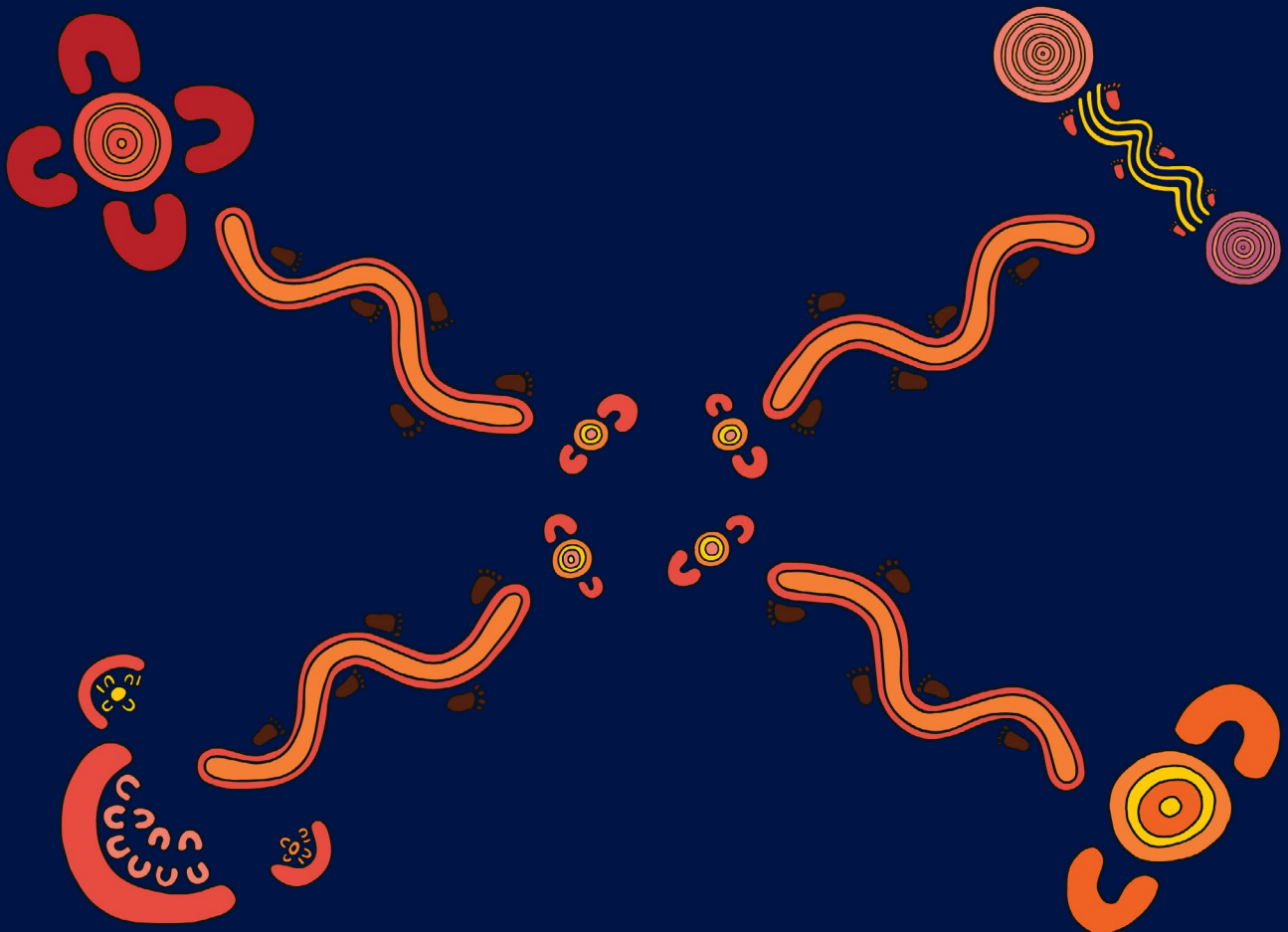




Brotherhood of St Laurence
Let's make change that lasts

Lessons from the transition of HIPPY to local First Nations organisations

August 2026



Acknowledgement

In the spirit of deep respect, we acknowledge the sovereign lands of all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations on which we have walked, listened, learnt and yarned throughout the last decade and now on the HIPPY transition journey.

