



Family &
Community
Services

NSW

Family and Community Services
Statistical Report 2014-15



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Secretary's message



The Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) continues in its commitment to build a strong evidence base through the delivery of its second Annual Statistical Report.

FACS, along with our partners in the non-government sector, progressed major reforms across all core areas of service delivery in 2014–15. The NSW Government aims to make a lasting change in people's lives by not just connecting people to the services they need, but assisting them to permanently break through the cycle of disadvantage. This report contains a range

of measures of performance to track progress in achieving better long-term outcomes for our clients.

We are working hard to improve client experience across the board – we are listening to feedback on how well we are working to make interactions with us helpful, meaningful and constructive. To reinforce our commitment to deliver quality customer service every time, we have also developed a new FACS Service Charter. The Charter outlines the standard of service that our clients should expect from us.

We work in an increasingly complex environment demanding innovative solutions to improve the effectiveness of services, and to maintain and extend our reach in the community. This report builds on last year's efforts to ensure we have the accessible and high quality evidence base we need to design, deliver and improve our services so that we continue making positive, lifelong changes for our clients and an enduring impact in the community.

Michael Coutts-Trotter
Secretary

FACS Strategic Statement

Our vision

All people are empowered to live fulfilling lives and achieve their potential in inclusive communities.

Our values

Service

Integrity

Trust

Accountability

Our work

Every day we are:

- putting people first
- creating local solutions tailored to meet local needs
- collaborating with government, non-government and community partners to reach more people with better services
- building an agile and cohesive department that leads and delivers social policy reform.

1. 2014–15 Year in review

During 2014–15, FACS provided support to more than 418,000¹ people alongside our partners in the non-government sector. We provide support services to children and young people and their families, people who are in need of housing assistance, people with disability, their families and carers, women and older people. One in eight people accessing our services were Aboriginal. FACS also reached more than 1.4 million through the Seniors Card, events associated with Seniors Week, and programs to help older people stay connected and active in their communities.

¹ There has been a reduction in the number of FACS clients on 2013–14. This is largely due to the transition of clients to the NDIS



1.1 Improving the lives of children and young people



Helping families earlier and with better services so their children are not taken into care

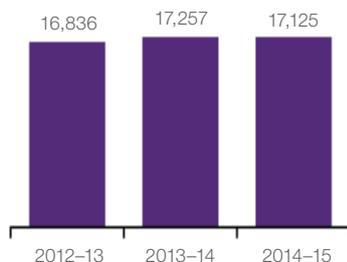
Intervening early with the right support can reduce vulnerabilities and prevent significant problems – which require more intensive or complex responses – from occurring or escalating. FACS aims to deliver prevention and early intervention services which are effective in building and sustaining positive and nurturing relationships for families, children and young people. Keeping families together in a safe and stable environment is a priority.

Many of the families who require support are experiencing multiple and complex issues which require a multi faceted response. These often include domestic and family violence, parental substance abuse, and mental health problems. FACS works in partnership with the non-government (NGO) sector and other government agencies to build their skills and capabilities to reduce the risks to children and young people, and ensure that they are supported to realise positive, long-term change.

The main early intervention services include Community Builders, Families NSW, Youth Hope, Aboriginal Child Youth and Family Violence Services and Integrated Domestic Violence Services. These diverse services are designed to help children, young people and families across the spectrum of needs. This includes universal programs for families who need basic support or guidance right through to intensive, integrated multi-component programs for families with complex needs.

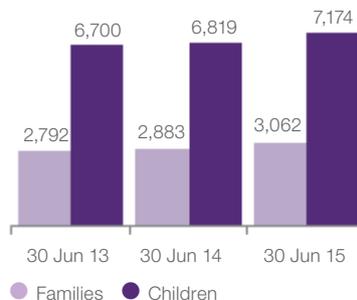
Addressing problems early

Children and young people receiving an intensive family support service



Building families

Families and children engaged or participating in *Brighter Futures*



Improving family functioning

8 in 10 children and young people exiting* the *Brighter Futures* program were not re-reported at risk of significant harm (ROSH) within 12 months



*Relates to families achieving case plan goals

Youth Hope – building pathways to safety and resilience for vulnerable older children and young people

The Youth Hope program is a four-year trial operating in six FACS districts which provides early intervention and intensive services for children and young people aged 9 to 15 years. Youth Hope assists children and young people in the target group who have been reported at risk of significant harm or are susceptible due to neglect, homelessness, domestic violence or drug and alcohol abuse. The program aims to keep children and young people safe and in a stable and supportive environment.

One young person assisted through the program is 14-year-old Nicky. Nicky was referred to the program due to the abuse she was experiencing at home. Due to her troubled home life, Nicky also has challenging behaviours, finding it hard to listen to advice and struggling with boundaries. This has led to some difficulties in finding family members willing to act as her guardian, and to problems at school. Through Youth Hope, Nicky has bonded with her caseworker, Alison, who has helped her get the support she needs, and been there for her when her family has let her down. Nicky values the support from Alison, and she has made a very powerful comment as to what her life might be like without the support provided through Youth Hope – ‘I would probably be dead.’

Increasing the proportion of children and young people in safe and stable homes

Outcomes for children are much better when they have a stable and safe home. The NSW Government promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through services focused on building stronger families and communities, and timely access to a responsive child protection system that keeps children and young people safe from harm.

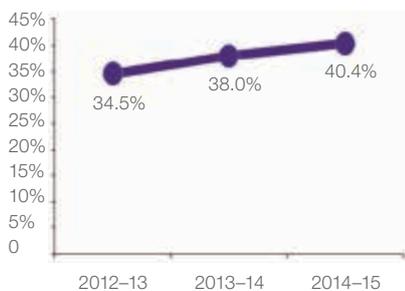
In 2014–15, the NSW Government continued the implementation of initiatives under Safe Home for Life to address growing demand for statutory child protection services, and to better coordinate services to support children and their families earlier and more effectively.

A number of significant reforms were introduced under Safe Home for Life in 2014–15 that re-focused efforts on preserving families where it is safe to do so. Permanent placement principles have also been introduced that have a strong focus on family restoration as the first casework option. Where this cannot be achieved, the goal is to provide a long-term, nurturing, stable and secure environment through guardianship and open adoption, with long-term foster care the final option.

On 29 October 2014, legislative changes came into effect which transitioned 2,418 children to guardianship orders, helping to ensure children and young people have a more stable, nurturing and safe home.

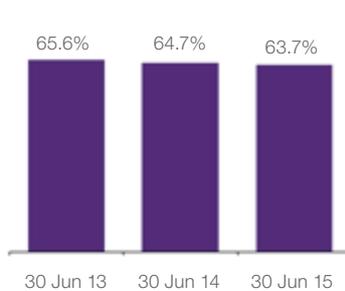
Reducing re-reporting

Percentage of children re-reported within 12 months following plan closure with goal achieved



Stability in care

Proportion of children and young people with less than three placements in their current care period



More open adoptions

314 carer adoptions since 2011–12



Helping parents address personal and parenting issues

Raising a child brings immense responsibility and challenges. Some parents and families need intensive support to build the skills and confidence needed so their children are not taken into care, or to enable their children to return home. The innovative Newpin Social Benefit Bond scheme provides this type of support.

Michelle came into the Newpin program after her baby, Brittany, was taken into care. Michelle had four other children in long-term care, and she and her partner had a history of drug use.

Following treatment for her drug use, Michelle began attending Newpin. Newpin offered Michelle a chance to address personal and parenting issues in a home-like setting with other parents in similar situations. Michelle was also had the opportunity to bond with Brittany through play. Because of Newpin, Michelle has been supported to transform her life and address drug use and relationship issues. After six months in Newpin, Brittany was restored to Michelle's care.

Michelle continues to make good progress, and has recently sought to have her other children returned to her care. Michelle credits Newpin with helping her sustain positive, long-term change.

Providing more children at risk of significant harm with a face-to-face response

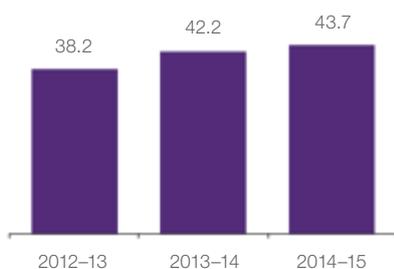
A key objective of Safe Home for Life is to increase the number of face-to-face responses for children at risk of significant harm (ROSH), and reduce the number of children entering out-of-home care (OOHC). To help achieve this, in 2014–15 FACS has expanded the Practice First model of child protection service delivery to a further 14 sites.

Practice First aims to make practice culture more effective in the way support is provided to families. In 2014–15, the NSW Government provided additional funding for 73 new casework support positions to assist with administrative and other tasks. This initiative enables caseworkers to spend more time with families. They gain a better understanding of their strengths and difficulties. It also increases opportunities to build more positive relationships and collaborative approaches to improving outcomes. This ensures children only come into care once available options to achieve parental change and family safety have been exhausted.

In 2014–15, the overall caseworker vacancy rate decreased to five per cent. This is an improvement on the 2013–14 rate, which was 10 per cent. The total number of full-time equivalent caseworkers increased to 2,012 in the June 2015 quarter. In 2014–15, 51,997 children received a child protection-related service or assessment, an improvement of 4.3 per cent from 2013–14. Of these, 39.6 per cent received a face-to-face assessment, an increase of 6.6 per cent – or 1,269 – on 2013–14.

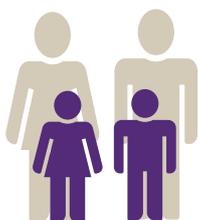
Meeting sustained demand

Rate of children and young people in ROSH per 1,000 population



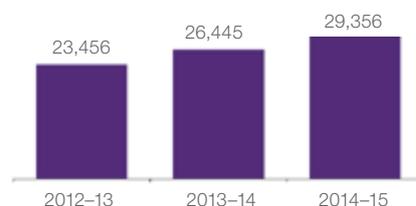
More face-to-face responses for children

14.7% increase in the number of children and young people with a completed face-to-face assessment since 2012–13



Tailored responses

Children and young people receiving a child protection assessment or service*



*If a report does not require a child protection response, children and families may be referred to other services in the community that may help the family

How FACS caseworkers are making a difference

Norma, a FACS caseworker, and Karen, a psychologist, have been working with Sonja, a single mother and her five children to build the foundations for a loving and happy family. When Norma and Karen first met Sonja, her house was hectic and she was on the verge of a breakdown. It was also evident that Sonja needed to work on her parenting skills, and her attachment to her children.

Sonja was initially resistant and fearful of FACS workers – she was frightened that her children would be taken away, and refused assistance. However, over time, Sonja came

to trust Norma, and began accepting the help she needed, including mental health services. Sonja also credits Norma with helping her to ‘think differently about my kids.’ Sonja acknowledges that ‘Norma works on the positives in my life instead of pointing out the negatives...She has worked beside me every step of the way, saying “you can do it”. I’d never been told that by anyone in my life.’

Norma says ‘I really admire Sonja. The level of change Sonja has achieved in her parenting would not have been possible if I hadn’t committed to working with her over the long term. Sonja has come so far. Best of all, the five children are together with their mum and she has fought hard to be what they need.’

Improving the outcomes of our most vulnerable children and young people in care

The priority for the NSW Government is to keep families together safely. When it is not possible to ensure the safety of a child or young person in their own home, child protection intervention is necessary.

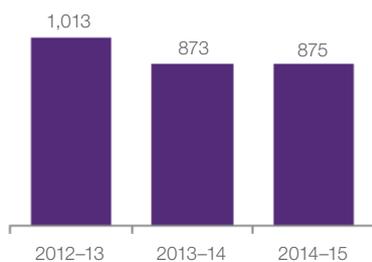
A stable and secure environment promotes attachment to caregivers and continuity in key relationships. Preservation or restoration to family is always the preferred outcome if this can be achieved safely. Guardianship, followed by open adoption (for non-Aboriginal children) and long-term foster care are the options where this is not achievable. For Aboriginal children, the NSW Government is committed to ensuring they are cared for in a way that respects their culture, and are placed with extended family or kin, or an Aboriginal carer, wherever possible.

As at 30 June 2015, there were 17,585 children and young people in OOH. This is a decrease of 7.2 per cent on the previous year. The reduction is largely due to the implementation of guardianship orders on 29 October 2014 – this change enabled relative and kinship carers who had full parental responsibility for a child or young person in their care to become their guardians. Children on guardianship orders are no longer considered to be in OOH.

The NSW Government is also working to streamline and improve the adoption process. Since 2012–13, there have been 249 adoptions in NSW. In 2014–15, the NSW Government commenced planning for the nation's first ever Institute of Open Adoption Studies to reduce barriers to adoption and lead research and education on open adoption best practice.

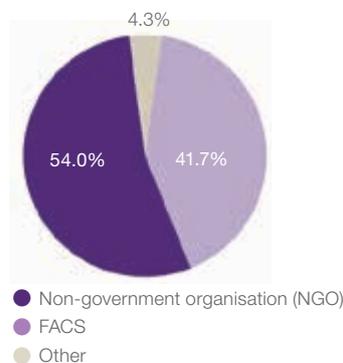
Family restoration

Children and young people exiting care who were restored to parents



NGO partners

Children and young people in statutory care by type of provider at 30 June 2015



Placement of children with relatives or kin

1 in 2 children and young people in care were placed with a relative or kinship carer



Getting families back together

Four siblings had been living with their mother, Kelly, and stepfather, Chris. Kelly couldn't see that Chris was abusive to her children and, sadly, because they could not be protected, the children were taken into care.

The children's father, Joe, desperately tried to see his children, but the family moved often and he could never find them. Kelly told the children he hated them. Joe eventually moved to country Victoria with his new partner, Lou, their baby daughter, and Lou's three daughters. Joe was upset to find his children were in care, and wanted to see them. Belinda, the FACS caseworker, started to reconnect the family.

The children were angry and distrusted their father, but the family started to heal. Individual plans were prepared for the children, and collaboration with multiple agencies across NSW and Victoria was necessary. The casework team booked a holiday house so the family could spend time together. After many visits and phone calls, the court decided the best place for the four siblings was with their father. The children are now all doing well, establishing friendships and settling into the life of the new family. Belinda says, 'I have learnt that time, distance and complexity are no barriers to doing our most important job of all – getting families back together.'

Improving the safety of Aboriginal children and young people with child protection concerns

In NSW, there is significant overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people and their families in the child protection system. The reasons for this are complex, related to a range of factors both past and present. Aboriginal children and young people represent around 5.4 per cent of the population, but in 2014–15, 21.6 per cent of children and young people involved in ROSH reports, and 36.8 per cent of all those in care were Aboriginal.

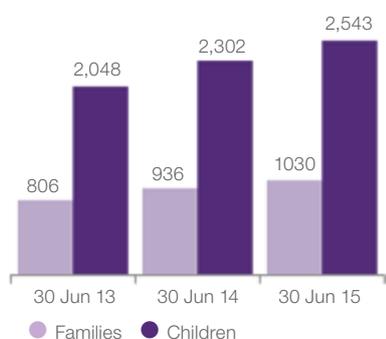
Between 2012–13 and 2014–15, there was an increase of 13.8 per cent – or 1,840 Aboriginal children and young people – reported at ROSH. The rate of increase of Aboriginal children and young people reported at ROSH has been more moderate over the last year.

The number of Aboriginal children and young people in care reduced by 4.7 per cent in 2014–15 on the previous year. This is largely due to the implementation of guardianship orders – 796 Aboriginal children and young people were on guardianship orders as at 30 June 2015. As at 30 June 2015, 77 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC were placed with an Aboriginal carer. FACS has undertaken to ensure that all Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC will be placed with Aboriginal carers in Aboriginal agencies by 2022.

The NSW Government is committed to addressing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people reported at ROSH and in OOHC. This commitment is captured in the *Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework 2015–2018*, which was released in December 2014.

Resilient Aboriginal families

Aboriginal children and young people engaged or participating in *Brighter Futures*

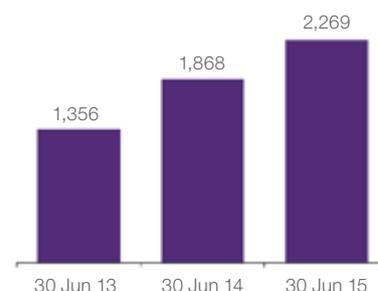


Connection to culture and community

77% of Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC are placed with a relative or an Aboriginal carer

Quality care and support

67.3% increase in the number of Aboriginal children and young people in statutory care with accredited NGOs



Family reunification – moving towards a positive change

Rose and four of her siblings had lived with their Aunt Pearl for 10 years. However, changing family circumstances for their Aunt meant she could no longer care for them. Rose, now 13 years old, developed a rapport with Michelle, an Aboriginal caseworker. They chatted about everything, including where she wanted to live, and – without hesitation – she said she wanted to live with her dad.

Rose's father, Jerry, used to drink and take drugs. He became a father at 15 and admitted he had no idea how to be a father. Then eight years ago, he put himself through a

rehabilitation program and has been clean ever since. Approached by Michelle, he was determined to make things right again. The first step was to assess whether Rose would be safe in her father's care. Michelle spoke with many people in the Aboriginal community, implemented a plan to ensure Jerry remained clean, and linked him to an Intensive Family Based Service to help him learn about parenting. For six months she worked with relevant agencies and service providers in a team to support Rose's return.

Jerry is now working to reconnect with his other four children. Michelle says, 'Rose is calmer and more comfortable within herself. Their loving bond is still evident...'

1.2 Supporting people with disability to realise their potential



Increasing the number of people with disability who make decisions about their supports

The NSW Government implemented significant reforms in 2014–15 to ensure that the goals and aspirations of people with disability, their families and carers are at the centre of support planning.

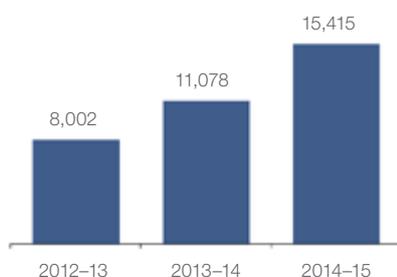
On 3 December 2014, the NSW Government implemented the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* to recognise that people with disability have the right to exercise choice and control over their lives and the decisions which involve them. The Act also prepares NSW for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The expansion of individualised funding arrangements is key to ensuring a seamless transition to the NDIS when it rolls out across NSW in 2018. Individualised funding ensures that a person's goals and preferences are identified and linked to purchased supports. This approach empowers people with the opportunity to live the life they choose. The proportion of people with disability who utilised individualised funding arrangements increased from 20.3 per cent in 2013–14 to 27.6 per cent in 2014–15.

Ability Links NSW also experienced rapid, state-wide expansion in 2014–15 to support the ongoing reforms. People with disability across every part of NSW now have access to a 'Linker' as a local first point of contact to access supports and services in their communities. This includes making connections with community, recreational and sporting groups, and businesses and other organisations.

Choice and Control

People with disability using individualised funding arrangements



Local coordination

Ability Links NSW assisted **9,009** people in 2014–15. This includes, 5,565 people who identified themselves as Aboriginal



Connecting with the community

Providers or Linkers made **153,145** community connections



Direct payments – supporting people to live the life they choose

The Direct Payment Agreement (DPA), which was launched in 2014, enables people with disability to receive funding into their bank account to purchase the supports and services they need. An independent evaluation of the DPA has found that the program was meeting its objectives in increasing opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers to have more choice and control over their disability supports.

Emma is a participant in the DPA – she is 26 years old, and has had her agreement managed by her mother. Emma lives in a small

community where there are no local support staff or service providers available. As part of Emma's DPA, her mother chooses, employs and trains local staff. Emma is now making her own choices about what, when, where and with whom she does activities. Emma's mother says that the DPA has 'brought a lot more people into our life and improved our support network hugely. Now we can spend quality time together doing the things we both enjoy! Emma knows many people in the community and is involved in activities such as the local boardriders club, soccer and netball matches, karaoke, riding her trike around town or to the beach, swimming and dancing. Her self-help skills are improving and she is living a much more independent and rewarding life.'

Preparing for the full roll-out of NDIS by July 2018

In 2014–15, NSW successfully completed the second year of a three-year trial of the NDIS in the Hunter region. The NDIS will see the implementation of a national service system focused on the individual choices and needs of people with disability. The NDIS takes a whole-of-life approach to accessing the supports which will assist people with disability to realise their goals and aspirations and participate in daily life.

The Hunter trial, which commenced in July 2013, had 2,250 participants as at 30 June 2014 – by the end of June 2015, this had more than doubled to 4,829.

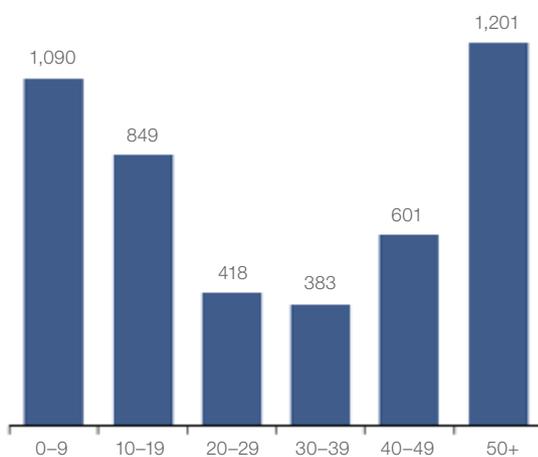
In May 2015, the NSW Government signed an agreement with the Commonwealth for the early transition to the NDIS for children and young people aged 0 to 17 years living in the Nepean and Blue Mountains District. This transition commenced on 1 July 2015, a year ahead of schedule.

It is expected that the NDIS will support more than 140,000 participants when it is fully implemented across NSW in 2018. By this time, the NSW Government has also determined that its direct services to older people and people with disability will transition to the NGO sector.

