community, government and non-government organisations to address challenges and strive for a safe and better future.

STRATEGIES

- Expand collaborative partnerships and build better relationships to provide co-ordinated services.
- Respect, support and provide assistance to our partners, including those who volunteer as carers.
- Co-design and implement quality approaches to deliver locally-informed and effective programs and services.
- Build and nurture stronger relationships with communities and families to ensure all children are raised in a nurturing and caring environment.
- Invest in and support our partners to build capacity and strengthen service delivery.
- Be transparent and accountable and share information effectively to build robust support around families.
- Expand our knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal culture, particularly principles connected with community and family.
- Empower communities to break the cycle of domestic, family and sexual violence.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2017-18

- Implement principles for collaboration and co-design with non-government organisations, and empower our non-government partners to design new programs, services and initiatives.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal carers and the support provided to Aboriginal families in out-of-home care.
- Drive better agency collaboration and coordination through the Children and Families Standing Committee and the establishment of the Reform Management Office to lead Child Protection and Youth Justice Reform.
- Develop a Carer Recruitment and Support Strategy and implement and embed the Foster and Kinship Carer Charter of Rights.
- Develop a clear investment strategy to inform prioritisation of new programs and initiatives.
- Support the establishment of community reference groups to provide advice and local solutions to issues relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Integrate cultural understanding and consideration into our practice.
- Increase the focus on client outcomes through the way in which services are designed, contracted and managed.
- Consider the requirements of regional and remote service delivery, tailored to reflect demand.





Territory Families is working so that all Northern Territory children experience safe, healthy and happy childhoods.

PROVIDE EARLY SUPPORT TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Territory Families will expand, develop and deliver services and programs which provide the earlier support families and communities need to tackle their problems.

STRATEGIES

- Support communities and families through targeted investment in early intervention and prevention programs and services.
- Create a responsive service system that provides pathways and options to flexibly meet the needs of families.
- Empower communities and families to tackle and prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Engage with young people earlier to reduce the risk of future offending and divert young people away from crime.
- Value and respect the views and ideas of children and young people and help them to build stronger connections with the community.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2017-18

- Introduce multiple pathways for families and children in need of support by developing and delivering a Dual Pathways model.
- Improve after-hours services for young people in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.
- Embed the Youth Outreach and Re-Engagement Teams into regional centres to provide through-care coordination for young people.
- Target youth diversion investment to programs that work and deliver outcomes for young people.
- Work with young people and the sector to develop a coordinated and cohesive policy for young people including increasing workforce participation and tackling key issues identified by young people.
- Work with partners to increase youth engagement in education, culture and training.





Territory Families is working to help children and young people build stronger connections with their communities

SAFEGUARD THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

Territory Families will respond appropriately, practically and constructively to family and community challenges in child protection, youth justice and domestic and family violence.

STRATEGIES

- Work to reduce the number of Aboriginal people in the child protection and youth justice system and address their over-representation.
- Refocus the child protection and youth justice systems on the restoration of families and communities.
- Ensure out-of-home care is a safe, caring, nurturing and restorative experience for children and effectively support them to transition from care.
- Ensure programs and services delivered to children and families are trauma-informed and therapeutic.
- Build a youth detention system that supports effective reintegration.
- Reduce domestic, family and sexual violence by providing targeted interventions and supports when needed.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2017-18

- Commence the transition of out-of-home care to the non-government sector over the next seven years.
- Lead the reform of youth justice and child protection by refocusing the system towards early intervention and restoration.
- Introduce appropriate measures to improve intake services and manage statutory demand.
- Ensure that there is appropriate planning and placements to meet the needs of children and young people in care.
- Facilitate the successful reintegration of young people from detention through focused and relevant programs and planning.
- Develop and implement a domestic, family and sexual violence reduction framework to reduce the impact of violence on our community.
- Grow and develop Indigenous non-government organisations focused on looking after children in out-of-home care.
- Establish victim youth conferencing in regional centres.
- Enhance youth detention facilities and programs.
- Introduce Therapeutic Residential Care.





Territory Families promotes, supports and celebrates community harmony and diversity.

ENCOURAGE AND CELEBRATE INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Territory Families will support and implement initiatives aimed at improving the lives of all Territorians.

