



SUBMISSION

To: Joint Standing Committee on the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme
Re: Inquiry into the Continuing Operation of the National Redress Scheme (NRS)
Date: 3 February 2026
From: Forgotten Australians Coming Together Inc, trading as Tuart Place
Author and contact person: Dr Philippa White, Director, Tuart Place

Introduction

Tuart Place is the Western Australian Government-funded support service for Care Leavers, including Forgotten Australians, former child migrants from the United Kingdom and Malta, members of the Stolen Generations, and other First Nations people who experienced out-of-home care during childhood.

Tuart Place is a survivor-governed, ACNC-registered charity delivering free, trauma-informed and culturally safe services. These include support with National Redress Scheme (NRS) applications and civil claims; professional counselling; life-skills and therapeutic group programs; facilitated access to records; individual and systemic advocacy; financial and legal referral support; service navigation; and assistance to access aged care and community services. Tuart Place also facilitates peer connection and community engagement through participant-led activities, including a quarterly newsletter¹.

Tuart Place's Redress Support Service

Since the commencement of the Scheme, Tuart Place has assisted more than 1,120 individuals across 20,220 occasions of service. As at 1 February 2026, Tuart Place has submitted 525 NRS applications, with a further 73 currently in progress. Of the 57 individuals awaiting commencement of support, 59 per cent are incarcerated and 73 per cent are First Nations survivors.

Tuart Place has contributed six previous submissions to inquiries relating to the NRS, as well as to the Second Year Review of the Scheme².

With the 10-year application deadline approaching and only 16 months remaining, the need for clarity regarding Scheme closure arrangements has become increasingly urgent—particularly for survivors whose reviews, revocations, or Freedom of Information requests will remain unresolved beyond the closing date.

Some NRS processes have improved over time. In particular, the ability to exchange certain documents by email has significantly streamlined communication. Tuart Place

¹ <https://www.tuartplace.org/category/high-street-happenings/>

² All submissions are available at <https://www.tuartplace.org/about/submissions-and-evaluations/>

welcomes these improvements and supports the expansion of email communication to routine matters, such as booking Acknowledgement calls.

As noted in previous submissions, people in Western Australia continue to experience poor telephone access to NRS case managers, who are unavailable after 2.00 pm WST. This issue could be readily resolved by enabling phone access for Western Australian callers when NRS staff in the eastern states commence work.

Scope of this Submission

This submission focuses on a single issue within the Terms of Reference: the treatment of survivors deemed ineligible for redress. This issue almost exclusively affects First Nations survivors in Western Australia who were placed in government-subsidised kinship foster care after legislative changes in 1972, but were not formally made wards of the state.

A fundamental misunderstanding of these so-called ‘private’ placements has resulted in a small but clearly defined cohort of survivors being excluded from redress. This submission identifies a straightforward remedy and urges the National Redress Scheme to take corrective action as a matter of urgency.

Background

From the early 1970s, departmental records in Western Australia reflect a growing awareness of Aboriginal culture and a corresponding reluctance to impose formal wardship on First Nations children. Instead, many Aboriginal children were kept in kinship care arrangements characterised as ‘private’, despite the State’s ongoing involvement and reliance on extensive non-statutory powers to oversee and direct those placements³.

This included children for whom the Western Australian Government paid foster subsidies and over whom the Department exercised substantial power and control. The Department made key decisions about these children’s lives, including education, medical treatment, and living arrangements, and retained authority to remove a child from a placement. These decisions were recorded in often extensive departmental case files.

The level of State involvement was such that many children reasonably believed they were wards of the State. As adults, they understood themselves to be eligible for redress and submitted NRS applications in good faith.

However, First Nations survivors in Western Australia are deemed ineligible by the NRS where their childhood sexual abuse occurred in subsidised ‘private’ kinship care. Survivors experience shock, distress, and re-traumatisation when found ineligible on

³ After 1972, the lives of Aboriginal children were governed by the *Child Welfare Act 1947 (WA)*, under which the Department had broad powers to intervene where children were considered in need of care and protection, without taking formal responsibility for the child or placing them under state wardship.

what appears to be a technical administrative distinction that disregards the reality of departmental control. Recently accessed historical policy material demonstrates that these decisions have been made in the absence of key evidence and are therefore incorrect.

Departmental Policies Governing ‘Private’ Foster Placements

Documents obtained by Tuart Place through a Freedom of Information request to the WA Department of Communities in October 2025 demonstrate that, under policies in force throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the Department regarded itself as responsible for children placed in subsidised kinship care.

