



Communities
& Justice

State Peaks Program Specifications

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1. Purpose

These Specifications provide stakeholders with an overview of the State Peaks Program (the Program), and outline for service providers and the community what is being funded under this Program, and the expected outcomes of the Program.

The specifications have been developed through a co-design process involving:

- Program managers across the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)
- Peak organisations currently funded by the Program, and
- Service system representatives including DCJ district and program staff, and service providers.

These specifications supersede the State Peaks Program Specifications of February 2020.

2. Legislative Framework

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) administers the Program according to the principles and requirements within:

- *Community Welfare Act 1987*
- *Government Sector Finance Act 2018*.

3. Program Context

NSW Government is committed to delivering improved services for the people of New South Wales through an integrated service response that is outcome driven and client centric. The Government has set ambitious priorities to enhance the quality of life for all people across NSW and improve how we look after our most vulnerable.

DCJ is implementing a commissioning approach to actively engage clients, communities and partners in the design of human services to achieve long-term outcomes. This acknowledges that effective engagement with civil society is key to identifying community needs¹.

A diverse, capable and flexible service system is required to meet the needs of clients and communities, and to respond effectively to change. DCJ works with our non-government partners to support the ongoing development of this service system, and to ensure coordinated engagement and optimisation of resources across government, non-government and the community.

Collaboration between DCJ and its non-government partners is guided by the strategic priorities of NSW Government which aim to address complex social issues. Existing priorities include NSW State and Premier's Priorities (refer to www.nsw.gov.au) and DCJ priorities outlined in the DCJ Strategic plan. These priorities may be subject to change.

¹ Sawyer, M, *Governing for the Mainstream: Implications for Community Representation*, AJPA 2002 and Melville, R. *Changing Roles of Community Sector Peak Bodies*, Institute of Social Change and Critical Inquiry 2003

