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# Appendix four – About the audit

## Audit objective

This audit assessed whether the rights of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system are effectively safeguarded.

## Audit scope and focus

In doing so, the audit focused primarily on the activities of the Department of Communities and Justice that administers the child protection system in NSW. The audit also included five non-government organisations that the Department of Communities and Justice contracts with to provide out of home care services across the State.

## Audit criteria

We addressed the audit objective by answering the following questions:

1. Are there established governance and accountability arrangements to understand and track performance in safeguarding the rights of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system?
2. Are there effective policies, practices, systems, and resources to support and enable staff to safeguard the rights of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system?
3. Are there effective monitoring and quality assurance systems to ensure that the outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system are consistent with their legislative rights and their human rights?

## Audit exclusions

The audit did not:

- examine the merits of government policy objectives and legislative Principles
- assess the outcomes of decisions made in relation to the placement of individual Aboriginal children
- examine restoration of Aboriginal children to their families
- Examine targeted earlier intervention programs.

## Audit approach

Our procedures included:

1. Interviewing
  - Senior Executives
  - Caseworkers
  - Policy officers
  - Community stakeholders
2. Examining
  - a) Documents
  - b) Data
3. Conducting a case review.

The audit approach was complemented by quality assurance processes within the Audit Office to ensure compliance with professional standards.

## **Audit methodology**

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Auditing Standard ASAE 3500 Performance Engagements and other professional standards. The standards require the audit team to comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance and draw a conclusion on the audit objective. Our processes have also been designed to comply with requirements specified in the *Government Sector Audit Act 1983* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

## **Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge the cooperation, constructive support and participation by the five non-government organisations and the Department of Communities and Justice.

## **Audit cost**

The cost of the audit was approximately \$880,000.