We pay our heartfelt respects to Elders past and present, and to the young leaders who carry forward the strength, knowledge and cultural legacy of their Ancestors.

We honour and pay respect to the diversity of language, cultural practice, leadership and governance that continues to thrive in local communities despite the impact of colonisation. We endeavour to walk humbly alongside community, listening deeply to the direction and decisions of Elders and community members.

We hope that our shared efforts through this transition process contribute to children growing up strong and proud in culture.

Cover artwork created by Home Tutors at HIPPY Alice Springs, expressing visual representation of the Five Essential Features of the HIPPY program and used with permission.



About HIPPY: The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is a national, two-year, home-based early learning and parenting program that works with families with young children (usually aged three and four years) in the two years before starting school. HIPPY is a no-cost program for families with HIPPY activity packs, storybooks and other materials included. The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) has the exclusive licence to operate the program in Australia. HIPPY Australia is funded for 50 sites focused on working with First Nations families and, where possible, these sites are run by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.



About SNAICC: SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak body that leads systemic and structural reform to protect and advance the rights, safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities across Australia. As one of the longest standing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies in the country, SNAICC has played a central role in shaping policy, practice and reform at a national level. Today, SNAICC develops evidence-informed policy, produces national guidelines and advocates for systemic and structural change that delivers real outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families, communities and organisations.

Message from Catherine Liddle, CEO, SNAICC: National Voice for our Children and Travers McLeod, Executive Director, Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL)

Community voice has been at the heart of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) transition. This project has reaffirmed that programs are strongest when they are grounded in local strengths, cultural knowledge and community expertise.

We sincerely thank everyone who is contributing to this work, particularly Elders, community members, First Nations organisations, existing HIPPY providers and staff. We are especially grateful to communities for generously sharing their knowledge, experiences and aspirations.

The transition of First Nations focused HIPPY sites from non-First Nations organisations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations represents a significant structural and cultural shift in the delivery of HIPPY.

As a social justice organisation, and consistent with agreed priority reforms nationally, BSL is committed to supporting First Nations organisations and communities to guide their own services and futures. These organisations are already embedded in community, with the knowledge, relationships, skills and vision needed to lead locally.

The evidence is clear: services for First Nations children and families are more effective, culturally grounded and sustainable when they are led and delivered by First Nations organisations. For non-First Nations organisations, organisational interests must not stand in the way of necessary and community-led change.

Non-First Nations organisations, like BSL, have a responsibility to reflect on and accept the roles they have played, including where they have acted on behalf of, or against the wishes of, First Nations communities. By working differently and challenging long-established ways of operating, allied organisations can help to enable successful transitions and contribute to lasting change.

In recent years, BSL has continued to reflect on its own role. BSL recognises that some historic practices may have caused cultural harm and excluded First Nations voices from program design, delivery and decision-making. This reflection has deepened our understanding of what self-determination requires in practice.

Over time, BSL and SNAICC have built a partnership grounded in trust, respect and shared learning. Central to this partnership has been a shared commitment to children and families, and the ability to have open and honest conversations. Through this transition, our organisations have brought together different but complementary strengths.

SNAICC's cultural leadership, community knowledge and guidance on self-determination and genuine partnership have been invaluable, alongside BSL's operational knowledge, in supporting the success of this project.

This project, together with SNAICC's broader transformation work, offers a practical model for sector reform. The HIPPY transition provides valuable insights for governments and organisations seeking to support community-controlled service delivery and, more importantly, self-determination.

Transition is not a destination in itself. Long-term self-determination requires First Nations leadership in governance as well as service delivery. Our commitment to embedding cultural leadership and continuing to learn will remain central as HIPPY enters its next stage of transformation, with provider organisations shaping the program's, responsive to community and family needs and priorities.

Notes about the use of language

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Nations are terms which are used interchangeably throughout this report. They are terms we use respectfully and inclusively, responding to those used in local communities and organisations.

