

Report

TEI Program Reform Western Sydney 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 reforms¹. 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.

¹ 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

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 Sydney District held in Blacktown on 7 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 are three key things you would change to improve FACS's management of TEI programs?
 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?

Blacktown

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- Good resource networks and interagencies working well
 - Good range of services - demographic targets met
 - Good relationships and networks in the area
 - Peak organisations a strength and sub-regional organisations
 - Stability of teams and network knowledge
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- Local district office - responsive/approachable
 - Diversity of services - sizes/types
 - Having local hubs - adds to diversity
 - Interaction between provider i.e. co-location and not competitive - level of collaboration is high (but at risk)
 - Soft entry points - but needs more resources
 - Combined interagency in Blacktown works well
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- Local organisations and diversity in the service mix
 - No one size fits all - local service structures to meet local needs
 - Advantages of FACS funding is when the funder steps back and allows services to meet the needs of their client group WITHOUT rigid oversight
 - Coordination and collaboration of large and small NGOs which do have accountability and flexibility
 - Good workers are good workers regardless of size of service
 - Works well to have localised decision making before it goes to centralised structure
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- Combination of big and small services
 - Good networks everyone knows someone
 - Partnerships, interagencies
 - Community development framework
 - Able to meet needs across a number of engagement points, soft entry points - more better
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- Provides support to other department's funding streams link education and health etc

- Flexibility with service planning and delivery

- Stability and understanding of current systems and processes
- Soft entry points
- Partnerships - sharing of resources and knowledge - not competitive
- Grass roots - being within the community - on the ground
- Decision makers on the ground

- Consultation between services
- Good collaboration between different projects but it is not so good when people are working with the same target group
- Soft entry points

- Work well with other partners
- Good communication with CPOs
- Portal works well
- Community development is a broad service so positive it can meet needs of many
- The focus on community development in TEI is a positive
- Good communication between services at interagencies at local, district and council levels
- TEI as a voluntary service enables good service with clients

- Current services who have the local history, knowledge of area and hence existing relationship
- Soft entry - large number of self referrals
- Collaboration between services
- Very limited involvement from CPO for larger organisations
- Level of trust (seen by clients) with current services (grass roots)
- Quarterly meetings with districts/FACS
- Relationship with CPO
- Limited age programs

- Working across ages gives flexibility
- Sometimes limiting ranges (ages) helps to target a program
- Working at ground work level

- Integrated programs - education families holistic assessment of whole family
- Soft entry - walk in/neighbourhood availability

- Certainty of funding enables us to do our work
- Parameters of contracts are broad so we can be quite flexible in responding to individuals' needs
- Geographical boundaries - can work well - e.g. in seeing clients across different LGAs
- We have the ability to work with other agencies - we can develop trust in a non-competitive environment
- Brokerage services can be flexible e.g. mobile minders can make decisions about allocation of funds/hours depending on agencies' needs
- Based in community helps develop trust and connection

- Diversity in services and service providers
- Different organisation attracts different staffing to support different skills and people
- Different groups of clients can be supported by diversity
- ACFC - works really well/holistic support of whole family
- The way ACFC was designed with local services and systems in mind
- The ACFC are managed by local services
- Age range - youth? to 18; Centrelink - youth allowance - age 24

- Aboriginal child and family centres - based on community consultation
- Client focus approach - less prescriptive
- Supportive FACS relationship with CPOs
- Successful integrative approach across sectors - health, education, child care, disability, Aboriginal services
- Flexible - even reporting is flexible to the local response
- Good support from CPO
- Service/location - next to station, good access for clients
- Partnerships with similar agencies e.g. shared group work 'Love Bites' co-facilitated
- From partnership, shared resources and understanding of other services
- Community Builders - good support CPO, culturally, language appropriate service for clients, brokerage - works well

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- Brokerage complements case work
 - Location good - accessibility
 - Community Builder - youth and flexible; able to respond to needs, able to determine local needs; localised; good support from CPO - responsive

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?

