

QAF case study – Aboriginal Cultural Connections



WHY ARE WE ASKING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE QUESTIONS ABOUT CULTURE?

Culture is important for many reasons and underpins who we are in terms of values, belief, customs, tradition and language.

As part of the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) we are asking Aboriginal children and young people, 9 to 17 years, a series of questions to help us ascertain what cultural support we need to provide.

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL CONNECTION QUESTIONNAIRE (ACCQ)

The Aboriginal Cultural Connection Questionnaire (ACCQ) is an Australian first, designed by Aboriginal communities for the QAF. Key elements of culture are included in the questionnaire, and a child or young person's answers reflect their knowledge and connection to their culture.

Caseworkers are able to work with this information to inform Cultural Supports Plans targeted to each child's needs. This may be identifying their mob, land or totem or to a greater depth of learning around lore, women's or men's business or language.

A snapshot of each child's results are included in the Child Overview, alongside other wellbeing information.

The ACCQ gives a caseworker a starting point to commence discussions about whether a young person wants to know more about their culture and enables them to put in place a plan that allows that to occur.

CONNECTING WITH CULTURE- WHAT PRACTITIONERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE TO SAY

An Aboriginal caseworker who sat with an 11-year-old while completing the questions said that "the child was not as connected to culture as I thought. Some of this information is in the Cultural Support Plan but the child didn't know it.... I now know what I will do at the next home visit... talk with the parents about their family connection and totems." The caseworker added,

'this is a game changer!'

One young person about to leave care said:

"I wish I had been able to complete these questions earlier, then I would know more about my mob."

He was leaving care with little cultural knowledge, few cultural connections to support him into his future. This is significant as he was about to leave care without support to develop these lifelong relationships and connections.