



Family Relationship Services  
A U S T R A L I A

Submission to the Department of Families, Housing,  
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Discussion  
Paper *'Developing a Family Support Program'*

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National Leadership, Local Responses – Working  
Together for Australian Families

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## About Us

Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) is the national peak body for community organisations delivering services to families, children and young people across Australia. FRSA and its member organisations seek to work in partnership with the Federal Government to strengthen and support Australian families. FRSA's vision is for an Australian society that is enriched through respectful relationships in all of their diversity. In the achievement of this vision, our role is to support the delivery of quality services and engage in the development of public policy.

Full membership of FRSA is available to organisations that receive funding from the Federal Government to deliver services funded through the [Family Relationship Services Program](#) (FRSP). Associate membership is available to a broader scope of organisations and individuals that support the vision and values of FRSA. FRSA currently has 137 organisation members. In addition to the financial support of members, FRSA receives Federal Government funding through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to provide industry representation and support.

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# 1 Executive Summary

Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) is the national peak body for community organisations that deliver Australian Government funded services to families, children and young people. This submission responds to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) Discussion Paper '*Developing a Family Support Program*' (the 'Discussion Paper').

FRSA welcomes the development of the Family Support Program (FSP) and the opportunity to contribute to the development process. We recognise the value of better integrating the range of Australian Government policies and programs that provide support to families and work to improve the wellbeing of children and young people, particularly those at risk of poor outcomes.

Already the process of consultation has contributed to a growing sense of partnership between the Australian Government and the community services sector. There mutual benefits to be gained from articulating shared goals, defining a common language and developing new approaches to measuring the impact of programs on the safety and wellbeing of children and families.

While national leadership is important, it is the quality and appropriateness of local activity that will make a difference in the day-to-day lives of children and families. Tangible, measurable improvements in well-being and resilience occur at the local level through the quality of relationships between family members, neighbours, peer groups, and community, health and education services.

Communities across Australia are diverse; a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be successful. Each community has a unique mix of strengths and challenges. To enhance child wellbeing and offer better protection against abuse, neglect and violence, effective local strategies will be needed. The local strategies most likely to be effective are those that reduce social isolation, wrap supports around children, parents and families and increase the capacity of services to identify children at risk and respond appropriately.

The local knowledge within community organisations is a significant asset to be recognised and valued in the new era of the FSP. These organisations have a deep commitment to the wellbeing and safety of children, they also know their communities very well – the strengths, the vulnerabilities, the challenges to be overcome. They can mobilise substantial community resources and leverage existing infrastructure to implement strategies quickly and efficiently.

In summary, the Family Support Program provides a fresh opportunity to combine the Australian Government's capacity for leadership and vision, with the capacity of the family support sector for innovation and responsiveness. Our vision is for a new service system based on sustainable, long-term partnerships that enable local initiative as diverse as the communities, families, children and young people it serves.

## 1.1 Summary of Recommendations

1. Further develop and articulate key concepts in the proposed FSP Operating Framework to foster shared understanding and agreement.
2. Recognise and adopt strategies that support flexibility in service delivery as part of a long-term partnership between government and sustainable community based provider organisations.
3. Value and support the diversity of the family support sector.
4. Recognise and develop 3 tiers of advisory mechanisms to inform system design and local decision-making – national, local and expert.
5. Invest in local service coordination and build relationships between practitioners to support referral and local project collaboration.
6. Facilitate service provider input into local area planning processes and foster the development of cross sector networks to increase local links between FSP services and other service streams in related sectors such as health and education.
7. Develop a Quality Framework for the FSP building on existing service standards.
8. Facilitate service collaboration in program design through enabling mechanisms that remove barriers and provide incentives for increased sharing of resources.
9. Establish decision-making processes informed by local consultation and needs assessment.
10. Develop alternatives to competitive tender processes for allocating new funding in the FSP.
11. Develop an FSP performance framework that builds on the outcome based FRSP framework in consultation with the broader FSP providers and stakeholders.
12. Develop universal measures of child and family wellbeing and tools that can be built into common data collection systems to be applied across different settings.
13. Develop reasonable and consistent funding regulation based on agreed principles of transparency, value for money and risk management.
14. That program administrators be encouraged to work in partnerships to develop principles for program governance, aligned to the national compact.
15. Develop a Workforce Strategy for the Family Support Program, as a matter of priority.
16. Commit to a principle of fair remuneration levels in the community sector and address current inadequacies through systematic review of funding levels and performance requirements across programs.
17. Invest in collaborative projects and programs to foster positive relationships across the diversity of Family Support Program service providers.

## 2 Program Operational Framework

Do the draft program operational framework and six key requirements in the discussion paper identify all the key factors that will support the more effective delivery of FSP services?

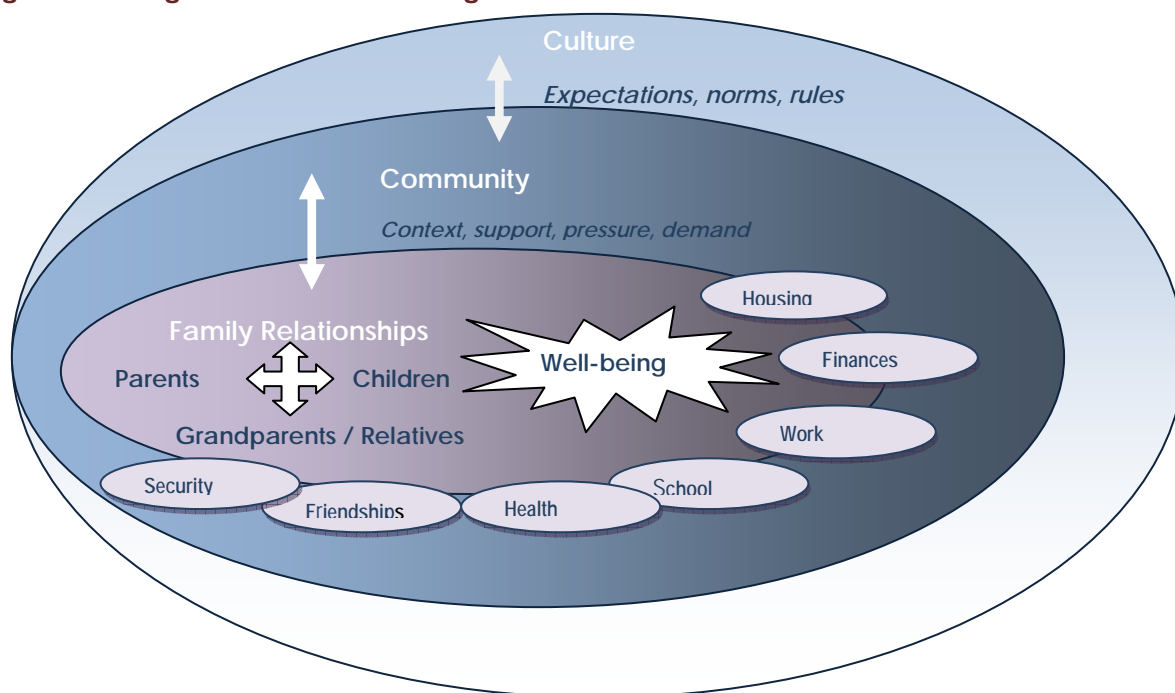
FRSA supports the intent of the principles outlined in the Draft Operational Framework. In the interests of fostering a shared understanding of the principles, we suggest that some of the key concepts be further explored and articulated. Some examples are identified below.

### Key concept 'well-being'

Well-being is a key concept in the principles that warrants more attention. It is assumed that there is a shared understanding of well-being and its importance to economic and social prosperity. There may be value in being more explicit and stating clearly that in the FSP context, well-being is not a 'soft' or idealistic state of happiness but rather a physical and mental soundness that makes it possible to maintain a home, participate in the workforce, attend school, provide care and meet the needs of other family members.