In this paper we use the term First Nations organisation, ACCO (Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation) or ACCHO (Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation)

in response to the terms being used by local communities when they refer to their organisations. We use the term partnerships to specifically describe instances when HIPPY is delivered through partnerships between community groups and First Nations organisations or through a First Nations organisation and a non-government organisation (NGO).¹

Purpose of the discussion paper

This paper aims to contribute BSL's lessons from transitioning services to First Nations organisations to the community service sector and support a journey of transformation where community decision-making, culturally grounded program design and local First Nations leadership are central. The lessons are based on a large-scale national transition project as part of the broader sector transformation.

This paper will discuss how government, philanthropists and NGOs can honour the cultural

authority, decisions and direction of Elders and community members and the importance of NGOs being prepared for change. Transitions are not cost neutral and consideration of the financial implications for all parties have been included.

This paper is a collaborative work between the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) and SNAICC: National Voice for our Children. The two organisations have been working in partnership to facilitate the transition of First Nations focused HIPPY sites since 2024.

BSL and First Nations HIPPY sites

BSL works with local organisations to deliver HIPPY (the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters), a structured early years education model for families with three and four-year-old children experiencing disadvantage. HIPPY is funded by the Australian Government. BSL holds the licence, and the program has been delivered locally in 100 sites by over 60 providers nationwide, including 32 ACCOs.

In 2014 HIPPY was expanded to include new First Nations focused sites. Some were run by ACCOs and others by NGOs. Over time, as existing providers exited the program, local ACCOs were approached to run First Nations sites. By 2023 there were 19 First Nations HIPPY sites delivered by 18 Aboriginal organisations. As of January 2026, the HIPPY network included 43 operating First Nations focused sites delivered by 32 ACCO and First Nations providers.

¹ For the purpose of this paper ACCOs are not classified as NGOs.

Background

When BSL entered a new five-year grant agreement with the Department of Social Services (DSS) for HIPPY in 2022, it committed to increase the number of local First Nations organisations delivering the program. BSL saw the transition of HIPPY to ACCOs as a natural way to support self-determination, which aligns with BSL's organisational strategy and Reconciliation objectives.

Putting programs under First Nations control is central to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families through greater community control, increased investment in ACCOs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led data and evidence, cultural governance and community-led decision-making. It aligns with national policy directions – including

the [Closing the Gap Priority Reforms](#) and [Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023-2026](#) – which emphasise the centrality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in child development, safety and wellbeing.

A BSL project was established and operated in 2024 and 2025 to transition HIPPY to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). The HIPPY Transition to ACCOs Project Advisory Committee governed the project. Committee members included First Nations organisations who were already HIPPY providers, representatives of NGOs and BSL senior staff. SNAICC were also members of this committee. Representatives of DSS attended the meetings as observers.

Transition methodology

A five-stage transition approach was tested in the second half of 2024 and fully implemented in 2025.

1. The **preparation stage** focused on minimising service disruption at a site level by enabling careful planning and clear stakeholder communication. Senior leadership of the NGOs delivering HIPPY at the site were engaged early to support organisational readiness, and shared transition plans with clearly defined roles were agreed on. Supporting resources included a process overview and communications toolkit, which were developed to build a shared understanding and consistency about the process across all organisations.

Work with test sites in 2024 helped develop a clear understanding of the phases of the transition process and the work and effort required at each step. It was decided that BSL would allocate a staff member to provide support throughout the process. A dedicated Navigator was brought in to support both the incoming ACCO and the exiting provider; working alongside site staff from

the start of transition until the new provider formalised their involvement and entered the establishment phase.

One provider undergoing transition commented:

I'd like to extend a thank you to [Navigator] for [their] incredible support throughout this process. It has been an emotive, challenging and uncertain time for our team. We approached [Navigator] with tricky questions, strong emotions and, at times, frustration. Throughout it all, [they] remained available, present, supportive and skilfully reframed situations while acknowledging the realities we faced. [Their] professionalism and empathy have made a significant difference, and we are truly grateful.

