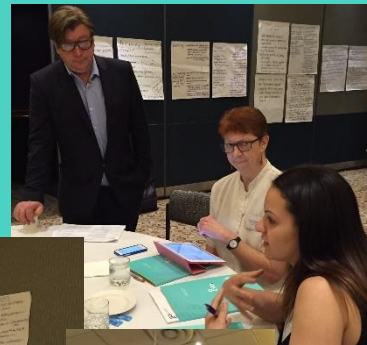
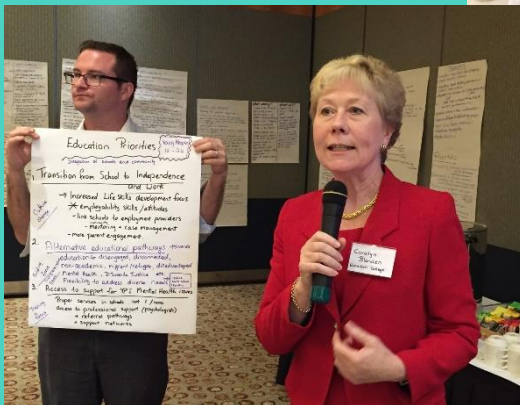


South Western Sydney regional consultation

2015, around 70 people who work with children and young people in South Western Sydney came together to contribute to a new NSW strategic plan. This is what you told us.



what you thought was **working** for children and young people in NSW and in South Western Sydney

Collaboration: **Good work between organisations** (state, local govt, community agencies). Specifics include referrals, MOUs, **co-case management**, with some schools, schools and communities partnerships, co-design and joint ROSH response. In addition, people are willing to do something different and to bring social capital along the “development agenda”.

Young people: Connected young people are making progress with support from services, family and community; there are new support services in some places (eg Auburn); there are multiple ways to make contact with services.

Recreational activities: Keeping children engaged and active, eg through sporting culture, vacation care, playgroups, early education, good engagement through open space and facilities.

Communication: Engaging children and young people and their values, CYP consultation and participation in decisions about programs. Understanding culture and background.

Local government: Funding for children and young people programs, some transport, CYP on the agenda.

Communities: Focused work on concentrated communities, creating a sense of belonging.

Services: **Service volume and variety.** NGOs doing some great work, eg Youth Hope, Burnside Intensive Family Support Options, **Family Referral Services**, Sherwood House therapeutic residential care. Government efforts including FACS, good public health system (Liverpool Hospital). Some one-stop-shops including Minto Aboriginal Child Family Centre, local health district partnership with Aboriginal hub, Aboriginal supported playgroup (Health + Education).

Service arrangements: **Early intervention** in a range of programs (eg family, homelessness and restorations) and preventive work to keep children out of the system. The national quality framework, soft entry points, understanding of mental health issues, case management, counselling support, integration of allied health with child services, multicultural services, some childcare starting to be child focused.

Families: Grassroots programs connecting families to services, like long-term intensive family programs and parenting programs (seeing improvements in parenting skills). Practical programs. Services with skills in working with refugee and newly arrived CYP.

what you thought was **not working** for children and young people in NSW and South Western Sydney (**System issues**)

Employment: Need better job services. Other issues include work and job experiences, unemployment levels and the school leaving age of 17 being problematic.

Transport in general: High cost, need more, safety.

Health: insufficient mental health and wellbeing services for all stages of mental health issues, access to and awareness of health services, not sharing immunisation status, no access to local services (ie a children's hospital) where health needs are complex.

Recreational activities: High cost, insufficient overall, not enough parks and open spaces, existing parks not very good, new developments have green space but not parks, YP being asked to move on from public spaces.



Service workforce and systems: Funding design should have a focus on long-term goals, rather than just short-term competitive funding. Lack of info sharing from data collection, data analysis, coupled with insufficient time to assess program effectiveness. Many systems are not very child friendly, services are too local. **Not enough early intervention programs vs crisis.** Collaboration is patchy. There isn't enough time to do it well.

