



**Shaping a whole of organisation response  
to evaluation:  
Achievements, challenges and learnings**

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**About Mission Australia**

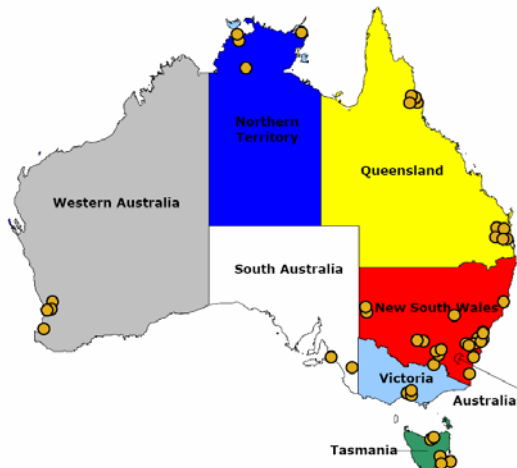
- Mission Australia is a national non-denominational Christian community services organisation
- We celebrate our 150<sup>th</sup> birthday this year
- We operate more than 450 community, education and training services, in every state and territory
- Our vision is to see a fairer Australia by enabling people in need to find pathways to a better life

## Community Services

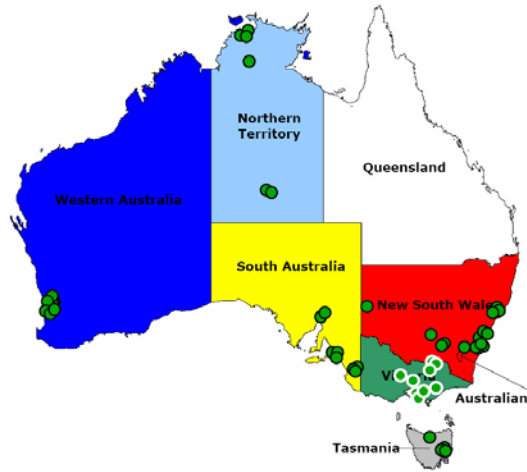
- Mission Australia's Community Services (CS) are structured around three pathways:
  - Pathways to strong families and healthy, happy children
  - Pathways through a successful youth
  - Pathways away from homelessness
- Each state and territory has different numbers of services within each of these pathways.



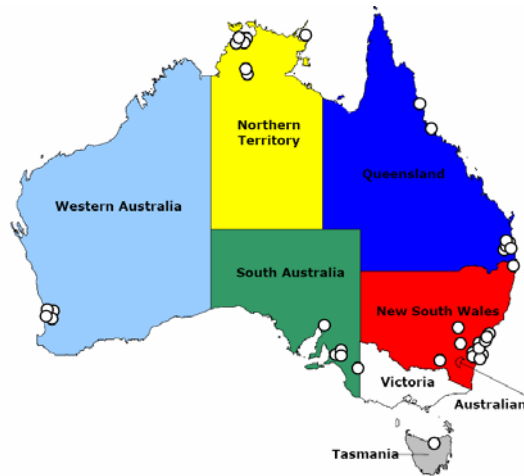
## Pathways to strong families and healthy, happy children



## Pathways through a successful youth



## Pathways away from homelessness



## Catalyst for action

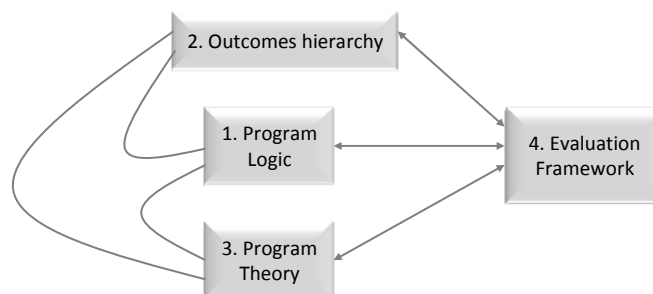
- At a national level, CS were grappling with questions like:
  - “What do we need to do to achieve our vision?”
  - “What does a fairer Australia look like?”
  - “What outcomes do our services need to be focusing on?”

We were looking for a better understanding of our impact, and a more consistent approach to measuring it.



