

October 2015

# Report

## TEI Program Reform Central Coast 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 (ACYFS)	\$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 reforms<sup>1</sup>. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](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 Central Coast District held in Tumbi Umbi on 14 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 *all* 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?*

### **Tumbi Umbi**

- Youth services work closely together to provide individual clients with outcomes;
- Resources, information and skills are shared;
- Youth services work across other services to benefit clients including health services, mental health (Headspace), juvenile justice, corrections, education and supported housing services;
- Services with capacity to network with other services and outreach to a diverse population lead to the best outcomes for young people due to the nature of transport and the size of the area;
- Interagencies;
- Partnerships with other services;
- Supporting children, supporting families, meeting play groups;
- Doing work in the home 1:1 work;
- Holding case management – taking the lead on case management;
- Networks are strong;
- Knowledge of who to go to for what leads to timely response;
- Interagency groups meet regularly;
- More open and flexible communication with government and inter government;
- FRS plays pivotal role in keeping families and clients for appropriate services;
- Targeting schools for Early Intervention Parenting Groups;
- Groups for parents 0 -8 years;
- Skilled staff with good relations with clients;
- Assessment, case management;
- Strong partnerships, relationships from top to bottom versus across service system;
- Strong leadership in organisations;
- Strength in the IFS processes for referrals from FACS to strengthen families;

- Strengths model where clients are actively participating in change;
- Neighbourhood Centre's or organisations, community centers' that provide a place-based model of service;
- Organisations that are embedded in community, local solutions, local knowledge, create connections, community empowerment;
- Diversity of providers ensures options for families;
- Cultural awareness, connections, targeted projects, workplace diversity;
- Collaboration of TEI services with other sector services ie, federal;
- Soft entry – non threatening – engages families through program for children: ie playgroup – builds trust;
- Gateway to referral – working with the whole family;
- Programs targeted "transition times" for families; ie transition to school, work, families more open to engage;
- Less formal programs that build communities and social groups reducing reliance on the service sector;
- Interagencies; large representation of service sector;
- Wealth of experience and knowledge base of workers who have been around many years;
- Benefits of IGA;
- There is less competitiveness around funding;
- Flexible policies and willingness to assist between services;
- Partnerships – developing and expanding;
- Services becoming more culturally safe/welcoming;
- Speech and language support exists – could be expanded;
- Early intervention – perinatal support/engagement;
- Soft entry approach – playgroups etc;
- Interagency groups training;
- Outreach services – availability of transport and home visits;
- Patchwork – will continue to develop a coordinated approach to service delivery;
- Neighbourhood and community centre structures work well;
- Inclusive of all ages responsive to local issues, feasible boundaries, juvenile justice models, care plans (client centered care);

- Breadth and depth of knowledge that exists in community resources, and leveraging this effectively for growth and problem solving;
- Increase/growth in competent boards and governance practices.

### 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?*

- Localised research (existing resource mapping) – special focus surveys (not generic surveys);
- Having a commitment to follow through on determination – long term > 4 years;
- Providing tools to support excellent implementation and measurement;
- Coordination of services/information of current service delivery and availability within the area – criteria for entry/referral process;
- Transport – community access to services improved;
- Culturally appropriate workers environment;
- Experience rather than qualifications valued in workers or partnership/joint visits when working with families – qualifications + community connections;
- Housing is a huge barrier;
- Issues with providing a service while no housing availability;
- Reluctance of private rental market to accommodate people in need;
- Cultural proficiency throughout all agencies – noting the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in care;
- Accessibility – lack of transport ie families with young children;
- Need either a pool of transport available for services or their clients or perhaps means for services to together attend more isolated areas;
- Better sharing of information ie case management, case planning, family history, formal case conferencing and collaborative case planning;
- Administration costs in applying for funding services from other department's for supporting families ie, homeless brokerage committee decisions;

