Targeted Earlier Intervention Program

Community Strengthening Data Project:
Community Wellbeing Survey Pilot Project Report

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"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

Margaret J. Wheatley

Content

1) Executive Summary

LCSA has been funded by DCJ for the TEI Community Strengthening Data Project (CDSP) with the objective to develop a **Community Strengthening Data Set** that adds value and complements Data Exchange (DEX) compliance data collated under the Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) Program and showcases activities that are designed to build strong and resilient communities, preventing issues from arising in first place. To this end a Community Wellbeing[1] Survey was developed that Community Strengthening organisations distribute to their clients, community members and stakeholders; as part of a pilot project to:

1. Better understand how our services contribute to community wellbeing.
2. Tell the story behind the data reported in the Data Exchange.
3. Collect consistent information about community wellbeing.

All TEI funded services delivering Community Strengthening program activities were invited to participate in piloting the Community Wellbeing Survey in their communities (see Appendix 1, page 22). Overall, 44 organisations signed up for the pilot, which ran over two 2-month periods in 2021. In the first phase, 10 organisations actively participated and a total of 287 surveys were returned to LCSA for analysis. In the second phase 20 organisation took part and the total number of returned surveys was 482. Both datasets represented a diverse geographic and demographic spread.

The quantitative data shows a high level of collective sense of belonging, participation, trust and access to resources / services. This demonstrates that community strengthening activities funded under TEI have a data baseline for community wellbeing, which measures increasing protective factors and decreasing risk factors in any given community. These findings are underpinned by the stories and examples community members shared in the surveys they filled out. The qualitative data shows strong Community Wellbeing themes relating to support from neighbours, friends and local organisations, particularly during times of crisis e.g. floods, bushfires and the COVID19 Pandemic.

The Community Wellbeing Survey fills a gap in the TEI Outcomes and Reporting regime and as such improves it overall. It captures the community level data as opposed to the program level data, which is adequately captured in the Data Exchange (DEX). The Pilot Project established that the Community Wellbeing Survey and the DEX Data are complementary data sets and together they create a more complete picture of the outcomes achieved by TEI Community Strengthening activities.

The Pilot Project has fulfilled its aims successfully by enabling a better understanding of how TEI funded services contribute to community wellbeing, better telling the story behind the data reported, and more consistently collecting information about community wellbeing. It has given LCSA and DCJ a practice-informed evidence base for the future prospects of measuring Community Wellbeing in TEI. With this report, LCSA presents the key findings from the Pilot Project and recommendations for future directions.

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[1] Community Wellbeing is defined in the LCSA Community Strengthening Data Project as, "The collective sense of belonging, participation, trust and access to resources / services, which is achieved through:

- o   increasing protective factors such as local capacity, social support and resources
- O   decreasing risk factors, such as miscommunication, disengagement, isolation / loneliness and trauma."

2) Summary of Recommendations

As a result of pilot data analysis, reference group discussions and consultation with the TEI sector, LCSA makes the following recommendations to DCJ for future directions:

1. **Refine and continue**: LCSA recommends continuing the optional use of the Community Wellbeing Survey by TEI Community Strengthening funded services. The Survey requires only minor changes, particularly by creating a unique identifier that clearly relates the survey respondent to a specific organisation and community.

2. **Develop a bi-annual report:** LCSA recommends publishing a bi-annual report to tell the story behind the data reported in the Data Exchange, and support learning and evidence-building in the TEI program

3. **Explore web-based applications to capture data and streamline data administration:** LCSA recommends an investment into a tailored data collection and curation tool that automates all aspects of survey administration both for services and for LCSA as the depository of data. This technology should ensure services have their unique usernames and data portal.

4. **Create website for live data dashboards:** LCSA recommends the use of the domain www.communitydevelopment.org.au (already in LCSA's possession) for a website that acts as a database both from a front end (user) and a backend (administrator), as well as a public dashboard of TEI-wide data showing live, deidentified, regional and district-wide data sets.

5. **Create "Communities of Practice" of participating organisations:** LCSA recommends having ongoing meetings and capacity building activities with TEI organisations using the Community Wellbeing Survey. This will ensure continuous quality improvement as well as the potential to align with DCJ Districts planning and policy development.

6. **Investigate useful add-ons to the new web-based application:** LCSA recommends assessing the need for data collection relevant to TEI-funded organisations such as capturing information and assisted referral services and adapt the application accordingly, in consultation with all stakeholders. *(refer to LCSA's defunct Lasso App)*

7. **Add Community Wellbeing Survey to TEI Program Logics:** LCSA recommends service providers update their Program Logic where they choose to use the survey eg indicate the survey will be used to collect data in the "Output" column, and add survey findings to the "Current situation" and "Evidence" columns where the findings have informed practice.

8. **Engage further stakeholders to benefit the TEI program:** LCSA recommends building intentional partnerships both internally with other DCJ funded programs e.g. SHS and external stakeholders e.g PHNs, to promote the use of the Community Wellbeing Survey in other jurisdictions.

9. **Economic modelling:** LCSA recommends including the Community Strengthening Data Project and the Community Wellbeing Survey pilot and rollout in the design of the TEI Program Evaluation to model economic and social return on investment of community strengthening outcomes based on the Community Wellbeing Survey.

10. **Review Reference Group role and composition:** Notwithstanding the value of the current Reference Group, LCSA recommends reviewing the Terms of Reference for the Reference Group and its potential for future purposes.

11. **Promote the survey:** LCSA recommends devising a marketing strategy to attract more TEI funded services to participate in the use of the Community Wellbeing Survey and to promote the value of the data set as complementary to DEX data sets.

3) The Community Wellbeing Survey Pilot – Overview and Scope

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), and LCSA are working together on a TEI Community Strengthening Data project. This project was developed in response to sector feedback about the need to:

- better collect, analyse and report the stories behind the data reported in the Data Exchange
- more consistently measure community wellbeing* as a longer-term outcome

To address the needs above an optional "Community Wellbeing Survey" (see Attachment 1) was developed that Community Strengthening organisations can distribute to their clients, community members and stakeholders. This survey was designed to:

- better understand how our services contribute to community wellbeing
- tell the story behind the data reported in the Data Exchange
- collect consistent information about community wellbeing

Community Wellbeing is defined in the LCSA Community Strengthening Data Project as, "The collective sense of belonging, participation, trust and access to resources / services, which is achieved through:

- increasing protective factors such as local capacity, social support and resources
- decreasing risk factors, such as miscommunication, disengagement, isolation / loneliness and trauma."

What is the survey about?

The survey is not only for TEI clients but all community members. It asks a series of questions about their experiences living and participating in their communities. The survey includes a bank of questions with a 5-point Likert scale (quantitative data) and an opportunity to share an example or brief story (qualitative data). The questions cover issues like:

- Sense of belonging
- Community Participation
- Trust in the community
- Access to services and resources

Piloting the survey

In order to test the survey and data collection approach TEI services were invited to participate in this Pilot Project. The aim was to engage the sector in helping refine the questions, ensuring they're suitable and provide us with the right information.

