

# HIPPY

## First Nations Governance Network Meeting #2

### Record of Meeting

14 May 2026

Meanjin



Brotherhood of St Laurence  
Working for an Australia free of poverty

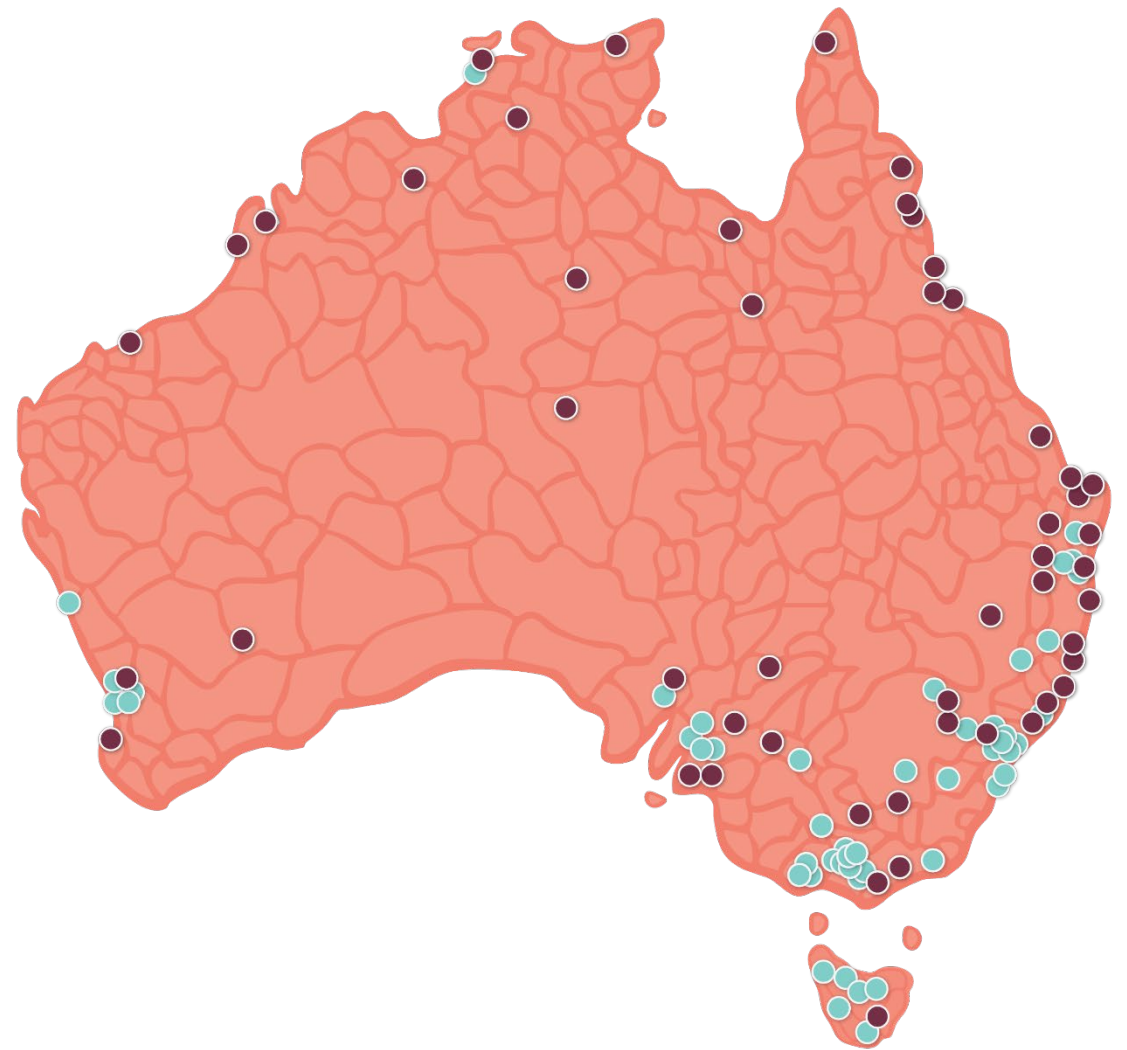
**Let's make  
change  
that lasts**

# Acknowledgment of Country

**With deep respect we take this opportunity to acknowledge the specific Traditional Owner groups on whose countries we have visited and where HIPPY operates.**

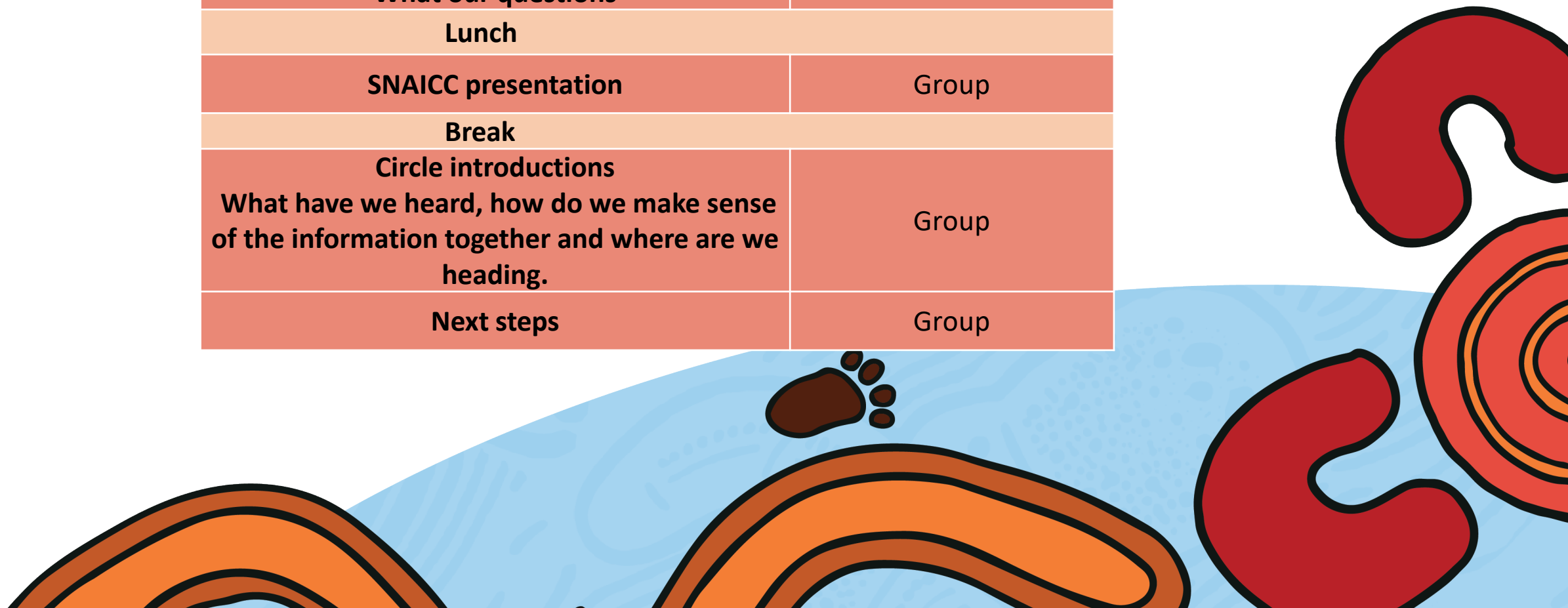
**We acknowledge the clan groups, Countries and their rich cultural authorities and governance that guides this work. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.**

**We endeavour to walk humbly alongside community, listening deeply to the direction and decisions of Elders and community members.**



**HIPPY across Australia**

<b>Session #2</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
Welcome to Country	Louisa Bonner
<b>Check in and setting the scene</b> <b>Purpose of the day and BSL commitment</b>	Mark & Clare
<b>Morning Tea</b>	
<b>Information session</b> <b>What our questions</b>	BSL & SNAICC
<b>Lunch</b>	
<b>SNAICC presentation</b>	Group
<b>Break</b>	
<b>Circle introductions</b> <b>What have we heard, how do we make sense</b> <b>of the information together and where are we</b> <b>heading.</b>	Group
<b>Next steps</b>	Group



# Attendees at meeting #2

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## First Nation providers representatives

Marissa Smith  
Tania Slack-Smith  
Mykol Paulson  
Fallon Roberts  
Nelson Tinoco Snr.  
Michelle Snowball  
Jason Field  
Thalep Ahmat  
Lizzie Adams  
Carmen Hill  
Mel Griffiths  
Aunty Jenny Smith  
Mikeely Fraser  
Brooke Walsh  
Kate Corney  
Kalari Ritchie

Somma Cozzi-Delaney  
Andrew Arden  
Rebecca Curphey  
Patricia Walker  
Darryl Smith  
Natalie Powder  
Aunty Kym Harrison  
Natasha Smith  
Bec Fidge  
Shellee Strickland  
Taliah Payne  
Sue Williams  
Raylene Foster  
Chloe Woolnough  
Kerri Rodwell  
Weny Kwee

## BSL representatives

Julie Ware  
Rebecca Pinney Meddings  
Annie Kent  
Clare Seddon  
Melinda Moore

## Facilitator

Mark Yettica-Paulson

## SNAICC representatives

Nadia Currie  
Sid Williams

# BSL Commitment

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BSL is committed to walking alongside First Nations Providers in the creation of a **First Nations Governance Network (FNGN) grounded in sovereignty, self-determination, and community-led leadership**. Our purpose is to enable this work, not direct it.

