

## Targeted Earlier Intervention Program

### Murrumbidgee, Far West and Western NSW

#### Western NSW Local Priorities

Murrumbidgee, Western and Far West NSW District has many strengths that provide 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 Western NSW

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 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. Families with multiple risk factors (ROSH)
11. Families with complex needs who have come to attention of child protection (OOHC)

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

- 41% of 0-5 year olds in the Western NSW district were identified as vulnerable<sup>1</sup>. This is the second highest out of the 15 Districts.
- Western NSW has the third highest estimated future costs to the NSW government, out of the 16 districts<sup>2</sup>.
- In the Western NSW district, the LGAs with the highest proportions of vulnerable children aged 0-5 were Brewarrina (79%), Gilgandra (60%), Coonamble (59%), and Bourke (56%).<sup>3</sup>
- In the Western NSW district, 402 children (10.5% of children) were developmentally vulnerable on two or more AEDC domains, and 764 children (20%) were vulnerable on one or more domains.<sup>4</sup>
- Walgett LGA had the highest proportion of children who were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains, at 23.1%. This was followed by Coonamble at 22.2%, and Warrumbungle Shire at 17.0%<sup>5</sup>
- 42% of vulnerable children aged 0-5 identify as First Nations children.<sup>6</sup>
- LGAs with the highest proportions of First Nations children, aged 0-5 who were identified as vulnerable, were Bourke (89%), Coonamble (85%), Walgett (78%), and Gilgandra (72%).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Their Futures Matter

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> AEDC Data Explorer: <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Their Futures Matter

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

- In the Western NSW district, 78% of children who had four or five indicators associated with vulnerability were First Nations children.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. First Nations children and young people are engaged in school and connected to their community and culture

- There are 28,541 First Nations people in the Western NSW district.<sup>9</sup>
- 53.6% of First Nations people in the Western NSW district are under 25 years old.<sup>10</sup>
- In the Western NSW district, the school with the highest proportion of First Nations students was Weilmoringle Public School in the Brewarrina LGA. 100% of students at this school identify as First Nations people. This school had an attendance rate of 88.4%.<sup>11</sup>
- At Brewarrina Central School, 98% of students identify as First Nations People and at Goodooga Central School 97% of students identify as First Nations people. Both of these schools have low student attendance rates, at 81.4% and 85.3%, respectively.<sup>12</sup>

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

- First Nations people make up 10.5% (n=28,541) of the total population in the Western NSW district.<sup>13</sup>
- The Brewarrina LGA has the highest proportion of First Nations people at 60.9% (n=1,009). This is followed by Bourke at 31.7% (n=835) and Coonamble at 30.2% (n=1,176).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> ABS Community Profiles, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples Profile, 2016 Census [https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/LGA11250?opendocument](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/LGA11250?opendocument)

<sup>10</sup> ABS Community Profiles, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples Profile, 2016 Census [https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/LGA11250?opendocument](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/LGA11250?opendocument)

<sup>11</sup> 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>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> ABS Community Profiles, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples Profile, 2016 Census [https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/LGA11250?opendocument](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/communityprofile/LGA11250?opendocument)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

- There were 664 Aboriginal Housing Office tenancies in the Western NSW district, as of the 30 June 2018. This amounts to 16.4% of all social housing tenancies.<sup>15</sup>

#### 4. Young parents experiencing vulnerabilities

- Mothers in the Western NSW district were more likely to give birth aged 19 years and younger compared to mothers across the NSW state. 4.9% of mothers who gave birth in 2018 (n=170) were 19 and younger, as compared to 1.9% of mothers in NSW overall.<sup>16</sup>
- Using the Local-level Mothers Index, mothers in the LGAs of Brewarrina (151), Walgett (146), Gilgandra (137), and Cowra (136) were identified as having the greatest hardships compared to other mothers in NSW (ranking out 152).<sup>17</sup>

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

- In the Western NSW district, only 13.1% of people had achieved a bachelor level degree or above. This is much less than the NSW average of 23.4%. Only 11.5% of people had completed Year 12, this is less than the NSW average of 15.3%. People in Western NSW were more likely to only complete year 10, 17% in Western NSW, compared to 11.5% in NSW<sup>18</sup>.
- 7,740 (6.3%) people in the Western NSW district are unemployed. This is the same as the NSW state average. However, 11 LGAs in Western NSW had higher proportions of unemployed people, the highest being in Brewarrina (16.2%), Walgett (10.2%) and Coonamble (9%).<sup>19</sup>
- The average income per week for a family in the Western NSW district is \$1,397. This is much less than the state average of \$1,780.