System disconnects: Between schools, TAFE, NGOs etc, between government agencies, linking GPs, specialists and allied health.

An overloaded system: Lack of support services, insufficient domestic violence responses, lack of youth refuges and emergency housing, homelessness, substandard family day care services. Time restrictions on services, Long waitlists, which undermine the prospect of early intervention.

“Young people need more
job opportunities”

what else you thought was **not working** for children and young people in NSW and South Western Sydney (**people issues**)

Development stages: Service delivery changes through age groups. The focus is on younger children, not enough for older children, but there is a need for more access to counsellors for child care centres. Not enough services for 14-18 years. Need for life skills training. Not enough funding for programs beyond 18, especially for 18-24 with disability.

Insufficient engagement of or services for **children with disability**, lack of services for children with special needs.

Vulnerable young people: Substance abuse, and associated illegal behaviour and JJs involvement. Indigenous and refugee young people have fewer supports and need a formalised referral system (+ support). Those that are disconnected are at huge risk of not having basic needs (eg home, food, health) met.

Community: There is a strong locational dimension to most things eg lack of Aboriginal specific child and youth services in Wingecarribee (and other areas), leading to poor outcomes in concentrated and disadvantaged communities. Need a community approach. Other issues include racism, negative perceptions of safety, lack of interpreting services, refugee and CALD needs increasing and not met, and lack of Aboriginal-specific services.

Family: Not reaching parents. Parents not delivering supervision and strong role modelling, being unable to support homework/school participation, generally time poor. Mixed messages from parents re alcohol. Parenting programs don't incorporate care for children, not enough engagement with children in family service delivery. ROSH responses. Need responses that protect children when parents don't want to engage.

Communication: Inconsistent opportunities for CYP involvement particularly re public space design. Poor awareness of local services. Appropriate information for CALD families. Patchy internet access when schools etc assume it is available.



what you thought were priorities for specific issues and systems for children and young people in NSW and in South Western Sydney

Issues:

Employment

Housing

Mental health

Safety (particularly ROSH)

Recognising trauma

Drug culture

Drug and alcohol services for <16yrs

Cost of education and tertiary fees

Life skills for all age groups, esp 18-25 year olds

Leaving care

CYP with disability

Domestic violence

Bullying

Humanitarian and other refugees (access to support)

Accessible appropriate activities and spaces for YP

Systems:

Connected strategic planning between agencies (eg schools, TAFE, FACS, NGOs)

Integrated service delivery

More services

Need for better coordination, avoiding duplication

Increase refugee services (education, employment, children, family)

More resourcing for FACS to respond to ROSH

Addressing lifestage service gaps eg 8-11 year olds

Funding models



what you thought were **priorities** for the **approaches** to children and young people in NSW and in South Western Sydney



Approaches:

Connected strategic planning between agencies (eg schools, TAFE, FACS, NGOs)
Integrated service delivery
Assessing a child's needs and THEN referring
Shifting from class to student in education
Engaging disconnected CYP to return to schooling
Strengths-based approaches building resilience
Not letting drug use interfere with employability or welfare receipt
Connectedness and transparency between YP and support systems
Better transitions from youth to adult services (esp health)

Approaches:

Better support for CYP with disability esp cognitive/behavioural/developmental delay
Removing stigma from mental health
Understanding cultural and intercultural differences
Better use of schools as community resources, access out of hours
More vocational youth services
Leveraging work of PCYC, collaborating
Services for younger children with issues
Allowing CYP to feel respected, valued, included, belong

"More responsibility, more trustworthy reliable transport ...try to keep all people at home rather than being homeless".
SWS primary school student

you singled out the approach to **education** and its relationship with other services—as your greatest area of concern

What is working

Education efforts: Schools (and school counsellors) that talk to services, some alternative pathways to learning and opportunity (although not enough). Links between education and others, such as education + health and wellbeing, coupled with clinical coordinators targeting health issues in schools. Benchmarks are improving, TAFE improving. Some schools look at child and family to provide holistic support.