These policies required departmental officers to undertake assessment, reporting, supervision, and enforcement functions equivalent to those applied to State wards. For example, Administrative Instruction No. 52: *Procedure for Payment of Private Foster Rates* (1973)⁴ transferred responsibility for private foster subsidies to the Welfare Section and directed officers to apply the same procedures to wards and non-wards.

Despite this, NRS Outcome letters issued to survivors whose abuse occurred in kinship care routinely state that the Independent Decision Maker is “satisfied that the administration and provision of private foster rates did not impose any responsibility on the Department of Communities”. This assertion is contradicted by the Department’s own policies. The document at Appendix 2, *Policy and Guidelines for the Payment of Departmental Foster Subsidies* (circa 1980)⁵, explicitly confirms departmental responsibility. Policy Statement 5.5 provides:

“Where the Department financially supports placements arranged between extended family or between a culture, community or friends by mutual consent, the Department will ensure that the placement offers a safe, nurturing, stable and culturally relevant environment for the child.” (p.5)

The policy further specifies that placements classified as ‘private’ were to be temporary only. Where placements exceeded 12 months, they were required to be reclassified to a category under which the Department assumed formal responsibility for the child (Policy Statement 5.4, p.5 & Item 6.2.4, p.7).

All survivors known to Tuart Place who have been deemed ineligible by the NRS due to kinship care arrangements remained in these placements for longer than one year. In both practical and policy terms, the Department’s obligations to these children were indistinguishable from those owed to state wards.

⁴ APPENDIX 1. WA Department of Communities. *Administrative Instruction No. 52: Procedure for payment of private foster rates*. (2nd November 1973).

⁵ APPENDIX 2. WA Department of Communities. *Policy and Guidelines for the Payment of Departmental Foster Subsidies*. Family and Children’s Services Library, WA. Document 009774. (Undated, circa 1980).

⁵ Tuart Place. Submission 17.2- *Supplementary Submission to the JSCNRS 23-6-24*. URL: <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=f2c66ef3-c35f-4a92-863b-abd67c6d43ad&subId=734315>

Previous Advocacy

The exclusion of kinship care survivors from redress has been raised in previous submissions by Tuart Place and other stakeholders, to both the Joint Standing Committee on the NRS and the WA Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's (CDJSC) 2023 Inquiry into justice options for survivors of institutional child abuse.

Tuart Place submitted that the State's efforts to keep Aboriginal families together following the Stolen Generations overlooked a critical reality: many kinship carers had themselves been removed from their families and raised in institutional settings, resulting in similarly impaired parenting capacity. In all cases known to Tuart Place, abuse occurred in kinship placements where carers—and often their parents—had themselves been removed as children⁶.

knowmore Legal Service advised the CDJSC that while redress eligibility hinges on institutional responsibility, this concept has been applied narrowly in Western Australia due to the historical use of 'private' care arrangements without formal guardianship orders. As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors in Western Australia are disproportionately affected, and NRS decision-makers almost invariably find applicants ineligible once a placement is characterised as private, regardless of the State's ongoing involvement or payment of subsidies. This approach, knowmore argued, denies redress in circumstances where there is a substantial degree of institutional responsibility⁷.

WA CDJSC Recommendations and State Response

The CDJSC acknowledged that historical case records demonstrate extensive State monitoring and decision-making in these placements, yet affected individuals have no avenue for redress other than civil litigation. The Committee noted that this exclusion disproportionately affects Aboriginal people placed by the State in family care who were not made wards.

The CDJSC recommended that individuals excluded from the NRS due to the absence of wardship be enabled to access the Scheme or provided with equivalent redress and support through a separate State mechanism⁸.

⁶ Tuart Place. Submission 17.2- *Supplementary Submission to the JSCNRS 23-6-24*. URL: <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=f2c66ef3-c35f-4a92-863b-abd67c6d43ad&subId=734315>

⁷ knowmore Legal Service <https://knowmore.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/submission-inquiry-into-the-options-available-to-survivors-of-institutional-child-sexual-abuse-seeking-justice-wa> (pp.41-42)

⁸ Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. *Seeking Justice: Improving Options for Survivors of Institutional Child Abuse, Volume 2: WA's Support for Survivors*. Report No. 6, 41st Parliament, Legislative Assembly of WA, August 2024. Recommendation 13. (p.36). URL:[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/\(Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID\)/5755C5796A8E757348258B79002C095A/\\$file/20240813%20Final%20Report%20Volume%202.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/(Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID)/5755C5796A8E757348258B79002C095A/$file/20240813%20Final%20Report%20Volume%202.pdf)

The WA Government acknowledged the issue but advised that further consideration was required⁹.