Understanding might be further enhanced by an examination of the ecological or contextual factors that impact on well-being. The proposed FSP Principles recognise that individual and family well-being (encompassing safety and resilience) are substantially influenced by the community context and wider cultural influences. This concept is fundamental to understanding why family support programs work with individuals, families and communities; and why the appropriate mix of supports might be very different across different community and cultural contexts. This could be assisted by the use of a diagram such as the one provided below.

**Figure 1: Ecological factors in well-being**



### **Key concept 'vulnerability'**

The use of the term 'vulnerable families' may be problematic because it implies a static state of disempowerment. This works against social inclusion by suggesting that 'vulnerable families' are different or 'other' to the majority of families. An alternative approach would be to recognise vulnerability as a temporary state which can happen to anyone or any family – perhaps as a result of a sudden trauma, illness, unemployment or separation. The goal becomes 'reducing risk' and 'building resilience' rather than 'fixing' groups of people or communities. This approach allows recognition that some groups and communities face greater risks and challenges but does not view disadvantage as inevitable.

Moving to a strengths based understanding of vulnerability is similar to the way that our societal understanding of disability has changed over the past two decades – reflected in the change in language from 'disabled persons' to 'people with disability' to more ecological concepts of 'disability' as a consequence of inaccessible environments and inadequate supports. An ecological understanding of vulnerability is that it occurs in the context of life events, circumstances and opportunities all of which can change over time.

### **Key concept 'family'**

The concept of 'family' is particularly challenging. An inclusive definition recognising the diversity of family relationships can become so broad that it is almost meaningless, yet anything less can be too narrow. Nonetheless, the absence of definition gives rise to concern that the Family Support Program may fail to recognise and respond to the diversity of family structures and relationships that exist in contemporary society. Some statements that recognise this diversity and the importance of developing supports that are appropriate and responsive to different needs may be a valuable inclusion in the FSP Operating Framework. For example:

- Clarify that the term 'parent' is used broadly to encompass mothers, fathers, step-parents, carers, grandparents and others who participate in raising children
- Recognise the value of engaging with men and fathers, particularly to highlight the positive role that the majority of dads take in family life
- Demonstrate an understanding of the unique circumstances of sole parent families and separated families with shared parenting arrangements
- Recognise the important role of grandparents and extended family networks
- Commit to the development of services that are culturally appropriate and sensitive to past harm; particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families as well as refugee and migrant families
- Acknowledge the additional challenges faced by families with a child or parent who has a disability, health or mental health needs.
- Respect the diversity of religious and lifestyle choices that families make and how this might impact on their use of support services.
- Recognise that equality of access to support for some groups such as gay parent families and children who have been adopted or fostered is a goal and new approaches may be warranted.

**Recommendation 1: Further develop and articulate key concepts in the proposed FSP Operating Framework to foster shared understanding and agreement.**

## 3 Program Design

### 3.1 Sustainability

**How can we build flexible service models with improved service pathways that are consistent with the FSP principles and operational framework?**

Sustainable 'mission focussed' organisations embedded in local communities are well placed to deliver effective integrated family support services that adapt over time to changing needs. The majority of organisations that deliver family support services have been a part of their local community for a long time. They have developed insight and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their community and they are well placed to understand the nature of support services most likely to be effective.

New organisations and new collaborations between providers – such as consortia arrangements, add a vibrancy and renewal to the sector that is important to foster. There is a long tradition in the community sector of new organisations being auspiced or sponsored by larger more established organisations. This is more likely to occur when organisations are not competing with one another or their own viability is not under threat.

The development of the Family Support Program is an opportunity to better understand the dynamics and driving or restraining forces that operate in the community sector. For example, assumptions that competition drives efficiency are not valid in non-market economies where there is a single purchaser who sets the price. Instead efficiency can be increased by building on existing capacity, supporting collaboration and sharing information. Likewise assumptions that larger organisations are more successful or more efficient warrant critique – smaller, local organisations can be better placed to harness local resources and target supports to local need within a specific community. Larger organisations contribute value in ways that are beyond the capacity of smaller organisation such coordinating activity across multiple sites or undertaking large scale research and evaluation projects that inform practice and decision-making. Neither large nor small organisations are inherently more successful, there is strength in having a diversity of providers that is often not well recognised by government.

Building on the work being done to develop a National Compact between the community sector and the Australian Government the FSP can lay the foundation for a new partnership approach to the delivery of family support. This might include recognition that the viability of organisations involved in the delivery of family support services is important. The collective capacity of the service system is enhanced by having organisations that can focus on achieving outcomes for families and communities over the long-term.

One of the challenges to sustainability has been the short term nature of funding agreements. Moving from 1 year to 3 year funding cycles was an important step towards a longer term commitment. However, increasingly the research literature identifies that real impact occurs over much longer timeframes. For example the work by Vinson (2007) identifies that geographic disadvantage is inter-generational and warrants sustained funding commitments over periods of 10-15 years. More recently the Evaluation of the Stronger Families and

Communities Strategy (2009) concludes that 3 years is a relatively short timeframe for developing new approaches and determining impact.

Community organisations with a strong community presence and connection are an important asset to the FSP. This deserves recognition and may warrant a commitment to long-term 'core' funding and/or investment in infrastructure that builds the capacity of these organisations to sustain a focus on 'turning the curve' on family and community wellbeing. This would secure ongoing capacity in the service system while packages of funding linked to specific outcomes might be transferable between providers.

Long term sustained investment is not at odds with flexibility. Pathways through the service system can be enhanced by allowing greater flexibility in the use of funds across service types – enabling organisations to work holistically with clients and tailor support to their needs rather than piecing together rigid 'packets' of support that must comply with narrow service delivery requirements.

One of the most significant restraints on flexibility is the historical nature of funding agreements that lock providers into a mode of delivery that may no longer be ideal. Opportunities for re-negotiating funding levels, operating guidelines and output requirements have not been readily available and are sometimes inconsistent with the use of competitive selection process. This can be addressed by seeing service delivery as a partnership which can be informed by all those involved and adapt to changing circumstances. Understanding the full cost of service delivery and the impact of changing service models underpins this approach.

In summary, strategies to support the development of flexible service delivery include:

1. Services are fully resourced and properly costed to be delivered flexibly from a variety of locations or alternate modes of delivery.
2. Program administrators and service providers are informed by research and evaluation on service costs and effectiveness when making decisions about service delivery arrangements.
3. Mechanisms exist for re-negotiating service models and performance measures overtime so that options are not restricted to historical arrangements.
4. Innovation is supported and disseminated to the broader service network.
5. The viability of organisations is recognised as core to sustainable service delivery.
6. Invest in infrastructure and capacity building at a 'systems' level as well as an 'organisation' level.