STRATEGIES

- Promote, support and celebrate community harmony and diversity.
- Support increased social inclusion and participation for groups at risk of social isolation and exclusion.
- Foster and develop programs, strategies and services to further engage Territorians in the community.
- Promote gender equity and diversity to value the contributions of all Territorians.
- Improve programs and initiatives that attract and keep people in the Northern Territory.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2017-18

- Develop coordinated services to assist senior Territorians suffering from elder abuse.
- Reform the Senior Concessions and the NT Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure the voices of children and young people, including those in care and within the youth justice system, are heard and acted on.
- Develop, implement and promote appropriate programs and support for multicultural communities.
- Develop a Gender Equity and Diversity Framework for the Northern Territory.
- Improve the funding provided to community groups and align it with the strategic direction of Government.
- Develop a communication strategy to promote positive community attitudes, greater awareness and better perceptions about Territory Families.
- Investigate how our vibrant multicultural communities can contribute to business, trade and economic growth in the Northern Territory.
- Build Territory Families' capacity to manage, respond and recover from emergencies.





Territory Families is working to engage with young people and their families earlier to reduce the level of youth crime

ENSURE THE STRUCTURES, SYSTEMS AND LEGISLATION SUPPORTS OUR VISION

Territory Families will use contemporary governance, technology solutions and best practice methods to design, deliver and monitor programs and services.

STRATEGIES

- Commit to evidence-based policy, service and program design that is directly linked to improving outcomes for families in the Northern Territory.
- Develop smarter technology solutions and better integrated systems that improve efficiency, streamline practices and promote paperless methods.
- Ensure agency systems, policy and processes enable effective and transparent partnerships.
- Examine the legislation and regulations governing our work.
- Implement measures to foster consistency, continuous improvement and quality standards across services, programs and policies.
- Improve the seeking, collection and analysis of client feedback in shaping and improving service delivery outcomes.
- Commit to a performance culture and improve accountability and continuous improvement through the public reporting of achievements and progress against our strategic plan.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2017-18

- Review and amend the Care and Protection of Children Act, the Youth Justice Act and the Adoption of Children Act.
- Align all child protection information systems with a new client management solution.
- Introduce electronic document records management.
- Improve our information and evidence through enhanced data analysis services.
- Develop common risk assessment and case planning tools.
- Explore and scope the introduction of a common client identifier.
- Introduce an accreditation scheme for Out-of-Home Care providers.
- Ensure procurement and acquisition processes support good outcomes for clients and introduce five year funding agreements.
- Establish global demand-based budgeting to allocate resources according to need, including establishing a governance framework that ensures quality control and delivery.
- Respond to the findings of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- Implement new feedback mechanisms for clients and the community.
- Deliver an upgrades program to Territory Families' infrastructure.



Territory Families will work with and listen to staff, value feedback and respect opinions

VALUE AND INVEST IN OUR PEOPLE

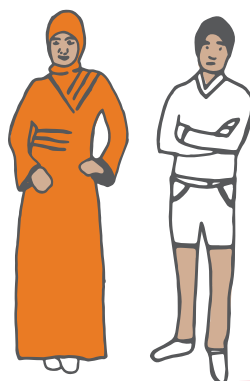
Territory Families will operate a safe and nurturing workplace and aim to be an employer of choice.

STRATEGIES

- Ensure a safe, supportive, professional, adaptive and dynamic work environment.
- Equip staff to work in a complex and dynamic environment by growing and developing the capability and capacity of our workforce.
- Work with and listen to staff, value feedback and respect opinions.
- Resource and attract a high quality workforce.
- Grow our Aboriginal workforce.
- Develop and invest in management to ensure the Department has the leadership capacity to deliver.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2017-18

- Introduce an Operational Support area charged with supporting the continuous growth and improvement of operational services.
- Develop and implement improved online and face-to-face training.
- Introduce improved connectivity and support to remote and regional staff.
- Introduce a Territory Families induction and orientation program that affirms the principles and workplace culture.
- Implement a Strategic Workforce plan that delivers improved capacity and capability of all levels of the organisation.
- Embed an Aboriginal workforce plan that is focussed on growing our Aboriginal workforce in operations, organisational services and leadership teams.
- Enhance attraction and recruitment processes to ensure Territory Families attracts and retains best in class staff to professional and administrative roles.
- Introduce trauma-informed and therapeutic training across child protection and youth justice.
- Enhance the capacity and capability of our leaders by focussing on their development.
- Establish employee engagement mechanisms that enable open and transparent dialogue and staff to influence agency direction and decision-making.





