

# Multi-Agency Community and Child Safety Teams (MACCST) – Stakeholder Fact Sheet

## What is a MACCST?

Multi-Agency Community and Child Safety Teams (MACCSTs) deliver timely, coordinated responses to ensure Northern Territory children, young people and families are **cared for, protected, safe and able to reach their full potential**. MACCSTs do this through developing collaborative response plans to address identified child, family and community safe risks.

## What does it involve?

- ✓ A shared commitment to work collaboratively to provide for the safety of people from the risk of harm.
- ✓ The sharing of agency's information and data to identify those children and families who are at the greatest risk of harm and combat emerging local community problems.
- ✓ The proactive sharing of information to inform critical decision making.
- ✓ A commitment to operate as a coalition with flexibility and responsivity in a problem solving framework.
- ✓ The development of client centred Shared Case Plans to respond to the needs of children and families most at risk of harm.
- ✓ The development of Community Safety Response Plans to address thematic community issues.

## Where are MACCSTs?

MACCSTs are rolling out in at least 27 remote communities and some major centres.

## Who is in a MACCST?

MACCST membership must include:

- At least two Aboriginal members of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, local staff of the relevant government agencies and /or members with cultural authority.
- Locally based non-government service providers that provide services for families, children, young people and communities.
- The most senior delegate based in the community from each of the following agencies:
  - Territory Families, Housing and Communities
  - Northern Territory Police
  - Department of Health and/or Aboriginal Medical Service
  - Department of Education and/or Independent School
  - Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
  - Department of Attorney-General and Justice (Correctional Services)
  - Manager, Children and Families Centre
  - Government Engagement Coordinator (Commonwealth)

It is acknowledged that not all agencies have permanent representatives at each community and the makeup

of the MACCST may therefore vary from location to location dependent on local requirements.

From time to time, the MACCST may invite any other person with relevant expertise, resources or cultural authority to attend meetings or present agenda items.

## How often are the meetings?

Meetings are held fortnightly, unless there is an immediate need to convene a meeting by exception. Community Safety Response Planning and Shared Case Planning components may be held on opposite weeks if this suits the community. The Community Safety Response Planning Meetings must be held at least monthly.

## What does a MACCST meeting involve?

MACCST meetings have a Terms of Reference, confidentiality undertaking, agenda and meeting minutes. MACCST meetings have two specific parts:

The first part of a MACCST meeting discusses emerging or thematic **community needs**. Members discuss the worries for a community, what has been tried before, what worked and what didn't, and how the community wants to tackle the problem. Strategies to address the issues are documented in a Community Safety Response Plan so everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities to respond to the issues. The Community Safety Response Plan is reviewed at the next meetings to make sure people are delivering their actions and reviewing whether it is achieving the desired results.

The second part of a MACCST meeting talks about **specific children and families**. Any MACCST members who do not provide services to children or families do not participate in this part of the meeting. This part of the meeting discusses the worries for a family, what has been tried before, what worked and what didn't and what the Agencies will do to intervene and support the family. The strategies are documented in a Shared Care Plan so everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities to support the child and their family. The Shared Care Plans are reviewed at the next meetings to make sure people are delivering their actions and reviewing whether it is achieving the desired results.

## How do I nominate a child, family or community safety concern for a MACCST discussion?

Any person who is worried about the safety of a child, family, group of children or the broader community can make a referral to the MACCST with the assistance of a MACCST member. For domestic and family violence concerns the referrer can use the Domestic and Family Violence Common Risk Assessment Tool (CRAT) as the referral document, the CRAT can be found at [here](#).

## What are my Information Sharing responsibilities?

Your legislative responsibilities to share information about children and families at risk are documented in the MACCST Information Sharing Protocol. As a MACCST member, you are expected to share information unless there is a specific legislative provision that prohibits you from doing so.

Information Sharing Entities should be families with information sharing obligations in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles, the Information Act 2002, Chapter 5A of the Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007 and Part 5.1A of the Care and Protection of Children Act 2007.

