

The Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Social Issues
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Questions taken on notice during the Committee's hearing on 8 October 2015

Dear Mrs Taylor

I write to you regarding questions taken on notice by NSW government officials during a hearing of the Inquiry into Service Coordination in Communities with High Social Needs conducted by the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues on 8 October 2015. Please find the answers to these questions from Committee members following this letter.

Yours sincerely

Amity Durham
Executive Director
FACS and Service Innovation Branch

Thursday, 8 October 2015
Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues
Questions on Notice

INQUIRY INTO SERVICE COORDINATION IN COMMUNITIES WITH HIGH SOCIAL NEEDS

First question taken on notice:

The Hon Penny Sharpe to Ms Amity Durham, Department of Premier and Cabinet —

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What is the expectation around public release of that data or availability of that data for others to use?

Ms DURHAM: If I can take that question on notice to give an answer, I think in its early stages this is about some of the Government's own decision-making. There is, I think, a wider commitment to open government and open data, but in the early days it is certainly something to inform and improve government decision-making. That is my understanding.

Answer:

Decisions to publically release the data and findings of the Data Analytics Centre will be made on a case by case basis.

The Data Analytics Centre will be the custodian of any new datasets it generates. It will assess the suitability of these datasets for public release and make them available where appropriate.

NSW Government agencies that provide data to the Data Analytics Centre will remain the custodian of data they provide and will continue to be responsible for assessing and publishing it as open data as appropriate.

Second question taken on notice:

**The Hon Greg Donnelly and Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile to Ms Amity Durham,
Department of Premier and Cabinet —**

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: On page 20 of your submission under the heading "Any other matters" you refer to promising international examples of service coordination. I was a little surprised that there was not further information about any successes Australia-wide to try to identify which initiatives appear to be working well. Does that reflect almost the reaching of consensus at State and Federal levels that a process of identifying something as working well is not going on or you did not have time and it was not really within the remit of the inquiry to give us that level of detail?

Ms DURHAM: In the way we selected the examples here we took an international focus. If we could take the question on notice then perhaps we could provide some of those examples. I think some of the challenges we face is that often a lot of these measures are tried but then the evaluation evidence is not there or it has not as yet been completed. Some of these things are quite new. There is always a challenge to get that definitive understanding: "Is this working?" Because often they are not measuring outcomes or the outcomes take a long time to see. Certainly we can take the question on notice and provide some Australian examples if we can.

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Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Ms Durham, are you clear about the question you said you would take on notice?

Ms DURHAM: Yes. We will provide any Australian examples where we think there is evidence that relates to the Committee's terms of reference.

Answer:

The following initiatives are provided to the Committee as Australian examples of service coordination.

Communities for Children – Commonwealth Government

Communities for Children is an initiative providing prevention and early intervention services to families with children up to the age of 12. It takes a place-based approach to strengthening families and achieving better coordination of services and supports within each target community.

The following activities are delivered under Communities for Children:

- *Facilitating Partner Services - develop and facilitate a whole of community approach to support and strengthen local service networks that contribute to child safety.*
- *Direct Services - delivery of early intervention and prevention family support, tailored to the needs of the local community. Direct Services are family focused and child centered, focusing on children 0-12 years and for some services, adolescents up to 18 years of age.*

Early results indicate that there have been moderate improvements in children's receptive vocabulary and parenting, and reducing jobless households. In terms of service coordination,

there have been reported improvements in how effectively services collaborate, with more information sharing, interagency training and referrals.

The national evaluation of the Communities for Children initiative is available online at: <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/family-matters/issue-84/national-evaluation-communities-children-initiative>

Services Connect – Victoria

Services Connect is a small-scale trial of a model for integrated human services in Victoria. It aims to drive system-wide change to the way individuals and families are supported, and to improve productivity by reducing duplication and fragmentation across the system.

Services Connect offers three levels of flexible client support:

- Managed support - for people with the most complex needs who require multiple services and more intensive coordination and assistance.
- Guided support - for people with moderate to high needs, who require some coordination and occasional assistance.
- Self-support - for the majority of people - they can largely self-manage their support and services with minimal assistance.

To date, Services Connect has been tested in five sites with over 1400 clients supported since 2012. There has been a reported greater level of service integration, planning and delivery for clients. Services Connect is now expanding to eight new sites and will be further tested in partnership with NGOs.

Further information about Services Connect is available at: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/for-funded-agencies/services-connect/what-is-services-connect>

Better Services – Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

The Human Services Blueprint (the Blueprint) is a long-term reform agenda to make the ACT's human services system more integrated, person-centred and sustainable.

The Blueprint is supported by three key Better Services initiatives:

- Human Services Gateway – a single access point for families and individuals seeking assistance for issues relating to housing, tenancy, homelessness, disability, child, young person and family matters, conflict resolution, debt management and grants for women returning to work.
- Strengthening Families – a new way of working with families who have complex needs and who are involved with a number of services such as housing, disability and health. Families have a Lead Worker to support them in identifying strengths and problems. Together, they develop an agreed family plan and put together a package of supports that best respond to their needs. Participation is voluntary.
- Local Services Network in Belconnen – a localised expression of governance that builds capacity for community involvement in identifying local priorities and solutions. Here the focus is on testing place-based services, local governance, data sharing and flexible funding arrangements.

Given the early implementation stages of Better Services, it is difficult to evaluate outcomes. However, initial data on families who are referred to Strengthening Families shows that the initiative is effectively reaching those with high-needs. An independent evaluation of the Blueprint is scheduled for 2015-2016. This evaluation will seek to identify the success factors required to achieve a scalable and sustainable model for implementation across the ACT.

This information has been provided by the ACT Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

Ceduna Service Reform – South Australia

The Ceduna Service Reform was initiated after a 2011 Coronial inquest into the deaths of six Aboriginal people on the state's Far West Coast highlighted concerns for the safety of 80-90 people in and around Ceduna dealing with homelessness and alcohol abuse. The South Australian Government identified the need for government and non-government agencies to work together to develop service responses that meet the needs of this high-risk group.

The Ceduna Service Reform project is a 'collective impact' model, with partner organisations agreeing to a shared agenda to achieve one vision. An independent manager was appointed to drive service reform and bring stakeholders together. Partner organisations then agreed to focus on a key outcome, decreasing alcohol-related injuries and fatalities, and five key strategies to achieve it:

- a 24/7 multi-agency outreach team (Ceduna Street Beat)*
- suitable supported accommodation options*
- prevention, protection and treatment options for drug and alcohol dependency*
- justice system responses to help reduce harm and avoid large fines and long prison sentences*
- equip organisations to provide better services for the community.*

The project is focussed on outcomes, with success measured against population level indicators. Early information demonstrates improved engagement of vulnerable people, reduced risky behaviours and efficiencies in service delivery.

This information has been provided by the South Australian Department of Premier and Cabinet.