2. **Community consultation** formed the second transition stage and centred on ensuring the approach was culturally appropriate and community-led. Independent First Nations facilitators were engaged to consult with local communities, cultural authorities, Elders, families, existing providers and staff. SNAICC was one of the organisations that played the essential role of independent First Nations facilitator. Facilitators elevated First Nations voices, developed a comprehensive understanding of local needs, assisted to determine whether HIPPY remained relevant and helped identify a preferred ACCO provider or partnership model.

Community consultations offered insight into community preferences, capacity and recommendations for future program stewardship.
3. The third stage focused on **First Nations provider(s) confirming their interest in the program**. Interested First Nations organisations shared details of their organisation's capacity, organisation policies, procedures and management frameworks. Community voice and local endorsement was the most important component of the expression of interest stage assisting to guide decisions as to which ACCO would deliver the program.
4. Once a provider was selected, **handover** emphasised collaboration between outgoing and incoming providers. This was supported by BSL and the Navigator. The handover stage focused on the transfer of program knowledge, staffing and families participating in the HIPPY program to the incoming provider. A 'commitment to handover' document was developed at each site, embedding principles of deep listening and two-way learning to guide provider roles, expectations, communication, staffing, asset transfer and knowledge sharing. This approach prioritised local decision-making and collective agreement. It reinforced respectful relationships and encouraged ongoing collaboration beyond the transition period to maintain family engagement.
5. The final stage addressed **training and establishment of new providers**. Existing HIPPY training materials were reviewed and adapted to support incoming First Nations staff through a mix of online, facilitated and in-person training. Training was co-facilitated with experienced First Nations staff to strengthen cultural responsiveness and peer learning.

Key achievements

By December 2025:

- **seventeen sites** had transitioned. **Fourteen to new ACCO providers and three to existing ACCO providers**, with handover completed and establishment underway. **Seven communities** had adopted a **model of partnership between ACCOs and all organisations to deliver HIPPY**. All partnerships have a focus on embedding First Nations leadership, cultural knowledge and governance
- **four sites had not completed transition**. Community members requested more time to prepare for the change and to be ready for transition.

The HIPPY network now includes **43 operating First Nations focused sites** delivered by **32 ACCO and First Nations providers**.

What was learnt along the way

Walking alongside and sharing power

Pursuing the HIPPY ACCO transition journey has allowed BSL to reflect and adapt towards an approach that enables First Nations leadership, elevates lived experience, cultural authority and knowledge.

Working as independent facilitators, SNAICC guided BSL and encouraged them not to jump to conclusions or rush decisions when there were stages of uncertainty or ambiguity through the transition process.

SNAICC also assisted BSL to understand what it meant to share power. They played a critical and diplomatic role, helping the BSL team make sense of what was unfolding in community and giving BSL confidence to move aside and give ACCOs space to take over. SNAICC helped to hold space for community decision-making to take place and reminded BSL that stepping into the space and making decisions on behalf of communities would risk repeating colonial patterns, deficit framing and systemic harm.

The community consultation process illustrates how First Nations people are successfully leading and making decisions in their communities and they are clear about the future they want to create. The process of listening to the voices of community members, Elders, First Nations leaders and advocates showed the way forward.

Cultural authority and lived experience

In their interim report, SNAICC commented:

‘... the HIPPY transition consultation demonstrated the power of respectful and relational community-paced engagement. The model is built around yarning, listening without agenda and showing up consistently – on Country and alongside community.

What worked well:

- Prioritising cultural authority from the beginning, ensuring Elders, ACCOs and community leaders led the conversation, not followed it.
- Using strengths-based narratives that focused on community aspirations rather than deficits.
- Embedding flexibility to adapt to cultural obligations such as Sorry Business, school holidays or local decision-making cycles.
- Working alongside existing networks – like Connected Beginnings, local tutors and cultural educators to build trust through known relationships.

This approach helped shift engagement from extractive consultation to reciprocal partnerships grounded in mutual accountability and cultural integrity.’²

The community consultation process illustrates how First Nations people are successfully leading and making decisions in their communities and they are clear about the future they want to create.

² Unpublished project report SNAICC 2025.