**Recommendation 2: Recognise and adopt strategies that support flexibility in service delivery as part of a long-term partnership between government and sustainable community based provider organisations.**

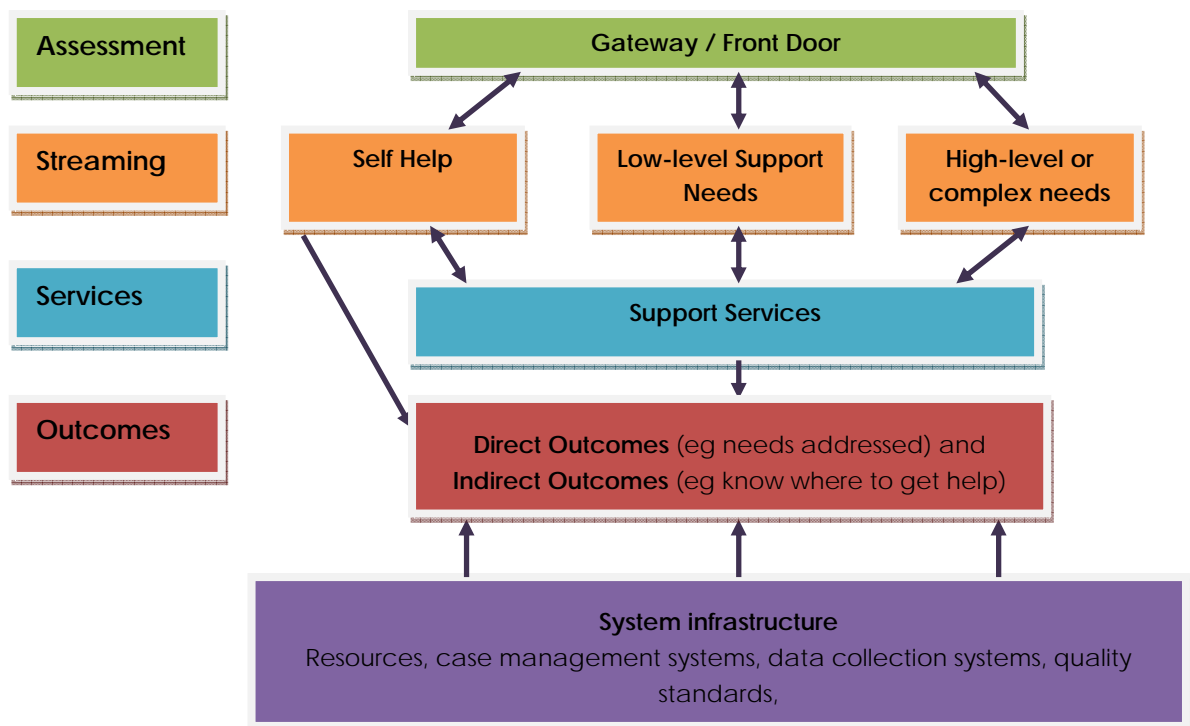
**Recommendation 3: Value and support the diversity of the family support sector.**

### 3.2 Getting the mix right

How can we ensure the service system is able to adequately support and engage both universal and targeted client groups in a region?

Service delivery systems must target resources appropriately along a continuum of self-help, low-level and intensive supports to meet the needs across the population, balancing a proactive early intervention approach with responding to assessed or articulated needs. This is a process of continual review and adjustment as community needs change over time. The diagram below identifies the generic components of any service delivery system.

**Figure 2: Components of Service Delivery Systems**



At the macro or national level the design of service systems can be usefully informed by research, practice wisdom and an understanding of the diversity of need across disparate communities. There will be some elements of community need, patterns of behaviour, effectiveness of existing service models that are common across locations and target groups. There will be other elements that are unique or highly variable. System design can also allow for components of the system to be locally tailored or adapted to understand and respond to the specific needs of local communities.

A national advisory council with a diversity of expertise would be best placed to inform decision-making on system design and the relative emphasis on each of the system components (eg gateway services, self help resources). However, local wisdom can inform the way that the service system is implemented on the ground and substantially enhance their effectiveness.

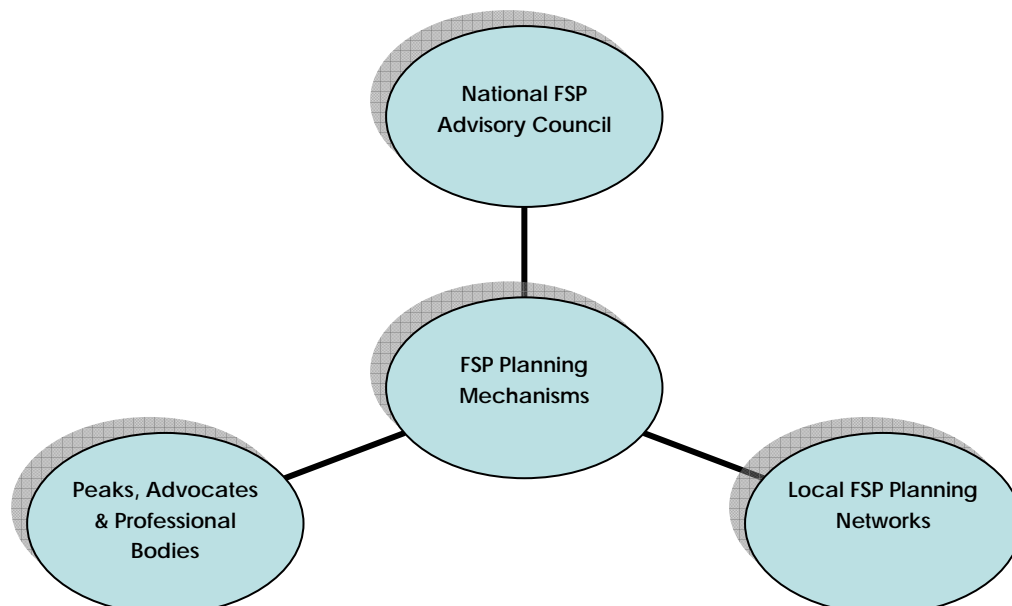
At the local level the service delivery system could be informed by local advisory groups that understand the local needs and priorities particularly relevant to the design of targeted or intensive support services. This would potentially bring together service providers and stakeholder representatives in a process of consultation about current and future responses to local needs and will help generate goodwill and buy-in on the part of organisations who in many cases have worked side by side for many years.

There is also a role for the national peak organisations that represent FSP providers and understand the driving and restraining factors that impact on program effectiveness. Peaks including FRSA, Families Australia, SNAICC, Playgroups Australia and ACOSS have practical experience in supporting program design and implementation. In addition, there are a range of groups representing the interests of children, parents, families and population groups as well as professional networks that can inform program design.

FRSA believes that there is value in the Family Support Program recognising and developing 3 tiers of advisory mechanisms to inform system design and local decision-making:

- **Local Planning Networks** consisting of provider organisations, stakeholder representatives and local community leaders;
- **Peaks and professional networks** that provide expertise and input on issues that impact on system design and service delivery;
- **National Advisory Council** to weigh and balance the range of factors to be considered in service design and provide national leadership.

**Figure 3: Proposed Layers of Advisory Mechanisms**



**Recommendation 4: Recognise and develop 3 tiers of advisory mechanisms to inform system design and local decision-making – national, local and expert.**

## 4 Service Delivery and Innovation

### 4.1 No wrong door

Can we improve service delivery so that clients requiring services in any of the core FSP streams can enter through any FSP service (i.e. a 'no wrong door' approach)?

There is considerable enthusiasm for a 'no wrong door' approach to be developed in the FSP. Practitioners positive engagement with clients acknowledging the service is part of a broader network and offering appropriate and assisted referral to other services that can assist families with a wide range of issues constitutes the no wrong door approach.

A major challenge is ensuring that all practitioners working with families understand and are aware of the range of supports available and how clients access these at the local level. Further, it relies on practitioners developing understanding, trust and value in other services to feel confident referring clients to other agencies. This can be difficult in a diverse service system with practitioners from different professional groups not historically trained to function as part of a multi-disciplinary system.

Professional rivalries and differences often go unacknowledged or are underplayed. The differences between health professionals, teachers, social workers, youth workers counsellors, lawyers are significant and fundamental in the training provided to them is often a deep sense of what is 'professional'. Addressing these rivalries will take ongoing education and training – working with universities, encouraging cross sector training and dialogue, fostering collaborative projects that get people working together (as in the Families NSW example below) is the key to increasing understanding of the different strengths each group brings to the table.

Comprehensive orientation and ongoing education for FSP staff is one approach to enhance knowledge of other services. Local project collaboration can also significantly enhance knowledge of other services available and encourage a no wrong door approach. See below Families NSW example.