In 2014–15, the NSW Government announced that the transfer of services will commence with the Home Care Service of NSW. The new operator will provide continuity and quality service for clients and staff, and support the service capacity of the sector as it responds to change and growth.

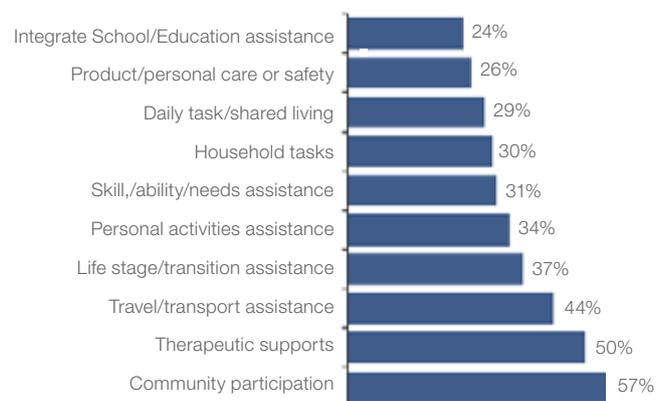
Age of trial participants

Hunter trial participants by age, 30 June 2015



Clients receiving supports

Number and proportion of NDIS participants receiving supports (top 10 support types with highest number of participants) at 30 June 2015





NDIS – opening doors, making a difference for families in the Nepean Blue Mountains

Penrith mum Jessica Ross says the NDIS has ‘opened doors’ to her family since the early rollout began in the Nepean Blue Mountains District last year.

Her son Jaxon, five, is off to kindergarten in 2016 and is greatly benefiting from the early intervention therapies he now receives through the NDIS.

Jaxon has a severe receptive and expressive language delay and a sensory processing disorder. Jaxon is also presently wearing a bone conductive headset to help with the hearing loss in his right ear. Jessica says that the ‘NDIS has opened the door for a massive opportunity for Jaxon.’

Jaxon and his family were initially referred by Westmead Children’s Hospital to Lifestart, an NGO which supports children and young people with disability or developmental delay. Lifestart then put the family in contact with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Lifestart helped Jessica with the paperwork before meeting with the NDIA planner. Jessica says, ‘we thought about Jaxon’s needs and goals for him to achieve and what we wanted to get out of life, and also his quality of life.’ Jaxon now has a multi-

category plan which reflects those needs and goals, but which can also be adjusted as his needs change. The family have developed a schedule for Jaxon – they can select the therapies that best meet his needs, and have the flexibility to ‘choose certain ones to ensure milestones are being met.’

Jessica’s advice to other families is to not be afraid to ask questions about their plans. ‘Take the time to make sure you get the best outcome for your family.’

Jessica also notes that ‘our key worker at Lifestart has been wonderful...She chases things up for me and it’s like an extra pair of hands, which is especially helpful when I have another child [Dylan, who is three].’

For Jessica and her family, the goal for Jaxon is to participate in school and community life in a ‘safe and stable way where he is not looked at any differently...With Jaxon starting kindergarten, it’s important that he feels he’s the same as the other children, that he’s not different and has time to settle in to his surroundings.’

Jessica says of the NDIS that ‘Jaxon is benefiting so much with all the different therapies...We can’t believe it’s real – it’s been so great.’

Jessica Ross kindly agreed to share her family’s story and for their photo to be included in the report.

1.3 Breaking disadvantage with social housing assistance



Improving the economic and social outcomes of people in social housing and using other forms of housing assistance

Secure and affordable housing provides people with the stability they need to engage as fully as possible in social and economic life. The NSW Government provides a range of housing assistance products to those with housing needs, including short-term, emergency, supported and crisis accommodation, social and affordable housing, and private rental assistance.

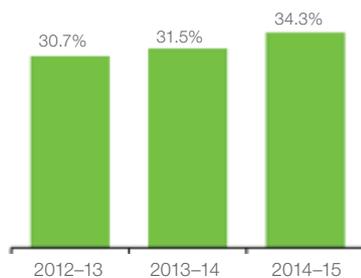
The NSW Government is focusing efforts on providing a sustainable and equitable social housing system that helps vulnerable people at the same time as it provides the opportunity to overcome disadvantage. Some people will need housing assistance for life due to their health, age or circumstances – but it also has the potential to provide a secure foundation from which people can be supported to change their circumstances. This can be achieved through strengthening partnerships across government, the NGO and private sectors to improve access to employment, education and training and other services, such as health care.

As at 30 June 2015, approximately 140,531 households, or 275,500 people, were living in social housing. During 2014–15, a further 32,676 households, or 75,300 people, were assisted with other housing products or services, including private rental assistance or temporary accommodation.

In 2014–15, 73,437 applications for housing assistance were received through the state-wide housing application system, an increase of 10 per cent compared to 2013–14. In 2014–15, 9,623 new tenants were housed in social housing.

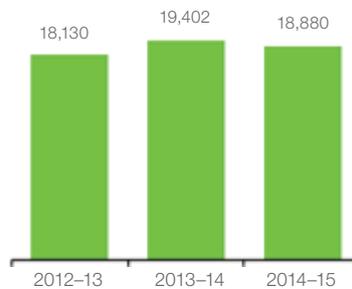
Pathways to independence

Households that left social housing* went to the private rental market, or home ownership



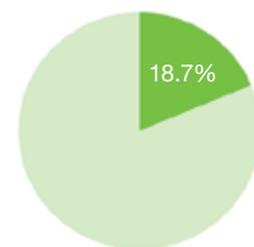
Range of products and services

Households assisted with housing products other than social housing



Sustainable community housing

18.7% of the social housing portfolio is managed by community housing providers



*Public and Aboriginal housing households

Providing outstanding customer service to vulnerable young people in the Hunter- District

The Hunter-Tamworth Youth Private Rental Subsidy Project Team, finalists in the teams category of the FACS 2015 Simply the Best Customer Service Awards, are very proud of the significant impact their pilot project is having on the lives of vulnerable young people struggling to secure stable accommodation.

The project is aimed at young people aged 16–24 years who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and who are committed to

study or work. More than 40 young people have been supported to secure private rental accommodation as a result of the project, including young people leaving OOHC, and those living in cars and in other unsafe situations. They are financially assisted by FACS to pay their rent and to set up their home as well as meet their study costs. Clients are also supported via their case plan to sustain their tenancy, and remain engaged with studies or gain employment. The project team is delighted that its success has resulted in approval to expand into two other districts in NSW.

Reducing the rate of people experiencing homelessness

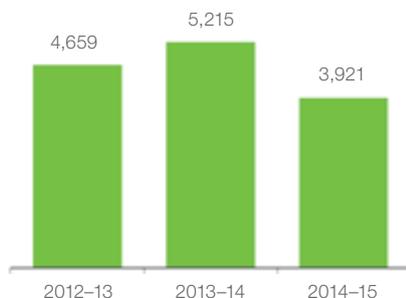
Homelessness is a complex problem, with many people requiring more than one type of assistance to help get their lives back on track. In recognition that the service system needs to be more responsive, the NSW Government progressed reforms in 2014–15 to the Specialist Homelessness Services program. These reforms enabled more people to access homelessness services delivered through NGOs. Funding was also increased by more than 9 per cent from \$135 million in 2013–14 to \$148 million in 2014–15. More than 48,000 people experiencing – or at risk of – homelessness were assisted with Specialist Homelessness Services.

Many children and young people also find themselves homeless or at risk due to factors ranging from housing affordability, poverty, unemployment, illness, domestic and family violence or the breakdown of family relationships. According to the 2011 Census, there were 28,190 homeless people in NSW. Over 37 per cent were 24 years or under, including 6,274 under 18 years. The NSW Premier has recognised the urgency of this issue by nominating reducing youth homelessness a key State – and personal – Priority.

In July 2014, Link2home was launched, providing a single, state-wide 24-hour contact point for people to gain information and access to homelessness services. The new service provides assessments and referrals, and has improved information sharing and increased efficiencies by better targeting referrals to providers with capacity. Link2home received 150,000 calls and assisted almost 50,000 clients in its first year.

Obtaining housing

Number of newly housed applicants in social housing who were previously homeless or at risk of homelessness



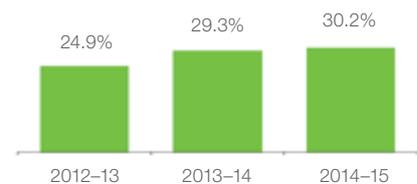
Maintaining housing

Nearly **9 in 10** new public and Aboriginal housing tenants who were previously homeless or at risk of homelessness were still in a home after 12 months



Ending homelessness

Proportion of unaccompanied young people aged 15–24 years who successfully moved from Specialist Homelessness Services to long-term accommodation*



*Reducing youth homelessness is a priority of the Premier

Youth Specialist Homelessness Services — Joe's story

Joe, 15, had to grow up quickly and shoulder responsibilities beyond his years. Joe's family life was chaotic – his father had died and he became responsible for supporting his mother and younger brother at a very young age.

Joe engaged with two services – the Ted Noffs Program for Adolescent Life Management, where he was provided support for his drug addiction, and Caretakers Cottage, which provides services to children and young adults facing homelessness. He was referred to St Laurence House for their residential program for homeless youth.

The supportive team at St Laurence House continued to help Joe turn his life around. When Joe first arrived, he had limited contact with his family but, with the support of staff, he quickly settled and successfully reconnected with them. St Laurence House provided a safe space to return to after family visits and the benefits of this stability became evident.

Joe had also disengaged from school and the team supported him to return to study at Waverley Action for Youth Services. Joe has now been back at school for 12 months and continues to make great progress. Joe remains strongly committed to recovering from his drug addiction and is now exploring options for further education.

Improving the financial position of the social housing portfolio

The social housing system provides secure, affordable housing to those in need. To ensure sustainability, the NSW Government is taking steps to deliver a viable and fair social housing system focused on breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

In 2014–15, FACS commenced the development of a new Social Housing Policy Framework to guide how the system will change. The Framework will address issues relating to housing supply, and how people can be provided with the right supports and opportunities to become – or remain – independent. During 2014–15, the NSW Government released a discussion paper to facilitate community dialogue on potential future directions.

As at 30 June 2015, there were 59,035 applicants on the Housing Register waiting list, with a median wait time of 24.8 months. Households on the waiting list may be receiving other housing assistance whilst awaiting placement in social housing. Addressing growing demand requires a strategic, holistic approach. An increase of five per cent over three years in the number of households successfully exiting social housing is a key objective of the new State Priorities.

The NSW Government will also grow the public housing portfolio by 6,000 properties over the next 10 years through redevelopment and the reinvestment of funds from the sale of other properties. There will also be a further 500 new affordable housing properties. Approximately 17,000 ageing properties will be replaced with new, well located properties that meet the needs of current and future tenants.

Service response

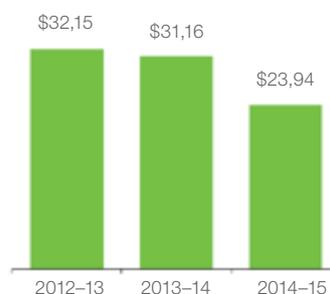
Median wait time for priority approved applicants housed* during 2014–15 was

3 months, an improvement on last year's result of 4.1 months

*Applicants housed in public and Aboriginal housing

Personal responsibility of clients

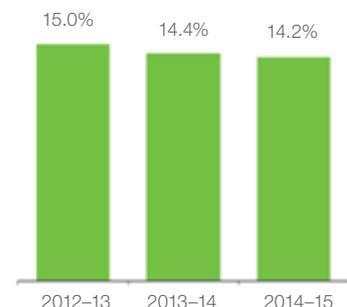
Average \$ rental arrears per tenancy*



*FACS managed properties - Applicants housed in public and Aboriginal housing

Making social housing fairer

Under-occupancy rate per public housing



*Under-occupancy is where the number of bedrooms exceeds the tenant's allocation requirement by 2 or more bedrooms

Creating vibrant, integrated and diverse communities

As part of Communities Plus, the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) is delivering a new generation of integrated housing developments in partnership with the private and NGO sectors. It is an ongoing program that involves the redevelopment of ageing social housing sites in metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW, and the establishment of new, sustainable communities. Communities Plus is focused on achieving mixed, socially inclusive communities, comprising social, affordable and private housing that is well located with good access to community facilities, transport, education and employment.

Initial development sites include the Ivanhoe Estate at Macquarie Park and six other sites, which will be transformed into sustainable mixed communities of around 3,000 new dwellings. The focus is firmly on leveraging the best in urban design, management and development, and exploring new ways of linking assistance to education, training and employment.

LAHC's expanded asset renewal program is being delivered with private and NGO sector partners as part of the NSW Government's broader social housing strategy – *Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW*. In total, the strategy will deliver up to 23,000 new and replacement social housing dwellings

1.4 Assisting people to participate in social and economic life



Assisting seniors to be healthy and active as they age

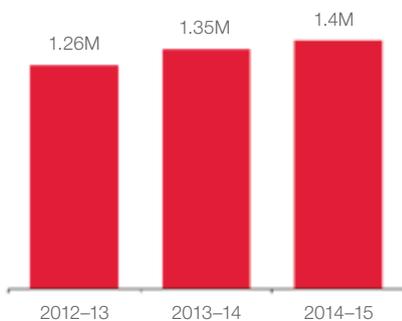
The NSW Government is committed to supporting people who are ageing to live a healthy and active lifestyle through a range of programs designed to respond to their changing needs and keep them engaged with their communities. The NSW Ageing Strategy provides the framework for the NSW Government's efforts to respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population. The Strategy is focused on helping seniors participate in social and economic life, and to maintain their independence and wellbeing.

An evaluation of the NSW Ageing Strategy, which was released in June 2015, found that the Strategy has had a positive impact in promoting awareness of ageing in NSW and in improving the life circumstances of a proportion of older people.

The NSW Seniors Card scheme is also a key initiative which aims to help seniors to stay connected with their communities and support their participation in recreational activities. In 2014–15, there were more than 1.4 million Seniors Card holders in NSW, with over 3,500 participating businesses across the state. The NSW Government is committed to expanding the Seniors Card program to reduce cost-of-living pressures for seniors. In May 2015, the NSW Government announced that AGL had joined the program, offering card holders competitive discounts on electricity and gas usage charges.

More Seniors Card holders

Senior Card Holders

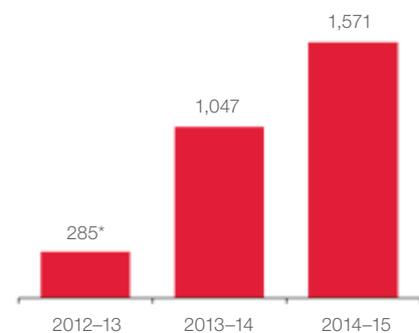


Tech savvy seniors

12,000 people participated in the *Tech Savvy Seniors* program, learning to use technology such as computers, tablets and smart phones

NSW Elder Abuse Helpline Calls

Calls to NSW Elder Abuse Helpline



*The helpline commenced in February 2013

Helping older people use technology to stay connected and online

Rapidly evolving new communication technologies present exciting opportunities for seniors to stay in touch with family and friends. To help older people access the benefits of new communication technology, a key initiative under the NSW Ageing Strategy is the Tech Savvy Seniors program. In partnership with Telstra, the NSW Government is providing free or low-cost training through a network of community colleges and libraries for seniors in the use of computers, tablets and smartphones.

Since the program commenced in 2012, 29,000 places have been offered to help seniors stay

connected. An independent evaluation of the program, released in early 2015, found that for every \$1 invested in Tech Savvy Seniors to date, \$10.98 is returned in social value – more than \$17 million in social value will be provided as a result the program in NSW.

To ensure even more seniors have access to training, the program has been offered in six languages through select metropolitan libraries since February 2015. The program will be expanded further to provide an extra 3,500 places each year over four years. Training is offered through over 70 community college locations across NSW, including courses in Australian Sign Language.

Reducing barriers to people with disability participating in daily life

Over the past decade, significant shifts in disability policy have placed a greater emphasis on the right of people with disability to be in control of their lives, to make or be involved in key decisions, and to participate as fully as possible in social and economic life.

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (the Act), which commenced on 3 December 2014, ensures the rights, independence and autonomy of people with disability are enshrined in legislation. The Act provides safeguards and access to mainstream services, and aims to establish more accessible and inclusive communities. It also aligns NSW legislation with the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

The Act also requires the NSW Government to implement a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), which sets out the whole-of-government goals to achieve inclusive communities. The plan, which was launched in February 2015, includes developing positive community attitudes and behaviours, creating more liveable communities, increasing meaningful participation in employment, and achieving more equitable access to mainstream services. People with disability were involved in developing the plan and their ongoing participation is crucial to identifying further focus areas and actions.

Additionally, the Act requires NSW Government departments and authorities to develop individual DIAPs. FACS has developed guidelines to assist agencies to develop their own DIAP.

Range of services for people with disability

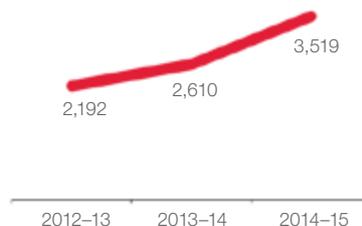
96,321 people with disability receiving services and supports

13% of clients are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

8% of clients identify as Aboriginal

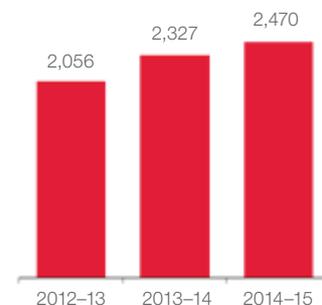
Tailored activities

People with disability in *Life Choices* and/or *Active Ageing* programs



Pathways to employment

People with disability in *Transition to Work* program



Supporting pathways to employment for people with disability

As part of the NSW Government's commitment to increase the social and economic participation of people with disability, FACS offers Employment Enablement Packages to help people with intellectual disability prepare for employment. Announced in the 2014-15 NSW Budget, the packages provide personalised planning, work readiness training, work experience, vocational education and, where required, culturally specific supports and on-the-job training.

Timothy is a 47-year-old man with Down syndrome who had been out of work for three years before he was referred to the program. Timothy was supported to develop his employment skills and, as a result, found employment with Red Rooster as a dining room attendant. At Red Rooster, Timothy is happy to be part of a team and has also made a friend, with whom he has coffee on a regular basis. Timothy's carer says that 'the positive change in Tim is amazing and having employment is a huge part of this change.'



Timebanking – volunteering with a difference

Timebanking is an innovative way to encourage community participation and recognise contributions to community life. Utilising an online system which enables people to connect, Timebanking is a community program that supports the voluntary exchange of services between members. By giving one hour of help, a member earns one hour of time credits, which can be exchanged for other services of personal value such as dog walking, cleaning, ironing, gardening, tuition and painting.

A major initiative of the NSW Volunteering Strategy, Timebanking is active in 70 communities, and is nearing 6,000 members. Since its launch in November 2012, 20,700 hours of support have been exchanged.

Timebanking has helped to meet the needs of members Noreen, 75, and Nicole, 20. Noreen keeps active through volunteering at her local community theatre. She lives independently in a community complex, however, over time Noreen has found it difficult to maintain her unit. Through Timebanking, she was connected with Nicole, who offered household duties as her skill.

Nicole was introduced to Timebanking through her Transition to Work caseworker. Nicole has mild intellectual disability, and utilised Timebanking to gain skills which could one day help her land her 'dream job' in aged and disability care.

Each month for six months, Nicole visited Noreen to perform light household duties. Noreen says she would rather 'have Nicole come instead of a paid cleaning service as she takes the time to spend with me and we have a cuppa and chat. She's just so lovely.' For Nicole, it was a ritual she greatly looked forward to, as Noreen has become a friend who 'always has a wise word to share with me and sometimes helps me in my day-to-day life.'

Over the course of their relationship, Nicole gained valuable experience that enabled her to begin volunteering at a local aged care facility – she subsequently began studying for her certificate in aged care. A year on, Nicole has gained part-time employment at the facility and has nearly completed her studies. She says the opportunity to work with Noreen 'gave me the chance to do what I really wanted to do and be busy.' Her family and caseworker credit Timebanking with providing opportunities for Nicole that were difficult to find previously.

Nicole and Noreen still meet for regular catch-ups. Nicole recently donated her banked hours to the local Timebanking community chest to further help others in her community.

Nicole and Noreen kindly agreed to share their story and for their photo to be included in the report.

Increasing the proportion of women on boards

Boards and committees represent a vital link between community needs and government delivery of services. There are approximately 400 government boards and committees, with around 4,400 members. Inclusivity and diversity on boards matters. Those more representative of the communities they serve have a better understanding of their clients and stakeholders, and promote creativity and innovation by bringing different perspectives to the decision making process.

Driving public sector diversity is a key State Priority, and a personal priority of the Premier. The NSW Government aims to increase the proportion of women in senior leadership roles to 50 per cent in the government sector in the next 10 years.

Women's representation on NSW Government boards and committees increased from 38.3 per cent in December 2013 to 39.1 per cent in December 2014. Women's share of senior leadership roles in the NSW public sector was 35.5 per cent as at June 2015. Women account for 64.5 per cent of the total NSW public sector workforce.

In ensuring female representation in leadership roles, FACS is setting an example – as at June 2015, over 55 per cent of FACS' senior executive, and more than half of its executive board, were female.