We offer secretariat support, infrastructure, and resourcing only to strengthen provider leadership. **We will not seek voting rights, authority, ownership, or influence over the network governance**. We will be available into the future and will transition at the speed required by a FNGN.

At a practice level we commit to sharing all curriculum materials, resources, systems and our program knowledge and expertise. This practice arrangement will be guided by a FNGN.

**When the FNGN determines that BSL should step back, we will do so with respect**. Our role is temporary, transitional, and always secondary to First Nations governance. We will follow guidance from a FNGN and there will be no competition- only support, integrity, and partnership.

As a FNGN establishes and leads on their own terms, BSL will step back, adjust the necessary internal arrangements to formalise the commitment and eventually step out, consistent with our values and our respect for First Nations leadership.

# Purpose of this meeting

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- Provide an opportunity for First Nations providers to meet in person, share their expertise and perspectives about the governance of HIPPY First Nations sites
- Provide further details about HIPPY and how it works to give context of how the national program operates
- Provide an opportunity to discuss transition, transformation and the possible visions for the future.
- To share ideas about how we can move toward the transition of governance arrangements and the steps needed to make it happen.

# Role of BSL in meetings

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- BSL will handle all secretariat work behind the scenes- papers, minutes, briefs, and coordination.
- BSL will offer expertise related to program delivery, sub-license requirements, systems, policies and procedures for as long as required to enable the successful transfer and sustainability of the program and impact for families.
- BSL will walk alongside and follow the lead of the group in relation to timeframes and process requirements.

# Transition to ACCOs Project - Phase 1

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- During 2024 and 2025 BSL transitioned HIPPY management from mainstream providers to First Nations organisations.
- As of December 2025, all First Nations focused sites are delivered by an Aboriginal organisation or through partnerships with First Nations organisations or community members.
- There is strong support within communities in which HIPPY operates for continuation of the program.
- Recent community consultations in First Nations communities have confirmed that HIPPY is regarded as a valuable component of their early years' service landscape.
- As a result of this phase, sixteen ACCOs are currently establishing HIPPY in their communities; most are represented here today.
- While partnership groups are not represented here today, if transitions occur and First Nations organisations are sublicensed, they could be included in the FNGN. At the earliest this would be January 2027.

# Transition Phase 2: Community partner role

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- Following the transition of HIPPY site level program, BSL is now keen to focus on its role as *community partner*.
- To achieve this BSL is supportive of stepping aside from its role as community partner for the First Nations providers and a deeper and more genuine governance change.
- This approach will establish self-determination and embed First Nations leadership at the heart of HIPPY's future.
- BSL is anticipating that a First Nations Governance Network will provide opportunities for key leaders at the 36 providers to explore the ways in which First Nations HIPPY sites could be managed and a new entity, could be established to act as the community partner and the additional licence holder.
- BSL is committed to walking alongside First Nations providers through this journey and assisting wherever possible with this phase of the transition.

# HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) key functions and costs



## HIPPY Australia National Office

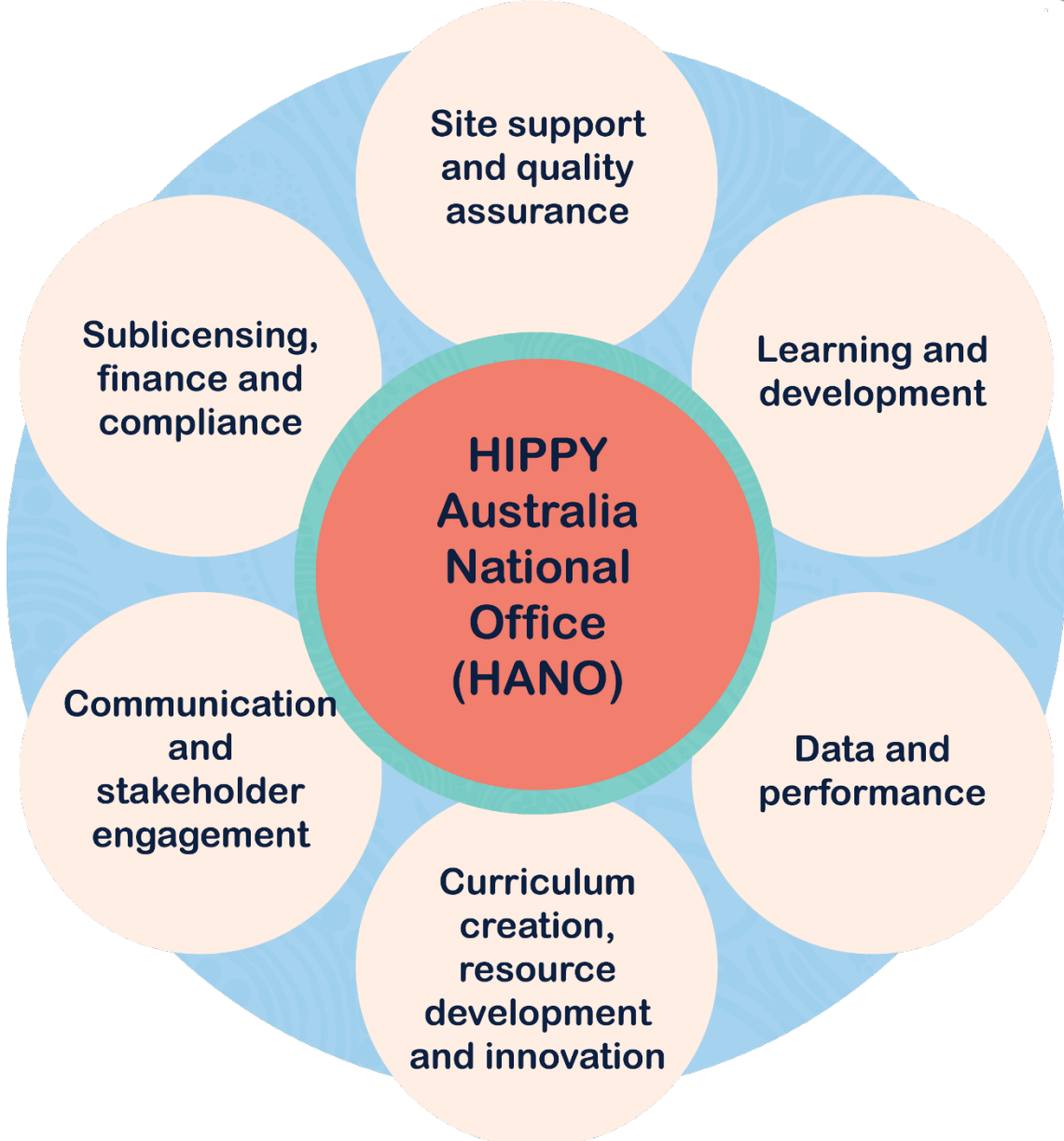
Ensures that national program outcomes are achieved for families and children

Delivery of Department of Social Service contractual obligations

Ensures the HIPPY model and program content aligns to the HIPPY International model AND is reflective of the contemporary policy, cultural and environmental Australian context

DSS engagement to ensure sufficient funding for HIPPY providers and policy engagement and connection to early years and other policy directions

Sector policy and stakeholder engagement.



# HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) key functions and costs

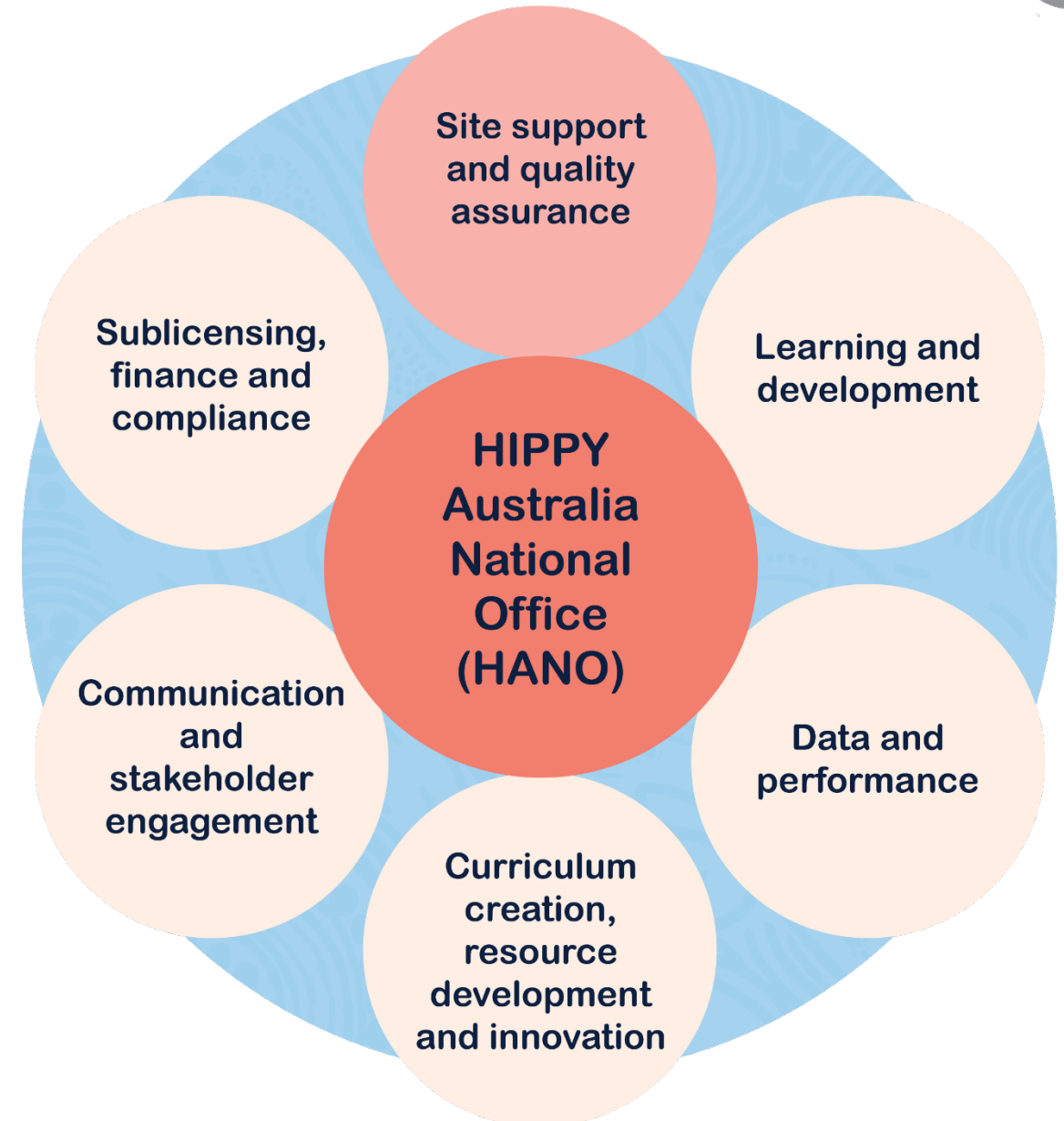


## Site support and quality assurance

Responsible for supporting delivery of the program at an individual site level and through groups or communities of practice

Each site has an allocated site advisor that supports them in practice, compliance and performance matters

Function supported by two teams of Site Advisors.



# HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) key functions and costs



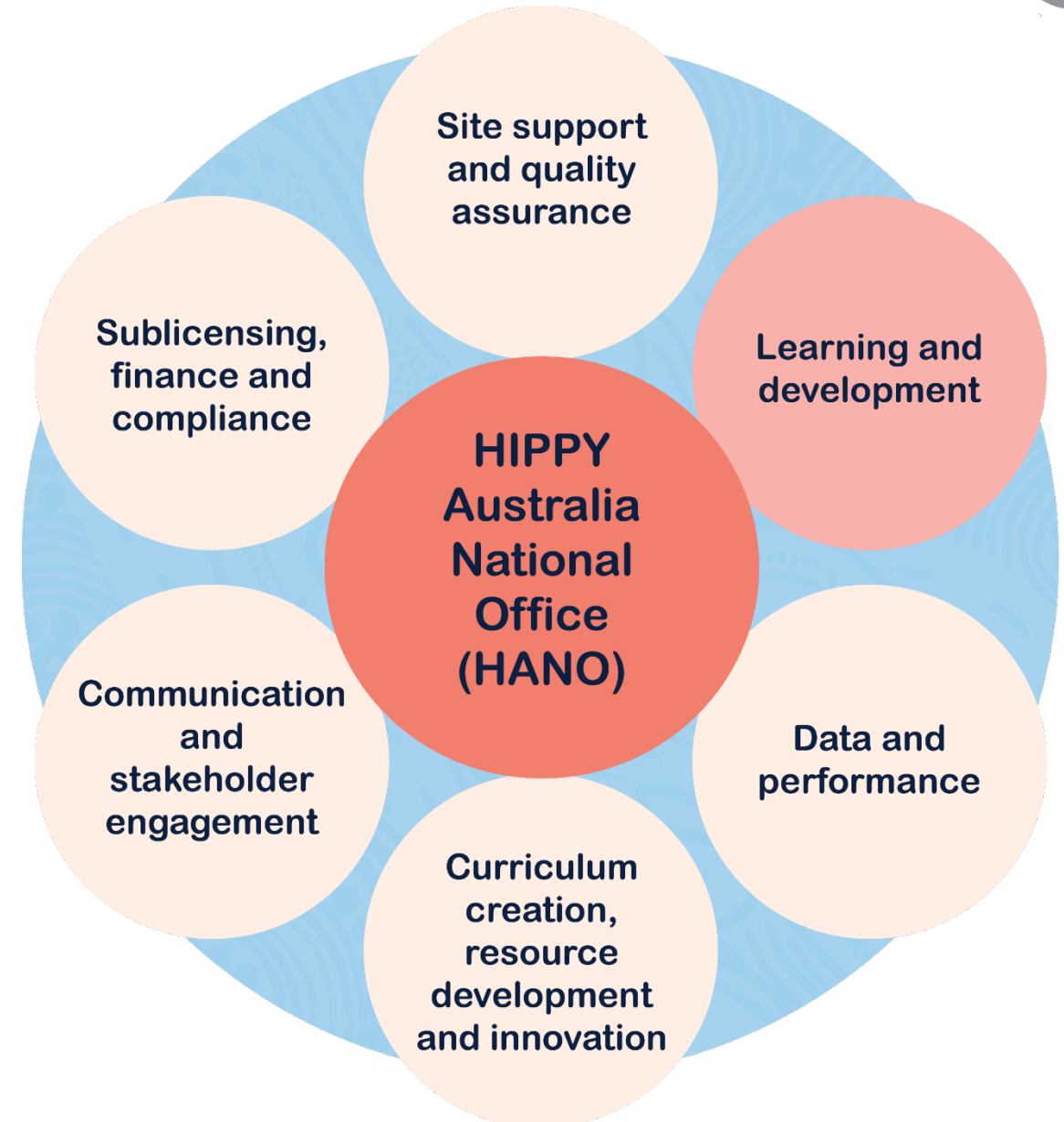
## Learning and development

Includes design, development and delivery of training via an online Learning Management System (LMS) and in-person training

Responsible for providing training to all new providers and coordinators and supports coordinators' initial training of Tutors

Co-ordinates Communities of Practice

Has designed and updates a personal and professional development program for HIPPY Tutors (Pathways to Possibilities).



# HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) key functions and costs



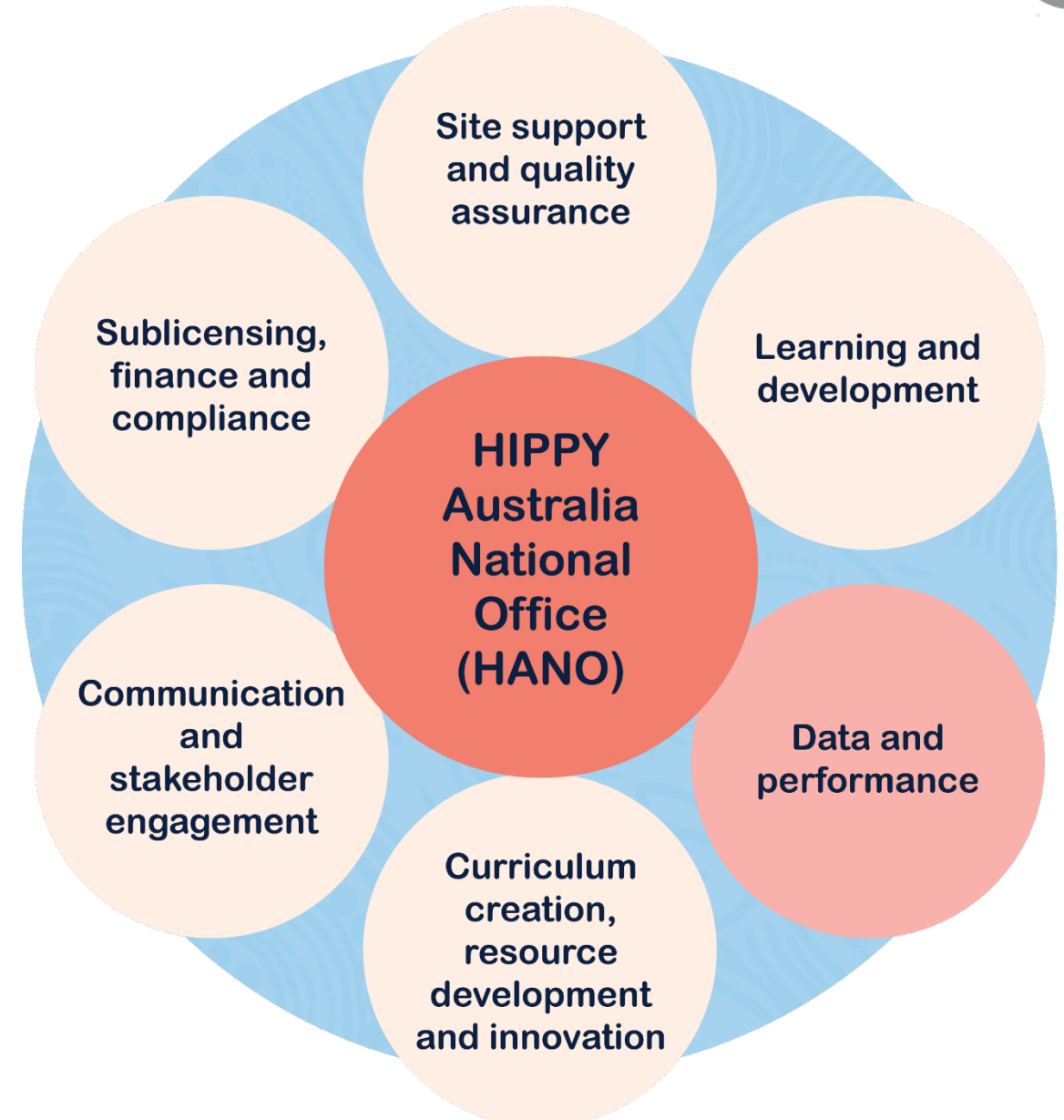
## Data and performance

Includes a national performance management system known as ETO (Efforts to Outcomes) into which each provider enters program delivery information

Data is aggregated and provided to DSS for DEX and contract reporting

Runs data quality reviews and provides support for providers including how to use data to support their work

Supports program evaluations.



# HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) key functions and costs



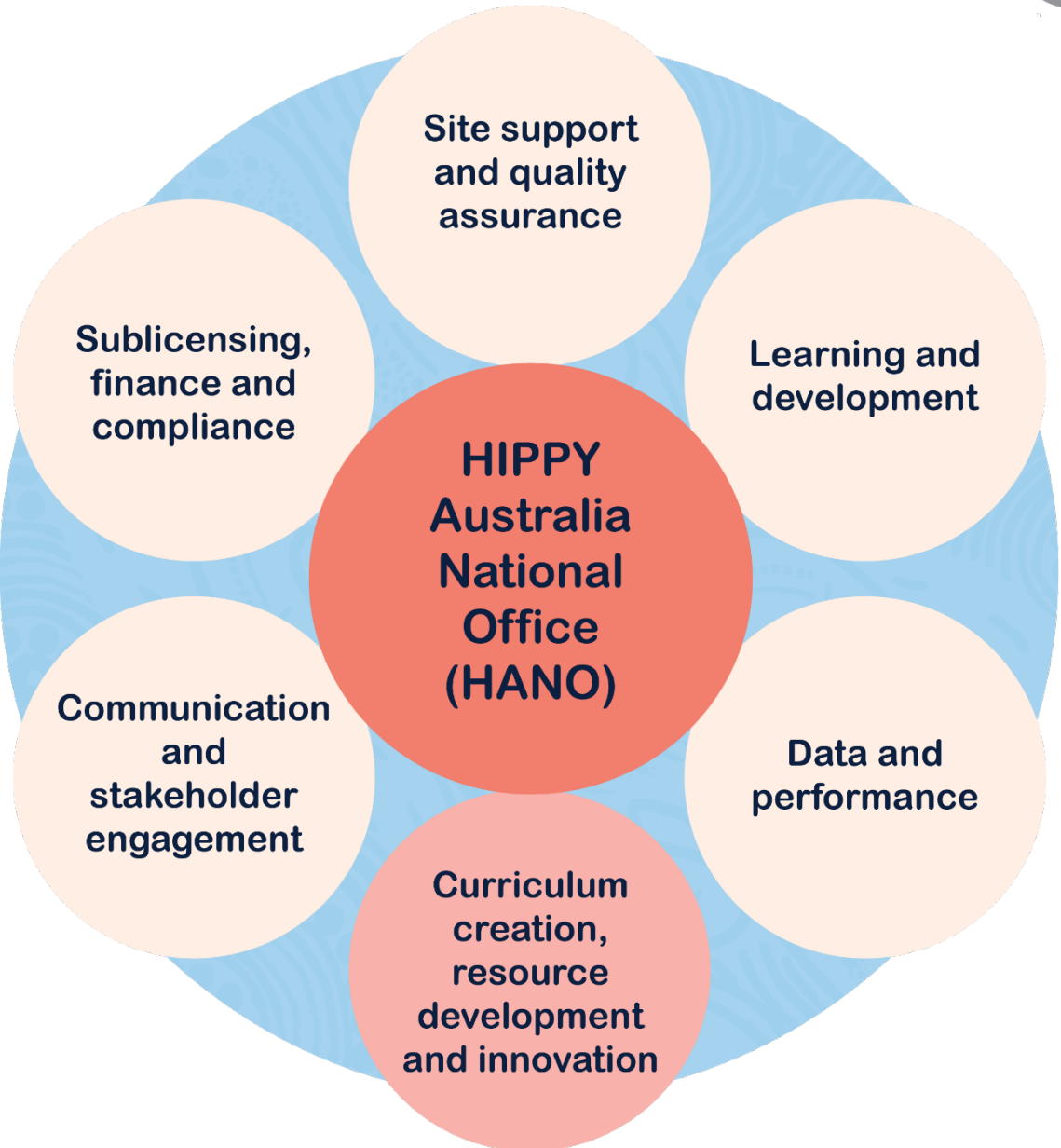
## Curriculum creation, resource development and innovation

Develops national program curriculum with early years education experts with advice from site Coordinators. A First Nations curriculum advisory group supported the most recent curriculum development in 2023

Updates curriculum as necessary, with complete curriculum reviews and redevelopment typically occurring every 5-7 years

Organises annual printing and distribution to sites of curriculum materials (activity packs, storybooks, support materials)

Supports innovation and continuous improvement of the HIPPY program delivery and operational enhancements.



# HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) key functions and costs

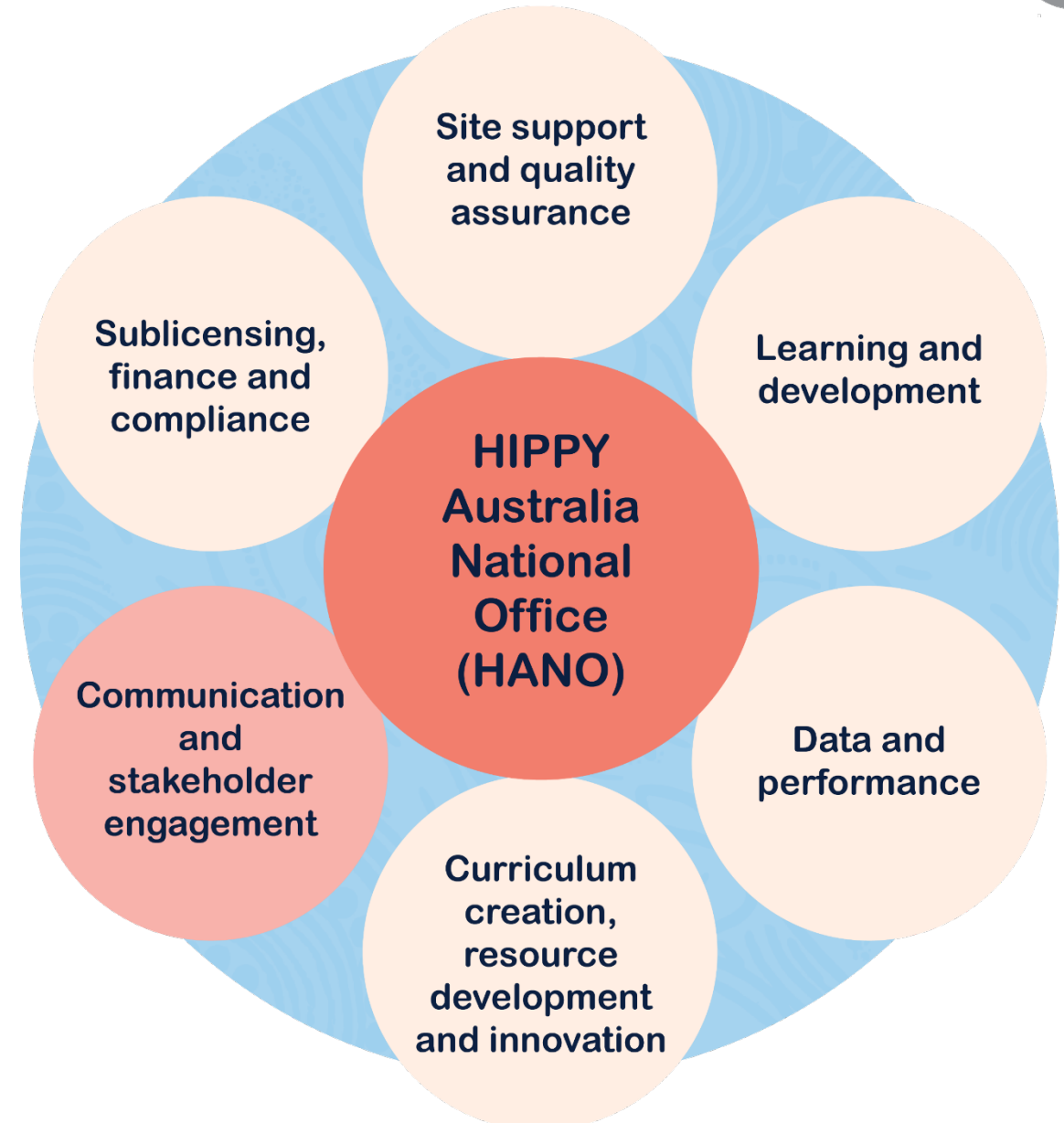


## Communication and stakeholder engagement

Maintains regular communication with network provider staff (Coordinators, Line Managers and CEOs), providing key information to support practice, learning, and connection across the network to share practice and expertise

Develops HIPPY promotional resources, templates and assets for HIPPY providers

Engages with stakeholders including DSS, SNAICC, sector leads and HIPPY International.



# HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) key functions and costs



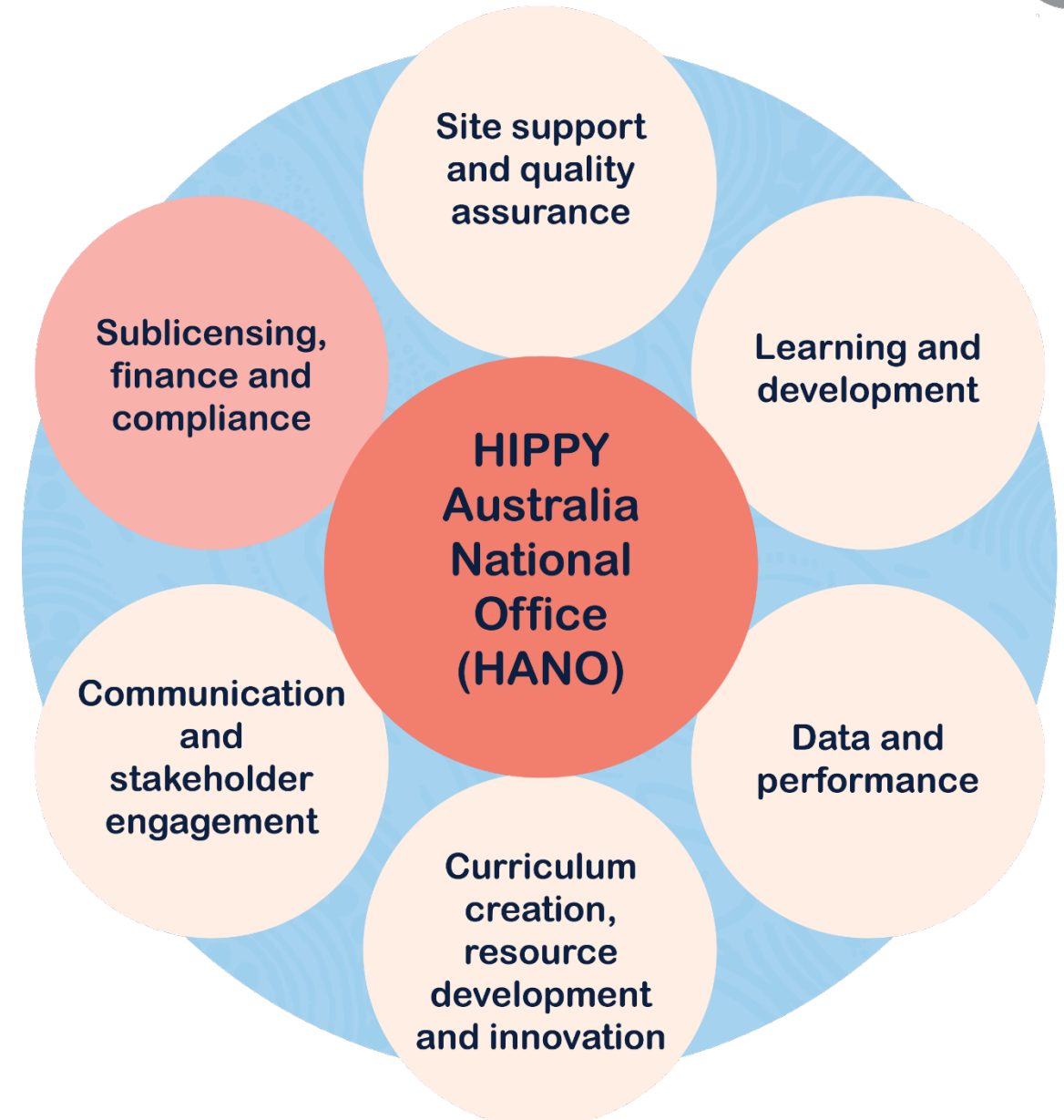
## Sublicensing, finance and compliance

Ensures that providers and HANO fulfil their contractual obligations to DSS and HIPPY International

Delivers of DSS contractual obligations, funding and risk management

Reviews and manages program compliance and risk, including that related to safeguarding and funding

Identifies new HIPPY providers and completes due diligence.



# Broader BSL Shared Services & Support

- Human resources
- Finance
- Legal

**Shared services support**



- Principal Advisor for Early Years
- Principal Advisor for Training, Education and Employment

**Policy engagement**



- Government Relations team

**Government relations expertise**



- Learning and Impact teams

**Data and evaluation expertise**



- BSL Communications and Marketing teams

**Communication expertise**



- Executive Leadership team engage with DSS and sector leaders

**Stakeholder engagement**



- Training opportunities for Coordinators and Tutors

**Technical and professional development**



# Licences/contracts



As part of the HANO cost per year BSL pays the following licenses/contracts:

Licence/contract	Supplier	Notes
Efforts to Outcomes	Bonterra	Bonterra, a US company, develops software designed for not-for-profits and fundraising. BSL has had the ETO license since 2015.
Canvas learning management system (LMS)	Instructure	Instructure is a US company and developer of the Canvas LMS HIPPY Australia has been operating the Canvas LMS since 2016 with a focus is on Tutor and Coordinator development and resources for parental engagement
HIPPY program licence	HIPPY International	There are license requirements around model fidelity, curriculum and delivery elements that have been researched and tested, and if implemented, result in educational and developmental outcomes for children.
Curriculum printing, warehousing and distribution	E-Bisglobal	E-Bisglobal, an Aboriginal owned print management business based on the NSW central coast has been responsible for curriculum and marketing production and distribution since 2024.

# Question Theme – What will mob think?

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- How will this change help me?
- Will I still be part of the program?
- Will I still have a say?
- Where is my voice in all this?
- How does it work for mob?
- We trust the way it is now; will our trust be broken?
- Will I still be helped with transport and access?

# Question Theme – Licensing

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- We would like to know more about the licensing models in Canada and NZ
- How has the licence been managed in the past? Have there been any issues?
- We shouldn't reinvent the wheel with the licensed model – if it works why change it?
- Can BSL tell us what they have learned working with HIPPIY International?
- Why are BSL transitioning the licence when what's there already works?
- What happens if you don't meet the licensing requirements?
- Is there an opportunity to have SNAICC >BSL >ACCO service sites as a model?

# Question Theme – One size will not fit all

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- What will the scope be to adjust the program to meet the needs of each community?
- How will service delivery remain as best practice in each community when the changes happen?
- Is there a staged approach that could be implemented over time?

# Question Theme – Continuing transition

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- What has been learned from the transition so far?
- How close are we to completing this transition beyond the program level?
- What is working and what is the ‘magic’ that makes it work so that we don’t lose it with the change?
- Is there a staged approach that could be implemented over time?

# Question Theme – Impacts at a grassroots level

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- What will this mean for our kids?
- What will this mean for staff on the ground?
- Will workload change for program staff? What about KPIs and service delivery?
- Will this impact rapport and relationships with families
- Will there be a change in how we work in community?
- We would not want this change to dynamics and cause any conflicts or family issues.
- When can ACCOs get involved more directly with the contract and have input in the program and structure?
- Is there a staged approach that could be implemented over time?
- Is there an opportunity to ask mob about their HIPPY journey, what works now and what it could look like down the track?

# Question Theme – Supports and resources

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- How will changes affect the support providers currently get?
- Will Tutors get the same support as now? There is real trust there now.
- What will happen to all the relationships – internal and external?
- How will the transition account for the different needs of community and mob?
- Are HIPPY Australia and BSL open to the input from our ACCOs to make improvements to the program and how it might be delivered?
- How will change make things better?
- What will happen with the materials and merchandise?

# Question Theme – Transformation and the role of the collective

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- What are SNAICC's thoughts about national oversight and how local communities can have their needs met at a national level?
- Would it be possible to integrate HIPPY into SNAICC somehow?
- Are we creating a 'peak body' or a 'community or facilitating partner' to replace BSL and what is the difference? Or are we creating a different sort of governing collective?
- How will the transition account for the different needs of community and mob?
- What does transition and transformation look like for this group?
- For a true, proper transition, we need to have power, control and ownership, including the resources, data and systems.
- Can everything about the service be shared transparently – risks, issues and learnings?

# Question Theme – Timeline and goals

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- Is there a pre-decided timeline or is this up to the group?
- What is the end goal for BSL?
- When can ACCOs get involved more directly with the contract and input into program and structure?
- Is there a staged approach that could be implemented over time?

