

BECAUSE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES MATTER – DELIVERING ON THE NATIONAL REFORM AGENDA

**UNITINGCARE
AUSTRALIA**

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Because Children and Families Matter
Delivering on the National Reform Agenda



November 2009

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IS JOINED UP POLICY POSSIBLE?

- **What would it look like?**
- **What role can practice, advocacy and research play in the quest for joined up policy?**

 **Joined-up research and advocacy to investigate whether these reforms demonstrated joined up policy in action.**

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**INTEGRATION IS 'GOOD', SILOS ARE
'BAD'**

EASY TO SRUIK, HARD TO ARGUE
AGAINST

HARD TO ACHIEVE AND EVALUATE

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AIMED TO BRING TOGETHER

- Experience of disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians
- Advice from service providers
- Advocacy
- Research

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ARE THE REFORM AGENDAS JOINED UP?

- Cross several portfolios
- Address 'wicked' problems
- Drive systemic change
- Similar goals

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QUESTIONS ASKED IN THE CROSS ANALYSIS

Within a social inclusion framework:

- Rights and agency
- Primary, secondary and/or tertiary
- Risk factors and at risk groups
- Investment in capacity and integration

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THESE QUESTIONS HIGHLIGHT

- Participation
- Inclusion
- Service integration
- Service capacity

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WHY ASK THESE QUESTIONS?

- ‘Top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ change

Not

- Are primary, secondary and tertiary service systems connected?

But

- How are they connected?

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COMMONALITIES

- Some common process and/or impact indicators

DIFFERENCES

- Language, concepts, objectives
- Agency attributed to children, young people
- Place of universal systems
- Emphasis on changing systems

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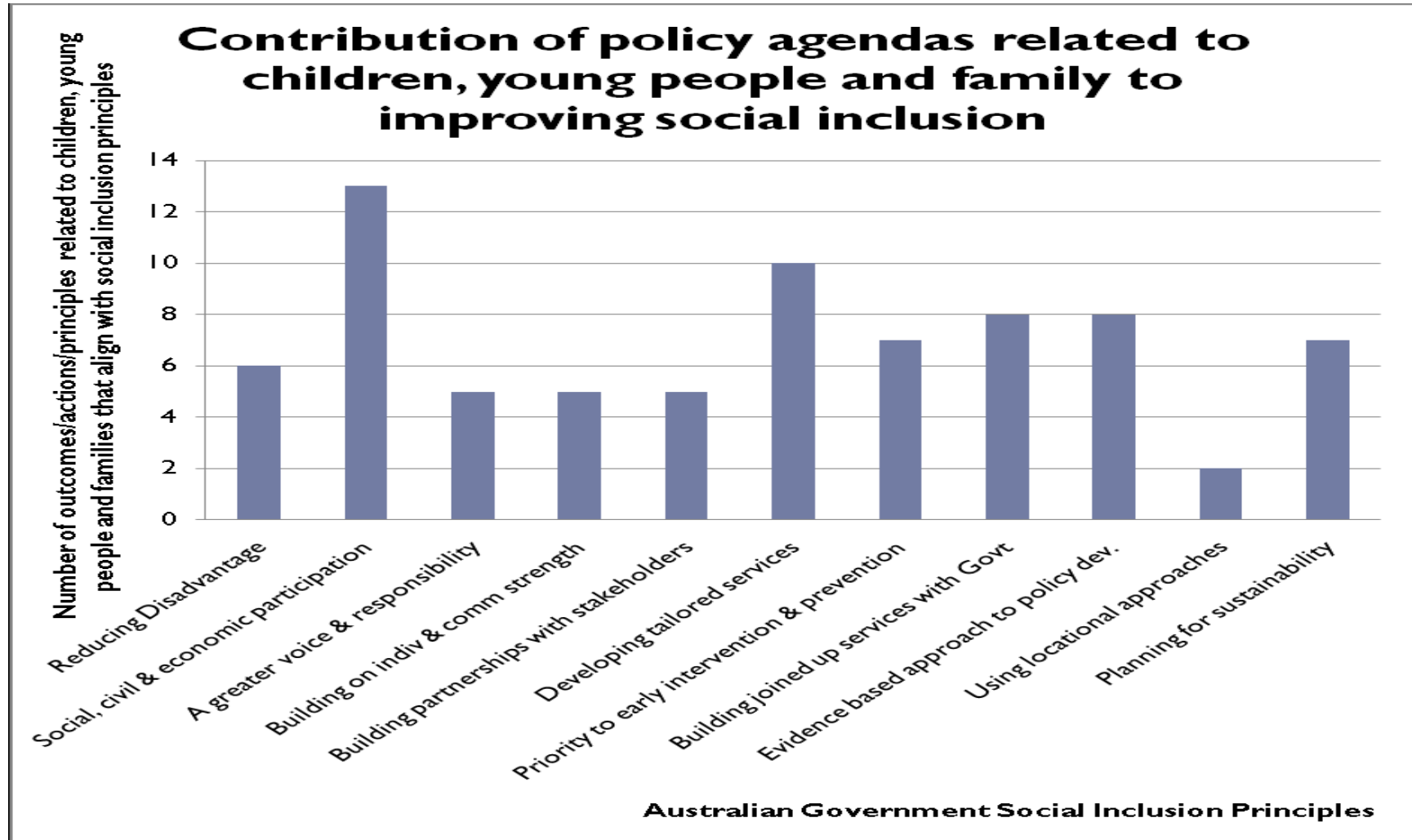
CRITICAL GAPS

- Children aged 8-14 years
- Children and young people living with disabilities

UNMET NEEDS

- Duration and intensity of services
- Adequate income

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ARE THEY JOINED UP POLICIES?

- Early childhood more aligned
- Middle years low visibility
- Implementation unco-ordinated at point of service delivery
- Fragmented for families with multiple risks and challenges

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JOINING UP ACROSS SYSTEM

- Locational focus – planning, delivery
- Voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable
- Strengths-based and enabling
- Respectful partnerships with services
- Administrative reforms (Compact)
 - Enabling Innovation
 - Integration
 - Outcomes focus

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TRANSFORMING CHILD PROTECTION

- Paradigm shift

Forensic, adversarial, legalistic



Inquisitorial, holistic, preventive, enabling

- Interaction with Family Law system

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LISTENING TO PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE EXCLUSION

- Space for hopes and expectations to be heard
- Strengthen all elements of system
- Embed early intervention
- Stable, appropriate, affordable housing
- Access to community infrastructure

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ADVOCACY

- Building on previous work
- Paper – www.unitingcare.org.au
- Parliamentary Forum
- Dialogue with network and sector
- Promoting joined up approach to research and analysis

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OUR HOPES FOR WHAT NEXT

- Determine shared priorities for assessing impacts of reforms
- Critical analysis of data collection
- Reduce gaps, duplication and low value collections
- Resourcing sector to contribute to assessing impacts

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OUR HOPES FOR WHAT NEXT

- Used and tested in other contexts
- Thoughtful, genuine, serious engagement
- Policies understood by service providers
- Meaningful, practical, feasible measures
- Capturing service user wisdom and advice

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HOPES AND PROMISES

- Joined up policy could be transformative
- Better ways to bring together diverse perspectives and skills and contribute to reform

**A MORE INCLUSIVE AND COHESIVE
COMMUNITY IN WHICH ALL
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND
FAMILIES CAN
GROW, FLOURISH AND CONTRIBUTE**