

# Report

## TEI Program Reform Western NSW District Workshops

Department of Family &  
Community Services

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## INTRODUCTION

The NSW Government has initiated a reform of the Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Programs, managed by the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), which cover a broad spectrum including:

- Community development
- Prevention and early intervention
- Support to families with greater need.

Under these categories are nine programs, all of which aim to improve child and family outcomes and build community capacity. The nine programs are:

• Child Youth and Family Support (CYFS)	\$54.2m
• Community Builders	\$43.1m
• Families NSW	\$26.5m
• Youth Hope	\$10.2m
• Staying Home Leaving Violence	\$5.0m
• Aboriginal Child Youth & Family Strategy	\$4.3m
• Integrated Domestic & Family Violence Services	\$3.5m
• Getting it Together	\$2.1m
• Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)	\$0.48m

FACS has recently released a *Sector Consultation Paper* as part of the engagement process on the TEI reforms<sup>1</sup>. The paper sets out the reform aims, which are to:

- Improve outcomes for clients of targeted earlier intervention services
- Create a service system continuum grounded in evidence-based best practice
- Target resources to those with the greatest needs
- Facilitate District decision making on the design and delivery of local services
- Increase flexibility so that clients are the centre of the system.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Family and Community Services 2015, *Targeted Earlier Intervention Programs Sector Consultation Paper*,  
[http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/335165/CS\\_TIER\\_consultation\\_paper.pdf](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/335165/CS_TIER_consultation_paper.pdf)

The consultation process for the TEI reform comprises several elements:

- District responses to the Sector Consultation Paper
- Specific cohort consultation sessions (managed by the Families and Place Unit of the FACS central office in consultation with peak organisations)
- District-led consultation sessions with the local sector
- Inter-government consultation (managed by Families and Place).

To assist the District-led consultations with the local sector, Families and Place offered to provide an external facilitator and Nexus was subsequently engaged to facilitate sector consultations for a number of the 15 FACS Districts. This paper summarises the key outputs of the facilitated workshops for the Western NSW District held in Dubbo on 17 October 2015 and Orange on 18 October 2015. The report is structured as follows:

- Section 1 presents some key themes that emerged across all the District consultations
- Sections 2 to 5 present the data from the small group discussions of four TEI reform questions:
  1. What works well with the current District TEI services and service system?
  2. What are three key things you would change to improve the way TEI services are delivered in the District to vulnerable children, families and communities?
  3. What do you think are things we need to improve to ensure effective service delivery for our Aboriginal clients and communities?
  4. How would you like to be informed and involved in the reform and consultation process?

The data for sections 2 to 5 were derived from 'report back templates' (see appendix 1) that were used to capture the key messages from the small group discussions. It should be noted that these data are in raw form and have not been edited or analysed. Accordingly, the responses should not be read as representing a consensus and, indeed, some responses are in conflict with others.

Nexus has also prepared a report that consolidates the key state-wide themes across the above four questions.

## 1. KEY THEMES

Fourteen key themes or ‘areas of concern’ emerged from our consultations across *a//* Districts:

- Flexibility
- Service coordination
- Service integration
- Resourcing and procurement
- Data collection and reporting
- Outcomes measurement and evaluation
- Evidence-based decision-making
- Capabilities of the sector
- Responsiveness and adaptability
- Service relevance/legitimacy
- Autonomy
- Continuum and quantum of services
- Engagement
- Client-oriented service design.

Many of these themes cut across issues of service system design, service delivery, program improvement and program support. It is important to note, however, that these themes resonate differently, depending on the context that which they refer to, and to keep this in mind when drawing insights from the data presented in the next sections.

For example, while service flexibility was identified frequently across all districts, it was used in different senses. In many cases, flexibility referred to either increased service provider autonomy in decision-making, and in some cases, less rigid contractual arrangements. From the perspective of the service system design and service delivery, flexibility was also identified as the general ‘sector or system capability’ required in order to accommodate differences in delivery styles, service culture and ways of working, and to adapt to different community or client needs. In other contexts, flexibility referred to a broadening of program guidelines, definitions (particularly definitions of early intervention) and funded activities, and implies program design change, rather than system change necessarily.