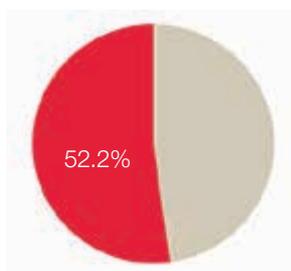
NSW Boards and Committees

Women hold **39%** of NSW Government board and committee positions



FACS leadership

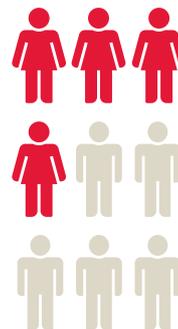
55% of FACS' public sector senior executives* were female



*As defined by the Government Sector Employment Act 2013

FACS Executive

4 of 9 FACS Board members were female





In quest of excellence: Margaret Crawford's advocacy for the most vulnerable citizens in the community, and her path to senior leadership

Margaret Crawford is a highly esteemed and vastly experienced leader in the public sector. Recently appointed as the NSW Government's new Auditor-General, Margaret's was previously the Deputy Secretary Corporate Services for FACS. In this role, Margaret provided oversight and management of FACS corporate services functions, including human resources, finance, ICT, legal services, and corporate planning, performance and governance.

Margaret, whose career has spanned Commonwealth, state and local government, has a track record of success in a diverse range of sectors, including housing and homelessness, community and disability services, transport policy and regulation, taxation administration, corporate services and gaming regulation. Her key focus in each role has been to transform and improve client outcomes for, often the most vulnerable citizens in the community.

Margaret is a Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. A respected and accomplished leader of large, complex public sector organisations, Margaret has worked at chief executive, chief operational and deputy secretary level for more than 20 years.

In announcing Margaret as the state's first female Auditor-General, the NSW Premier Mike Baird described Margaret as 'an inspiring and empathetic leader of large and often distributed workforces ... a trusted partner of colleagues across government, NGOs and industry bodies, and an authoritative adviser to Government Ministers and Boards.'

As a successful and experienced leader, Margaret will continue to navigate the path to greater leadership roles for women and their advancement in the public sector. Over the course of her career she has helped to achieve a greater representation of women in the corridors of senior management, and worked hard to influence and shape government policy, businesses and communities.

Margaret kindly agreed to share her story and for her photo to be included in the report.

Increasing the number of women in non-traditional trades

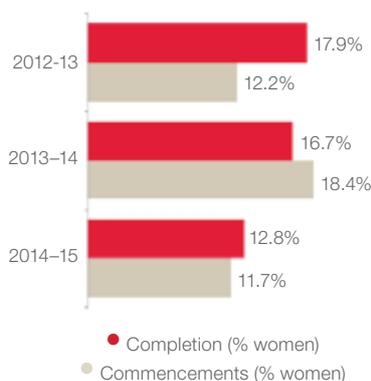
The last 40 years has seen women's participation in the workforce steadily grow from 43 per cent in 1978 to around 60 per cent in 2015. More women are also engaged in formal education than ever. In NSW in 2014, 20.5 per cent of females compared with 18.6 per cent of males were engaged in formal study. More women were also achieving higher qualifications – 27 per cent of women reported attaining a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 24.2 per cent of men.

However, there remains a considerable gender gap in relation to key economic indicators. Women earn more than \$300 per week less than men based on the average weekly earnings for full-time workers. Women also continue to be significantly under-represented in non-traditional occupations, remaining dominant in retail, hospitality, education, administration and the community services sector.

Addressing under-representation to open up opportunities for women in industries they might otherwise feel discouraged from entering is a key focus for the NSW Government. In 2014–15, FACS continued progressing the Investing in Women program, which offers funding for partnership projects that support the training and employment of women in non-traditional trades. Investing in Women has an annual budget of over \$200,000, with funding of up to \$25,000 available for each project. Nine projects were funded in non-traditional trades in 2014–15. Since 2012, 29 partnership projects have been established across NSW.

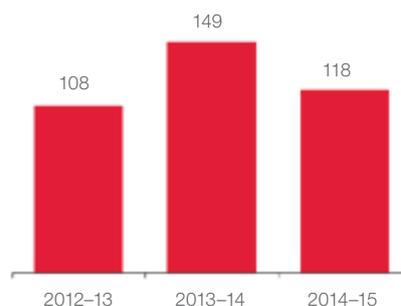
Females in apprenticeships and traineeships

Technical and trade commencements and completions



Helping women gain financial security

Female apprenticeships and traineeships completions in non-traditional trades, 2013 to 2015



Women in non-traditional trades

9 projects were funded in non-traditional trades in 2014–15





Tools for Success – assisting women on the path to a career in male dominated trades

For some women, pursuing a career in a male-dominated field can be a challenging and daunting task. But it can also be a pathway to a well-paid, flexible and rewarding career. To help disadvantaged women over 16 years embark on a successful career in a non-traditional trade, in 2014–15 the NSW Government trialled the Tools for Success scholarships program to assist women living in social housing in NSW to work towards a career in a non-traditional trade.

Administered by the NSW Federation of Housing Associations, scholarships were made available to assist women in pre-apprenticeship training in a non-traditional trade, or women aiming to commence or continue their apprenticeship in largely male-dominated industries.

One non-traditional occupation for women is commercial cookery. Jessica, a recipient of the Tools for Success scholarship, is very keen to pursue a career in cookery and, at just 17, has already acquired considerable hands-on experience in her chosen field. Now in the second year of a four-year apprenticeship in commercial cookery at TAFE, Jessica is also working to complete the HSC this year, and is in paid part-time employment. Jessica has described her enthusiasm for the course, and the impact it has had on her life. Her experiences thus far in a male-dominated field are overwhelmingly positive.

‘It was a fantastic year last year. It was busy...exciting and I enjoyed most of it! Throughout the last year I have washed and washed many dirty dishes! But I have also chopped, peeled, grated, washed, cooked and ate many foods. I got my very own knife set – that was amazing! I also got a chef’s apron and special hat from Nan for Christmas last year.’

Jessica enjoys working as a caterer in her local town, the varied experiences it has provided, and how it has helped her develop her skills.

‘I do catering for people around the town [as well as] morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. We did many orders. A few were small for just five to ten people, but others were huge, for 50 to 80 people. The biggest we’ve done was for a fancy ‘do’ for over 100 people. I love catering. It’s amazing how long it takes to put the dishes together and then our customers come and the food is gone in a second.’

In an acknowledgement of her skill and creativity, Jessica’s own dishes are now being added to the menu. Jessica’s commitment to her work has also been recognised by her employer, who has entrusted her to manage the kitchen duties while she has taken leave.

The qualification Jessica is working towards will enable her to work as a commercial cook in organisations such as restaurants, hotels, clubs, pubs, cafes, cafeterias and coffee shops. Jessica is positive about how Tools for Success has helped her to pursue her goals. ‘I enjoy my work and I am having a lot of fun! I am excited for this year!’

1.5 Reducing domestic and family violence



Increasing the availability of early intervention and tailored support

In the 12 months to June 2015, there were 28,939 incidents of domestic violence-related assault recorded by NSW Police. Domestic and family violence is a whole-of-community issue that requires a whole-of-government response.

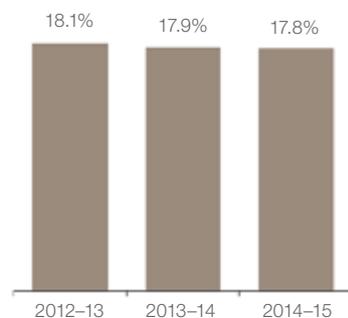
The personal, social and economic implications of domestic and family violence are profound. Chronic transience and homelessness, unstable housing, parental substance abuse and mental health concerns and, for children, immediate and potential long-term harm to health and wellbeing are some of the consequences of the experience of domestic and family violence. It is a driving factor in families' needs for FACS services.

The NSW Government is focused on improving responses and better linking families at risk with support services across the government and NGO sectors. A key focus is to also strengthen early intervention and prevention supports to stop violence from occurring at all, and to change the attitudes and behaviours which lead to violence.

In 2014–15, FACS piloted four new community-based Men's Behaviour Change programs to work with men to change their violent and controlling behaviours. FACS also progressed the Domestic and Family Violence Skills Development Strategy, which is providing education, training and professional development to frontline non-government workers to enhance their skills in responding to, and supporting victims of, domestic and family violence.

Protecting children and young people

Prevalence of domestic violence in ROSH reports



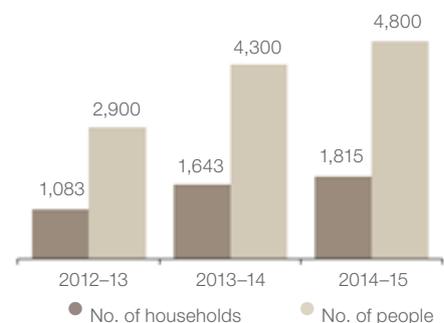
Domestic violence prevention

3 in 5 eligible *Brighter Futures* families had domestic violence as an identified vulnerability



Safe and secure housing

Households and people accessing *Start Safely* rental subsidy



Starting over with *Start Safely*

Hannah came to Australia in 2010 to be with her husband, knowing no-one and with limited English. Sadly, Hannah experienced severe domestic violence – starved by her husband, frail, timid, and traumatised, she fled the family home with her two very young children. The family was initially referred to a refuge by the Domestic Violence Line, before connecting with St Michael's Family Centre.

Hannah's support worker helped her to find stable accommodation and secure financial assistance through *Start Safely*, a rental subsidy available to approved applicants for up to two years. Hannah was assigned a FACS *Start Safely* specialist, who has

provided her with support and encouragement when times were tough.

To work as a web designer, Hannah had to undertake further study to have her qualifications recognised. When Hannah exited *Start Safely* after two years, she had achieved this and was freelancing. However, her family law court case had not been finalised. Though no longer receiving the subsidy, Hannah remains in contact with her *Start Safely* specialist, an arrangement which will continue until her court case has been resolved.

Despite the anxiety and hardship, Hannah is now happy, confident and thankful for the opportunity to change her circumstances with the assistance of *Start Safely* – she is justifiably proud of what she has achieved.

Improving the response to domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence can be difficult to identify, and is widely underreported. All too often it is a hidden crime with perpetrators adept at employing strategies to silence their victims. Victims need to have confidence in the services available so they feel safe and supported when they seek assistance.

Through the NSW Government's Domestic and Family Violence Framework, It Stops Here: Standing Together to End Domestic and Family Violence, FACS is working together with partner agencies to implement an integrated and coordinated state-wide system that ensures the safety of victims and their children is at all times the overriding concern.

A key initiative is the trial of Safer Pathway, a new approach to assessment, referral and service coordination that provides holistic and tailored support. During 2014–15, the trial was launched in two sites, Orange and Waverley, with rollout to a further four sites in July 2015.

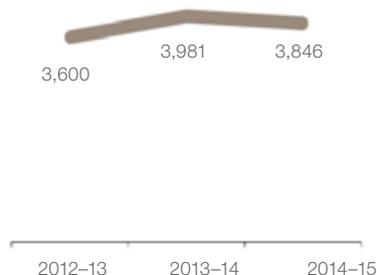
Staying Home Leaving Violence is a key program, which prevents homelessness by supporting women and their children to remain in their homes when safe to do so. The program was evaluated in 2014–15. It was found to be successful, particularly in supporting victims to remain in the home of their choice. The program operates in 23 locations and will be expanded to a further four by 2016. The NSW Government is also investing \$20 million from 2015–16 in the Domestic Violence Response Enhancement program. This funding will enable services to provide more 24/7 support and after-hours access to crisis accommodation.

Safe victims

10,966 people were referred to domestic violence support services by the FACS Domestic Violence Line

Supported victims

Domestic Violence Line referrals to counselling and other supports



Sheltered victims and children

2,156 referrals by service providers to the Staying Home Leaving Violence program



Rapid service linkage to prevent homelessness

A 61-year-old woman experiencing domestic violence contacted Link2home, assisted by NSW Police and an interpreter. A social housing resident, she advised that her husband – the main tenant – had a history of physical and verbal abuse, that she was afraid to return home, and had no-one to her.

Link2home provided temporary accommodation, advised NSW Police of her location and provided her with details to attend the local FACS office the next day. A referral was also sent to Moving On Moving Outwards (MOMO) for outreach. MOMO is a FACS-funded specialist homelessness service

provided by Domestic Violence NSW which supports women with client-centred case plans to identify and sustain accommodation and tenancies.

The next day, the MOMO caseworker assisted the client with a medical assessment and supporting documents. She attended the FACS office, where her temporary accommodation was extended.

MOMO/FACS case management continued, and MOMO secured transitional accommodation within five days of the client first contacting Link2home. MOMO's network of support providers ensures clients are connected with local services, and the team maintains client relationships to prevent repeat homelessness.

Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) – helping families to live in safety and free from fear

Marianne's story

Marianne, who is from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, lives in social housing with her two boys in a location where she has no family or friends nearby. She is separated from her husband.

FACS referred the family to SHLV Wollongong because Marianne was struggling with ongoing harassment from her ex-partner. SHLV Wollongong worked with FACS to relocate Marianne and the children to another property not known to her ex-partner. A risk assessment and safety audit was conducted by NSW Police and consultation with FACS facilitated home modifications to improve their safety.

SHLV Wollongong linked Marianne and her boys to a local counselling support service. Marianne received assistance with financial management, which has enabled her to take control of her finances. Marianne's sons had also become aggressive towards her, and she was experiencing difficulties in managing this behaviour. Through counselling, her sons' behaviour improved – they are now more settled and interact more positively with Marianne. Marianne has also managed to put clear boundaries in place around her ex-partner and the visitation of the boys. She has said that, 'without this support, I don't know where we would've ended up.'



Rose's story

Rose is a single mum with three children who moved interstate to escape her violent and dangerous partner. When Rose and her children presented to the Kempsey SHLV Service she was socially isolated, experiencing a high level of trauma. She lacked access to finances and financial management skills, and was extremely frightened for her family's safety.

Rose and her family were provided with intensive support and complex safety planning that was assessed and adjusted according to risk on a daily basis. To improve safety, an SOS duress personal alarm was issued which, when activated, quickly connects victims with NSW Police. Safety home modifications were also made.

The Kempsey SHLV Service coordinated multiple local services to assist the family throughout the 15-month support period to promote recovery from the trauma of domestic and family violence. These included community health professionals, family law specialists, counsellors, real estate agents, the local school, NSW Police, Central Monitoring Services and family support services.

Through this collaborative support, and Rose's proactive engagement, her future is looking brighter. Rose feels safe and is now empowered to manage daily tasks. She is confident, communicating effectively with the agencies providing the family with services and support. Rose's children feel safe, secure and happy, and those at school enjoy it and are doing well.

1.6 Better outcomes for Aboriginal people, families and communities



Source: the launch of social storybooks and comics (case study on page 34) at Collarenebri, with participants from the Collarenebri Central Public School. Reproduced with permission.

Improving how we work with Aboriginal people to deliver responsive, culturally appropriate services tailored to community needs

Policy, services and programs need to create opportunities and practical actions to break the cycle of disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal families and communities. For this to occur, strong partnerships with Aboriginal communities need to be forged to drive the development of local, relevant, and flexible responses.

FACS has developed the *Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework 2015–2018* in recognition that more needs to be done to improve engagement with Aboriginal communities and staff. The Framework embeds Aboriginal cultural inclusion, accountability and monitoring processes focused on the achievement of better outcomes for Aboriginal people and their families in programs and services.

To measure our success, the Framework includes reportable headline indicators across all areas of FACS service delivery. Other headline indicators will measure the department's commitment to increasing the proportion of Aboriginal people in the FACS workforce, and increasing investment in viable Aboriginal NGOs, businesses and contractors. A robust review and reporting process will be implemented, with districts to report on their outcomes to their local communities and their Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Committee.

Tailored supports

687 Aboriginal people with disability used individualised services in 2014–15



Local engagement

29.8% of clients with disability assisted through Ability Links were Aboriginal



Community-centered activities

158 Aboriginal people with disability participated in *Life Choices* or *Active Ageing* programs



Connecting children in care to culture and community

In July 2014, the Aboriginal Foster Care Team, known as Nye Gurung, was jointly established by the Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains Districts to focus on recruiting, training and supporting Aboriginal carers. Their aim is to help Aboriginal children in care to find long-term placement with an Aboriginal carer, and assist Aboriginal foster care agencies to meet the demand for carers.

The team, which is based at Mt Druitt and works from Lithgow to Auburn and the Hawkesbury, consists of six Aboriginal caseworkers and a manager. Commencing

with nine short-term carers, the team has since recruited 16 new carers, and achieved approximately 100 placements, including providing 20 Aboriginal children with a culturally appropriate long-term placement. Nye Gurung is currently either training or assessing a further 10 to 15 prospective carers.

During 2014–15, the team's functions have expanded to include responsibility for conducting all Aboriginal consultations for both districts. The team has also developed a training package for non-Aboriginal carers of Aboriginal children. The team's standing in the community has also grown, often being contacted to provide advocacy on a range of issues, and for general assistance in engaging with FACS.

Improving access to affordable, quality and culturally appropriate housing for Aboriginal people

Housing instability is recognised as a key indicator of social disadvantage and marginalisation. Data from the 2011 Census highlights the extent to which Aboriginal people in NSW experience housing disadvantage – Aboriginal households are at higher risk of homelessness, and experience overcrowding in urban areas at more than double the rate of non-Aboriginal households. This increases to more than six times the rate in remote NSW. Two-thirds of all Aboriginal households in private rental housing experience affordability stress.

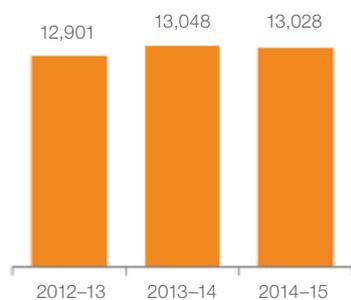
The Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) is at the forefront of developing and delivering initiatives to ensure that Aboriginal people in NSW have access to affordable, quality and secure housing. The AHO also provides support to Aboriginal community housing providers (ACHPs).

The AHO recognises that the NGO sector is best placed to deliver local solutions that reflect the diversity of individual and community needs. This is outlined in the AHO's Corporate Plan, released in 2015, which identifies its priorities to 2022. By then the AHO aims to have: transferred the management of all AHO properties to ACHPs; registered all housing providers under the National Regulatory Code; and delivered 1,000 housing and housing-related assistance opportunities to Aboriginal communities.

Since 2012–13 there was a 6.1 growth in Aboriginal housing stock. As at 30 June 2015, the AHO portfolio consisted of 5,756 houses, an increase of 117 on 2013–14 numbers. There were also 4,878 ACHPs serving Aboriginal communities in NSW.

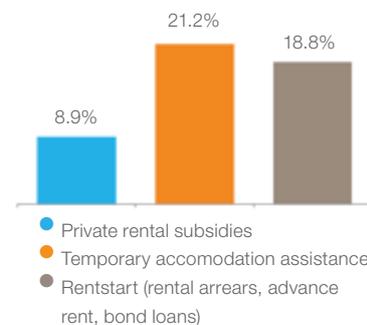
Culturally appropriate housing

Aboriginal tenants in public housing and community housing



Range of housing assistance

Proportion of Aboriginal clients assisted with products other than social housing during 2014–15



Transition to private rental market

382 Aboriginal households exiting social housing* moved to the private rental market/ownership



* Public housing and AHO only

Community stories – creative messaging on housing issues

For ACHPs in the Western Region, overcrowding, rental arrears and tenant damage have been reported as their biggest issues. The AHO – together with consultancy group Inception Strategies – worked directly with five remote Aboriginal communities to develop storybooks and comics as an alternative way to address the issues raised by ACHPs.

The stories were created during workshops held in remote townships, with tenants building a picture of life in their communities, weaving housing messages into stories that were written by the community for the community.

The books entitled *Kyena* and *Robbie the Dodger* address the importance of paying rent. *Dennis and Gossie the Goat* focus on repairs and maintenance, and *Yabby Fishin'* and *Trey and Tahlia* cover issues arising from overcrowding. These resources have assisted tenants to develop practices which contribute to sustainable housing maintenance, and to acknowledge the importance of financial management. They have also assisted ACHPs in identifying households with support needs, and to help them access supports.

The stories were launched in Bourke, Enngonia, Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge and were well attended by participants and the wider Aboriginal community.

Reducing the number of Aboriginal people who are homeless

Homelessness is a societal problem that disproportionately impacts Aboriginal people and communities. The 2011 Census shows that in NSW, Aboriginal people experience homelessness at a rate more than three times that of the general population.

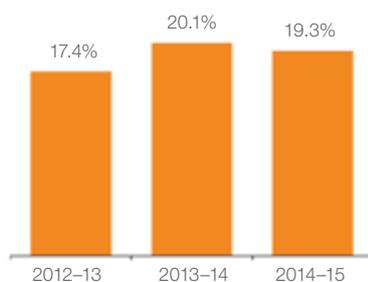
Aboriginal people face unique barriers when it comes to avoiding homelessness and maintaining tenancies. The legacy of past policies and practices continues to inform the present, and cultural differences around family, ownership, and mobility are often not accommodated by mainstream approaches to housing and homelessness prevention. As with the general population, Aboriginal clients are also increasingly presenting with higher rates of complex needs. This impacts on their capacity to secure and maintain housing.

FACS is committed to reducing the over representation of Aboriginal people who are homeless or experiencing repeat homelessness – this is a key reportable commitment of the department's Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework 2015–2018.

The ten year National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) with the Commonwealth, which aims to improve Indigenous health, education and employment, ended its seventh year in July 2015. NSW has met all agreed targets to date. Specific achievements in 2014–15 include the construction of 36 new houses in remote areas, 32 Employment Related Accommodation houses for Aboriginal people from remote areas, 327 refurbishments of remote Aboriginal community housing properties, and one safe house.

