## Protection and Support Services Working Group 2013 Strategic Plan

### Purpose of the strategic plan

The purpose of the strategic plan is to guide the Protection and Support Services Working Group (PSSWG) in meeting the goals of the Review and to provide a focus for the work of the PSSWG.

A primary objective of the Review is to collect and publish in an annual report, data that will enable ongoing comparisons of the efficiency and effectiveness of Australian State and Territory governments’ services.

The purpose of the Review is to develop and report objective and comparable performance indicators on government funded services. The Steering Committee seeks to publish the best available data in a timely manner (even if the initial results are imperfect) with appropriate caveats, and focus on improving data quality over time.

The role of the PSSWG includes:

* recommending the boundary of the services for the purposes of this exercise and providing comments on boundary issues
* developing agreed indicators of performance for the services within the framework
* reviewing and proposing performance indicators developed elsewhere for inclusion in the chapter
* developing an agreed set of definitions for variables which make up the indicators
* identifying appropriate data sources, and where appropriate, initiate and manage a data collection system
* contributing to the Community services sector overview.

The terms of reference of the Report on Government Services (RoGS) can be found in the front pages of the latest RoGS and on the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision’s (the Review) webpage. The terms of reference of the Review can be found on the Review’s webpage at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/review/tor.

### Vision

The PSSWG currently addresses two areas: child protection services (including out-of-home care and family support services) and youth justice services. Child protection services aim to assist families experiencing difficulties to minimise the risk of difficulties escalating or recurring by assessing needs and providing appropriate support services. Youth justice services aim to promote community safety and reduce youth offending by assisting young people to address their offending behaviour and take responsibility for the effect their behaviour has on victims and the wider community.

### Liaison

To achieve the goals of the Review as outlined in this plan, the PSSWG must maintain cooperative relationships with related groups which are likely to have a bearing on the Working Group’s activities. The parties of most significance to the PSSWG are the:

* Standing Council on Community, Housing and Disability Services (SCCHDS)
* Research, Evaluation and Data Working Group (REDWG)
* Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA)
* Juvenile Justice Research and Information Group (JJ RIG)
* Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
* Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

### Council of Australian Governments (COAG) developments

COAG endorsed the review of RoGS Executive Summary and Recommendations of the HoTS/SO working group at its meeting on 7 December 2009. The findings of the review emphasise the importance of the RoGS as a performance measurement and public accountability tool. The review concluded with 24 recommendations, some of which became effective immediately, while others are to be implemented over the coming few years.

The Steering Committee has discussed and agreed implementation plans for various aspects of the review of RoGS recommendations and the recommendations of the Independent Reference Group, several times between late-2009 and late-2011. The draft 2013 PSSWG strategic plan reflects relevant Steering Committee decisions. Working Groups, in conjunction with the Secretariat, will continue to implement the Steering Committee’s decisions throughout 2013.

In addition to the COAG endorsed recommendations of the review of RoGS, the following COAG developments are pertinent to the PSSWG:

* *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children* — The National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children (the National Framework), endorsed by COAG at its 30 April 2009 meeting, is being implemented by working groups comprising representatives from State and Territory governments, the Australian Government and the non-government sector. The National Framework contains a range of performance indicators designed to measure success in achieving the National Framework’s high-level outcome that Australia’s children and young people are safe and well. Some existing RoGS performance indicators are included in the National Framework. Where appropriate, the PSSWG will further develop the RoGS child protection performance framework to align with other indicators in the National Framework.
* *National standards for out-of-home care —* the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), in consultation with State and Territory governments, has developed national standards for out‑of‑home care that seek to improve the quality of care provided to children and young people in out-of-home care and ensure that these children have the same opportunities as other children to reach their potential. The national standards are underpinned by indicators to measure performance. The national standards incorporate some out-of-home care performance indicators included in the RoGS, as well as other broader measures of child health and wellbeing.

The PSSWG will maintain a watching brief on the above COAG priority areas and other related initiatives, to ensure that the Child protection and youth justice services chapter and the Community services sector overview reflect any relevant COAG developments.