Blacktown

-
- Flexibility in services - client centred
 - Funding is not targeted equitably
 - No adequate reporting and accountability with some programs
 - Lack of services for low risk families - actual early intervention families, that become our ROSH clients
 - Working better with other federal/state services such as education and health
 - Allegedly no funding, but funding has been released from head office for programs but no reporting to district
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- Comprehensive list of services in geographic area and having places where these people meet - more localised and at a management level
 - Funding for coordination roles/interagency meetings
 - Qualitative data from clients and sharing of FACS data
 - Resources for services to do research and collate what works with their community
 - To have clients participate in round table discussions
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- Relationships between FACS and NGOs regarding child protection (ROSH is NOT separate)
 - Fund services to provide holistic, flexible client centred programs without trying to fit in a rigid framework
 - Robust outcome measurement system (KPI reform)
 - Fund collective impact and infrastructure to support the partnerships wanted by FACS
 - While FACS says no more funds - reforms would be more successful if services were appropriately funded
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- Geographic limitations, boundaries need flexibility to allow cross-area engagement
 - Grey areas for engagement and gaps in service should 11 year olds attend 12-18 year old program

- Referral pathways especially from FACS schools
 - Stronger communication and engagement opportunities with FACS
 - Ability to influence impacts on clients not just at an individual level but also at a community level
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- Flexibility with target group and catchment area e.g. eligibility for those who live, work and frequently visit LGA - percentage of funding for designated LGA and percentage for neighbouring LGAs
 - Community funding is not community minded
 - Clarification around contracts, goals etc
 - Improved design in surveys
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- Long-term funding contracts e.g. 5 years then review and extend for another 5 years
 - Focus on quality over quantity when reporting or collecting information
 - STOP competition which undermines partnerships (potentially) - competition between organisations not good. Relationships from the very top to those working with families need to be built on trust, stability and honesty - from top to bottom
 - GAP Brighter Futures - EIPP
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- Currently some duplication and lack of clarity about roles
 - Some clients over serviced, others on a waiting list
 - Need more case conferencing
 - Formalising collaboration with formalised partnerships
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- Changes to reporting system to FACS, in an RBA framework
 - Flexibility towards target group i.e. Work aimed at children should also allow services to work with adults (survivors)
 - Extend the period of working with clients. Have no time limits of work with start and finish dates
 - Community builders to make changes requires long term work
 - Reduce the gap between Brighter Futures and EIPP
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- Increased involvement/resources available for smaller organisations (more involvement from CPOs) - human resources
 - Reporting data needs to be more meaningful and currently doesn't represent work with clients
 - More flexibility in age ranges (i.e. 11 year olds)

- After the reform process, FACS may consider supporting the NGO sector to continue to meet regularly to discuss service delivery gaps and evidence based outcomes
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- Improving relationship with CPO and district
 - Communication between districts own departments/head office
 - Not all districts offer quarterly meetings
 - Involvement with resources for smaller organisations
 - Important to fund extra activities in running programs
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- Data and collection of information is limited
 - More money to expand programs
 - More flexibility to work longer programs over longer periods/years
 - More joining of 9 types of services e.g. technology/networks/family support - ONE program/holistic approach to services - adaptability of programs to meet the needs of family as it presents to us - without loss of funding on the ground or specialist services
 - Better awareness of what services are provided in the area in order to network for clients
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- Build services for people from CALD background and access to interpreters - should be a capability within each service
 - FACS and OOHC agencies can be values-based in decision making rather than understanding children's needs e.g. Shine for Kids - children of prisoners
 - Data collection systems need to be useful, usable and part of continuous quality improvement. Existing survey doesn't measure anything useful. We should be able to design and use useful tools
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- Need to do better including all services that support the family - to identify the interventions
 - Improve on how we work with ATSI families not to be too quick to remove children
 - Building the capacity on the ground to deal with people in the community of existing services, not making new services
 - Investing in small organisations to build their capacity and their resilience
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- Revise data collection questions to reflect service
 - Greater flexibility around funding criteria - age, length of engagement

- Triple P program does not work for all families - content heavy, not easy to deliver to a broad range of families - particularly if they don't have high education levels
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- People fall through the gaps of rigid criteria e.g. age groups
 - EIPP - CYFS/data set out of date and needs updating
 - Length of engagement is unrealistic for vulnerable clients because of time to engage; chaotic - hard to get to appointments; circumstances work against engagement - have to review - 6-12 months rather than review at 3 months

4. FACS's PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

What are three key things you would change to improve FACS's management of TEI programs?