The pilot was *optional* for all TEI funded organisations delivering services under the Community Strengthening Stream - Program Activities:

1. Community Connections
2. Community Centres
3. Community Support

There were two pilot periods for surveys conducted:

- Pilot Phase 1: 13 July 2021 – 7 September 2021
- Pilot Phase 2: 21 September – 17 December 2021[2]

The two weeks between the reporting periods were used by LCSA to review the initial data, consult the Reference Group, and make amendments for the second pilot period.

The CDSP Reference Group provided advice to LCSA in both establishing and analysing the Pilot Project. LCSA acknowledges and thanks the Reference Group members for their support and advice throughout the Pilot. The Reference Group included:
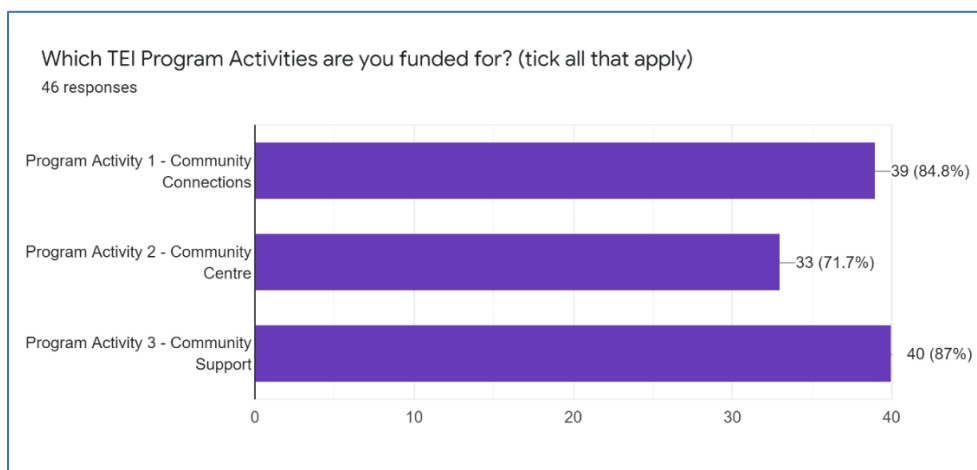
- Brett Martin, NSW Department of Communities & Justice
- Kylie Evans-Locke, CareSouth
- Mick Barrett, Belong Blue Mountains
- Tania Muchitsch, Sector Connect
- Will Doran, Kurri Kurri Community Centre
- Lyn Lormer, LCSA
- Can Yasmut (chair), LCSA

Pilot Participation

Profile of Participating TEI Providers

44 organisations signed up to participate in the Pilot Project, representing a wide range of service types, organisational size, geographic locations and TEI funding allocations. The online registration generated further intelligence on how organisations plan to administer the survey and what foreseeable challenges and obstacles the Pilot needed to consider.

Upon registration, organisations specified the following Community Strengthening Program Activities they are funded for:

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[2] The original deadline was extended due to the COVID19 impact on the sector and service delivery.

Only half of these registered organisations participated actively in distributing the survey. Most of the remaining organisations indicated that they did not have the capacity to actively participate but expressed interest in being kept informed and engaged in the progress. Three organisations opted out in hindsight and did not participate.

The Pilot Phase 1 ran for 8 weeks from 13 July – 7 September 2021. The number of organisations participating was 10, generating a total of 285 responses from these 23 different geographic areas representing both metropolitan and regional communities. With the aim to seek feedback and to create a community of practice, it was decided to invite participating organisations to attend a consultation workshop to share the learnings from the Pilot Phase 1 experience.

At the beginning of Pilot Phase 2, by when more organisation decided to sign after further promotion, another workshop was hosted. Twenty-seven organisations took part in the workshop, 20 of which becoming the active participants in the second phase.

Pilot Phase 2 ran for 11 weeks, from 21 September – 17 December 2021. After considering the feedback from participants, the Reference Group advised to keep the Community Wellbeing Survey unchanged, mainly to ensure that the data sets generated in both pilot periods are compatible.

In Pilot Phase 2, LCSA received a total of 482 responses from the 20 organisations distributing the Community Wellbeing Survey in their communities. It is worth noting that out of the 20, seven organisations participated in both pilot periods. The spread both geographically and service types was greater than in Pilot Phase 1.
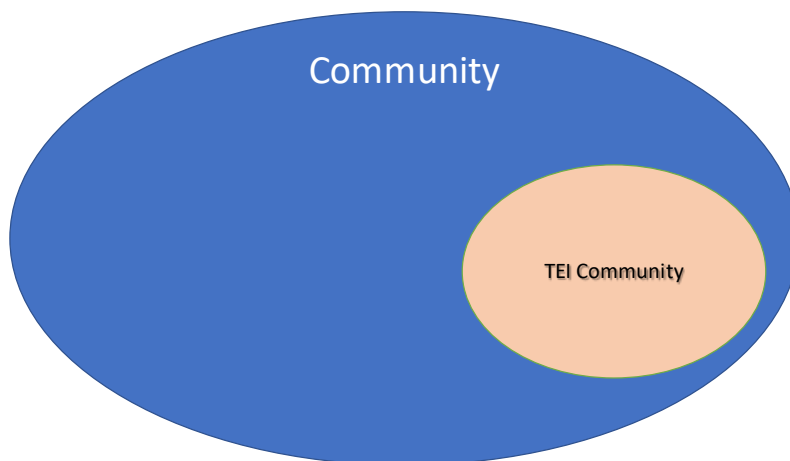
As a result of keeping the survey identical in both stages, overall data can be generated with the narrative that **"20 TEI funded services participated in the Pilot Project. Through their efforts LCSA has received 767 responses to the Community Wellbeing Survey, demonstrating that funding under the TEI Community Strengthening Stream creates stronger, well-connected, trusting communities in which people have a strong sense of belonging and access services and information in their community to deal with any challenges they face either individually or as a community."**
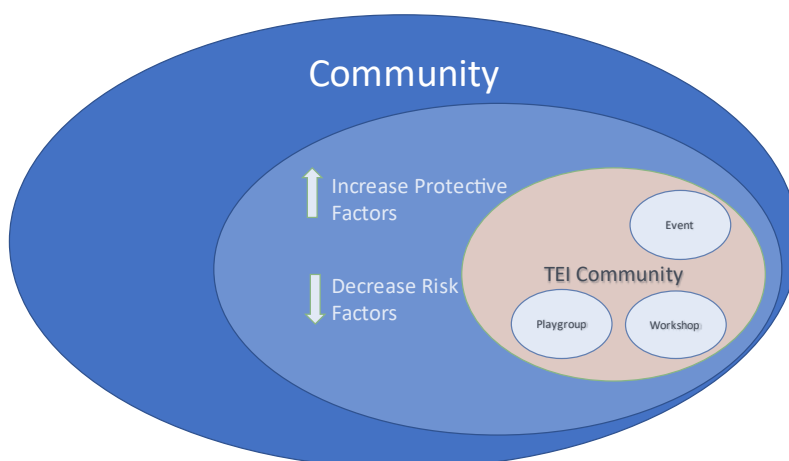
List of actively participating organisations

