

FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

In collaboration with community service agencies, and in response to the Northern Territory Government Public Safety Model, Centrelink has deployed a mobile and tailored service to itinerants and homeless people in Major urban centres across the Northern Territory. The service will maximise contact opportunities for vulnerable and disengaged customers who face multiple and complex barriers.

Through these partnerships, Centrelink assists itinerant and homeless people with assessment of needs, accessing services and facilitating pathways to solutions.

The arrangement is consistent with place-based principles and is in response to the social inclusion agenda. The placed based servicing program is a key strategic priority for Centrelink.

ISSUES

There are a number of issues that drive this approach, they are:

- A growing concern for vulnerable people who have no permanent accommodation in urban areas;
- Within these areas there are homeless non-Indigenous people, who also join with Indigenous long grass community groupings, but most visible are the itinerant groupings of Indigenous people from remote communities who have come into urban areas for a range of reasons and periods of time.
- Significant groups include those who live long term in urban areas (any number of years) and those who spend shorter periods of time in urban areas but are more mobile between their country, other communities and urban areas;
- There are a large number of visitors from remote areas who become homeless for a variety of reasons including access to alcohol. More significantly for coping with deeper unresolved problems, such as; the fear of violence, the impact of suicide, mental illness, aggressive behaviour, disrespect to elders, grief from a family member's death, escaping disputes and community conflicts, unemployment, lack of resources including housing and access to medical treatment;
- Local agencies report that many are not in receipt of income support payments mainly due to difficulties when engaging with Centrelink and other service providers.
- Many homeless people are not subject to Income Management unless they have come from a prescribed community. This in itself, results in complexities in connecting people with appropriate service solutions. For those who are Income Managed, there are complexities in accessing their funds if they are disengaged from Centrelink.

BACKGROUND

PLACE BASED SERVICES

The Place Based Service Program offers Centrelink an opportunity to design and test augmented service offers for customers, which support the development of a new service delivery model for Centrelink to deliver sustainable socially inclusive outcomes for citizens.

This initiative provides an opportunity to explore and assess Centrelink's ability to contribute to creating a more accessible and responsive service system that improves the lives of disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and communities.

The Place Based Service Program aims to improve our understanding of and improve our ability to respond to the social inclusion agenda through the identification of the core capabilities that enable us to design and deliver a customer centric service delivery model.

PLACE

The Public Safety Model coordinated by Interagency Tasking Coordination Groups can be strengthened through Centrelink supporting immediate engagement with homeless people about their income support, income management, participation obligation, housing needs and referral to specific service providers.

The Centrelink Place Based Services initiative special purpose teams are now mobile with capability and capacity to deliver and broker a range of services, providing a channel of entry to Centrelink. The teams include Indigenous Service Officers, Customer Service Advisors, Social Workers and when required access to Job Capacity Assessors.

PARTICIPANTS

Through established relationships, Centrelink is maximising positive outcomes for customers, ensuring we are responsive to the needs of individuals and families and providing an opportunity for improved access for participants to services with improved links to complementary services.

As a priority and through early intervention, the special purpose teams working in collaboration with partners are providing a joined-up service to facilitate connection to Centrelink and to ensure participants are in receipt of appropriate income support.

PARTNERS

Service delivery is through a collaborative approach working with government agencies across all levels, service providers, the local community and customers.

In 2007, the NT Government approved a Public Safety Model, introducing a range of initiatives aimed at tackling anti-social and low-offending behaviour in urban areas.

The Model involves an increased level of cooperation and coordination across government and non-government agencies to enable more effective monitoring, reporting, assessment of and response to anti-social behaviour.

By direct invitation, Centrelink has joined the Interagency tasking groups to work on problem solving and developing comprehensive response plans through an integrated service response.

Key to this arrangement is the partnership with local community service agencies and the focus on common purpose service delivery through a tailored service offer.

Working together, joining up service responses, the tailored service offer will strengthen connections with this highly vulnerable group.