



Better Chances
Forum

Better Chances Forum Engagement Practice Resource

*Learning and stories from Bundjalung, Yaegl
and Gumbaynggirr Country, Northern Rivers,
NSW*

30 June 2023

Version 1



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.

Inclusion is about the actions we take every day. We welcome, support, and celebrate diversity.

Purpose

This resource brings together learning and stories from Better Chances Forum (BCF) members and stakeholders to help shape, build and share how we engage children, young people and their families and communities.

What is included in this resource?

- Overview of BCF, what it is and how we work together.
- BCF Engagement Practice Project overview, definition of engagement practice and who is involved.
- What we learned from BCF members – a summary of themes from our BCF engagement practice workshops conducted in 2022 and 2023.
- Sharing of stories and examples of engagement practice from Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr Country (Northern Rivers) from the 2023 Better Chances Engagement Practice Forum.
- Links to other resources for engagement practice including principles for policy making, and other frameworks, guides and tools.

This resource is designed as a living document with further versions to be created incorporating additional information from BCF members.

About Better Chances Forum

Better Chances Forum (BCF) is a collaboration supporting better chances for children, young people, their families and communities to lead safe, healthy and happy lives. We focus on early intervention and prevention to keep families together.

We bring together people from organisations and groups across the Northern Rivers region of NSW to:

- connect, reflect and build our practice
- share information and build relationships
- act to work more supportively alongside children, young people, their families and communities
- create space for storytelling to explore what's working and not working in our service systems — to understand challenges, gaps and opportunities— and communicate these stories to decision-makers.

BCF is convened by Social Futures as part of the Early Intervention Connect program, which is funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice under the Targeted Earlier Intervention program.

Our agreement – how we work together in BCF

BCF participants work together to set up supportive spaces for challenging conversations. We:

- acknowledge each other's knowledge and respect each other's contribution
- listen deeply – not to respond, to understand
- help create a space that is safe for people to ask questions
- be clear about what is confidential and mindful of privacy for our clients and colleagues
- offer support in the group to debrief with colleagues
- remember it is ok to step out if you need to – let us know if you would like to check in
- encourage you to share your story and experience being heard
- acknowledge that language matters because strengths-based, respectful language will support us and people we work with.

This agreement supports BCF members to learn together and reflects how we approach our work with children and young people. We come to BCF activities to connect, collaborate and to be challenged and build our practice. We aim to leave better off than when we arrived.

About the BCF engagement practice project

In 2022 BCF commenced our engagement practice project to support workers managers and organisations in strengthening how we engage with children, young people and their families and communities. The engagement practice project has included:

- reflective practice workshops for workers and managers facilitated by Social Futures and Ngyunya Jarjum in 2022 and 2023
- the March 2023 regional Better Chances Engagement Practice Forum in Ballina, bringing together 140 people to connect and share stories and examples of how we approach engaging children and young people and their families and communities
- further opportunities for BCF members to share and reflect on their engagement experiences, including through monthly connection meetings
- development of this resource.

What do we mean by engagement practice?

Engagement practice includes:

- how services connect with children, young people and families seeking support (may include approach to intake, assessment, planning and relationship building)
- how we support children, young people and their families to influence decisions about their lives and the support they will receive (alongside services and community)
- building relationships between services and community to support wellbeing
- involving children, young people and their families in the design, delivery and evaluation of services, programs, activities and policy.

What we learned from BCF members

Seven BCF engagement practice reflection workshops were held in 2022 and 2023, facilitated by Social Futures and Ngunya Jarjum Aboriginal Child and Family Network. Participants worked in small groups – sharing experiences of successful engagement with a child, young person or family, and discussing what made the engagement successful, followed by larger group discussion about implications for our engagement practice. Further engagement practice discussions were held during BCF connection meetings throughout 2022-23.

An overview of themes from BCF engagement practice workshops and discussions is presented below.

Relationships, relationships, relationships!

Relationships are critical – listening, validation, seeing everyone as an individual and building trust – to connect.

Start by meeting where people are at. Don't worry if we don't provide what we think they need – we can still be open, honest, acknowledge our limits and connect with others best placed to help. No single agency has all the solutions.

Children and young people and families need to know a worker they are relying on has their back and is a safe person.

If we know our children, young people and families, we can advocate alongside them for what they need; and see when assumptions others make about them need to be corrected. This is important when unfair assumptions about children, young people and families influence or restrict their options and pathways.

We need to learn how, and make space, to put children and young people at the front from the get-go – not just relying on family/parent views about children and young people's experiences and needs.

