

*Attachment to Submission to the  
Inquiry into the impact of violence on young Australians*

This attachment outlines activities of the Australian Government that address risk factors of violence or other related issues. While not directly linked to the terms of reference of the Inquiry these initiatives are included in the submission to paint a more holistic picture of the Government's work in supporting young Australians who may be at risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence. It should be noted that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list of initiatives that support the positive development of young people, but rather to highlight some that may be of particular interest to the Committee.

Further information on what the Government is doing for young people can be found in *Investing in Australia's Young People: a stocktake of Australian Government initiatives for young people* at [www.youth.gov.au](http://www.youth.gov.au).

### **School and education related initiatives**

#### *Youth Attainment and Transitions*

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions aims to increase participation of young people in education and training, assist young people make a successful transition from school to further education, training or full-time employment, and increase attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications of young people aged 15-24, including Indigenous young people.

As part of the Australian Government's contribution to the National Partnership, two new programs, School Business Community Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections, commence from 1 January 2010.

The Australian Government is working closely with the State and Territory Governments to develop and implement these two new programs, including reducing overlap and duplication between programs and assistance, and making it easier for young people to access the assistance they need.

Youth Connections will provide an improved safety net for young people who have disengaged from education, or are at-risk of disengaging, through the provision of individually tailored case management and support to help young people to re-connect with education or training and build resilience, skills and attributes that promote positive life choices and wellbeing.

Young people eligible to receive Youth Connections services will include those who are severely disengaged from education, training or work, family and community. They may also have multiple barriers, which may be related to violence. Some participants may experience violence at their home, or be the victim of violence and bullying at school. Alternatively, participants could be violent themselves at school, or be perpetrators of violence. These experiences provide significant risk of them not completing Year 12. These participants have highly complex personal situations and have no discernable plans to re-engage with and/or complete Year 12 or an equivalent.

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In South Australia, an additional \$300,000 is available for a Youth Connections – Specialised Services Program to link with the South Australian Juvenile Justice System for young people in or exiting the system. Youth Connections – Specialised Services delivery will be targeted to help the young people re-engage with their community and education and/or further training through the provision of individualised case management to overcome their personal barriers (including having experienced violence or been the perpetrator of violence).

The Partnership Brokers objective is to facilitate stakeholder engagement, build community capacity and infrastructure and drive the Australian Government’s education reform and social inclusion agendas to improve education and transition outcomes for all young people.

This will be achieved through a national network of Partnership Brokers that establish sustainable partnerships between and among four key stakeholder groups:

- Education and training providers
- Business and industry
- Parents and families
- Community groups.

Partnership Brokers will foster a strategic, whole-of-community approach that supports young people’s learning and development.

Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers programs will be delivered simultaneously across Australia, across 113 designated Service Regions.

The Australian Government has committed \$623 million over four years for measures to improve young people’s educational attainment and transitions from school. Of this total amount \$286.8 million over four years has been allocated to Youth Connections funding and \$182.9 million over four years has been allocated to Partnership Brokers funding.

Further information can be found at

[www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/YouthAttainmentandTransitions/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/YouthAttainmentandTransitions/Pages/Home.aspx).

*National School Chaplaincy Program*

The National School Chaplaincy Program aims to support school communities that wish to access the services of a school chaplain or secular pastoral care worker. It is a voluntary program that assists school communities to support the wellbeing of their students, including strengthening values, providing greater pastoral care and enhancing engagement with the broader community.

The program provides annual support of up to \$20,000 for government and non-government school communities that have established school chaplains or further enhanced services already being provided. Chaplains/pastoral care workers provide general personal and religious advice, comfort and support to all students and staff, regardless of their religious denomination, irrespective of their religious beliefs.

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Under the National School Chaplaincy Program, up to \$165 million over 3 years has been made available to Australian school communities to assist in the provision of chaplaincy services. The Government will provide an additional \$42.8 million to extend the program for all participating schools until December 2011. The extension of the program will ensure that those schools funded under the program will be able to continue to provide valuable support in the provision of student wellbeing services.