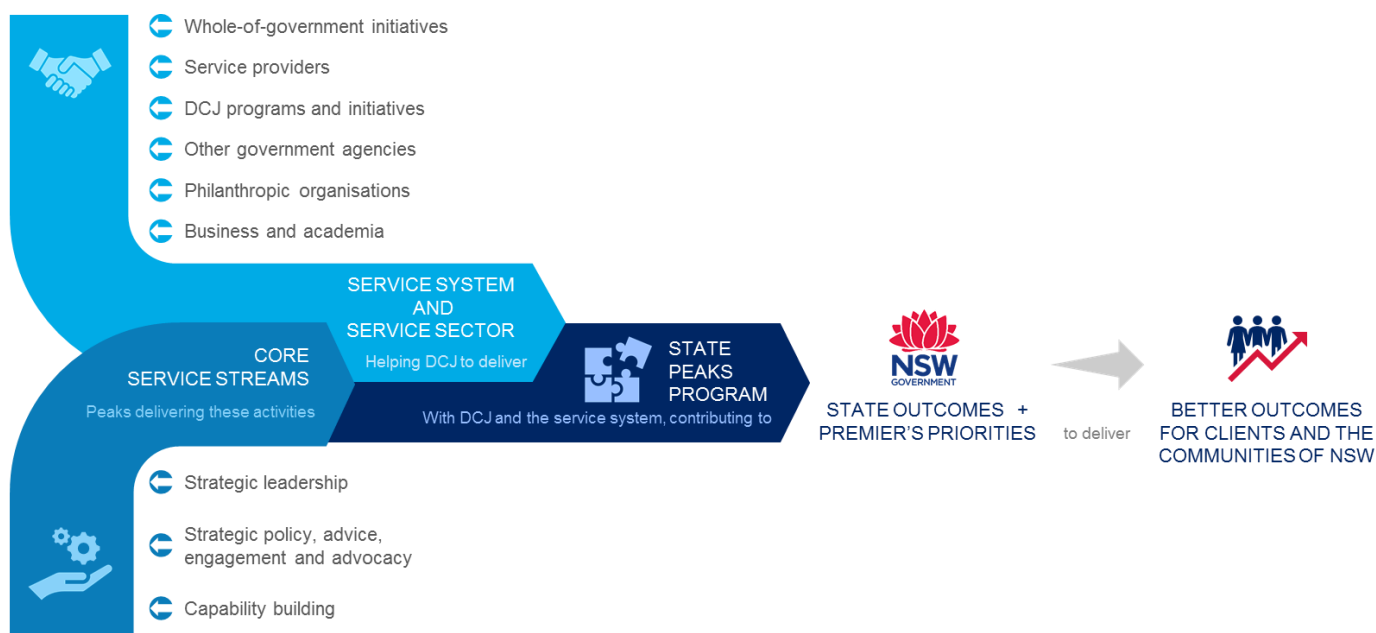
4. Program Description

4.1 Program Aim

The State Peaks Program is one of the means by which DCJ engages its partners to work collaboratively to identify and understand needs, and address challenges faced by the human services sector. It aims to support the ongoing development of a diverse, sustainable and capable service system that is informed by sector and client experience, and delivers improved outcomes for clients and communities.

The Program has been designed to be flexible to reflect the dynamic environment of the human services system, and to ensure the ongoing relevance of the Program to future Government and community priorities.

The Program sits alongside a range of other initiatives and projects, including those otherwise funded or delivered by DCJ, other Government agencies, peaks, service providers and other non-government organisations.



4.2 Contracted Service Providers

The Program is delivered by peak organisations (including industry bodies and consumer groups) that represent the interests of consumers, communities and non-government organisations working in the human services system. This currently includes child and family, community building, domestic and family violence, homelessness and housing peaks².

The Program defines a peak organisation (also described as a 'peak') as:

A representative, non-government organisation whose membership predominantly consists of other (legally unrelated) organisations of allied interests and which is recognised by other peaks and their sectors generally as acting on behalf of its stakeholders, representing stakeholder interests and being the representative for their sector on relevant matters; or consumer group.

² The flexibility in program design provides the potential for other DCJ funded peaks to operate under this program at the discretion of DCJ.

4.3 Program Objectives

The objectives of the Program are to contribute to building a:

- Partnership approach that recognises the respective roles and responsibilities of Government and the non-Government sector.
- Diverse and capable non-government sector in the development and delivery of human services.
- Collaborative approach in engaging with the sector, consumers and communities to bring their views, ideas and needs to the design of policy and programs.
- Service sector grounded in evidence informed practice and research.
- System grounded on effective collaboration and partnerships between the Government, the service sector and other stakeholders.
- Sector adaptable and responsive to changing community needs and Government priorities.
- System that harnesses industry expertise and innovation to deliver improved client outcomes.

4.4 Program Logic

The State Peaks Program logic outlines how the work of the Program contributes to achieving positive impact and outcomes for clients and communities in NSW. It provides a description of:

- the current situation and needs of the service system
- the evidence and experience drawn upon to inform the approach to Program activities that will positively impact the needs of the system
- Program outputs and short term outcomes that can be achieved within the period up to 3 years
- long term outcomes aimed at supporting better outcomes for clients and communities.

The State Peaks Program logic is included at **Appendix A**.

4.5 Target Population

Peaks funded under the Program engage with a range of stakeholders to support achievement of Program outcomes, including (but not limited to):

- vulnerable children, adults, families and communities across NSW
- Aboriginal people and communities
- contracted service providers
- service providers in adjunct service sectors
- NSW and other Government agencies
- industry bodies, community and special interest groups, and private sector entities
- academic and training institutions.

The Program is state wide and peaks must ensure sufficient representation in regional and remote communities.

4.6 Core Service Streams and Activities

The three core services streams of the Program are:

1. Strategic leadership and research.
2. Systemic policy, engagement, advice and advocacy.
3. Capability building.

Table 1 shows the range of activities covered by the core streams within the Program.

