



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release July 14, 2021

Media Contact: Lisa Frost
EA Community Engagement
Family Services Australia
lisa.frost@familyservices.org.au
(Office) +61.2. 1800 FSA 000 (1800 372 000)

**Family Services Australia Launches Inaugural
Aboriginal Advisory Committee**

***Family Services House
Illawarra-Shoalhaven Community Services Hub***

*Stockland Civic Plaza,
211 Lake Entrance Road, Shellharbour City Centre NSW*

*FSA Illawarra-Shoalhaven, Sutherland, SW Sydney, Southern Highlands, Northern
NSW, Tweed Heads NSW, Gold Coast and Ipswich QLD, Australia.*

Through the combined support of community, government and the corporate sector, Family Services Illawarra Limited, trading as Family Services Australia (FSA) announced today it had formed an independent Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC) to innovate therapeutic responses to early intervention needs of First Nations children, young people and families throughout Australia.

Following community, client and stakeholder feedback, FSA has independently formed its AAC with the appointment of three prominent Australian First Nations people:

Chaired by Professor Paul Chandler, Bidjigal man, BSc. (Hons). DipEd. MSc. PhD MAICD. An internationally renowned cognitive psychologist, Professor Chandler is currently a Distinguished Fellow and Honorary Professor at UNSW and creator and Foundation Director (Early Start) at UOW. He was the first Aboriginal person to attain a PhD at UNSW and first and only Aboriginal Faculty Dean at any Australian University.

Amara Barnes, Wiradjuri Woman, Indigenous Engagement and Partnerships Manager, Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) Australia; and former Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Manager at UOW.

Andrew Craig, Gamilaroi Man and Workforce Development and Training Manager, Fulton Hogan.

Speaking at the launch, **Professor Paul Chandler, Chairperson of the FSA AAC** said, *“The AAC team are all so excited to be working with the innovative FSA team and particularly enthusiastic about providing professional and research support to the FSA Therapeutic Aboriginal Child and Family Centre. We believe our “early years are the key to success” approach will be of great significance, and will benefit Aboriginal children and their families in the Illawarra and*

beyond. We are also honoured to be working with Craig Bloxsome and the newly proposed Uncle and Aunt in Residence. This will bring deep local cultural knowledge, and understanding of the local families which will bring about cultural safeness and powerful change”

Mr Gary Jackson, FSA Managing Director and Company Secretary said, *‘The launch of our Aboriginal Advisory Committee will see through early intervention, the prevention of inter-generational trauma risk from our Australian history. Family Services Australia will always aim to achieve therapeutic reconciliation for all First Nations people.’*

Mr Jackson added, *‘As chosen facilitators on behalf of community led goals, we will nurture and empower children, young people and adults to ensure we deliver inner capacity, improved health and well-being in cultural safety, while protecting and extending life expectancy through therapeutic and traditional multidisciplinary community services.’*

FSA’s Aboriginal Community Engagement Coordinator Mr. Craig Bloxsome, Proud Yuin man from the Wandj Wandandian tribe on the NSW South Coast said, *‘With community led support, our AAC and planned introduction of an Aunt and Uncle in Residence, FSA is achieving cultural safety and well-being for our First Nations children, young people and families, reversing the trends of the past.’*

About Mr. Craig Bloxsome

Mr. Bloxsome was raised with cultural knowledge from the Wreck Bay community where his great Grandfather was one of the first settlers in that community and maintained a connection to country, family, and spiritual beliefs that has been passed down through the generations.

Mr. Bloxsome said, *‘As we acknowledge NAIDOC, this is very important to our people and its origins that can be traced to the emergence of Aboriginal groups in the 1920’s, which sought to increase awareness in the wider community of the status and treatment of First Nations peoples.’*

Mr. Bloxsome said, *‘The 2021 NAIDOC theme Heal Country calls for all Australians to continue to seek greater protection for our lands, waters, sacred sites and cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration and destruction. It’s a celebration of diversity, culture and achievements of First Nations people.’* **Mr. Bloxsome added,** *‘It is also a time to celebrate the oldest and continuous living culture in the world. For me, it’s about coming together to look at and acknowledge the past, working together in the present and planning together in the future’*

FSA is situated in its community services hub set on 3,000sqm, joined by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) South Coast Academy (SCA); Mission Australia; a Telstra Platinum IT Partner, Virtual IT Group; Edmen Community Staffing Solutions; and a Campos Coffee Community Café, Signora’s Café and Deli.