More information is available at

[www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/NationalSchoolChaplaincyProgram](http://www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/NationalSchoolChaplaincyProgram).

*Sporting Chance Program*

The Australian Government is contributing \$42 million over four years (2009-2012) to support the Sporting Chance Program that will provide for delivery of projects that use sport as a vehicle to increase the level of engagement of Indigenous students to improve their educational outcomes.

More information is available at

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Indigenous/Schooling/Programs/SportingChance/Pages/default.aspx>.

*Values Education Program*

The Values Education Program has funded a number of initiatives to support values education in Australian schools.

These include:

- the Values in Action Schools Project
- curriculum and professional learning resources
- funding for state and territory education authorities to conduct a Values Education Professional Learning Program for teachers
- the Values Education website [www.valueseducation.edu.au](http://www.valueseducation.edu.au)
- national activities, including partnership projects with parents, principals, teachers and teacher educators and a national conference.

More information is available at [www.curriculum.edu.au/values](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/values).

*School Enrolment and Attendance Measure*

The School Enrolment and Attendance Measure is a measure being trialled in Queensland aimed at increasing school enrolment and attendance by encouraging parents to take positive steps to lift their children's school attendance.

Families in the Logan suburbs of Woodridge, Kingston, Logan Central and Eagleby, and the communities of Doomadgee and Mornington Island will take part in a trial linking school enrolment and attendance with welfare payments.

The trial will commence in Term 1, 2010. Around 2,000 parents receiving income support in the trial sites will be required, if requested, to demonstrate to Centrelink

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that their children are enrolled, and that they are taking reasonable steps to make sure their children attend school regularly.

Implementation of the measure is being led by the Queensland State Government Department of Education and Training, in collaboration with Centrelink and DEEWR national and state office representatives. While the measure does not specifically target violence, it does target at-risk young Australians.

More information is available at

[www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/progserv/welfarereform/Pages/ImprovingSchoolEnrolmentAttendance.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/progserv/welfarereform/Pages/ImprovingSchoolEnrolmentAttendance.aspx).

*National Green Jobs Corps*

The Government will invest up to \$82.5 million in National Green Jobs Corps. Commencing on 1 January 2010 and finishing on 31 December 2011, National Green Jobs Corps will offer 10,000 places for unemployed Australians aged 17 to 24 years to gain a combination of environmental work experience, skills development and accredited training. National Green Jobs Corps will help equip young Australians with the skills to fill employment opportunities in emerging green and climate change related industries. The program will provide additional participation opportunities for young people who struggle to engage with and remain in education or training.

Further information can be found at [www.deewr.gov.au/ngjc](http://www.deewr.gov.au/ngjc).

*Cyber Security Education Package*

To help children understand the importance of cyber security, the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has developed a Cyber Security Education Package consisting of two interactive, self-learning modules for students in years 3 and 9. The objective of the modules is to provide children with the skills and knowledge necessary to protect themselves online. Topics covered by these modules include advice on securing personal information online and social networking. The modules are available free to all Australian schools through the Government's Stay Smart Online website or on CD-ROM.

Further information is available at [www.staysmartonline.gov.au/budd-e/](http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au/budd-e/).

*Cyber Safety Education programs*

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA) has a suite of cyber-safety education initiatives in train, including its cyber-safety schools package and outreach activities. The ACMA's programs include general cyber-safety awareness presentations to teachers, parents, students and other key stakeholders; it also provides online educational resources. Additional funding has recently been announced to continue and expand these activities.

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The ACMA have developed a new Cybersmart website ([cybersmart.gov.au](http://cybersmart.gov.au)) to provide parents, teachers, trainee teachers, librarians and children with up-to-date, comprehensive and age appropriate online cybersafety resources and assistance. The website also provides a dedicated online helpline and counselling service for children provided by Kids Helpline, to provide a quick and easy way to report online incidents that cause concern. Additional funding has also been recently announced to extend the hours of operation of the online Helpline to increase its availability when most needed.

Further information is available at [www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au).