Peaks may be contracted to deliver activities across any or all of the core streams that involve working with Government, other government agencies, providers, the service community and other stakeholders.

Table 1: State Peak Program core service streams and the range of activities within each stream

Core streams	Range of activities
Strategic leadership & research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and partnerships to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead and/or facilitate work that supports the effective use of resources, improved service delivery and/or strengthening sector capability. ○ Engage in and influence commissioning activities to contribute to program design and implementation of reforms and strategic priorities. ○ Contribute to or conduct research, support innovation and build evidence. • Develop and implement strategies to inform stakeholders and to support the development and delivery of effective Government policy and reforms.
Systemic policy, advice, engagement and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with community and sector networks across NSW on needs, challenges and opportunities as well as to inform government policy, programs and reforms; including identification of emergent issues & potential solutions. • Advocate on behalf of the sector, consumers and communities through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representation of the voice of the sector, consumers and communities including through membership/attendance on government working groups/committees & sector representative councils. ○ Joint advocacy, collaboration and networking. • Develop and implement strategies to engage, empower and inform consumers, the sector and communities in the design and improvement of policy and service delivery. • Deliver information, advice & referral services for consumers and/or carers including individual advocacy.
Capability building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement strategies to understand the current and future needs of the service sector, consumers and communities. • Continued development of the service sector through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provider capability building including governance, financial, systems, legal, continuous improvement through using data, reporting and evaluation, consumer participation, advocacy and cultural capability. ○ workforce capability & skills building including: conferences, training, communities of practice, practice tools, resources. • Promote better understanding with consumers and sector of Government policy, programs and reforms – and vice versa – through newsletters, forums, meetings, social media, research, events etc. • Build capability of consumers to engage in commissioning of services.

Note: For definitions of terms outlined in the service activities refer to the Glossary at Appendix A.

5. Program Delivery

5.1 Program Principles

Evidence³ and experience identifies a number of key principles that should be incorporated into approaches for the delivery of services within the Program.

These principles underpin how DCJ and the Program service providers work together to deliver the Program:

1. As partners, we have shared responsibility for contributing to the success of the outcomes.
2. Meaningful and culturally appropriate engagement with consumers and communities will ensure that we respond to the changing needs and contribute to the outcomes.
3. A commitment to work together as partners supports achieving the best outcomes for the people of NSW.
4. Services need to be delivered to reflect the diverse groups and communities across NSW. Together we promote inclusive principles for people with disabilities, diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Aboriginal people and communities and LGBTIQ+ groups.
5. Recognition that individuals, communities, providers and the service system offer valuable expertise and commitment on which we can build long term change.
6. Collaboration and partnerships with other peaks, government and other agencies is a focus element.

5.2 Service Planning

Peaks will be provided with a list of key priorities identified by DCJ program areas which will inform the negotiation of individual peak Service Plans. These Service Plans will form part of peak's contractual agreement with DCJ.

If required, Service Plans can be reviewed yearly to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to emerging Government and service system priorities.

5.3 Contracting

Service Providers will be contracted under the *NSW Human Services Agreement (HSA) standard terms* and the *Agreement for Funding of Services Schedule – State Peaks Program*. These Program Specifications and individual peak Service Plans will be attached to the Schedule as part of the contracting documents.

³ Nous Consulting Group Review of NSW Sector Development Program, 2019; Maddison. S. and Carson. A, Civil Voices: Researching Not-for-Profit Advocacy 2017

