

**INQUIRY INTO SERVICE COORDINATION IN  
COMMUNITIES WITH HIGH SOCIAL NEEDS**

**Organisation:** Wellington Council

**Date received:** 14/08/2015

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14 August 2015

The Director  
Standing Committee on Social Issues  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE:    SERVICE COORDINATION IN COMMUNITIES WITH HIGH SOCIAL NEEDS**

Wellington Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Upper House inquiry into service coordination in communities with high social needs. Like many communities across Australia, Wellington has been dealing with the problem of Crystal Methamphetamine (more commonly known as 'Ice'). Significant efforts have been made by local community groups, law enforcement agencies and government stakeholders in the region to address this issue. We agree with the sentiments expressed by the Chair of Social Issues Committee for 'assistance and coordinate help.'

In recent weeks, Wellington has been a focal point for local, regional and national media with respect to the 'ice epidemic.' While many residents disagree with some of the media reports, there is a broad consensus that 'ice' is a problem in the community. There is hope that the recent media coverage will highlight, to state and federal decision makers, some of the issues facing the Wellington community.

Council has been working together with a wide range of government and non-government stakeholders to address disadvantage and high social needs within the Wellington Local Government Area (LGA). Although not an exhaustive list, there are opportunities for stakeholder input through:

- Wellington Council Community Services Advisory Committee;
  - Wellington Council Crime Prevention Committee;
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- Gungie Origin 2820;
- Wellington Community Services Interagency;
- Wellington Learning Community; and
- Wellington Communities for Children Committee.

The effectiveness of these committees and initiatives has improved over the years with progress on various fronts. However, many service providers in the community have indicated barriers to achieving further outcomes. These include:

- Changes to funding and contracting arrangements, for government and non-government service providers, including block funding;
- High staff turnover;
- Lack of financial resources; and
- The need for better data collection and information gathering.

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that there are also issues with respect to funding allocated to the Wellington LGA being diverted to other regional areas. While there are many benefits from coordinating resources from larger centres such as Dubbo and Orange, this can lead to adverse impacts on service delivery to smaller areas such as Wellington. Each community has their own unique set of circumstances and a 'one-size fits all' approach is less likely to address areas with high social needs.

Wellington Council has consistently advocated for a coordinated approach to issues relating to high social needs. We commend the efforts of government and non-government service providers to alleviate disadvantage facing many residents in the Wellington LGA. However, these organisations need more support in the form of financial and operational resources.

Should you require further information, please contact me

Yours faithfully

Karen Roberts  
**A/General Manager**