Importantly, all prior advocacy and the State's response were developed without access to the historical policy documents obtained under FOI in October 2025. These documents demonstrate that responsibility lies not with the State alone, but with the National Redress Scheme, which has relied on incomplete information in determining eligibility. The Scheme must now correct this misunderstanding.

The 'Negligence' Exclusion

Ineligibility letters commonly state that the NRS does not apply principles of negligence or duty of care. However, this rationale is misplaced in the present context.

Departmental case files demonstrate that officers fulfilled their policy-mandated responsibilities to non-wards, including home visits, assessments, interagency coordination, and record-keeping. These files frequently include medical, dental, educational, welfare, court, and police records, as well as reports of abuse.

The exclusion of negligence principles is therefore irrelevant: eligibility is not undermined by a failure of duty, but rather by a mischaracterisation of the Department's role. The historical evidence shows that the Department exercised responsibility consistent with institutional care.

Relevant Considerations

First, the number of affected individuals is small. Prior to 30 June 2023, only 28 applications in Western Australia were deemed ineligible on this basis, out of more than 3,100 applications¹⁰. Nationally, fewer than 60 applicants were excluded because the abuse was not considered to have occurred in a participating institution¹¹. Inclusion would involve minimal cost and no legislative amendment.

⁹ Government of Western Australia. *Government response to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee Report 5 and Report 6: Seeking justice: Improving options for survivors of institutional child abuse, Vols. 1–2*, 26 November 2024 (p.5). URL: www.parliament.wa.gov.au/cdjsc

¹⁰ WA Department of Justice, Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime. 18 August 2023 (p.17)
URL:

[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/lulnquiryPublicSubmissions/B8720109C9B8C4E748258A0F0002ED6E/\\$file/20230804%20-%20RC%20RESPONSE%20SUB%20P00014%20-%20Commissioner%20for%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%20WA_Redacted.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/lulnquiryPublicSubmissions/B8720109C9B8C4E748258A0F0002ED6E/$file/20230804%20-%20RC%20RESPONSE%20SUB%20P00014%20-%20Commissioner%20for%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%20WA_Redacted.pdf)

¹¹ Department of Social Services. *Submission 9 (Supplementary Submission 8) to the Inquiry into the operation of the National Redress Scheme*. Answer to Question on Notice 20-9-23. (p.2) URL: <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=e043ba05-6fce-4d46-a65f-97ddddd5797&subId=734158>

Second, where the State paid subsidies to carers, it was effectively contracting individuals to provide care on its behalf. Those carers functioned as agents or ‘Officials’ of the institution for the purposes of the Scheme¹².

Third, compelling compassionate grounds exist. Many survivors are also excluded from the WA Stolen Generations Redress Scheme due to the timing of their removal. The severity and lifelong impacts of abuse significantly limit their capacity to pursue civil litigation or judicial review.

Conclusion

The term ‘private placement’ is a misleading label that obscures the historical reality of State control over subsidised kinship foster care in Western Australia.

In light of newly uncovered policy evidence, existing parliamentary recommendations, and acknowledged inequities, Tuart Place urges the National Redress Scheme to urgently correct the error in its assessment of eligibility for survivors abused in these placements.

Excluding First Nations survivors on the basis of an administrative classification that does not reflect lived experience or historical responsibility undermines the intent of redress. Enabling this small and clearly defined cohort to access the Scheme would be a proportionate, morally justified, and readily implementable response.

Recommendation

Tuart Place recommends that the National Redress Scheme amend its administration and guidance to Independent Decision Makers to ensure survivors are not excluded solely because their placement was classified as ‘private’ kinship or foster care.

This should include:

1. Explicit recognition that State approval, oversight, and subsidisation of kinship and foster care constitutes institutional responsibility for the purposes of the Scheme;
2. Development and publication of clear guidance to ensure consistent decision-making; and
3. Reconsideration of previously rejected applications, with access to trauma-informed and culturally safe support.

Appendices

Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 are attached.

