

Families and Communities Programme Communities for Children Facilitating Partner Community Strategic Plan

The Communities for Children Facilitating Partners (FP) Sub-activity

FPs are place-based and develop and facilitate a whole of community approach to support and enhance early childhood development and wellbeing for children from before birth to 12 years. FPs build on local strengths to meet local community needs and create capability within local service systems, using strong evidence of what works in early intervention and prevention as identified by the Families and Children Expert Panel. They collaborate with other organisations to provide a holistic service system for children and families. FPs fund other organisations (known as Community Partners) to provide services including parenting support, group peer support, case management, home visiting services and other supports to promote child wellbeing.

The Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan (the Plan) supports FPs to set out a vision for their service area. It identifies the key needs and service gaps in the community, develops ways to better coordinate and collaborate and outlines priority areas and strategies to address need and improve outcomes for children and families.

The Plan should build on the extensive knowledge that FPs and their Committees have gained in working with their communities, often over long periods of time. This new Community Strategic Plan presents an opportunity to critically reflect on what is changing and what continues to be the strengths and challenges for your local community.

The Plan also reflects the Australian Government's commitment to civil society and an acknowledgement that it is only through everyone in a community working together that true change in outcomes and trajectories can be achieved. This includes governments, non-government organisations, academia, business and community members.

The Community Strategic Plan should be developed with the aim of achieving the Families and Children Activity Outcomes and the Communities for Children FP objectives. The objectives of the Communities for Children FP are outlined below, including the new objective around school transition and engagement.

- To improve the health and well-being of families and the development of young children, from before birth through to age 12 years, paying special attention to:
 - Healthy young families — supporting parents to care for their children before and after birth and throughout the early years;
 - Supporting families and parents — support for parents to provide children with secure attachment, consistent discipline and quality environments that are stable, positive, stimulating, safe and secure;
 - Early learning — provide access to high quality early learning opportunities in the years before school; provide early identification and support for children at risk of developmental and behavioural problems; assist parents with ways they can stimulate and promote child development and learning from birth; and

- School transition and engagement - support children and families to make a smooth transition to school and work with local schools to assist children and families with their ongoing engagement with school.
- To create strong child-friendly communities that understand the importance of children and apply this capacity to maximise the health, well-being and early development of young children at the local level.

Community Strategic Plan Guidance

All Facilitating Partners are required to provide a Community Strategic Plan by **1 April 2015** for each Service Area and will cover the period to 1 July 2019.

The Plan includes the following sections:

1. Communities for Children Facilitating Partner's Details
2. Community Informed Service Mapping
3. Community Engagement
4. Service Area Vision
5. Priority Areas

When developing your Plan, you should consider the following documents:

- Families and Children Guidelines Overview
- Communities for Children FP Operational Guidelines
- Your Families and Communities Programme Grant Agreement, especially Item B
- Families and Children Performance Framework
- Families and Children Programme Logic, and
- State, territory and local government policies, plans and services

FPs will likely generate a substantial amount of valuable information as they develop their Plan. However, as part of the Department's commitment to reducing reporting requirements, FPs can limit responses to **one page per section** and **one page per priority area**.

The Plan must be developed in conjunction with your Communities for Children Committee and signed by an authorising officer in your organisation before it is submitted to your Grant Agreement Manager for review.

Please contact your Grant Agreement Manager if you need assistance developing your Plan or if you may have difficulty in meeting the due date.

Other useful information resources include:

- [Factsheet on the Families and Children Expert Panel](#)
- [Factsheet on Collaboration](#)
- [Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage](#)
- [Closing the Gap: National Indigenous Reform Agreement](#)
- [The Toolkit for Indigenous Service Provision](#)
- [The Working and Walking Together handbook prepared by SNAICC](#)
- [The Engaging hard-to-reach families and children report by Natasha Cortis, Ilan Katz and Roger Patulny](#)
- [The Family Relationship Services Australia \(FRSA\) What Helps and Hinders, FRSA Linkages and Collaboration Project Report](#)
- [Interagency Collaboration by the Australian Institute of Family Studies](#)
- [Promising Practice Profiles at the Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse by the Australian Institute of Family Studies](#)
- [Creating Conditions for Collective Impact](#)