Organisation	Pilot Phase 1	Pilot Phase 2
Aboriginal Community Resource Centre - Blue Mountains		√
Armidale Council Volunteer Referral Service	√	√
Belong Blue Mountains		√
Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre	√	√
Camden Community Connections (trading as Big Yellow Umbrella)	√	√
Campbell Page	√	√
Cancer Council		√
Centacare Bathurst		√
Chester Hill Neighbourhood centre		√
Counterpoint Community Services	√	√
Creating Links	√	
Highlands Community Service Centres.		√
Humanity Matters Inc	√	
Information and Cultural Exchange Centre		√
Lithgow Information and Neighbourhood Centre Limited		√
Murwillimbah Community Centre	√	√
Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre Inc.		√
Outer Liverpool Community Service Inc		√
Sector Connect	√	
Tamworth Family Support Services	√	√
Temora Community Centre		√
The Hub at Guyra		√
Uniting		√

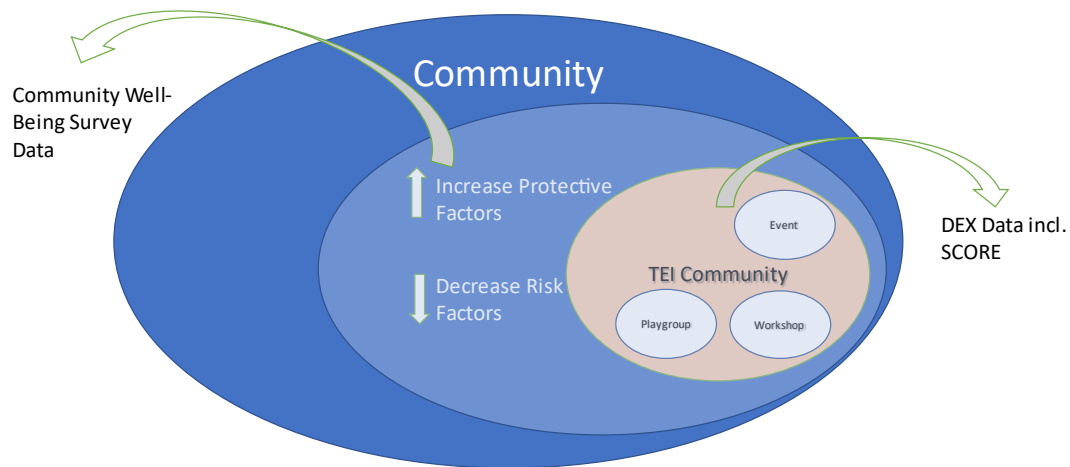## 4) The Difference between the Community Wellbeing Survey and DEX Data

To demonstrate the relationship between the Community Wellbeing Survey and the DEX datasets, we must first distinguish between the community at large and the community of TEI clients (shown in these graphics as the 'TEI Community'). TEI Community members are certainly members of the broader community, however as recipients of direct services or participants of TEI-funded activities, any outcome in their lives because of the TEI activity, is solely a measure of *the effectiveness of the program* or TEI program activity. DEX captures this data adequately.

While program-level outcomes have most certainly a flow-on effect on the broader community, they can only make clear statements about the program and not about the community surrounding TEI clients. As per the definition of Community Wellbeing, the increase of protective factors and the decrease of risk factors are not only observed within the TEI Community but in larger parts of the community, as seen in the next diagram.

Ultimately, the Community Wellbeing Survey is an attempt to capture the flow-on effects of TEI funded Community Strengthening activities in the broader community, by inviting people from the TEI Community but also outside the TEI Community, to share their experience of what it is like to live in their community (shown in the third diagram as the light blue area which includes the TEI Community).

It is important to note that the sum of individual's experience does not add up to a community's experience. It is at best a snapshot of Community Wellbeing. The Community Wellbeing Survey measures the community-level outcomes achieved through Community Development, asking the question 'Is the community any better off?' rather than program-level, individual outcomes which ask the question 'Is the service recipient / client any better off?'.

In conclusion, both data sets are relevant and important. They complement each other as they are measuring two different things: DEX Data including SCORE captures the impact of an activity on an individual or group, whereas the Community Wellbeing Survey captures the protective and risk factors on a community level.

6) Data Analysis

The primary objective of the Pilot Project was to test both the content and the administration of the Community Wellbeing Survey with TEI service providers. The scale of the Pilot was not intended to get a meaningful sample to assess state-wide or program-wide impact. It is however important to acknowledge that a deeper analysis of the data – once reaching a meaningful and representative sample size - will act as an evidence base for economic and social arguments to invest in prevention and early intervention as a key measure in the child protection system in NSW.

Statistical analysis of each survey question to identify the most common responses

The survey begins with a "**About You**" section including a set of demographic questions which are not about identification but solely for statistical purposes. The survey is entirely anonymous.

The second part of the survey is about the four well-being outcome areas, entitled "**About your views on community wellbeing in your local area**", giving survey participants the opportunity to share their subjective opinion on the state of wellbeing in their community as well as a story or an example, which provides valuable qualitative data.

The demographic questions were designed to give survey participants ultimate freedom in answering the questions as they see fit, by making the answers open-ended rather than providing predetermined options. For instance, rather than giving gender options (as many surveys do), this survey requires a written word/s to describe their gender. This has created a greater diversity in demographic data than expected, and respectively serving self-determination and empowerment of survey participants.
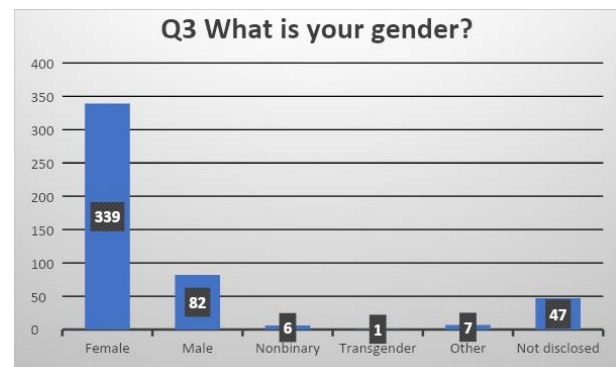
There are 2 questions (Q1 and Q8) where the open text box responses provided diversity in the wrong sense: when asked which town they are from or which organisation handed out the survey, the many different answers describing one and the same locality or organisation, created an administrative challenge that ought to be avoided in the future.

The collective responses for the "**About your views on community wellbeing in your local area**" (Q9-Q12) across both pilot periods, give a significant example of how Community Wellbeing Data can be generated with this survey both on local and on state-wide level.

Statistical analysis of the demographic data to identify characteristics of the survey participants

The demographic data of the total responses provides some insights into the characteristics of survey participants across the state; however, this information is likely to be more valuable for individual services assessing the participation in their surveys.

The following 3 graphs give you an example of how the demographic data can be visualised for data analysis purposes:

Q2 What is your age?

18 years or younger	19-34	35-49	50-69	70+	Not disclosed
14	82	117	170	49	50

Q3 What is your gender?