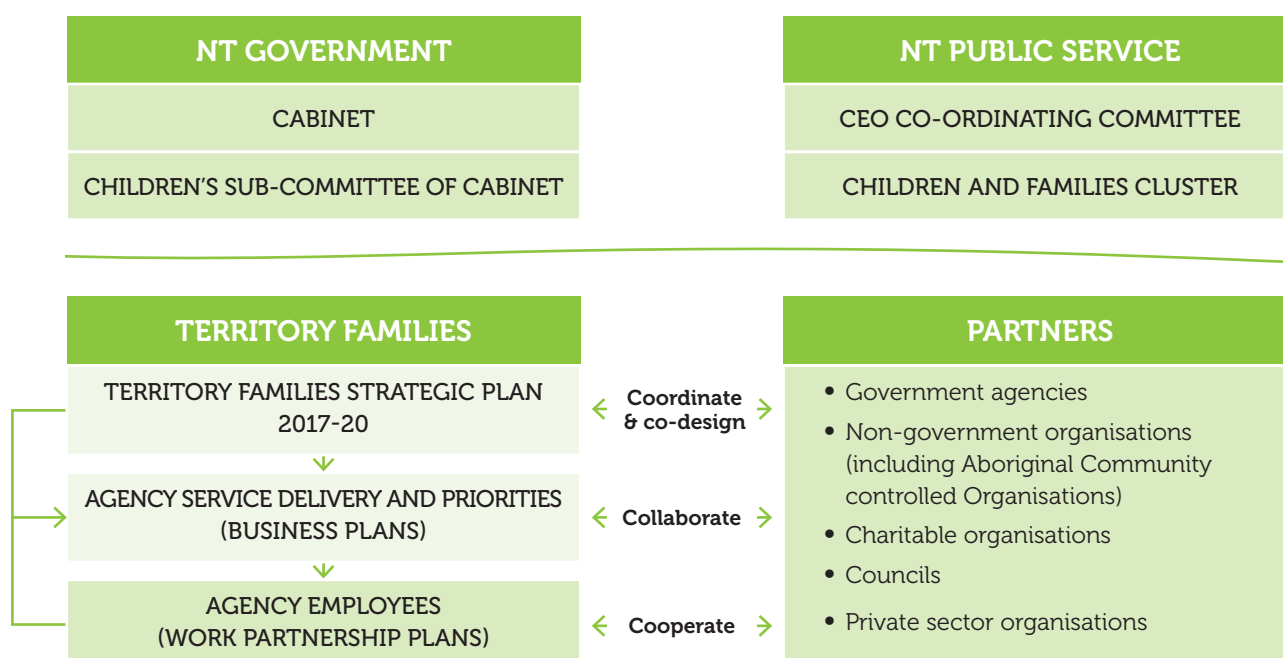
Territory Families is working to improve
the lives of all Territorians

ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE



Territory Families has clear expectations of performance, accountability and being an evidence-based and learning organisation. The Territory Families Strategic Plan 2017-2020 reflects the strategic agenda of government and whole of government change agenda. Territory Families' business areas will support the implementation of the plan through the development of business plans and employees' work partnership plans.

Governance structure



To continuously improve our performance and ensure accountability Territory Families will:

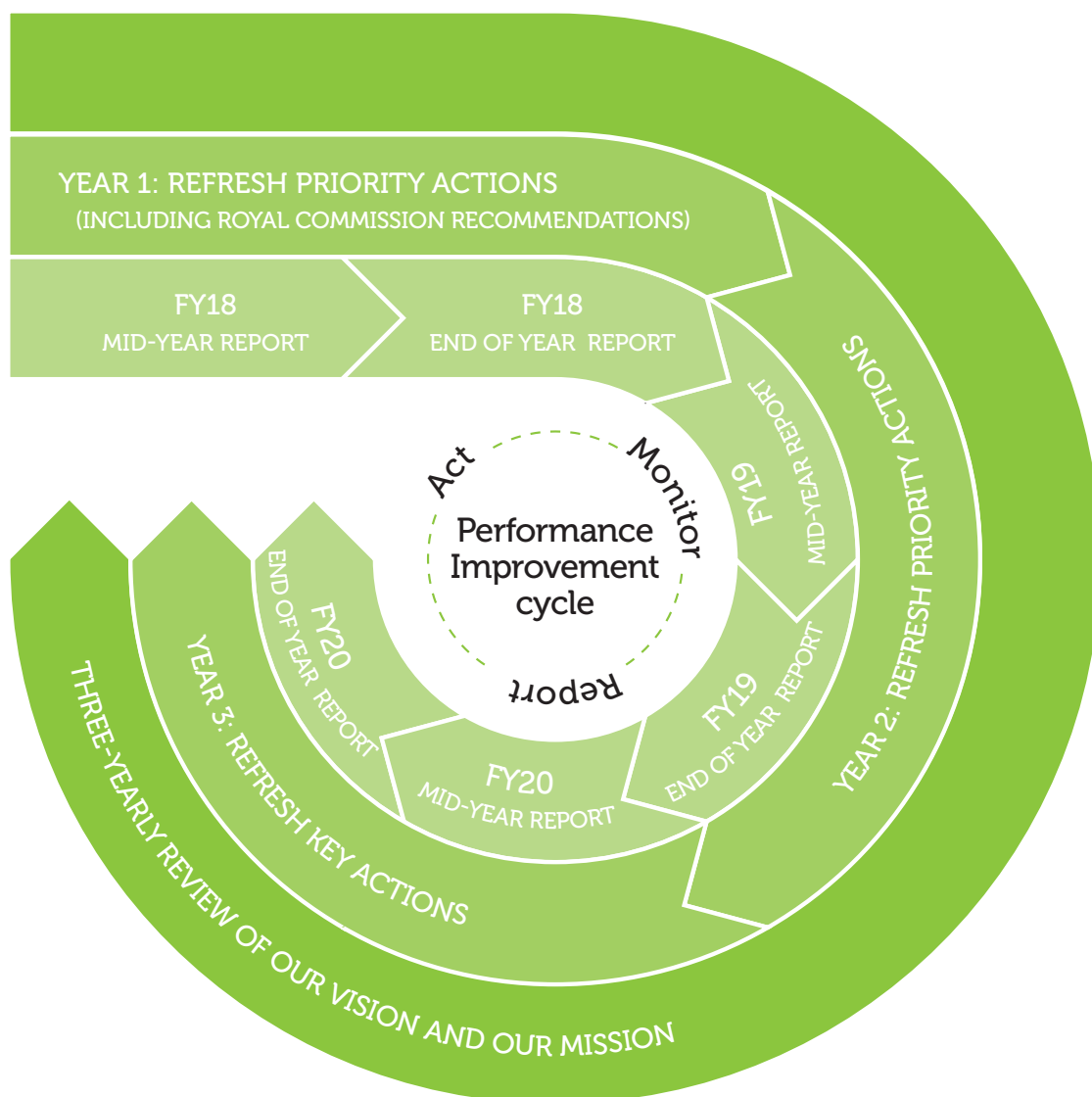
- Build on strengths and focus on areas for targeted improvement.
- Focus on continuous improvement, including by engaging clients, staff and stakeholder.
- Use a wide range of outcome measures to determine how well Territory Families' goals are achieved.
- Provide effective, efficient and quality services that contribute to the agency's goals, working objectively, with integrity and impartiality.
- Progress the agency's strategic direction through the Executive Leadership Group and hold managers accountable for the performance of their staff and the deliverables identified in their business plans.
- Use reporting as a mechanism for stakeholders to learn about, and contribute to, the agency's improvement efforts.
- Universal, prevention, and crisis response services.
- Increase investment in early intervention services.
- Enhance the role of the non-government sector in providing services.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The monitoring and review process is an integral part of the performance improvement cycle. It determines the effectiveness of strategies and actions, and guides future decision-making and activity. Territory Families will monitor the implementation of this plan.

The key actions that this plan identified will be refreshed annually and the strategic priorities, goals and mission statement reviewed at the end of each three-year cycle. Public reporting will be at six and 12-month intervals.

Review cycle for implementation of the Strategic Plan





Within the first year of this strategic plan, Territory Families will develop a Performance Reporting and Outcomes Framework. The Performance Reporting and Outcomes Framework will be an important accountability tool to ensure we are meeting our long-term goals and achieving genuine progress.

In 2017-18, while the Performance Reporting and Outcomes Framework is developed, Territory Families' view of success will be guided by:

- Increasing the number of families receiving family support and early intervention services.
- Reducing the number of children, young people and families who have consequent statutory interventions in either the child protection or youth justice systems.

- Improving the proportion of aboriginal children in out-of-home care being cared for by Aboriginal carers.
- Improving communities' satisfaction with our services.
- Increasing the proportion of Aboriginal staff working in Territory Families, including in leadership roles.
- Increasing our remote service footprint.
- Increasing the proportion of non-government partners who have long-term funding.
- Improving staff and service provider satisfaction.