5.3.1 Sub-contracting

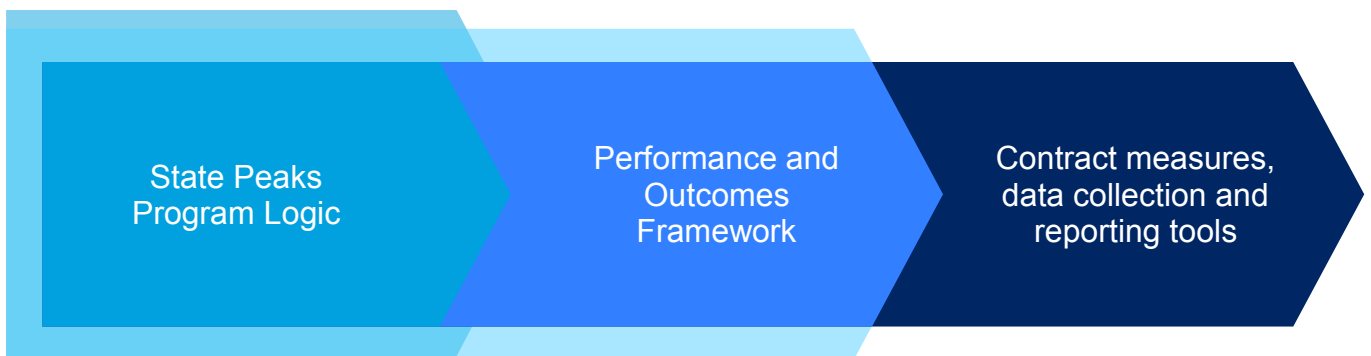
DCJ recognises that peaks may engage contractors or specialist organisations to support the delivery of services under the Program from time to time.

Where the provider identifies a need for specialist contractors or partners to assist in delivering the services, this will be agreed with DCJ as part of a joint planning approach. Where appropriate contracting partnerships will be specified in the service plan and the endorsed service plan will constitute DCJ's consent to subcontract the specified services.

If the provider wants to change the services DCJ has agreed can be subcontracted in the service plan, the provider must seek consent to subcontract the services from the contract manager. The provider will need to seek approval for sub-contracted services as per DCJ procedures for sub-contracting.

6. Performance and Outcomes Framework

The Program is underpinned by a Performance and Outcomes Framework to enable measurement of the effectiveness and efficiency of delivering the outcomes defined in the Program Logic.



The Program Performance and Outcomes Framework was implemented in 2020. It is expected that outcome measures, tools and processes will be refined over time.

The Program Specifications will be revised as necessary as the Outcomes Framework is refined in collaboration with key Program stakeholders.

The Program performance and outcome framework has been designed to reflect the understanding of the contribution to the long term outcomes through reporting and measurement of short term outcomes. It will:

- provide recognition of collaborative work undertaken by peaks within the Program, and
- reflect the contribution to innovation and the work being undertaken to move towards evidence informed system design.

The overall performance of the Program will be monitored to ensure it is achieving expected progress on the outcomes, and that outputs delivered by individual peaks contribute to the achievement of these outcomes.

This will be achieved by DCJ collecting information and data on Program measures, with providers collecting and reporting qualitative and quantitative data that will demonstrate their contribution to the Program outcomes as well as service (contract) level performance measures.

6.1 Program Outcome Measures

Program level reporting relates to the overall performance of the Program in delivering the short term outcomes in-line with the stated Program outcomes and DCJ and State Priorities.

Program reporting will be based on a range of data inputs including:

- Annual survey by DCJ to key stakeholders including:
 - DCJ program areas
 - Peaks
 - Member organisations.
- Case Studies by peaks on initiatives contributing to Program outcomes.
- Achievement of Service Plan deliverables contributing to Program outcomes.

6.2 Peak Contract Performance Measures

Contract level reporting monitors peaks' achievement of key Service Plan deliverables and contribution to program outcomes.

7. Reporting and data collection

A range of performance indicators and measures have been outlined, which will demonstrate how achievement of Program outcomes will be assessed. This includes use of both qualitative and quantitative data, and varied methods of data collection.

Peaks will be required to provide six-monthly reports on progress at a minimum. Some measures will be reported on at six monthly intervals; other measures will be annual.

Peaks will also be required to adhere to the reporting requirements of the DCJ *Agreement for Funding of Services* referenced in clause 19.4(a)(i) and in the *Schedule under Supplementary Conditions* clauses 12, 13 and 14.