1. Communities for Children Facilitating Partner's Details

Facilitating Partner Details

Service Area Name	Fairfield Includes the suburbs: Carramar Fairfield, Fairfield East, Fairfield Heights, Fairfield West, Old Guildford, Smithfield, Villawood, Wetherill Park and Yennora.
FP Name	The Smith Family
FP Contact Name	Randa Warda
FP Contact Title	Project Manager Communities for Children Facilitating Partner – Fairfield
Address	2/11 William Street Fairfield
State/Territory and Postcode	NSW, 2165

Community Strategic Plan

Date Communities for Children Committee agreed to Community Strategic Plan	3 March 2015
Name of Facilitating Partner Authorising Officer	Sulabha Pawar National Manager, Government and Community Projects
Signature of Facilitating Partner Authorising Officer	SULABHA PAWAR

DSS Use

Date of Submission to DSS	
Date of DSS approval	
DSS Delegate Name	
DSS Delegate Position	
DSS Delegate Signature	

2. Community-Informed Service Mapping

Fairfield City and its Demographics

The Fairfield CBD is 30km South West of Sydney and it leads an LGA spanning 102 square kilometres and 27 suburbs. While some of these suburbs are home to families on above average incomes, there is a density of significantly vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the east of the LGA. This includes the Communities for Children suburbs: Carramar, Fairfield, Fairfield East, Fairfield Heights, Fairfield West, Old Guildford, Smithfield, Villawood, Yennora and Wetherill Park. At the 2011 ABS Census, the population of Fairfield included 0.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, 52.3% who were born overseas and 69.9% who speak a language other than English at home. Fairfield is historically one of the most multicultural hubs in all of Australia and has recently become the area of highest intake of refugees and asylum seekers with 9,377 migrants from 117 different countries arriving in the area between January 2011 and December 2014.

The community of Fairfield is home to three distinct population groups: the long-term non-migrants living generally in what is known as the Parks district, the long-term migrant people who began settling in the area since early in the 20th century and the newly-arrived refugee and asylum seekers. The latter is a group whose arrival and sometimes movement out of the area create a relatively high transience. Those who remain in the LGA or nearby suburbs have built 'emerging communities'. While each of these groups have unique needs, all of them suffer from poverty, evidenced by Fairfield's SEIFA ranking as the 3rd most disadvantaged LGA in NSW and the only metropolitan area in the bottom 16 rankings.

Fairfield Children and Families

Fairfield's children and families experience extremely high levels of vulnerability. Babies are born in families that experience socio-economic instability; young children enter formal schooling with significant deficits in all 5 AEDC domains and are overall nearly 1½ times more likely to suffer from 2+ vulnerabilities when they begin school. Young and older parents feel socially excluded and unable to engage with healthy social activity because of lack of access and affordability; many suffer from preventable illnesses that, according to the Fairfield LGA Health Profile 2014, led to 4,162 hospitalisations and over 200 deaths in 2010-12; youth and adults experience disengagement that is attested by DEEWR unemployment rate of 21.2% in the 2165 postcode in September 2014, 3.7 times the NSW rate and the highest in the State; families experience housing stress with average household sizes of 3.23 persons compared to 2.5 in NSW, and cost of rent at rates competitive with suburbs closer to the City of Sydney; the stress of high cost of living is made worse with extremely high gambling and smoking addictions.

There is also cross-cultural stress in the area: emerging communities, refugees and asylum seekers of trauma and torture experiences and economic migrants bring with them yet another layer of complexity and add to the challenges already existing in the area.

Community informed mapping of strengths and needs

The Facilitating Partner's community consultation established that there is a need to create strong and stable social support networks for children and families in Fairfield in order to increase their ability to access the services sector. 435 conversations were undertaken with children and parents who indicated that they feel lonely and isolated; they do not have access to social networks, to meaningful health and wellbeing activities and spaces, or to

meaningful and engaging education and work opportunities. The consultation also uncovered that children and their families are not skilled to handle life transitions and end up unprepared and disengaged at school and in society.