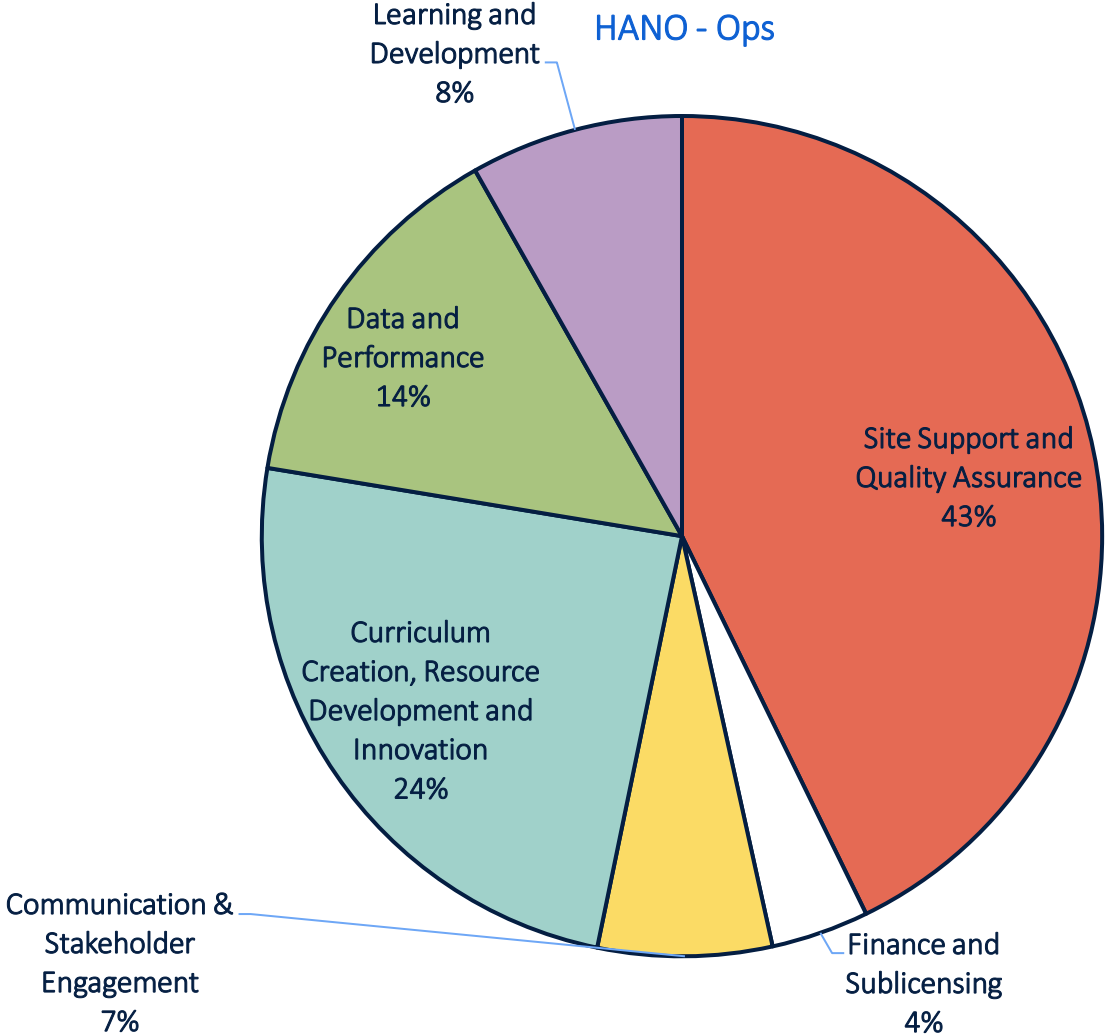
# Question Theme – Contract

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- Is BSL handing the contract over to ACCOs as it currently is or can the contract be altered to better meet the needs of ACCOs?
- What is the Commonwealth Government's commitment to funding the First Nations HIPPY sites?
- How will the transition account for the different needs of community and mob?
- What does transition and transformation look like for this group?
- What does sustainability look like over time?
- What is the current status of performance and what would performance success look like in the future?
- How will compliance work if BSL is not involved?

# HANO functions and % funding allocation

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# Allocation of funding

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- Currently BSL receives approximately \$33m per annum to deliver HIPPY in up to 100 sites.
- Approximately 18% of the funding goes to HANO to deliver the supports and services for HIPPY sites and meet contract requirements and obligations.
- The remainder of the funds are directed to HIPPY sites.
- Generally, budgets are created for sites to ensure equal distribution of funds to each site.
- At times, on a site-by-site basis, there are some additional funds provided to compensate for remote delivery conditions, additional families receiving services or capacity building.

# HIPPY International obligations



## Operating parameters and benefits

- Programming and operations align to the HIPPY model to ensure outcomes for families and children (i.e. learning approach, roles of HIPPY implementing staff, pack delivery timing, role play etc.)
- HIPPY curriculum approval and ownership/intellectual property rights
- Access to global HIPPY curriculum, resources and evidence
- Participation in International HIPPY Directors' virtual network and annual in-person meeting