Program and peak contract level performance reporting requirements are outlined in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3: PROGRAM OUTCOME INDICATORS

PROGRAM OUTCOME INDICATORS				
Program outcome	Indicator	Frequency	Report tool	Who
The service system works together to more effectively and efficiently support the needs of consumers and communities	Evidence of collaboration on projects and initiatives that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on an integrated service system • contribute to relevant NSW Premier's Priorities 	Six monthly	Case study	Peaks
Shared accountability to build and grow a sector that delivers evidence-informed practice	Contribution of sector and consumer needs by peaks and DCJ to inform policy development and service system design	Annually	Survey (recipients: peaks, DCJ)	DCJ
	Evidence of collaborative initiatives to support evidence-informed practice	Six monthly	Case study	Peaks
Increased and more effective communication, collaboration and engagement	Stakeholder satisfaction with communication, collaboration and engagement	Annually	Survey (recipients: peaks, DCJ, member organisations)	DCJ
An integrated evidence base to inform policy, and service design and innovation in service delivery	Extent of contribution to development and support of evidence base to inform policy and service system design	Six monthly	Case study Six monthly or annual report	Peaks
Increased voice and experience of consumers, communities and the sector in policy development, program design and service improvement	Evidence that views of Peaks sought and represented the views of consumers, communities and the sector to inform policy	Annually	Survey (recipients: DCJ, member organisations)	DCJ
	Extent that initiatives prioritise capture of consumers, communities and the sector	Six monthly	Case study	Peaks
Efficient use of resources to generate service innovation	Effectiveness of partnerships and or/collaboration on strategic priorities	Six monthly	Case study	Peaks
A service sector with increased capability and flexibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to the dynamic and changing nature of consumers and community needs 	Sector informed and able to contribute to and support government policy, reform and initiatives	Annually	Survey (recipients: member organisations)	DCJ and Peaks
	Stakeholder engaged in initiatives to support increased capability in cultural competency	Annually	Survey	DCJ and Peaks

PROGRAM OUTCOME INDICATORS

Program outcome	Indicator	Frequency	Report tool	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deliver inclusive and culturally appropriate services that address the needs of Aboriginal and other vulnerable communities deliver commissioned services to meet priority consumer and geographical needs 			(recipients: member organisations)	
	Stakeholder engaged in initiatives targeting priority consumer and geographical needs	Annually	Survey (recipients: member organisations)	DCJ and Peaks

PEAK CONTRACT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Key Performance Indicator	Measure
Peaks are responsive to Government priorities	<p>Service Plans include activities that demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment to priorities Collaboration with Government, peaks and/or other community or private partners.
Peaks achieve agreed Service Plan deliverables	Service Plan deliverables are achieved against agreed measures and timeframes or as otherwise agreed between DCJ and peaks.
Peaks provide timely and completed reports	<p>Peaks submit six monthly and annual reports against Service Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 15 working days of the end of the reporting period or otherwise agreed with the contract manager. Report against agreed measures.

8. Notified policies and standards

Providers funded through the Program are required to appropriately reflect the policies, procedures, process and practices listed below, in the delivery of the core service streams outlined.

These notified policies and standards may be updated, amended and replaced from time to time, or new documents added as necessary.

A.1. DCJ Contract Management Framework

A.2 Subcontracting

Appendix A.

