

25 March 2025

Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety
Parliament of New South Wales
Parliament House,
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Response to the NSW Parliament Supplementary Questions

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety at its hearing as part of the Community safety in regional and rural communities in New South Wales on 24th February 2025. I respond now to the supplementary questions.

1. Service providers have told us that they are limited by resource-intensive funding and grant frameworks. Do you have any comments on these issues and how they might be addressed?

Applying for, reporting on and acquitting grants and funding contracts can be time-consuming, onerous, unrewarding and un-remunerated exercises. Service providers often spend considerable periods of time applying for grants, only to be unsuccessful.

Furthermore, there are no funding pockets which finance not-for-profits to apply for funding, which means this often-unproductive activity must be completed using organisational resources. Board members, staff and executives often contribute many hours of their own time to apply for and manage grants.

Funding uncertainty and short-term contracts result in organisations taking a reactive approach, rather than proactive, strategic approaches to funding. Unfortunately, short-term grants only serve to undermine the stability needed to address long-term issues such as trauma, disadvantage and poverty.

Longer funding terms (10 years) and streamlined application and reporting mechanisms would certainly release important resources for more service delivery instead of grant or funding contract administration.

Developing long-term funding opportunities for service delivery that is collaborative, community-led and outcome focused will better serve to engage young people and address trauma. By fostering



this model of funding, communities can also ensure programs meet actual local needs including population size, instead of programs being designed around funding.

2. How can funding models for youth-focused programs be restructured to support long-term sustainability?

Long-term sustainability is vital to gain the trust of young people and communities. Short-term funding cycles or constantly funding only pilot programs breeds a lack of trust in communities. Staff who have made strong relationships in community often leave in the face of contract uncertainty, and new service providers often find it difficult to engage young people when they have seen programs come and go.

Long-term sustainability would be improved by funding contracts of 10 years or more. While longer-term contracts often strike fear in bureaucrats, these contracts can still be monitored by departmental program officers. Service delivery and efficacy can still be assessed, and improvement plans put into place where needed. A model that promotes a continuity of service delivery can adapt and grow to meet the changing needs of the community more effectively is needed and will also promote investment in sustainable infrastructure.

When programs are working well and producing results in community, it is nonsensical to have good program staff suffer income-insecurity and to make providers re-tender every few years. There are many evidence-based programs already established across the country that must be supported to continue. Many times, young people face barriers in accessing these valuable programs because of excess demand, or because of location and transport barriers.

Investment in infrastructure that supports service delivery such as community centres, youth facilities and recreational spaces should be prioritised, as should investment in infrastructure for TAFE, Universities and public transport to reduce barriers for young people trying to access further education as a pathway out of disadvantage.

Funding models should also be guided more by the communities and service providers they are targeting to ensure it aligns with community needs, while also fostering collaboration to better share resources.

3. In your evidence to the Committee you said:

What we really need to see is a long-term systemic program that can work with families and that can dip in and out, so support families and be there again when more crises occur.

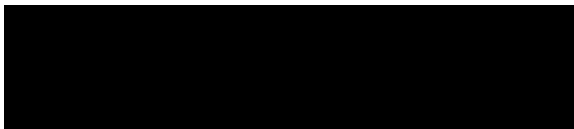
Can you provide more detail about how such a program might work, and could existing services be coordinated to fulfil this function?

In order for such a program to work successfully, it must be funded long-term and well embedded in community. The whole premise is that young people, parents or families could come into the program when intervention is needed and exit when current issues have been addressed.

The most important element is that relationships are established with the service provider and the individual or family can come back when issues escalate, or crises occur. An example is the West Street Centre for people who have experienced child sexual abuse. This service supports people for as long as they need it, and they are able to return at any time for as long as they need. In this way people or families who are experiencing trauma only have to tell their story once. This type of model importantly recognises that you can't treat long-term trauma using a short-term time frame.

Wraparound and diversionary services for young people in rural and regional areas need to be tailored to include a whole-of-family approach to encourage sustained engagement with families, rather than crisis interventions. Furthermore, we recommend co-design with service users, government, service providers and communities to ensure programs are tailored to identified needs.

Yours Sincerely,



Nicky Sloan
CEO