## Where do we record MACCST meetings?

Each community has a Microsoft Teams site established. All MACCST members will have access to the Community Channel where meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and Community Safety Response Plans will be stored and shared. MACCST members that are directly involved in the delivery of services to children and families and are authorised information sharers will have access to a Shared Case Plan Channel where Shared Case Plans are stored and shared.

A MACCST Resources Teams site is the one source of truth for templates and resources until a website is developed.

## **Will permission be sought from community to see whether they want this in their community?**

MACCST represents a fundamental change in the way in which the Northern Territory Government (NTG), NTG funded services, and the Australian Government coordinate and deliver services both at the client level (where children are at risk) and at the community level (to address major safety issues). The work the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet led in Arnhem in relation to volatile substance abuse is a great example; this is not optional and is about how we do our business and how we contract manage services that we fund.

Involvement of Traditional Owner (TOs) is absolutely at the discretion of the TOs and it is up to each MACCST to engage with TOs in their individual communities. The involvement of TOs is essential to developing effective plans. Involvement may look different at the Community Safety Response Plan and Shared Case Planning levels. For example, Mikan (a Yolgnu cultural authority group) is involved at the Shared Case Planning level but what this looks like at the Community Safety Response Planning level may be quite different and is dependent on what the TOs decide.

## **Who takes lead role in each community?**

Responsibility for the success of the MACCS Framework is shared across relevant NTG agencies and partners; that is, there is not one NTG agency that has responsibility, ownership or ultimate decision making authority.

MACCSTs are chaired, co-chaired and minuted (secretariat) by members who are elected by the local MACCST. What agency or who the chairs and secretariat represents at the meeting may be different from community to community. For example, in one community the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet lead the Community Safety Response Planning part of the meeting and Territory Families, Housing and Communities lead the Shared Case Planning. Save the Children are the lead in providing secretariat support to the group. In another community, the Aboriginal Community Controlled Medical Service leads the Community Safety Response Planning part and the School Principal is the lead in providing secretariat support. In another community, Northern Territory Police and Territory Families, Housing and Communities co-chair meetings while the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet lead secretariat support.

## **What commitment is there to include local service providers in MACCST?**

Inclusion of other services is at the discretion of the local MACCST members and will vary depending on the needs of the MACCST and the services present in the community. For example the local shire council youth coordinator may attend meetings and at other a church youth coordinator may attend.

## **MACCS Management Group**

Senior Executive Officers from the participating MACCS Framework NTG agencies form a Management Group who is responsible for oversight of the implementation, governance and operation of MACCSTs across the Northern Territory including meeting frequency; attendance; engagement, participation, planning and action; appropriate level of representation; and most importantly that operationalisation is reflective of the Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy intended outcomes, values, and principles.

## **What is the plan to review the MACCS Framework?**

The MACCS Management Group are scoping an evaluation research project with Charles Darwin University (CDU) and Menzies School of Health Research. The aim is twofold: firstly, to work with CDU to track the implementation of the initiative (we doing what we say we will do in terms of meetings, attendance and documentation); and, to ensure the quality of Community Safety Response Plans and Shared Case Plans. This part of the evaluation will track inputs and outputs and short term outcome measures over the next two years. The second aim of the evaluation is to measure the outcomes for children, families and communities, where the MACCS Framework has been implemented; this will be a longitudinal study and is in planning in partnership with Menzies.

## **Have there been any thoughts of a share case management IT platform which could assist support collaborative case management?**

Yes, this would be great. Territory Families, Housing and Communities are currently in the design phase of building a new Case Management System, 'CARE'. This system will have the functionality to undertake shared case planning and information sharing with the MACCST partners.

## **How do I find out more?**

To find out more, you can ask local MACCST members (e.g. Manager of the Safe House, Clinic Manager, School Principal, or Police Officer). Alternatively, you can contact MACCS Framework Implementation Team on 1800 MACCSF (622 273) or at [MACCSFramework@nt.gov.au](mailto:MACCSFramework@nt.gov.au).

## Where are the MACCST communities?

### Multi-Agency Community and Child Safety Teams Northern Territory

- Major Centre
- MACCST
- Remote Community
- Greater Darwin
- Arafura (Top End)
- East Arnhem
- Big Rivers (Katherine)
- Barkly
- Central Australia

