

Are you an individual or making a submission on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

Organisation name

Amity Health

Position

Families and Communities Coordinator

Is your organisation....?

- A provider currently funded under one or more of the 5 programs in scope for this consultation

What type of service or support do you mostly provide?

- Prevention or early intervention services

What state or territory does your organisation deliver services and supports in?

- Western Australia

Where does your organisation deliver most of their services and supports?

Regional area

1. Does the new vision reflect what we all want for children and families?

The new vision is strongly aligned with the existing work of Communities for Children (CfC), CaPS, and the Families and Communities sector within Amity's new strategic plan, as it places children and families firmly at the centre of support. Amity's current CfC and CaPS programs are focused on delivering and supporting high-quality, evidence-based and lived-experience-informed services that assist families and children in times of need. These programs also ensure families in the community have access to the tools and resources they need to strengthen their wellbeing.

The vision highlights the importance of strong families and community-led solutions, which is already a core element of how we work. By building on the role

of CfC Facilitating Partners (FPs), the new vision also provides opportunities for regions to broaden their impact. This includes strengthening family skills and confidence and ensuring every child has the chance to grow up safe, healthy, and strong.

2. Are the two main outcomes what we should be working towards for children and families? Why/Why not? - Outcome 1: Parents and caregivers are empowered to raise healthy, resilient children - Outcome 2: Children are supported to grow into healthy, resilient adults.

1. Parents and caregivers are empowered to raise healthy, resilient children.

These outcomes align well with Amity's strategic focus. Supporting parents and building child resilience are central to prevention and early intervention work, which remains a key strength of Amity's current CfC and CaPS programs and a continued focus for future planning. Emphasising parental capacity—a well-established driver of child wellbeing—is positive, as is the focus on early intervention rather than reactive responses.

However, while the outcomes reflect family strengthening and child wellbeing, they could benefit from greater clarity and inclusivity. The term “empowered” is broad and open to interpretation—does it refer to access to education, resources, mental health supports, or financial stability? The outcomes also do not explicitly address systemic barriers such as poverty, housing insecurity, or discrimination, which can significantly affect families. Additionally, the absence of explicit community-focused language is notable given the strong emphasis on community-led approaches in previous frameworks. The term “healthy” is also quite broad and could be more clearly defined to ensure a shared understanding across sectors.

2. Children are supported to grow into healthy, resilient adults

The focus on resilience for children and young people is positive, with a long-term emphasis on wellbeing and recognition of the importance of early childhood experiences in shaping adulthood. However, the outcomes do not specify developmental stages or critical transitions, such as adolescence or school entry. They also lack measurable indicators—terms like “healthy” and “resilient” need clearer definitions to guide practical implementation. Importantly, while fostering resilience is valuable, there must also be a strong focus on ensuring children have a safe and nurturing childhood, with the time and space to grow and develop at their own pace rather than being rushed into adulthood.

Overall, the outcomes are promising and aligned with shared goals, but refinement would enhance clarity, inclusivity, and accountability while acknowledging the broader factors that influence child and family wellbeing.

3. Will a single national program provide more flexibility for your organisation?

The new national program has the potential to provide greater flexibility for the programs currently in Amity's portfolio. It could allow us to respond more effectively to emerging challenges within the community, without the constraints of current contractual requirements, while maximising outcomes for families and children and reducing service overlap.

Simplifying the grant and reporting process would also free up time and create more opportunities for Amity to deliver services that meet local needs. With our strong footprint and established community connections, we are well placed to implement place-based solutions that address both immediate and underlying issues affecting children and families.

Shifting from a strictly evidence-based approach to an evidence-informed model could foster greater improvement, particularly in regional and remote communities where unique challenges call for flexible and adaptable solutions. The streams broadly reflect both the current and future needs of children and families, offering a strong foundation for prevention and support.

However, further clarification and information are needed to fully understand how they will be implemented in practice.

To be truly effective, the streams must respond to broader underlying pressures and promote equity and inclusion. Early intervention should not be limited by age but recognised as valuable across the full developmental spectrum, particularly during key transitional stages, ensuring children and families receive support when it is most needed.

4. Does the service or activity you deliver fit within one of the three funding streams? Do these streams reflect what children and families in your community need now – and what they might need in the future?

Amity's Communities for Children (CfC), Children and Parent Support (CaPS), and Health Country Kids hub programs align with Stream 2: Prevention and Early Intervention. Some facilitated programs through CfC, such as the Parents Under Pressure program, could also fit under Stream 3: Intensive Support, as they provide parents and carers with intensive therapeutic assistance.

CfC and CaPS programs focus on early intervention and prevention, supporting

children and families to improve health, wellbeing, and community connections, while reducing risks and promoting resilience. This approach allows services to be tailored to local needs and empowers communities to shape priorities and solutions. The CfC Facilitating Partner (FP) model further reduces administrative burden and enables smaller organisations to deliver high-quality services. Programs are guided by research, local knowledge, and lived experience, ensuring both relevance and effectiveness.

5. Are there other changes we could make to the program to help your organisation or community overcome current challenges?