Female	Male	Nonbinary	Transgender	Other	Not disclosed
339	82	6	1	7	47

Q4 Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

Yes	No	Not disclosed
57	374	51

In line with the same data set, in response to Question 5, 18% of respondents stated that they are living with a disability, 78% stated that they didn't and 6% preferred not to say.

Questions 6 and 7 have the objective to assess cultural diversity of survey participants by asking about their country of birth and languages spoken at home. The Pilot Project data shows that (in order of highest to lowest responses) the majority of survey participants were born in Australia, UK, Germany, China, Cambodia and Malaysia followed by a small number of participants listing Lebanon, the Netherlands, USA, Canada and India as their country of birth. Again, in order of highest to lowest response rate the main languages spoken at home of survey participants were: English, Arabic, Cantonese, Khmer, Vietnamese and Urdu.
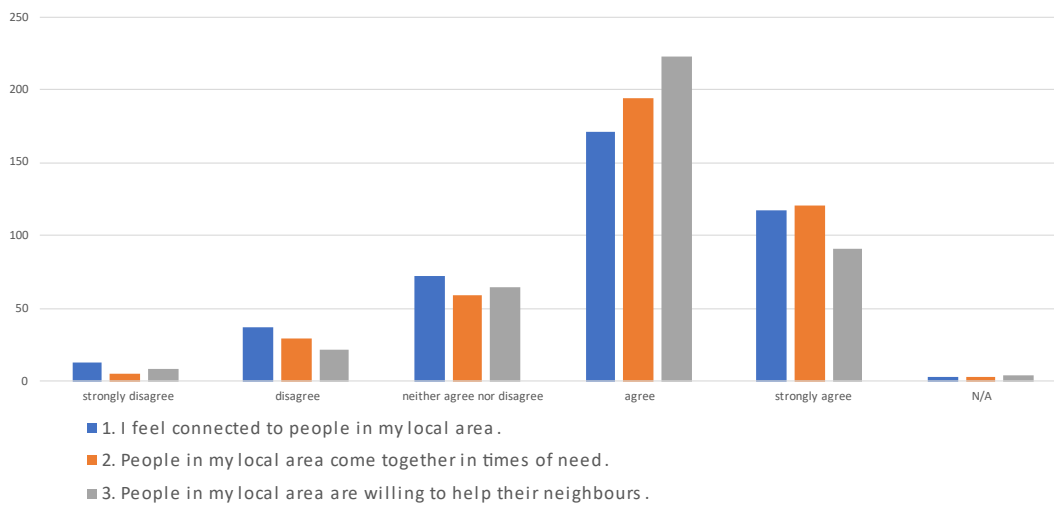
Please note that an analysis of Question 1 and 8 is deliberately not provided in this report to avoid any assumptions or judgements on the participation rate of one TEI funded service compared with another. The purpose of the Pilot Project was to test the content and administration of the survey question. Targets for response rates per organisation were not set.

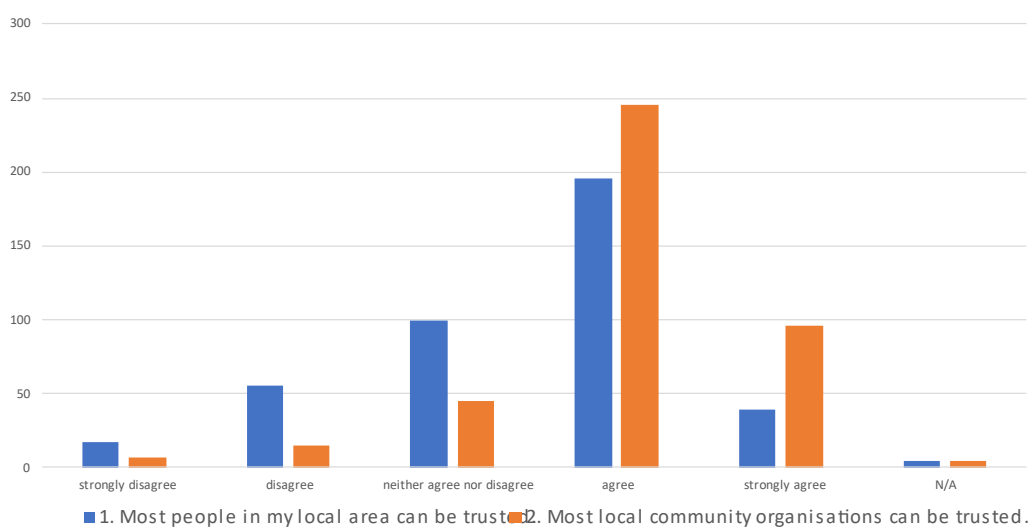## Statistical analysis of the Community Wellbeing Outcomes Data

The following graphs show responses for the questions about Sense of Belonging, Trust, Participation and Access to Resources / Services in the community. There is an overall majority of survey participants 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with the statement about positive connections and sentiments.

This data visualisation is an example for any community that receives a representative data sample from their own community. There are two key points of interest for any local data analysis: 1) Why do people either agree or disagree, and what are the outliers? *and* 2) What are the stories behind the data i.e. what does the qualitative data tell us? Are there any stories or examples given by survey respondents that qualify their answers?[3]

Sense of Belonging

1. I feel connected to people in my local area.
2. People in my local area come together in times of need.
3. People in my local area are willing to help their neighbours.