## Payments: (Maximum \$150 000 US)

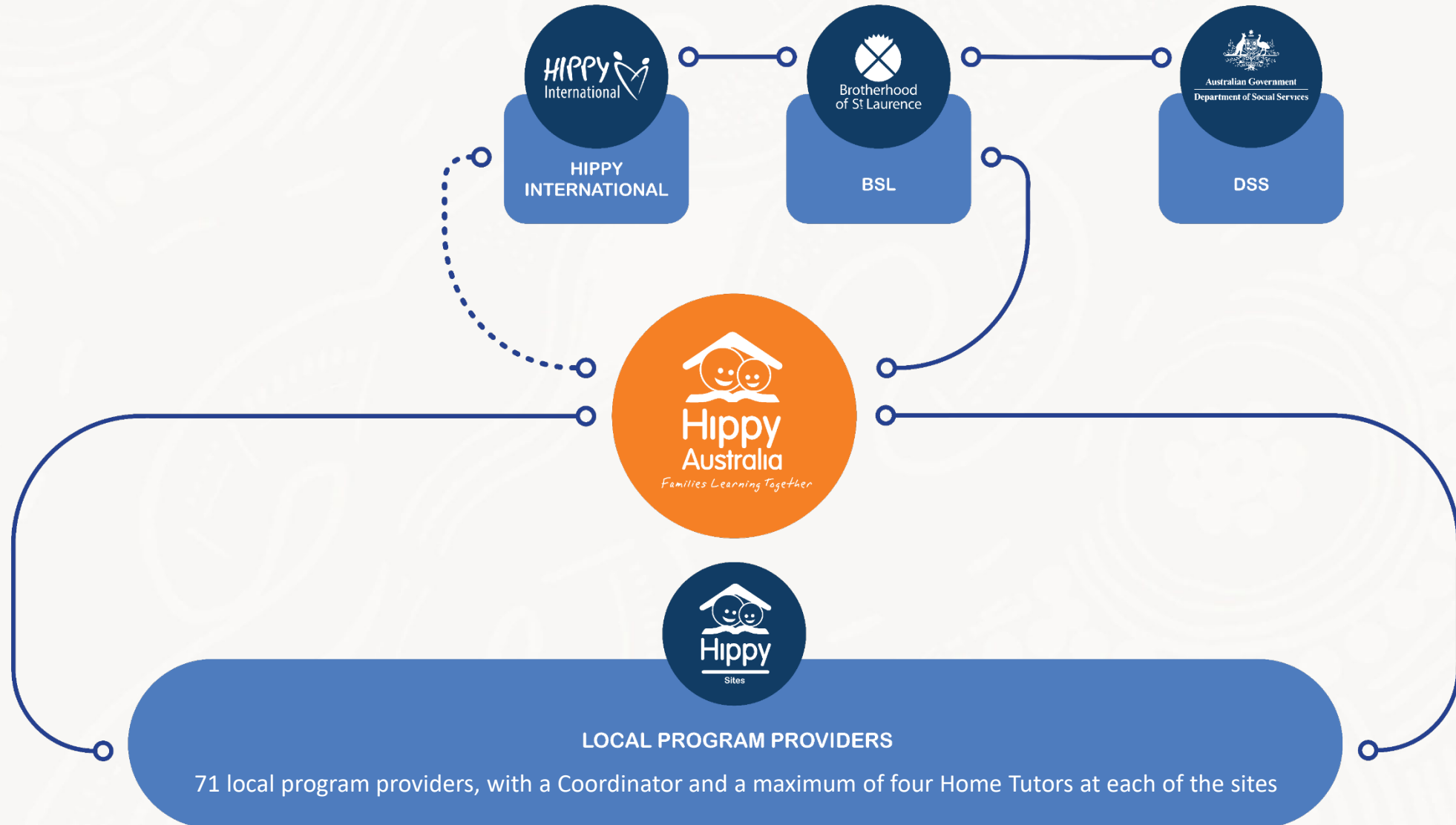
Annual licence fee \$33 000 US

Individual participant user fee \$20 US

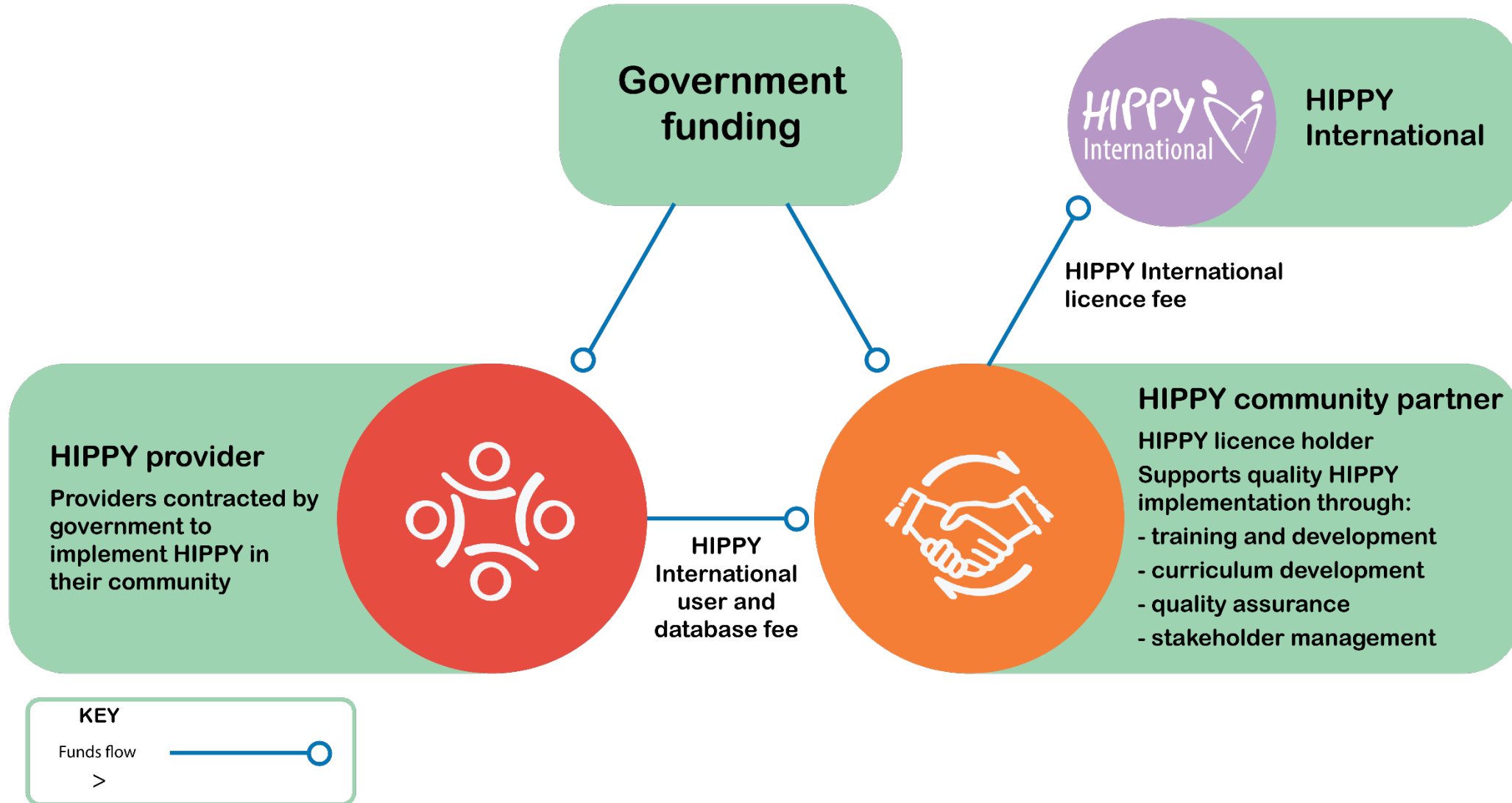
- Due Diligence assessments have been conducted prior to signing agreements/new agreements with HIPPY International.



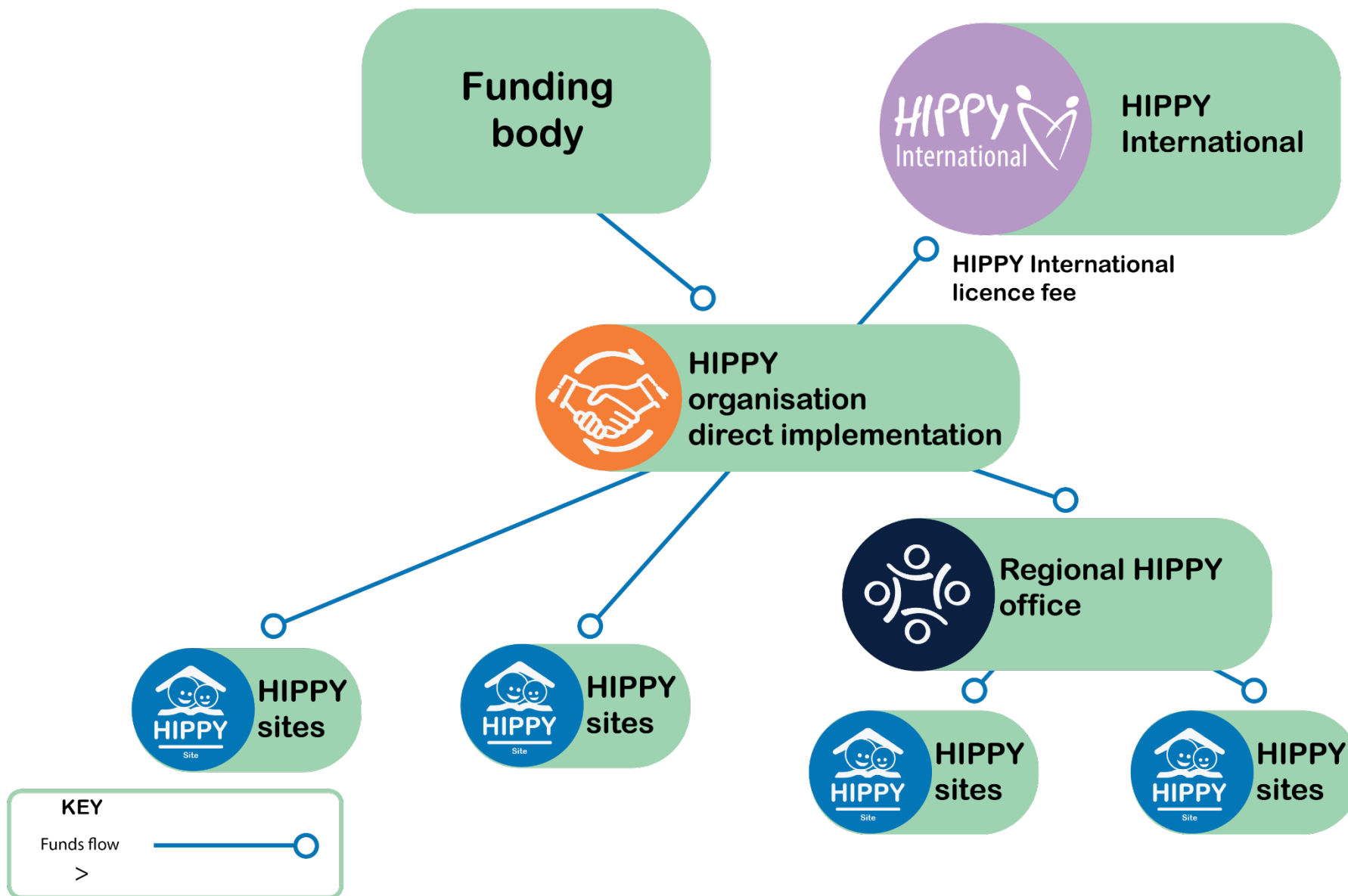
# Current state: HIPPY Australia



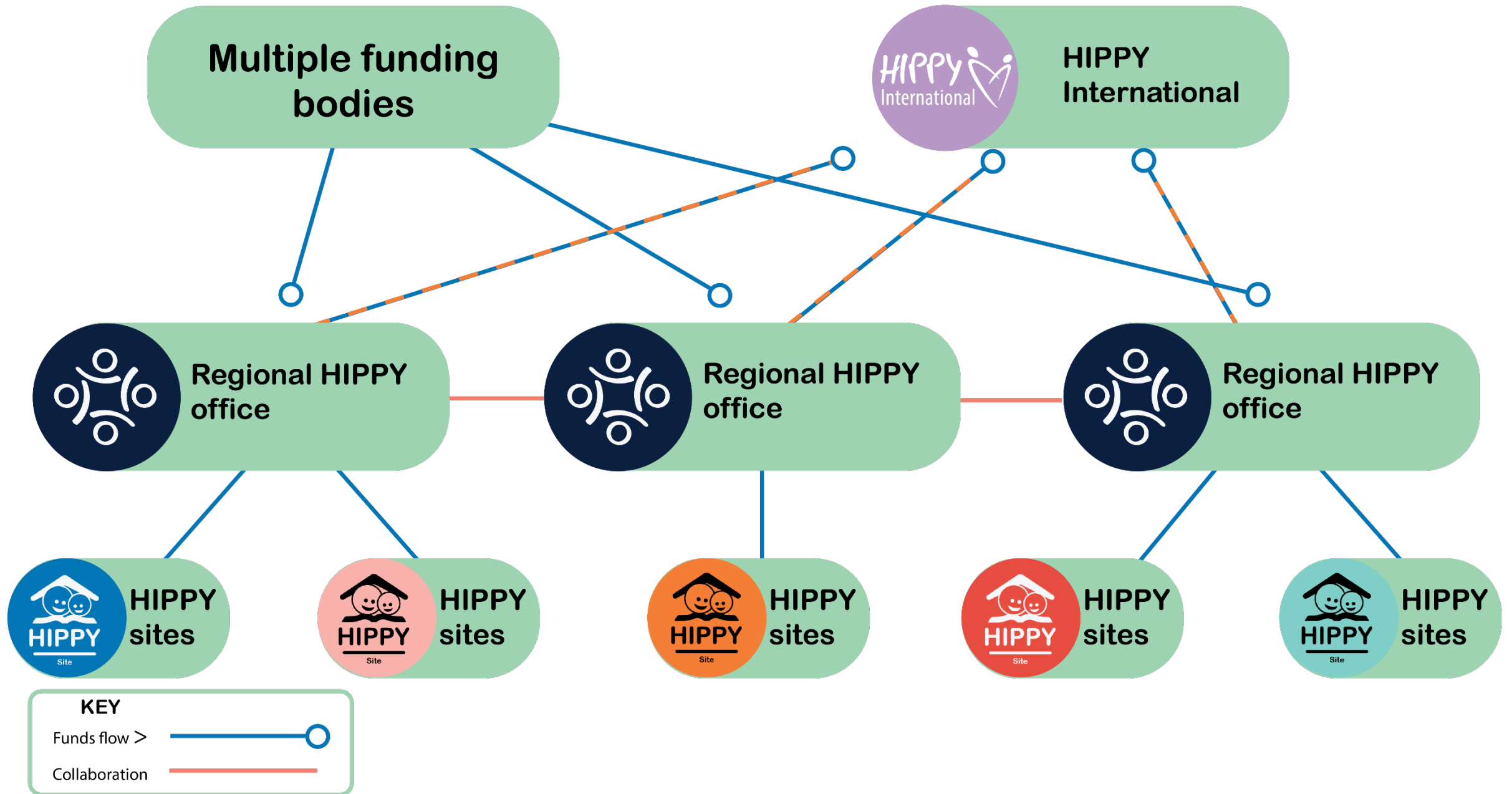
# Global HIPPY Community Partner operating model (Canada)