A.1 Terminology and definitions

Terms	Definition
Advice and referral	Deliver an information, advice and referral service (e.g. call centre, website, portal) for consumers, citizens and/or carers, including individual advocacy
Advocacy, representation & policy development	Advocacy, representation and policy development activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- providing advice on & responding to government policy and programs- membership/attendance on government agency working group/committees and sector representative councils.- participating in public forums and events- awareness raising campaigns
Client	A person using human and community services. In this document, also referred to as 'consumer'. Refer below.
Collaboration	A partnership approach that relies on an open exchange of information and sharing of knowledge. It is dependent on mutual respect and is aimed at supporting the partnerships between the parties.
Commissioning	A structured approach centred on achieving the best possible outcomes for consumers, in the most efficient, effective and sustainable way. This is done by designing, delivering and managing – in collaboration with partners and consumers – the services which best address consumer needs.
Community capability building	Community/or consumer centred capability building activities and resources.
Community planning & coordination	Activities related to local planning, coordination, information sharing, and effective use of resources including local partnerships, interagency & networks.
Consumer	<p>These are people or groups who use human and community services, as well as their family and carers. This includes people and groups who have used a service in the past or who could potentially use the service in the future, and who become members of a consumer group.</p> <p>The term reflects commissioning to place consumers at the centre by engaging and involving in design, delivery including decision making and service improvement.</p>
Consumer capability building	Activities to support consumers to engage with government, service providers and participate in their community including training, resources, forums, workshops, campaigns, community events.
Consumer consultation	Lead or facilitate consultation & engagement with consumers to enable input/collaboration on government policy, programs and reforms and/or identify emerging issues and potential solutions.
Information dissemination - consumers	Information provided to consumers to assist them to understand government policy, programs and reforms through newsletters, forums, meetings, social media etc.
Information dissemination - sector	Information provided to service providers to inform them about government policy, programs and reforms through newsletters, forums, meetings, social media etc.
Organisational capability building	Activities which support development of community organisations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- governance , financial, systems, legal- continuous improvement through data collection, reporting and evaluation

Terms	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consumer participation & advocacy - cultural capability
Partnerships	Activities related to leading and/or facilitating partnerships across government, non-government and for profit organisations to support more effective use of resources and/or improved service delivery and/or strengthen organisational or sector capability.
Peak body, or peak	A representative and non-government organisation whose membership predominantly consists of other (legally unrelated) organisations of allied interests and which is recognised by other peaks and their sectors generally as a representative of the whole of their sector, or consumer group.
Peak Service Plan	A specific plan attached to a peak's contract outlining detail of agreed deliverables and measures
Qualitative data or measures	Measures of values or counts that are expressed as numbers; numeric variables
Quantitative data or measures	Measures of 'types' or categorical variables, which may be presented by a name, symbol or number code; can include written evidence
Reform implementation	Collaboration with DCJ to implement reform initiatives/strategic priorities, including service design, planning, implementation, pilots and evaluations
Research	Conducting, collaborating or contributing to research.
Service system	A configuration of community and organisational networks designed to deliver services that satisfy the needs, wants, or aspirations of consumers.
Sector	Includes services provided by a broad range of government, for –profit, sole providers and non-government agencies. These services are provided for a diverse range of needs (e.g. housing, homelessness, family & domestic violence, child and family services, volunteering, youth and community justice, ageing, disability).
Sector consultation	Lead or facilitate consultation and engagement with sector to enable input/collaboration on government policy, programs and reforms and/or identify emerging issues and potential solutions.
Workforce development	Activities to facilitate development of workforce capability and skills, including training, communities of practice, practice tools, resources & frameworks.

A.2 State Peak Program Logic

VISION STATEMENT: A strong and diverse consumer-centred service system delivering positive outcomes to vulnerable children, families, individuals, and communities.

