

## Targeted Earlier Intervention Program

### Mid North Coast, Northern NSW and New England District

#### Mid North Coast 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 Mid North Coast District

Mid North Coast spans diverse communities across a large geography. TEI funded service providers should consider these priorities in order to address disadvantage.

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

1. Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities
2. Vulnerable young children, aged 0 – 5 years
3. Children and young people at risk of disengagement from school, family and community
4. Young parents with known vulnerabilities or who are experiencing a number of hardships
5. Building Aboriginal service investment through:
  - Services that meaningfully engage Aboriginal people in their design and delivery
  - Services delivered by Aboriginal staff
  - Services delivered through Aboriginal organisations.

## Evidence

### 1. Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities

Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities experience complex challenges that impact their health, wellbeing and safety. Aboriginal communities across Mid North Coast experience significant disadvantage due to the enduring impacts of dispossession and disenfranchisement.

- 5.8% of people identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the Mid North Coast, double the New South Wales state average of 2.9%<sup>1</sup>. The proportion of the Aboriginal population that is 25 years and younger

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<sup>1</sup> 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>

(53.6%)<sup>2</sup> is much higher than the average proportion of the entire population (26.6%).<sup>3</sup>

- Aboriginal families on the Mid North Coast accessed 349 Aboriginal Housing dwellings, and 510 Indigenous Community Housing dwellings in 2018, which made up 6.4% and 9.4% of Social Housing dwellings respectively.<sup>4</sup>
- The populations of Kempsey, Nambucca, and Mid Coast LGAs have high proportions of Aboriginal people (11.6%, 7.6%, and 6.2% respectively). These LGAs have low socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA) scores (4, 9, and 20 respectively).<sup>5</sup> This means these areas are relatively disadvantage compared to other areas in NSW.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children are overrepresented in out-of-home Care (OOHC) . In the Mid North Coast district, 851 children were in OOHC as of 30 June 2018. Of these children, 47% (n=401) are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.<sup>6</sup>
- In the Mid North Coast district, 39% of children aged 0 to 5 were identified as vulnerable. Of these children, 32% identify as Aboriginal.<sup>7</sup>
- In the Mid North Coast district, 17% of children under 15 years are affected by mental illness. Of these children, 31% identify as Aboriginal.<sup>8</sup>
- In the Mid North Coast district, 19% of children and young people aged 15-18 are affected by mental illness. Of these children, 25% identify as Aboriginal.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census, <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>

<sup>4</sup> FACS Administrative Data

<sup>5</sup> ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), 2016

<sup>6</sup> FACS Administrative Data, unpublished.

<sup>7</sup> Their Futures Matter

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

## 2. Vulnerable children, aged 0-5 years

- The first 2000 days is a critical time for physical, cognitive, social and emotional health. Early childhood experiences impact future health, wellbeing and fulfilment outcomes.<sup>10</sup>
- Close to 35% of children in the Mid North Coast district are developmentally vulnerable or at risk.<sup>11</sup> There is a slightly higher proportion of developmentally vulnerable children in the Mid North Coast district (20.2%) on one or more domains compared to the state average (19.9%). Kempsey had the highest proportion of children with developmental vulnerabilities in one or more domain (28.8%).<sup>12</sup>
- 1 in 3 children aged 0 to 5 are considered vulnerable in the Mid North Coast district (n=6,789). 43% of these children have parents who interacted with the justice systems. 24% of these children had a mother aged 21 and under at birth.<sup>13</sup>
- Kempsey (48%) and Nambucca (45%) LGAs have the highest proportion and largest number of vulnerable children aged 0 to 5 years.<sup>14</sup>

## 3. Children and young people at risk of disengagement from school, family and community

Disengagement of children and young people from school, family, and community can adversely affect long-term outcomes. Students who are disengaged from school are more likely to leave school early. This group is more likely to earn a lower income, face social exclusion, engage in crime and engage in risky health behaviours.<sup>15</sup>

- 1 in 6 children aged under 15 years and 1 in 5 young people aged 15 to 18 years are affected by mental illness in the Mid North Coast.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The First 2000 Days Framework, NSW Ministry of Health, February 2019. Document number PD2019\_008

<sup>11</sup> AEDC Data Explorer, <https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Their Futures Matter

<sup>14</sup> Their Futures Matter

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/media/1422/report-education-children-at-risk-of-disengaging-from-school-literature-review.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Their Futures Matter

- There were 2,368 short suspensions and 613 long suspensions from schools in the Mid North Coast district in 2018.<sup>17</sup>
- There were 13 expulsions for misbehaviour, 10.6% of the total expulsions for misbehaviour for the state. There were 21 expulsions for unsatisfactory behaviour, 17.2% of total expulsions for unsatisfactory behaviour in the state.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4. Young parents with known vulnerabilities or who are experiencing a number of hardships

Teenage parenthood is associated with a number of adversities, including low socioeconomic status, educational under-achievement and substance misuse. In turn, young parenthood can act to further entrench some of these problems and perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage.

- There were 124 births to mothers aged 19 and under in the Mid North Coast in 2018. This is 4.4% of all births in the district, more than double the NSW state average of 1.9%.<sup>19</sup>
- Kempsey had the highest proportion of teenage mothers at 11.5% of total births in the LGA.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, 14.1% of people had a year 9 or below education attainment level in Kempsey, the highest proportion of the LGAs in the Mid North Coast.<sup>21</sup> Kempsey also has one of the lowest median weekly personal incomes in the Mid North Coast district, at \$474.<sup>22</sup>
- Kempsey has one of the lowest SEIFA rankings in the state, 4 out of 129. This indicates that it is very disadvantaged socio-economically, compared to the rest of the state.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> NSW centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation: <https://data.cese.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/suspensions-and-expulsions-in-nsw-government-schools>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Healthstats NSW: [http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab\\_mbth\\_age/mab\\_mbth\\_age\\_lgmap](http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab_mbth_age/mab_mbth_age_lgmap)

<sup>20</sup> Healthstats NSW: [http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab\\_mbth\\_age/mab\\_mbth\\_age\\_lgmap](http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab_mbth_age/mab_mbth_age_lgmap)

<sup>21</sup> ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census: <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> ABS, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), 2016

## 5. Building Aboriginal service investment

It is crucial to invest in Aboriginal services to respond to the needs of Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities in Northern NSW. This will help to break the cycle of disadvantage that continues to impact on generations of Aboriginal families.

We will develop a holistic approach to Aboriginal child and family supports. We will deliver universal, targeted and tertiary services within communities. These services will cover the entire continuum of care and will reflect the community context.<sup>24</sup> Implementation of the DCJ Aboriginal Case Management Policy is an integral focus of the New England District.

- In 2019, the Closing the Gap progress report revealed only two of the seven targets were on track. The CEO of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Patricia Turner AM, has stated that there needs to be more community-controlled services available to help improve outcomes for Aboriginal Communities.<sup>25</sup>
- Participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decisions that affect them is a core human right<sup>26</sup> It is also recognised as critical to decision-making that takes account of the best interests of children, from a cultural perspective <sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 'What you told us' - Aboriginal Case Management policy consultations, Absec, August 2017

<sup>25</sup> <https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2019/06/an-absolute-national-shame-government-urged-to-invest-more-in-aboriginal-led-services/>

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007

<sup>27</sup> The Family Matters Report 2019; Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009