# Global HIPPY Community Partner direct implementation model (NZ, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay)



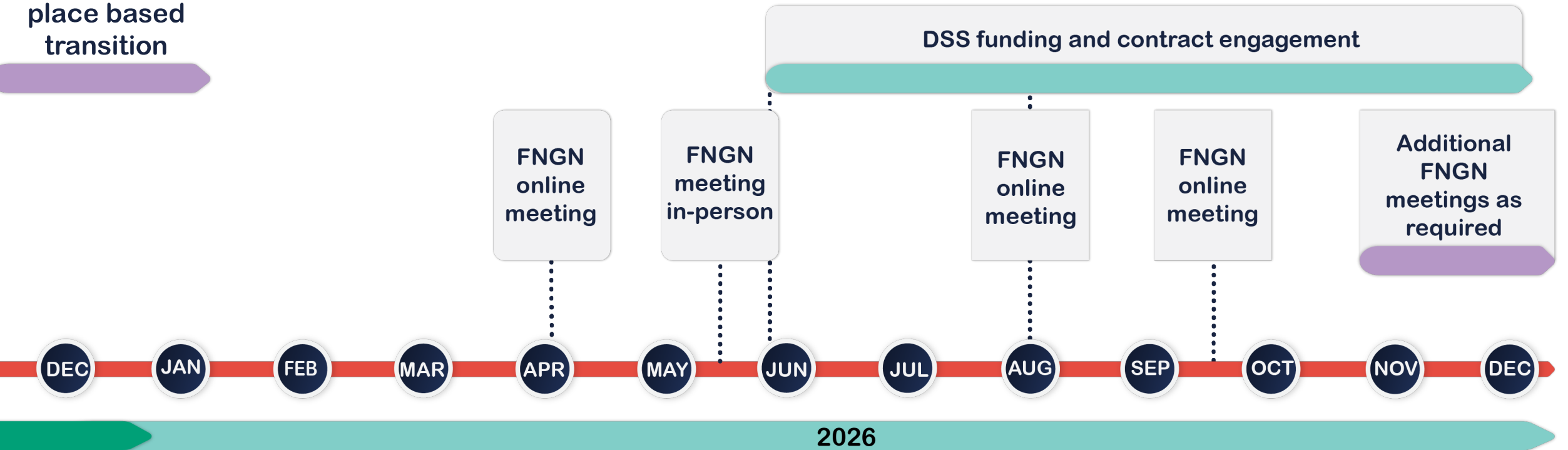
# Global HIPPY Community Partner operating model (US)



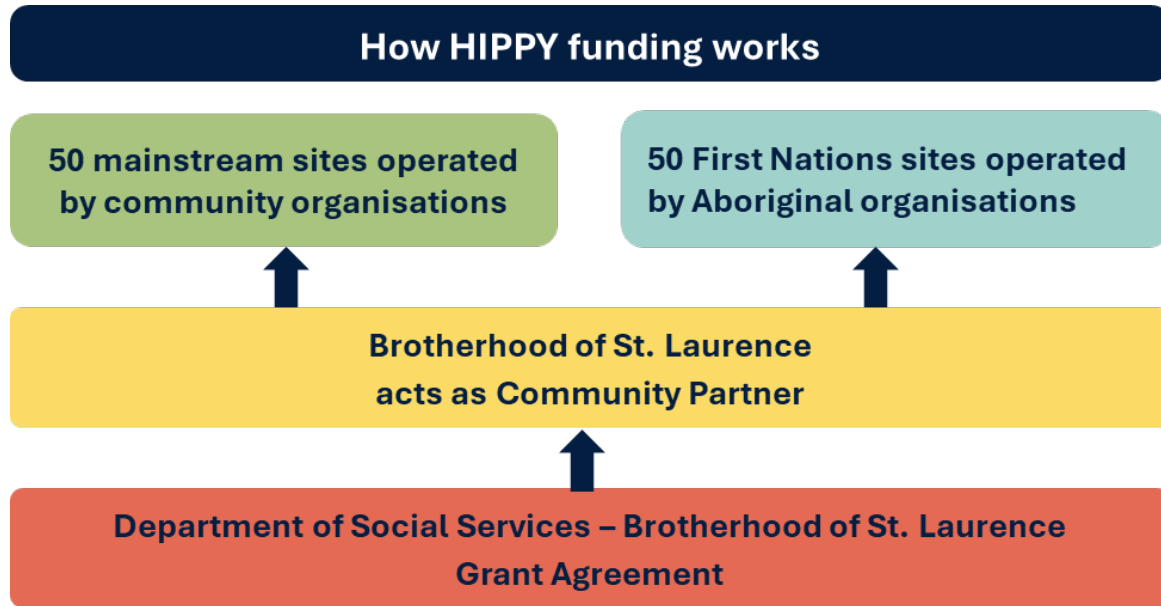
# Timeline of meetings



Site-level  
place based  
transition



# DSS HIPPY Grant Agreement



- BSL is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services
- BSL has been supporting the operation of HIPPY for 27 years. The number of sites has grown from one in 1998 to 100 sites in 2015.
- HIPPY annually supports approximately 4500 families.
- In the context of HIPPY, the community partner is the organisation that holds the grant agreement with DSS and the license with HIPPY International.
- There is a current 5-year Grant Agreement that concludes in June 2027.
- BSL would remain the community partner for 50 sites delivering to CALD and disadvantaged communities.

# Opportunities and next steps

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1. Ask BSL to set up a SharePoint page where we can all share information about possible models and our research about what would work for us.
2. Can we share more detail about the other models from other countries and in Australia, including other arrangements that might be similar like from the NIAA? Let's consider developing a unique model for us.
3. Perhaps the SharePoint page could be reviewed every two weeks to facilitate an 'active discussion', then we could consult our organisations and each other to decide what should be worked up and not.
4. We need a clear 'go to' person from BSL.
5. We should appoint roles from members of this group that can represent us in DSS discussions.
6. Agree on regular meetings.

# Opportunities and next steps

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7. We should explore the pros and cons of three options:
  - Forming/choosing a First Nations peak body
  - Having Individual direct contracts
  - Deciding that we are not ready for either of the above, so we need to extend the transition timeline.

Then once we have these worked out, we should all discuss our preferences

- We need to have good communications for our workforce.
- We need to develop a timeline that suits us.
- There is an issue that this change could be seen as segregation and it may cause unease in our communities. Especially in places where there are significant numbers of CALD and disadvantaged families using services.

# Opportunities and next steps

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8. Some organisations may not want to segregate their services and will want to continue to provide services to everyone.
9. We need to be clear about what should stay the same and what would be good to change.
10. We need to have DSS here and working with us collaboratively.
11. Each option will have risks, so we need to make sure we have done a good assessment of these.
12. We need to bring the others who are outside this room up to speed.
13. Should we create a First Nations leadership team to represent us? Or should we create some sort of representation of regions?
14. We should develop a view of transition key milestones and then we can be realistic about the timelines and resources we will need.

# Reflections on the day

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15. The group is starting to form a collective and it seems like we have the commitment to continue to work together.
16. We have lots of knowledge in the room and we are all committed to doing the best for children and families.
17. It has been so beneficial to be here in person.
18. We need to continue to build a safe space because some robust discussions will be needed in the future.
19. If our voices are loud that is because we are speaking on behalf of our kids.
20. I feel like self-determination is being supported.
21. We need to go back and share the details of the meeting with our organisations to get their views.

# Timing of next meetings

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22. Next meeting should happen after National Reconciliation Week but before NAIDOC. Potential first week of July.
23. In three weeks, the record of meeting should be shared with the First Nations providers.