

Targeted Earlier Intervention Program

Murrumbidgee, Far West and Western NSW

Murrumbidgee Local Priorities

Murrumbidgee, Western and Far West NSW District has many strengths that provide potential opportunities to improve our services to clients. These include strong local communities that value personal relationships, a committed and stable workforce connected to their communities, a willingness to test new and innovative ideas for rural and remote communities and a rich First Nations cultural heritage.

We will take a local approach

We know that every local community is different and has distinct needs and priorities. Local knowledge is crucial to identifying and addressing these needs. That's why we're taking a local approach to recommissioning for Targeted Earlier Intervention.

The new TEI program will focus on collecting data so you can learn more about your local community. This will help you to identify needs, as they change, in your area. As the evidence grows, you'll be able to adapt your service to what works in your community. This is crucial to supporting children, young people, families and communities experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, vulnerability in NSW.

DCJ Districts will work with you to identify the needs and priorities of your community. We will look at:

- local priority groups – who needs the services most in your community?
- location – where in your local area are the services needed most?
- service type – what kinds of services will work in your area?

This evidence-based snapshot outlines the main priority groups in your District. This will help you to plan services that can make a real difference in your local area.

Local Priorities for Murrumbidgee

Please note, local priorities are not listed in order of importance.

1. Children, including First Nations children, not reaching their developmental milestones
2. First Nations children and young people engaged in school, and connected to their community and their culture
3. First Nations children, young people, families and communities have access to culturally safe services
4. Young parents experiencing vulnerabilities
5. Families experiencing low levels of education, high unemployment and financial disadvantage
6. Families experiencing domestic violence, particularly in isolated communities
7. Children, young people, families and communities who are socially or geographically isolated
8. Children, young people and families affected by substance misuse
9. Children, young people and families experiencing mental health issues
10. Refugee and CALD communities have access to culturally safe services
11. Families with multiple risk factors (ROSH)
12. Families with highly complex needs who have come to attention of child protection (OOHC)

Evidence

1. Children, including First Nations children, not reaching their developmental milestones

- In the Murrumbidgee district, 10.1% of children were developmentally vulnerable on two or more AEDC domains. 19.5% of children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more AEDC domain.¹
- Nine LGAs across Murrumbidgee district have higher proportions of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain. These

¹ AEDC Data explorer: <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer>

include Junee LGA (30.9%), Hay LGA (28.6%) and Murray River LGA (28.1%).²

- Nine LGAs across the Murrumbidgee district also have higher proportions of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. These include Junee LGA (16.4%), Murray River LGA (15.0%) and Albury LGA (14.9%).³
- More than one in three (37.3%) children aged 0 to 5 in the Murrumbidgee district are identified as being vulnerable. Of these children, 40% had a mother who smoked during their pregnancy, 39% had a parent who interacted with the justice system and 31% have had a child concern report.⁴
- Of the total number of vulnerable children aged 0 to 5 in the Murrumbidgee district, 25.6% identify as First Nations people.⁵
- The largest proportion of vulnerable 0-5 year olds in the Murrumbidgee district was in the Narrandera LGA, at 50%. This was followed by 38% in Murrumbidgee LGA and 35% in both Albury and Leeton LGAs.⁶
- Of the vulnerable children aged 0-5 years in the Murrumbidgee district, 427 had 4 or 5 indicators associated with poorer outcomes. 63% of these children identify as First Nations people.⁷
- Of the vulnerable children aged 0-5 years in the Murrumbidgee district, 749 had 3 indicators associated with poorer outcomes. 48% of these children identify as First Nations people.⁸

2. First Nations children and young people who are disengaged from school, their community and their culture

- There are 12,589 people in the Murrumbidgee district who identify as First Nations people.⁹
- The majority of these people are children and young people. 55.9% of First Nations people in the Murrumbidgee district are under 25 years old.¹⁰

² ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: [https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016 QuickStats](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats)

³ Ibid

⁴ Their Futures Matter

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: [https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016 QuickStats](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats)