Resourcing and impact of the HIPPY transition to ACCOs project

Transitioning services is not a cost-neutral exercise. Resourcing consultation, facilitation and BSL staffing have all been significant outgoings, the type of which should be considered in transition planning, as well as costs incurred by incoming and outgoing providers, as described below. Given that HIPPY is one of the first larger-scale transitions to ACCOs to be facilitated, this section offers information to understand the potential financial impact of future transitions in Australia.

As outgoing HIPPY providers, NGOs experienced transition costs which included redundancy payments.

For ACCOs, establishing new programs and services means managing start-up costs. In the case of HIPPY, BSL provides ACCOs startup funds, which ensures the new provider has sufficient resources in place to deliver the program. Examples of how these funds are spent include: purchasing computers, phones and desks; setting up HIPPY sites; purchasing materials for group meetings; recruitment costs; onboarding staff early to prepare for service commencement; and other incidental expenses. BSL's experience in HIPPY (within and beyond the transition to ACCOs project) has shown us that having funds specifically for establishment means services are up and running quickly and other budget lines are not being used incorrectly.

The attention and energy required to support change and enable transition at a site and provider level also meant that outgoing and incoming providers' ability to focus on achieving targets and outcomes was understandably impacted. BSL has been keenly aware that the amount of change related to this project impacted the ability of HIPPY providers to meet sublicence target requirements. While all efforts were made by outgoing organisations to continue services to children and families, some impacts were unavoidable. Some program staff, knowing their jobs were finishing, left early to secure other employment. In some instances, staff and teams were destabilised and this also affected service delivery.

Investing in First Nations organisations: capacity vs capability

Throughout the transition project there has been considerable discussion about investing in the capacity of First Nations organisations. SNAICC, community members, First Nations providers and the HIPPY Transition to ACCOs Project Advisory Committee saw the importance of differentiation between **capacity** and **capability**.

Capacity was defined as the organisational functions required to implement HIPPY and other future programs. These include:

- policies and procedures
- people services and human resources
- financial management systems
- IT systems
- facilities and office space.

Capability was defined as the ability of the staff and governance groups within an organisation and local community to deliver the program according to the contract or funder requirements.

Two key occasions illustrate times when First Nations organisations indicated they did not have capacity to deliver HIPPY:

1. An organisation delivered multiple services across a range of systems, which presented an internal environment that was already stretched from both management and infrastructure perspective. In this example, absorbing an additional program would jeopardise the delivery of all their existing programs.
2. A small ACCO indicated they were interested in delivering HIPPY, however, without additional investment in systems, policy development, human resources, and office and meeting spaces, entering the contract was not possible for them.

Stakeholders have been keen to emphasise that they have the **capability** to deliver HIPPY but not the **capacity**. Ongoing barriers include the lack of long-term funding arrangements. Current funding is generally short-term with no additional allocation for building organisational capacity.

First Nations stakeholders have also communicated that the First Nations sector it is already starting from a place of underinvestment compared to NGOs. NGOs have had decades of funding which has contributed to them building the infrastructure they need to run programs. Infrastructure such as IT and data systems, finance, training and development and research all require investment over time. It is important for governments to think broadly about investing in capacity building and not assume that ACCOs will have developed the same infrastructure as NGOs.

In this project, we have elevated the importance of honouring community voices and direction in relation to preferred First Nations organisations. In cases where preferred organisations did not have the capacity to deliver the HIPPY program, but they were the community's preferred First Nations provider, funds were directed to support partnerships between the NGOs (who have the capacity) and First Nations organisations or community groups (who have the cultural authority and leadership capability). In addition, in instances where there was not an ACCO with the capacity to participate in a partnership, steps have been taken to develop cultural governance capabilities in NGOs.

Flexible service funding and formal relational contracting

First Nations stakeholders who attended community consultation meetings said the siloed nature of government funding causes operational and administrative problems. Receiving small amounts of funding, each with very specific requirements, means each component of funding requires significant data collection and reporting processes, which makes for a complex and costly administrative environment. First Nations stakeholders encouraged government to consider the adoption of a flexible funding model for First Nations early years, family and children's services. They have identified that ideally the funding model for HIPPY would adequately support a wraparound response including community engagement, systems navigation and family/parenting support. A flexible funding model was detailed in SNAICC's [Funding model options for ACCO Integrated Early Years Services: final report](#) (2024).