Being locally based and community-led, immersed and visible in community supports engagement.

It's the way we work with children, young people and families that tells them how welcome they are. If they are not engaging, we might need to think about what we can do differently to build a relationship with them.

Self-determination, empowerment and decision-making

When we have good relationships with children, young people and families we are better placed to support them in their choices and decisions. When you have built trust and connection you are better placed to help reframe and support people to see their strengths.

Carry our agenda lightly. We can offer options without being prescriptive about solutions. Part of our responsibility is to work together to identify and explore options, to make sense of different choices and possible impacts and back their decisions. Workshop participants noted the importance of supporting the choices children, young people and families make, even when it's not the decision we would make or recommend. We can support people's goals, big or small.

Stepping in, stepping back – one workshop participant described this as like a cha-cha dance – leaving space for children, young people and families to take up their responsibility.

We find pathways to access support that people are seeking that may not be obvious through standard referral processes, and we sometimes need to translate between C&YP and families and our services and systems. One workshop participant noted it's important that we are transparent, especially with young people, about how and why we translate to support them to act on their choices.

We often need to balance organisational and system requirements with what's right for children, young people and families – to support them to act on their choices.

We need to find ways to help people to see and feel they have permission to say what they want and know they will be heard and respected – that we will support them to have a voice in ways that are really going to work for them and support to have a voice that will be heard.

Sometimes informed consent for children and young people can be different to parent/family consent. They may have different views or different needs to understand their choices.

Working with humanity

Workshop participants discussed the importance of working in a very human, authentic way to create safe spaces, connect and support good engagement. This requires a level of vulnerability from us as workers, and to do this we need to:

- understand our own vulnerability
- have good boundaries
- practice self-care
- be willing to sit in discomfort
- build our skills and understanding to work intentionally using our own lived experience where relevant (mutuality)
- have space and support to reflect on our practice.

We need to recognise and manage our own feelings and frustrations so that they don't get in the way of listening and validating children, young people and families' experience – so we can offer empathy.

Get comfortable with silence and allow children, young people and families time to think and gather their thoughts. One workshop participant noted many feel shame if they are hurried and unable to respond.

Some practical engagement tips from participants

- Patience – remember that it could be 30 minutes or longer before a child, young person or family feels comfortable enough to get into a conversation.
- Give children, young people and families a heads up on what will be happening in your next session with them, or what their choices are, so they can consider how they engage and be prepared.
- Stop and ask people to clarify their understanding of your conversation – rather just assuming the information you have shared is understood.
- Sometimes people say yes to an appointment because they feel an expectation that they cannot say no, even though they won't be able to attend. There could be a very simple reason like an appointment clash, or the options offered may not be suitable or appropriate. When they don't show up we sometimes assume unfairly that they are not committed.
- We can encourage people to speak up in these situations by letting them know how we will support them to follow through on their decisions. We can also ask questions to clarify whether the support offered suits the child, young person or family.
- Letting children, young people and families know that their time is as valuable as ours.
- Use simple, accessible language, which benefits everyone.
- Pets can be a great way to connect with children and young people.
- Find ways to work alongside other programs and activities to connect where people are. Offer a range of professional, valued and effective activities and programs independently and in partnership with others – providing interesting and appealing options to reach a wide range of people from all ages, stages, backgrounds and circumstances.
- Communicate messages that acknowledge diversity in the environment and spaces where children and young people engage.
- Facilitate transport for young people to get to activities.

Sector invitation to share stories of engagement practice

Following the engagement practice workshops and the desire from the sector to continue this conversation and connect at a face-to-face event, we asked BCF members to submit applications to present at the 2023 Better Chances Engagement Practice Forum. The conference theme was 'Connect, reflect and share our stories'. We wanted to hear and learn about engagement projects and approaches from within Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr Country (and beyond), particularly those that are locally, community or culturally led. We received many applications. An outline of the selected presentations is included in the following section of this resource.

Further presentations are being shared at Better Chances Forum monthly connection meetings.

2023 Better Chances Engagement Practice Forum

The 2023 Better Chances Engagement Forum was an event for workers, services and community representatives supporting children, young people and their families across Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr Country (Northern Rivers NSW).

It was held on Wednesday 15 March 2023 at Ballina RSL and attended by more than 140 people representing over 43 organisations.