¹² Australian Government. *National Redress Guide: ‘Official’ Definition*. Version 1.26 Released 2 January 2026. URL: <https://guides.dss.gov.au/national-redress-guide/1/1/o/20>

APPENDIX 1:

‘Procedure for payment of private foster rates’

This 1973 policy document records the transfer of responsibility for paying private foster rates for non-wards from the Maintenance and Relief Branch to the Welfare Section.

To standardise payment procedures with those applying to subsidies for children in State care, the Department required its field officers to adopt new processes for all private foster applications. These procedures were intended to align private foster arrangements with the welfare framework used for State wards.

Under the policy, field officers were required to conduct home visits, undertake assessments and enquiries, gather relevant information, prepare reports, and make placement recommendations.

These functions were equivalent to those performed in relation to children under State wardship.

WA Department of Communities. *Administrative Instruction No. 52: Procedure for payment of private foster rates*. (2nd November 1973).

Released to Tuart Place pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, [REDACTED], 24 October 2025.

APPENDIX 1

13-1-7-9

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ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION NO. 52.

13-1-7-9 PROCEDURE FOR PAYMENT OF PRIVATE FOSTER RATES

Responsibility for payment of private foster rates for non-wards, has been transferred from the Maintenance and Relief Branch to the Welfare Section.

So that procedure for payment of foster rates may be standardised with that of payment of subsidy for wards, it is requested that field officers adopt the following procedure with all private foster applications : -

1. Where possible action to be initiated at Division or District Office and application Form I.A. completed.
2. The field officer to visit the home of the applicant and prepare the normal Report, which will include -
 - a) The full details of person applying;
 - b) The full details of the child/children for whom foster rates have been applied.
 - c) Full details of parents of child, including whereabouts, financial circumstances and reason for placement.
3. Recommendations for commencement and termination of payment to be made on usual yellow Subsidy/Movement Advice (Form D.C.W. 247), clearly indicating that the subject of the application is not a ward, and if white or native. This form, the application and the Report are then to be submitted to the Welfare Section.
4. If action is initiated at Head Office, the application form will then be completed and with any known details, be forwarded to the appropriate Division or District Office, and then actioned as in (2 and 3 above).

Your co-operating in observing the above procedures, is requested.

A/DIRECTOR

2 November 1973

Addition No. 33 2/11/73.
Precedes Section 13-2
"Management in cases of suspected
child maltreatment".

Distribution:
All Field Staff

APPENDIX 2:

‘Policy and Guidelines for the Payment of Departmental Foster Subsidies’

This undated policy document (circa 1980) demonstrates that, under the Department’s policies and procedures in place at the time, the Department regarded itself as responsible for children placed in subsidised kinship care arrangements. This is made explicit in Policy Statement 5.5, which provides that:

“Where the Department financially supports placements arranged between extended family or between a culture, community or friends by mutual consent, the Department will ensure that the placement offers a safe, nurturing, stable and culturally relevant environment for the child.” (p.5)

This policy document also identifies four categories of foster placement. Category 1 applied to placements of State Wards. Categories 2 and 3 applied to both wards and non-wards. Category 4 applied to privately arranged placements.

Importantly, departmental policy limited Category 4 placements to a maximum duration of one year. (see Policy Statement 5.4, p.5 and Item 6.2.4, p.7)

At the conclusion of that period, the placement was required to be reclassified as either:

- a Category 1 placement, equivalent to a child under the care and/or control of the State (wardship); or
- a Category 2 placement, in which the Department formally accepted responsibility for the child’s placement, notwithstanding the absence of a court order.

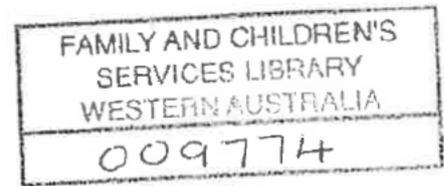
In both Category 1 and Category 2 placements, children were subject to supervision, support, and review arrangements equivalent to those provided to State Wards.

WA Department of Communities. *Policy and Guidelines for the Payment of Departmental Foster Subsidies*. Family and Children’s Services Library, WA. Ref: 009774. (Undated, circa 1980)

Released to Tuart Place pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, [REDACTED], 24 October 2025.