Having these streams in place has the potential to support families; however, there also needs to be a focus on current crises, such as affordable housing and the cost of living. Families and children accessing programs and services provided through these contracts will continue to struggle without some stability in housing and living situations. There is also room for improvement in funding flexibility, to allow services to adapt more effectively to emerging needs within the community.

6. Do you agree that the four priorities listed on Page 4 are right areas for investment to improve outcomes for children and families?

The four priorities are the right areas to focus on and reflect evidence-based approaches to improving child and family wellbeing. They align with Amity's direction on prevention and early intervention. Early intervention helps prevent issues from escalating, and co-located, integrated services give families more opportunities to access a range of supports.

Community-led design ensures services meet the unique needs of each community, which is particularly important for improving outcomes for First Nations children. ACCOs provide culturally safe, trusted services to support these efforts. To achieve successful outcomes, priorities should include flexibility for local adaptation, capacity-building for ACCOs and smaller community organisations, and sustained funding to ensure long-term impact.

7. Are there any other priorities or issues you think the department should be focusing on?

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Ongoing feedback from reports has highlighted a gap in mental health services and support, especially in regional areas. With the growing rate of child and youth mental health issues, there's a clear need for mental health support within family services.

Cost-of-Living and Economic Stress

Multiple programs have reported that financial stress is a major driver of family strain and can increase children's vulnerability. This needs to be considered when planning programs and supports.

Housing Stability

Housing insecurity has a significant impact on family wellbeing. Partnering with housing services and advocating for broader solutions can help address this issue.

8. Do the proposed focus areas – like supporting families at risk of child protection involvement and young parents match the needs or priorities of your service?

Supporting Families at Risk of Child Protection Involvement

This aligns with Amity's current focus on early intervention, helping to prevent escalation by supporting parents and carers and providing guidance for children. By intervening early, families can access the support they need before issues become more serious, promoting better outcomes for both children and parents.

However, there is room for improvement, particularly in strengthening partnerships and referral systems with child protection and intensive family support services. Building these connections will help ensure families receive timely, coordinated support when they need it most.

Prevention and Early Intervention Support for Children 0–5 Years

This aligns with several of Amity's existing programs, such as facilitated playgroups and kindy readiness programs. Facilitators focus on children's development, social and emotional wellbeing, and provide families with information about available services. Families are supported through warm referrals to ensure they can access the help they need.

Supporting Young Parents

Supporting young parents fits with Amity's focus on strengthening families through practical, supportive programs. Young parents can experience isolation, financial pressure, and stigma, so it's important to provide tailored support.

This includes offering youth-friendly and culturally safe engagement, as well as working closely with services that provide housing, education, and mental health support.

9. Are there other groups in your community, or different approaches, that you think the department should consider to better support family wellbeing?

There is a growing number of grandparents stepping into parenting roles, highlighting the need for tailored support and resources to help them care for children effectively.

11. What would you highlight in a grant application to demonstrate a service is connected to the community it serves? What should applicants be assessed on?

Amity demonstrates strong and ongoing evidence of local partnerships, active community governance, and collaborative planning, ensuring programs are responsive to local needs and priorities. Highlighted capacity to engage and collaborate effectively with local communities, a thorough understanding of the strengths and limitations within each region, and well-established partnerships with local organisations. Strong skills in data collection, analysis of evaluation results, and impact reporting ensure programs are informed, responsive, and accountable, with outcomes currently being achieved.

12. Beyond locational disadvantage, what other factors should the department consider to make sure funding reflects the needs of communities?

Access to mental health services, reliable transport, family and domestic violence supports, and stable housing are all critical factors affecting the wellbeing of children and families.

13. What's the best way for organisations to show in grant applications, that their service is genuinely meeting the needs of the community?

The organisation's evidence of current outcomes, gathered through data and report collection and feedback from community organisations and members, highlights gaps in services and programs and guides how it is currently working to close those gaps within the community.

14. How could the grant process be designed to support and increase the number of ACCOs delivering services to children and families?

Make application processes simpler, offer grants to build capacity, and prioritise ACCO-led governance. Support non-ACCO, First Nations-led service providers so they can become ACCOs or access funding opportunities.

15. What else should be built into the program design to help improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families?

Develop and implement culturally safe guidelines to ensure all programs are respectful, inclusive, and responsive to community needs.

17. What kinds of data or information would be most valuable for you to share, to show how your service is positively impacting children and families?

Case studies of lived experiences highlight the meaningful impact of the programs delivered by the organisation within the community, demonstrating the positive outcomes being achieved and the real difference these supports are making for families and children.

18. If your organisation currently reports in the Data Exchange (DEX), what SCORE Circumstances domain is most relevant to the service you deliver?

Measures such as circumstances and client satisfaction don't necessarily apply across all current CfC and CaPS programs, as this depends on the specific program requirements.

20. What does a relational contracting approach mean to you in practice? What criteria would you like to see included in a relational contract?

Focus on outcomes and flexibility, while highlighting a strong history of collaboration and meaningful community engagement.