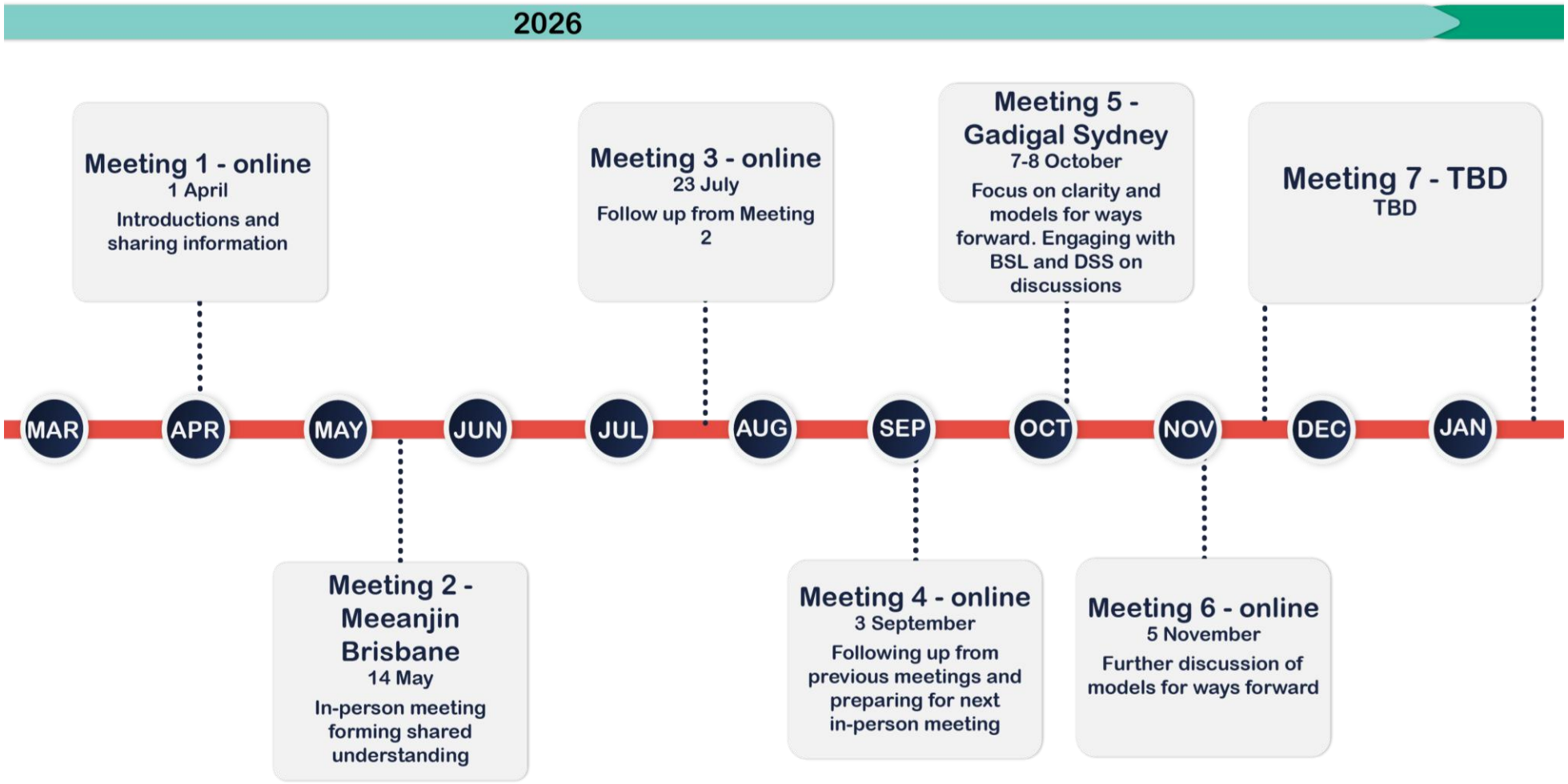
HIPPY First Nations Governance Network meeting #5
Record of meeting October 2026 – Gadigal Country

Process timeline – where have we come from and where are we up to



Record of meeting

Wednesday 7 October 2026

Welcome and opening session

Smoking ceremony and time for grounding to prepare the group for conversations.

Brief comments from BSL and facilitators about purpose for the days and welcome.

Lunch together

Group connection over lunch.

Facilitators ran a process to have the whole group introduce themselves:

Four Stories of Identity

- Name
- Birthplace
- People
- Special place

Briefing on Frameworks and shared purpose discussion

The whole group was reminded of the frameworks used for dialogue on the future state of HIPPY for ACCOs:

- Eagle, ant and emu
- Leadership gardens

The whole group worked on articulating their understanding for the purpose for the meeting and how they want to feel when it is finished.

Purpose of the meeting

Clarity

- About the transition and impacts for ACCOs
- About enabling First Nations governance and leadership for HIPPY First Nations sites
- About moving forward, funding, program fidelity and local adaptation

Self-determination

- HIPPY should be embedded in culture and reflect mob needs

Right resources

- Discussion and shared understanding about funding, controls, licencing and models to suit communities and ACCOs

Adaptation

- Discussion and shared understanding about HIPPY adaptation to community contexts

Group feeling

- Confident, informed and empowered
- Like the future is looking bright and we will decide together
- Like families and babies are empowered, included and heard
- We have some security, clarity and confidence in a way forward
- We have strengthened connection and trust
- On a high and hopeful that young people and families feel part of community

Break - Afternoon Tea

Developing clear purpose

There was time for ACCOs to discuss the future state of HIPPY, purpose, related issues, and clarifying what decisions need to be made (and who makes them).