Homeless no longer

Proportion of newly housed tenants previously homeless or at risk of homelessness who were Aboriginal



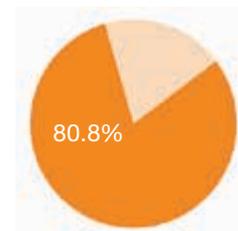
Stable tenancies

9 in 10 tenancies for Aboriginal people previously homeless or at risk of homelessness still housed after 12 months



Sustaining long-term accommodation

80.8% of Aboriginal clients* were provided with assistance to sustain long term accommodation



* Based on total Aboriginal specialist homelessness services clients requiring assistance to sustain housing tenure

Helping vulnerable people secure a brighter, independent future

A young mother is finding her independence with the assistance of the Lower and Upper Hunter Aboriginal Youth Homelessness Support Service provided by the Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation.

The young woman, who has a history of complex intergenerational trauma, police involvement, OOHC and unstable accommodation, presented to the service in desperate need of stability and direction.

Ungooroo supported her in securing transitional housing and worked intensively with her to address her case plan and the

barriers to maintaining stable long-term accommodation. Within nine months, she has turned her life around. She has transitioned to private rental with the assistance of the Youth Private Rental Subsidy and is successfully maintaining this tenancy. She has also commenced study, gained her provisional driver's licence, purchased a car, and applied for entry into the Indigenous Police Recruiting Our Way course – a specialist program to assist entry to the NSW Police Academy. She is described by Ungooroo as a lovely mother doing a wonderful job of juggling motherhood and study. She has grown into a fiercely independent and confident young woman in the time she has been engaged with Ungooroo.

FACS districts



2. District profiles

FACS localisation reforms took effect in September 2013 with the establishment of 15 integrated FACS districts replacing the previous regional divisional structures. Localisation places individuals, families and local communities at the centre of everything that we do. It enables more localised planning and decision-making and improves links between senior service delivery management and frontline staff.

These changes brought together Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Community Services and Housing NSW client services and operations. Each district is better placed to cater to local needs.

Case study quotes on the following pages have been made by FACS district staff.

FACS districts

Central Coast

Far West

Hunter New England

Illawarra Shoalhaven

Mid North Coast

Murrumbidgee

Nepean Blue Mountains

Northern NSW

Northern Sydney

South Eastern Sydney

South Western Sydney

Southern NSW

Sydney

Western NSW

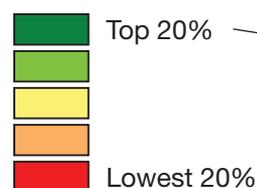
Western Sydney

Key for district maps

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (**SEIFA**)

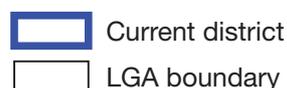
Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (**IRSAD**)

SEIFA 2011
IRSAD Score

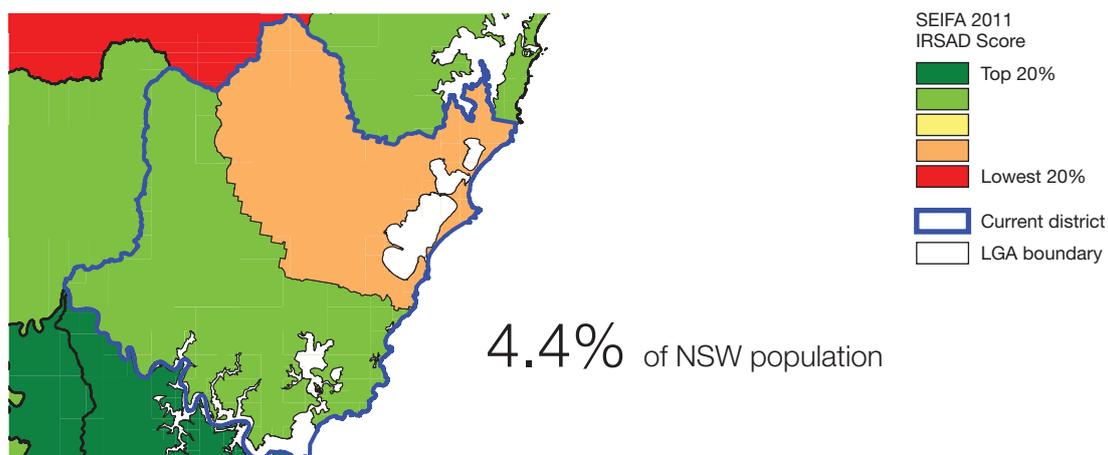


A high IRSAD index indicates a relative lack of disadvantage.

A low IRSAD index indicates relatively greater disadvantage and lack of advantage in general.



Central Coast



Strong community partnerships to promote child safety

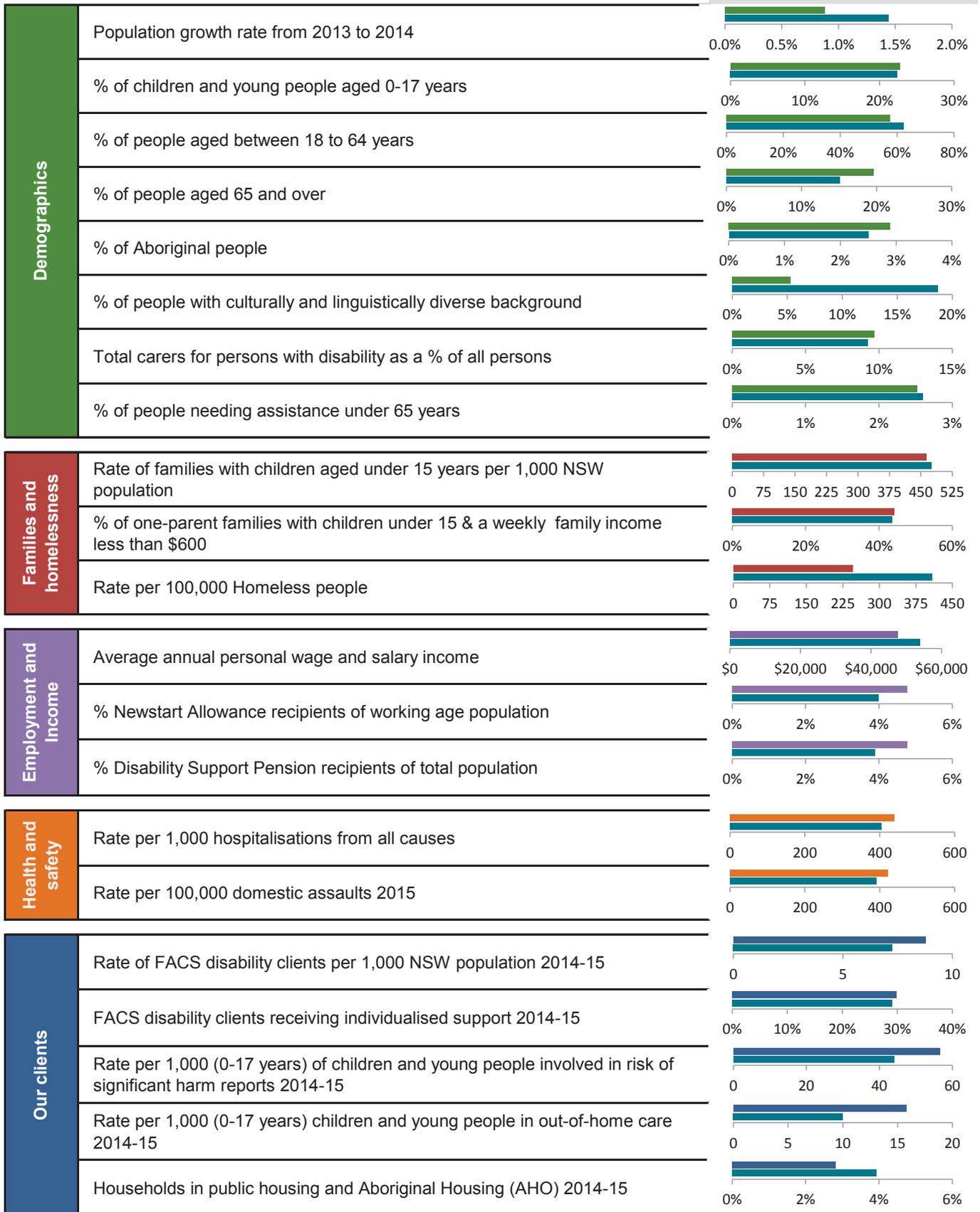
The Central Coast District has been implementing a co-design approach to projects being implemented to support the Safe Home for Life child protection reforms. A significant initiative is the recently opened Central Coast Multi-Agency Response Centre covering the Gosford and Wyong Local Government Areas. The Centre has been developed through a co-design process with the community and other government agencies.

Operated by 12 officers comprising FACS, NSW Health, the Department of Education, and the Central Coast Family Referral Service, the Centre receives and assesses child protection reports from community organisations and government agencies, and makes decisions regarding the most appropriate pathway for service provision or intervention. The ultimate aim of this initiative is to make people and agencies more responsive and aware that child protection is everyone's business, not just FACS'. This approach aims to make the most of local knowledge to deliver more effective responses. It is also aimed at reducing the number of ROSH reports going to local Community Services Centres, which in turn allows FACS caseworkers to see more children and families.

To support this initiative, the Central Coast District is promoting the use of Patchwork, an application that allows practitioners to quickly and easily find out who to contact to 'join up' the services needed for a child or family. The district is also trialling an interagency 'pop-up' office model in isolated Central Coast communities. FACS and other community partners and agencies will travel to these communities on a community bus to engage local parents, families and young people. A variety of engagement strategies are used, such as 'pop-up and play' for the kids, and drinks and snacks as an informal way to promote visibility, and to share information to help support their needs.

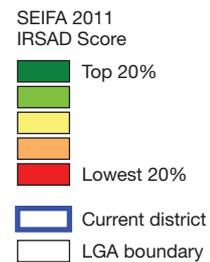
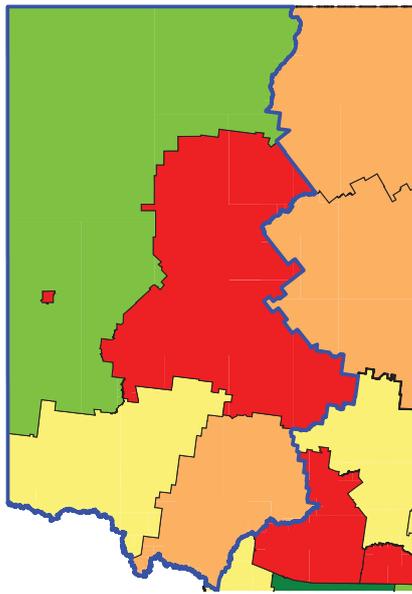
“Having a multi-agency approach helps us to be seen in a different light. We don't want people to be scared of us but we have a responsibility with child safety, and there is plenty of work we can do before we step in with a statutory response.”

Central Coast vs. State



District
NSW

Far West



0.4% of NSW population

Strengthening the Far West through collective effort and astronomy

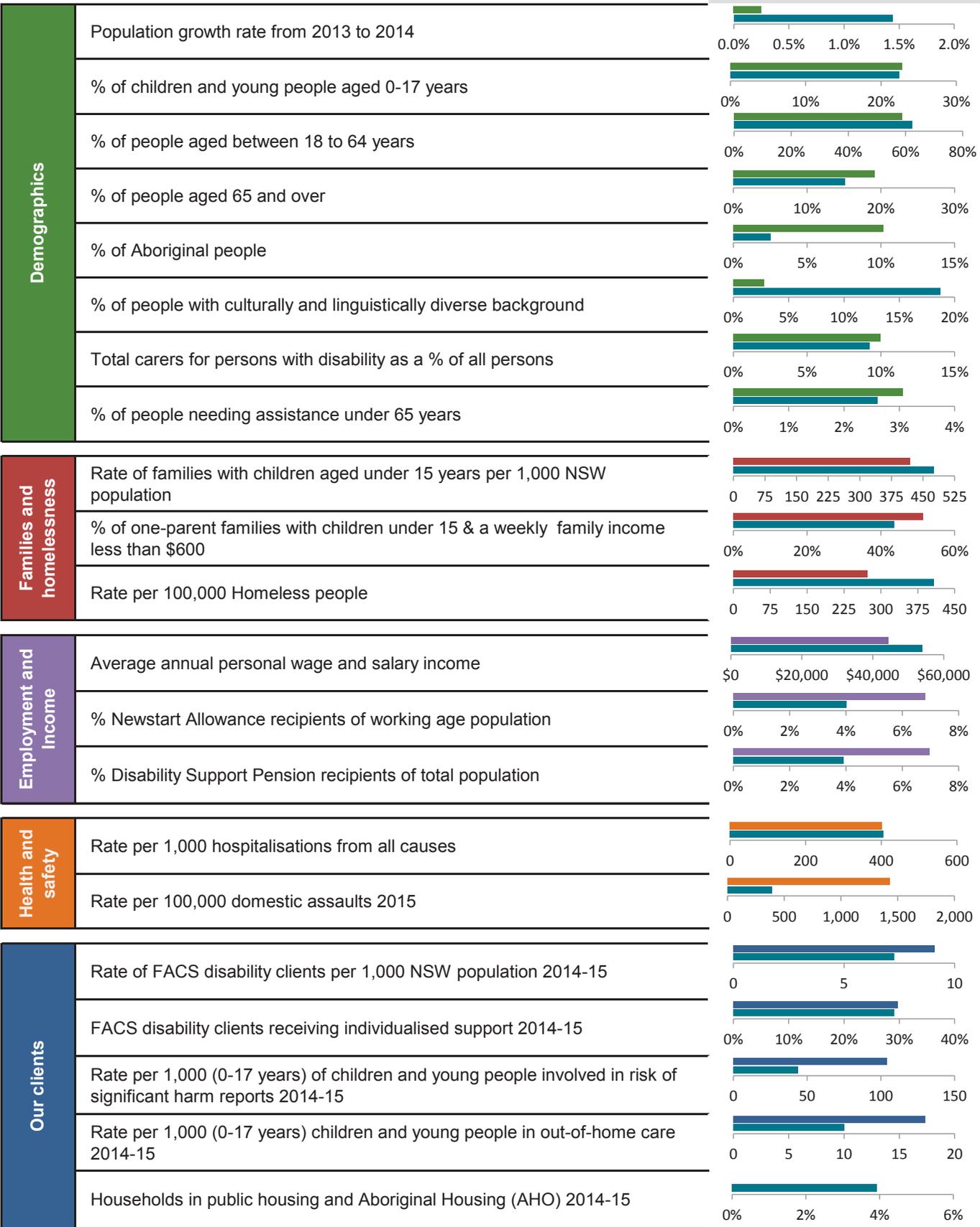
In November 2014, FACS, together with representatives from local councils and the Commonwealth Government, NGOs and the private sector, established Collective Far West to collaborate on innovative, collective responses to social disadvantage. Through a community event held as part of the Collective (a 'pitch' event), came a proposal to strengthen community development through astronomy.

A small local enterprise, Outback Astronomy, suggested a proposal that could provide training and development for local young people in the tourism sector, and employ local Aboriginal Elders to present traditional cultural knowledge of the night sky alongside western astronomy.

As part of the Outback Astronomy proposal, a community event was planned with participation by locals, including school children. The goal was to break the world record for the most people stargazing across multiple sites in a country. Led by the Mount Stromlo Observatory in Canberra and the Siding Spring Observatory at Coonabarabran, the event required each participant to purchase a \$10 telescope to view the night sky. To assist disadvantaged school children to participate in the event, the FACS Far West District purchased 100 telescopes, which have been donated to Outback Astronomy to support the education of school children and other youth groups in astronomy.

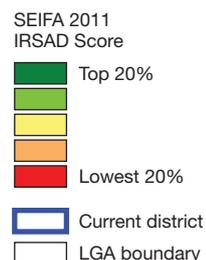
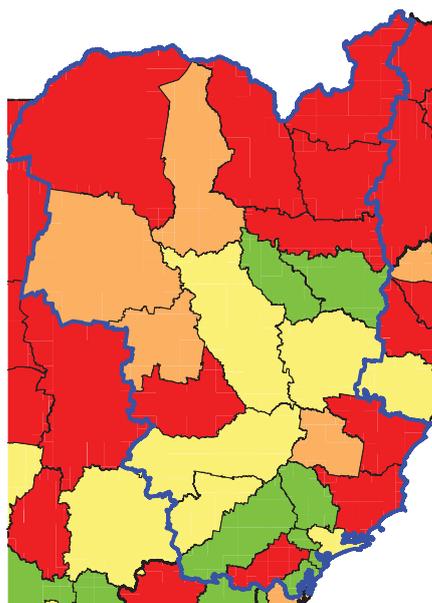
“What can we do to identify and remove barriers, to make things easier, and facilitate partnerships that will help to release the creativity we know is in the community?”

Far West vs. State



Legend: District (light blue), NSW (dark blue)

Hunter New England



12.1% of NSW population

Supporting clients to transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme with a collaborative agency approach

Mary is a 10-year-old girl with complex disability support needs who comes from a large family of seven children. Mary has a diagnosis of moderate intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder. Over a considerable period, Mary and her family had been receiving support from FACS with housing, care and protection and support in relation to Mary's disability.

Mary was scheduled to transition to the NDIS in the Hunter trial site. However, before Mary's NDIS planning could commence, the family was evicted from their private rental in Newcastle, leaving them homeless. FACS supported the family to relocate to Maitland to a FACS housing property.

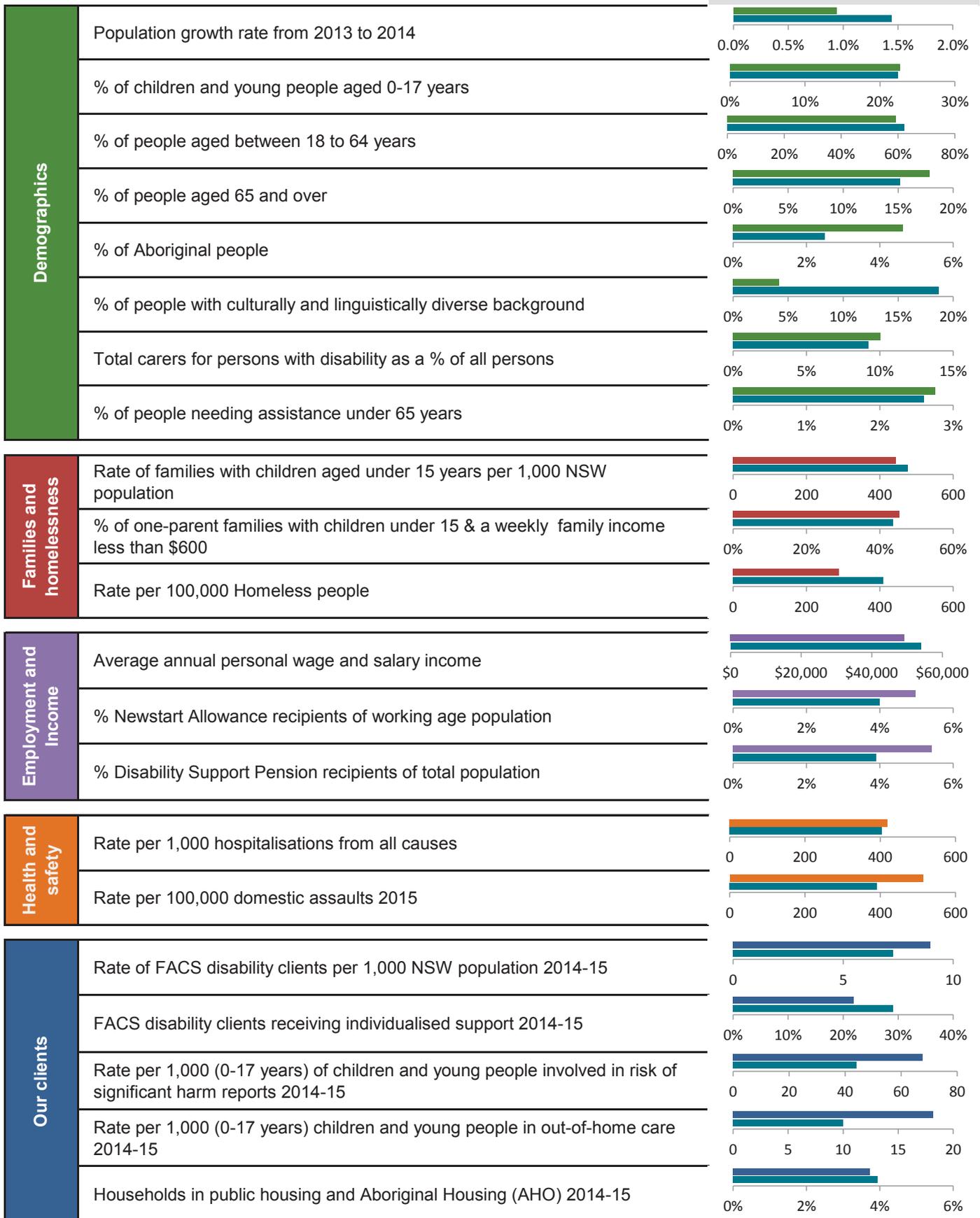
In recognition of Mary's needs and the broader challenges faced by the family, FACS staff worked closely with the NDIA to support Mary and her family through the NDIS planning process.

Recognising that the family needed to feel comfortable before transition planning could commence, FACS employed a flexible approach to engagement, including using Telstra Integrated Messaging to contact the parents. FACS staff arranged the initial planning meeting at Mary's school, as the parents were familiar and comfortable with that environment and school staff. This proved to be a turning point in the family's willingness to engage and connect with new providers.

With intensive support, engagement and encouragement from FACS staff and collaborative work with the NDIA team, Mary's mum felt supported to engage with the NDIA. Mary's mum actively identified goals for her daughter and the supports she would need to meet those goals.