## The four components of the framework

- To achieve this goal, MA developed a four-page framework to implement across CS nationally:





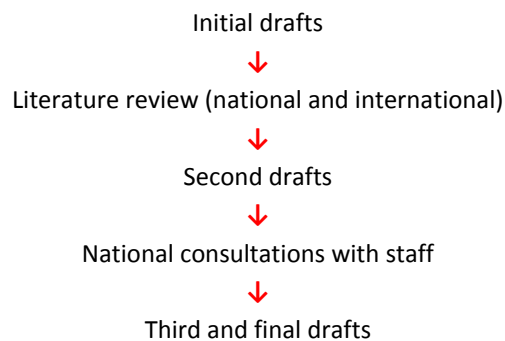
## Why?

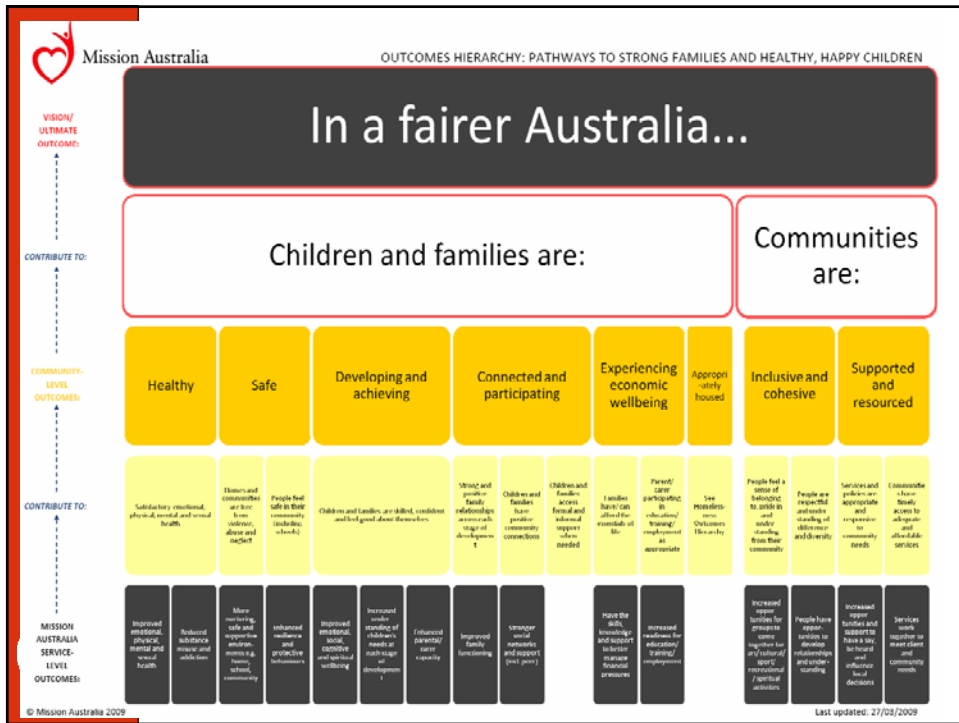
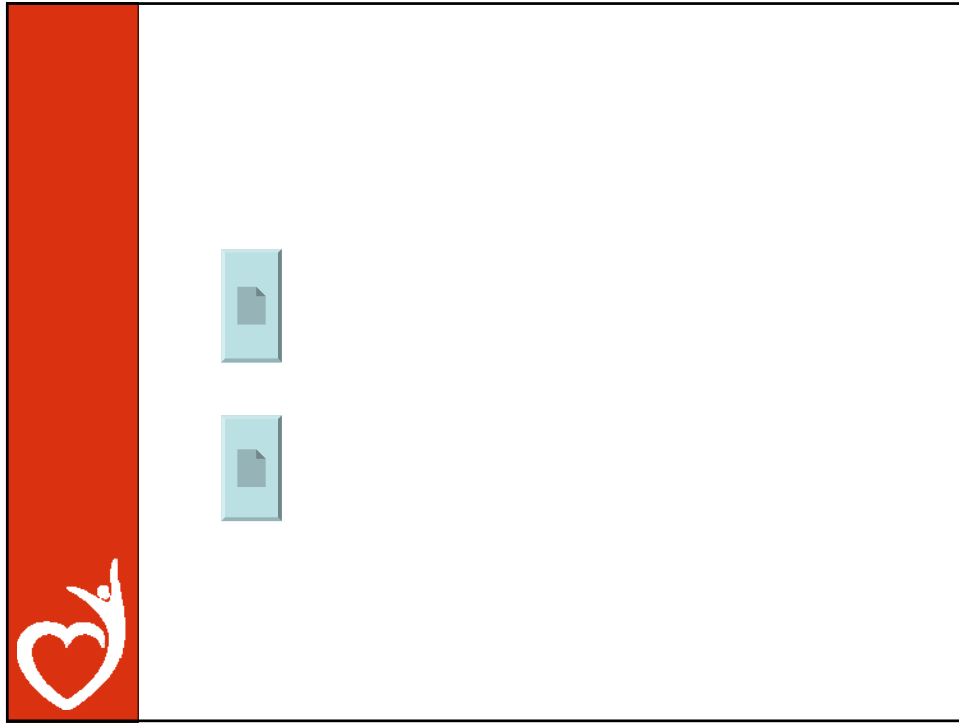
- We don't currently have a consistent way to describe what we do across Australia.
- As an organisation, we want to get better at focusing on the outcomes we achieve with clients, and measuring these more effectively.
- It's important to give our services the tools and support they need to reflect on practice, understand our work and how it links to the vision, and make sure that we're still doing the best we can for the communities we work within.
- Funding bodies moving towards this model.