### **Community related initiatives**

#### *Diverse Australia Program*

The Diverse Australia Program is an initiative that aims to address cultural, racial and religious intolerance by promoting respect, fairness and a sense of belonging for everyone.

In addressing issues of racial, cultural and religious intolerance the Program does have some impact on the social factors that contribute to violence by young Australians and the development of strategies to reduce violence and its impact on young Australians.

The Diverse Australia Program is delivered through four key elements:

- Community Grants, including small scale and large community grants
- Emerging Issues Funding
- Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme community engagement activities
- an information component that includes Harmony Day (celebrated annually on 21 March).

Funding for community-based projects is available through the Diverse Australia Program (\$2.7 million is expected to be available for the 2009-10 financial year).

Young people are a priority group for Diverse Australia Program. In 2008 and 2009 the Australian Government spent some \$1.8 million on 39 projects directed at young people.

For more information about the Diverse Australia Program please visit [www.harmony.gov.au](http://www.harmony.gov.au).

#### *National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*

The National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (NAP) is a cross government initiative developed by the Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in response to events around the world and in Australia since 2001. It involves an allocation of \$41.5 million in Australian Government funding for development and implementation from 2005-06 to 2009-10.

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While not on the whole directly addressing violence, the NAP aims to build positive community connections and community cohesion and resilience by addressing grievances, building inter-community understanding, fostering leadership (including in young people) and building positive community relations.

In 2008-09, Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) funding totalling \$949,000 was allocated to 20 State and Territory Partnerships, including over \$283,000 for eight youth-focused projects. In addition, a total of \$356,000 in Community Grants funding was allocated to 12 youth-focused projects.

Examples of youth-focused initiatives that were allocated funding in 2008-09, and which are ongoing, include:

- The Victorian Arabic Social Services Inc in Broadmeadows, Victoria received \$30,000 for the *VASS-Hume Brave project*. This project aims to engage marginalised young Muslim men from Arabic speaking backgrounds who are at risk of becoming involved in extreme and violent activities. It will connect them with religious leaders and expose them to the diversity of Islam so that they are less likely to adopt a narrow interpretation of Islam. The project will also strengthen relations between these young people, local police, religious and community leaders and members of the wider community. Activities include volunteering, mentoring, capacity building and peer mentoring.
- Beyond Empathy Ltd received \$30,000 for the *Across My Bridge* project. This initiative aims to build and strengthen relationships between young people from Muslim backgrounds and support agencies and the wider community, principally in the Auburn area. The project will deepen engagement with female and male at-risk young people. Using visual art, sculpture, music, hip hop, dance, performance, film making and other digital media, it will re-engage young Muslims in a positive way through a series of workshops. These will develop self-esteem, and act as a catalyst for their positive re-engagement in their community.
- DIAC contributed \$80,000 to the *Digi-Diaries* youth project being undertaken by Arts New South Wales in association with a community based group. The project employs digital story telling as a means of addressing marginalisation of young Muslim people in Western Sydney. It encompasses skills development workshops, film production, and screenings followed by audience discussion. Expected outcomes include enhanced self expression, communication and employment skills. It will also build wider community awareness of issues being encountered by the youth people involved and counteract negative media stereotypes.

*Community Liaison Officer network*

The Community Liaison Officer (CLO) network is based in DIAC State and Territory Offices. The network comprises around 35 CLOs and is highly valued within DIAC and other government agencies as a source of advice on Australia's culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse communities. The network is a means of targeted consultation and information dissemination.

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CLOs work to build close rapport with community leaders and gain their confidence and respect. They identify key issues within communities and facilitate productive communication between the Government and communities, including in times of celebration and distress. CLO activities support multicultural policy development and implementation, and effectively promote national unity and social cohesion.

In the case of a crisis in Australia or overseas, for example because of a natural disaster or civil unrest, the Department's capacity to communicate with diverse communities through the CLO network makes a valuable contribution to the government's response.

While violence in families or in communities is not a focus for the CLO network, any reports of violence received by the network are responded to seriously. CLOs are able to facilitate communication between community members and law enforcement authorities to address any incidents of violence or other crimes as they arise.

