

Targeted Earlier Intervention Program

Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains District

Nepean Blue Mountains District Local Priorities

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 Nepean Blue Mountains District

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

1. Parents, including young parents, grandparent and kin carers, experiencing vulnerabilities
 2. Children not reaching their developmental milestones
 3. Young people disengaged from school
 4. Families experiencing domestic violence
 5. Children and young people experiencing mental health issues
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6. Young people and families affected by substance misuse
 7. Children, young people and families who are socially and geographically isolated
 8. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities have access to culturally safe services
 9. Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities have access to culturally safe services

Evidence

1. Parents, including young parents, grandparent and kin carers, experiencing vulnerabilities

- In the Nepean Blue Mountains district, Lithgow LGA has the lowest Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) score (908) and is ranked the lowest (17 out of 129). This means that Lithgow is relatively disadvantaged in terms of economic and social conditions, compared to other LGAs in the district.¹
- Lithgow has the highest rate of unemployment in the Nepean Blue Mountains district (7.7% compared to the state average of 6.3%).
- Lithgow has the lowest income level in the district. 31.2% of households in Lithgow earned less than \$650 a week, compared to 19.7% in NSW as a whole.²
- In the Local-Level Mothers Index, Lithgow received the lowest rank of the four LGAs, 92 out of 152.³ This means mothers in Lithgow face more hardship than mothers in the other LGAs.
- In 2018, 131 mothers aged 19 and under gave birth in the Nepean Blue Mountains district. This accounts for 2.9% of all births in this district, slightly higher than the NSW state average of 1.9%. Lithgow had the highest proportion of young mothers aged 19 and under in 2018 at 3.5%.⁴
- Between 2015-2017 in the Nepean Blue Mountains district, mothers in Lithgow were most likely to smoke during their pregnancy (22.3% of mothers compared to the state average of 8.7%).⁵

¹ ABS, Socio-Economic Indexes for Australia (SEIFA), 2016, 2033.0.55.001:<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2033.0.55.0012016?OpenDocument>

² ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: <https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au>

³ Harris, J and Wells, M, 2016, State of Australia's Mothers, Save the Children, Sydney, <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2016/05/apo-nid63692-1201431.pdf>

⁴ Healthstats NSW: http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab_mbth_age/mab_mbth_age_lgmap

⁵ Healthstats NSW: http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab_smo_cat/mab_smo_cat_lga_trend

- In Lithgow, 37% of children aged 0-5 were identified as vulnerable due to one or more risk factor. Of these vulnerable children, 31% identified as Aboriginal.
- In Penrith, 35% of children aged 0-5 were identified as vulnerable due to one or more risk factor. Of these vulnerable children, 16% identified as Aboriginal.⁶
- In 2016-17, 1,436 children and young people were in out-of-home care (OOHC) in the Nepean Blue Mountains district. The majority of these children and young people were in Penrith (n=810).⁷
- In 2016-17, 5,093 children and young people were found to be at risk of significant harm (ROSH). The majority of these children were in Penrith (n=3,243).⁸
- Local knowledge from community organisations and sector peaks has highlighted a significant gap in support for grandparent and kin carers.
- In Australia, 30% of children with two working parents receive some form of care from their grandparents.⁹
- Grandparents who are primary carers often need to deal with a range of emotions including joy and excitement; apprehension about the role and the overwhelming amount of new information available; grief, loss and fear due to the loss of or issues with their adult child; and relief that they will be part of their grandchild's upbringing.¹⁰
- One in four children who live with only one parent also co-reside with a grandparent who provides care. This is most likely if their parent was relatively young, had a lower level of education attainment, or was from a non-English speaking background.¹¹
- Research found that more than 70% of grandparent carers were financially disadvantaged. Two out of three grandparent carers needed to make changes to their employment to look after their grandchildren. The majority of these carers raised concerns about physical and mental health, and relationship and social issues.¹²

2. Children not reaching their developmental milestones

⁶ Their Futures Matter

⁷ FACS Datacube

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ ABS: [https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/4402.0Media Release June 2014](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/4402.0Media+Release+June+2014)

¹⁰ First Five Years: <https://www.firstfiveyears.org.au/lifestyle/raising-grandchildren-grandparent-carers>

¹¹ First Five Years: <https://www.firstfiveyears.org.au/lifestyle/raising-grandchildren-grandparent-carers>

¹² AIFS: <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/families-policy-and-law/12-grandparents-primary-carers-their-grandchildren-policy-and>