### Performance indicators for future development from the 2013 RoGS

The performance indicator frameworks, developed separately for (1) child protection and out-of-home care services, and (2) youth justice services, are the starting points for identifying gaps and future longer-term data development work in these areas.

The performance indicator frameworks from the 2013 RoGS are at figures 1 and 2 of this strategic plan.

### 2013 strategic plan items

Items for inclusion in the 2013 work plan with a high or medium priority are set out in further detail in table 1, including relative priority, likely scope of work, responsibilities and likely completion dates. Lower priority and longer-term work plan items and issues are included in table 2.

### Work plan for 2013 — key activities (table 1)

#### Child protection performance reporting

At its November 2012 meeting, the PSSWG agreed several work plan items for child protection and out-of-home care performance reporting in 2013. In particular, the PSSWG agreed to:

* Continue to improve the completeness of reporting on the educational outcomes of children on child protection orders for the performance indicator ‘Improved health, education and wellbeing of the child’. The 2013 RoGS included experimental NAPLAN data for children on orders for Queensland and SA. Data for additional jurisdictions should be available for inclusion in the 2014 RoGS.
* Continue to improve the completeness of reporting for the performance indicator ‘Children with documented case plans’. The 2013 RoGS included data for Queensland, WA, Tasmania, and the ACT. Data for additional jurisdictions should be available for inclusion in the 2014 RoGS.
* Continue to improve national ‘Pathways’ unit cost reporting for child protection services in the 2014 RoGS by sourcing appropriate denominators for unit cost reporting. In addition, further improve child protection financial reporting in the RoGS by conducting a reconciliation between jurisdictions’ local financial reporting and RoGS’ child protection financial reporting to identify possible inconsistencies.
* Develop and refine definitions and counting rules for previously unreported child protection performance indicators, in order of priority: safe return home (high); permanent care (high); placement with sibling (medium); continuity of case worker (low); local placement (low).

#### Youth justice performance reporting

At its November 2012 meeting, the PSSWG agreed several work plan items for youth justice performance reporting in 2013. In particular, in consultation with the JJ RIG and the AJJA, the PSSWG agreed to:

* Develop unit cost efficiency indicators for youth justice services.
* Review the comparability and completeness of reporting for existing youth justice indicators (particularly assaults in custody and self-harm in custody for which there are several data gaps and data comparability concerns).
* Further develop the youth justice performance indicator framework to include outcome indicators (for example, education and employment readiness, secure housing on exit from youth justice supervision, repeat offending).

