



Cloncurry place-based study – March 2018

Exploration of local child and family support services



Purpose

- This place-based study was designed to examine family support services in Cloncurry in terms of:
 - service networks
 - access to family support services
 - service quality
 - facilitators and barriers.



Setting



- Cloncurry is a small regional town located approximately two hours east of Mount Isa.
- It is characterised as a strong and connected community, although formal supports are limited.
- Mount Isa, as the nearby service hub, has a considerable child protection and family support service footprint.
- Outreach services are provided from Mount Isa to Cloncurry and to other communities throughout the Gulf of Carpentaria region.



Method

- After a desktop analysis of existing Child Safety Service data, we travelled to Cloncurry and Mount Isa for one week.
- Key stakeholders helped us to identify and contact the target population.
- We ran interviews and a workshop with local stakeholders from:
 - local governance groups
 - government agencies
 - non-government organisations
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations.



Sample





Key findings

Context: Facilitators

- Existing local community networks assist with service coordination and information sharing.
- Local and regional service providers generally have collaborative relationships.
- Awareness and knowledge of relevant policies and legislation facilitate appropriate reports to Child Safety Services and referrals to secondary services.

Improve access to family support services

- Service coverage is limited in Cloncurry, and is supported by outreach services from Mount Isa.
- Relationships and trust underpin service accessibility and client engagement.
- Services delivered in non-stigmatising environments are more appealing to families.

Establish robust service networks

- Place-based governance structures are seen to be more useful, relevant and locally-focused than regional governance groups.
- Positive information-sharing and collaborative cultures produce stronger relationships and client-centred practice.
- Feedback on referrals is valued and encourages subsequent referrals.

Ensure high quality of services

- Service quality is grounded in trust of a service and its frontline workers.
- Local workers' knowledge and cultural understanding is equally as valued as their skills and experience.
- Continuity of workers is seen to be critical for sustained client engagement.

Context: Barriers

- Shame, stigma, mistrust and lack of confidence and interest deter some people from seeking help.
- Distance to support services and limited transportation options impact service accessibility.
- High workforce turnover and employment of non-local people influence perceptions of service quality.
- A lack of service coordination and limited awareness of service coverage/availability influence referrals, which affects clients' access to services.