What is not working:

Education and training: Relevance of school curriculum, school suspensions (esp in primary schools) with insufficient support and supervision available for students), insufficient resourcing for teachers to both teach AND assist with vulnerable children, teachers not recognising trauma, overall poor management of disengaged young people, inadequate training pathways. Not enough school involvement. Not enough supports for children.

Approaches to improve outcomes for CYP within schools:

Health and education seen as JOINT priority within schools.
School awareness of trauma-informed practices.
After school programs for CYP to connect to each other.
Better use of schools as community resources, access out of hours.
Integrating schools and education with other important issues eg health and wellbeing.
Partnerships between schools and employment agencies, focusing on employability skills and attitudes.
Integrating mental health/stress management to primary school.
Alternatives to schools for disengaged CYP eg Café Horizon, learning links, TVET courses.
More effort to connect external family support with internal school support.

"We need to reinforce life lessons in school like how to do your taxes, how to write your resume, how to pay bills and interviews".
SWS high school student

we asked you:

What **three big ideas** do you have that could, if supported across the state, improve the lives of children and young people?

and we gave you some prompt questions:

What state-wide directions currently support effective local decision making and service delivery for children and young people?

What state-wide directions currently hinder effective local decision making and service delivery for children and young people?

What makes for good child-centred practice in this area

How should children and young people be involved

What local initiatives could be adapted and scaled up across the state?

"Don't be racist, don't waste water" SWS primary school student



you told us your big ideas for the strategic plan*

Jobs, training and innovation:

Integration between schools and VET and other government services to strengthen career pathways for non-academic CYP.

More informed career advisors at school, making sure their information on jobs for the future is sound.

Encourage lifelong learning and strengthen life skills, backed by a change in the curriculum (or the way it is applied).

Introduce incentives for employers to take on young people, eg mentoring programs, education and funding.

Increase opportunities for work experience from an earlier age.

"We don't want to be
looked down by others,
because that's a terrible
feeling" SWS high school student

Domestic and family violence:

Refine the approach to managing DFV for the child, for example, promoting normality through kicking a ball, giving them a voice, explaining the normality of their behaviour. Examine the KPIs to make sure they support this approach.

Refine the engagement process so it is based on trust and quality rather than the number of referrals.

Educate CYP about respectful relationships, starting at primary ages, coupled with making everyone accountable for positive relationships. Promote strengths in current responses.

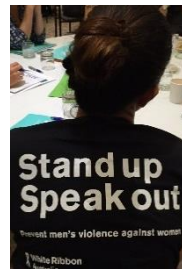
Transitions:

Transition programs for preschool to primary, with minimum standards for school readiness.

Addressing bullying and peer pressure for primary school children, with a new approach and consistency in all schools.

Using high school to prepare CYP for adulthood, linking them to lifeskills such as interviews and other employment skills.

Extending support for OOHC as current services are extremely limited.



here are more big ideas for the strategic plan

Mental health and drugs:

Flexibility in criteria to access services, incorporating a strength and purpose approach. This will require a reorienting of funding approaches.

Boosting the soft entry points for CYP to access services such as Family Referral Services or everyday activities such as yoga. NGOs hiring more 'mental health experts'.

Media campaign to normalise mental health issues, highlighting positive role models living with those issues.

Support for Aboriginal children and young people:

Expand the Minto Aboriginal Child Family Centre, which could be used as a model for support across the state with adequate funding. Couple with strengthened links between Health and AMS.

Require Aboriginal history and culture in the curriculum; embrace, celebrate and support Aboriginal culture in schools.

Address multigenerational trauma at a community level, coupled with an empowerment strategy and investment in the future of Aboriginal CYP with targeted multifaceted funding.