|  | **Table 1 – 2013 Protection and Support Services Work Plan** |
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| Item | Suggestion | Responsibility | Comments/scope of work | Relative priority | Likely completion date |
| **CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES** |
| 1(Agenda paper 6.2.1) | Improve the completeness of reporting on the educational outcomes of children on child protection orders for the performance indicator ‘Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child’.  | Secretariat; PSSWG | The 2013 RoGS included experimental NAPLAN data for children on orders for Queensland and SA. Data for additional jurisdictions should be available for inclusion in the 2014 RoGS. | HIGHReview at April & July meetings, and out of session as required. | Implement for 2014 RoGS |
| 2(Agenda paper 6.2.2) | Improve the completeness of reporting for the performance indicator ‘Children with documented case plans’. | Secretariat; PSSWG; AIHW | The 2013 RoGS included data for Queensland, WA, Tasmania, and the ACT. Data for additional jurisdictions should be available for inclusion in the 2014 RoGS. | HIGHReview at April & July meetings, and out of session as required. | Implement for 2014 RoGS |
| 3(Agenda paper 6.2.3) | Continue to improve national ‘Pathways’ unit cost reporting for child protection services in the 2014 RoGS by sourcing required numerators and denominators.  | Secretariat; PSSWG | The PSSWG made significant progress in refining and implementing the Pathways project in 2011 and 2012. Further work is necessary in 2013 to ensure:* all jurisdictions supply the necessary financial data (numerators) for unit cost calculations
* SA was not able to provide family support services expenditure data for the 2013 RoGS (AG2)
* all jurisdictions supply the necessary activity counts (denominators) for unit cost calculations
* Vic, Qld, Tas, and the ACT could not provide an activity count for total reports to child protection (AG1)
* No jurisdiction could provide a robust activity count for children commencing family support services (AG2)
* Tas and the ACT could not provide an activity count for children commencing intensive family support services (AG3)
* Vic, Qld, SA and the NT could not provide an activity count for children commencing protective intervention who were not on an order (AG5)
* SA could not provide an activity count for orders issued (AG6)
* Vic and Qld could not provide an activity count for children commencing protective intervention who were on an order (AG7).
 | HIGHReview at April & July meetings, and out of session as required. | Implement for 2014 RoGS |
| 4(Agenda paper 6.2.3) | Further improve child protection financial reporting in the RoGS by:* conducting a reconciliation between jurisdictions’ local financial reporting and RoGS’ child protection financial reporting to identify possible inconsistencies
* reviewing the comparability of expenditure data across jurisdictions for family support services and intensive family support services.
 | Secretariat; PSSWG | A reconciliation of local reporting and RoGS reporting was agreed by the PSSWG at its November 2012 meeting, following a suggestion by Qld. The PSSWG agreed that out-of-session work with financial officers might be necessary to progress this item.  | HIGHReview at April & July meetings, and out of session as required. | Implement for 2014 RoGS |
| 5(Agenda paper 6.2.4) | Revise the counting rules for the new measure for the ‘safety in out-of-home care’ performance indicator. | PSSWG, Secretariat | At the July 2012 meeting, the PSSWG agreed to report a new measure for the ‘safety in out-of-home care’ performance indicator: ‘the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a notification while in out-of-home care, which was substantiated’. This measure was included in addition to the existing measure: ‘the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care’. The PSSWG agreed that the proposed additional measure was conceptually more straightforward (and would therefore enable the NT to report where it had not done so previously). It was also noted that the new measure provided a more fulsome picture of the experience of children in care. However, there are comparability issues with the experimental data for the new measure, which require further PSSWG attention during 2013.  | HIGHReview at April & July meetings, and out of session as required. | Implement for 2014 RoGS |
| 6(Agenda paper 6.2.5) | Keep a watching brief on unit record developments to ensure timely data are available for the 2014 RoGS. The child based unit-record collection is under implementation and will replace the aggregate collection currently reported for the 2014 RoGS onwards. | PSSWG; AIHW Secretariat | In February 2012, David Kalish, Director of the AIHW, wrote to David Christmas, Convenor of the PSSWG, to advise that it is likely to be difficult to supply unit record data in accordance with RoGS’ production timelines. Mr Kalish explained that the AIHW would be in a better position to advise on this matter in early 2013 following completion of the unit record ‘dress rehearsal’. The unit record collection will be a primary data source for the child protection section in the RoGS from the 2014 Report onwards. | HIGHReview at April, July and November meetings | Ongoing |
| 7(No paper) | Develop/refine definitions and counting rules for previously unreported child protection performance indicators, in order of priority: * safe return home
* permanent care
* placement with sibling
* continuity of case worker
* local placement.
 | PSSWG, Secretariat, AIHW | During 2011, the PSSWG agreed to progressively develop and refine collection strategies for previously unreported RoGS indicators, for implementation once the unit record collection is operational. Indicators currently in the child protection performance indicator framework for which data are not reported are:* safe return home (high priority)
* permanent care (high priority).
* placement with sibling (medium priority)
* continuity of case worker (medium priority)
* local placement (low priority)