## 2. WHAT WORKS WELL

*What works well with the current District TEI services and service system?*

### Orange

- 
- Soft entry points for vulnerable families to engage on voluntary basis
  - Good knowledge of local service system
  - Referrals & inter-agency partnerships (in some areas)
  - Targeted families with resources available
  - Work with whole family
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- Collaboration - working with others to build on resources
  - Working with other services to meet needs in the community
  - Soft entry point
- 
- Longer-standing services
  - Collaboration between services
  - Understanding between services about what they do/don't do
  - Strengthening relationship with FACS - working together better
  - Stronger relationships at CPO level - good understanding
  - Strong commitment of NGOs in working together & driving change
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- Community Builders provides seed funding as basis for seeking other sources of funding
  - Flexibility of Families NSW program
  - CY&F can be aligned to individual needs
  - Culture of being involved in local community: first point of contact
  - Working together/partnerships (e.g. strategic planning processes)
- 

### Dubbo

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- Autonomy given to achieve outcomes
  - Partnership with FACS improving
  - Excellent referral system
  - Networking & exchange of information
-

- Community Builders adds value to the programs being delivered
  - Wide flexibility who can be referred - broad base excellent
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- Face-to-face contact with CPO - local "on the ground"
  - Mix of individual v. group services
  - Targeting works well (e.g. 0-5 playgroups)
  - ACYFS data portal works well - as opposed to others
  - Contracting portal works well
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- Good communication between CPO and service providers
  - Flexibility
  - Locally driven
  - More client focussed
  - Stronger partnerships between NGOs in community e.g. Community Builders
  - Healthy support from peak bodies
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- Flexibility within programs to cater for individual needs with a broad range of issues
  - Good relationships/partnerships schools, Barnardos & other organisations
  - Collaboration between services - when this happens it's very beneficial
  - Soft entry for newer organisations - really worthwhile to hold 'all service' events & a way for introductions so the community to be aware of what is available
  - Employing local people with local knowledge, understanding & established links
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- Previous regional governance worked well - whole of government whole of community
  - Engagement & willingness to undertake work by local organisations, network & communities
  - Current system generally covers the spectrum of need
  - Delivery of professional services to communities
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### 3. IMPROVEMENTS TO TEI SERVICES

*What are three key things you would change to improve the way TEI services are delivered in the District to vulnerable children, families and communities?*

#### Orange

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- Continuum of services not available in all areas (e.g. no IFPS so EI services end up supporting very high needs families but poorer outcomes and age gaps)
  - No restoration services
  - Poor communication between state/federal/local government
  - Poor use of existing infrastructure (e.g. empty government buildings)
  - Extend length of contracts
  - In some areas interagency needs better communication and coordination, better service promotion both between services and community
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- Distribution of funds - some areas need to go up & some go down - reflect changes in needs in area/communities
  - Greater flexibility with services to meet needs of community
  - Greater integration/community caption with health, education, government
  - Better coordination between state & federal funding priorities/needs and service provision
- 
- Federal and state funding issues - overlapping services EI v. Crisis
  - Gap in Early Intervention Services - lack of services in this space
  - Improve relationships between frontline staff - adopt the model of Bathurst CSC and their funded programs - great collaboration and stopping clients falling between the gaps
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- More flexibility with programs
  - Reporting is restrictive - portal provides a very narrow view
  - Recognise the value of neighbourhood centres
  - Outreach does not work in small rural locations: better to resource local organisations' sustainability (large organisations don't have connections into community)
  - Lack of service networks to respond to intensive networks in rural communities
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## Dubbo

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- More frequent conversations with partners on an ongoing basis
  - Integrated planning with the 3 tiers of government & service providers
  - Less emphasis on programs and more on clients - in a holistic way (e.g. include the school, parents, main care givers etc)
  - Continued competitive short term tendering for funds - change this - avoid duplication
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- 5-8 yo is hard to engage in playgroups
  - Incentives
  - Portal issues - wording of questions
  - Reduce the gaps across age groups
  - Room to transition across services
  - Restoration to work – need transition eligibility (i.e. not stop-start)
  - Family referral service is not working
  - Sharing resources more
  - Recruitment & retention - supporting with funding
  - Clearly name - confusing currently i.e. family/youth/childhood
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- Have a suite of programs delivered across age groups in community
  - Evidence based resource allocation i.e. funding matches where greatest need is
  - Outreach not effective - preference is for staff to sit in community with support
  - Competitive tendering or collaboration??
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- Change narrowness of age ranges - the scope of some programs is too narrow
  - Allow more flexibility to cater to clients with complex needs holistically and also to cater for the less complex client
  - Barriers e.g. timeframe, too rigid, restricted to age groups
  - Funding - extend time
  - Staff retention in rural and remote areas
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- Re-establishment of centralised governance group to reduce duplication
  - Gap in services for 9-15 yrs: lack of youth services
  - Coordinated, integrated service system planning & service delivery