Trust

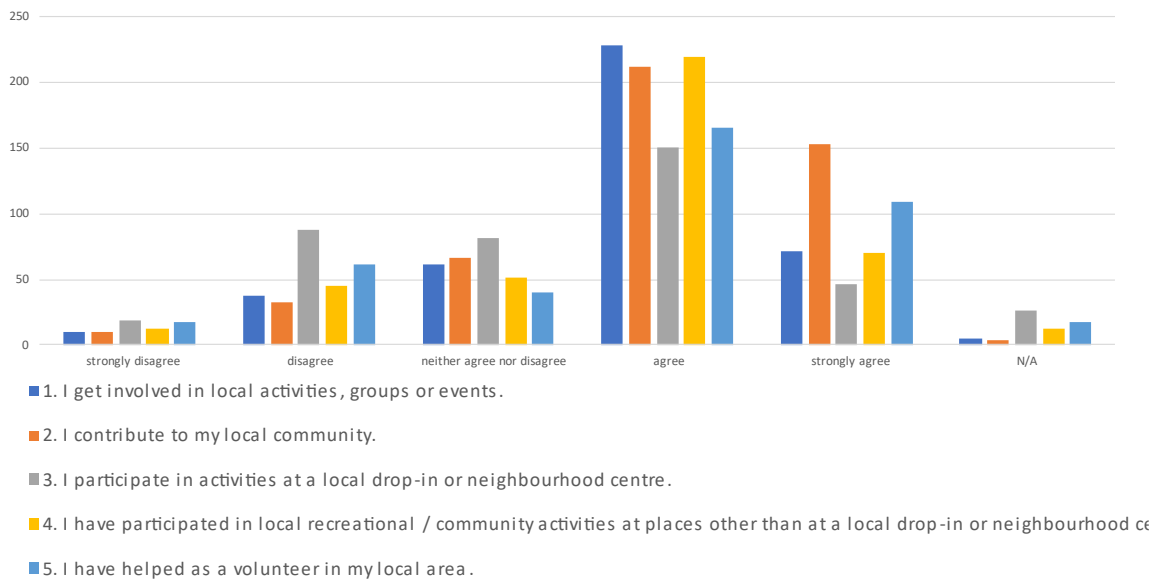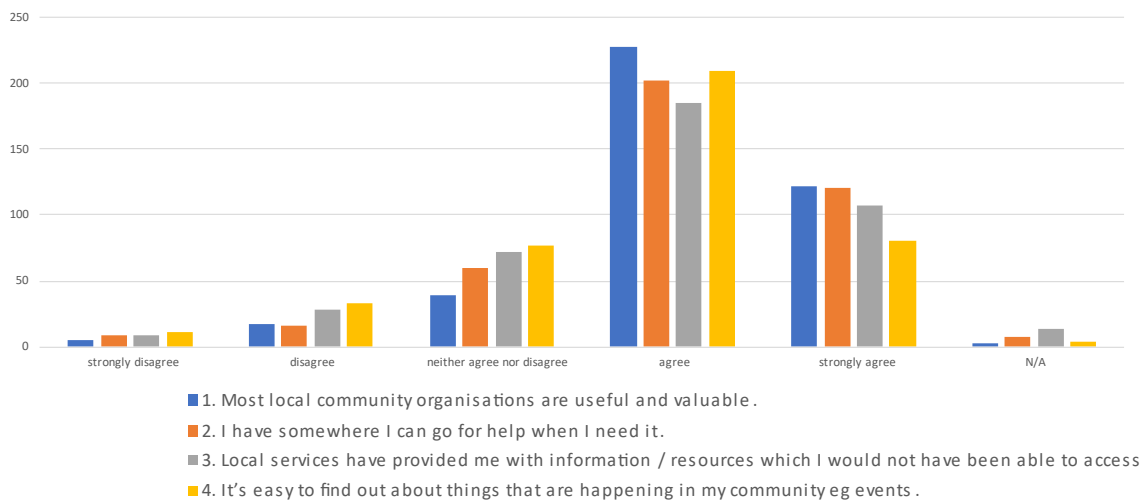1. Most people in my local area can be trusted. 2. Most local community organisations can be trusted.

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[3] The sample size from the Pilot Project is too small to analyse the data in this way for the state of NSW.

Participation

- 1. I get involved in local activities, groups or events.
- 2. I contribute to my local community.
- 3. I participate in activities at a local drop-in or neighbourhood centre.
- 4. I have participated in local recreational / community activities at places other than at a local drop-in or neighbourhood ce
- 5. I have helped as a volunteer in my local area.

Access to Services / Resources

- 1. Most local community organisations are useful and valuable.
- 2. I have somewhere I can go for help when I need it.
- 3. Local services have provided me with information / resources which I would not have been able to access
- 4. It's easy to find out about things that are happening in my community eg events.
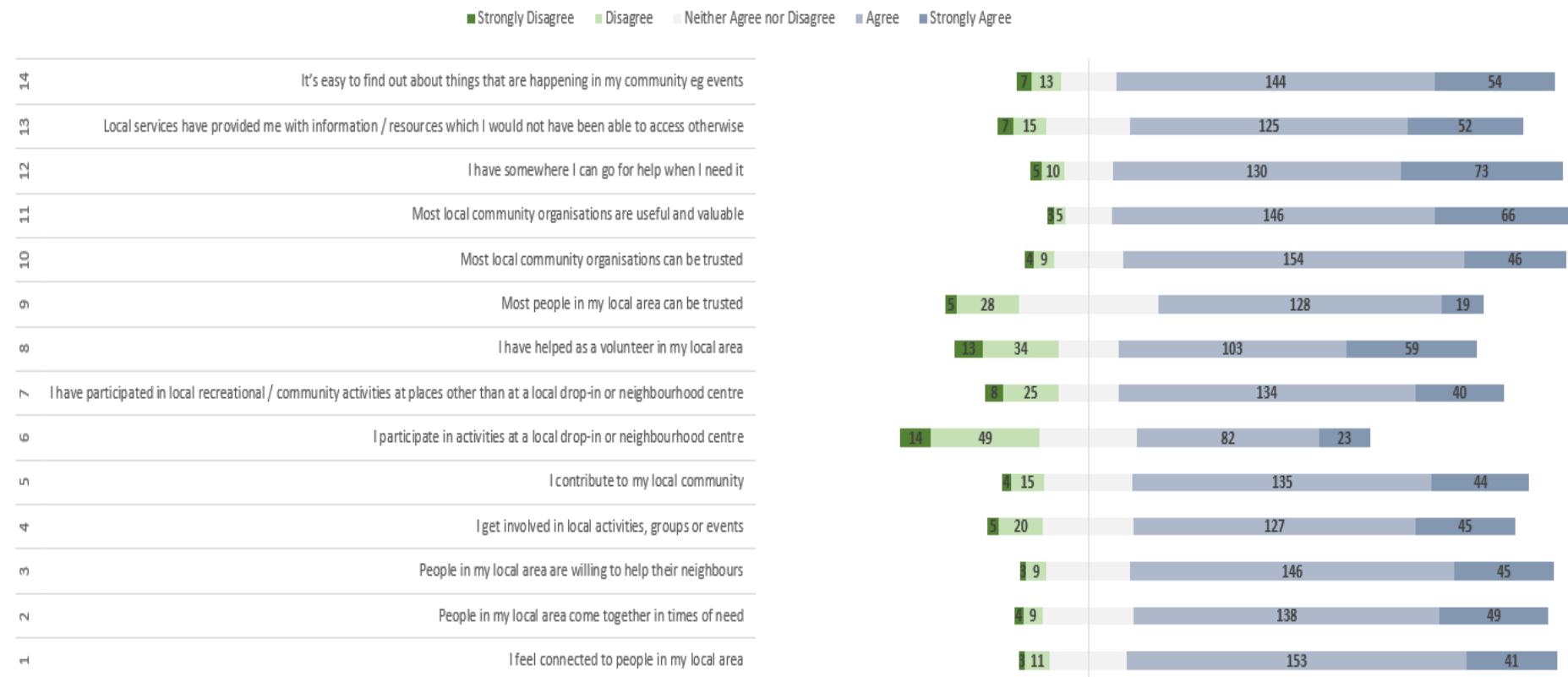
The following table is an attempt to create a 'Score Sheet' for all Survey Responses received during the first Pilot Phase. This is a good example of how a comparison between reporting periods could be made and also how data could be presented on an online dashboard.