A risk with the 'no wrong door' approach is that it becomes burdensome. It can be difficult to engage hard to reach families if every contact involves extensive screening and assessment. It is important to recognise and allow different levels of engagement with services. Services can co-host a range of events that introduce families to what is available in their local area without making formal contact and having to become a 'registered client'.

Community information days and open days, family fun days, parent information nights, and/or other social or interest based activities can facilitate initial contact that will help build increased awareness, familiarity and trust between families and the services they may not have previously accessed. The best outcome for families from this approach can be a sense of one door opening to many others rather than having to locate and access many different unfamiliar services that one would normally only attend when having problems.

Working collaboratively across multiple agencies is resource intensive. Investment in this activity is warranted in light of the long term benefits it will deliver through enhancing the effectiveness of the service system overall.

### **Practice Example 1: Families (First) NSW**

The implementation of Families (First) NSW over the past decade is an example of a coordinated effort to develop a no wrong door approach by creating improved links across different professional disciplines leading to improved outcomes for children and families. Families NSW, formerly known as Families First is the NSW Government's strategy to enhance the health and wellbeing of young primary school aged children and their families. It is a prevention and early intervention strategy to help parents give their children a good start in life.

The philosophy of Families NSW is that the Government and non-Government services work together and with communities and service providers to plan and develop more responsive and coordinated services. A central platform is providing ongoing opportunities for families and children to be connected with their local community and services that can assist them to build well being and resilience.

In several of the key models used to plan for this initiative, local community service organisations were initially funded to establish the needs of an area and facilitate an integration of services by involving other key service personnel and using a strengths-based community development approach, attracting and building trust with local families in communities facing a range of social issues including isolation due to limited public transport options for example.

Families NSW Projects are intended to enhance, support and develop sustainable child and family service networks across regions and embed network processes in local agencies (Local Government, Government and Non-Government Organisations). The main purpose of families NSW projects is to progress change in the way services (working with families with young children) work together and enhance existing partnerships. The development of Families NSW service networks is to create increased capacity to:

- deal holistically with the needs of families;
- provide coordinated support in collaboration with families and other agencies &
- provide improved access to early support at the time families need it and in forms that are most helpful to them.

These Networks assist local child and family services to develop sustainable network practices which enhance coordination and planning, as well as individual, organisational and network capacity.

**Recommendation 5: Invest in local service coordination and build relationships between practitioners to support referral and local project collaboration.**

## 4.2 Creating linkages

How can we link with other community services (e.g. FaHCSIA and other Commonwealth programs, state/territory services such as child protection services and mental health)?

Input into local area planning processes is essential to creating better links between services and best results are achieved when all local stakeholders are included and facilitated to provide input. The links created through such processes can immediately increase clients' access to other local services in the short term while also increasing the overall capacity of local organisations to work more collaboratively.

Common performance measures and shared responsibility also create positive interdependent links between services, for example if the 'program level outcome' is a drop in child abuse rates, all local services need to be engaged in their local area to understand the role they play together to make that happen. This increases awareness of other support services and personnel available to assist clients beyond the scope of just one service.

Adequate resourcing helps foster improved links and capacity to respond to local needs where as inadequate resourcing is a barrier to creating the essential connections necessary to develop this responsive capacity. Where resources are inadequate, organisations can spend inordinate amounts of time and energy trying to attract new funds to improve sustainability which often impacts on the business of service delivery.

There are some other particularly good examples of partnerships based on a shared commitment to the local community that can also advance the no wrong door policy and improve inter-disciplinary collaboration. Such an example is the Integrated Family Support Project in the ACT. This has been established as a pilot project from 2008 to 2010 to develop a model for collaboration between government and non-government agencies and families, with the aim of providing sustained, integrated services to families at risk. The project aims to engage with families from a strengths perspective early in the life of the child and the life of the problem, before the problems necessitate court intervention. Findings from this strategy will be important to consider in developing options to facilitate a no wrong door approach within the FSP.

The recent evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy outlined some clear success in the Communities for Children (CFC) sites that further underpin the importance of collaborative practise and a no wrong door approach. Increased service coordination and collaboration were major outcomes of CfC. It was established that increases in service provision and capacity were accompanied by an improvement in recruitment and engagement of families previously disengaged from early childhood services and from groups considered hard-to-reach. Service reach increased when:

- funding was made available for consulting with the community throughout.
- interventions and recruitment methods were tailored and designed for specific groups (for example, 'soft entry' approaches, which took traditionally formal services into familiar, non-threatening locations where families congregated), and practical support like transportation and active referrals were offered.
- there was networking and coordination between service providers.

- staff and outreach workers had local connections and where at least one worker was of similar background to the target group.

Service reach was also facilitated because non-government organisations were perceived as less threatening than government departments (based on the fear that governments may try to remove children).

**Recommendation 6: Facilitate service provider input into local area planning processes and foster the development of cross sector networks to increase local links between FSP services and other service streams in related sectors such as health and education.**

## 4.3 Standards

### Should we have a set of standards for staff delivering any FSP service?

FRSA supports the development of a Quality Framework for the family support services in which standards for service delivery would be an important component. Given the diversity of the services delivered under the FSP standards relating to specific work roles or positions would be difficult. However, broader standards building on the FRSP Approval Requirements and other standards currently applicable to FSP service delivery would help to build community confidence in the service system and ensure consistency.

Standards generally set minimum benchmarks. A Quality Framework can move beyond minimum benchmarks to promote continuous improvement and set aspirational goals. This is particularly important in a sector as diverse as the FSP with some programs delivered by trained volunteers and others delivered by highly skilled professionals that participate in a practitioners registration scheme or adhere to a professional code. The context of service delivery is also highly variable – the standards we might reasonably apply to conducting a group therapy program in a metropolitan location may be too high for a remote community where services and staff have fewer resources to draw on.

### What quality service standards do you think the FSP should have and are there existing standards that might apply?

There are two sets of standards that could be readily adapted include:

- FRSP Approval Requirements
- Family Support Standards

Across these and many other service standards applicable to the community sector (disability, HACC, children's services etc) the standards relating to generic functions such as governance, financial management, human resource management, client data systems etc should be standardised. More specific standards that relate to service types could be modular and applied only to those services that are relevant. For example, standards for post separation services might include security provisions that would not be appropriate in early intervention services. Alternatively, program or service guidelines rather than standards

might be used to establish norms in relation to aspects of service delivery unique to different service types.

A potential benefit of developing a Quality Framework would be to develop some common branding that services could use to indicate to the community that they are quality assured and funded by the Australian Government. This could be in the form of a symbol or logo with some words that serve to build community confidence. It is important that this does not compete with the organisations own branding and community presence but rather complement this and acknowledge government investment.

**Recommendation 7: Develop a Quality Framework for the FSP building on existing service standards.**

#### 4.4 Sharing Information

**In what circumstances would providers benefit from sharing information/data/resources (including offices, administrative processes, workers, products) and how could this be facilitated?**

Again, for effective responses to local needs of clients and service providers alike, the program cannot rely on a one size fits all approach. The circumstances in which providers would benefit from sharing a variety of resources will depend on existing local needs and infrastructure, the extent and nature of established relationships between services and the flexibility of program funding to support and encourage sharing. There can be significant efficiency gains through increased economies of scale but this will only be successful if several other important factors are not compromised.

It is important that resource sharing should not diminish client choice and accessible engagement opportunities. In some cases consolidation would be a good thing while in others, more disbursement of services across a region would be better – this needs to be informed by local consultation. Respect is demonstrated when discussion with and between the full range of services working with children and families of different needs takes place. This results in a more holistic picture of the capacity for innovative sharing of information, data and resources between agencies that will ultimately result in better outcomes for children and their families.