APPENDIX 2

NOTE: The handwritten underlining and marks in this document appeared in the copy provided to Tuart Place under FOI in October 2025



POLICY AND GUIDELINES

FOR THE PAYMENT OF

DEPARTMENTAL FOSTER SUBSIDIES

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S
SERVICES LIBRARY
189 ROYAL STREET
EAST PERTH W.A. 5004

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1.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the Department for Community Services' framework for the payment of subsidies for children in foster care. It reflects the Department's aim for a comprehensive and co-ordinated subsidy policy and is a decision making model for approving subsidy payments within the Department.

2.

2. OBJECTIVES OF POLICY AND GUIDELINES

- To provide a clear set of rules to be understood by all staff.
- To ensure the quality of decision making is of a uniform and highest possible standard.
- To provide written grounds to justify decisions made.

3.

3. MANDATE FOR PAYMENT OF FOSTER SUBSIDIES

"Private Foster Rates" are paid under the welfare and Assistance Act. All other payments have as their legislative support the Child Welfare Act.

Welfare and Assistance Act 1961.

Section 8(a)

8. The Minister may for the purpose of rendering and affording financial assistance -

a) to or on behalf of indigent persons;

make advances at his discretion to persons who apply for such assistance and satisfy the Minister that in the circumstances of the case such assistance should be given.

Child Welfare Act 1947

Section 65 & 66

65. The Minister may pay to the governing authority of any subsidized centre or subsidized facility for the maintenance therein of any child, such sum and for such periods as he may determine.

66. The Minister may pay to the foster-parent of any child, for the care and maintenance of such child, such sum as he may determine.

4. PRINCIPLES FOR PAYMENT OF SUBSIDIES

- 4.1 Subsidy payments should be made with the initial intent of assisting with the reunification of families.
- 4.2 Subsidy payments are not income maintenance payments.
- 4.3 Subsidy payments are linked to costs associated with maintaining and caring for a child, and do not represent reimbursement for all costs which may be incurred for a particular child.
- 4.4 Caregivers are considered volunteers and subsidy payments are provided as reimbursement for child related costs and not a fee for the service provided by the caregiver.
- 4.5 Subsidy payments should allow for degrees of payments to accommodate the age and needs differences of children.
- 4.6 Relative to those subsidies available to State Wards, caregivers should not be financially disadvantaged by the Department placing a child in their care.
- 4.7 In addition to basic subsidy, every foster parent with a child placed by the Department has the entitlement to reimbursement for those extra expenses approved for payment by the Department.
- 4.8 Parents have responsibility for the financial support of their children.
- 4.9 Where placements are arranged between members of an extended family or between a culture, community or friends by mutual consent, the Department has no obligation to support financially such placements.

5.

5. POLICY STATEMENTS

- 5.1 No child will be committed to the care of the Department for purely financial reasons.
- 5.2 Where the Department separates or approves the separation of children from their families and places them with other caregivers, the Department will ensure that, amongst other considerations, these children are financially supported in their placements.
- 5.3 Children 'Placed Under the Control' of the Department, and non ward children placed in foster care by the Department will receive the appropriate ward subsidy rate.
- 5.4 Subsidy payments approved to provide support for the care of a non-ward child privately placed will be paid at a rate less than the ward rate and for a maximum period of not more than 12 months.
- 5.5 Where the Department financially supports placements arranged between extended family or between a culture, community or friends by mutual consent, the Department will ensure that the placement offers a safe, nurturing, stable and culturally relevant environment for the child.
- 5.6 The Department will not pursue the non payment of any agreed parental contributions towards the cost of maintaining a child in foster care.
- 5.7 The guardianship and adoption of children will in certain circumstances be supported by subsidy payments where the higher than normal costs of maintaining the child would prevent the caregiver accepting guardianship or adoption.
- 5.8 The level of subsidy payment will be reviewed annually and adjusted in line with costs of living increases.

6.

6. PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR SUBSIDY PAYMENT

6.1 OVERVIEW

There will be 4 categories for subsidy payment.

- (i) Three categories will be for those placements requiring close supervision and support by the Department or an approved agency.
- (ii) One category will be for those placements which have been privately arranged and assessed by the Department as not requiring intensive intervention.

6.2 CATEGORIES OF SUBSTITUTE CARE AND GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING PAYMENT

6.2.1 Category 1 (Child Under Care and/or Control)

Children placed in Category 1 placements are to be provided with ongoing support, supervision and review. This includes the placement of children under order who are placed with an approved agency by the Department or within Departmental programmes. This category includes all wards in foster care.

A case review is to be held within the Divisional Office on the child and family at the end of the child's first three months in Substitute Care. Further reviews should be at least six monthly.