Total number of participating TEI services: 10   Total number of completed surveys: 285

Survey Responses

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree □ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

#	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14	It's easy to find out about things that are happening in my community eg events	7	13	144	54
13	Local services have provided me with information / resources which I would not have been able to access otherwise	7	15	125	52
12	I have somewhere I can go for help when I need it	5	10	130	73
11	Most local community organisations are useful and valuable	15		146	66
10	Most local community organisations can be trusted	4	9	154	46
9	Most people in my local area can be trusted	5	28	128	19
8	I have helped as a volunteer in my local area	13	34	103	59
7	I have participated in local recreational / community activities at places other than at a local drop-in or neighbourhood centre	8	25	134	40
6	I participate in activities at a local drop-in or neighbourhood centre	14	49	82	23
5	I contribute to my local community	4	15	135	44
4	I get involved in local activities, groups or events	5	20	127	45
3	People in my local area are willing to help their neighbours	3	9	146	45
2	People in my local area come together in times of need	4	9	138	49
1	I feel connected to people in my local area	3	11	153	41

Graphic provided by DCJ

Thematic analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions. This will involve identifying common themes, issues and experiences described by survey participants.

Giving community members a voice about things that matter to them, is essential to be relevant and impactful when providing community services. Gathering qualitative data by inviting community members to give some examples about how they feel when they think about a sense of belonging, trust, participation and access to resources/services in their community, is a powerful way to gain insights into the 'fable' of a community.

Every community has a 'fable', a story that is told when people ask what kind of community they live in. Often the external perception, or story told *about a community,* is different to the story a community tells itself.

Good Community Strengthening a.k.a. Community Development aims to engage community in the telling of their story, gathering the community knowledge and aspirations to design programs and support activities that lead to the change a community wants to see.

It is therefore almost impossible to provide a "NSW story" based on a state-wide survey data set. These stories are local, and a meaningful analysis of qualitative data must start locally. However, events such as the COVID19 Pandemic, natural disasters or war, can have a significant effect on the psychology of an entire population of a state. The survey responses would reflect this.

Indeed, the Community Wellbeing Survey Pilot was run during the height of the COVID19 Pandemic and has shown a common theme and issues associated with the pandemic but also with natural disasters. People express their experiences and concerns in relation to social isolation, loneliness, lack of neighbourhood interaction and support, financial stress and difficulties in gaining meaningful employment or volunteering opportunities. In balance there are many mentions of gratefulness for having friends and neighbours look out for each other and also to have local community centres and services available to access for information and support.

Another assumption from the Pilot Data Set of open-ended responses is the fact that Community Strengthening activities funded under TEI have an influence <u>outside</u> of the 'TEI Community'. The Community Wellbeing Survey has one question about participation in activities run by the local neighbourhood or community centre, which indicates if respondents are TEI clients or not. Overall 53% of respondents said that they did not participate in activities provided by their local centre, and still expressed their community to be trusting and having a strong sense of belonging. These kinds of thematic conclusions require more data and are certainly more meaningful on local level rather than on State level.

Ultimately the most important aspect of giving community members a voice is willingness to listen; the fact that very rarely they are provided with the opportunity to comment on the strength and wellbeing of their community.

The following quotes are taken directly from the Community Wellbeing Survey responses we received:

Sense of Belonging

"I help on committees in local area and transport older people when needed"

"I've long since [the beginning of the pandemic] lost touch with friends in my local area"

"Suburb is quite disrespectful to people who don't fit into the dominant groups. They don't care about people with disabilities."

Community Participation

"I run an ATO sponsored tax clinic for low income people through the neighbourhood centre. I also regularly deliver veggie boxes to the neighbourhood centre from food we grow at the community farm that is donated to people in need in the community.

"I volunteer at my community centre, I volunteer to mow a lawn for elderly resident, I volunteer at the local gardens."

"I helped with local aboriginal junior teams assisting the coach with sports league and soccer."

Trust

"I leave a key in my front door. I see my neighbours most days."

"You have to watch your back within my community."

"I trust my local services but not the community

"I trust most organisations although several organisations have let me down in the past."

"There are multiple members of the community with genuine interest in supporting each other and contributing to developing harmony and trust for a safer environment."

Access to Services / Resources

"My local community centre always provides me information and what services are available."

"The community Facebook pages are a great source of info."

"Our fire brigade is active in keeping us informed and was very helpful during last bushfire season."

Limitations of this Data Analysis:

Comparisons between different activities and communities (LGAs)

The small sample size for 20 communities across the state makes it difficult to compare between different activities and communities. It is anticipated that the participation of TEI services and hence local communities will grow over time, making the sample sizes much more meaningful for both local conclusions and broader comparisons across communities and regions.

Practitioners involved in disseminating and analysing the Community Wellbeing Survey will be invited to form "Communities of Practice" for TEI funded services to learn together from each other's experience.

Comparisons between the different reporting periods

Drawing a comparison between the different reporting periods will be a feature of future data analysis. The table for Pilot Period 1 above shows an overall response scoresheet, which could be generated for all future reporting periods and comparative trends could be drawn from then over a longer period of time. LCSA acknowledges DCJ and FACSIAR for assisting with the creation of this graphic.

The data analysis in summary:

1) The quantitative data shows a high level of a collective sense of belonging, participation, trust and access to resources / services in communities. The questions in the survey were fit for purpose, generating the right data to make statements about the level of Community Wellbeing which includes a demographic profile of survey participants.

2) The qualitative data shows strong themes relating to support from neighbours, friends and local organisations, particularly during bushfires and the COVID19 Pandemic. The provision in the survey for people to share an example of their lived experience, is greatly beneficial for understanding the stories of communities and the stories behind the data.

3) Community-level Data, also often referred to as Population Data, is different from DEX data because it describes in this context the state of Community Wellbeing which goes beyond TEI client groups. The Community Wellbeing Survey establishes the strength of a community rather than of individuals and gives the public the opportunity to share their views of a sense of belonging, participation, trust and access to resources / services in their community.

4) The Pilot Project run over two reporting periods generated a data set that is comprehensive in its own right and complements the DEX data set to tell a complete story of Community Strengthening efforts in the TEI Program. The sample size of the data generated during the Pilot is too small to make statistically viable statements or conclusions of the state of Community Wellbeing in communities, but it confirms that it is 'fit for purpose' as a framework for a future roll-out across the TEI Sector.

7) Key Findings and Policy Implications

1. Data Efficacy

The data set generated by survey responses is a true reflection of how community members perceive their community's strength. The data creates a contribution/attribution link between TEI Community Strengthening activities by measuring and building evidence on the:

- sense of belonging across the community
- level of trust between community members
- level of participation by community members in altruistic activities; and
- how accessible services and resources are for community members in need.

The findings from the pilot confirmed the Community Wellbeing Survey enables the TEI program to better understand how TEI funded services contribute to community wellbeing, better tell the story behind the data reported in the Data Exchange, and better collect consistent information about community wellbeing.

Most importantly this data set is filling a vacuum that was left when the former Community Builders Funding Program was integrated into the TEI Program, and when DEX became the data reporting portal. DEX, by design, is relying on individual data only and does not capture community or population level data that demonstrates how well and how strong a community is in its entirety.