While ACCOs were in conversation, the BSL team was also in conversation about their role in transition to the future state of HIPPY.

Dialogue in the whole group

There was time held for conversation as a whole group to hear about the nature of the separate conversations.

A strong theme was the need to move from broad conversation to tangible progress:

- Clarify and separate contracts and licensing arrangements
- Develop the new model rather than continuing indefinitely with conceptual discussion
- Create a clear timeline and decision-making process
- Recognise the expected 2027 funding decision
- Build resourcing and expectations for new ACCOs
- Select priority topics for focused dialogue and sign-off
- Define the current HIPPY model and the future HIPPY model
- Consider implications if peak bodies become involved
- Avoid allowing complex issues to remain unresolved without a decision pathway

There was a desire to have direct conversations about the essential infrastructure for the future state of HIPPY with ACCOs.

It was decided to adjust the program for day two to reflect desire to work together on models as a way forward.

The models emerging were:

1. Maintaining current status quo of BSL holding Australian licence and acting as HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) for all HIPPY sites (First Nations focus and broad focus).
2. The HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) First Nations network is taken up by another ACCO peak body.
3. Each ACCO will have separate contracts
4. A new program replaces HIPPY for ACCOs to use

Thursday 8 October 2026

Connecting with purpose for the day

The whole group welcomed in people who had missed the introductions from Day 1.

Some were from ACCOs and others from Department of Social Services (DSS).

There was another round of introductions to include roles and organisations.

There was an informal presentation and time for discussion with the representatives from DSS.

Discussed the authorizing environment for discussions and people in the room as representatives of the majority of ACCO's delivering HIPPY in their communities.

Break

Dialogue in separate groups for mapping the "Actors in the HIPPY transition to move towards a future state"

This was done in three separate groups.

Each group worked on identifying the following:

- Who is the actor? *E.g. BSL, ACCO, etc.*
- What is their role? *E.g. licence holder, service delivery, etc.*
- What loyalties does this actor have in relation to HIPPY transition? *E.g. To HIPPY International, families, etc.*
- What might be their sense of loss or fear in HIPPY transition? *E.g. Control of funding, reputation, etc.*
- What authority does this actor have? *E.g. Decide on recipients of funds, program adaptation, etc.*
- What might be some opportunities in relation to this actor? *E.g. Increase ACCO control, improve connection with others, etc.*
- What questions arise from discussing this actor? *E.g. What actions can be done within timeframes? Who can deliver services? Etc.*

Lunch

SESSION 10 – Exploring models

This was done in two groups incorporating ACCOs, BSL and DSS.

Each group worked on the models:

1. Maintaining current status quo of BSL holding Australian licence and acting as HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO).
2. The HIPPY Australia National Office (HANO) is taken up by another ACCO peak body.
3. Each ACCO have separate contracts
4. A new program replaces HIPPY for ACCOs to use.

The strongest direction was towards **First Nations leadership, authority and funding**, with children, families and communities at the centre.

This meeting had **not settled on a final structure**.

The progress was more about greater alignment on the direction and on the process needed to reach the next decisions. The consensus in the room was that this was achieved.

Themes emerging from the conversations:

- ACCO-led future.
- Options still to work through:
    - individual ACCO contracts;
    - peak / backbone;
    - combination;
    - adapted HIPPY model;
    - potential other model.
- Need more information about what a backbone function means;
- wanting tangible progress;
- not rushing into the wrong structure;
- bringing the broader ACCO network into the decision;
- preserving what works in HIPPY;
- creating genuine space for cultural authority and local adaptation;
- providing sufficient time, capability and resources for transition;
- ensuring the process itself demonstrates self-determination, transparency and shared decision-making.

Short Break

Identifying roles and responsibilities for next steps

There was a conversation about next steps.

Some of the roles identified in transition to the future state of HIPPY

- **DSS**
    - Navigate government decisions and systems.
    - Support transition through policy, funding and accountability.
    - Help define what the future arrangement needs to achieve.
- **ACCOs**
    - Design what the future model needs to look like.
    - Hold community relationships, cultural authority and local knowledge.
    - Work collectively and independently where appropriate.
    - Help establish the accountability needed to deliver and administer the program.
- **BSL**
    - Listen to and learn from the concerns and aspirations of the group.
    - Be transparent and accountable.
    - Work alongside ACCOs.
    - Support workforce and capability transfer.
    - Contribute evidence, learning and policy support.
    - Support a First Nations-led journey for children and families.
- **Peak and sector bodies**
    - Help coordinate sector transition.
    - Connect jurisdictions, communities and representative organisations.
    - Support dialogue across different actors.

What next / how do we move forward?

- Need to hear from people beyond those in the room.
- Take conversation back to:
    - Boards
    - CEOs
    - Elders
    - Communities
- ACCOs not represented need an opportunity to have a say.
- Can't assume this group can make the decision for everyone.
- Consistent information needs to go out first.
- Group members need to make sure they are keeping up to date with relevant information by visiting the online materials in the First Nations Governance Network webpage.
- Summary of the two days / key messages.
- Then seek broader views.
- Online survey as one option to inform direction.
- Need to keep momentum and not let it stall.

Close