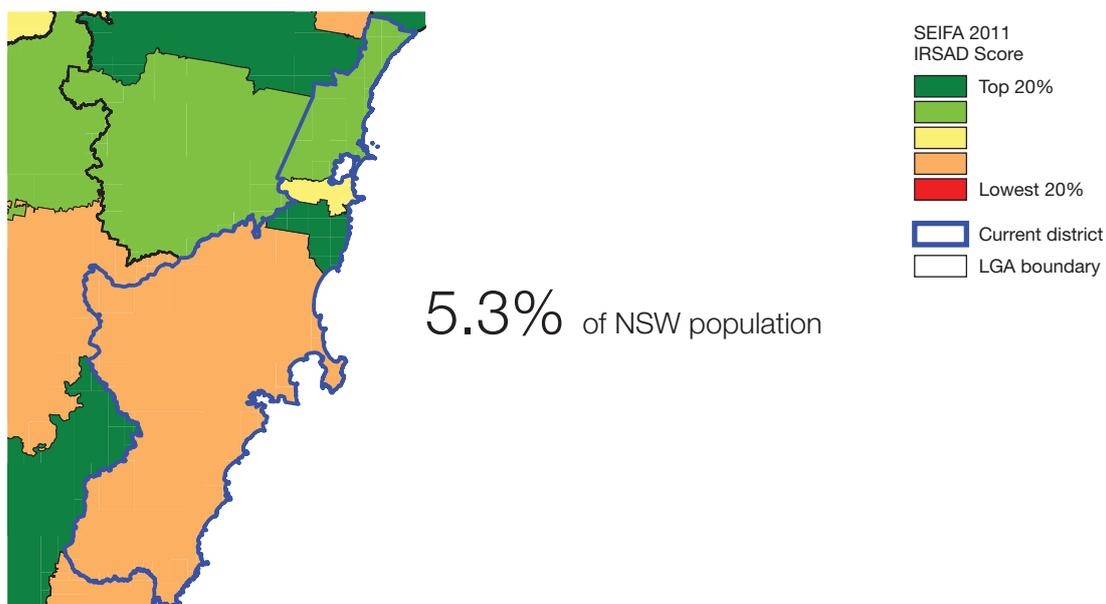
Mary's transition plan was successfully implemented after a period of 10 months. Mary was provided with individualised funding to meet her needs and personal goals, which included therapy and behaviour support, access to the community and engagement in social participation activities and coordination of supports.

Hunter New England vs. State



█ District
█ NSW

Illawarra Shoalhaven



Delivering integrated service delivery at the OneFACS Service Centre, Coniston

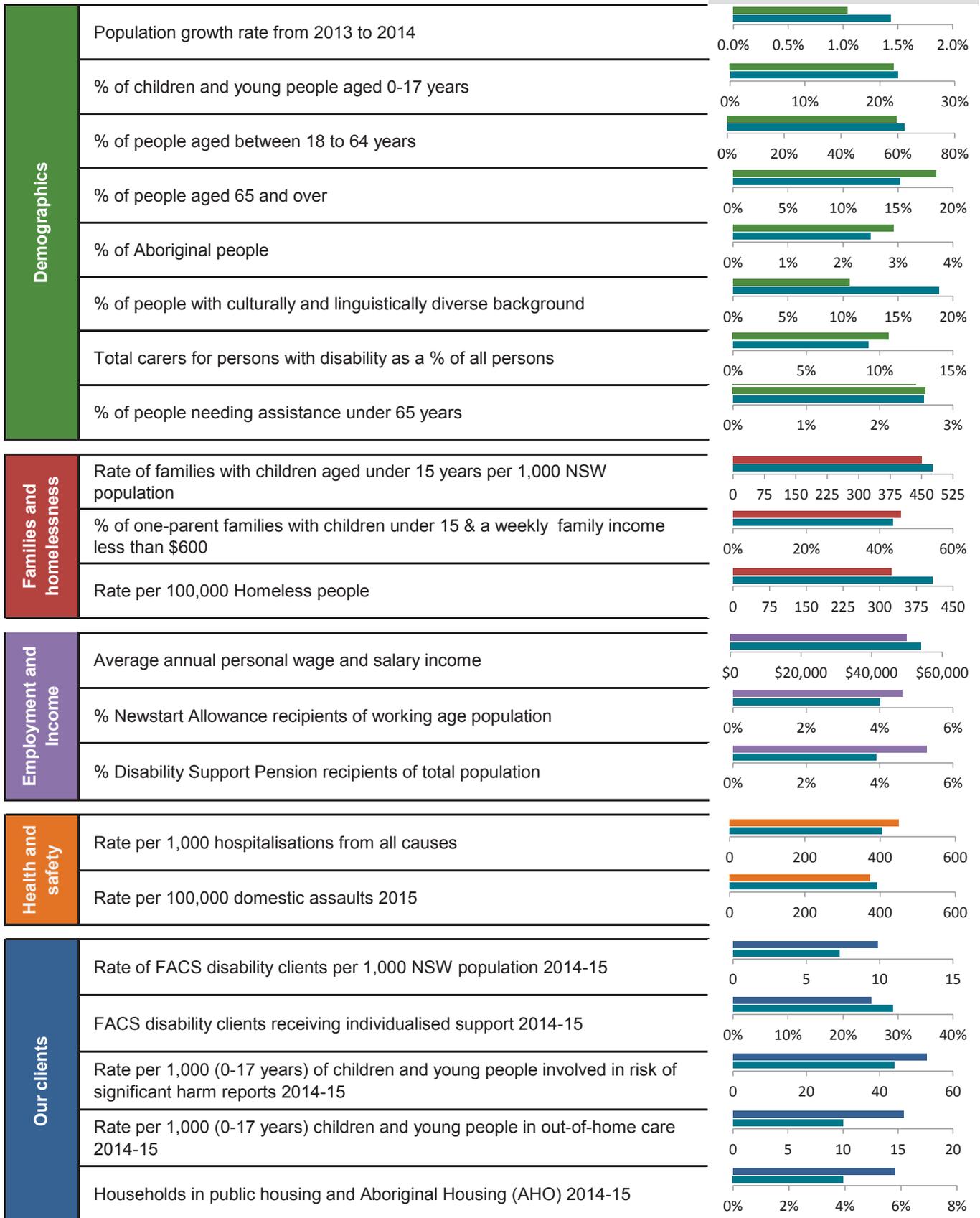
Since its establishment in 2014, the OneFACS Service Centre at Coniston has been delivering integrated services to clients from across all FACS service streams in one place.

The ability to break down barriers and work collaboratively is essential when it comes to delivering better services. A recent successful example of integrated service delivery is the case of a young woman with an intellectual disability about to leave OOHC. The young woman had been receiving FACS disability services while in care but had a history of placement breakdowns due to her challenging behaviour. Her final placement prior to leaving care was with an NGO.

The young woman was also receiving services from a FACS caseworker at the OneFACS Service Centre who encouraged her to apply for social housing. Staff at the service centre worked cooperatively to achieve the best possible outcome for the client. Housing staff at the service centre provided her with information on how to apply for social housing, and a disability support worker provided assistance with explaining the application process. As a result, everyone worked together with the client and the NGO service providers to ensure a plan was in place for her future. The young woman is now on the housing waiting list and continuing to receive appropriate FACS and non-government support services.

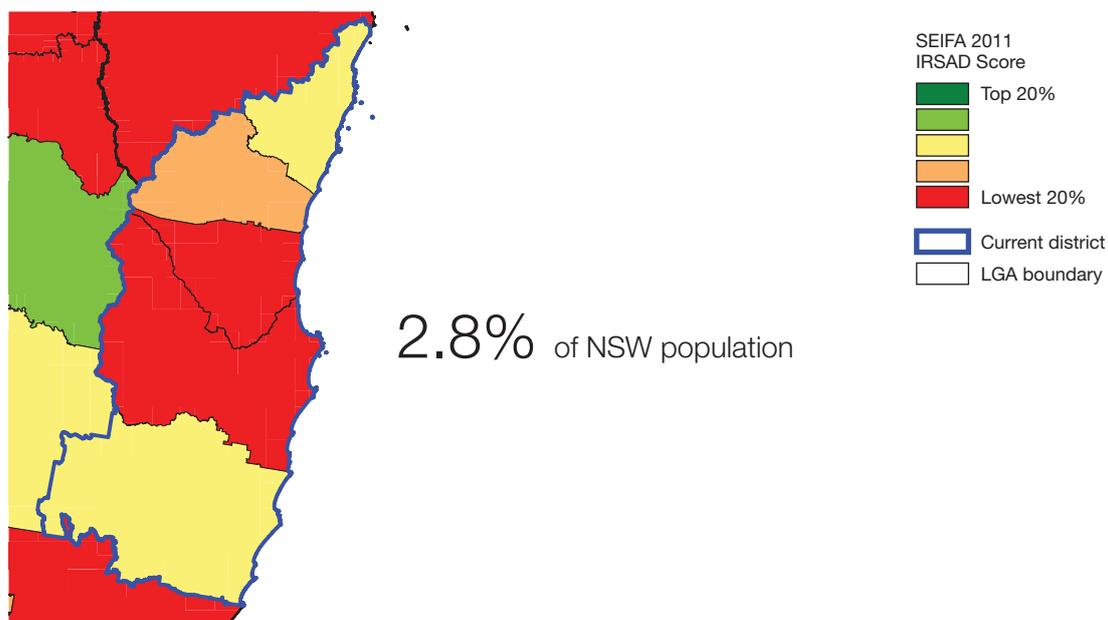
“Everyone was in the same space to get the best outcome for this young woman, taking her needs into account and planning for her future in a holistic and collaborative way.”

Illawarra Shoalhaven vs. State



□ District
■ NSW

Mid North Coast



Improving client service through co-location

In late 2014, all of the FACS service streams in Port Macquarie, as well as a number of the department's NGO partners, relocated to the site of the former Department of Community Services (DOCS) office.

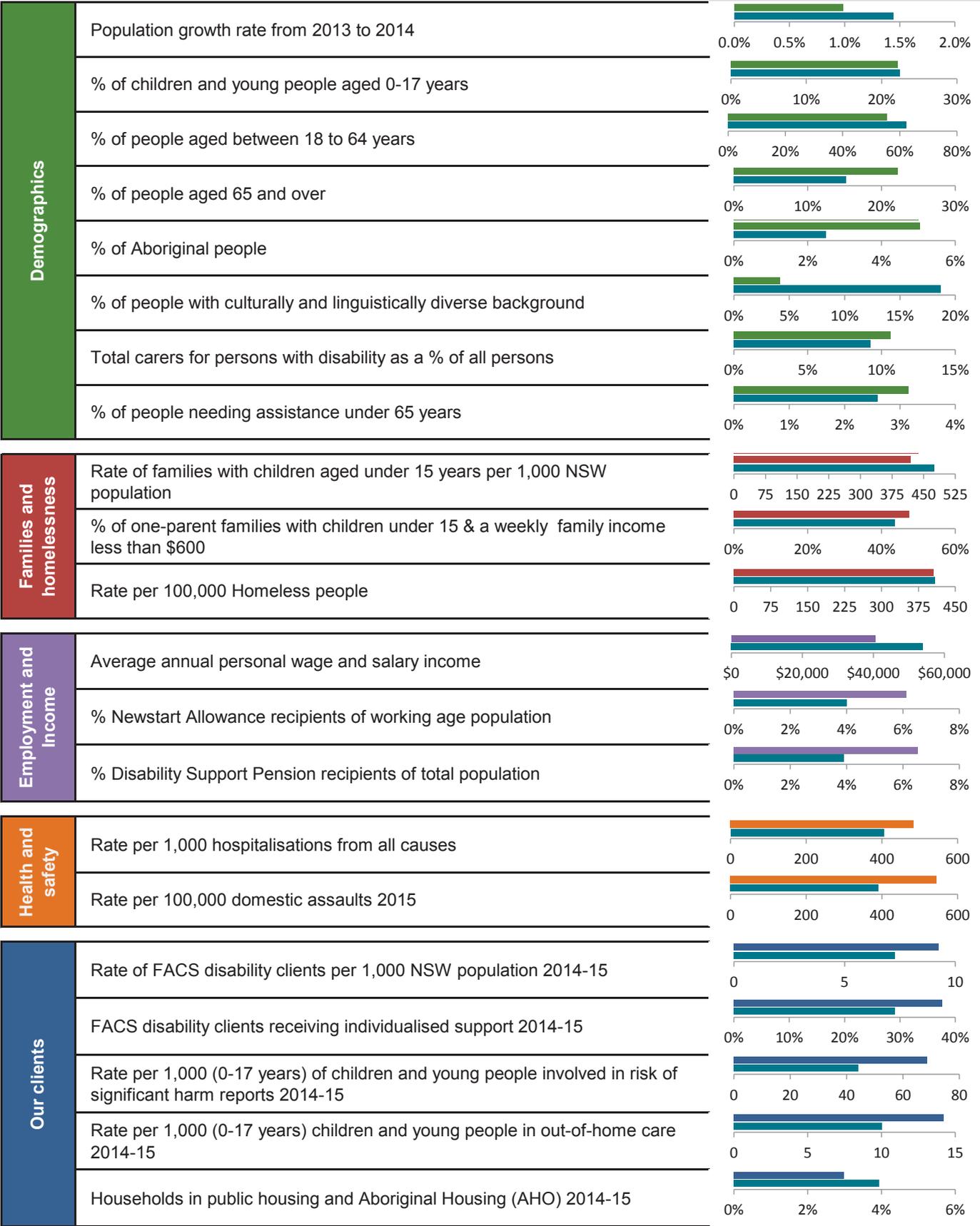
As part of the planning for the new office, FACS staff consulted with local Aboriginal Elders to discuss and alleviate any concerns about moving all FACS streams into a former DOCS office. To make the office more welcoming for Aboriginal people, the district arranged for a local Aboriginal Elder to paint a mural in the reception area.

The co-located office has proven to be of benefit for both FACS staff and clients. Clients no longer have to visit more than one office and staff have direct access to co-workers from other streams for any housing, disability or child protection issues. Importantly, clients are receiving a better service because front counter staff have developed their skills and knowledge, and can answer routine inquiries across all of the streams. It has made communicating across service streams much easier, supporting things to happen faster and in better ways for clients.

The co-location of NGOs in the office also provides clients with access to additional services. The NGOs work closely with staff in the housing stream and co-location provides a one-stop-shop for FACS and NGO services. In many cases, the NGOs are able to assist clients who may not fit the eligibility criteria for public housing but who nevertheless need assistance. They can, for example, help clients to apply for private rental properties through their networks with real estate agents.

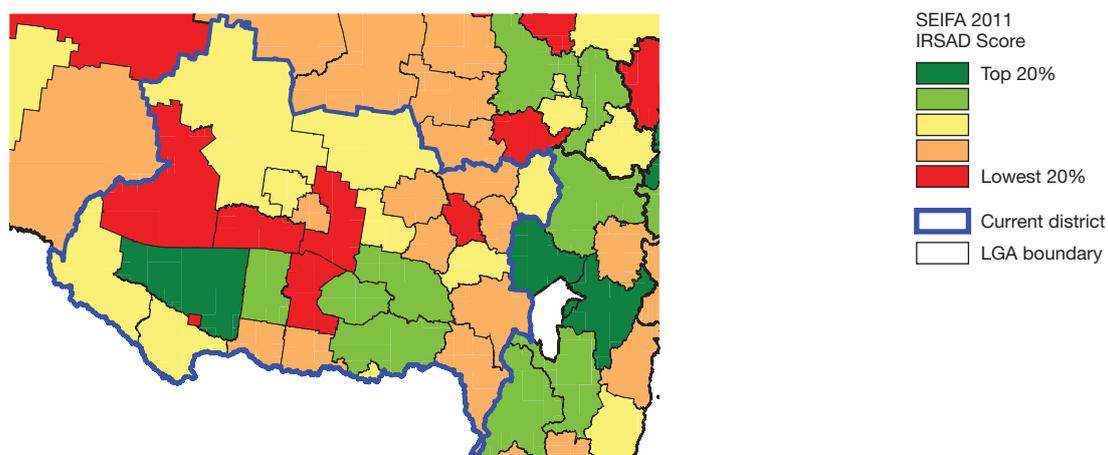
“The NGOs give us more traction with clients. They also bring a capacity to be more innovative and source funding to bridge the service gaps which become apparent through the partnership between them and FACS.”

Mid North Coast vs. State



Legend: District (light blue), NSW (dark blue)

Murrumbidgee



3.9% of NSW population

Developing high-tech solutions to help disadvantaged youth in social housing

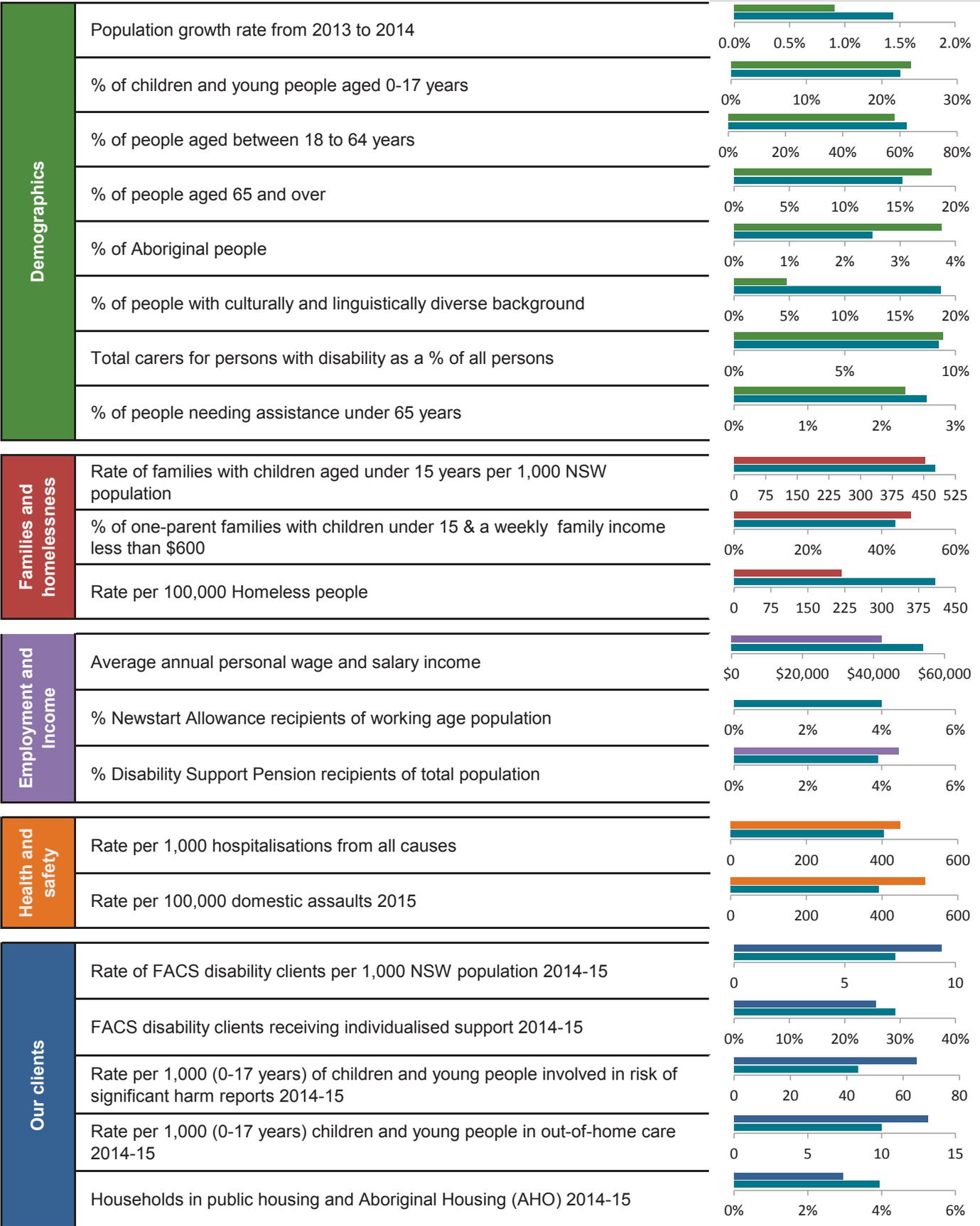
In mid 2015, the Murrumbidgee District partnered with Wagga Wagga City Council, a local Aboriginal Elders group, Charles Sturt University and the group Random Hacks of Kindness to launch the Wagga Wagga Hackathon. A 'hackathon' is an event where computer programmers and software and hardware developers come together to collaborate intensively on software projects. The aim of the Wagga Wagga Hackathon, which was held in November 2015, was to give disadvantaged youth living in a local social housing estate access to technology to help them to connect with individuals and networks in the local community.

To support the hackathon, the Murrumbidgee District and its partners collected stories from local young people to inform the hackers in their collaborative effort to be innovative in how the community can address unemployment and social issues for young people. At the same time, the district and its partners engaged with the business community to find out what they need in terms of young people's pre-employment skills, and to help young people become work ready.

At the hackathon young people worked together with hackers and students from Charles Sturt University, using coding and web design to develop innovative and technological solutions for the problems and issues identified by the young people. Given the success of the event, the district has plans to export the hackathon concept to more regional and remote areas in NSW.