CURRENT SITUATION/ NEEDS	EVIDENCE	PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
<p>The NSW human services sector is undergoing unprecedented change.</p> <p>Policy reform, changes to market structures and performance, demographic changes and organisational trends are affecting clients, communities and sectors.</p> <p>An independent review shows that the program has delivered value, yet there are opportunities to improve to ensure the program meets emerging needs and challenges.</p> <p>The program faces significant challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> government's move towards the commissioning approach demographic and policy changes increasing demand for sector development activities how to demonstrate a link between data and evidence maintaining flexibility complexity of the human service system; siloed programs onus on organisations to evolve their capabilities to deliver services in this new environment over representation of Aboriginal people in services barriers to access and engagement in regional and remote areas need to operate within the existing budget. 	<p>Over 10% of the population live with significant economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Aboriginal people and people with disability experience greater rates of significant economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Regional communities have higher concentrations of poverty and experience difficulty accessing services.</p> <p>Collaboration across Government, communities and the sector produces better policy and delivers improved outcomes for consumers and communities.</p> <p>A commissioning approach to service delivery needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage the sector to respond to changes in the operating environment change the way government engages with consumers and the sector (Maddison, S. & Carson, A, 2017) focus on outcomes, and encourage sector to robustly report on progress towards achieving outcomes (Nous, 2019). <p>The robust functioning of a democratic society is supported by the role of intermediaries between the community and Government and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires systemic advocacy as a key channel for Government to seek expert advice – multiple modes of representation (Sawer, 2002) ensures a diverse range of views and voices are represented (Melville 2003). <p>Workforce and organisational development strategies that use implementation science builds staff capability.</p>	<p>STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP & RESEARCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with a range of partners and other stakeholders, as well as work with Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to support effective use of resources and improve service delivery in relation to commissioning approaches, to implement reforms and strategic priorities to contribute to research, innovation and building evidence. Develop strategies to inform stakeholders and work with Government on policy and reforms. <p>SYSTEMIC POLICY, ENGAGEMENT, ADVICE & ADVOCACY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with community and sector networks across NSW. Advocate on behalf of the sector and consumers. Collaborate and network; undertake joint advocacy. Develop and implement strategies to engage, empower and inform. <p>CAPABILITY BUILDING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map and understand current and future needs. Continued development of the service provider sector. Collaborate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively & efficiently support the needs of the sector, consumers and community build capability. Promote better understanding of policy, programs and reforms. Build the capability of consumers to engage in commissioning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging the sector to improve data collection and sharing of evidence will result in more outcome-focused and evidence-informed service delivery. Collectively engaging with regional networks and individuals at a local community level. Engaging consumers in design and delivery of services that are focused on their needs and priorities will improve uptake of services and increase the wellbeing of individuals, children, families and communities. Engaging client groups will inform decision-making and identify their needs for policy development and program design. Engaging providers and promoting practice improvement and a change agenda. Building an evidence base across the service system that reflects community cohorts. Using multiple channels for communication, collaboration and engagement. Working in partnership with other peaks, providers, consumers, other stakeholders and Government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deliver collective advice, research and advocacy on community needs facilitate integrated policy development and commissioning approaches. Facilitating the establishment of partnerships between the service system and the private and academic sectors. Working with the service system to deliver diverse and culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal and other vulnerable groups. 	<p>SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service system works together to more effectively and efficiently support the needs of consumers and communities. Shared accountability to build and grow a sector that delivers evidence-informed practice. Increased and more effective communication, collaboration and engagement. An integrated evidence base to inform policy, and service design and innovation in service delivery. Increased voice and experience of consumers, communities and the sector in policy development, program design and service improvement. Efficient use of resources to generate service innovation. A service sector with increased capability and flexibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respond to the dynamic and changing nature of consumers and community needs deliver inclusive and culturally appropriate services that address the needs of Aboriginal and other vulnerable communities deliver commissioned services to meet priority consumer and geographical needs. <p>MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumers and communities are engaged and empowered to shape service design and delivery to be meet their needs. Sector-led evidence-informed practice, research and evaluation findings are harnessed to advocate for and deliver innovation in service delivery. Partnering within the service system delivers an integrated approach to meeting the needs of consumers and communities. Transparent, equitable and targeting of resources to priority outputs will contribute to program outcomes. <p>LONG-TERM OUTCOMES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A diverse, integrated and sustainable service system that is flexible to meet the changing needs of children, families, individuals and communities, focused on delivering positive outcomes. Policies and delivered services reflect consumer and local community needs and outcomes.