The forum was delivered by a dedicated committee of BCF members, including Our Regional NSW (Office for Regional Youth), Social Futures, Ngunya Jarjum Aboriginal Child and Family Network, Livable, YWCA Australia, Northern NSW Local Health District, NSW Department of Education, We AI-i Programs, Centre for Children and Young People SCU and FAMS (Family Services NSW).

And was proudly supported by YWCA Australia, Social Futures and the Department of Communities and Justice, Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Program.

Uncle Lester Moran opened the forum which was followed by an interactive grounding activity facilitated by Murwillumbah Community Centre Indigenous Programs.

The day consisted of morning presentations and afternoon workshops which were introduced by MC's Kylie Maunder and Ian O'Reilly (Social Futures). Presentations included the day are outlined below.

The event concluded with a whole group reflection. Asking participants to consider engagement strategies they have heard today which they can include in their practice, including; go outside and offer sessions outdoors, deep listening, connect to a place and nature, breathe together, grounding, movement, slow down and simplify, voice, yarning, family-lead decision making processes, and the importance of sharing of stories.



Artwork: Sharing, walking and working together by Naomi Moran Bundjalung | Dunguthi

2023 Better Chances Engagement Practice Forum

An exciting regional forum for workers, services and community representatives who support children, young people and their families across Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr Countries (Northern Rivers).

Wednesday 15 March | 9:30am - 4pm | Ballina RSL

Connect, reflect and share our stories

Connect and build relationships. Reflect on how we connect, support and involve, children, young people and families who engage with our services.

Hear and learn about engagement projects and approaches that are locally, community or culturally-led from within the Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr Countries and beyond.

COST: \$45 per ticket (incl GST) plus booking fee
Includes catered morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

For complementary community member tickets or ticketing support contact betterchances@socialfutures.org.au or visit our website.

YWCA Australia **SOCIAL FUTURES**

This forum is organised by a dedicated committee of Better Chances Forum (BCF) members, including: Office for Regional Youth, Social Futures, Ngunya Jarjum Aboriginal Child and Family Network, Livable, YWCA Australia, Northern NSW Local Health District, NSW Department of Education, We AI-i Programs, The Family Centre, Centre for Children and Young People SCU and FAMS.

Proudly supported by YWCA Australia, Social Futures and the Department of Communities and Justice Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Program.

1800 719 625 betterchances@socialfutures.org.au

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Forum feedback and next steps

Most attendees shared within their evaluation that they have made or strengthened connections, have new learning that will enhance their practice and would recommend the forum to their colleagues.

Some of the most valuable parts of the forum identified in evaluations were the first keynote presentation on family-led decision making (by Michelle Rogers), learning about different services in the area and connection. Participants shared they were able to gain some valuable information and insight and engage in networking that will allow them to better serve and engage families, children, young people and community.

Suggested improvements include providing a ready-made resource of all organisations at the event, and providing more time to connect and space for organisations to speak more about what they do.

All attendees were provided with a shared contact list of attendees so people could stay connected after the event and invited to keep connecting and sharing their engagement practice through the BCF monthly connections meetings. Thank you to everyone who participated and supported the Forum.

For more information and to view the event image gallery see Social Futures website <https://socialfutures.org.au/2023-better-chances-engagement-practice-forum-photo-gallery/>



Stories and examples of engagement practice – presentations and workshops

Dignity of choice: Family-led decision making made real (Michelle Rogers, Ngunya Jarjum Aboriginal Child and Family Network)



This presentation supported delegates to better understand their roles in supporting families working towards change, and in providing support to practitioners to hold their power and privilege in a manner that facilitates family led decision making in practice. Michelle is a Wiradjuri woman, visiting in Bundjalung Country. A strong practitioner background in child protection, focussed on family led decision making in practice and dignity through choice, she challenges self-determination and empowerment concepts in the face of systemic oppression. Choice offers dignity,

dignity empowers, empowerment enables self-determination and self-determination is healing. The presentation explored understanding unconscious bias and gently pushing practitioners to challenge our own understanding of our role and impact in Aboriginal families and communities.

For more information contact Ngunya Jarjum Aboriginal Child and Family Network

<https://ngunyajarjum.com/>.

A community conversation weaving together stories of community-led engagement and action (led by North Coast Youth Action with the NSW Office for Regional Youth)

The panel shared an intergenerational conversation between community members from Clarence Youth Action, Richmond Community Association, North Tracks, Clarence River U3A and Maclean High School. The group shared stories about working together across generations, different experiences of community and interest in more engaging activities for the younger people in our community.



Find more information about North Coast Youth Action via the NSW Office for Regional Youth <https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/regional-youth-community-coordinator-initiative>. Participants in the community conversation included the following.