Another area that was consistently highlighted through the consultation was that the high levels of engagement of young children, particularly seen through their primary school attendance rate of 91-97% across the LGA, is not sustained as they get older. These children have strong aspirations and ambitions, and many relate their dreams to helping their family overcome current disadvantage, however, their enthusiasm is not extended into adolescence and adulthood. This can be strongly linked with the parents' lack of motivation to be engaged members of civil society and the educational, health and wellbeing challenges they themselves live with on a daily basis. A consistent approach that builds the profound skills necessary to remain motivated and engaged, and that is relevant, realistic and meaningful to these families, would support these children to grow into positively effective members of society.

The Fairfield Service System

There is a plethora of services at Fairfield ranging from Federally funded early childhood and family services to a concentration of NSW Health, multicultural services, settlement services, job seeker networks, NGOs delivering single parent, mother, father and family support services, school based and school related services and programs. Some of these services are experiencing stress related to government reform and funding changes. For example, the local supported playgroups are developing strategies to facilitate and enable staff to transition families in a period of 12 to 18 months, and NGOs are scaling back services that have lost government funding such as Anglicare's highly effective HOPE refugee family and relationship counselling. The impact of the latest round of Commonwealth funding will not be felt for another few months. Government decisions relating to housing accessibility will also create a gap that is too soon to realise at this point in time.

The issue surrounding services and service provision at Fairfield is predominantly in the area of communication, access and reach. This aspect was consistently highlighted by families and service providers during the FP community consultation. There is a need to improve access and reach between vulnerable, isolated children and families, and the service industry in the LGA. Enhancing the effectiveness of the service sector to connect with vulnerable children and families and to increase participation in activities would in turn encourage people to attend services and to engage meaningfully in long-term, sustainable processes.

Service providers at Fairfield are connected through interagencies, as well as through a referral system. The services are grouped according to target clients and speciality. Smooth referral processes apply to clients who fall within the target age, gender, status and need categories, however, when clients cease to fit into the criteria of a service they then seem to drop out of the network. There is hence a gap in the communication between services in the broader sector; the DSS Data Exchange will help track some of these families and individuals. Child, youth, young adult and parent services would benefit their own practices and their clients' needs by knowing more about each other and about what is available. There is a clear opportunity to improve support through improving the communication, access and reach across the community.

3. Community Engagement

Communities for Children (CfC) has been at Fairfield since 2005 and has geographically expanded from the centre of the LGA to include 10 suburbs in total. The Smith Family as Facilitating Partner conducted a thorough **research and community consultation** process in developing its Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019. The consultation process was guided by the **CfC Committee** and the current **Community Partners** from the start. The survey was developed in conjunction with the Community Partners who ensured focus on learning about the experiences of children and families and that are health, wellbeing and socio-economically related. The survey was evaluated before public distribution by a Committee advisory group that included three service providers who were new to the Committee and who represented the new CfC areas of Smithfield and Wetherill Park, and local settlement services.

The **consultation** involved a total of 540 interactions with children 0-12, parents, service providers and utilised methods that included surveys, interviews and focus groups. Interviews were also conducted with school leaders and staff as well as local businesses. The extensive **engagement of the community** delivered a representation of the diversity of voice and experience of people living at Fairfield. The only group that was challenging to engage in this process was Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This group comprises only 0.7% of the population of the Fairfield LGA and they generally do not live in the CfC area. The FP is closely connected with the Fairfield Local Aboriginal Access Group, an interagency that in 2015 is developing a strategy and an approach to increase engagement of local Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people with services.

The findings of the community consultation and the desktop research undertaken by the FP team were tabled in a **Scoping Document** that was endorsed by the Committee at its meeting on 3rd February 2015. The Committee, along with other community members, engaged with the *Summary of Findings* of the report in developing our **strategic priorities** at a forum held on 13th February 2015.

