Sunshine Coast place-based study — May/June 2019

Exploration of transitioning to independence support services
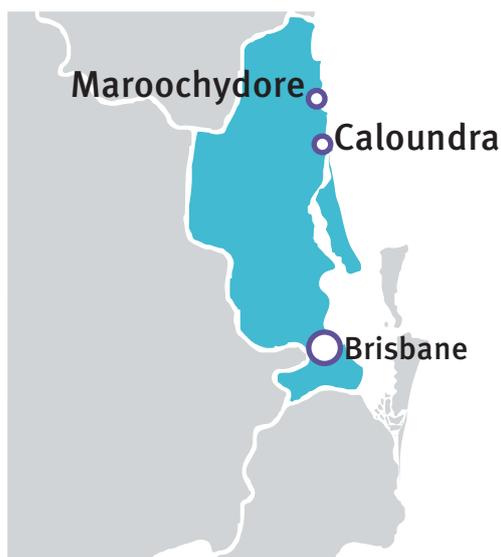
Purpose

This place-based study was designed to examine transition services in the Sunshine Coast in terms of the local-level outcomes being achieved for young people transitioning to independence. The study explored:

- available services and supports
- young people's participation in transition planning
- facilitators and barriers to improved outcomes
- local partnerships.

Setting

- The Sunshine Coast is approximately 100 kilometres north of Brisbane.
- The scope of this place-based study was the Caloundra and Maroochydore Child Safety Service Centre catchments, which are both major cities within the Moreton Region of Child Safety Services.
- Caloundra and Maroochydore are hubs for transition services across the Sunshine Coast which means they provide outreach services.
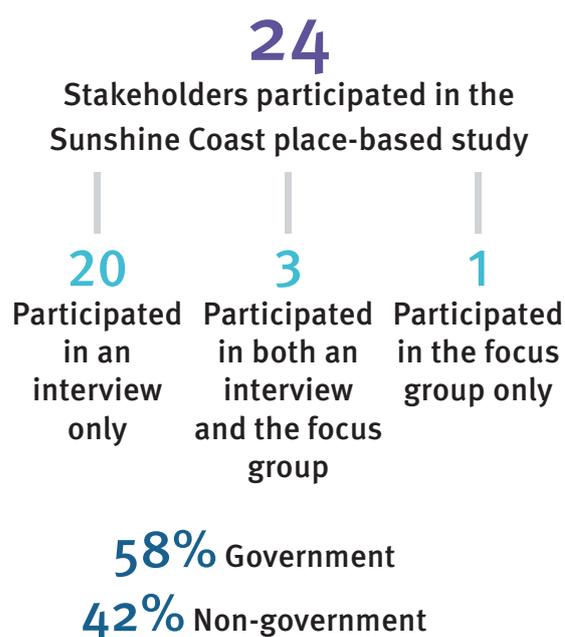

Maroochydore
Caloundra
Brisbane

Method

- A desktop review of literature, service documentation and Child Safety Services data was undertaken.
- Local stakeholders helped us to identify the target population—stakeholders involved in supporting young people transitioning from out-of-home care in the Sunshine Coast.
- We visited the Sunshine Coast over a two-week period.
- We ran interviews with local stakeholders from:
  - local and regional governance groups
  - government agencies
  - non-government organisations.
- We conducted a follow-up focus group with key stakeholders to test findings and explore information gaps.

Sample

24
Stakeholders participated in the Sunshine Coast place-based study

20
Participated in an interview only

3
Participated in both an interview and the focus group

1
Participated in the focus group only

58% Government
42% Non-government

Queensland
Family & Child
Commission

Queensland Government

Key findings

Facilitating Factors

Transition planning process

- Early, gradual planning is critical and facilitates young peoples' readiness to transition to independence.
- Young peoples' agency should be encouraged, and they should lead decisions about their future.
- Services leave the door open for young people who are not ready to engage.

Local 'transition' service system

- Consistency and continuity of support networks enable positive outcomes.
- Diverse services exist to assist young people transitioning from care, and these services are tailored to young peoples' needs.
- Strong local service networks exist and the high demand for services is met through collaboration and creative means.
- Outreach, co-location and mobile services improve service access for young people.

Culture, leadership and partnerships

- There is sector-wide commitment to achieving positive outcomes for young people.
- Positive and respectful language is used when talking about young people.
- Aspirational approaches are targeted at getting young people out of disadvantage and into education and employment opportunities.
- Multi-sector collaboration and linkages exist at all levels with the common goal of improving outcomes for young people.

Barriers

- Limited capacity for services to engage with young people early enough in the transition planning process inhibits developing the relationships needed to support young people leaving care.
- There are some gaps in the local provision of youth services, including specialist mental health services, disability and healthy relationships/domestic violence services.
- There is some lack of awareness, particularly among young people, about the types of services and supports available locally.

Opportunities

- Further developing the 'life skills program' for young people leaving care currently being offered by the T2A team. This would support the development of young people's readiness and independent living skills prior to their transition.
- Development of a strategy for disseminating information about local supports and services for young people leaving care.