Zak Masters and Jeremy Jablonski, Clarence Youth Action

In the wake of a heartbreaking wave of suicides among young people, Clarence Youth Action (CYA) emerged in 2016 to create positive change. CYA brought together community and service providers for events, forums, and meetings on issues that affect youth – giving young people an unprecedented platform to have their voices heard. This innovative model puts Young People at the centre of designing social change making initiatives. Hear from Jeremy & Zak – both inspired by CYA's impactful work on improving conditions around them – now pursuing careers directly involved in championing causes related to young people today!

Ben West and Portia Walker, Richmond Community Association

Ben and Portia are part of the Richmond Community Association, a group of passionate and motivated individuals who have inspired community led action and locally led events and initiatives supporting local young people in the Casino and Richmond communities. Ben recently led the successful Water is Life initiative, supporting local youth in Casino to create a bush tucker walk along the riverbank has strengthened the cultural identities of its young Indigenous participants. The project reinforced youth connection to country, Elders, and community. Meanwhile, as part of her involvement on Advocate for Children & Young People's Youth Advisory Committee (as a young parent), Portia has become known throughout the region as a passionate advocate and champion for community driven action. Both Portia and Ben continue to advocate for youth in the Richmond and are working on a range of exciting locally led initiatives.

Patrick Higgins and Phill Hilliard, North Tracks

Phil and Patrick are founding members of North Tracks, which offers a lifeline to struggling young people by reconnecting them back to the community, practical learning to help them find employment and life-changing opportunities that create hope and pathways for a better future. Patrick is a local business owner and manages a team working in the real estate industry. A former board member of CASPA in Lismore for 5 years, Captain of a local Rural Fire Brigade, his time at CASPA saw a need for a local youth group that address the issues of community engagement and building better self-images so our youth can lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. With an impressive career in banking, Phil has brought his expert knowledge of governance and risk to the organisation. His time as CEO of Ballina Fishman's Co-Op is now leading him into generous retirement – a role which he continues with by staying on committee for Wollongbar Rugby Club.

Allan Woods, Clarence River U3A and John Elisaia, Maclean high school

University of the 3rd Age is a not-for-profit volunteer organisation, dedicated to life-long learning. It caters to retired or semi-retired people aged over 50. In 2020, Allan Woods and a large group of volunteers developed a grassroots collaboration between their Men's Shed, Mudyala Aboriginal Corporation, Nungera Aboriginal Co-Operative Society and Maclean High School supporting young men aged 13-20 in basic craftsmen and entrepreneurial skills. This intergenerational project has strengthened community ties, re engaged young people in education and built a team of unlikely mentors that has led to purpose, belonging and connection for both age groups. The U3A women have now expressed interest in developing a similar initiative for young women.

Headspace Lismore young people's advisory group

The Young People's Advisory Committee (YPAC), first established in 2015, is a group of young people aged 12 to 25 years who live in the local community who volunteer to share their ideas and opinions to represent young people at large and have their voices heard. The YPAC contributes to headspace by attending and planning community events, facilitating workshops, and providing feedback to better improve our communities we live in.

Developing a culture of design as a first step towards community engagement practice (Lisa Jovaisa, YWCA Communities for Children and Josh Creighton, Agency in Design)

This presentation showcased Agency in Design and YWCA Communities for Children's (CFC) Culture of Design project with our CFC Community Partners. They explored the need for Indigenous Knowledge informed reflection of practice as a first step to improving community practice for all people. This presentation provided an example of cross-cultural collaboration in action and shared insights/learnings from initial phases of the project.

For more information contact YWCA Australia Communities for Children program
<https://www.ywca.org.au/programs/child-protection/communities-for-children/>.

“They won’t engage” (Tyarna Larkin with Andy Hamilton, Sally McAdam and Heidi Viall, Human Nature Adventure Therapy)

Human Nature Adventure Therapy (HNAT) shared an exploration of adventure therapy as an effective mode of engagement for adolescents, and HNAT’s development as an organisation using video and slides followed by a facilitated panel consisting of adventure therapists, therapeutic mentors and program participants discussing challenges and successes with engagement for healing.



Find more information about HNAT at <https://humannature.org.au/>.