Built and natural environments:

Give children a real voice in planning and other decisions about environment.

Governments to lead a **better understanding of risk and change** the ideologies underpinning access to the environment.

Healthy children:

Shift the focus on **food in schools** from commercial/fundraising interests to healthy children—and **enforce nutrition policy** (note the links between healthy children and access to the environment).

Introduce a **child health officer into schools**.

Mandatory parenting classes linked to supported playgroups and adequately funded early childhood health centres.

Activities:

Free YMCA/YWCA membership for vulnerable families.

Local government involvement in increasing organised sporting activity.

here are big ideas to improve education for the strategic plan

Education (0-12):

Clearer, integrated standards and guidelines between early education and schooling. Codifying and sharing information so transition is supported, standardised and transparent.

Integrating health and education within schools, since healthy students are more likely to be healthy learners. Place clinical care coordinators in schools, working with teachers.

Take advantage of the flexible curriculum to **boost (emotional/mental/practical) life skills** that are relevant to the student/society/employment and encourage positive living as a whole.



Education (12-24):

A coordinated focus on **transition from school to independence and work**: introduce life skills (particularly employability) development, strengthen links with employment providers, greater community mentoring and case management and greater parental engagement.

Fund more **alternative educational pathways** for CYP who are disengaged, non-academic, alongside supporting those from a migrant/refugee background, experiencing disadvantage or mental health issues and inside the JJ system.

Access to support for young people with mental health issues, particularly through adequate access to psychologists in schools as well as clear referral pathways and support networks.



here are more big ideas to improve service integration for the strategic plan

Effective service integration:

Whole of sector mapping that backs a **structured, planning coordinated cross-sector delivery approach** (backed by economic analysis)

Create regional portals of available services (internet, face to face and phone)

New models of funding services and projects that are delinked from changes of government and backed by long-term evaluation of programs

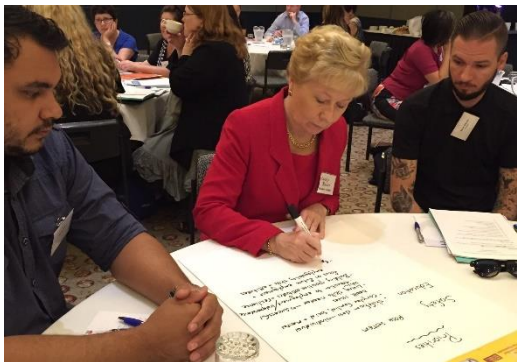
Get feedback from CYP regarding what effective service integration looks like. Then combine that vision with political will to shift current approaches.

Invest in early intervention—and understand what early intervention means.

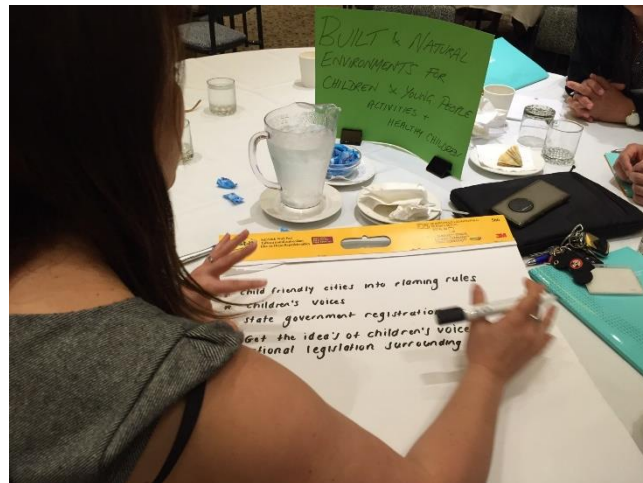
Create schools as community hubs, because of the centrality of education to children's lives. In particular, introduce counselling and other support services to support family functioning and improve children's learning.



thank you for your time and your wisdom.



"Optimism, aspiration,
responsibility" SWS high school
student



keep communicating with us via
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