It is also imperative that such consolidation occur where services' enter willingly into these arrangements having considered that there is an alignment in their mission and goals and that their organisation cultures are compatible. Respect is threatened when such consolidation is imposed or experienced as a 'take over' resulting in lasting tensions that can undermine any efficiency gain.

Co-location of a range of services can have benefits for local families and agencies alike provided access is not reduced and compatibility is sound. Such co-location can significantly improve referrals between services as both staff and clients are more likely to feel confident to make use of a service in an existing location they have already accessed

and had a positive experience. However, there are many other practical means to improve collaboration and increase referrals without co-location.

As reported in the National Evaluation of Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (FaHCSIA, 2009) "Communities for Children (CfC) stakeholders reported that the number and strength of networks had increased in their communities between 2006 and late 2007, and that the nature of the relationships between service providers had changed for the better, largely as a result of CfC. Trust and respect increased and service providers became more willing and open to working together as time progressed. They said CfC helped break some of the silos that previously existed in the early years service sector. Collaborations also helped service providers to solve problems, upgrade skills, increase capacity, identify the best providers for different service delivery areas, and minimise the duplication of services. The improvements in service coordination and collaboration in CfC sites were so marked that a number of stakeholders interviewed described the occurrence as a cultural change. Given the implementation challenges discussed above, this is a significant finding which indicates the strength of the CfC model."

In that same report, the 'Service Coordination Study' revealed that most of the collaboration within CfC occurred around activities, although to varying degrees depending on the activity, for example, planning, service delivery, sharing information, professional development. All of these coordination activities were found to be quite useful.

**Recommendation 8: Facilitate service collaboration in program design through enabling mechanisms that remove barriers and provide incentives for increased sharing of resources.**

## 5 Needs and Location

### What factors should be taken into account in determining the range of FSP services required for a region or community?

There are a number of large scale research projects that have the potential to inform FSP service planning. Examples include the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (AIFS), Separated Parents Study (ANU), Family Law Reforms Evaluation and the Evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. In addition, there are local and program factors to be taken into account, such as:

- Demographics of the local area
- Local community needs as articulated (and tested) by a range of stakeholders
- Availability of other existing family support service infrastructure
- Capacity of the service system, particularly in rural and/or remote areas
- State/Territory and Local Government funded programs operating in the area

There may be value in developing an agreed system for identifying areas with 'high' or 'changing' need. Such a system should take into account:

- Expected population growth especially in outer metropolitan growth corridors etc
- Socioeconomic indicators including household income, employment status, education levels, income to housing ratio
- Proportion of young parent and sole parent families
- Cultural mix – Indigenous and multi-cultural

FRSA believes that some services should be 'universal' or widely available. This links back to the way the FSP conceptualises 'vulnerability' and the relative value of investing in building resilience at a 'whole of population level'. This does not mean engaging every family in direct service delivery – universal approaches are more likely to be preventative and delivered through strategies like public education campaigns or collaborative projects with schools or health services and/or may involve the delivery of low-intervention support such as parent education seminars as a means of engaging with families and encouraging help seeking if problems arise. In addition to universal preventative strategies there are also 'essential' services that respond to risk and common types of need. Statutory child protection services must be available in every community, similarly support for separated families and children need to be widely available.

FRSA has recommended a tired approach to program design and planning that would incorporate local advisory groups and national advisory mechanisms. At both levels the relativity of priority needs and potential benefit of alternative approaches can be examined. While consensus may not always be possible, decision making will benefit from debate and consultation.

**What is the best way to specify service catchments/service delivery areas? For example: In delivering services should your delivery area be defined by statistical sub-divisions, local government regions, postcodes or by other means?**

FRSA recognises that there is some value in having one consistent approach to specifying service delivery areas across the country. We believe that the 'Local Government Area' is the approach best understood by the general population and most likely to align with related service delivery systems. In moving to a consistent approach it would be important to allow some flexibility under existing service delivery agreements where there may not be a clear 'fit'.

It is also important to define what a 'catchment' area means. In some cases it is used to describe the area in which services are to be provided – recognising that clients may come from a broader area. For example, the catchment area is Sydney CBD but the service can be accessed by anyone who travels into this area. Alternatively, catchment can mean the area in which a client must live in order to be eligible or automatically entitled to a service, such as the catchment area for public schools. This may legitimately vary across programs.

Decisions on both the need for and location of specific services will always be challenging. High level mapping and/or national profiling of populations by Local Government Area or Statistical Sub Division are a logical starting point. However, the relevance of this data also needs to be tested and informed by local area planning/consultation groups that understand local community characteristics including people movement along local transport corridors which are significant factors influencing accessibility to and use of 'local' services.

The reality of limited resources always requires difficult decisions between competing priorities on a national, state and local level. Involving a wide range of stakeholders in planning at each of these levels will more accurately inform local priorities. One approach would be for Commonwealth & State/Territory Governments to jointly sponsor a community needs assessment or consultation process on a rolling 2 yearly basis.

**Recommendation 9: Establish decision-making processes informed by local consultation and needs assessment.**

## 6 Selection and Retention of Providers

### 6.1 Adaptability

How should a balance be achieved between giving providers funding security, managing performance and ensuring services are located in areas of need?

Adapting to meet changing community needs is not incongruous with sustainability and funding security for community organisations. Organisations do not generally need to shut down or relocate to meet changing needs; they just need to adapt the range of services they provide. There are many examples within the FRSP of providers seeking permission to change catchment areas to respond to population shift.

One of the difficulties here is that an emerging need in a suburban area does not correlate to a drop in need somewhere in the city centre. Urban sprawl creates new pockets of need and sometimes a change in priority assessment. One way to address this is to engage providers in identifying need and informing government on priorities. Notwithstanding this, increased flexibility in funding arrangements can also assist by allowing organisations to increase service provision in areas where there is increased demand while not 'sitting on' funds if and when demand has reduced.

### 6.2 Selection

FRSA believes in consultative and transparent selection processes that facilitate the best outcomes for families and children in the most cost effective manner. Nonetheless we believe that the use of competitive selection processes has had a number of unintended consequences that warrant critical review.

For example, in the recent expansion of FRSP services, consultation with the existing service sector may have identified the most suitable provider for the large majority of new services and strategies to bring in new providers could have been developed. Competition could have been limited to those areas where agreement could not be reached. An approach often used in procurement processes is to invite Expressions of Interest to identify those providers most suitable and then commence negotiations with these providers on potential arrangements. This allows for a dialogue about which services are most needed in a specific area and which organisational profile (or combination of organisations) is best placed to meet those needs. During negotiations factors such as organisational capacity and/or limitations would be considered and the potential for partnership or collaboration between providers explored.

There are also models from other sectors that could be adapted. One example is the hub-and-spoke model developed in community health that creates a generalist hub linked to specialist service delivery which may have been a useful blueprint for the design of Family

Relationship Centres<sup>1</sup>. There is plenty of scope for developing new models for allocating funding in the family support sector, drawing on examples from across different sectors including health, education and community services in Australia and overseas.

The recent use of competitive selection processes in FRSP has had a number of significant negative impacts on resource distribution, including:

- Substantial resources were spent on preparing funding applications, each separate application required many hours of preparation it is estimated that costs of up to \$20,000 per application were involved in some cases with many larger organisations submitting multiple applications in all three funding rounds.
- Some organisations applied for services in geographic areas and areas of speciality they would not ordinarily pursue because of uncertainty regarding the allocation of funding in their core areas of interest.
- Very few new providers secured funding in their own right (3 in total) – 97% of funding was allocated to existing service providers and 100% to non profit providers.
- While the sector overall has grown substantially in size, the rate of growth in existing providers has been variable – some grew quickly, some grew substantially, some did not grow at all.
- Competition between agencies has been intense in some areas; at odds with the collaboration and cooperation that the sector was previously known for.