The Diverse Australia Program is continuing to focus on projects engaging youth, with a particular emphasis in 2009-10 on projects seeking to re-engage youth impacted by cultural, racial and religious intolerance with education and employment pathways. The CLO network will continue to help identify issues that might need to be addressed with multicultural affairs funded projects, through regular reporting of ongoing or emerging community relations issues.

*Homelessness*

The White Paper on Homelessness, *The Road Home: a National Approach to Reducing Homelessness*, makes reference to an increased focus on the needs of young people and their families by Centrelink's social workers, especially in relation to young people under 18 who have applied for Youth Allowance Unable to Live at Home (UTLAH) (refer to page 35 of the White Paper). More information can be found at [www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/progserv/homelessness/whitepaper](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/progserv/homelessness/whitepaper).

*Supported Accommodation Assistance Program*

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) provides emergency and transitional supported accommodation and related services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Australian Government ended SAAP on 31 December 2008 and subsumed funding for homelessness services under the National Affordable Housing Agreement from 1 January 2009. More information can be found at [www.aihw.gov.au/housing/sacs/saap/index.cfm](http://www.aihw.gov.au/housing/sacs/saap/index.cfm).

*Reconnect*

The Australian Government funds the Reconnect program to provide a community based early intervention program for young people 12 to 18 years, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and their families. Reconnect uses family focused early intervention strategies to help the young person achieve family reconciliation, and improve their level of engagement with work, education, training and the community.

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In 2008-09 Reconnect services supported 3,884 family members and 5,463 young people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. Physical, sexual, emotional abuse and family violence were cited as reasons for seeking Reconnect support in a small proportion of support periods. More information can be found at [www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/funding/reconnect/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/funding/reconnect/Pages/default.aspx).

*Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service*

The Australian Government jointly funds the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service (NTAIS) under a bilateral agreement between the Australian and Northern Territory Governments. This current agreement is from 2006-07 to 2009-10 with the Australian Government providing \$4.576 million.

The objective of the NTAIS is to assist in alleviating the language barriers faced by Indigenous people throughout the Northern Territory, particularly in relation to health and legal issues. The funding has two purposes: half is dollar matched by the NT Government to support NT-run law/justice agencies. The second is to give Indigenous legal assistance providers, Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service units and Community Legal Centres in the NT free access to interpreters.

While this program does not have a specific focus on youth, it support young people directly in enabling interpreter support, and supports young people through achieving better outcomes for families through improved access to services.

For more information about NTAIS please visit

[www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Indigenoulawandnativetitle\\_Indigenoulawprograms\\_AboriginalInterpreterService\(AIS\)](http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Indigenoulawandnativetitle_Indigenoulawprograms_AboriginalInterpreterService(AIS)).

*Indigenous Culture Support program*

The Indigenous Culture Support (ICS) program assists the maintenance and continued development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The objectives of the program are to increase public awareness of Indigenous culture and support the sustainable development of community organisations, as well as support the transmission of knowledge and skills across age groups and imaginative new forms of expression.

The program supports approximately 130 projects each year with a budget of approximately \$7 million. Projects are supported across the country including urban, regional and remote communities.

The ICS program supports cultural projects that encourage social cohesion and strengthen Indigenous communities, making them more resilient to the effects of problems such as violence. Entrenched problems with self-esteem and substance abuse are often the cause of violence in Indigenous communities. Projects supported under ICS foster a strong sense of identity, pride in culture, and provide positive alternatives which contribute to combating negative attitudes and responses in difficult circumstances.



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The ICS program has a strong focus on youth with a central aim being the transmission of Indigenous culture across generations. A direct focus of many projects is youth diversionary outcomes that are achieved by using cultural activities as circuit breakers to re-entry into negative behaviours. Young people are encouraged to engage with their community, make positive choices and develop cultural maturity. Projects often involve youths who have been in contact with the juvenile justice system and the program also supports cultural projects for Indigenous inmates in correctional centres.

More information about ICS is available at [www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/ICS](http://www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/ICS).

*Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records program*

The Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records (MILR) program assists the maintenance and continued development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The objectives of the program are to support the maintenance of Indigenous languages, increase their use in a range of fields and media, increase public appreciation and support the sustainable development of community organisations. The MILR program has a strong focus on youth with a central aim being the transmission of Indigenous languages and knowledge across generations.

The program supports approximately 65 projects each year with a budget of approximately \$9 million. Projects are supported across the country including urban, regional and remote communities.

For more information about MILR, please visit [www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/MILR](http://www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/MILR).

**Family and child protection related initiatives**

*National Early Childhood Development Strategy*

Research evidence indicates that a child's most vital learning is during their first five years. This means there is a critical window of opportunity to help equip every child for life. The National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Strategy – *Investing in the Early Years* focuses on all aspects of children's development including learning, physical, social, emotional and cultural dimensions from before birth to age eight and provides a roadmap for further collaboration.

The vision of the Strategy is that by 2020, all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation.

The Strategy encompasses a wide range of early childhood priorities and initiatives at national, state and territory levels. It provides a comprehensive approach to building an effective early childhood development system in Australia for children from before birth to eight years, which embraces a child-centred perspective and identifies the early childhood development outcomes that governments (through COAG) seek to achieve by 2020.

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The Strategy will be an important mechanism for:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the importance of the early childhood development amongst parents, other primary care givers, the broader community and government agencies.
- Implementing the reform priority relating to vulnerable children and families, including the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
- Pursuing more responsive services and infrastructure for children and families at risk.
- Developing national 'cross-government' capacity for monitoring, research and evaluation related to children, families and early childhood development services to inform policy and improve transparency.

Implementation of the Strategy will occur in partnership with state and territory governments and Commonwealth agencies – including DEEWR, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of the Treasury, FaHCSIA and the Department of Health and Ageing.

Key reform priorities under the National ECD Strategy identified for further development for COAG's consideration in 2010 include:

- strengthening universal maternal, child and family health services
- support for vulnerable children
- improving early childhood infrastructure
- building parent and community understanding of the importance of early childhood development
- strengthening workforce across early childhood development and family support services
- building better information and a solid evidence base.

More information can be found at

[www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Pages/EarlyChildhoodDevelopmentStrategy.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Pages/EarlyChildhoodDevelopmentStrategy.aspx).

*Early Childhood Education and Care National Quality Framework*

On 7 December 2009, the Australian Government, in partnership with state and territory governments, agreed to a number of improvements to early childhood education and care through the introduction of a National Quality Framework. The new framework will help to ensure Australian children get the best possible start.

The new framework will cover long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschools services.

The framework includes:

- a National Quality Standard, to help providers improve their services in the range of areas that impact on a child's development
- improved staff-to-child ratios so that each child gets more individual care and attention

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- new qualifications requirements for early childhood education and child workers, so staff are better able to lead activities that help children learn and develop
- a new quality rating system, so that parents will know the quality of care on offer and can make informed choices about which service is best for their child
- a new national body to guide the implementation and management of the overall framework.

The framework will begin to be implemented from 1 July 2010, with staff to child ratio and qualification changes being progressively implemented from 1 January 2012.

The final framework incorporates feedback received on the Consultation Regulation Impact Statement from providers, families and the early childhood sector.

More information can be found at

[www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Quality/Pages/home.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/home.aspx).

*Responding Early Assisting Children (REACH)*

The Responding Early Assisting Children (REACH) Activity aims to improve access to support services and encourage at-risk and vulnerable families to engage with their community through collaborative approaches.

REACH provides child-centred, family focused and community connected responses to raising children. The primary target group is families experiencing disadvantage in their children's early years and/or at key transition phases in their children's lives. This includes families in rural and remote areas, Indigenous families and families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. REACH has a secondary focus on caregivers who can benefit from assistance to reduce personal and social barriers and improve their parenting capacity.

There are two projects funded under REACH that have relevance to the Inquiry.