In 2015, the FP will continue to engage a **broad representation** in the Committee and maintain the active participation and membership of its six distinct groups: parents, community partners, other service providers, school leaders and personnel, local authorities and government agencies as well as local businesses and the Cumberland Chamber of Commerce. The group that will be added to enhance the relevance of the work of the FP and the Committee will be of children 0-12. This will be possible through an after school or a school holiday activity. The breadth of membership of the Committee ensures the representation of the diversity of people living at Fairfield, the diversity of the services provided, and the voice of the vulnerable and disadvantaged people who are the intended beneficiaries of our work.

The Committee will continue to meet bi-monthly and members will hold **active, participatory membership** that will be re-invigorated at the start of each financial year through an Expression of Interest process. The Committee's **engagement with our target groups** will be enhanced **through creative strategies** in order to increase exposure of our work and to connect the Committee directly with vulnerable children and families, and with local businesses and authorities who are keen to strengthen harmonious relationships and partnerships across the LGA.

As per previous practice, the FP will have a relationship with ***local schools and school leaders*** through the Committee and through programs in its organisation's portfolio, but it will essentially concentrate all fundamental relationships in the activities and programs delivered by its Community Partners who work at and through schools. The FP will engage Committee members and Community Partners in developing Outcomes Based Accountability, and it will support and provide mentoring and training opportunities to the community in the use of research and in developing evidence informed practice.

Attached: CfC Committee membership list and Terms of Reference

4. Service Area Vision

Vision

Fairfield is an aspirational community that is welcoming, where children grow healthy and safe and go on to become active members of our community

The ***Vision for the Fairfield CfC FP*** area is about strengthening the community by empowering its children and enabling them to envision a future that is safe and defined by success. It represents the two-way interaction between community and individuals, who are 'grown' into integral members of the community. This vision also speaks to the diversity, multiculturalism and transient population of Fairfield in its 'welcoming' frame; the community wants to see harmony across its many small community groups.

This vision developed from an activity of the CSP Strategic Priorities Forum that asked participants to write the headlines that they want to see in June 2019. Every group fed back a vision that saw children as confident, independent, resilient and safe. It was unanimously agreed that the community will be characterised as 'aspirational' because its members will be highly motivated and engaged in life activities.

The Forum attendees utilised findings of the CfC Facilitating Partner (FP) community consultation in crafting these vision statements. The community conversations, the interviews and the focus groups that the FP conducted asked children and their parents about goals they set themselves. In all cases, the children had highly enthusiastic and at times altruistic hopes for the future, including 'putting food on the table' and 'saving people from war'. The parents, while they had very high hopes for their children, had no or very little goals for themselves. These parents did not connect lack of motivation with their disengagement and disenfranchisement in the community. The responsibility to provide children a healthy childhood, to enable them to dream and to have universal access is hence shared by the community.

5. Priority Areas

Priority Area One

Fairfield children and families utilise opportunities to connect to a social, active and inclusive community.

Overview

This priority reflects the need for improved social support and networks for children and families living in the Fairfield CfC FP area. This pattern emerged strongly through the community consultation process and is reflected in public data such as NATSEM 2014, which indicates that only 14% of children 0-4 attend preschool in Fairfield East and 17.7% in Fairfield West. This was further highlighted through the community consultation process that found children and parents seek after school and school holiday activities because of their social isolation and need for support networks.

Responses to the FP's survey questions that asked who respondents talk to and what strategies they use to feel better when they are unhappy overwhelmingly indicated a lack of access to appropriate support networks in the home and outside it. Furthermore, there is a lack of free or affordable recreational activities for children and parents in the area. Respondents, ranging from children 5 years of age to grandparents stated that recreational activities are very expensive and that they simply cannot utilise available options. In an area like Fairfield East, where the AEDC shows 14.5% of children experience vulnerability in Social Competence, there are no free public recreational spaces. Free regular activities in Fairfield CBD are limited to the library and CfC Community Partner activities.