To exemplify the value of the Community Wellbeing Data Set, and the relationship between TEI clients and the community at large, it is important to acknowledge that the sum of individual TEI clients does not make up the entire community. In return however, strengthening the whole of community (beyond TEI client cohorts) has a positive impact on prevention, early intervention and community resilience.[4]

Comments made by survey respondent confirm that even though they may be a TEI client, they are first and foremost a community member who participate in community life and see the responsibility of community strengthening going beyond TEI service delivery. Respectively, this is the point where local community organisations can benefit from this data set as a baseline for future planning, community development and engagement activities.

Recommendation:
- **Refine and continue**: LCSA recommends continuing the optional use of the Community Wellbeing Survey by TEI Community Strengthening funded services. The Survey requires only minor changes, particularly by creating a unique identifier that clearly relates the survey respondent to a specific organisation and community.

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[4] Refer to LCSA's TEI Submission, 2016 making a case for the integration of Community Builders into TEI.

3. Relationship between Community Wellbeing Survey and DEX

One key issue of measuring Community Wellbeing is that it currently sits outside of contractual obligation under TEI and reporting requirements within DEX. The SCORE Surveys in DEX are a useful tool to assess the impact and quality of TEI services, capturing the experience of individuals and practitioners in direct relation to TEI services, however they can easily be perceived as measuring the same thing as the Community Wellbeing Survey. It is therefore paramount that the relationship between the Community Wellbeing Survey and DEX is articulated clearly. This will achieve both more participation from the TEI Sector and a better understanding of Community Strengthening Outcomes.

Organisations participating in the Pilot Project reported that while they could see the value of the Community Wellbeing Survey in the long term, it is an addition to their workload and the data is not yet readily available to services for planning and community engagement purposes.

The role of the Reference Group throughout the Pilot Project was critical for success.

Recommendations:
- **Develop a bi-annual report:** LCSA recommends publishing a bi-annual report to tell the story behind the data reported in the Data Exchange, and support learning and evidence-building in the TEI program
- **Review Reference Group role and composition:** Notwithstanding the value of the current Reference Group, LCSA recommends reviewing the Terms of Reference for the Reference Group and its potential for future purposes.
- **Promote the survey:** LCSA recommends devising a marketing strategy to attract more TEI funded services to participate in the use of the Community Wellbeing Survey and to promote the value of the data set as complementary to DEX data sets.

4. Technology

The Pilot used Survey Monkey as the online application to administer the survey. Using LCSA's Survey Monkey account, all surveys arrived in one centralised point, enabling the LCSA team and CSDP Reference Group to analyse the data. The survey was accessible either through a hyperlink or by scanning a QR code. Some community members preferred the survey in paper form, which were sent to LCSA for manual entry into the Survey Monkey.

The Pilot has shown that Survey Monkey is not the right platform for a larger scale roll-out of the Community Wellbeing Survey. It provides ease of access for survey participants, but it is not 'fit for purpose' for analysis and presentation of data. One major shortcoming was the difficulty to sort survey responses and attributing them to the right TEI organisation.

A future collection tool needs to be connected through a username to give each survey response as a unique identifier. This will ensure that each response can be attributed to the right organisation distributing. The ultimate goal should be to 1) make the survey more accessible from the front end and 2) automate the administration, analysis and sharing of data in the back end.

We received feedback that the QR code was used frequently, an opportunity that arose as a silver lining from the COVID19 check-in procedures people became familiar with. It also lends itself very well for display in the foyer or a website.

Recommendations:

- **Explore web-based applications to capture data and streamline data administration:** LCSA recommends an investment into a tailored data collection and curation tool that automates all aspects of survey administration both for services and for LCSA as the depository of data. This technology should ensure services have their unique usernames and data portal.
- **Create website for live data dashboards:** LCSA recommends the use of the domain www.communitydevelopment.org.au (already in LCSA's possession) for a website that acts as a database both from a front end (user) and a backend (administrator), as well as a public dashboard of TEI-wide data showing live, deidentified, regional and district-wide data sets.
- **Investigate useful add-ons to the new web-based application:** LCSA recommends assessing the need for data collection relevant to TEI-funded organisations such as capturing information and assisted referral services and adapt the application accordingly, in consultation with all stakeholders. *(refer to LCSA's defunct Lasso App)*

5. Language barriers and other accessibility issue

The Pilot Project has brought to light the issue of survey accessibility for people from a non-English speaking background, people who do not have access to internet or technology, or people with low literacy.

The outcomes surveys under the Community Builders Funding Program, were adapted for young people and for people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Non-English speaking clients often filled out their surveys using a translating service or with the help of practitioners, which raised confidentiality and data quality issues. A similar approach would have been more inclusive throughout the Pilot.

The long-term success of the Community Wellbeing Survey will be determined by how inclusive the entire process is. This has to include surveys in different community languages and overall better accessibility of surveys.

Recommendation:

- **Create "Communities of Practice" of participating organisations:** LCSA recommends having ongoing meetings and capacity building activities with TEI organisations using the Community Wellbeing Survey. This will ensure continuous quality improvement as well as the potential to align with DCJ Districts planning and policy development.

6. Potential to use survey beyond TEI

The survey has been used not only by TEI clients but also community members, either receiving other services from an organisation or indeed 'filling out the survey at the train station'. The concept of Community Wellbeing goes beyond TEI and the nature of the questions prompts respondents to speak about health, education, volunteering, crisis management, government authorities etc. – all of which are relevant to create stronger communities.

Inadvertently the Community Wellbeing Survey creates links across the entire Human Services spectrum, and dovetails into many aspects of the Human Services Outcomes Framework on a population-wide level.

While the Pilot Project was targeted at the TEI service system, there are obvious opportunities for TEI Community Strengthening using the Community Wellbeing Survey to broaden networks, building partnerships across sectors and feeding their data into broader geographic data sets. This could potentially assist DCJ and other human services departments in planning, policy development and investment strategies.

Recommendation:

- **Engage further stakeholders to benefit the TEI program:** LCSA recommends building intentional partnerships both internally with other DCJ funded programs e.g. SHS and external stakeholders e.g PHNs, to promote the use of the Community Wellbeing Survey in other jurisdictions.

7. Implications for policy and further investment

The TEI Community Strengthening Stream makes up almost half of the overall TEI funding pool. A baseline data set showing 'how strong' a community is, will ensure that governmental investment into community strengthening is evidence-based and well-targeted.

A baseline is also important for services to gain a deeper understanding of their community, and what emerging issues need to be addressed through TEI Community Strengthening activities.

This is particularly important in the context of Disaster Management. A community needs to be prepared and ready for any crisis that may occur, be capable in its immediate crisis response when it occurs, and ultimately be well-connected, resilient and trusting to recover and rebuild after a crisis. In the current day, the COVID19 Pandemic has unfolded in addition to natural disasters with destructive outcomes, putting unprecedented demands on TEI services.

To mount an argument for sound investment into community development, baseline data on the state of a community's well-being, is currently missing from the broader social policy framework in NSW.

Under TEI, funded services are required to have a Program Logic that assesses the community need, articulates a Theory of Change and measurable activities to achieve desired outcomes. Pilot participants reported that this baseline data set can play a pivotal role in reviewing and refining TEI Program Logics and Outcomes Measurement.