¹⁰ ABS Community Profiles, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, 2016 Census: <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/communityprofiles?opendocument&navpos=230>

- In the Murrumbidgee district, the school with the highest proportion of First Nations students was Brungle Public School, in the Snowy Valleys LGA. 92% of students at this school identify as First Nations people. This school had an attendance rate of 94.7%.¹¹
- At Ashmont Public School in Wagga Wagga, 54% of students identify as First Nations People and at Red Hill Public School (also in Wagga Wagga) 47% of students identify as First Nations People. Both these schools have low student attendance rates, of 88.8% and 89.5%, respectively.¹²

3. First Nations children, young people, families and communities have access to culturally safe services

- 4.4% (n=12,589) of the population in the Murrumbidgee district are First Nations people.¹³
- The Junee LGA has the highest proportion of First Nations people at 7.8% (n=488). This is followed by Carrathool at 7.6% (n=208) and Murrumbidgee at 7.5% (289).¹⁴
- There were 319 Aboriginal Housing Office tenancies in the Murrumbidgee district, as of the 30 June 2018. This amounts to 9.3% of all tenancies.¹⁵

4. Young parents experiencing vulnerabilities

- In 2018, 103 mothers aged 19 and under gave birth in the Murrumbidgee district. This accounts for 4.4% of all births in this district. This proportion is higher than the NSW state average of 1.9%.¹⁶
- Griffith and Wagga Wagga had the highest number of mothers aged 19 and under give birth, at 37 and 13, respectively.¹⁷

5. Families experiencing low levels of education, high unemployment and financial disadvantage

¹¹ NSW Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, Master dataset: NSW government school locations and student enrolment numbers (2017): <https://data.cese.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/nsw-public-schools-master-dataset>, Student attendance rate by individual government schools (2011-2017): <https://data.cese.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/student-attendance-rate-by-school>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: [https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016 QuickStats](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats)

¹⁴ ABS Community Profiles, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile, 2016 Census: <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20Census%20Community%20Profiles>

¹⁵ FACS Administrative Data, unpublished.

¹⁶ NSW Healthstats: http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab_mbth_age/mab_mbth_age_lgmap

¹⁷ Ibid.

- In the Murrumbidgee district, only 12.6% of people had a bachelor degree level or above. This is much less than the NSW average of 23.4%. Only 12.2% of people had completed year 12, again this is less than the NSW average of 15.3%.¹⁸
- People in the Murrumbidgee district were more likely to only complete Year 10, 16.3%, compared to 11.5% in NSW. There was also a higher proportion of people who had only completed year 9, 12.2%, compared to 8.4% in NSW.¹⁹
- In the Murrumbidgee district, 7,172 people (5.4% of the population) are unemployed. This is less than the NSW average of 6.3%. Unemployment rates were highest in Albury, where 6.8% of the population were unemployed and Narrandera, where 6.1% of the population were unemployed.²⁰
- The median weekly income for a family in the Murrumbidgee district is \$1,406. This is much less than the NSW state average of \$1,780. Berrigan (\$1,251), Hilltops (\$1,261), and Gundagai (\$1,280) have the lowest family incomes within the district.²¹
- All of the 21 LGAs in the Murrumbidgee district have higher proportions of low-income households than the NSW average of 19.7%. The highest proportions were in Berrigan (30.3%), Narrandera (30.1%), and Gundagai (29.5%).²²

6. Families experiencing domestic violence, particularly in isolated communities

- There were 1,434 domestic violence-related assaults in the Murrumbidgee district in 2018. The highest rate of domestic violence-related assaults occurred in the Griffith LGA, with a rate of 744.8 per 100,000 people. This is the 12th highest rate in NSW.²³
- Rates of domestic violence were also high in Leeton (692.0), Wagga Wagga (628.6), Murrumbidgee (607.3), and Edward River (603.4).²⁴

¹⁸ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: [https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016 QuickStats](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW LGA excel crime table: https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_crime_stats/bocsar_lgaexceltables.aspx

²⁴ Ibid.

