

Targeted Earlier Intervention Program

Mid North Coast, Northern NSW and New England District

New England 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:

1. local priority groups – who needs the services most in your community?
2. location – where in your local area are the services needed most?
3. 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 New England

New England spans diverse communities across a large geography.



TEI funded service providers should consider the priorities in order to address disadvantage.

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

1. Aboriginal children, young people and their families
 - Aboriginal children not reaching their developmental milestones and not school ready
 - Aboriginal young people that are disengaged from school and support
2. Children 0 – 5 and families experiencing low levels of education, high unemployment and financial disadvantage, including young parents experiencing vulnerabilities.
3. Young people
 - Young parents experiencing multiple vulnerabilities
 - Young people experiencing mental health issues
 - Young people interacting with the criminal justice system
 - Young people at risk of disengaging from school or structured learning opportunities
4. Rural communities adversely affected by drought
5. Potential and emerging disadvantage and vulnerability
 - CALD families and communities (including humanitarian migrants and refugees)
6. 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

1. Aboriginal Children, young people and families

- 9.7% of the population in New England District identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n=20,471). The highest proportion of people who identify as Aboriginal come from the Moree LGA (21.6%).¹

Aboriginal children not reaching their developmental milestones

- 12.8% of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population in the New England district are aged 0-4 years old (n=2,618).¹
- 42% of the children aged 0 to 5 who are vulnerable in the New England district identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n=2,433).²

Aboriginal people who are disengaged from school and support

- 33.5% of the Aboriginal population in the New England district are aged 5-19 years old (n=6,846).³
- 43% of the children aged under 15 affected by a mental illness identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the New England district (n=1,199).⁴
- 37% of children and young people aged 15 to 18 affected by mental illness identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the New England district (n=685).⁵

2. Children 0 – 5 and their families

- All LGAs in the New England district have a higher proportion of low-income households, compared to the state average of 19.7%.⁶
- 6.5% of people in the New England district are unemployed (n=6,144), just higher than the NSW average of 6.3%.⁷

¹ 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>

² Their Futures Matter

³ 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>

⁴ Their Futures Matter

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ FACS administrative data

⁷ Ibid.

- Families in New England have an average weekly income of \$1,372, much lower than the NSW average \$1,780.⁸
- Tenterfield had the highest proportion of low-income households, at 38.7%. This is followed by Glen Innes Severn (35.1%), Gwydir (31.7%) and Inverell (29.6%).⁹

3. Young People

Young parents experiencing multiple vulnerabilities

- 6.1% of mothers who gave birth in the New England district in 2018 were aged 19 and under (n=159), this is much higher than the NSW state average of 1.9%.¹⁰
- Tenterfield received the highest ranking of the LGAs in the Australia's Mothers Index, 149/152. This indicates that mothers in Tenterfield face a lot more hardship than mothers in most other LGAs in the state.¹¹

Young people experiencing mental health issues

- There are 5,155 children in New England under 15 and affected by mental illness. That's about 1 in 6 New England children aged under 15.¹² 16% of children aged under 15 belong in this vulnerable group (5th highest out of 16 DCJ districts).¹³
- Projected outcomes for the vulnerable group are worse than the NSW average for this group, e.g. 41% of the vulnerable group are expected to complete the HSC in NSW compared to the NSW average of 53% for this group.¹⁴
- There are 1,851 children and young people in New England aged 15 to 18 and affected by mental illness. That's about 1 in 5 New England children and young people aged 15 to 18.¹⁵ 20% of children and young people aged 15-18 belong to this vulnerable group (4th highest out of 15 DCJ districts).¹⁶

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ FACs administrative data

¹⁰ Healthstats NSW: http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/Indicator/mab_mbth_age/mab_mbth_age_lgama

¹¹ State of Australia's Mothers, Save the Children, Sydney: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2016/05/apo-nid63692-1201431.pdf>

¹² Their Futures Matter

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

- Moree Plains LGA has the highest proportion of children under 15 affected by mental illness (65%) and children and young people 15 -18 affected by mental illness who identify as Aboriginal (57%).¹⁷

Young people interacting with the criminal justice system

- Projected outcomes for the vulnerable group are generally worse than the NSW average for this group, e.g. 31% of the vulnerable group are expected to interact with the justice system in the future compared to the NSW average of 25% for this group.¹⁸

