

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Only the Magistrate can order a Care Circle.
- Only cases that are in the Children's Court at Nowra can have a Care Circle.
- The child or children must be Aboriginal.
- If anyone in the matter does not want a Care Circle then one will not be held.
- Ask your lawyer to tell the Magistrate if you want or don't want a Care Circle.

WHERE DOES A CARE CIRCLE TAKE PLACE?

Care Circles will be held in places that are safe and comfortable for Aboriginal people. These places must also be able to fit everyone in.

HELPFUL CONTACTS

Nowra Local Court Care Circles Project Officer

Plunkett Street, Nowra
Ph: (02) 4480 6900

Aboriginal Legal Service (head office)

Level 8, 33 Argyle Street, Parramatta
Ph: (02) 8836 3444

Canberra Aboriginal Legal Service

7/9 Moore Street, Canberra
Ph: (02) 6249 8488

Nowra Aboriginal Legal Service

89 Plunkett Street, Nowra
Ph: (02) 4422 3255

Nowra Community Service Centre

Ph: (02) 4424 5100

Ulladulla Community Service Centre

Ph: (02) 4454 7744

Wollongong Legal Aid

73 Church Street, Wollongong
Ph: (02) 4228 8299

COMPLAINTS

All complaints regarding Care Circles should be made to the Project Officer on (02) 4480 6900

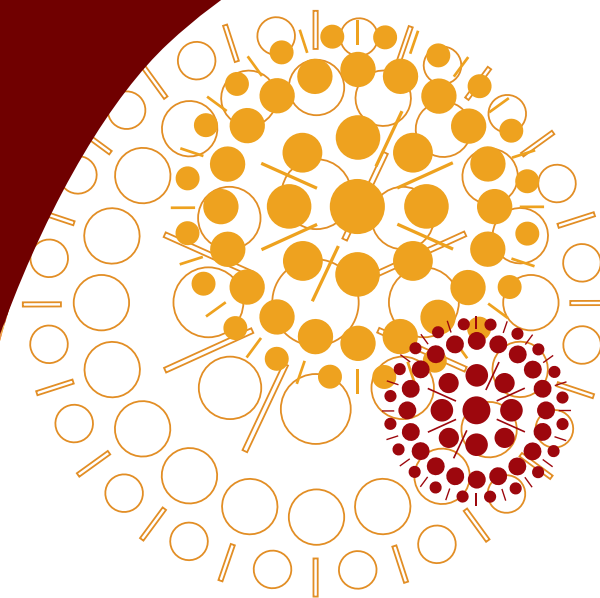


NSW Department of
Community Services



Justice &
Attorney General

This is a joint project of the Department of Justice and Attorney General and the Department of Community Services.



CARE CIRCLES

**CHILDREN'S COURT
CARE CIRCLES FOR
ABORIGINAL KIDS AND
THEIR FAMILIES**

WHAT ARE CARE CIRCLES?

Care Circles is a program where Aboriginal people (“community representatives”) in the Shoalhaven area help the Children’s Court make some decisions about Aboriginal kids. These decisions are about “care matters” so they are usually about where kids should live, who they see or services the family may need to help them care for their kids.

Care Circles is a good way of giving Aboriginal people a say in what happens to Aboriginal kids.

The Care Circle does NOT make decisions about kids and their families. Only the Magistrate can decide what should happen with kids and their families. But the Care Circle can tell everyone in the Care Circle, including the Magistrate, what they think should happen.

Care Circles CAN talk about and advise the Court on:

- Family services that might help the kids stay at home
- Where the kids should live
- Contact between the kids and their family

Care Circles CANNOT deal with whether the kids should have been taken by the Department of Community Services in the first place.

WHO TAKES PART?

These people will be at a Care Circle:

- Child’s parents and their lawyers
- Children’s lawyer
- Three community representatives
- Department of Community Services and their lawyer
- Magistrate
- Care Circle Project Manager
- Any other party to the matter
- Support people (ask your lawyer if you want a support person there).

CAN ANYONE BE A COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE?

Not just any interested community member can be in a Care Circle. Community representatives must be approved by the NSW Attorney General’s Department. Any person in the court case has the right to say they don’t want a certain community representative in their Care Circle.

The community representatives do not get copies of the court papers. They only get important information about the case that the lawyers agree on or the Court approves. Your lawyer will speak to you about what you think the community representatives should be told about you and your case.

The community representatives MUST NOT tell anyone what they hear in, or are told for, the Care Circle. They have to sign a declaration to the Court that promises they won’t tell anyone what they know about the kids or the family.