- In 2018, approximately 10% of children were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains in the Nepean Blue Mountains district. This was slightly higher in Penrith (12.0%) and Lithgow (13.7%).¹³

3. Young people disengaged from school

- In the Nepean Blue Mountains district, Windsor South Public School (853) has the lowest Index of Community Socio-Education Advantage (ICSEA) score (853). 30% of students at this school identify as Aboriginal.¹⁴
- Of the government schools in the Nepean Blue Mountains district, school attendance rate is lowest in Chifley College Dunheved Campus (81.2). 27% of students at this school identify as Aboriginal.¹⁵

4. Families experiencing domestic violence

- In the Nepean Blue Mountains district, 1,799 domestic violence related assaults and 1,502 non-domestic violence-related assaults occurred between January and December 2018. Domestic violence related assaults were most likely to occur in Penrith, with a rate of 601.8 per 100,000 people.¹⁶

5. Children and young people experiencing mental health issues

- Lithgow has the highest rates of children and young people affected by mental illness in the Nepean Blue Mountains district.
- 21% of children and young people between the ages of 15 and 18 were affected by mental illness in Lithgow. This is compared to 15% in the Blue Mountains, 13% in Penrith and 12% in Hawkesbury. 27% of this group of children and young people in Lithgow identified as Aboriginal.¹⁷
- 15% of children aged under 15 were affected by mental illness in both Lithgow and the Blue Mountains. This is compared to 12% in Penrith and 10% in Hawkesbury. 28% of this group of children in Lithgow identified as Aboriginal.¹⁸

¹³ AEDC Data Explorer: <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer>

¹⁴ NSW Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, Suspensions and Expulsions in NSW government schools (2015-2018): <https://data.cese.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/suspensions-and-expulsions-in-nsw-government-schools>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW Local Government Area Excel crime table: https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_crime_stats/bocsar_lgaexceltables.aspx

¹⁷ Their Futures Matter

¹⁸ Ibid.

6. Young people and families affected by substance misuse

- The most common drug offence in the Nepean Blue Mountains district is cannabis use or possession. The highest rate of cannabis drug offences is in the Lithgow LGA (194.8 offences per 100,000 people) followed by Penrith (190.2 per 100,000 people).
- The second most common drug offence is amphetamine use or possession, which is most common in Penrith (107.3 offences per 100,000 people) followed by Hawkesbury (91.6 offences per 100,000 people).¹⁹

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

- There were 7,242 dwellings (6%) with no access to a motor vehicle in the Nepean Blue Mountains district. The highest rate is in Lithgow at 8.9%. This is less than the NSW state average of 9.2%.²⁰
- There were 16,098 dwellings (13.3%) that had no access to the internet in the Nepean Blue Mountains district. The highest rate is in Lithgow, at 24.7%. This is higher than the NSW average of 14.7%.²¹
- In the Blue Mountains district, 5.2% of people need assistance with core activities. The LGAs with the largest proportion of people needing assistance with core activities were Lithgow at 6.5% and Blue Mountains at 5.5%.²²

8. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities have access to culturally safe services

- In the Nepean Blue Mountains district, the proportion of households where a non-English language was spoken at home was highest in Penrith (20.7%), followed by Hawkesbury (9.3%), Blue Mountains (8.8%) and then Lithgow (5.1%).²³

¹⁹ Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW Local Government Area Excel crime table:

https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_crime_stats/bocsar_lgaexceltables.aspx

²⁰ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>

²¹ Ibid.

²² ABS, 2016 Census Community Profiles:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20Census%20Community%20Profiles>

²³ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>



9. Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities have access to culturally safe services

- In the Nepean Blue Mountains district, 3.6% (n=13,160) of the population identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is slightly more than the NSW state average of 2.9%.²⁴
- Lithgow had the highest proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (5.8%), followed by Penrith (3.9%), Hawkesbury (3.7%) and then the Blue Mountains (2.3%).²⁵
- The majority of these people are children and young people. 55% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the Nepean Blue Mountains district are under 25 years old. This is significantly higher than the NSW state average, where only 28.6% of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population are under 25 years old.²⁶
- In Penrith, 17,074 children were under the age of five. Of these children, 35% (n=5,911) were identified as vulnerable. 16% of these vulnerable children identified as Aboriginal. By comparison, in Hawkesbury, 28% of children under the age of five were vulnerable and 12% of these children identified as Aboriginal.²⁷

²⁴ 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>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Their Futures Matter