There is also a need to increase social skills, socially acceptable behaviour and opportunities for socially isolated and excluded children and families. In the Fairfield community, children's Social Competence in AEDC was 1.3 to 1.8 times worse than the State average, and in the Communication and General Knowledge domain the whole community rated 17.2% compared with 8.5% in NSW, with Old Guildford reaching 26.3%, more than three times worse than other children in NSW and Australia. Hence, the aim of this priority will be to provide:

- welcoming, social, active and inclusive opportunities to connect children 0-12 and their families to a social, harmonious and healthy lifestyle.
- opportunities for vulnerable families to improve social networks that deliver improved social capacity, better health outcomes, parenting skills and support networks.
- active and inclusive social opportunities for a healthier, vibrant, resilient, harmonious and connected community.

Families and Children Activity's Outcomes this priority will contribute to:

Improved child wellbeing; Improved individual and family wellbeing; Improved family functioning; Improved community functioning; More cohesive community.

Communities for Children FP Objectives this priority will address:

Objective 1 - To improve the health and well-being of families and the development of young children, from before birth through to age 12 years, paying special attention to:

- **Healthy young families**
- **Supporting families and parents**

Strategies to achieve improved outcomes

Funded direct service delivery: Activity Examples - School-based social networks, playgroups and recreational groups; men's, women's and parents' groups; cultural and language groups; cross-cultural groups; visible programs and unstructured groups; cooking, music and arts groups; newly-arrived family groups; unemployed people's groups.

Other actions by FP, CfC committee and other key players: The FP will promote partnerships, networking and use of public spaces by service providers. The Committee members will be able to provide mentoring and coaching opportunities for Community Partners, to other service providers and to school staff.

Improvement measurement: methodology

Methodology to measure improvement and outcomes of the strategies listed will include, along the quantitative reporting, qualitative approaches to evaluating impact of networks through observation, pre and post evaluation, visibility of use of spaces and other means through which to assess success of network development.

Stakeholders

- Children 0-5 and their families; children 5-12 and their families; extended kin network.
- Early childhood service providers: playgroups, preschool, child care, day care, family day care
- Young parents, single parents, young and older carers
- Vulnerable parents and families living with domestic violence and facing child protection issues; Parents of refugee, trauma or torture experiences
- Service Providers: NGOs, settlement and refugee services, migrant and multicultural services, specialist groups, community groups and their leaders
- Local businesses
- Local Council
- Department of Family and Community Services

Priority Area Two

Fairfield children and families are well-prepared to handle life transitions.

Overview

This priority is in response to the need of individuals in the community to be better prepared and more resilient when dealing with *life transitions*. The AEDC assessment of the preparation of children 0-5 to enter school indicates serious deficits in all 5 domains and NAPLAN results indicate that 42-74% of students at CfC Fairfield area primary schools perform in the bottom NSW quarter. With such a high number of children at risk attendance rates of 91-97% at primary school drop to 88-95% at high school, and only around 88% of youth finish Year 12. Fairfield Public School and Fairfield High School encounter the most student disengagement rates as both are home to high refugee and asylum seeker children. Fairfield High School is also host to a large Intensive English Centre (IEC).

Added to that, the transient population of newly-arrived refugees and asylum seekers places a huge demand on the schools and on settlement services in the area. Settlement services do a great job of supporting families through the welfare system in the first 6 months of families' arrival in the area, but the FP community consultation found that transition skills such as food security and cultural awareness are not addressed and the families' ability to handle living in a new country and culture is not developed.

The FP's consultation process highlighted two distinct yet related *transitional paths: chronological* (children 0-5, children 5-12, youth 12-18, young adults 18-24 and adults 24+) and *stage transitions*. The latter refers to social, cultural and life transitions and includes family planning, parenthood, new culture and lifestyle, cross-cultural interactions, dealing with the logistics of living in a new country, improving personal and family wellness and mental health, and being prepared to move from welfare to financial independence and employment.

Families and Children Activity's Outcomes this priority will contribute to:

Increased personal agency; Stronger family relationships; Increased parental capacity; Increased economic engagement.