The impact on relationships between organisations is perhaps the most significant cost of competitive processes. Competition provides a disincentive to share intellectual property, physical resources and practice wisdom. Collaboration may be increased amongst those who form an alliance or consortia to compete for new funding but it is likely to decrease between those who compete against each other.

The competitive process also has a long-term impact on the relationship between organisations and funding bodies. See more on this in Section 7 under Funding.

**Recommendation 10: Develop alternatives to competitive tender processes for allocating new funding in the FSP.**

## 6.3 Performance Measurement

### How should good performance in the FSP be identified?

Identification of good performance is based on a sound knowledge of the agreed outcomes expected. Consultation and agreement between funding bodies and service providers about overall program outcomes for families and children under the FSP and about

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<sup>1</sup> For example of the hub and spoke model applied to the delivery of family support see the Rural Beginnings Project 'Promising Practice' paper available at [www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/ppp/profiles/pppdocs/itg\\_rural\\_beginnings\\_hub.pdf](http://www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/ppp/profiles/pppdocs/itg_rural_beginnings_hub.pdf)

what constitutes good performance based on those outcomes is an important baseline to be established.

Assessment of the quality of services that clients receive needs to be identified from a range of different sources to gain a complete measurement of the performance of an FSP provider. Direct service delivery is one very important aspect of performance, however local community engagement and support, collaboration and innovation, trust and recognition are also important indicators of good performance and need to be identified and measured in a consistent manner.

### How should outcomes in the FSP be measured?

We need to recognise the value of diversity and not assume that direct comparisons between services is always appropriate, it is not that simple. Different organisations appreciate and respond to different community needs. Local accountability is important and is another factor to be measured.

Currently in the FRSP performance is identified and measured via collation of FRSP On-line data and organisations' annual Status Reports. These measures are supplemented from time to time with specific research on certain aspects of reforms etc. There have been many lessons learnt over the years from challenging experiences with incompatible and/or onerous data collection and management systems. The establishment of the integrated FSP provides an excellent opportunity to review existing outcomes and the systems currently in place to measure them.

Consultation with the broader FSP sector on outcome measures and the elements of an effective data collection system is an important step following the establishment of an agreed set of overall outcomes.

A planning, management and reporting approach now widely used in Australia and internationally is the Results-based accountability framework (also known as outcome-based accountability). RBA is defined as a management tool that can facilitate collaboration among human service agencies, as a method of decentralizing services, and as an innovative regulatory process. At a minimum, the term implies that expected results (also known as goals) are clearly articulated, and that data is regularly collected and reported to address questions of whether results have been achieved.

RBA can be developed and used for a broad range of goals at different levels: state, community, agency, or program. The level of the goals dictates responsibility for achievement of results. For example, all persons in a state or community - including lay citizens, public agency managers, and providers - are responsible for meeting state - or community - level goals. By contrast, agency managers are responsible for attainment of agency-level goals. Similarly, program managers and providers are responsible for meeting program-level goals.

Although many states and localities do not currently have RBA "systems" per se, they have multiple ongoing efforts focusing on achieving measurable results for children and families. RBA efforts can be designed at different levels; efforts focusing on different aspects of child

and family services can be developed simultaneously. An important step in beginning a RBA effort is to identify and coordinate potential RBA activities that are already occurring.

A strategic planning process is an essential first step in the development of a RBA system. Successful systems begin by stepping back and examining core values, then articulating a plan for the future based on these values. A strategic plan includes a vision or conceptual image of the core values of the state, community, agency, or program; goals; and targets to measure progress. States most successful in designing RBA efforts have developed processes to include all stakeholders in the articulation of the strategic plans.

The articulated goals and objectives or expected results reflect the values identified in the strategic plan and state of the desired conditions of well-being. Although these goals are generally expressed in terms of the entire population, they can be addressed to individual agencies and programs. Goals can be expressed within a specific time frame and in quantifiable terms, or without reference to time or without attached quantifiable measures.

Objectives, derived from the goals, are generally expressed in terms of the entire population but can target participants of a program.

Indicators that enable decision-makers to assess progress towards achievement of intended outputs, outcomes, goals, or objectives always specify time frames and are expressed in measurable terms. Goals and objectives should be articulated before availability of indicator data is considered. It is important to determine the goals and objectives in their own right, without the constraints of measurement requirements.

A combination of these and other systems and processes are worthy of further investigation and consultation to determine applicability to the FSP.

**Recommendation 11: Develop an FSP performance framework that builds on the outcome based FRSP framework in consultation with the broader FSP providers and stakeholders.**

## 6.4 Systems and Processes

### What systems and processes could we use to support this?

There is a need to develop more universal measures of child and family wellbeing and tools for measuring that can be applied across different settings. This would enable more accurate measurement to occur.

The draft FRSP Performance Framework developed by the joint Government / Sector working group on Quality and Performance Management has identified some agreed performance measures that represent a good starting point for the FSP. The revised Family Relationship Services Program Performance Framework aims to complement ongoing research and evaluation activities to provide Government with stronger evidence on the benefit of Family Relationship Services to Australian families.

Important principles underpinning this framework and any other options under consideration should include:

- **focus on client outcomes**

While government and the sector continue to need data on the quantity and quality of service provision, the most important question is whether Services are making a difference for families.

- **minimise red tape**

The framework will make use of existing data to minimise red tape for service providers and families. Any additional data requirements will be offset by a significant reduction in FRS Online and contractual reporting requirements as part of the broader departmental red-tape reduction agenda.

- **provide a whole-of-Family Relationship Services methodology**

The framework is designed to be flexible enough to meet the needs of individual service providers yet comprehensive enough for national program management and development purposes.

After recent consultation with the Sector about the potential to provide the data needed to support the framework, it was found that while the vast majority of services agree on the value of this data, the diversity of the sector means the data currently collected varies considerably between service providers and service types in both coverage and quality.

The results of a year-long trial of the methodology commencing in July 2009 will make an important contribution to how good performance should be measured in the FSP. The trial is open to all providers on a volunteer basis and provides an opportunity for the framework to be further refined before full implementation under the FSP in 2011.

To build on the FRSP Performance Framework and use the RBA approach for application to the broader FSP would require further consultation. Presuming the overall FRSP program objective of improved family functioning remains under the broader FSP vision and governing principles the redevelopment of a common set of intermediate and immediate outcomes across the increased number of sub program categories is important.

An important consideration in the redevelopment of common outcomes across the broader program is the application of varied levels of significance to different service types. This issue has been highlighted in the development of the FRSP Performance Framework with lengthy discussions at the joint Government / Sector working group resulting in agreement to list outcomes as either 'key' (primary) or 'other' (secondary) to accurately indicate the priority of each outcome for different service types .

It is important that the development of any alternative outcome based performance measurement system is used as an alternative rather than additional mechanism to avoid increasing compliance costs and reducing service delivery outputs.

**Recommendation 12: Develop universal measures of child and family wellbeing and tools that can be built into common data collection systems to be applied across different settings.**

## 7 Funding

What are the key features that providers consider essential in building a rational and transparent system for distributing available resources?

### Invest in Sustainability

The first key feature essential to a rational and transparent distribution of resources is the development of costing methodology that ensures the full cost of service delivery is met both initially and over the long-term. Services that are under-resourced threaten the effectiveness of the service system overall as they divert resources and energy away from other goals.

Another important feature would be processes for allocating funding that support rather than inhibit collaboration. FRSA believes that the use of competitive selection processes has had a number of significant negative impacts on relationships between organisations delivering family relationship services. Competition provides a disincentive to share intellectual property, physical resources and practice wisdom. Collaboration may be increased amongst those who form an alliance or consortia to compete for new funding but it is likely to decrease between those who compete against each other.