7. Children, young people, families and communities who are socially or geographically isolated

- In the Murrumbidgee district, 25.7% of the population are aged 19 and under.²⁵
- In the Murrumbidgee district, 5.8% of households had no registered motor vehicle. This is less than the NSW state average of 9.2%.²⁶
- In the Murrumbidgee district, 21.9% of households have no internet access. This is higher than the NSW average of 14.7%.²⁷
- The LGAs with the highest proportion of households with no internet access were Hay (31.9%), Narrandera (27.4%) and Gundagai and Temora (both 27.1%).²⁸

8. Children, young people and families affected by substance misuse

- In the Murrumbidgee district, the most common drug offences were those related to cannabis possession or use. Edward River had the highest rate of cannabis-related drug offences at 748.7 per 100,000 of the population. This was followed by Narrandera with a rate of 573.3 per 100,000 of the population.²⁹
- Narrandera also has the highest rate of amphetamine-related drug offences at a rate of 269.8 per 100,000 of the population. This was followed by Edward River with a rate of 234.7 per 100,000 of the population.³⁰
- In 2018, Albury LGA had the largest number of 10-17 year olds proceeded against for drug offences, at 9. This was followed by the LGA of Wagga Wagga, at 8.³¹
- In 2018, Wagga Wagga also had the largest number of 18-19 year olds proceeded against for a drug offences, at 13. This was followed by Albury and Berrigan, both at 11.³²

²⁵ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: [https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016 QuickStats](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats)

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW LGA Excel crime table: https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_crime_stats/bocsar_lgaexceltables.aspx

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

9. Children, young people and families experiencing mental health issues

- In the Murrumbidgee district, 15.2% (n=4,161) of children under 15 years are affected by mental illness.³³
- In the Murrumbidgee district, 19.9% (n=1,931) of young people aged 15-18 years are affected by mental illness.³⁴
- In the Murrumbidgee district, there were 48 suicides in 2017. This equals a rate of 21.5 per 100,000 population. This is higher than the NSW rate of 10.8 per 100,000 population.³⁵

10. Refugee and CALD communities have access to culturally safe services

- In the Murrumbidgee district, 17.9% of residents were born overseas and 7.8% of households speak a language other than English.³⁶
- Griffith LGA had the *smallest* proportion of residents born in Australia, at 70.7%. This was followed by Carrathool, at 79.8% and Hay at 80.3%.³⁷
- Griffith LGA had the largest proportion of households where a non-English language was spoken, at 24.9%. This was followed by Leeton, at 9.6%, and Albury at 8.0%.³⁸
- In 2017, 226 humanitarian migrants settled in the Murrumbidgee district. These migrants settled in Wagga Wagga (n=162), Albury (n=59) and Griffith (n=5). These three LGAs are the regional centres in the Murrumbidgee district that intake humanitarian migrants.³⁹

11. Families with multiple risk factors (ROSH)

- In the Murrumbidgee district, 5,424 children and young people were reported at risk of significant harm in 2017-18.⁴⁰
- Of these children, 24.2% (n=1,318) identified as First Nations People.⁴¹

³³ Their Futures Matter

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ NSW Health Stats, Suicide by local health district:

http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/men_suidth/men_suidth_lhn?&topic=Mental%20health&topic1=topic_men&code=men_l_1%20bod_dementhos

³⁶ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016_QuickStats

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Department of Social Services, Settlement Data Reports January 2017 to 31 December 2017:

<https://www.data.gov.au/dataset/ds-dga-8d1b90a9-a4d7-4b10-ad6a-8273722c8628/details>

⁴⁰ FACS administrative data, unpublished.

⁴¹ Ibid.



12. Families with highly complex needs who have come to attention of child protection (OOHC)

- As of 30 June 2018, there was 958 children and young people in out-of-home care in the Murrumbidgee district.⁴²
- As of 30 June 2018, there were 413 First Nations children and young people in out-of-home care in the Murrumbidgee district. This amounts to 43.1% of all children in out-of-home care in the Murrumbidgee district.⁴³

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.