A flexible funding model in this context should also include giving First Nations organisations and local communities agency over the outcomes they want to set for their children and families. This would give them control over the allocation of funds for staffing, initiatives and activities to support these outcomes. Outcomes management would sit alongside a contracting approach that embeds trust, flexibility and collaboration directly into formal agreements to manage complex and long-term relationships. This type of contract would focus on shared goals between communities and funders rather than risk mitigation and achieving targets.

Role of NGOs

NGOs have a critical role to play in the success of transitions at a local level. In some, where there had been acknowledgement of the Closing the Gap Safe and Supported framework (the national framework for protecting Australia's children) and where the organisation had a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), local HIPPY staff and line management appeared to be better prepared for transition. They understood why the transition was important and how it would support the Safe and Supported first action plan, self-determination, cultural leadership and governance. In a small number of these organisations, staff were already committed to and heavily investing in partnerships with local and regional First Nations organisations. In some cases, organisations providing HIPPY had already started transitioning programs and funding locally, so had their own knowledge and experience of transition processes that built on deep, genuine and trusting relationships.

Despite the preparedness of some organisations to transition, some did not have local partnerships and appeared less confident in the face of the sector change. At times, NGO staff presented to independent facilitators and BSL staff as overwhelmed, frustrated and were resistant to the change occurring. Local HIPPY staff and line management often communicated that they were 'blindsided' by the concept of transition and were not ready. There was also understandable anxiety and concern about job security and about supporting families already involved in the program. In these NGOs, there was a lack of

confidence about how to navigate the transition, both within their organisations and with families.

Feedback from some NGOs and First Nations providers throughout the project showed differing views of the transition process. First Nations providers tended to understand the purpose of the process and were excited and energised. They saw the value of the independent First Nations facilitators and said they felt heard and respected. Some NGO providers were more critical of the process and believed their views had not been fully considered or could not be seen in changes to the transition process. A small number of NGOs seemed to expect they would be able to direct and control the transition process and its outcomes. They did not fully understand the transition process was designed to enable First Nations voice and decision-making, and that the process was a significant advancement in self-determination.

In local communities, NGOs are central to the delivery of many health, wellbeing, children's, youth and family services. Because of this they are also in positions of power. They can hold the majority share of funding and resources for both First Nations and NGO services. Some NGO providers expressed negative views about the capability of local First Nations providers. Independent facilitators perceived this as an indication that power sharing is something that some NGO providers may not fully understand.

In many communities where HIPPY has been delivered by a NGO for almost a decade, BSL was particularly careful to not set up a process that could destabilise community relationships and create difficulties that could persist after transition. There continues to be a risk that NGO service users may feel disadvantaged because HIPPY now has a stronger First Nations focus. There is also a risk that long-held relationships between the First Nations organisation and NGOs may have been impacted by the change. Throughout transition, to support the establishment of productive and supportive relationships at a local level, considerable effort should be paid to keeping communication open and continuing the connection with NGO providers following the community consultation process.

Role of government: developing a national transition framework and roadmap

The Commonwealth Government has shown BSL, First Nations communities and the independent facilitators deep trust throughout the HIPPY transition to ACCOs project. They have shown respect for the cultural leadership and governance at each site. However, there are further opportunities for government to support transition activities and enable transformation across the sector. As the project progressed, there were times when a national transition framework and roadmap would have been useful.

A framework, developed and supported by First Nations leaders and agreed to by government, would ensure integrity of each transition process. SNAICC is currently developing a transition framework with input from BSL and other providers who are experiencing transitions (both ACCOs and NGOs). For organisations not able to develop their own approaches, frameworks provide the information and resources needed to structure and organise their work.

In addition to a framework, a timeframe or national roadmap would allow the community sector to see the plan for the transition of programs and funding to First Nations organisations and communities. This would allow all stakeholders to have clarity about roles, and when and where they will need to play their part.