The competitive process also has a long-term impact on the relationship between organisations and funding bodies. Organisations are treated as though they have no history of relationship with the funding body and issues such as organisation sustainability, managing growth or relationships between organisations are not relevant. Problems arising in the implementation of services such as changing costs associated with premises or workforce shortages are seen as solely the responsibility of the service provider – they submitted a tender therefore they must deliver. Changes to the model or the target of the services are also ruled out because there has been a competitive process and it would be unfair to the unsuccessful applicants to change the nature of the service once it has been awarded on the basis of a set criteria.

The development of the FSP presents an opportunity to reconceptualise the relationship between funding body and provider as a collaborative partnership. In many commercial areas the relationship between supplier and purchaser is recognised as reciprocal, particularly when suppliers are limited in number and has skills or expertise highly valued by the purchaser. An example often used is that between airlines and aircraft manufacturers – there are a small number of manufacturers, they work very closely with the airlines to design new aircraft that meet their needs, airlines invest in design and work very collaboratively with suppliers. Delivering community services is at least as complex as delivering transport services.

### Indexation

Another key element to building a more rational resource distribution system is to build in adequate indexation for funded contracts. FRSA urges the Federal Government to review the formula used to determine indexation rates for family relationship services as levels of indexation over recent years have fallen well below the level of increased costs.

For example, in 2007-08 the indexation rate applied to FRSP funding was just 2.1% and in 2006-07 it was 1.7%. Service providers are reporting increases in the order of 4% (consistent with the seasonally adjusted labour price index through the year to September 2007 which was 4.2%<sup>2</sup>). This is the third year in a row that wage costs in the health and community services sector increased by around 4% while indexation rates hover around 2%. Wage costs account for approximately 72% of all funding provided to FRSP service providers<sup>3</sup>, sometimes more. For example, one member organisation reports *"over the past two years SACS workers have received a pay rise of 3.5% per year. With salary and on costs at 84% of the total organisational budget it is easy to see that indexation (1.7% and 2.1% respectively) is not keeping up."* There have also been substantial cost increases in information technology and commercial rent, which are not recognised in standard indices, such as the CPI. The incapacity to match increasing costs has significant flow on effects to service delivery.

### **Rural and Remote Service Delivery**

The cost of delivering services in regional, rural and remote areas is substantially higher and this should be recognised in funding models. FRSA is aware that in other human service sectors, including aged care and disability services, the increased cost of delivering services in rural and remote areas has been acknowledged and addressed through higher levels of funding.

### **Capacity Building**

Another issue for providers in managing government funds is the treatment of unexpended funding. Currently if an organisation delivers a service for less than the amount of funding received the unspent funds are required to be returned to the funding body unless approval is granted for the funds to be applied to a specific project or activity. This is a significant disincentive for achieving efficiency gains in government funded family support services. If government were to fund a for-profit entity to undertake the same work there would be no such expectation. The for-profit entity would expect to keep any surplus and indeed this would be factored into the service cost or budget prior to commencement.

Surpluses from FRSP funded services are generally small and variable from year to year as environmental factors such as levels of demand and internal factors such as stability in the staff team fluctuate. However, the opportunity to retain a surplus and use it to build capacity, purchase equipment, reward staff or fund an innovation project would be a powerful incentive in support of efficiency. Furthermore, there is inequity in the treatment of deficits and surpluses. If a service or activity costs more than anticipated resulting in a deficit, the organisation is liable for the additional cost. A surplus in one program cannot be applied against a deficit in another. Similarly a surplus in one financial year cannot be used to offset a deficit in another financial year. As a result organisations carry all of the risk in relation to service costing methodology and enjoy none of the benefits of achieving cost reductions.

**Recommendation 13: Develop reasonable and consistent funding regulation based on agreed principles of transparency, value for money and risk management.**

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<sup>2</sup> ABS (2007) Cat. no. 6345.0.

<sup>3</sup> Ernst & Young (2006) pg 26

## 8 Additional Priorities

### 8.1 Program Governance and Partnership

There has been considerable focus over recent years in community sector governance and risk management. The development of funding allocation and accountability mechanisms has shifted much of the risk for government funding bodies on to community organisations. This has sometimes strained the relationship community organisations have with government and with each other. Improving program governance and fostering partnerships between government and the sector and between provider organisations has many potential benefits for the FSP.

FRSA believes that there is the potential to substantially enhance the relationship between the FSP administrators and the service delivery organisations through the development of agreed principles which can be operationalised to meet the needs of both. An example would be agreement on a timeframe for advising the sector on continuation of funding when sub-programs reach the end of their contracted term. Another example would be commitment to the development of performance data collection systems that work effectively for both government and service providers.

As the national compact between the Federal Government and the nonprofit sector starts to take shape it would be important to align the principles that form the basis of the compact with principles in the FSP. Indeed it may be that the main focus of this work could become the practical mechanisms for operationalising broader principles that underpin a partnership between government and community organisations.

Within the FRSP significant achievements have occurred through the operation of three Joint Sector-Government Working Groups mentioned above. Each working group consists of representatives from service provider organisations and the two government departments that fund FRSP services. These groups have formed to explore solutions to areas of long standing difficulty, in three areas:

- Workforce Development
- Services Agreements and Funding
- Quality and Performance Measurement

Participants in all three groups report an increased understanding of the needs of the others and the complexity of the issues. There have been practical enhancements to the service agreements as well as significant development work in the area of performance measurement. A substantial workforce mapping project is now underway and this will feed into the development of a workforce development plan. FRSA believes that collaborative approaches to policy and program administration warrant further support and should be valued by both the sector and government.

**Recommendation 14: That program administrators be encouraged to work in partnerships to develop principles for program governance, aligned to the national compact.**

## 8.2 Workforce Development

Workforce challenges are consistently identified as the most significant issue facing service providers working with families, children and young people.

Currently, there is a national undersupply of graduates from key areas such as social work, psychology and counselling. In the family support sector and the community services sector more broadly there has been relatively little investment to increase the supply of qualified staff. Where there has been some investment in the development of vocational qualifications<sup>4</sup>, there has been limited investment in making training more affordable for potential trainees.

Other sectors such as health and education have benefited from substantial investment in workforce development to increase supply through strategies such as HECS relief, VET FEE HELP, scholarships and placement incentives. In particular, strategies have been developed to offer incentives to people willing to work in rural and remote areas. FRSA has made representations on behalf of member organisations to make VET FEE HELP available to students undertaking high-demand training with community based training providers. FRSA has also called on government to invest in scholarships or similar support to increase the number of graduates in key disciplines such as social science and psychology<sup>5</sup>.

The comparatively poor salary levels in this sector act as a major disincentive to attracting highly skilled professionals. Providers have consistently identified differences in salary levels between staff employed in direct service delivery in the community sector and those performing similar work in the public sector is between \$15,000 and \$30,000 per annum for each full time equivalent position. This creates major recruitment difficulties with some positions vacant for extended periods of time resulting in disruption to service delivery. It also undermines the efficiency and effectiveness of the service sector by creating a 'revolving door' of young graduates gaining experience in community organisations but then taking more generously paid positions in government or private sector agencies within 1-3 years.

**Recommendation 15: Develop a Workforce Strategy for the Family Support Program, as a matter of priority.**

**Recommendation 16: Commit to a principle of fair remuneration levels in the community sector and address current inadequacies through systematic review of funding levels and performance requirements across programs.**

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<sup>4</sup> In 2007-08 the Family Relationship Services Program invested in the development of new vocational qualifications - Certificate IV in Children's Contact Service Work, Diploma of Children's Contact Service Work, Diploma of Family Intake and Support Work, Vocational Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counseling, Vocational Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution, Certificate IV in Relationship Education, Diploma of Relationship Education. Only the delivery of the Vocational Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution has been subsidised and then only the compulsory 3 units required for registration and only for practitioners registered by February 2008.