- Funding is provided to Barnardos Australia – Canberra Centre under REACH for the *Kids Friends Program*. This is a mentoring program for disadvantaged children providing early intervention through alternative social networks, reducing juvenile crime and other anti-social behaviour. This service targets children and families across the whole of the ACT. The program will receive \$47,513 over the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2011.
- REACH funding is also provided to the Northern Peninsula Area Women's Shelter Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation which provides early intervention and transitional stages activities with Indigenous families experiencing stress, crisis and difficulties in caring for children. These activities include individual support, parenting training and life skills education group work. This service works with Indigenous families with children under 18 in remote areas. The project will receive \$258,218 over the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2011.

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Funding has been provided for the REACH Activity to transition to the new Family Support Program over the two years to July 2011. The target group for REACH was 0 to 5 years. The new Family Support Program will target children up to 12 years of age instead of just five years.

More information is available at  
[www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/progserv/Pages/parenting-reach\\_services\\_directory.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/progserv/Pages/parenting-reach_services_directory.aspx).

*Indigenous Parenting Support Services*

Indigenous Parenting Support Services (IPSS) target families with children aged up to 12 years old with a focus on children under school age. Services will be offered to Indigenous families in safe and informal settings. They will provide referrals to other services as required. They will help Indigenous parents overcome barriers to good family relationships and support them through their children's transitions to childcare, preschool and primary school.

The IPSS program is not a program that provides violence related services on the whole, although this program is flexible and responds to local needs and may therefore provide these types of services.

More information is available at  
[www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/progserv/families/icp/Pages/ipss.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/progserv/families/icp/Pages/ipss.aspx).

*Communities for Children*

Communities for Children funds organisations to develop and facilitate a whole of community approach, building on community strengths and the existing infrastructure of organisations, networks and resources, making use of strong evidence of what works in early intervention. It is implemented through a national framework which allows for tailored approaches at the local level and provides communities with the opportunity to develop flexible and innovative approaches that best reflect their circumstances.

Within a site, Communities for Children targets the whole community. Where a need is identified, specific strategies focus on particular target groups (for example, Indigenous Australians or people from CALD backgrounds). Each Communities for Children site is required to establish and maintain a Communities for Children Committee (CCC). The CCC is a voluntary group of key stakeholders within a site who work in collaboration with the Facilitating Partner to develop, guide and implement the activity.

More information is available at  
[www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/progserv/communitieschildren/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/progserv/communitieschildren/Pages/default.aspx).

*Family Relationship Advice Line*

The Family Relationship Advice Line provides information and advice on family relationship issues and parenting arrangements after separation. Family

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Relationships Online provides all families with access to information about family relationship issues, and the range of services that can provide assistance. More information can be found at

[www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/familyreonline.nsf/Page/RWPF75B8B7D68233B6DCA2572180001650C](http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/familyreonline.nsf/Page/RWPF75B8B7D68233B6DCA2572180001650C).

*Medicare benefits*

Medicare Australia administers the current Medicare Benefits Schedule, which has a range of items that are specific to young people, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Health Check, introduced on 1 May 2006 (for ages 0-15 years)
- Healthy Kids Check introduced 1 July 2008 (for ages 3-6 years)
- Pervasive Developmental Disorders (Autism items) introduced 1 July 2008 (for ages 0-15 years).

There are no items on the Medicare Benefits Schedule that specifically relate to youth violence issues, however, an added benefit of having a range of youth-specific item numbers is that there will be a greater number of opportunities for young people to be seen by medical practitioners. Each of these consultations represents an opportunity for the practitioner to identify and report any possible instances of need or violence.

Medicare eligibility also provides the flexibility to adjust requirements to meet specific circumstances (some of which may come about as a result of violence issues). Medicare Australia has policies and procedures in place which give special consideration to young people who present to Medicare as in crisis or homeless.

For homeless and 'in crisis' young people, the usual enrolment considerations are relaxed. Where an applicant is unable to meet the usual enrolment requirements due to their personal circumstances, a letter from one of the following may be submitted confirming the young person's eligibility and identity:

- teacher
- social worker
- minister of religion
- youth refuge worker
- police
- member of the legal profession
- medical practitioner.

More information can be found at [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au).