Communities for Children FP Objectives this priority will address:

Objective 1 - To improve the health and well-being of families and the development of young children, from before birth through to age 12 years, paying special attention to:

- **Early learning**
- **School Transition and engagement**

Strategies to achieve improved outcomes

Funded direct service delivery: Activity Examples - this will include support for parents to engage with their children's development and preparedness at all stages of their childhood through to primary school, high school and beyond. It will also include direct support for children to develop resilience and skills to deal with a variety of transitions. Direct service can also target newly-arrived families, long term migrants and non-migrant groups at

Fairfield to enable them to prepare for study and/or employment, to settle into new areas and to expand their own resource base.

Other actions by FP, CfC committee and other key players: Support, mentoring and coaching for parents, particularly young parents and single parents, is something we can develop through the Committee and through partnerships with NGOs, Department of Human Services and Job-Seeker services. Potential for innovative social enterprising activities.

Improvement measurement: methodology

Quantitative measures in this priority will include playgroup and preschool attendance rates, school engagement and retention rates; engagement with employment and/or study; increased economic participation for parents. To support this we will measure participation and return rates of clients to programs delivered by services providers and observe: increased parental engagement, decrease in the risk that vulnerable children experience, and decrease in the overall number of children at risk. In the long term we would look for improved AEDC results and decrease in child vulnerability, as well as improved employment and education outcomes.

Stakeholders

- Playgroups, preschool, childcare providers, family day care providers, other early childhood service providers
- Support groups for parents, mothers, fathers, separated and single parent families
- Child protection agencies
- Settlement, refugee and asylum seeker services, migrant and multicultural services
- Primary and high schools
- Department of Education
- Local businesses and job-seekers networks
- Department of Family and Community Services

Priority Area Three

Fairfield children and families feel empowered to engage with life-long aspirations through education, life skills and employment.

Overview of the priority

This priority focuses on motivation to engage in lifelong education and employment, and on aspirations that are necessary in a young child's life and that encourage them to maintain their enthusiasm and excitement for learning into adolescence and adulthood. Research by the Brotherhood of St Laurence has shown that the levels of youth disengagement is alarmingly high and in an area like Fairfield where ABS statistics indicate long-term chronic unemployment at over 2 times the national average as well as a high long-term unemployment ratio of 34% of all unemployed in long-term unemployment, there is a need to influence and to improve the perception of parents, and to support children to maintain their young energy.

The research was paralleled with the FP's consultation process where it was found that parents of children 0-12 overwhelmingly lacked aspirations for themselves. These are parents whose age ranges from 20 to over 50, yet they see no hope for themselves to do more than meet their daily living expenses, yet they expect their children to become professionals so that they can change their lives. This is in direct contrast to research by NCVER that demonstrates the academic and early career success of children is linked with aspirations espoused at home.

Hence, in this priority, the family home would be at the centre, and it would play an active role in supporting children's development before school, throughout their school and into higher education and/or work. This priority aims to create sustainable outcomes by providing support and experiences that **create aspirations** and a **strong sense of belonging** and ownership for children and their parents. Exposure to opportunities would be through pathways for children and their families that take them out of their regular cycles.

Families and Children Activity's Outcomes this priority will contribute to:

Increased personal agency; Increased positive community connectedness; Improved individual and family wellbeing; Increased economic engagement; More cohesive communities.

Communities for Children FP Objectives this priority will address:

Objective 1 - To improve the health and well-being of families and the development of young children, from before birth through to age 12 years, paying special attention to:

- **Supporting families and parents**
- **School Transition and engagement**

Strategies to achieve improved outcomes

Funded direct service delivery: Activity Examples - effective early intervention programs and activities will engage parents in all phases of their children's development. Activities can include the whole family based and can provide family counselling and support; cross-

cultural education; real life experiences that take children and families out of routine, connect children and their parents with the business community and enable community leaders to utilise existing resources.