- TEI services not referring aboriginal pregnant women till 36 weeks when it should be 21 weeks;
- Acknowledge that it does take a community to raise a child and that more than one service will be engaged with a family;
- Stronger referral systems – to and from organisations;
- Mechanisms for clear referral pathways from FRS and FACS;  
Mechanisms for FRS to capture new information;  
Services to be located in areas of disadvantage;  
Consistency across program guidelines and translation on the ground;
- Enhanced home-based assessment and interventions – assess child protection risks, mental health;
- Flexibility around service provision – 6 weeks – limits for intervention ie lengths of group;
- Cultural sensitivity CALD, Aboriginal CALD worker;
- Family conferencing in Early Intervention Programs with the formation of Intervention teams around the family;
- Services for 8 – 12 age group;
- Relax timeframes to connect 'wrap services' around families – eg timeframes are too short;
- Increase more NGO's holding case management/lead agencies;
- Play space – local areas to be 'experts' in their area – have access to a variety of services – 1 stop shop;
- More resources;
- Do things well;
- Sharing information within a confidential framework;
- Reliance on volunteers;
- More transparency about what services provide.

## 4. FACS's PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

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

- Need to provide more capacity for qualitative reporting of outcomes with young clients. Some outcomes cannot be reported in current reporting databases which are very much qualitative, counting numbers etc;
- Timeframes and expectation's of an outcome are unrealistic. For instance funding expects client centered casework within short spaces of time;
- Rhetoric around collaboration and wrap around services and other tenders lead to competitive tendering which lead to demoralisation and dysfunctional partnerships only formed to complete tenders;
- Make contracts a little more flexible;
- Increase awareness/importance on 'actual early intervention' prioritise;
- FACS to allow NGO's to touch base/regroup under their supervision to talk about/share ongoing, what is working well and what's not – ongoing after the reform;
- Open conversations about service delivery;
- Provide training for workers around multicultural issues – cultural sensitivity;
- More meaningful consultative services around output and outcome;
- Statistics;
- Co-operation and negotiation between state and federally funded programs – joint accountability;
- More understanding of the types of services and programs available;
- Improved communication/engagement between CPOS across TEI programs (if not already happening);
- Give support to FACS to reallocate funding to areas of high need and also to reallocate funding if organisations are not complying;
- Guideline to restrictive in regards to clients being able to sit with multiple services particularly specialised services;

- Reporting system subjective – reports activity not outcomes ie activity – community BBQ vs outcome - relationships built in playgroup;
- Transparency around how WWY funding is allocated;
- Target groups, age constraints, time constraints, flexibility of contracts;
- Flexibility around KPIs – meeting needs of community as they change/shift;
- Getting the context around data collection and truly understanding the service structure;
- Burden of paperwork and reporting and availability of service staff to meet these requirements;
- Security and ability for long term planning with single year funding;
- Consistency for workers and services and assist with capacity building in the workforce;
- Earlier notification of successful/unsuccessful funding;
- Partnerships – a central information directory of services and charges;
- Reporting portal is not 'person' friendly and does not accurately reflect;
- The work and time spent with clients;  
Those family members who fall outside 'age group';  
Families who span more than one reporting cycle;  
Surveys (paper) are too 'busy' and beyond literacy levels;
- Management of programs spanning different age groups – less dependence on real age (developmental age or end of primary school):
- Consistency in survey disciplines (construct, design, distribution, relativity etc);
- Timely distribution of meaningful, quality feedback and data;
- Flexibility to be adaptive.

## 5. TEI REFORM CONSULTATION

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

- Consultatively and continually;
- Email communication;
- Email survey – consultation;
- True consultation, co-design;
- Come to us where possible for example Interagencies;
- Include consumers; have them at the table;
- Regular updates and involvement;
- Remember small organisations are just as important;
- Actually come to visit services;
- Step by step agenda for reform that spells out stages of reform process;
- Working parties from each service stream – including non-funded stakeholders;
- Workshops, emails, dashboard;
- Part of a broader advisory group;
- Ongoing meetings with community project officers;
- FACS improving their knowledge of services, the scope of their mandate etc;
- Some projects state-funded, some federally funded;
- Continued feedback and communication;
- No long silences;
- Meeting such as these – face to face;
- Have different services attend so gaps and what's working well can be highlighted – even after the reform;
- A meaningful platform for consultation should include evaluations of each service, their strengths and weaknesses;
- Consultation with other services outside of this process about the services that work well for them; For example Centrelink, Housing Services,

Education etc and which services that they think provide a good service on the coast.

# APPENDIX 1: REPORT BACK TEMPLATE

## CENTRAL COAST REPORT BACK SHEET

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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# CENTRAL COAST 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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