

# Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care (ACAC)

Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care is a program for Aboriginal children and families involved with the child protection system where authorised Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations provide vital child safety services.

The Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care (ACAC) program gives authorised Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) – under section 18 of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 – legal responsibility for Aboriginal children or young people who have been placed on a Children’s Court protection order.

Under this program, an authorised ACCO will actively work with the child’s family, community, and other professionals to develop a case plan to address protective concerns and achieve long-term objectives in a way that is culturally appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

To date, Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BDAC) and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

(VACCA) are the two ACCOs authorised to operate under the program. However, in late 2023 Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC) will become fully authorised.

Njernda Aboriginal Cooperative (Echuca) is in pre-authorisation and Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative (located in Shepparton) will start pre-authorisation in 2023.

The full authorisation of BADAC, and the broader expansion of the ACAC program, recognises that Aboriginal people and organisations are best placed to make decisions and deliver services that protect the best interests of Aboriginal children.

## Community Protecting Boorais program

An Australian first, the **Community Protecting Boorais program** allows authorised ACCOs to take responsibility for investigating reports that are made to child protection for Aboriginal children. The program aims to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care, by prioritising self-determination and facilitating Aboriginal models of care delivered by ACCOs.

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency and Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative will lead the program, which started in 2023 – in an extension of their involvement in the ACAC program for many years. They will respond to child protection reports, thereby intervening earlier to try to divert families from further entering the child protection system.

### More information

For more information, please see the [Frequently asked questions \(Word\) document here](#).

If you have any questions about the above, please email [aboriginalinitiatives@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalinitiatives@dffh.vic.gov.au).