
F Community services preface

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Attachment tables

There are no Community services attachment tables throughout this Indigenous Compendium.

Families are the principal providers of care for children, older people and people with disability (ABS 2010; Australian Government 2008). Community services aim to:

- support families to fulfil their caring roles
- provide care when families are unable to
- provide interventions where individual needs are not able to be met within the community without special intervention.

Community services provide support to sustain and nurture the functioning of individuals, families and groups, to maximise their potential for development and to enhance community well being (Australian Council of Social Service 2009). Although community services generally target individuals, they can be delivered at an institutional level. Services are typically provided by government and the not-for-profit sector, but the for-profit sector also has an important role (for example, as owners of aged care facilities). Community services also contribute to the development of community infrastructure to service needs (AIHW 2005).

Cross-cutting community services issues

Community services pathways

Although this Report discusses three areas of community services in separate chapters, it is recognised that there are many linkages between different community services. Governments are increasingly emphasising the need for integrated, client centred community services.

Many community services are linked by the provision of different services to individuals at different stages of life. Other services are not as strictly age-specific and some individuals may receive multiple services at the same time — for example, a child who is in receipt of juvenile justice services together with homelessness, child protection or disability services. Disability services can continue throughout an individual's lifetime and overlap with the provision of aged care services.

The sequence of interventions or services can be referred to as 'pathways' of community service provision. However, there is limited information on the patterns of access by individuals to the range of community services, either concurrently or in succession over a lifetime. A greater understanding of the links between the use of various community services, the nature of these links, and whether interventions in one area of service provision result in reduced need for other services, will help to inform government social policy agendas.

An example of relevant research is a longitudinal study of Indigenous children (*Footprints In Time*) by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), into the links between early childhood experiences and later life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, covering areas such as health, culture, education, housing and family relationships (FaHCSIA 2008).

Future directions in performance reporting

The Steering Committee intends to replace this preface with a Community services sector summary and continue to expand reporting on the characteristics of the community services sector. In particular, developments that span various community services, such as measures of social capital and social inclusion, will be considered. Ongoing investigation of cross-cutting issues might allow improved reporting for community services as a whole.

Each chapter (aged care, services for people with disability and protection and support services) contains a service specific section on future directions in performance reporting. The aim of this section is to provide an insight into other related and overarching developments on reporting in the community services sector.

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2010, *Community Services Australia, 2008-09*, Cat. no. 8696.0, Canberra.

AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2005, *National Community Services Information Strategic Plan 2005–2009*, Cat. no. AUS 68, Canberra.

Australian Council of Social Service 2009, *Australian Community Sector Survey Report 2009*, Strawberry Hills.

Australian Government 2008, *Families in Australia: 2008*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

FaHCSIA (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) 2008, *Research News*, Issue 31, Canberra.