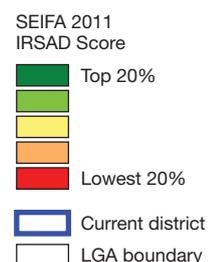
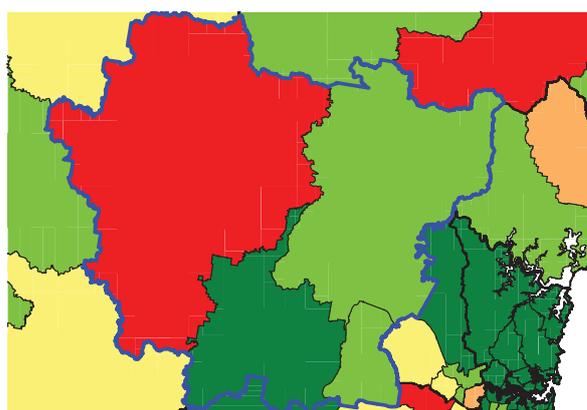
"I am really excited about this project as it starts with what is strong not wrong in the local community... We have been given the freedom to do things differently to break the cycle. to do things even when the outcome is uncertain. We are engaging creatively with clients in a different context and moving forward side by side with our partners."

Murrumbidgee vs. State



Legend: District (light blue), NSW (dark blue)

Nepean Blue Mountains



4.8% of NSW population

Working with other agencies to support clients with complex issues

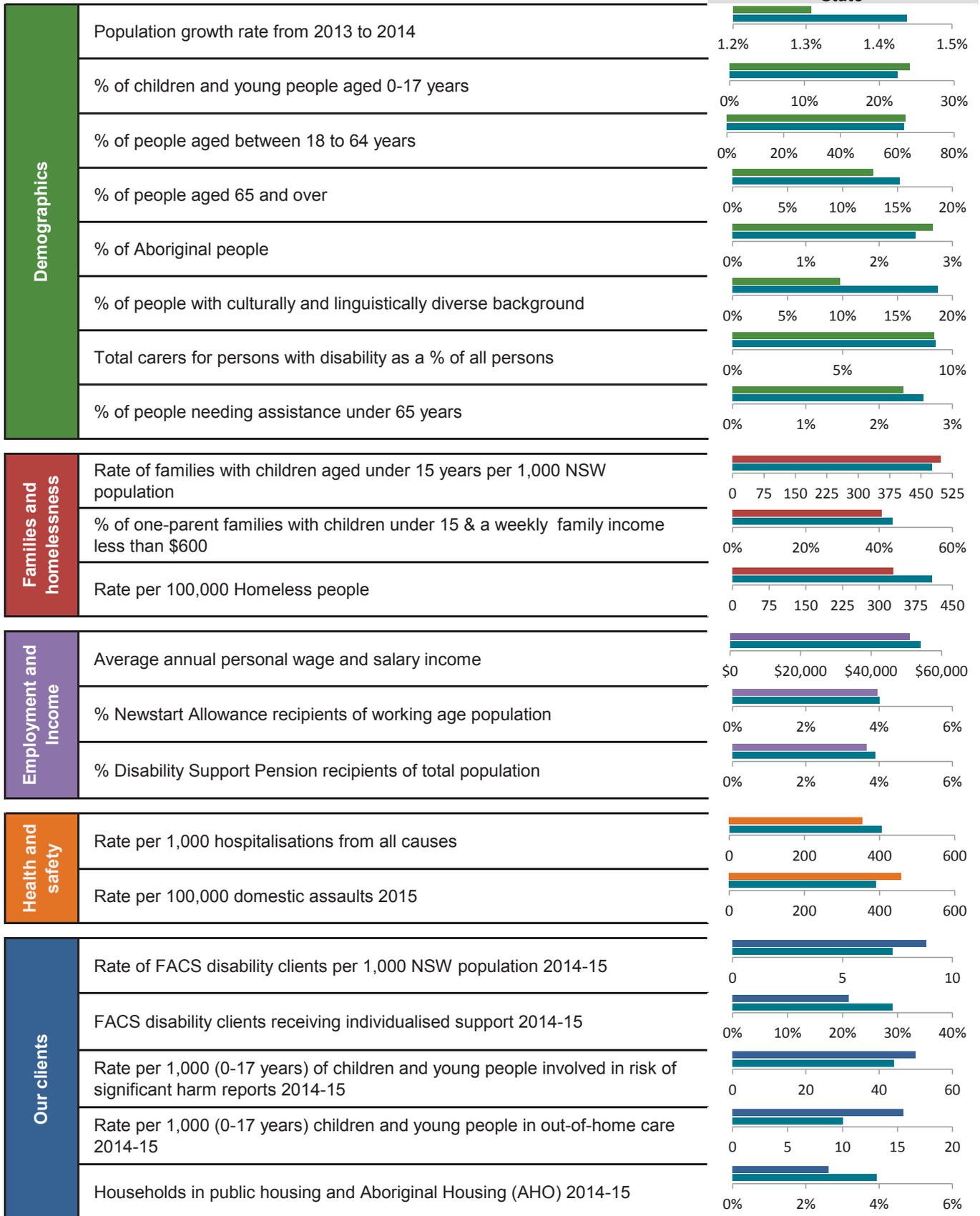
Cross-agency collaboration is a key strategy in achieving better outcomes for clients. In the Nepean Blue Mountains District, FACS is working together with other agencies to coordinate support around vulnerable individuals and families through the Nepean Blue Mountains (NBM) Integrated Complex Case Panel. The goal of the Panel is to provide integrated case management across agencies to contribute to the wellbeing of individuals or families with complex needs who require more intensive support.

The cross-agency Panel, which is broad in its operation, has strengthened relationships and improved collaboration. The Panel was established in 2014 and is administered by FACS. Chaired by the Police Local Area Commander, the interagency representation is comprehensive. It includes representatives from FACS, Juvenile Justice, the NSW Police, the Department of Education, NSW Health, and Corrective Services NSW (Community Corrections), along with the NBM Primary Health Network and Wentworth Community Housing. The Panel also works closely with other NGOs as required to support effective case coordination.

One example of a successful collaboration is the case of a teenage boy, Graham, which was referred to the Panel. This young man was part of a family facing complex and challenging circumstances. These circumstances deteriorated to the point where the family was facing homelessness and family breakdown. Through coordination and collaboration, the Panel identified their needs and ensured the family received the interventions required to attain stable accommodation and to negotiate therapeutic, mentoring and flexible respite services. These interventions alleviated family stress and resulted in significant improvements in Graham's wellbeing and school participation. Feedback from the family indicates that the young man is happier and more settled than he has been for a long time.

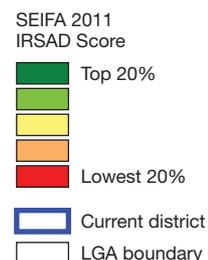
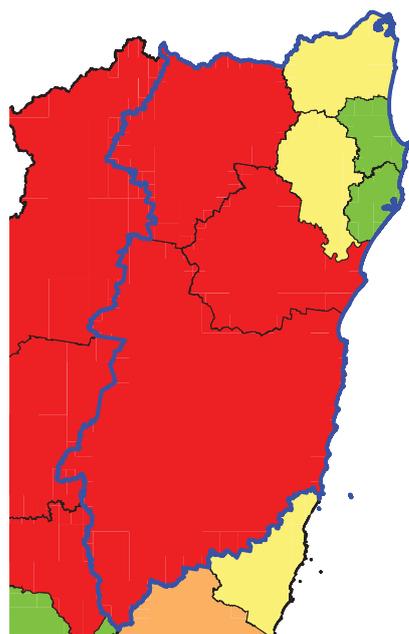
“An integrated service response by all FACS streams, including disability services, services for children and young people, and housing was the key to delivering the wraparound supports and services needed by the family”.

Nepean Blue Mountains vs. State



District
NSW

Northern NSW



3.9% of NSW population

Working together to support a mother to maintain her tenancy and provide a home for her children

This is a case where services worked cooperatively to support a struggling young mother at risk of homelessness secure a brighter future for her family.

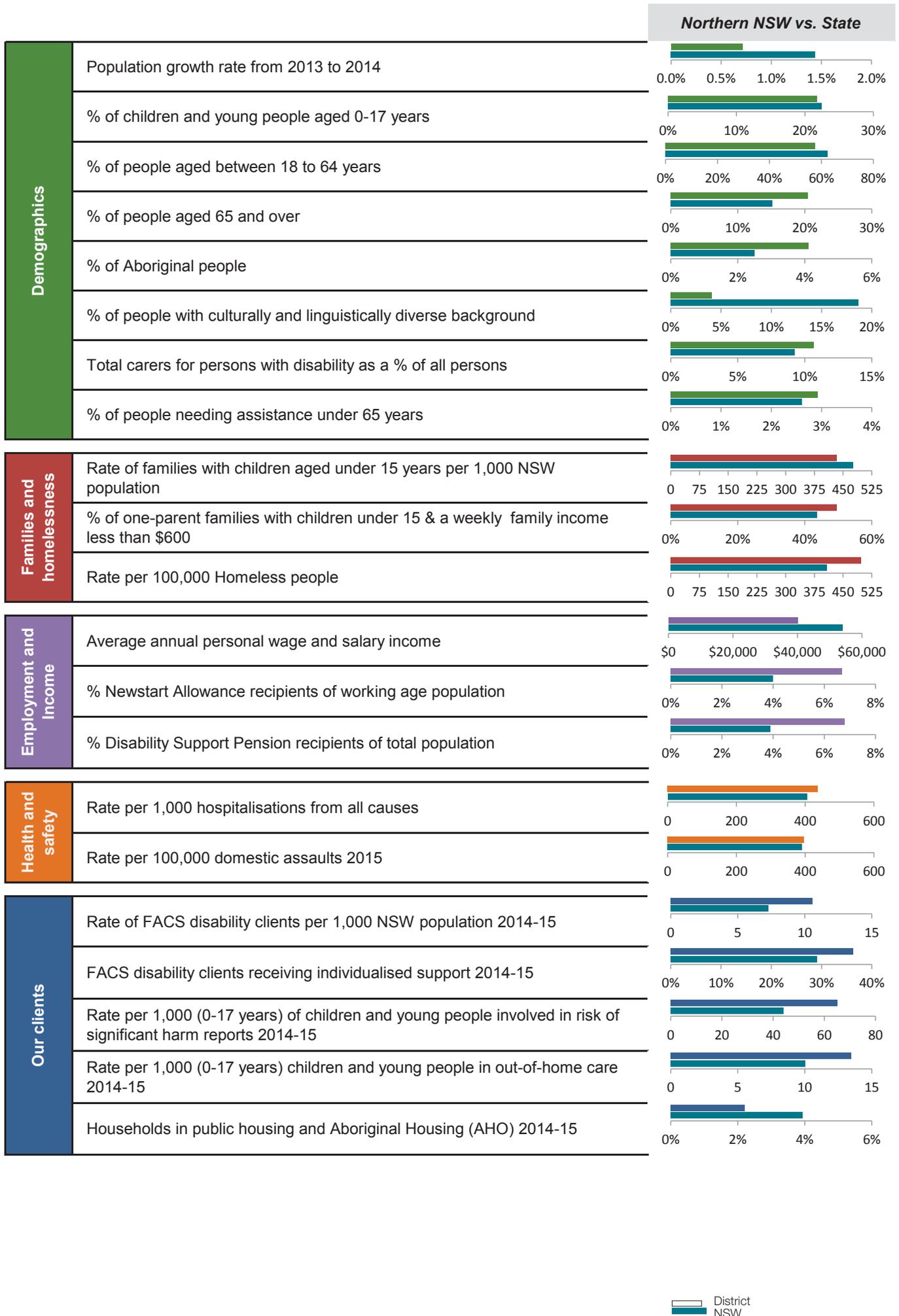
The young mother had two children with disability, and was experiencing difficulties maintaining her tenancy. She struggled to pay the rent and there were also issues with property care and squalor that posed a risk to the children.

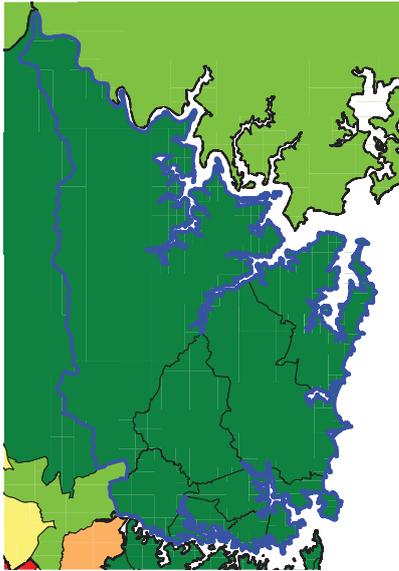
FACS staff working across child protection and housing worked together to support the woman, providing her with intensive intervention services to enable her to sustain a tenancy and to look after her children appropriately. They also connected the family with NGO services to provide additional family support. The long-term approach taken by FACS was to ensure she had access to the supports she needed to live together safely with her children.

One of the interventions involved a fortnightly service that worked with the young mother to educate her on how to look after the property and keep her home clean. As a result of her interactions with FACS, the young mother was relocated to another public housing property that was better suited her needs. As she had incurred a tenancy damage debt from the previous property, FACS organised for her to receive financial advice so that a plan with regular instalments was put in place to help her clear the debt.

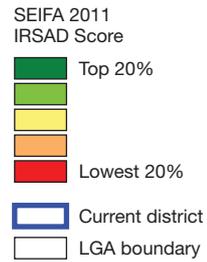
After three months she no longer required the specialist intervention because it was clear that she was able to look after her property and had gained more control over her life. The fact that all services were working together with her to work through her issues was the key component.

“It would not have happened if all the services had not collaborated. We used a very strong collaborative approach. We were all there to help this mother maintain the family unit and sustain the tenancy”.





Northern Sydney



11.9% of NSW population

Supporting a community through collective impact

The Northern Sydney District is working with a tenants' association and other local stakeholders to develop a Wellbeing Centre on a high rise public housing estate to improve and maintain the overall health and wellbeing of the residents. This estate has a high proportion of elderly residents who are experiencing a range of health issues and who are at risk of social isolation. Many of the residents are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The idea to establish the Wellbeing Centre came from the tenants, who wanted it to be more than just a drop-in centre.

The Northern Sydney District supported the initiative by posting a worker on the estate to build rapport with the tenants and discover the community's aspirations. The project is led by the tenants' association with the support of FACS and is overseen by a steering committee that includes government and NGO partners.

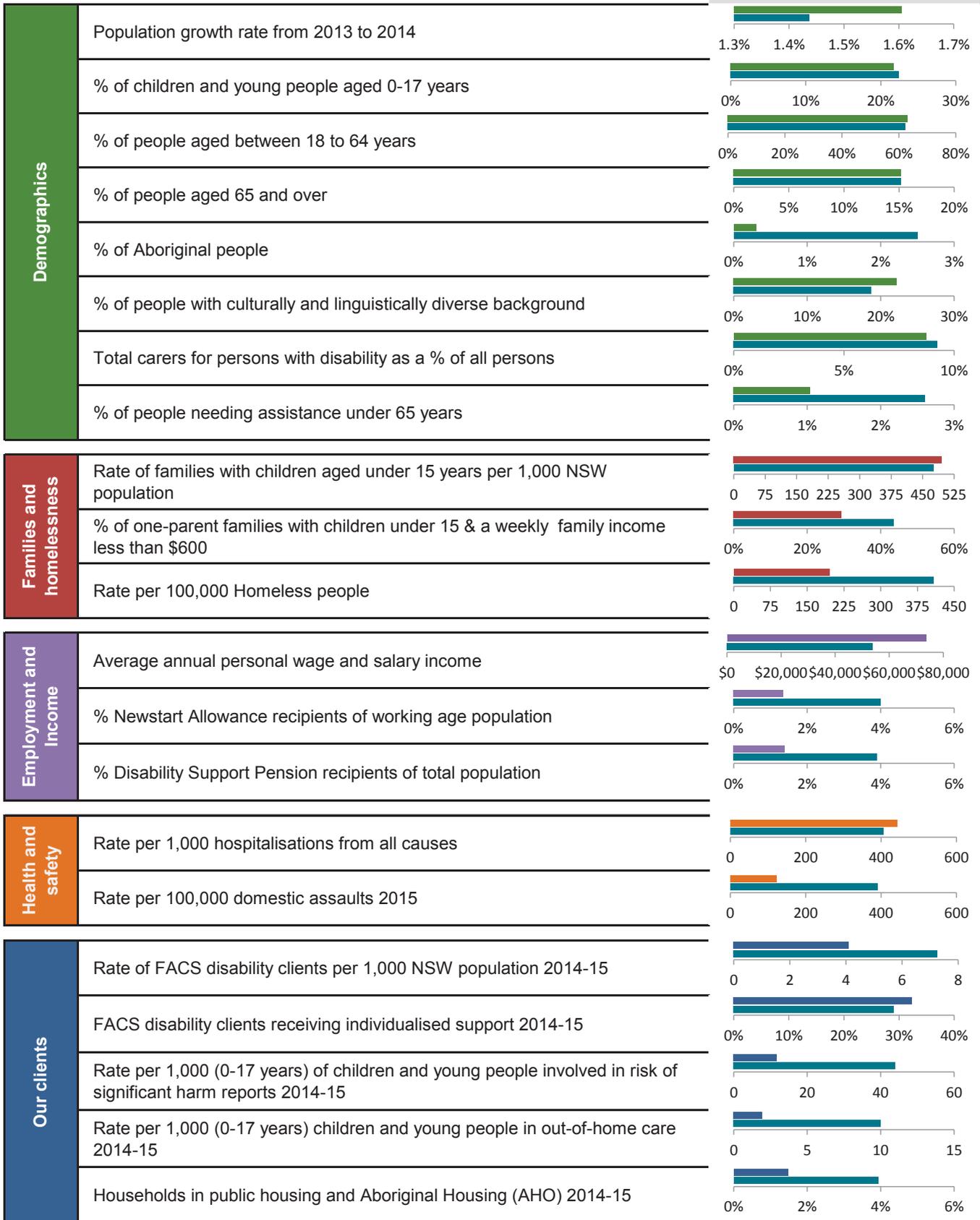
The University of Technology Sydney and Macquarie University have assisted the tenants' association with translation work, including at the annual general meeting of the Tenants' Union. Other support has been provided by NSW Health, the NSW Mental Health Commission and Volunteers NSW, the latter assisting the tenants' association with the recruitment of volunteers.

A construction company donated computers to the tenants' association for its office and to establish an internet café on the estate. It also arranged for one of their staff to work in the garden to create a pleasant environment for the tenants.

The Wellbeing Centre is still a work in progress, but the tenants' association is working to further develop the concept. To help the centre become self-sustaining, one of the tenants has taken on responsibility for grant applications and the president of the tenants' association is working to establish a store selling healthy food on the estate.

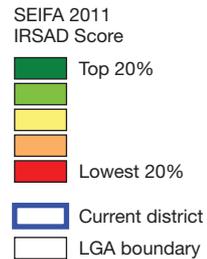
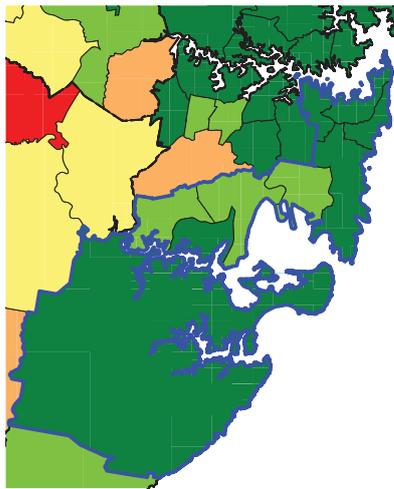
“We aim to empower social housing tenants to be more independent, explore new career opportunities and plan for the futures they aspire to”.

Northern Sydney vs. State



District
NSW

South Eastern Sydney



11.4% of NSW population

Working collaboratively with NGOs to support a young mother and her baby to leave a domestic violence situation

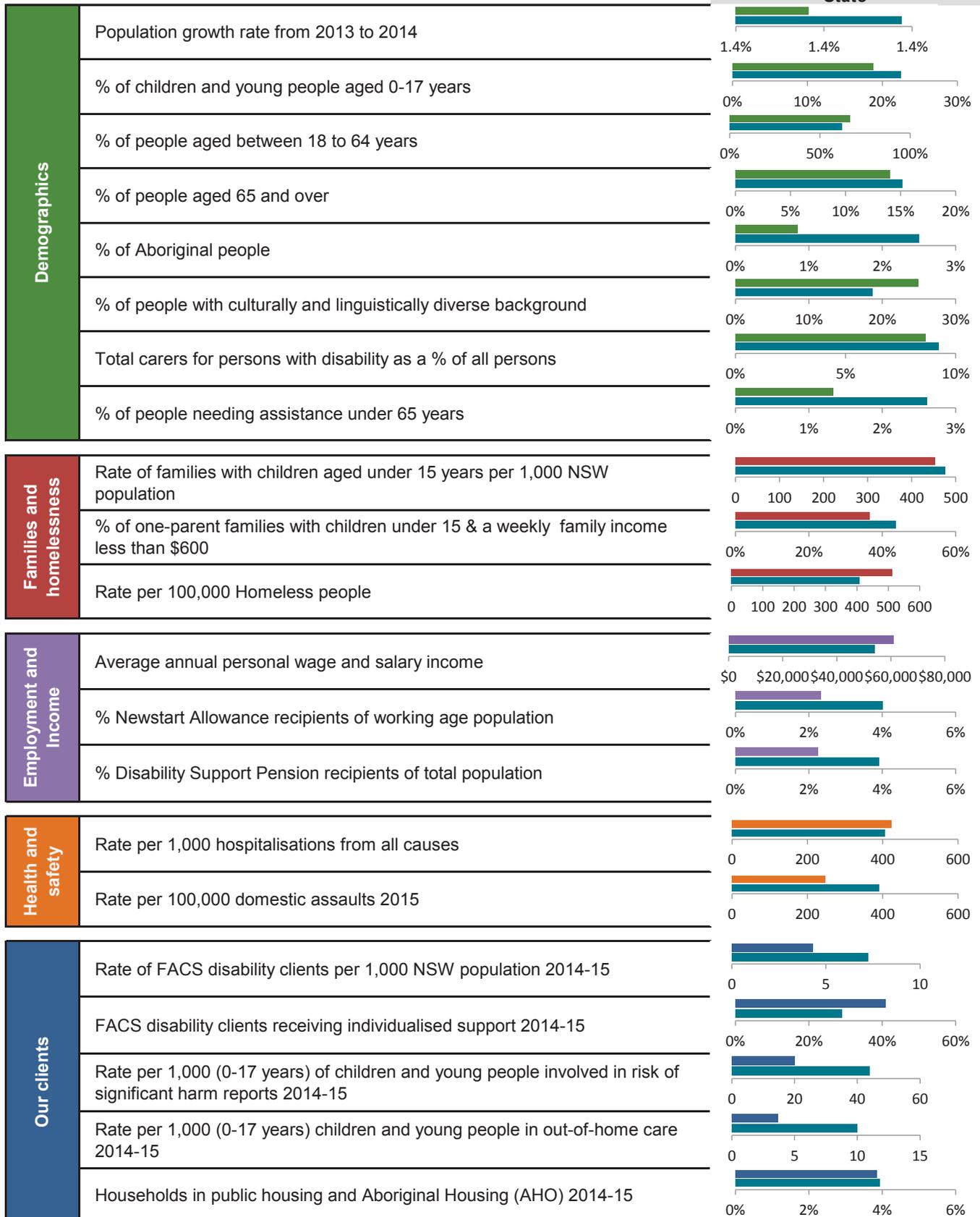
This case study highlights a strong working relationship between FACS and NGOs in assisting a young mother experiencing domestic violence. This young woman had been receiving support through the Brighter Futures early intervention program but, due to a range of domestic violence issues, was further referred to another NGO's young parents program. The young woman was not living with the baby's father but he continued to pose a risk to the mother and her very young child. As a result, the case was also referred to the Safer Pathway team, which assisted in ensuring a well-coordinated and tailored domestic violence response for her.