<sup>5</sup> FRSA Pre-Budget Submissions 2008 & 2009 available from [www.frsa.org.au](http://www.frsa.org.au)

### 8.3 Support Collaboration

Collaboration is a desirable but resource intensive activity. Sometimes some initial support can make it possible to develop a collaborative project or partnership that can go on to have significant benefits for the service delivery system more broadly. An example of this is provided below which began with Victorian Government funding for collaborative projects.

#### Practice Example 2: Communities Southwest

**Communities Southwest** is an alliance of incorporated, non-government, not-for-profit, organisations that are based in south west Victoria. The mission of Community Southwest is to *be a powerful influence in developing stronger communities, fairer and more self-dependent local communities*. Formed by nine founding member organisations - Western Region Alcohol & Drug Services (WRAD), Aspire, A Pathway to Mental Health, Western District Employment Access, Brophy Family & Youth Services, Community Connections (Vic) Ltd, Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative, Southern Way, Vantage Inc and Mpower – Community Southwest began as an MOU between agencies with funding from the Victorian Government and has recently become an incorporated entity with an expanded membership.

The alliance aims to support members with numerous opportunities to draw on collective strengths while building improved understanding of other services. Some examples include:

- Governance Network meetings ~ Board, Committee members and CEO's meet quarterly to interact with a guest speaker and network on issues. This provides an opportunity at the Governance level for members to collaborate and share ideas.
- Member CEO Group ~ meets bi-monthly, for an informal breakfast, to hear from the CSW Board, and to share ideas at the senior executive level.
- Business Managers ~ meet bi-monthly where the business managers and administration managers' network and share ideas, best practices at the operational level.
- CSW Intranet ~ provides opportunities for our electronic newsletter, advertising of vacancies as well as coordination of interagency projects.
- Human Resource forum ~ meeting 2-3 times per year for interested parties to meet and discuss issues related to the human resource function.
- Information Technology ~ CSW has a website and intranet and liaises with preferred suppliers of IT equipment to help members achieve efficiencies.
- Purchasing ~ CSW liaises between preferred suppliers and members to ensure the smooth operation of the supplier arrangements.
- Research ~ CSW can undertake and coordinate research activities that benefit members.

**Recommendation 17: Invest in collaborative projects and programs to foster positive relationships across the diversity of Family Support Program service providers.**

## 9 Conclusion

The family support sector is vibrant, innovative and resourceful. It is characterised by organisations that are focused on a mission to achieve social change. Some of these organisations have been part of the Australian landscape since before Federation; others have formed more recently in response to emerging community needs or a newly defined cause. All contribute value to our society that warrants recognition and support.

The development of the Family Support Program is a timely opportunity to review the approach taken to the creation and delivery of policy initiatives that improve the resilience and wellbeing of families and children. Improved partnership between government and service providers is essential to the effectiveness of organisations to generate agreed outcomes. As highlighted in this submission there are some excellent examples of innovation and collaborative practice that demonstrate the possibilities. There are also some clear areas of need, including the need to address workforce issues and inequities in regulation.

On behalf of our member organisations, FRSA welcomes the opportunity to further contribute to the development of the Family Support Program. We can readily provide more information on any of the issues or examples contained in this submission and have also encouraged member organisations to make submissions and participate in consultation events.

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# 11 FRSA Members

## FULL MEMBERS

### AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Centacare Canberra & Goulburn  
Marymead Child & Family Centre  
Relationships Australia Canberra & Region

### NEW SOUTH WALES

Anglican Counselling Service  
Anglicare NSW  
Baptist Community Services  
Broken Hill Family Mediation Service  
Centacare Bathurst  
Centacare Broken Bay  
Centacare Maitland-Newcastle  
Centacare New England North West  
Centacare Parramatta  
Catholic Care, Sydney  
Centacare Wagga Wagga  
Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes  
Centacare Wollongong  
Community Connections North Coast  
Community Programs Inc  
Interrelate Family Centres  
Macquarie Legal Centre  
Manning Support Services  
Newcastle Family Support Services  
Relationships Australia NSW  
The Family Centre  
UnitingCare Burnside  
UnitingCare Unifam Counseling & Mediation

### NORTHERN TERRITORY

Anglicare Northern Territory - Resolve  
Centacare NT  
Relationships Australia NT

### QUEENSLAND

Centacare Rockhampton  
Centacare Brisbane  
Centacare Cairns  
Centacare Toowoomba  
Centacare Townsville  
Community Services Australia  
Foundations Child & Family Support  
Kinctions  
Kyabra Community Association  
Lifeline Community Care Queensland  
Lifeline Darling Downs & South West QLD - Men & Relationships Program  
Mackay Children's Contact Services  
Men's Information & Support Assoc.  
Mercy Family Services  
Pine Rivers Neighborhood Centre  
QPASSTT  
Relationships Australia QLD  
Sunshine Coast Family Contact Centre  
Toowoomba Children's Contact Centre  
Youth and Family Service (Logan City)

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Anglican Community Care  
Anglicare SA  
Centacare Adelaide  
Centacare Whyalla  
Lutheran Community Care  
Relationships Australia SA  
UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide  
UnitingCare Wesley Bowden  
UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide  
UnitingCare Wesley Port Pirie  
Whyalla Counselling Service

### TASMANIA

Anglicare Tasmania Inc  
Centacare Tasmania  
Positive Solutions  
Relationships Australia Tasmania

### VICTORIA

Anglicare Victoria  
Australian Greek Welfare Society  
Berry Street Victoria  
Bethany Community Support  
Brotherhood of St Laurance  
Cairnmillar Institute  
Centacare Ballarat  
Centacare Melbourne  
Centacare Sandhurst - Bendigo  
Child & Family Services Ballarat  
Children's Protection Society  
City of Greater Geelong  
Community Connections  
Community West  
Crisis Support Services  
Drummond Street Relationship Centre  
Eastern Access Community Health  
Family Life  
Family Mediation Centre  
Family Relationships Institute  
GordonCare for Children  
Goulburn Valley Family Care  
LifeWorks Relationship Counselling & Education Services  
MacKillop Family Services  
Mallee Family Care  
Relationships Australia Victoria  
South East Migrant Resource Centre  
Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre Inc  
Stepfamily Association of Victoria  
Salvation Army Bendigo  
Upper Hume Community Health Service  
Upper Murray Family Care

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Agencies for South West Accommodation  
Anglicare WA  
Catholic Marriage Education Services  
Centacare Geraldton  
Centcare

Clan WA

Men's Outreach Service Broome  
Ngala  
Relationships Australia WA

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Arafemi Victoria Inc  
Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association  
Central Coast Disability Network  
Challenge Disability Services  
Citizens Advice Bureau of WA (Inc)  
Communities@Work  
Drug Arm Australasia  
Family Action Centre  
Family Drug Support  
First Light Care Association Inc  
FSG Australia  
Halsmith Consulting Pty Ltd  
Karingal Mental Health Support  
Legal Aid ACT  
Legal Aid NSW  
Legal Aid WA  
Lifeline Australia  
Lone Fathers Association Australia  
MAREAA  
Migrant Resource Centre of SA  
Oz fame Inc (Australian Family and Marriage Education)  
Parentline ACT Inc  
Parentline Vic  
Pathways Counselling & Family Services  
Relationships Australia - National  
Richmond Fellowship of Western Australia  
Robyn Sexton & Associates  
Southern Youth & Family Services Association  
The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Inc  
The Salvation Army Counselling Service  
Top End Association for Mental Health  
Unitingcare Family Services - Northern Tasmania  
Victoria Legal Aid

*Please note that this is a list of organisations by trading name rather than legal entity.*