Definitions for these indicators are yet to be agreed. Definitions will need to be agreed before counting rules can be developed, and data collection piloted.  | MEDIUMReview at April & July 2013 meetings. | Update on pertinent unit record developments to be provided by the AIHW at July 2013 meeting. PSSWG to review next steps at July & Nov 2013 meetings. Implementation unlikely until 2015 RoGS at the earliest. |
| 8(No paper) | Develop a mini case study for Steering Committee review for inclusion in the child protection section of chapter 15. | Secretariat; PSSWG | Review whether there are any evaluated child protection/family support services programs in operation in states and territories which might form the basis of a mini-case study for inclusion in the chapter. | MEDIUMDevelop out of session for PSSWG review at July meeting | 2013, for possible inclusion in the 2014 RoGS |
| **YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES** |
| 9(Agenda paper 6.3.1) | Develop unit cost efficiency indicators for youth justice services. | JJ RIG, AJJA, PSSWG, Secretariat | Considerable work took place in during 2010 ‑ 2012 to develop a national youth justice expenditure data collection for publication in the 2013 RoGS. The next step is to develop unit cost efficiency indicators using the expenditure data and appropriate activity counts, for publication in the 2014 RoGS. This work will be undertaken in consultation with the JJ RIG and the AJJA. | HIGHReview at the April, July & November meetings | 2013, for inclusion in the 2014 RoGS |
| 10(Agenda paper 6.3.2) | Review the comparability and completeness of reporting for existing youth justice indicators (particularly assaults in custody and self-harm in custody for which there are several data gaps and data comparability concerns). | JJ RIG, AJJA, PSSWG, Secretariat | Not all jurisdictions have been able to supply data for existing youth justice performance indicators. It would be helpful to review the extent to which data gaps can be addressed in 2013. In addition, there are comparability concerns for several indicators, particularly the assaults in custody and self-harm and attempted suicide in custody indicators. The Secretariat will work with the JJ RIG to conduct a moderation exercise for these indicators to try and improve consistency in the application of the counting rules across jurisdictions.  | HIGHReview at the April, July & November meetings | 2013, for inclusion in the 2014 RoGS |
| 11(Agenda paper 6.3.3) | Further develop the youth justice performance indicator framework to include outcome indicators (for example, education and employment readiness, secure housing on exit from youth justice supervision, repeat offending). | JJ RIG, AJJA, PSSWG, Secretariat | A youth justice performance indicator framework was included for the first time in the 2009 RoGS. Since 2009, the framework has been refined incrementally. Further work is required to identify and develop stage 3 outcome indicators for youth justice services. It is anticipated that definitions and performance indicator boxes will be developed for agreed outcomes indicators for inclusion in the 2014 RoGS. This work is to be undertaken in liaison with the JJ RIG and the AJJA. | HIGHReview at the April, July & November meetings | 2013, for inclusion in the 2014 RoGS |
| **COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR OVERVIEW** |
| 12 | Contribute to ongoing reporting and development for the Community services sector overview.  | PSSWG, Disability Services Working Group, Aged Care Working Group, Secretariat | New Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) data will be available for the 2014 RoGS for the sector-wide indicator ‘Improving child development’. These data will be included in the Working Group draft of the sector overview and subject to the usual Working Group draft review processes. | HIGHReview at November 2013 meeting. | 2013, for publication in 2014 RoGS |
| **CHAPTER-WIDE** |
| 13(No paper) | Separate child protection and youth justice services into two separate chapters for the 2014 RoGS, subject to Steering Committee agreement. | Secretariat; PSSWG; JJ RIG and AJJA | * The PSSWG notionally agreed to separate child protection services and youth justice services into two chapters at its November 2012 meeting. However, it was not feasible to make this change for the 2013 RoGS. Therefore, the PSSWG agreed to change the name of the chapter to Child protection and youth justice services for the 2013 RoGS and to seek Steering Committee agreement to separate the chapters for the 2014 RoGS.
 | HIGHSteering Committee to be consulted at its first meeting of 2013 | 2013, for publication in 2014 RoGS |