Young people at risk of disengaging from school

- Of people aged 15 and over in the New England District, the most common highest level of educational attainment was year 10 (17.1%), followed by a Certificate III (15.7%) and a Bachelor degree or above (12.8%).¹⁹
- 12.5% (n=20,536) of people have a year 9 or below as their highest level of educational attainment in the New England district, compared with 8.4% across NSW.²⁰

4. Rural communities adversely affected by drought

- District data sets show rural and remote areas experience higher vulnerability and greater social isolation than metropolitan areas.
- The New England district economy is based on rural and agricultural industry. This area has experienced the longest dry period in the history of recorded weather patterns. Advice from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology suggests that drought is unlikely to end in the foreseeable future, and it is likely that the negative impacts of drought on children and young people will increase and compound.²¹
- It is widely understood that the impact of drought extends beyond the agricultural industry. The social and economic recovery from drought is expected to take five years following drought-breaking rain.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census, <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Unicef Australia, In their own words the hidden impact of prolonged drought on children and young people, February 2019, <file:///H:/TEI%20next%20steps/July%20District%20mapping%20stuff/Drought-Report-2019.pdf>

- Smaller towns have a high level of dependence on the agricultural industry and therefore the impact of drought is intensified.²² In 2018, The NSW Business Chamber conducted a survey to help identify the impact of drought on small businesses in New England. The survey identified 91% of New England businesses have been badly impacted by drought, with 60% likely to cut staff. Across the state, only 84% of businesses have been seriously impacted by drought.
- The New England river system and water storage is at critically low levels with no flows along the full length of the Barwon –Darling River systems²³. Ongoing dry riverbeds have a unique impact on Aboriginal Children, who have a reliance and connection to the river systems for cultural, spiritual and recreational purposes.²⁴
- The reduction in income and increased social isolation caused by drought impacts mental health across communities.²⁵ The most vulnerable people in drought are children, women and older men.

5. Potential and emerging disadvantage and vulnerability

CALD families and Communities

- In the New England district, over 84% of residents spoke only English at home (see Table 4). This is higher than the NSW state average of 68.5%.²⁶ The proportion of households where a non-English language was spoken at home was highest in Armidale Regional at 8.3%.²⁷
- In 2018/19 Armidale was identified by the Federal Government as a primary settlement location for refugees. There were 261 humanitarian migrants who settled in Armidale Regional LGA in 2018.²⁸ This is a large increase from 2017, where only 36 humanitarian migrants settled in New England, all of whom settled in the Armidale Regional LGA.²⁹

²² Alston, M & Kent, J, 2004, Social Impacts of Drought A report to NSW Agriculture https://www.csu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/704483/Social-Impacts-of-Drought.pdf

²³ DPIE presentation to Drought Task Force October 2019

²⁴ Unicef Australia, In their own words the hidden impact of prolonged drought on children and young people, February 2019, <file:///H:/TEI%20next%20steps/July%20District%20mapping%20stuff/Drought-Report-2019.pdf>

²⁵ National Drought Mitigation Center, How does drought affect our lives?

<https://drought.unl.edu/Education/DroughtforKids.aspx>

²⁶ ABS Quickstats, 2016 Census, <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20QuickStats>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Department of Social Services, Settlement Data Reports 2018: <https://www.data.gov.au/dataset/ds-dga-8d1b90a9-a4d7-4b10-ad6a-8273722c8628/details>

²⁹ Ibid.

6. 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 context³⁰. Implementation of the DCJ Aboriginal Case Management Policy is an integral focus of the New England District.

Services that meaningfully engage Aboriginal people in their design and delivery

- Participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decisions that affect them is a core human right.³¹ It is also critical to decision-making that takes account of the best interests of children from a cultural perspective.³²

Services delivered by Aboriginal people

- Aboriginal staff and partner organisations can offer valuable cultural knowledge which can improve design of services, service accessibility and outcomes for Aboriginal clients.
- Aboriginal staff and partner organisations can develop an organisation's cultural competency.

Services delivered through Aboriginal organisations

- ABSEC states that “Aboriginal-led solutions to issues in Aboriginal communities are widely recognised as more appropriate to addressing not only the crisis that is occurring, but going some way towards addressing the causal factors of disadvantage, poverty and limited economic engagement.”³³

³⁰ 'What you told us' – Aboriginal Case Management policy consultations, Absec, August 2017

³¹ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007

³² The Family Matters Report 2019

³³ Absec, Delivering Better Outcomes for Aboriginal Children and Families in NSW