

14 July 2016

Ms Catherine Andersson  
Head of Secretariat  
Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision  
gsp@pc.gov.au

Dear Ms Andersson

I write in response to the call for feedback on the proposed reporting framework on 'what works to improve outcomes in government services'. Families Australia is a national, peak, not-for-profit organisation that strives to improve the wellbeing of Australian families, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised. Families Australia does this by providing policy advice to the Australian Government and Parliament on behalf of more than 800 member organisations around Australia. Please find below Families Australia's comments on the proposed reporting framework on what works to improve outcomes in government services.

Families Australia supports the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision's goal to enhance its performance monitoring work in government service provision (the Annual Report on Government Services) with complementary reporting on what works to improve outcomes for services in the Report on Government Services.

Families Australia welcomes a framework that would provide analysis of whether activities are achieving intended outcomes rather than the current focus on through-puts. Prior to fully supporting the proposed framework we raise two areas of concern highlighted by our member organisations.

Firstly, we are concerned that the process described in the framework may exclude areas of knowledge generation and evidence that do not fall within the definition of an acceptable evidence base such as Randomised Controlled Trials. Families Australia member organisations recognise that innovation is often best conceptualised on the ground by service providers who identify problems or gaps in the system/s. This innovation can then be implemented using a systemic and evidence based approach by service providers. Families Australia seeks the Steering Committee's consideration on how the proposed framework will include ground up evidence building.

Finally, our member organisations' experience is that new knowledge and evidence needs to be considered with the benefit of a deep knowledge of the whole service system to reduce the incidence of unintended consequences. Our members have experience of evidence on discreet areas of practice affecting funding for broader programs which led to reductions in core services. Families Australia seeks the Steering Committee's consideration on how evidence will be interpreted and used to reform services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this proposed framework and Families Australia looks forward to understanding how the framework will be further developed and risks addressed.

Yours sincerely



Dr Brian Babington  
Chief Executive Officer