Rockhampton place-based study — February 2018

Exploration of local child and family support services

Purpose

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

Setting

Rockhampton
39 stakeholders

- There has been considerable investment in the Rockhampton child protection and family support system, resulting in a large number of services and multiple providers offering some of the same service types. However, service choice is seen as more limited for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- Rockhampton acts as a hub for child protection and family support services across the Central Queensland region.
- The capacity of local services to provide accessible and high-quality services to families is affected by families' location and outreach service provision.
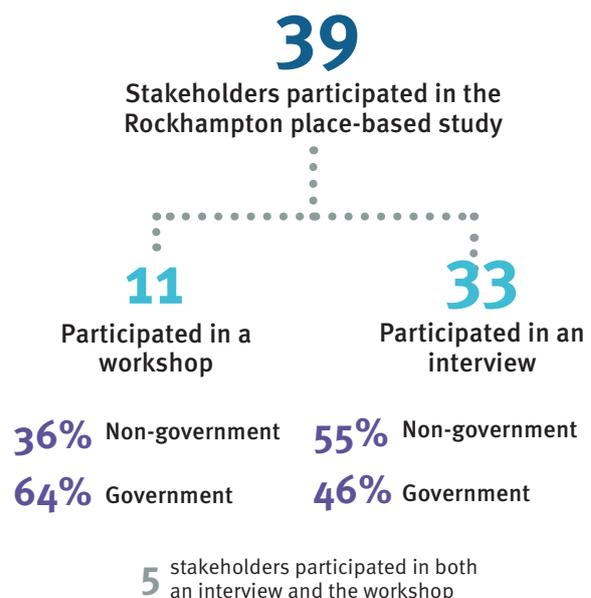
Method

- After a desktop analysis of existing Child Safety Service data, we travelled to Rockhampton 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.
- Some stakeholders participated in both an interview and a workshop.

Sample

39
Stakeholders participated in the Rockhampton place-based study

11
Participated in a workshop

36% Non-government
64% Government

33
Participated in an interview

55% Non-government
46% Government

5 stakeholders participated in both an interview and the workshop

Queensland
Family & Child
Commission

Queensland
Government

Key findings

Context: Facilitators

- There are a large number of services and multiple providers of some types of services.
- Strong relationships between service providers enable families to move across services.
- Frontline workers use non-stigmatising and individualised approaches for working with clients.
- Some local stakeholders are increasingly focussed on building collaborative relationships.

Improve access to family support services

- The number of services available offers families a range of supports and choice in providers.
- It is difficult for families and service providers to navigate the large and changing service system.
- Relationships and trust between service providers and families are critical.

Establish robust service networks

- Strong information sharing enables multiple services to co-develop responses for families.
- Multiple networks and meetings create stakeholder fatigue.
- A better understanding of the intent and a focus on driving outcomes would encourage agencies to participate in networks.

Ensure high quality of services

- Frontline staff use tools and approaches which are strengths-based and tailored to the client.
- Workers have less time with clients if they provide support to neighbouring communities or carry high caseloads.
- It is difficult to attract and retain a regional workforce.

Context: Barriers

- Local stakeholders have limited awareness of available services or their capacity to take on new families.
- There is poor public transport to connect families in surrounding communities to the services in Rockhampton.
- Services are filling up with low-risk cases, limiting the support available for high-risk families.
- There are pockets of strained relationships between services which restrict referral pathways.
- There are limited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific services in Rockhampton.