Recommendations:

- **Add Community Wellbeing Survey to TEI Program Logics:** LCSA recommends service providers update their Program Logic where they choose to use the survey eg indicate the survey will be used to collect data in the "Output" column, and add survey findings to the "Current situation" and "Evidence" columns where the findings have informed practice.

- **Economic modelling:** LCSA recommends including the Community Strengthening Data Project and the Community Wellbeing Survey pilot and rollout in the design of the TEI Program Evaluation to model economic and social return on investment of community strengthening outcomes based on the Community Wellbeing Survey.

7) Appendix 1: Guide for TEI Community Strengthening Pilot Survey

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), and LCSA are working together on a TEI Community Strengthening Data project. This project was developed in response to sector feedback about the need to:

- better collect, analyse and report the stories behind the data reported in the Data Exchange
- more consistently measure community wellbeing* as a longer-term outcome

The TEI Community Strengthening Survey

To address the needs above we have developed an optional "Community Wellbeing Survey" (see Attachment 1) that Community Strengthening organisations can distribute to their clients, community members and stakeholders. This survey will help us:

- better understand how our services contribute to community wellbeing
- tell the story behind the data reported in the Data Exchange
- collect consistent information about community wellbeing

*Community Wellbeing is defined in the LCSA Community Strengthening Data Project as, "The collective sense of belonging, participation, trust and access to resources / services, which is achieved through:

- increasing protective factors such as local capacity, social support and resources
- decreasing risk factors, such as miscommunication, disengagement, isolation / loneliness and trauma."

What is the survey about?

The survey is for TEI clients and community members. It asks them a series of questions about their experiences living and participating in their communities. The survey includes a bank of questions with a 5-point Likert scale (quantitative data) and an opportunity to share an example or brief story (qualitative data). The questions cover issues like:

- Sense of belonging
- Community Participation
- Trust in the community
- Access to services and resources

Piloting the survey

We're conducting a pilot of the survey to test the questions we've designed and our data collection approach. This will help us refine the questions to ensure they're suitable for clients and provide us with useful information. The pilot will also help us figure out the best way to administer the survey and what works best for service providers and clients.

Who is the pilot for?

The pilot is **OPTIONAL** for all TEI funded organisations delivering services under the Community Strengthening Program Activities:

1. Community Connections
2. Community Centres
3. Community Support

Why join the pilot?

If you choose to join the pilot your organisation will benefit by:

- obtaining qualitative 'community wellbeing' data to complement your DEX data
- building your evidence on what's working locally and identifying new issues / needs
- providing feedback on the survey design and implementation and contributing to improve the survey tool

When is the pilot being conducted?

There will be two pilot periods for surveys to be conducted:

- **Tue 13 July 2021 – Tue 7 September 2021** (8 weeks)
- **Tue 21 September - Fri 23 November 2021** (9 weeks)

If using your own survey forms, the closing dates to submit your data is **Tue 7 September** and **Friday 23 November 2021**. If using the LCSA Survey Monkey, the raw data will be automatically submitted each survey.

The two weeks between the reporting periods will be used by LCSA to review the initial data, consult the Reference Group, and make amendments to the survey or guide if needed for the second pilot period.

How do we join the pilot?

To join the pilot please complete the online Registration Form to provide information about your organisation and nominated contact person for the pilot.

How will the survey be administered?

Once the pilot phase commences, you will be expected to provide the survey to clients and community members within the pilot period. Service providers will have full flexibility in administering the survey. They can either:

- choose specific questions and incorporate them into an existing survey
- use the LCSA Survey Monkey link provided: LCSA Survey Monkey
- print paper versions of the survey and distribute to clients

The survey may be completed in-person or online by a TEI client. A client can complete the survey on their own, or with the help of a support person or practitioner.

Who do we send the completed surveys to?

- Surveys completed using the LCSA Survey Monkey link will automatically submitted to LCSA.
- If you chose to use paper copies of the survey, please email the **raw** data to datapilot@lcsansw.org.au by **Tue 7 September** and **Friday 23 November 2021** respectively for pilot periods 1 and 2. Please email the data in a digital format – not scanned copies.
- If you chose specific survey questions and incorporated them into an existing survey, please email the **raw** data to datapilot@lcsansw.org.au. You must only send LCSA the data for the Community Wellbeing questions – not the other questions in your existing survey. The data must be emailed to LCSA by **Tue 7 September** and **Friday 23 November 2021** respectively for pilot periods 1 and 2. Please email the data in a digital format – not scanned copies.

What will happen with the survey data?

The raw survey data from both reporting periods will be analysed by LCSA. The data analysis will include:

- statistical analysis of each survey question to identify the most common responses
- statistical analysis of the demographic data to identify characteristics of the survey participants
- comparisons between different activities and communities (LGAs)
- comparisons between the different reporting periods
- thematic analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions. This will involve identifying common themes, issues and experiences described by survey participants.

The findings will be reviewed by the Community Strengthening Project Reference Group. A report will be prepared for the sector to comment on.

A final pilot report will also be prepared by LCSA. This will include:

- a review of the pilot process
- recommendations for how the survey can be improved (if necessary)
- recommendations for how the implementation can be improved (if necessary)
- next steps for the Community Strengthening Data project

Where can I get further information?

Please contact LCSA as the lead organisation for the pilot – datapilot@lcsansw.org.au

Attachment 1

Community Wellbeing Survey

About you:

All information you provide is anonymous and will only be used for statistical purposes.

Where do you live? (suburb / town only):	
What is your age?	
What is your gender?	
Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?	
Are you living with a disability?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to say
In what country were you born?	
What is the main language you speak at home or in your community?	
Which organisation gave you this survey?	

About your views on community wellbeing in your local area

Below are 4 sections with statements about:

1. Sense of belonging
2. Participation
3. Trust
4. Access to resources / services

Thinking of your local community, please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statements. There are no right or wrong answers. You have the option to skip an answer and leave it blank, or tick N/A if the statement is not applicable to your experience.

Sense of belonging

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel connected to people in my local area.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. People in my local area come together in times of need.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. People in my local area are willing to help their neighbours.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Can you share a brief example or story about connecting with other people in your community?

Participation

Below are some statements about your experience of community participation. Please state how much you agree or disagree with these statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I get involved in local activities, groups or events.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. I contribute to my local community.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. I participate in activities at a local drop-in or neighbourhood centre.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. I have participated in recreational / community activities at places other than my local community or neighbourhood centre.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. In the past 12 months I have helped as a volunteer in my local area.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Can you share a brief example about your experience of community participation?

Trust

Below are some statements about your experience of trust in the community. Please state how much you agree or disagree with these statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Most people in my local area can be trusted.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. Most local community organisations can be trusted.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Can you share a brief example about your experiuence of trust in the community?

Access to services / resources

Below are some statements about your experience of access to services and resources in the community. Please state how much you agree or disagree with these statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Most local community organisations are useful and valuable.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. I have somewhere I can go for help when I need it.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. Local services have provided me with information / resources which I would not have been able to access otherwise.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. It's easy to find out about things that are happening in my community eg events.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Can you share a brief example about your experiuence accessing services and resources in the community?

Trust