Bunyarabugalma: to make well – make healthy (Lara Lei, Aunty Dierdre Currie and Jamie Penny, Murwillumbah Community Centre Indigenous Programs)



Bunyarabugalma (to make well - make healthy) is a locally produced, Aboriginal designed trauma healing approach for all ages incorporating therapeutic breathing, stretching, Aboriginal language learning and animal postures to connect mind, body and spirit. It was developed by Murwillumbah Community Centre’s (MCC) Indigenous Programs team and has proven itself as a great engage children, young people and adults. It can be used in all settings with people of all ages and developmental stages. Participants experience the benefits of connecting with language, breath and movement for a deeper connection to community, country and culture.

MCC Indigenous Programs has developed a video (DVD) and card set as part of the *Bunyarabugalma Healing Resource*. For more information contact MCC Indigenous Programs via <https://mccentre.org.au/murwillumbah-hub/>.

Flow: Explore our own stories and stories of communities we are part of, past and present, through movement and sound (Yaegl Bundjalung man Mitch King)

Flow workshop is about acknowledging how we are influenced by the environment around us whether it is walking on the land that we care for or from the consumption of the waterways that we are connected to. Through movement and sound we explore our own stories as well as the stories of the communities that we are a part of, both from the past and the present.



Primarily Based on play building processes Flow creates a togetherness with the group that is super engaging yet fun for participants at the same time. Coming from the premise that everyone has their own rhythm and way of moving Flow shows that everybody can be creative with their own sense of being while still exploring the unknown possibilities. For more information contact Mitch King mkflowprojects@gmail.com.

Gender and sexuality: Creating safer and more inclusive spaces in the community (Simeon Remata and Sharyn Marshall, ACON)

ACON led a discussion on the diversity of gender and sexuality and some simple strategies for individuals and organisations/service providers to create a safer and more inclusive spaces in their communities. The presentation covered gender identity, expression and experience; use of pronouns; sexual identity, orientation and behaviour; stigma and health disparities in the LGBTQ community; HIV prevention strategies; services and programs of ACON. For more information contact ACON <https://www.acon.org.au/who-we-are-here-for/regional-nsw/#acon-northern-rivers>.

Milkiri: Inclusion in culture schools program (Richard Clarke, Social Futures)

This presentation showcased an innovative culturally-led program for primary school children looking at disability inclusion from a First Nations cultural perspective. Milkiri is facilitated by Richard Clarke, a Ngemba man and storyteller who uses his cultural knowledge and own family experiences to help students understand disability inclusion through a cultural lens. Richard, alongside the Capacity-Building & Engagement team as part of Local Area Coordination (NDIS) at Social Futures, has developed Milkiri for all students alongside our other school disability inclusion programs such as Sports Ability. Social Futures has found that Milkiri is especially powerful for Aboriginal students and students with disability. Sessions are accessible for all students and presented in a variety of learning styles: watching, storytelling, demonstration, listening, tactile, interactive play, discussions. Richard will present on the program and show some of the resources he uses in the sessions.

The key principles of cultural inclusion Richard talks about are:

- our culture keeps us strong
- all community members have valuable roles in their family, kinship and community, regardless of disability or difference
- everyone takes care of each other in our community
- we are all connected to Country in mind, body and spirit – there can be different ways to connect to Country for everyone.

For more information <https://socialfutures.org.au/service/milkiri-ant-dance/>.

Empower young people to take charge of their mental wellbeing (Batyr)

batyr is a youth mental health non-profit organisation that delivers preventative mental health education programs within schools, universities and the community. This session provided an overview of batyr's programs and how they create an impact in the community. batyr explored the impact of having young people share their lived experience of mental health at their programs and through their innovative storytelling app - OurHerd.

Participants were also introduced to Being Herd, a free workshop that empowers young people to share their stories of lived experience, highlighting the themes of hope and resilience throughout their journey. batyr reflected on the work they have done in the community and announced an exciting project with the Department of Regional NSW: empowering Northern Rivers youth to be the Mental Health Change Makers within their community.

For more information contact batyr <https://www.batyr.com.au/ourherd>.

Supporting children and their families in a positive transition to school in Lismore and Goonellabah (Aruma and Jarjum Centre)

Aruma and Jarjum Centre presented an outline of the YWCA Communities for Children funded Lismore Transition Program and Indigenous Advancement Strategy funded Goonellabah Transition Program, including:

- how both programs support young children from Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal families with complex needs to develop skills and attitudes for a positive transition to school
- referral pathways and links to a range of Early Childhood services and Community Services
- fostering children's sense of self and identity through cultural inclusion and trauma-informed approach.

For more information contact Aruma <https://www.aruma.com.au/disability-services/children/early-childhood-intervention/> or Jarjum Centre Lismore <https://jarjum.com/>.