The collaborative work of FACS and the NGO sector supported the young woman with safety planning, also helping her understand the impact of domestic violence on herself and her baby. A critical success factor in this case has also been the casework undertaken by one of the NGOs and the trusting relationship this worker has established with the young woman. This trust has given her the confidence to disclose what is happening in her life and helped her to identify the risks to her child. As a result, this is assisting with the work that FACS and the NGOs are undertaking in conjunction with the young woman to help improve her circumstances.

While all of the young woman's issues are not yet resolved, there are improvements in her understanding of her situation and support is there for her and her baby.

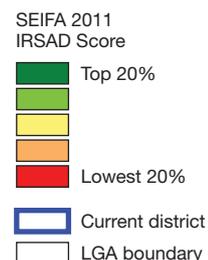
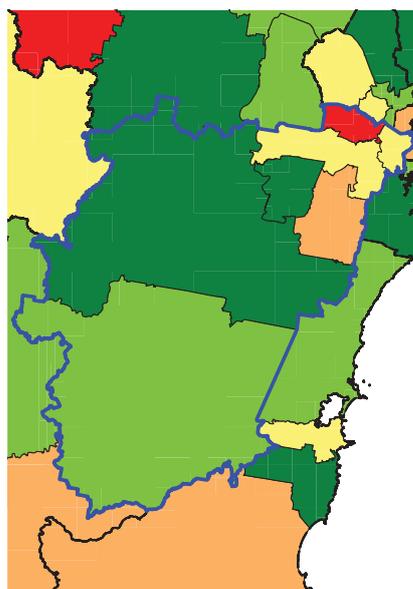
“It can take a long time to work with people experiencing domestic and family violence to help them understand the impact of different forms of violence. It is important they are supported to make decisions for themselves rather than us making decisions for them”.

South Eastern Sydney vs. State



District
NSW

South Western Sydney



12.2% of NSW population

Innovative housing solutions for a young man with disability

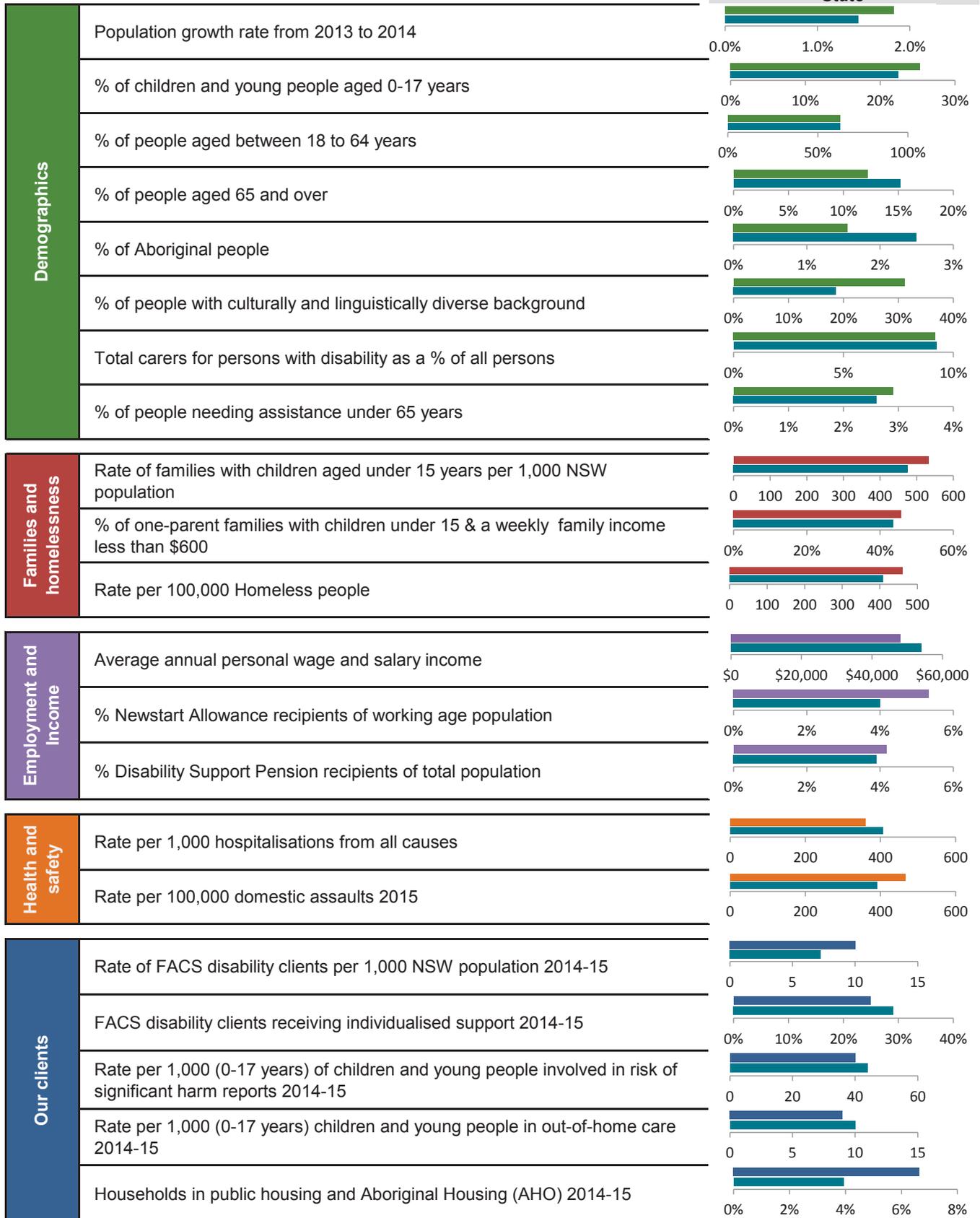
This case demonstrates how tailored support can help support people with disability continue to live independently the community. Kim is a young man aged 26 with Downs syndrome who has been receiving FACS disability supports at key milestones during his life. In 2009, an incident occurred at home that meant he and his two siblings were no longer able to live with their parents. At that time, FACS organised for him, together with his older sister and younger brother, to move into temporary accommodation. While living in this house Kim began attending a day program during the week to improve his living skills and to provide social activities for him. Sometime later, his older sister moved overseas for work, leaving the young man with his younger brother, who was studying at university.

During routine visits by FACS housing staff they noticed that Kim seemed to be spending a lot of time on his own and that his brother was not often present. Following this discovery, FACS organised a case meeting that included Kim's sister and brother, the housing specialist, his disability case manager and a representative from the organisation that ran Kim's day program. They worked together to map out the best way forward for Kim to address his social isolation. Through this work FACS organised for an individualised accommodation support package to be developed for Kim that included a focus on living skills, and domestic assistance.

Kim was occupying a three-bedroom house on his own and, in normal circumstances, it would not have been possible for him to live there long-term. However, his sister was able to negotiate with FACS to purchase the house. Kim could now stay in his familiar environment, with public transport access to his day activities, and is continuing to receive the supports he needs to live independently.

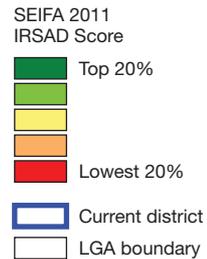
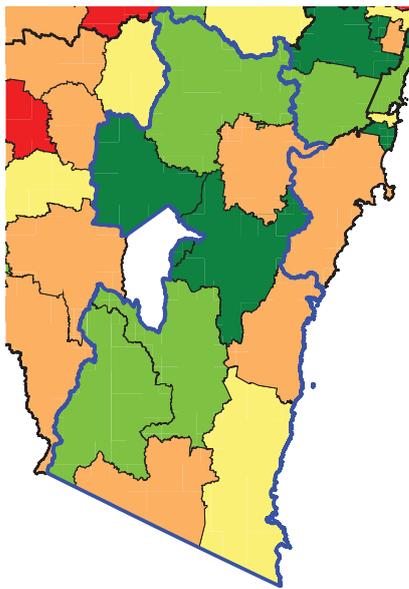
"We all collaborated. Without the understanding that you need time to work things through, the outcome would have been very different".

South Western Sydney vs. State



District
NSW

Southern NSW



2.7% of NSW population

Working together to support the accommodation and safety needs of a teenage girl

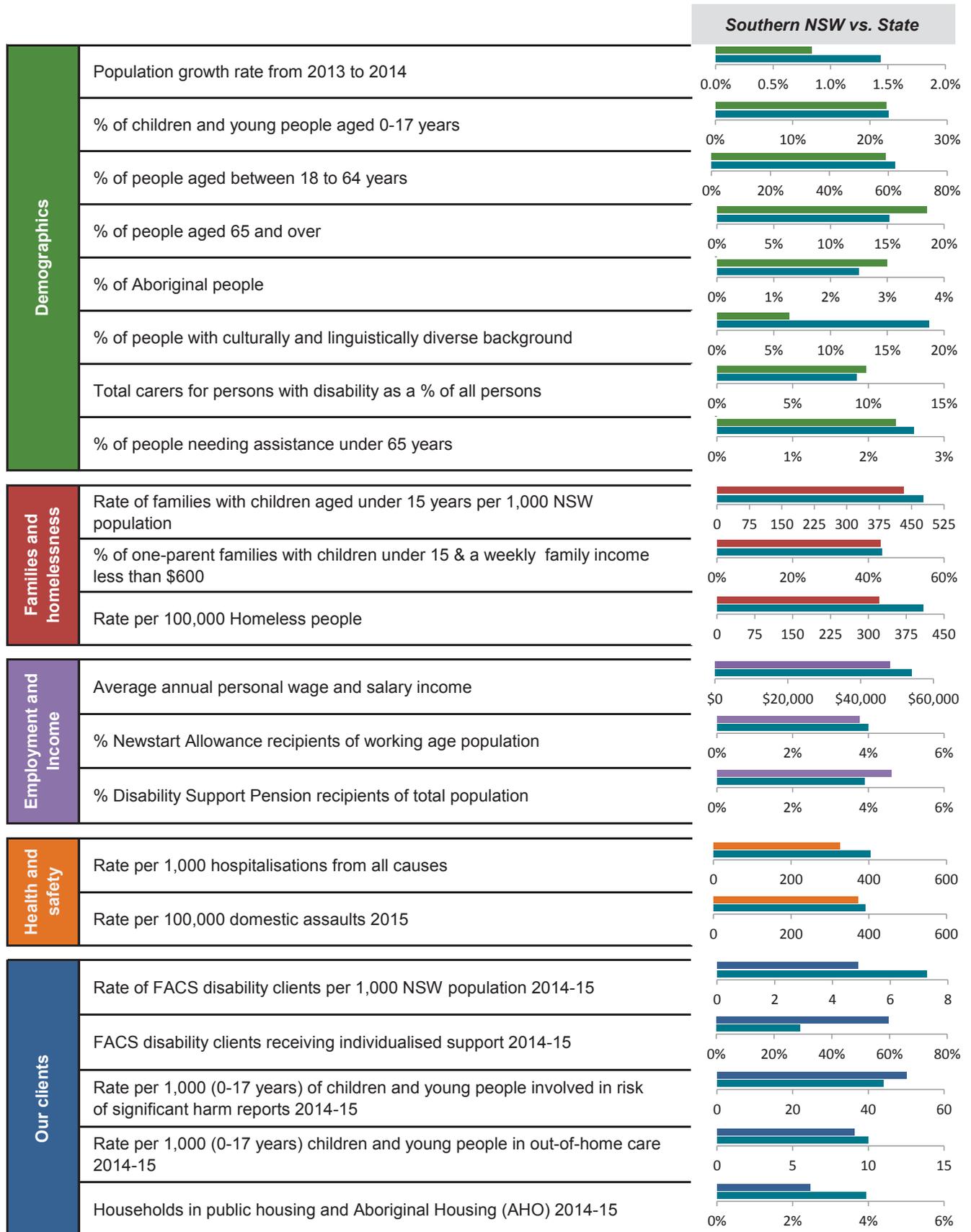
Annie was 15 years old when her father died, leaving her alone in the home that she had lived in for most of her life. Annie's parents were divorced and she did not have a good relationship with her mother, who had re-married and lived several hours away. Annie and her father had lived in a FACS social housing property. As she was under 16, current policy meant that Annie was unable to sign a lease to enable her to stay in the house.

As Annie wanted to stay in her home and continue at her local school, FACS staff working across housing and child protection streams came together to find a solution that would best address Annie's safety and accommodation needs.

An interim solution was found when Annie identified Freda, an adult family friend, who agreed to move in and take responsibility for the lease under a temporary arrangement that enabled Annie to stay in the home. Freda also supported her ongoing school attendance. Annie's mother was contacted and agreed to this arrangement – Annie's mother also provided her with some financial support and helped with books and school uniforms.

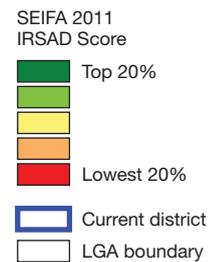
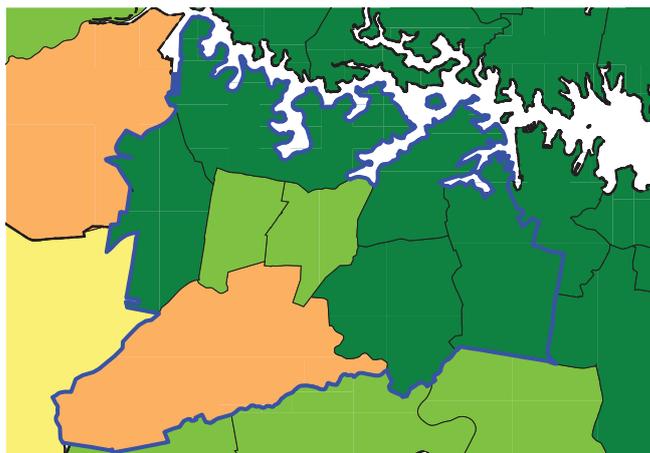
Through the two FACS streams working together, Annie was able to remain in the home she had lived in with her father. She continued to attend school and after turning 16, Annie was able to take on responsibility for the lease of the home. Freda has moved out of the house and ongoing casework support is being provided by FACS.

"It was memorable when we signed the lease – a reminder we had been able to work as one agency towards a common goal. It was a difficult experience but a good outcome for a girl who was grieving the loss of her father. In the midst of her grief it was important for us to listen to what she wanted."



District
 NSW

Sydney



8.4% of NSW population

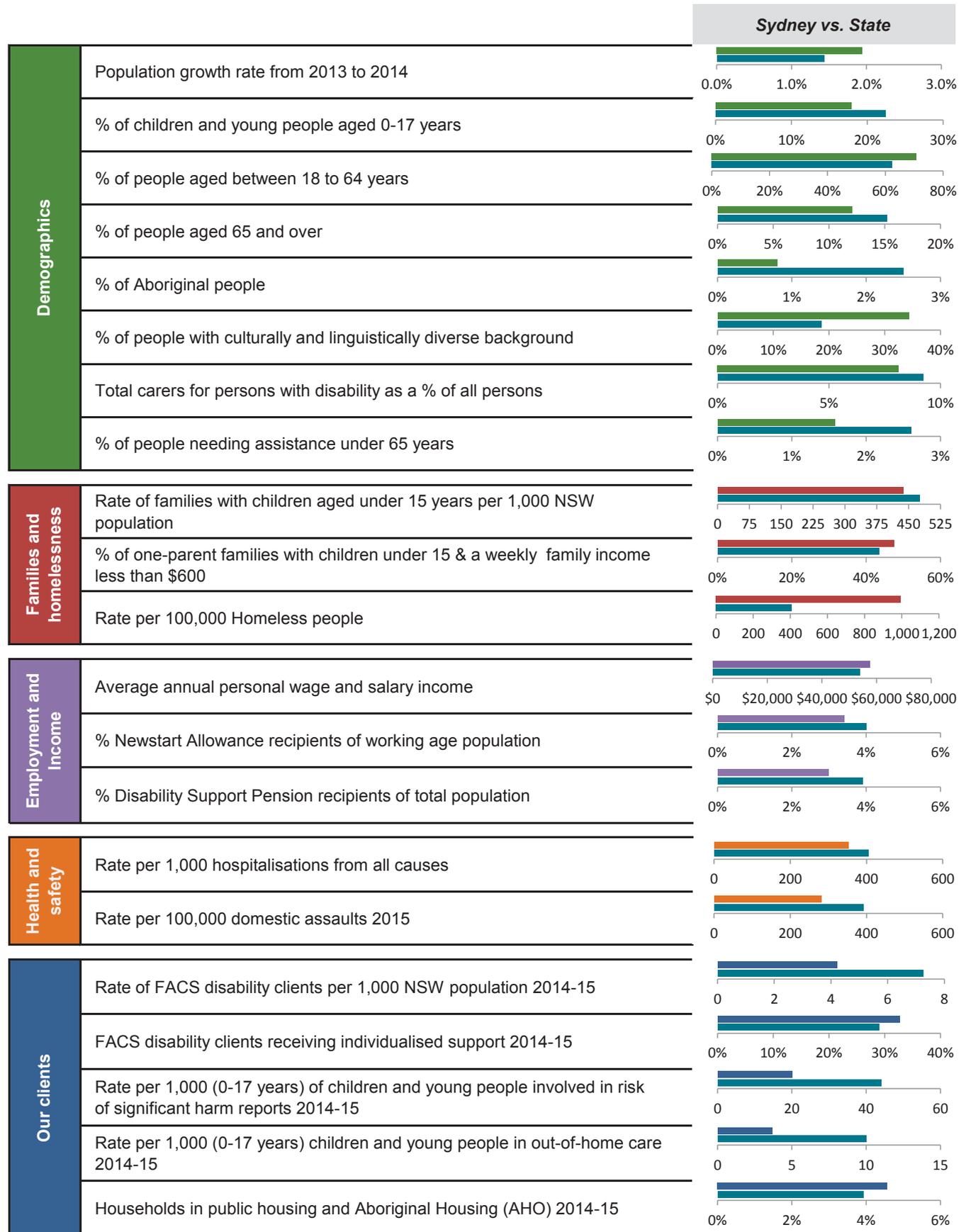
Helping Sydney's rough sleepers find beds

Earlier this year Sydney and South Eastern Sydney Districts trialed a new initiative, opening a pop-up housing office in Woolloomooloo to offer help to people sleeping rough or living in a shelter.

The pop-up office ran for three nights with staff from FACS and the 24/7 housing service, Link2home, on hand to assist clients with temporary accommodation or to answer housing application queries. Clients requiring urgent assistance were offered temporary accommodation for three nights and an NGO partner was available to provide transport.

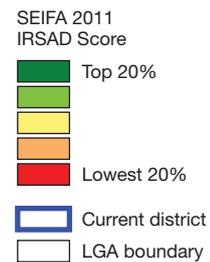
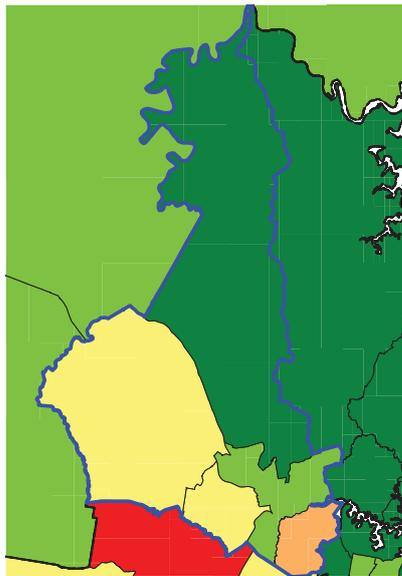
Many of the clients visiting the pop-up office had previously applied for housing but because of issues with transience, their applications had lapsed. FACS staff tried to provide as much assistance as possible for clients on the spot, such as lodging, updating and reactivating applications. As well as benefiting clients, the pop-up office provided a way for staff to engage with clients in their own environment and to see their circumstances first hand.