| 14(No paper) | Review whether there is scope to consolidate chapter 15 excel attachment tables, which were in excess of 550 pages in the 2013 RoGS. | Secretariat; PSSWG | * With the emphasis on extending time series reporting since the review of RoGS, chapter 15 attachment tables have grown to over 550 pages in length (as all indicators are reported for 10 years where data are available). The child protection data in the chapter 15 attachment tables are currently presented in two forms: “All jurisdictions” attachment tables and “Single jurisdiction” attachment tables. The “Single jurisdiction” attachment tables replicate the data that appear in the “All jurisdictions” attachment tables, only they use a different presentation format. This approach means that there are many more pages of data that require checking by the Secretariat (and states and territories) to finalise the Report. The Secretariat would like PSSWG feedback on whether the “Single jurisdiction” attachment tables are a necessary component of chapter 15 attachment tables, or whether footnotes etc. from this section could be consolidated in the “All jurisdiction” attachment tables to reduce the Report production burden.
 | HIGHReview draft consolidated attachment tables at July 2013 meeting. | 2013, for publication in 2014 RoGS |
| 15(No paper) | Development of Data Quality Information (DQI) for child protection and youth justice performance indicators. | PSSWG, Secretariat, AIHW | * Develop and revise (as necessary) DQI for all indicators where data are reported.
 | HIGHSecretariat to draft remaining DQI for PSSWG out-of-session review in August 2013 | 2013, for publication in 2014 RoGS |
| 16(No paper) | Continue to implement the review of RoGS rec’s on items for future action, subject to Steering Committee decisions at its May, August and December 2013 meetings.  | PSSWG, Secretariat | * Continue to contribute to the inclusion of a stronger emphasis on time series and/or longitudinal reporting, subject to rec. 12 (rec.13).
* Contribute to a report to be provided by the Steering Committee to COAG triennially, commencing in December 2012, through continued development and revision of annual strategic plans, which outline a work plan for addressing data gaps (rec. 10).
 | MEDIUMPSSWG review and action as required | 2013, for publication in 2014 RoGS |
| 17(No paper) | Consider changing the name of the PSSWG to align with the new name of chapter 15. | PSSWG, Steering Committee | * For the 2013 RoGS, chapter 15 was renamed from Protection and support services to Child protection and youth justice services to more clearly identify the scope of the chapter. It seems desirable to change the name of the PSSWG to align with the service areas it has responsibility for in the RoGS. Rename to Child Protection and Youth Justice Working Group (CPYJWG)
 | MEDIUMReview at April meeting | 2013 |
|  | **Table 2 – Low priority and/or ongoing tasks** |
| Item | Suggestion | Comments/scope of work |
| **CHAPTER-WIDE** |
| 18 | Review the implications of the National framework for protecting Australia’s children and National standards for out-of-home care for the Protection and support services chapter. | Consider how the Protection and support services chapter and the Community services sector summary can reflect developments arising from the ‘National framework for protecting Australia’s children’ and the development of ‘National standards for out-of-home care’. |
| 19 | Identification of indicators that should be removed from the Child protection and out-of-home care performance indicator framework – subject to Steering Committee approval – where it is unlikely that there will be data available for reporting in the foreseeable future. | Review indicators in the framework for which data have not been reported and assess the likelihood of data availability in the foreseeable future. Recommend a course of action to the Steering Committee based on such review (i.e., whether triennial report to COAG should highlight the lack of data for an important concept or whether an indicator should be removed from the framework because it is no longer considered policy relevant or is unlikely to be meaningfully reported on). |
| 20 | Update matrix listing the relevant departments for each service area under the ‘Roles and responsibilities’ section of the chapter. | Ongoing task: The matrix listing the relevant departments in each jurisdiction responsible for child protection and youth justice service delivery will need to be updated where there have been departmental name changes. |
| 21 | Expand indicators on services to Indigenous people. | Ongoing task: Review the appropriateness of Indigenous reporting for some or all indicators. |
| **INDICATOR DEVELOPMENT** |
| 22 | Consider the development of new child protection equity, effectiveness and efficiency indicators. In particular, investigate ways in which workforce pressures might be measured. | Low priority in 2013: Review the priority attached to this task at April 2014 PSSWG meeting. |
| 23 | Investigate linkages between and across:* child protection services and broader community services
* youth justice services and other corrective services (e.g., police, courts etc.)
* child protection and youth justice services.
 | Low priority in 2013: Review the priority attached to this task at April 2014 PSSWG meeting. |
| 24 | Development of a ‘client satisfaction’ indicator for child protection. | Low priority in 2013: Review the priority attached to this task at April 2013 PSSWG meeting. |
| 25 | Development of a ‘client satisfaction’ indicator for out‑of‑home care. | Low priority in 2013: Review the priority attached to this task at April 2013 PSSWG meeting. |

### Figure 1: Performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services (2013 RoGS)



### Figure 2: Performance indicators for youth justice services  (2013 RoGS)