Blacktown

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- Release of de-identified data
 - More transparency in decision making - allocations of a specialised nature
 - Flexibility
 - Announcement of rollover, or not
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- Other districts to operate as Western Sydney office does (particularly Parramatta office)
 - Map the services funded for TEI and communicate that to the sector
 - Data collection and sharing with service providers/community i.e. through common data systems (CRMs)
 - Measurement questions are too restrictive
 - Consultation with people on the ground i.e. data needs/development
 - Transparency in data across FACS and funded service providers
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- Minimum of 5 year funding cycle that is separate from electoral cycles (with ongoing review processes)
 - A better way to capture what we do that moves away from the numerical outputs and shows the change we are creating in the lives of clients/community
 - Fund backbone organisations (regional/sub-regional peaks) that act as connections
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- Data reporting, the outcomes are not always reflected in the state
 - The holistic development of clients and communities is not recognised
 - Accountability and feedback on performance
 - What recognition do over-achievers get? What happens when we do better than what we agreed to
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- Pre-school education: suitable and adaptable, good tool towards early intervention
 - Current surveys and consultations do not provide either party with enough information to improve programs. More accurate information can be received from internal consultations

- Resources for service providers to move towards evidence based e.g. expert panel

- Concentrate more on building a relationship and partnership rather than FACS being only an entity to report to
- Communication has improved

- Staff need to feel secure - services need to know 6 months before contract ends whether it will continue
- Data - improve tools for data collection - keep consistent across programs - make data available

- Programs targeted at clients that are willing to meet criteria, willing to do A, B & C to achieve results rather than clients being eligible because they are in dire needs. Using a strength based approach
- Availability of data to services
- Reporting needs to be more thorough in terms of stats reported on to FACS
- Better communication/meetings with child protection workers and NGOs in child protection

- Negotiation with service providers regarding PLA's and contracts
- We don't receive feedback if we are doing right/wrong
- Can improve on training with service providers regarding reporting/online portal
- Much more functional reporting system
- 3 year funding contract

- RBA feedback does not work for all service types - needs flexibility for better reporting and data collection of the services actually provided
- Federal, state, district boundaries often do not match up with program needs

- Turnover of staff can create problems and inconsistency in communication. Some CPOs communicate much more than others. Some have little or no contact. CPOs should have to come and visit agencies and meet with staff and discuss things, understand our services as part of their role (KPIs)
- Continuous improvement

- FACS role as a network - to link other PLA's organisations together for information sharing
- More face to face forums/2 times per year
- FACS lead conferences to help with capacity building

- Look at building outcomes together with other agencies identify the gaps and build towards the outcomes
- We need 5 year contracts with 6 monthly accountability, not quarterly
- More choice in parenting programs
- More adaptive approach to PLA - flexibility to review this with CPO
- Revise data collections - some data collection questions doesn't reflect the program's work and FACS to amend the data collection questions or systems
- Sporadic contact from CPO - 4 in the past 2 years. Openness and knowledge of service - increased communication, consistent
- Longer contracts - 5 years - this gives enough to measure outcomes, longer term outcomes; staff and program consistency - build relationships with clients - able to develop with other services

5. TEI REFORM CONSULTATION

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

Blacktown

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- Email
 - Communicate, communicate, communicate
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- Inclusion in the design and development of data/systems development - to have a voice in how we're measuring outcomes/satisfaction
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- Emails
 - CPO contact
 - Website
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- Bi-annual meetings
 - Emails
 - Early notification of potential rollovers (before xmas)
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- Round table discussions within LGAs for local planning
 - Short webinars based at services to ensure all workers are kept up to date and given a chance to provide feedback
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- More conversations
 - Email
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- Consultation in smaller program types to have similar discussion
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- Email
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- Continuous email. Regular and updated emails
 - More consultation sessions and roundtables to be quarterly
 - To be informed ASAP of contract renewals
 - Smaller consultation sessions
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- Gather program types together for a common forum and discussion
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- Through regular contact with CPO and district office
 - Non-FACS funded services have no clear way of being involved
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- More webinars
 - Conference - for FACS funded organisations

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- Webinars like those delivered by ANROW - really simple technology, they stick your link in the outlook calendar, can submit questions - they schedule these at lunchtime so people can squeeze this into their busy day, saves time for trainer etc
 - Emails
 - CPO provides list of local providers and get together at the local level

APPENDIX 1: REPORT BACK TEMPLATE

Targeted Earlier Intervention Reform District Consultation Sessions WESTERN SYDNEY 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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Targeted Earlier Intervention Reform District Consultation Sessions WESTERN SYDNEY DISTRICT

REPORT BACK TEMPLATE

3. What are three key things you would change to improve FACS's management of TEI programs?

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

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