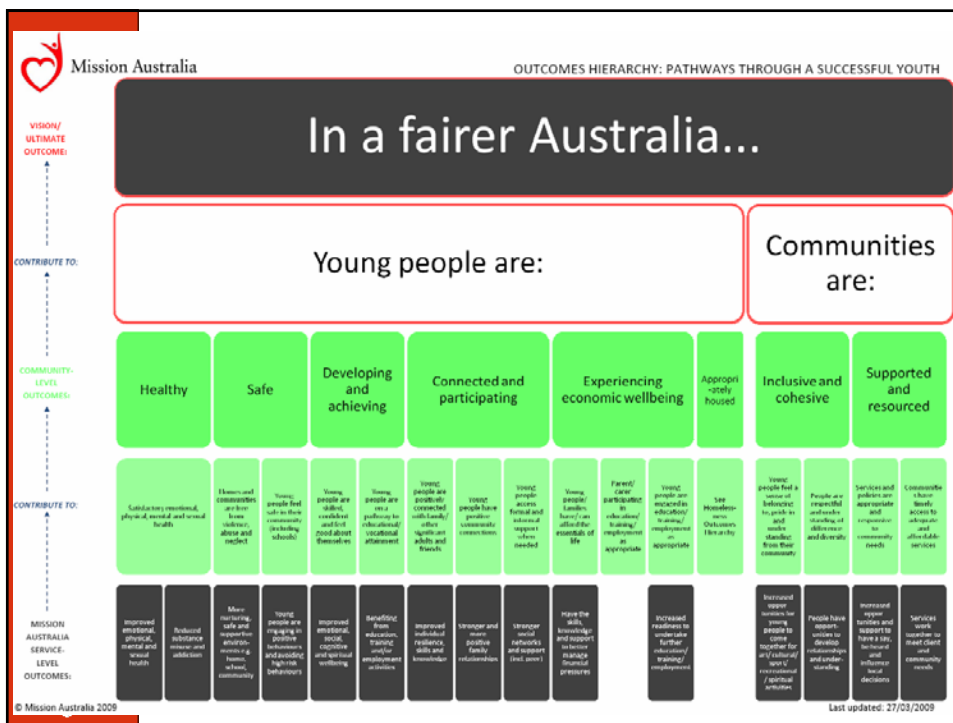
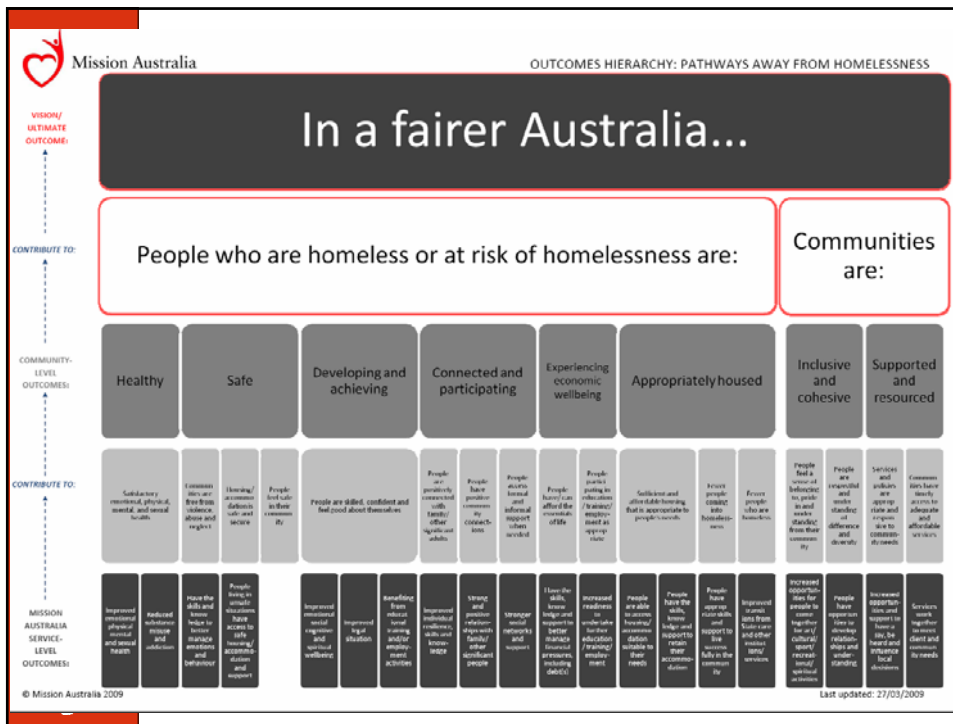