6.2.2 Category 2 (Department accepts responsibility for the child's placement, but child not under order)

These children are provided with the same supervision, support and review arrangements as children in Category 1 placements.

Children can be placed in Category 2 in one of the following ways:-

- a) The child's placement in Departmental foster care, an approved foster care agency programme or placement with relatives, is arranged by a Departmental worker and approved by the Divisional Supervisor; or;

7.

- b) The child's placement is initially privately arranged by the natural parents or the child but, following assessment, the Departmental worker recommends, and the Divisional Supervisor, approves, the placement as a Category 2 placement. This would only be appropriate where the child would be at demonstrable risk of abuse or neglect if active intervention, support and ongoing supervision were not provided for the placement; or
- c) The child's placement is initially classified as a Category 4 placement but, at a late stage, a review recommends, and the Divisional Supervisor approves, that the placement now requires intensive intervention and ongoing supervision by the Department and consequently, is reclassified as a category 2 placement.

6.2.3 Category 3 (Child placed by approved foster care agency - eg Wanslea)

Responsibility for intervention and supervision of these children normally rests with the foster care agency. If the child is placed by the Department with an approved agency, the placement is to be classified as a Category 1 or 2 placement.

6.2.4 Category 4 (Privately arranged placements)

The Department is under no obligation to provide financial support for privately arranged placements.

The decision to make private foster payments will be based upon the needs of the child, and the family circumstances of the natural and foster families.

Payments are to be used to maintain children who are non-wards in non-parental family care over a relatively short period of time up to a maximum of one year.

(4) Financial support may be provided, with the approval of the Divisional Supervisor, initially for up to three months, in situations where:-

8.

- (a) neither parent (including step and defacto parents) is able or willing to provide adequate care for the child;
- (b) the current caregiver is unable to provide adequate care for the child;
- (c) intensive social work and/or legal intervention by the Department is not required to meet the needs of the child; and
- (d) the parents are unable to financially maintain their child in Substitute Care.

Individuals or families providing temporary care of children in these circumstances are to be recorded as 'particular child only' status as they do not necessarily have the prerequisites for registered Departmental foster parents.

All placements qualifying for assistance must be investigated, endorsed and recommended by the field officer.

Where Category 4 placements continue for up to three months, and continued financial support is sought, a review should be held within the three month period to reassess whether the placement should continue to be financially supported by the Department. Where the conditions outlined above continue to prevail, the case review may recommend that the Divisional Supervisor approve an extension of payment for a further three months.

Where a Category 4 placement is to continue for longer than six months, and continued financial assistance is sought, a case review should be held within the next six month period, to determine why the child has not returned to live with a natural parent and what action the Department should take to meet the needs of the child. If the conditions outlined above are still present, the case review may recommend the placement be reclassified to a Category 1 or 2 placement, or recommend an extension of payment for a further period of time to a maximum of 6 months.

9.

The aim of having time-limited subsidy payments for Category 4 placements is to ensure that privately arranged placements which may initially merit support from the Department do not "drift on" unnecessarily after a temporary family crisis has passed.

When financial assistance is initially granted, recipients are to be advised, along with parents and guardians, that payments will be reviewed within 3 months and for a maximum of 12 months. Payment for category 4 will cease following appropriate advice of imminent termination at the end of the 12 month period.

It is however recognised that some privately arranged placements may need to continue to receive financial support, and other avenues of Departmental intervention will have to be considered by the case worker. This could involve additional resources being made available to the natural family so the child could return home or the placement being reclassified to either Category 1 or 2 depending on the intensity of intervention and supervision required.

7. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

7.1 RELATIVE CARE

As it is Departmental policy to seek to maintain a child within his/her extended family, a modified assessment of near relatives will be developed.

Near relative is defined as the father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle or any grand parent of the child.

This assessment will aim to be:

- (i) As non-intrusive as possible to the family
- (ii) Acknowledge familial responsibilities and obligations and the wishes of the child
- (iii) Streamlined to minimize delay in placement
- (iv) Usually be for a particular child only
- (v) Not to qualify the family as a foster family

7.2 FOSTER CARE

As it is the care needs of children which are being addressed, all caregivers other than near relatives will be subject to a full assessment.

7.3 CULTURAL AND ETHNIC CONTEXT

An assessment procedure to suit Aboriginal communities and specific ethnic groups is appropriate.