Other actions by FP, CfC committee and other key players: local businesses and business leaders would provide mentoring experiences and skills to children and their parents; Agencies involved in education, employment and finance can support the work of services by enabling families to access opportunities and by rewarding engagement; School P&C committees would provide exemplar behaviours and opportunities for parents to be continuously engaged with their children throughout their lives.

Improvement measurement: methodology

Quantitative measures of improvement in this category would be in the number of different cultural groups that engage in early childhood activities with their children; the number of parents who engage with their children's primary and high school experiences; the number of out of school activities parents and children do together; the number of voluntary activities for fathers and children; increase in experiential, career-based education for children and their parents. Qualitative measures would include pre and post survey responses; a review of the relevant FP Scoping Document findings in 2017; information provided by CPs.

Stakeholders

- Children 0-12, siblings, parents, young and older carers, grandparents
- Community Leaders
- Local schools and P&C groups
- Local businesses and job services providers
- Department of Human Services and Department of Education
- Department of Family and Community Services

Priority Area Four

Fairfield families have well-connected access and reach across the community.

Overview of the priority

This priority emerged as a result of the FP's consultation where every interaction with children, parents/carers and service providers indicated that there is difficulty of access and reach between the two groups. The parents that were consulted were already engaged in at least 1 service, yet their responses to questions around what services they think would be useful to improve conditions for themselves and their children indicated that they do not know what is available beyond the service that they are already connected with. Service providers' surveys and staff interviews by the FP indicated that they struggle to reach new clients. In an area where there are high numbers of vulnerable, socially excluded and disadvantaged people, and there are many service providers who deliver programs, there is a clear need for improved reach and access across the community.

This priority aims to facilitate and influence improvement in the Fairfield service system to be more connected and accessible. It also aims to support greater reach and effective engagement with vulnerable community members. It would target community groups via their leaders, and it would engage service providers in methods to improve communication regarding needs, so that services can be effective, relevant and engaging.

Effective access and reach across the community would create sustainable connections by simplifying the multiple existing networks. Raising awareness of the relevance of services to children and their families makes them better informed about what is available in the area, and better placed to utilise the services. This priority would also increase the awareness of the power of partnerships amongst service providers and that partnerships are varied, ranging from funded to in-kind, mutually beneficial, formal and informal arrangements.

Families and Children Activity's Outcomes this priority will contribute to:

Increased use of early intervention and prevention approaches; Improved access for vulnerable or disadvantaged individuals and families; Improved community functioning; More cohesive communities.

Communities for Children FP Objectives this priority will address:

Objective 2 - To create strong child-friendly communities that understand the importance of children and apply this capacity to maximise the health, well-being and early development of young children at the local level.

Strategies to achieve improved outcomes

Funded direct service delivery and other actions by FP, CfC committee and other key players: Build platforms that enhance the existing communication systems and influence improvement by utilising innovative practices. Platforms could be web-based and could utilise social networking as nearly every participant in the consultation process indicated that they have at least one device at home. Mapping and developing relationships with

community leaders and 'gate keepers'. Advocacy to service providers, NGOs and neutral agencies that would function as the 'backbone' would create buy-in and a shared vision.

Access to vulnerable and disadvantaged families through Centrelink and settlement services can be utilised in addressing this priority. Soft entry points can be enhanced and a regular child and family event that draws large attendance and participation of the community would also address this need.

Partnerships will be crucial in this space. All stakeholders will need to share a common vision of creating an aligned, connected and simplified service system.

Improvement measurement: methodology

Outcomes measures; there will be evidence of improvement in this priority area through thorough and user-friendly service mapping, technology-based platforms, soft and hard entry points for children and families, events and spaces. The DSS Data Exchange SCORE will be very useful in identifying increased reach to new clients.

Stakeholders

- Children 0-12, youth and other siblings, parents, young and older carers.
- Community leaders.
- Settlement services and other services to which clients would transition post their initial settlement phase.
- Service providers and NGOs offering services to isolated and excluded individuals and families.
- Department of Human Services and local government Communications and Asset Management units.
- Department of Family and Community Services