## First: Outcome Hierarchies

- We decided to establish outcome hierarchies for each of the 3 CS pathways.







## What went well:

- Organisation was ready
- Leadership team committed resources and got behind it
- Process was rigorous, increasing trust in the final product
- National consultation increased rigour and buy-in
- Practitioners contributed knowledge and engaged in discussion

*The process and the product have enabled us to have a much sharper focus on the outcomes we want to achieve at a service level and a clearer idea both of what our vision means and how what happens at a service level contributes to that vision.*



## Staff feedback:

### What staff liked:

- *“Generally it made a lot of sense and resonated with practice”.*
- *“Allows staff to see how their daily practice affects the community – how you are contributing to the community and nation”.*
- *“Provides individual workers with connection to broader aims of MA”.*
- *“Good arbiter for dilemmas and decisions”*
- *“Helps us to think ahead. Has potential for great planning tool.”*
- *“Very comprehensive. Much more extensive than in the past when similar exercises had been undertaken.”*
- *“The overwhelming feeling is that it was an understandable document that made lots of sense and there was wide support for it amongst the group.”*

### What staff didn't like:

- *Cultural groups / people with a disability/ those in rural/ remote areas/ diversity were not overtly represented.* (Note: The OHs are meant to apply to 'all Australians' within the pathway and the indicators developed can pick up 'diversity').
- *Some services don't achieve service level outcomes as they work more at the community level (eg C4C).* (Note: This has been addressed by the inclusion of community indicators).
- *Many said advocacy is a gap.* (Note: Advocacy is an activity and the OHs provide input on what we should be advocating for.)
- *“Model doesn't highlight the sideways interconnectedness”* (Note: we changed the format)





### Challenges and learnings:

- It is difficult work – many people are trying to do this and finding it tricky
- It was time and resource intensive
- With the process of the consultations, there was some great discussion that didn't get captured
- It was a new way of thinking and there was some resistance, and some misunderstanding
- Important not to get carried away by the formatting
- Important to be clear about what they are and are not: Only CS contribution to a fairer Australia; not the complete picture of a fairer Australia; not the entirety of what we do as CS.