- Flexible delivery model include use of technology - be innovative
  - Different way of procurement & commissioning of services
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## 4. FACS's PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

*What do you think are things we need to improve to ensure effective service delivery for our Aboriginal clients and communities?*

### Orange

- 
- Listen to Aboriginal community members and service providers - create space where they can be heard and talk
  - One size does not fit all - need flexible responsive approaches
  - Need consistency in service providers so can build relationships
  - Soft entry points needed to build relationships, trust and not coming in as Child Protection
  - Adopt and fund a service model that aims to break cycle of incarceration & overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in jail - look at research
  - Address need for children in care to heal
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- Gain trust of the local Aboriginal community (comes down to local workers)
  - Better staff training - cultural awareness for services
  - Design of programs/services driven by and in conjunction with the Aboriginal community
  - Important to have good working relationships with Lands Council, as in Orange
    - form Elders groups
    - form Aboriginal Hub
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- Greater involvement of Aboriginal people at all levels of planning & implementation
  - A consistent approach across all state government services in inclusion of Aboriginal people
  - Empower and support Aboriginal people to lead in this space, be able to change our practice when required
  - Look further into whether integrated or specialist service delivery is best for our Aboriginal communities - opportunity through reform to do that
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- Recruitment of Aboriginal staff
  - Supporting families
  - Referral processes
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## Dubbo

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- More Aboriginal staff
  - Mutual obligation programs (e.g. Clontarf program in Dubbo)
  - Community development to create 'space' to let them aspire to be the best they can be
  - Design programs with people not for people
  - Knowing and understanding identity
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- More brokerage
  - Focused on disadvantaged families not race
  - Flexibility
- 
- Effective consultation with community
  - Providing alternatives in service delivery
  - Staff consistency - longer terms for contracts
  - Increasing Aboriginal employment
  - Providing training & mentoring in community
  - Soft entry - volunteering - encouraging local people to volunteer
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- School traineeships - are they still available?
  - Adaptability - as each community, and each family group is different
  - Consistency
  - Accessibility
  - Keep it simple
  - PPP - too rigid
  - Cultural awareness training for all staff
  - Recruit & retain local Aboriginal staff
  - Transparency
  - Not judging
  - Employ best person for the job
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- Community capacity building
  - Reduce duplication of services, enhance the knowledge to the community of services that do exist
  - Look at the NGO sector becoming more specialised in 2 or 3 areas rather than many services they currently provide

- Use local decision making processes in Aboriginal communities, include feedback loop
  - Cultural competency
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## 5. TEI REFORM CONSULTATION

*How would you like to be informed and involved in the reform and consultation process?*

### Orange

- Updates via email
- Feedback through local interagency groups
- Email
- Continuation of conversations - that are targeted (e.g. age specific)
- Regional/district based meetings that are easy to access not in Sydney
- Community consultation
- Learn from lessons of other reforms please
- Clear communication around reform processes
- Clear communication strategy from the start - what is going to happen/when
- Kept informed of the reform program - ongoing
- FACS staff to visit small communities

### Dubbo

- Informed - direct feedback after each consultation stage, prefer face-to-face, provide opportunities for all to have a say
- Involved - involve stakeholders in practical design of models, allow scope to have community based design
- Communication with a portal or email
- "Thoroughly" - needs to be an openness from the beginning about the progress of the decision making
- Good, honest communication
- Continual communication
- Needs to be a conversation
- Ongoing contact
- Honest, up-to-date and have realistic timeframe
- Same message at same time

- More workshops & information sessions
- Available for co-design and working groups
- Invited to appropriate meetings
- Kept updated through email system
- Service-specific forums

## APPENDIX 1: REPORT BACK TEMPLATE

### Targeted Earlier Intervention Reform District Consultation Sessions WESTERN NSW DISTRICT

#### REPORT BACK TEMPLATE

1. What works well with the current District TEI services and service system?

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2. What are three key things you would change to improve the way TEI services are delivered in the District to vulnerable children, families and communities?

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Family &  
Community  
Services

## Targeted Earlier Intervention Reform District Consultation Sessions WESTERN NSW DISTRICT

### REPORT BACK TEMPLATE

3. What do you think are things we need to improve to ensure effective service delivery for our Aboriginal clients and communities?

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4. How would you like to be informed and involved in the reform and consultation process?

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