While only 373sqm remains left at Family Services House, it is available for a planned Therapeutic Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, which space can be secured with complementary fit-out to meet community led needs of First Nations peoples.

Ends ###

FSA Aboriginal Community Engagement – Education and Awareness

Family Services Australia acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and the places in which we live. We pay respect to Ancestors and Elders, past, present and future. We recognise the unique cultural and spiritual relationship and celebrate the contributions of First Nations peoples to Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this media release public link may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material.

Some material may contain terms that reflect authors' views, or those of the period in which the item was written or recorded, but may not be considered appropriate today. These views are not necessarily the views of Family Services Australia. While the information may not reflect current understanding, it is provided in a historical context.

About Family Services Australia (FSA)

Established in 1992, FSA aims to keep clients *Safe, Well, Strong and Connected* through direct services to local children, young people, parents and families who are striving to achieve this but face multiple and sometimes insurmountable challenges.

In 2016 a revised multi-disciplined service commitment was launched to holistically support unmet client needs in multiple geographies in Southern and Northern NSW and in South East and South West QLD, later expanding from (2) to (34) sites.

Currently **FSA Client Satisfaction (CSAT)** is 97.5% and **Employee Satisfaction (ESAT)** 90%, representing our values of **Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Empowerment (CARE) with Integrity.**

Throughout the regions it operates, FSA has been established to continue its community support journey through Merger and Acquisition (M&A), Community, Philanthropic, Government, Non-Government Organisation (NGO) and select Corporate sector partnerships.

For more information visit www.familyservices.org.au or call 1800 FSA 000 (1800 372 000)

About Family Services House

Family Services House is a unique facility designed and located in the community interest, representing a trusted place to go when our community needs support. FSA are grateful that through the dedication, therapeutic care and life outcomes our staff consistently provide, a long term easily accessible facility has been secured in the community interest on 30year recurring terms.

Keeping children, young people, adults and families *Safe, Well, Strong and Connected*.

Built with dedicated Telstra fibre to the premises technology supported on-site by the industry leading Virtual IT Group, Family Services House is also home to a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) South Coast Academy (SCA), Mission Australia, Edmen Community Staffing Solutions and a Campos Coffee Community Café, Signora's Café and Deli.

Together on-site with FSA's six integrated child and family service streams available to clients through referral in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven regions and throughout NSW and Australia online:

1. Early Intervention (EI) – Park and Play, All About Play and 21 evidence-based Group Work programs, Children and Creche Services and Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) supporting the Shoalhaven;
2. Child Youth and Family Support (CYFS) – Including Families NSW;
3. FSA Psychology, Mental Health Support and Wellbeing (MHS&W) – Child, Adolescent and Adult psychological services and Online e-Consult Child Mental Health Services (CMHS) including available telehealth services for ages 4-18 throughout NSW schools;
4. Disability Management Services (DMS) – Disability Employment Services (DES) and Specialist Mental Health Services;
5. Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) – Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) and both Child and Adult Victims Counselling Services; and
6. Intensive Family Preservation (IFP) – Together with Drugs and Alcohol in Pregnancy and Parenting Services (DAPPS)

About FSA Psychology – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Support and Wellbeing

Est. 2012 and now with a Community Reach of more than 26,757 Occasions of Service (OoS) per annum, FSA Psychology provides a range of counselling and personal development services in a friendly environment for kids, teens and families in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven and through e-Consults Online, helping to protect and promote client well-being.

FSA Psychology offers an uplifting environment that continues to create long-lasting solutions to some of the most demanding health challenges facing society and communities today. Our FSA Psychology Child Mental Health Services (CMHS) service stream has been founded on a model that acknowledges that the best progress occurs for vulnerable people when there is a strong base of support around them. For more information see www.FSApsychology.org.au or call 1800 FSA 000 (1800 372 000) Option 2.