### How we can use them:

- Services can reflect them in their program logics so we all know how each of our services is working towards our vision
- They can be incorporated into decision-making e.g. deciding on new business
- They can be used to tell others about our vision, and how we intend to achieve it
- They can be used as a framework for measuring our progress as a national organisation
- We can report on them, and share our learnings with others



## Next: Program Logic

- Task: to roll out program logic to CS across Australia
- Goal: every CS has its own program logic, developed by staff, that accurately and rigorously describes their service:
  - What needs it meets
  - The resources it has
  - The activities it implements
  - The outcomes it works towards
- Scope: approx. 300 services across Australia



## Process

Working group: definitions and templates



Project managers trained “champions” across country



Champions ran workshops for each service (first draft)



Champions and key staff refined first draft (second draft)



National review team provided feedback on second draft



Third and final drafts



## Examples



## What went well:

- Templates and definitions were well-received
- State-based training created a wider pool of staff with shared understanding
- State-based approach allowed flexibility
- Service workshops created ownership over their program logic
- People started talking about what they achieve rather than what they do
- Incorporating outcomes from the 3 OHs connected people to the vision of the organisation
- Completed program logics have been used for a multitude of purposes





## Challenges and learnings:

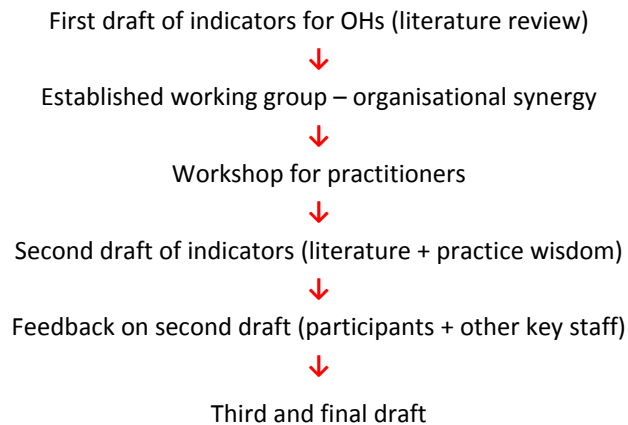
- Massive task, both to deliver the training around the country, to workshop PL with each service and to review drafts
- Contracted an external provider to develop training and it did not meet our needs
- Learning process so quality of final product varied
- Other things came up within the organisation that took precedence over rolling out PL
- Service staff had differing levels of motivation and capability to engage in PL
- Many services are still not through to the final draft



## Next: Evaluation frameworks

- We've named the next piece of our framework "Evaluation Capacity Building Project" because there are actually four pieces of work:
  - Evaluation framework
  - Measures, Indicators and Tools
  - Evaluation guide
  - Social Inclusion pilot
- Goal: we want to know if we're making a difference, and what that difference is. It is hoped that these pieces of work will allow us to:
  - Build the capacity of the organisation to conduct and learn from evaluations
  - Foster a culture of evaluation and continuous improvement

## Process: Measures, Indicators & Tools



## What went well (so far):

- Selection process of staff to attend the workshop was flexible and effective – resulted in the right people in the room on the day
- External consultant highly effective and a good match for Mission Australia
- Staff were highly knowledgeable and willing to engage throughout the whole day
- The leadership team committed the resources to bring people together and several also participated
- The foundation was already laid – through the implementation of the OHs and PL



### **Challenges and learnings (so far):**

- Difficult to find the right indicators – many people are measuring different things, or measuring them in a way that is not suitable for MA
- The workshop required good planning and then good facilitation on the day to achieve everything we set out to achieve
- Comprehensive preparation was essential
- Involves an organisational cost in terms of both time and money



### **Overall challenges and learnings:**

- The scope of the work is enormous, due to large number of services and staff and the geographical spread
- The complexity of the work is high – requires careful thought and good rollout processes
- Doing this work is not possible without genuine buy-in from staff, based on a commitment to be doing the best that we can with our clients
- The success of the work is very dependent on leadership at many levels of the organisation
- The end result will be worth it, because the interim results have already been extremely valuable





## Overall successes:

- Involving our skilled staff has significantly improved the quality of each piece of work
- High degree of buy in from people internally and externally
- “Products” have been built into our organisational processes and strategies – real impact
- Beginning the process of culture change
- Already on track to achieve our long-term goals:
  - measure and report credibly on the impact and outcomes
  - provide specific and assured policy advice
  - understand ‘what works’ and draw on evaluation findings to improve practice and enhance client outcomes
  - make informed investment decisions
  - *Concretely progress towards a fairer Australia*