



Mr Martin Hehir
Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services
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1 February 2011

RE: Response to the Release of the Service Delivery Framework 2011 - 2014

Dear Mr Hehir,

On behalf of the Youth Coalition of the ACT, I would like to provide you with a formal response and urgent request for more information; relating to the *Service Delivery Framework 2011 – 2014: Version 1* (the Framework), which was released on Friday 28 January 2011.

The Youth Coalition has three significant concerns with the Framework, which were highlighted in our submission to the *Draft Service Delivery Framework 2010 – 2013* (the draft Framework). These include: A loss of focus on young people aged 18 – 25 years of age; funding allocated towards case management and youth engagement services; and unclear funding for complementary activities and the broader Youth and Family Support Program. The Framework has not addressed these issues, which we outline below in further detail. I have also attached our initial submission for your information.

Loss of Focus on Young People aged 18 – 25 Years

As raised in our submission to the draft Framework, the Youth Coalition is very concerned that the Framework will result in a significant loss of services for young people aged 18 – 25 years and their families in the ACT. The Framework highlights that supports for young people aged 18 – 25 years will focus on their transition to independence and engagement with the adult service system; typically for young people transitioning from out-of-home care, youth detention or homelessness services.

A focus on young people under the age of 18 does not align with other key ACT Government strategies and programs; such as the *ACT Young People's Plan 2009 – 2014*; or the development of CAMHS to support young people aged 12 – 25 years, in recognition of their support needs.

In addition, focusing on young people aged 18 – 25 who are transitioning out of care, youth detention or homelessness services is inconsistent with services funded through the Framework operating at a secondary intervention level. It does not provide scope for secondary services with existing clients to continue to support young people once they turn 18; nor does it meet the needs of young people aged 18 – 25 who may be involved in the adult criminal justice system, with health services, who are young parents (who have differing support needs to parents over the age of 25), or who require support with education and employment.

While the Youth Coalition was pleased that the Framework defined young carers as up to the age of 25 (following our recommendation), we are disappointed that the Framework states that supports will be focused on young carers under the age of 18.

Funding Allocated for Case Management and Youth Engagement Services

Following the release of the draft Framework, the youth sector and Youth Coalition raised significant concerns regarding the high allocation of funding (28% or \$2,680,701) towards Case Management; compared with the limited allocation (10% or \$861,850) towards Youth Engagement Services. In our submission to the draft Framework, we recommended that the funding allocated towards Youth Engagement Services be increased to at least 18%, through a reduction in the funding allocated towards Case Management.

Youth services have been reporting to the ACT Government for a number of years that they have experienced difficulties in meeting their funded case management hours – not because there are not enough young people to case manage – but because young people often identify as wanting more informal supports. In response to this, youth services (and particularly youth centres) have identified innovative and more appropriate ways of engaging with and supporting young people.

The under-resourcing of Youth Engagement Services is further exacerbated by the new emphasis on assertive outreach. The delivery of street outreach only on Friday and Saturday evenings will not deliver meaningful, long-term outcomes for young people who access it.

Funding for Complementary Activities and the Youth and Family Support Program

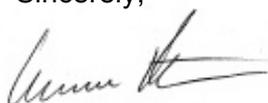
While the Framework specifies funding amounts for those services that will be select sourced through the tender process; it does not provide any information relating to:

- The total funding levels for the Youth and Family Support Program; or,
- Funding allocated towards complementary activities, including peak support.

In addition, the Framework does not provide any information on the role of peak activities within the new Youth and Family Support Program. It is vital that this information is articulated within the Framework.

As the peak body for young people aged 12 – 25 years and those who work with them in the ACT; we would appreciate if the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services provides a response to our concerns as a matter of urgency; to support those services engaging in the procurement process, and to work towards positive outcomes for children, young people and their families in the ACT.

Sincerely,



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