Engaging early to create better chances for families and communities (Kris Roberts and Kristy Lee Buchanan, Rekindling the Spirit)

This presentation included an overview of the Rekindling the Spirit Early Intervention Program, stories about how they engage with families and the outcomes they have seen. They also shared how they supported community throughout the Northern NSW floods in 2022. This program engages early with families to create better outcomes for the whole community, and is located at the Rekindling the Spirit Health Service, which allows the team to work closely with Doctors and other clinical staff to support early intervention.

For more information contact Rekindling the Spirit <https://www.rekindlingthespirit.org.au/index.php/engagement/targeted-early-intervention>.

Resources

Engaging children and young people in your organisation (NSW Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People)

In 2019 the NSW Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People released this guide for engaging children and young people in organisations. It is available at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/info/publications/guides-and-resources> along with other guides and resources. The guide covers why we should include children and young people in decision making, practical information for participation, ethical considerations, evaluating participation, checklists and case studies.

Giving due weight to children and young people in policy making

In this participatory research project completed in 2020, young people with firsthand experience in out of home care worked as co-researchers to identify what helps and what gets in the way to give due weight to children and young people's views in policymaking.

'Through our eyes: giving due weight to children and young people in policy making' online: Meaghan Vosz, Shelley Keevers, Dylan Williams, Ben, Bonnie and Nika, (2020). *Through our eyes: giving due weight to the views of children and young people in policymaking*, Lismore: Centre for Children and Young People, <https://researchportal.scu.edu.au/esploro/outputs/book/Through-our-eyes-giving-due-weight-to-children-and-young-peoples-views-in-policymaking/991012894798002368>

The following extract was prepared in 2020 to inform BCF.

Practice principles for engaging with children and young people

- a) **Valuing children and young people's lived experience:** *Seeking out, listening to, prioritising and sharing the knowledge that children and young people develop through their experiences in life and social systems.*
- b) **Supporting children and young people's participation:** *Providing comfortable spaces, speaking in accessible and inclusive language, building children and young people's capabilities to express views and engage in policy/program deliberation and decision-making.*
- c) **Engaging directly with children and young people:** *Being in reciprocal dialogue with children and young people.*
- d) **Relating with respect, reciprocity and accountability:** *Building relationships and communication with children and young people, recognising their contributions and capabilities. Prioritising authentic and meaningful interaction and demonstrating accountability to them in each engagement (this includes feedback, reporting back and demonstrating how we delivered on commitments to them). It includes compensating or paying them for their contributions, especially where they may be working alongside other paid adults. This practice also includes relational accountability and cultural safety.*
- e) **Integrating children and young people in decision-making:** *Include children and young people in decision-making processes, spaces and places.*
- f) **Giving due weight to children and young and young people's views:** *Listening, weighing-up and giving serious consideration to children and young people's views. Paying attention, deeply considering their meaning and deliberating the consequences for our decision-making.*

Social Futures Community Engagement Framework

The [Social Futures Community Engagement Framework](#) provides the basis for how Social Futures engages with communities and how to encourage participants and communities to become involved across the diverse range of Social Futures' services. It is guided by the [IAP2](#) Spectrum and outlines who Social Futures engages with, how to engage and what are Social Futures engagement commitments.

Information from the international human rights framework

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 12: Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.

<https://www.unicef.org.au/our-work/information-for-children/un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 1: Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognised in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law.

Article 2: Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.

Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

For Articles 4 to 46 see <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-1>

Self-determination is concerned with the fundamental right of people to shape their own lives. In a practical sense, self-determination means that we have the freedom to live well, to determine what it means to live well according to our own values and beliefs.

In recognising that Indigenous peoples have this right, governments are required to recognise our collective/group identities such as our nations, language groups, clans, family alliances or communities.

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/self-determination>

BCF activities – how you can connect

- Monthly connection meetings—facilitated online or face-to-face workshops focusing on connection and strengthening our practice (10 am to 12 noon, Third Wednesday of the month).
- Healing and strengthening activities for First Nations workers.
- Bi annual BCF regional conference.
- BCF practice leadership group – driving strategic direction, planning and practice leadership in BCF.
- Monthly BCF e-newsletter
- We encourage BCF member organisations to keep their details up to date in the national [Ask Izzy](#) data base where appropriate.

Contact us to get involved

e: betterchances@socialfutures.org.au

w: socialfutures.org.au/sector-support/

lan: 0438 005 798

Katrina: 0416 277 244