“The pop-up office was definitely a success. It was the first time we had done anything like it and we had a higher level of engagement with the clients because that client group does not like coming into offices to talk to public officials.”



District
 NSW

Western NSW



3.8% of NSW population

Supporting an Aboriginal family together with other agencies

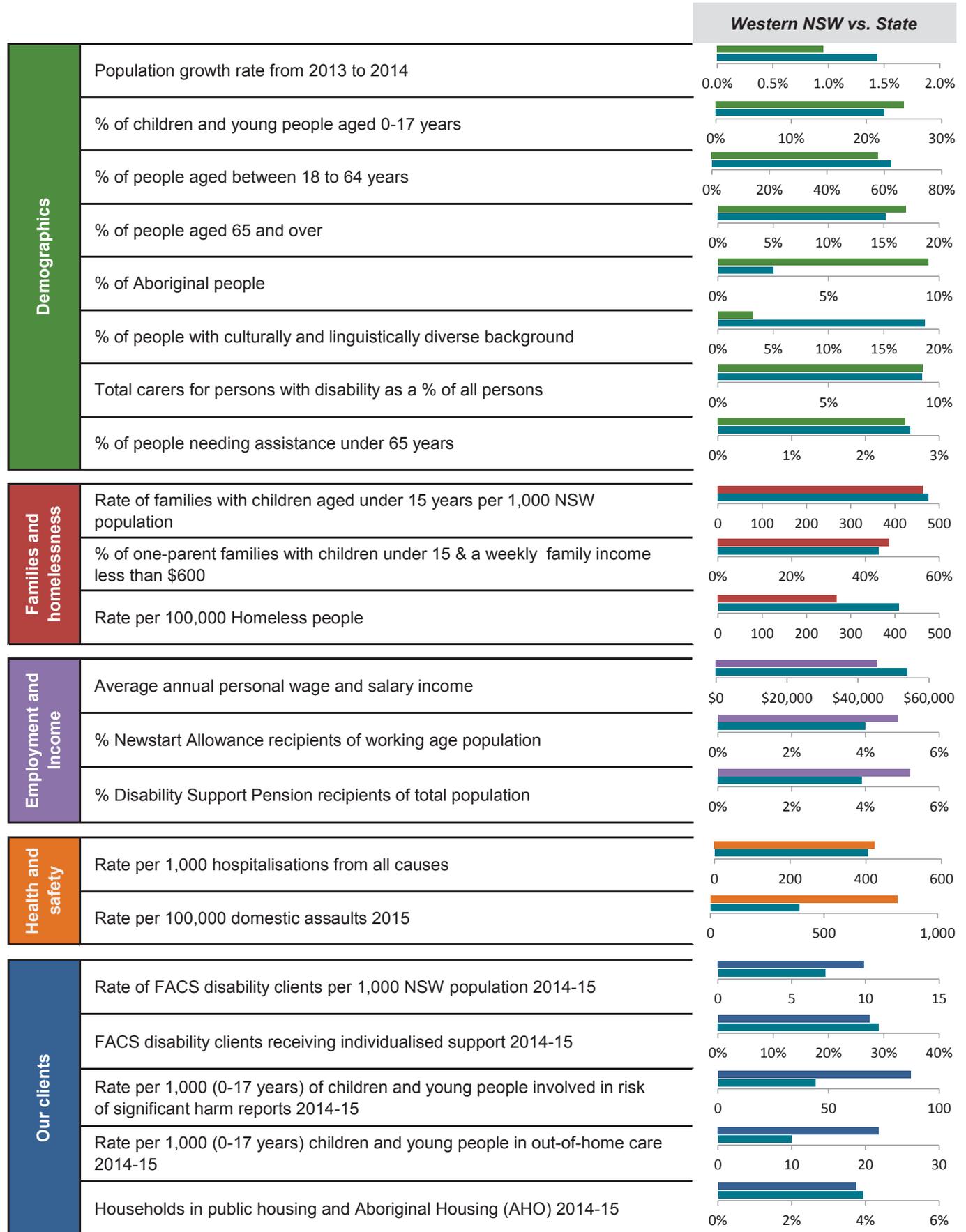
This story concerns an Aboriginal family with eight children, including a young baby. The family has a history of transience and homelessness, moving between various locations in western NSW. The family also experienced issues related to antisocial behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse. The mother was often living on her own with the children as the father was frequently in and out of prison.

Following the release of the father from prison, the family moved to Wellington, where they were provided temporary accommodation in a caravan. FACS staff from the child protection and housing streams worked with other government agencies to support them until they were able to secure permanent accommodation. FACS' priority for the family was to find them stable accommodation as they saw that as key starting point for working with the family to address other issues.

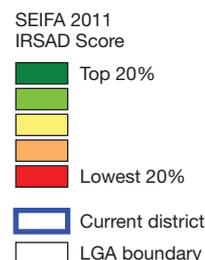
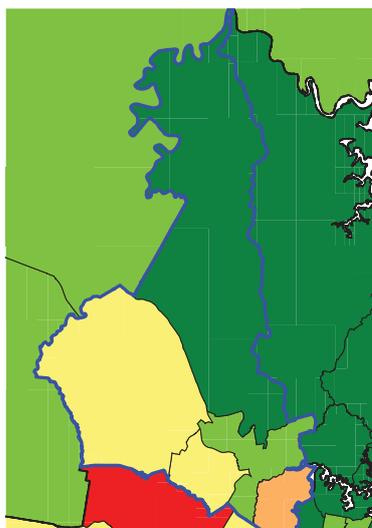
Eventually, the family was allocated a three-bedroom property in Dubbo, where FACS provided them with an Aboriginal case manager and referred them to an Aboriginal intensive family preservation service. However, now that the family had stable accommodation, they attempted to disengage from services. To address this issue, FACS linked with Corrective Services NSW (through Community Corrections), who made engagement with the intensive family preservation service a condition of the father's Community Corrections order.

To further support the family and address their needs, the FACS child protection and housing streams worked with the Department of Education, NSW Health and Corrective Services NSW. Case management meetings were held at the local Community Corrections office where the family felt most comfortable. Engagement with this family is a work-in-progress, but the family is still together and engaging with services.

"We had to build a relationship with the family and other agencies because we couldn't do this on our own. We needed to bring it back to family-centred practice."



Western Sydney



12.0% of NSW population

FACS and NGOs working together on transition planning for a young man with disability

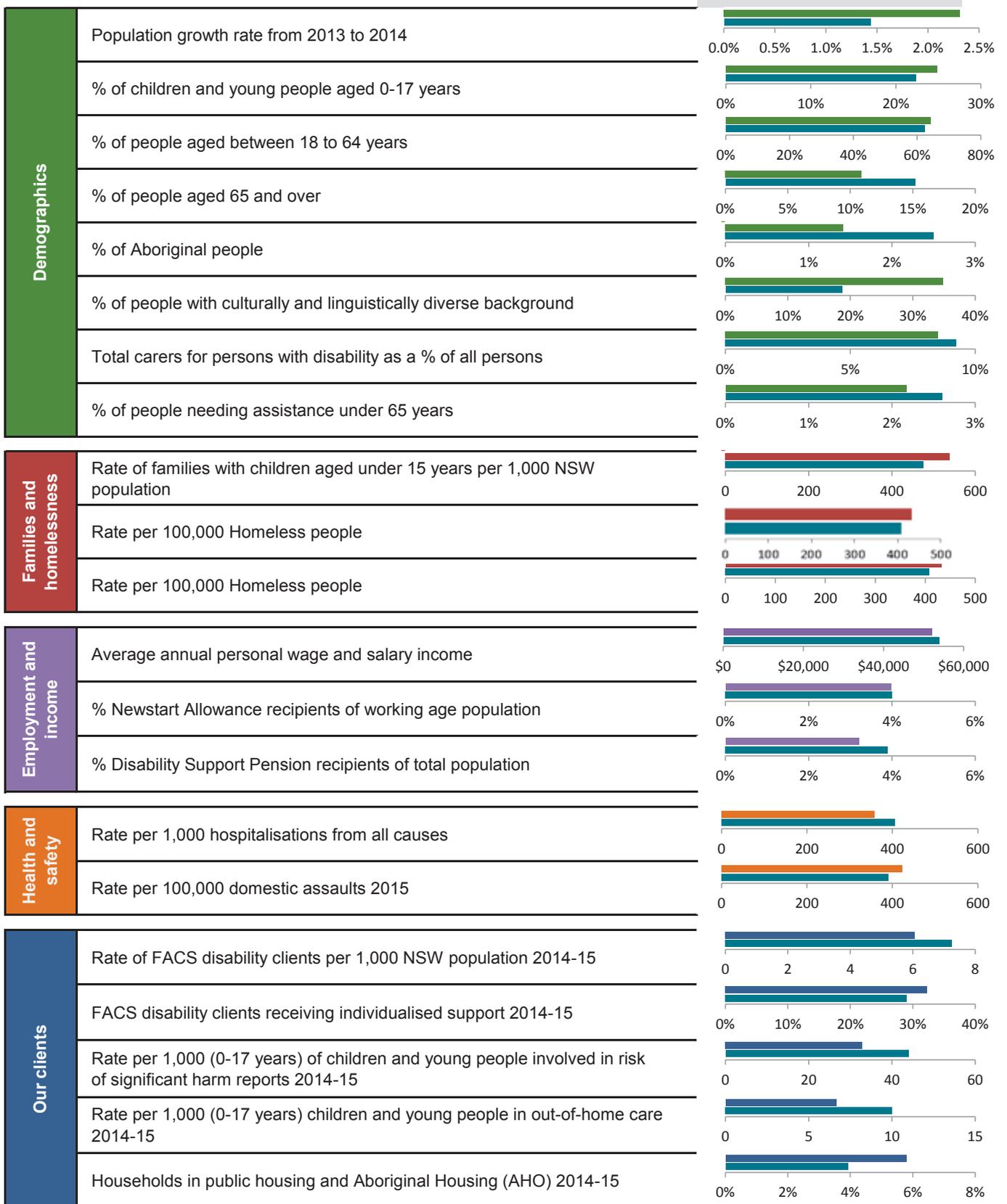
This story concerns a young man from a Pacific Islander background with a mild intellectual disability who was removed from his mother as a child and placed in the parental responsibility of the Minister. The young man had a significant history of trauma and was the victim of abuse in kinship and supported accommodation placements. His view of the world was dictated by his history in care, which contributed to him displaying inappropriate behaviours, including sexualised behaviours. He had a history of property damage and posed a potential risk of assault to staff. As a result of these issues, the young man was placed in emergency accommodation provided by an NGO.

While he was in temporary accommodation, staff from FACS across the child protection and disability streams worked with the young man to put in place behaviour support strategies and appropriate case management. This was undertaken in collaboration with the temporary accommodation provider and another NGO provider of disability accommodation services. All support providers understood the importance of utilising a trauma-informed care response to assist in developing safe strategies. The outcome of this joint work was extremely positive. The young man moved from emergency accommodation into a villa-style unit for people with disability with an NGO provider, where he had greater autonomy.

The young man also reduced his weight by 30 kilograms through healthy diet and regular exercise and commenced a work placement on a farm with the goal of developing his vocational skills.

“As a team we worked together to provide a consistent and effective transition... All staff and support services involved in this case were elated to see the significant positive change in the person’s life, in particular seeing him engage with family appropriately and gain employment.”

Western Sydney vs. State



District
NSW

3. Working better and smarter with our partners to improve services and lives



FACS works together with its partners to provide frontline services that enable vulnerable families, children and young people in NSW to achieve positive change, improve their circumstances and realise better lifelong outcomes

3.1 Our investment

FACS makes a significant investment in the delivery of frontline services through its NGO partners. FACS continues to be the largest funder of NGO services in NSW, recognising that NGOs are key to achieving the department's goals in making a difference to the lives of vulnerable families, children and young people in NSW.

NGOs bring valuable connections to communities, a comprehensive understanding of local contexts, and different ideas and approaches to the delivery of supports and services. The sector is dynamic and highly diverse, particularly in terms of the services they provide, the clients they serve and their organisational structure and funding base. The sector is also growing, developing its capacity and capability as the NSW Government invests in an expanded role for NGOs in the provision of supports and services.

In 2014–15, the NSW Government spent \$5.5 billion on services to support vulnerable people and families and to build stronger communities. FACS' largest areas of expenditure over the year were:

- supported accommodation for people with disability
- OOHC for vulnerable children and young people
- community support for people with disability, their families and carers
- social housing assistance
- tenancy support
- child protection services.

More than half of the FACS budget – approximately \$3.3 billion, or 59 per cent – was provided to NGO partners to deliver services and supports on behalf of the NSW Government.

FACS recognises that respectful, intelligent and real collaboration between the NGO sector and the department is key to delivering quality, integrated frontline services that provide clients with the right services when they need them. The goal is to deliver meaningful, positive, long-term change.

FACS is focused on building stronger relationships with the NGO sector to improve service reach and impact to optimise outcomes for clients. This will be achieved by establishing a service system that is customer-centric, innovative and responsive to a changing environment.

3.2 Embracing innovation – new approaches to service delivery

FACS and its partners are working in an increasingly complex environment – the mounting pressures of population growth and demographic change mean that efforts need to be focused on achieving efficiencies in budget management. Embracing service and business innovation is a necessary priority. Clients are presenting with multiple and complex needs in increasing numbers, with rising demand across all areas of FACS service delivery. Clients are also expecting better access to integrated services. As a result, FACS and its NGO partners are required to use more innovative approaches and models of service delivery to ensure assistance is effective to improve the impact of services and supports. This requires strategically targeting resources, and maximising benefit for those most in need. In short, it demands new ways of working - more flexibility, improved responsiveness and integrated approaches.

FACS is progressing extensive reforms across all areas of FACS service delivery, notably the transition to individualised funding for disability services ahead of the implementation of the NDIS, the transfer of OOHC placements to NGOs, and the strategies to ensure the sustainability of social housing. FACS has also recognised the significant benefits to clients, the community, the NGO and private sectors, and to the government that can be achieved through innovative approaches to investment.

Newpin

FACS has embarked on this journey of change through implementing with UnitingCare Burnside Australia's first social benefit bond, Newpin (New Parent Information Network). Newpin is an intensive child protection and parent education program that works therapeutically with families under stress to break the cycle of destructive family behaviour and enhance parent-child relationships. Originating in the United Kingdom, Newpin was created in response to the needs of new parents experiencing issues such as isolation, mental illness, family violence, social disadvantage, and low self-esteem, and for those who were at risk of physically or emotionally harming their child or children.

The bond allows the NSW Government to pass some of the risk of performance to the private sector and pay on the successful social outcomes from government savings. If successful, investors receive a financial return on their ethical investment, and service organisations secure longer-term funding, and greater certainty and capital to better plan and implement preventative programs.

In its first two years of operation, Newpin has delivered impressive results. As at June 2015, Newpin has successfully restored 66 children to their families and supported another 35 families to prevent their children from entering OOHC. The cumulative restoration rate is 61.6 per cent over the two-year period compared to a baseline of 25 per cent. In 2015, this delivered an 8.9 per cent return to investors, building on a first-year return of 7.5 per cent.

In addition to the original program at Bidwill, Burnside now operates a Newpin Fathers program and programs at Wyong, Doonside, and St Marys. The success of Newpin in NSW has since seen the model exported to several other jurisdictions.

Social housing reform

Creating a fairer and more sustainable future for social housing in NSW is a significant and complex challenge. While considerable progress has been made in social housing, including turning around a decline in the number of properties, the system has challenges in sustainably meeting client needs and supporting better outcomes:

- demand continues to outstrip supply
- the customer experience can be improved
- opportunities in the system and pathways out of social housing require further development
- the current financial model for social housing cannot be sustained in the long-term.

To encourage innovation in financing, leveraging and service delivery models, FACS is bringing together government, NGOs and the private sector, as well as the broader community, to solicit and foster ideas about how best to establish a system that is fair and accessible to those most in need while also providing a pathway to independence.

In 2014–15, FACS began developing a new Social Housing Policy Framework to create a better social housing system for NSW. *Social Housing in NSW: a discussion paper for input and comment* was published in November 2014.

Consultations were held, including a forum led by the Minister for Family and Community Services with approximately 200 participants to hear first hand the issues facing social housing. The feedback from the forum was published in a report called *Thinking about the future: Social Housing in NSW. The blueprint for change — Future Directions for social housing in NSW*, published in 2015-16.

The NSW Government has also launched the Premier's Innovation Initiative to seek new approaches to deliver services in collaboration with the private and NGO sectors. FACS leads the social housing assets priority area under this initiative. A diverse range of applicants submitted proposals on how to boost the supply of social housing, and FACS will work to develop innovative and practical proposals in partnership with the private and NGO sectors in 2015–16.

3.3 Putting people first – focusing on customer service and delivering results

Client satisfaction is a key measure of how well the department is working to deliver personalised and coordinated responses that best meet individual needs. The FACS Strategic Statement outlines the department's commitment to customer service, pledging to:

- put people first
- create local solutions tailored to meet local needs
- work with government, non-government and community partners to reach more people with better services
- aim to build an agile and cohesive department that leads and delivers social policy reform.

Putting people first is key to making a positive impact on the lives of clients, because how services are delivered is just as important as what services are provided.

To strengthen this commitment to high quality customer service, FACS has released a department-wide service charter that outlines its service obligations.

To further encourage high quality, person-centred customer service focused on achieving the best outcomes for clients, the department has introduced the FACS Simply the Best Customer Service Awards, with the inaugural Awards ceremony held in late 2015. The Awards celebrate the contributions of FACS employees working to break the cycle of disadvantage through outstanding client service. The winners and highly commended recipients were selected from over 600 FACS employees nominated from around NSW.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Technical notes

(i) Population data

The following population data has been used in the report:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Preliminary Estimated Resident Population, as at 30 June 2013. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013, *Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2013*, cat. no. 101.0, ABS, Canberra.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013, *Population Projection, Australia, 2012 (base) to 2101* cat. no. 3222.0, ABS Canberra.
- Australian Bureau of Statistic 2014, National Regional Profile, 2008 to 2012, cat. no. 1379.0.55.001, ABS, Canberra.

(ii) Calculation of rates

Rates for children and young people

The rates for all children and young people involved in ROSH reports and all children and young people in OOHC at 30 June 2014 were calculated using ABS population estimates for 30 June 2013.

Rates for FACS disability clients

The rates for FACS disability clients were calculated using ABS population estimates for 30 June 2013

(iii) Points of analysis

‘During the year’

Counts of people and/or households during the year were calculated by counting each distinct person/household of interest during the financial year. Each person/household was counted once, even if there were multiple occurrences during the year.

‘30 June (at end of the financial year)’

Counts of people/households at 30 June were calculated by counting each distinct person/household of interest at the end of the financial year. Each person/household was counted only once even if there were multiple occurrences during the year.

(iv) Socio-economic status

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) developed by the ABS is used for each FACS district to analyse socio-economic status. The SEIFA comprises four indexes that are constructed using information from the census of population and housing. The four component indexes are the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage, the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage, the Index of Economic Resources and the Index of Education and Occupation.

Appendix 2 – Data sources

Objective 1

ABS Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026 (Catalogue 3238.0) (Series B(a))

ABS Estimated Resident Population, NSW at 30 June 2014 (Catalogue 3101.0).

Non-Aboriginal rates calculated using the difference in the population data of the Total (ERP) and Aboriginal (Estimates & projections, ATSI)

FACS Community Services Caseworker Dashboard.

Intensive Family Based Services – State-wide Services/NGO.

Intensive Family Preservation – Intensive Family Support Register.

Key Information Directory System (KiDS) – Corporate Information Warehouse.

Objective 2

Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Funding Management System.

ADHC – Disability Minimum Data Set 2014–15.

FACS yearly report on the trial of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the Hunter NSW 2014–15.

Objective 3

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013, *Census of Population and Housing: Basic Community Profile, 2011*, cat. no. 2001.0, ABS, Canberra.

HOMES & Annual Community Housing Data Collection.

Housing NSW Enterprise Data Warehouse.

Objective 4

ADHC Funding Management System.

ADHC – Disability Minimum Data Set 2014–15.

Australian vocational education and training statistics: apprentices and trainees: summary, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2015.

Objective 5

FACS Interactive Insights and Domestic Violence Line Database.

Housing NSW Enterprise Data Warehouse.

KiDS – Corporate Information Warehouse.

Objective 6

ADHC Funding Management System.

ADHC – Disability Minimum Data Set 2014–15. Housing NSW Enterprise Data Warehouse.

Housing NSW Enterprise Data Warehouse.

HOMES & Annual Community Housing Data Collection.

Working better and smarter with our Partners to improve services and lives

NSW Department of Family and Community Services Annual Report 2014–15.

District Reports

ADHC Funding Management System.

ADHC Minimum Data Set 2014–15.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014, *National Regional Profile, 2008 to 2012*, cat. no. 1379.0.55.001, ABS, Canberra.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013, *Census of Population and Housing: Basic Community Profile, 2011*, cat no. 2001.0, ABS, Canberra.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014, *Preliminary Estimated Population, as at 30 June 2014, by Local Government Area in NSW by sex and single year of age*: unpublished estimates based on June 2011 Census of population housing data, ABS Canberra.

HOMES & Annual Community Housing Data Collection.

Housing NSW Enterprise Data Warehouse.

KiDS annual data – Corporate Information Warehouse annual data.

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW recorded crime statistics.

NSW Health Statistics, Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health.

NSW



Family &
Community
Services

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