**Anglicare marks Foster Care Week with focus on Indigenous families**

During Foster Care Week, 11-17 September, Anglicare is calling for more targeted support to help vulnerable children and families in Wagga Wagga and the Riverina area to minimise the need for children to move in to foster care, and to maximise their support when they are in Care. This is particularly important for children from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background who are over represented in the foster care system.

“There are almost 17,000 in Care in NSW, and over 6000 of these are children from an Aboriginal background,” says Tangerene Ingram, Anglicare’s Coordinator at Wanggaay Koori Out of Home Care service in Wagga Wagga. “While our aim is to see families stay together where possible, there is still a growing need for foster carers to give support to vulnerable children and young people, especially Indigenous families. We need more Aboriginal foster carers to help children remain connected to their culture.”

Ms Ingram believes that educating the wider community to help identify obstacles that individuals and families face on a daily basis may help to reduce the risk of children moving in to Care.

Marie, an Indigenous woman and foster carer, understands how important this is. “It is important for all children to feel like they are connected and belong.  And it is important that the children don’t lose their culture and identity,” she says. “I observed there was a great need for foster carers in our community.  I found the Wanggaay crew at a community event and I approached them [about becoming a foster carer].  I haven’t looked back since.”

Marie says being a foster carer is very worthwhile. “It is great to see the children come out of their shell and their personalities bloom.  I love to watch them smiling and laughing,” she says. “For people considering becoming a carer I’d say to give it a go. Be part of the change in our community. You won’t regret it.”

People interested in becoming foster carers with Anglicare can call 1800 367 837 (1800 FOSTER)

**For more information, please contact Amy Lanham on 0437 321 451**