Government could also help to bring NGO providers to the 'transition table' by including transition requirements in grant agreements and contracts, if not included already. Alongside this, NGOs could be supported through clear policy statements and an active government education and communication strategy. The community consultations have shown that some NGOs need more support to fully understand self-determination, cultural governance, decision-making and leadership. Government could assist organisations to explore how genuine partnerships can be underpinned by power sharing and why it is important not to compete for funds where a First Nations organisation could provide the service. As mentioned previously, government also has the responsibility to fund any broader capacity building required by First Nations organisations to enable them to deliver child and family services.

Forming a First Nations Governance Network

BSL recognises the imperative to support the transfer of funds and service delivery to First Nations organisations in order to practise our support for self-determination genuinely. Accordingly, BSL continuing in the role of the community partner for the First Nations sites will not be possible. Throughout 2025 there have been many conversations within BSL, with SNAICC and at the HIPPY Transition to ACCOs Project Advisory Committee about how to enact cultural governance and enable cultural leadership at the community partnership level.

In late 2025, all First Nations HIPPY providers were invited to be part of a First Nations Governance Network and to provide advice about next steps related to network governance, contracting, community partnership and practice.

BSL understands it will be important to follow First Nations Governance Network as its members are highly experienced in cultural governance and will have expertise on how cultural leadership can be operationalised in the context of HIPPY. BSL is committed to supporting and collaborating with First Nations providers during this time and will take their direction on next steps, including how long it might take for the governance transition to occur.

Conclusion

The transition of HIPPY to ACCOs represents a substantial reform in the way early years and family services are governed, delivered and experienced by communities. The work undertaken in 2024 and 2025 demonstrates that transition, when grounded in cultural authority, community leadership and respect for self-determination, can go beyond a simple transfer of service delivery to become a process of structural and relational transformation. The project has shown that First Nations communities are clear on their aspirations for children and families and are best placed to make decisions about how programs like HIPPY should operate locally. When these voices are prioritised and supported by systems that genuinely share power, the outcomes are stronger, more culturally grounded and more sustainable.

The five-stage transition methodology proved effective in balancing accountability with flexibility and in recognising the emotional, organisational and practical complexity of change. Preparation, community consultation,

provider selection, handover and establishment all played a vital role in minimising disruption to families, while supporting both incoming First Nations organisations and outgoing NGOs. The inclusion of dedicated navigation support and independent First Nations facilitation meant difficult conversations could be held respectfully, community knowledge could inform decision-making and the integrity of the process could be protected during moments of uncertainty. Importantly, the approach disrupted extractive consultation practices and replaced them with relational, paced engagement that reflected community rhythms, obligations and priorities.

The transition also surfaced systemic challenges that extend beyond HIPPY. Making a distinction between capability and capacity helped highlight longstanding inequities in funding arrangements. This was particularly the case regarding the lack of investment in the infrastructure required for First Nations organisations to deliver and sustain programs at scale. The project reinforced that transferring services without addressing these

structural gaps risks undermining the very goals of self-determination and community control. The use of partnership models and cultural governance arrangements provided interim solutions in some contexts. However, the findings point clearly to the need for long-term, flexible funding models. They also require contracting approaches that prioritise trust, shared outcomes and relational accountability rather than narrow compliance and short-term targets.

The roles of NGOs and government emerged as critical to the success of future transitions. While some NGOs demonstrated readiness, humility and commitment to power sharing, others struggled with uncertainty, loss of control and limited understanding of self-determination and cultural governance. This underscores the importance of clear national frameworks, government leadership and education. There also need to be contractual mechanisms that explicitly support transition to First Nations organisations. At the same time, government's willingness to trust community-led processes within this project provides a strong foundation for future reform – particularly if accompanied by investment in sector-wide transition roadmaps and capacity building.

Finally, the establishment of a First Nations Governance Network marks an important step towards embedding cultural leadership and long-term governance reform within HIPPY. BSL's recognition that it must ultimately step away from a central partnership role reflects a deepened organisational understanding of what self-determination requires in practice. The success of the transition to-date has relied on patience, courage and a willingness to relinquish control, and these same qualities will be essential as governance arrangements continue to evolve. Taken together, the lessons from this project demonstrate that meaningful transition is not a single event but an ongoing commitment to listening, learning and transforming systems so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families are supported through services led by, and accountable to, their communities.

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