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<sup>15</sup> FACS Administrative data, unpublished.

<sup>16</sup> NSW Healthstats: [http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab\\_mbth\\_age/mab\\_mbth\\_age\\_lgama](http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab_mbth_age/mab_mbth_age_lgama)

<sup>17</sup> State of Australia's Mothers, Save the Children, Sydney: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2016/05/apo-nid63692-1201431.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The lowest family income is in Brewarrina (\$923), Walgett (\$1,039), and Warrumbungle Shire (\$1,103).<sup>20</sup>

- All 22 LGAs in the Western NSW district have higher proportions of low-income households, that is households with less than \$650 gross weekly income, than the NSW state average (19.7%). Walgett (38.9%), Brewarrina (37.7%), and Warrumbungle Shire (33.2%) had the highest proportion of households with less than \$650 gross weekly income.<sup>21</sup>

## 6. Families experiencing domestic violence, particularly in isolated communities

- There were 2,179 domestic violence-related assaults in the Western NSW district in 2018.<sup>22</sup>
- Assaults were most likely to occur in Walgett at a rate of 2,374.8 per 100,000 people, which is also the highest rate of domestic violence in NSW. This was followed by Coonamble, with a rate of 1,637.3, which was ranked second in NSW.<sup>23</sup>
- Of the 22 LGAs in the Western NSW district, 8 were in the top 20 in NSW for the highest rate of domestic violence-related assaults.<sup>24</sup>

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

- Western NSW has a geographical area representing more than half the land mass of NSW.
- In the Western NSW district, LGAs with the highest proportion of households with no registered motor vehicle were Brewarrina, (22.9%), Walgett (12.7%), and Bourke (11.9%).<sup>25</sup>
- In the Western NSW district, 23.3% of households have no internet access. This is higher than the NSW average of 14.7%.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW LGA Excel crime table:

[https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar\\_crime\\_stats/bocsar\\_lgaexceltables.aspx](https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_crime_stats/bocsar_lgaexceltables.aspx)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census, <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

- The LGAs with the highest proportion of households with no internet access were Brewarrina (38.5%), Walgett (35.9%) and Coonamble (34.2%).<sup>27</sup>

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

- In the Western NSW district, the most common drug offences were cannabis possession or use. Warrumbungle Shire had the highest rate of cannabis-related offences at 804.1 per 100,000 of the population. This was followed closely by Walgett with a rate of 775.4 per 100,000 of the population.<sup>28</sup>
- Coonamble has the highest rate of amphetamine-related offences at a rate of 396.9 per 100,000 of the population. This was followed by Gilgandra with a rate of 306.1 per 100,000 of the population.<sup>29</sup>
- Of the 22 LGAs in the Western NSW district, Western Plains Regional LGA had the largest number of 10-17 year olds proceeded against for drug offences, at 20. This was followed by the LGA of Orange, at 10.<sup>30</sup>
- Of the 22 LGAs in the Western NSW district, Western Plains Regional LGA also had the largest number of 18-19 year olds proceeded against for a drug offence, at 15.<sup>31</sup>

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

- 19.1% of children under 15 years are affected by mental illness in the Western NSW district (n=8,098).<sup>32</sup>
- 24% of children and young people aged 15 to 18 years are affected by mental illness in the Western NSW district (n=3,038).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW LGA Excel crime table: [https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar\\_crime\\_stats/bocsar\\_lgaexceltables.aspx](https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_crime_stats/bocsar_lgaexceltables.aspx).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Their Futures Matter

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

- In the Western NSW district, there were 38 suicides in 2017. This equals a rate of 13.8 per 100,000 population. This is higher than the NSW rate of 10.8 per 100,000 population.<sup>34</sup>

## 10. Families with multiple risk factors (ROSH)

- In 2016-17, 6,595 (9.5%) children and young people were reported at risk of significant harm (ROSH) in the Western NSW district. This is similar to the state average of 9.7%. The largest number of these children were in Western Plains Regional (n=1,296), Orange (n=930), and Bathurst Regional (n=814).<sup>35</sup>
- In 2017, 18, 6,364 children and young people were reported at ROSH. 41.4% of these children (n=2,632) were First Nations children.<sup>36</sup>

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

- As of 30 June 2018, 1,475 children were in out-of-home care in the Western NSW district. 900 (61%) of these children are First Nations children.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> 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\[ \]%20bod\\_dementhos](http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/men_suidth/men_suidth_lhn?&topic=Mental%20health&topic1=topic_men&code=men[ ]%20bod_dementhos)

<sup>35</sup> FACS Datacube

<sup>36</sup> FACS administrative data, unpublished.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.