

Targeted Earlier Intervention Program

Murrumbidgee, Far West and Western NSW

Far West 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 Nation 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 Far West

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 are 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. Families with multiple risk factors (ROSH)
11. 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/not school-ready

- In the Far West district, 11.9% (n=47) of children were developmentally vulnerable on two or more of the AEDC domains in 2018. This is greater than the NSW average of 9.6%.¹
- The proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more AEDC domains was greatest in the Wentworth LGA, at 14.3%. This was followed closely by Central Darling LGA, at 13.6%, and Broken Hill, at 13.0%.²
- In the Far West district, 23.7% of children were developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more AEDC domain. This is greater than the NSW average of 19.9%.³

¹ AEDC Data Explorer: <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer?id=135245>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

- The proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more AEDC domain was greatest in Central Darling, at 45.5%. This was followed by Wentworth, at 27.0%, and Broken Hill, at 23.0%.⁴
- In the Far West district, 50.6% (n=622) of children aged 0-5 years old were identified as vulnerable. Broken Hill and Central Darling had the largest proportion of vulnerable children, at 50.0% and 70.0%, respectively.⁵
- Projected future outcomes for this group of vulnerable children are relatively poor and are generally the worst out of all 16 Districts. For example, 51.0% of this vulnerable group are expected to have a ROSH report in the future, compared to the NSW average of 34.0%.⁶
- 37.0% of vulnerable children aged 0-5 in the Far West district identify as First Nations people. In the Central Darling LGA, 81.0% of vulnerable children aged 0-5 years old identified as First Nations people.⁷
- Of the vulnerable children aged 0-5 years in the Far West district, 42 children (or 3.0% of the children) had 4 or 5 indicators associated with poorer outcomes. Of these 42 children, 32 (or 77.0%) identify as First Nations people.⁸

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

- There are 28,622 people in the Far West district, incorporating the Balranald, Broken Hill, Wentworth and Central Darling LGAs. Of these, 3,706 people identify as First Nations people.⁹
- The majority, 49.6% (n= 1,536), of First Nations people in the Far West district are under 25 years old.¹⁰
- In the Far West district, the school with the highest proportion of First Nations students is Dareton Public school in the Wentworth LGA. 98% of students at this school identify as First Nations people. This school has an attendance rate of 81.4%.¹¹

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Their Futures Matter

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016_QuickStats

¹⁰ Ibid.

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>.

- At Wilcannia Central School in Central Darling, 94% of students identify as First Nations people. This school has a very low attendance rate of 62.7%.¹²

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

- 10.8% (n=3,103) of the population in the Far West district are First Nations people.¹³
- Central Darling has the highest proportion of First Nations people at 40.3% (n=739). This is followed by Wentworth at 9.6% (n=654), Balranald at 9.0% (n=206) and Broken Hill at 8.5% (n=1,504).¹⁴
- There were 372 Indigenous Community Housing dwellings in Far West district as of the 30 June 2018.¹⁵

4. Young parents experiencing vulnerabilities

- In 2018, seven mothers aged 19 and under gave birth in the Far West district. This accounts for 3.7% of all births in this district. This proportion is higher than the NSW state average of 1.9%. All of these births were in Broken Hill.¹⁶
- Mothers in Far West ranked very low in the Australian Mothers Index. Central Darling achieved the lowest rank, 152/152, of any LGA in the state. This suggests mothers in the Far West district face much greater hardships than most other mothers in the state.¹⁷

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

- In the Far West district, 8.6% of people had a bachelor degree level or above. This is much less than the NSW average of 23.4%. Only 9.3% of people had completed year 12, this is less than the NSW average of 15.3%.¹⁸
- There was also a higher proportion of people who had only completed year 9 or below in the Far West district, 16.5%, compared to 8.4% in NSW.¹⁹

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 Ibid.

¹⁵ FACS Administrative Data, unpublished.

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

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

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.

- In the Far West district, 8.0% (n=974) of the population were unemployed. This is greater than the NSW average of 6.3%. Unemployment rates were highest in Central Darling, where 11.2% of the population were unemployed and Broken Hill, where 8.8% of the population were unemployed.²⁰
- The median weekly family income in the Far West district is \$1,275. This is much less than the NSW state average of \$1,780. Central Darling had the lowest median weekly family income, at \$1,075.²¹
- All four LGAs in the Far West district have higher proportions of low-income households (households with less than \$650 per week gross) than the NSW average of 19.7%. The highest proportions were in Central Darling (34.5%), Broken Hill (32.0%), and Wentworth (26.9%).²²

6. Families experiencing domestic violence, particularly in isolated communities

- There were 377 incidents of domestic violence related assaults in 2018 in the Far West district. The rate of domestic violence-related assaults was highest in Broken Hill, at 1,147.0 per 100,000 people.²³

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

- The Far West district of NSW is a unique part of Australia. It includes some of the most diverse and remote communities in NSW.
- Almost the entire region is geographically isolated.
- The population is younger than the state average, with 23.2% of the population aged 19 and under.²⁴
- In the Far West, 9.2% of households had no registered vehicle. The LGA with the highest proportion of households with no registered motor vehicle was Central Darling, at 16.0%.²⁵
- 27.0% of households have no internet access. This is higher than the NSW average of 14.7%. The LGA with the highest proportion of households with no internet access was Central Darling at 38.9%.²⁶

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

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

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

- In the Far West district, the most common drug offences were those relating to possession or use of cannabis. Broken Hill had the highest rate of cannabis-related drug offences at 430.8 of 100,000 of the population. This was followed by Wentworth with a rate of 387.3 of the population.²⁷
- Broken Hill also has the highest rate of amphetamine-related offences at a rate of 374.9 per 100,000 of the population. This was followed by Wentworth with a rate of 114.7 per 100,000 of the population.²⁸
- In 2018, only 2 drug offences by 10-17 year olds were proceeded against. These were both in the Broken Hill LGA.²⁹
- In 2018, only 5 drug offences by 18-19 year olds were proceeded against. Again, these were both in the Broken Hill LGA.³⁰
- Far West district has no residential treatment facilities. Treatment options are out of district and out of state.

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

- 39% of children under 15 were affected by mental illness in the Far West district.³¹
- 44% of children and young people aged 15-18 years were affected by mental illness in the Far West district.³²
- In the Far West district, there were 35 suicides in 2017. This equals a rate of 15.1 per 100,000 population. This is higher than the NSW rate of 10.8 per 100,000 population.³³

²⁷ Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW LGA Excel crime table:
https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_crime_stats/bocsar_lgaexceltables.aspx

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Their Futures Matter

³² Ibid.

³³ 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)

10. Families with multiple risk factors (ROSH)

- In the Far West district, 798 (12.5%) children and young people were reported at risk of significant harm (ROSH) in 2016-17. This is higher than the NSW state average of 9.7%.³⁴
- Broken Hill had the largest number of children reported at ROSH at 516.³⁵
- 398 First Nations children and young people were reported at risk of significant harm in 2016-17.³⁶

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

- As of 30 June 2018, there were 100 children and young people in out-of-home care in the Far West district. 88 of these children were First Nations children.³⁷

³⁴ FACS Datacube

³⁵ FACS Datacube

³⁶ FACS Datacube

³⁷ FACS Administrative data, unpublished.