

NCOSS Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) Sector Assistance Strategy

STAGE 2 Completion & Outcomes Report

August 2020

Acknowledgment of funding

NCOSS acknowledges the NSW Department Communities and Justice who funded this project as part of its TEI Sector Assistance Strategy.

1) Highlights and summary

The TEI Sector Assistance Strategy (TEI SAS) is a statewide initiative funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). Stage 1 was undertaken in 2017-2018, and Stage 2 in July 2018 to June 2020.

Under Stage 2 TEI SAS funding, NCOSS completed three (3) major activities:

- 1) Delivered thirty (30) TEI Practice Forums, statewide and district-specific, which increased the knowledge and confidence of 472 participants on key topics.
- 2) Held five (5) peer learning sessions and developed five (5) new resources, to support the development of TEI local learning circles which aim to provide ongoing professional development and peer support to the TEI sector.
- 3) Provided approx. 565 individualised support hours to fifty-four (54) TEI-funded services which resulted in the achievement of two to three clearly-defined goals per service, as well as the overall positive increase in knowledge, skills and confidence of services to implement the TEI Outcomes Framework.

1.1) Practice Forums

NCOSS subcontracted Fams in early 2019 to deliver thirty (30) workshops across NSW. The workshop aimed to support the sector in:

- developing meaningful outcomes that directly relate to the work they were doing with children, families, young people and communities;
- identifying tools and resources to measure those outcomes;
- exploring how to interrogate outcomes data; and
- using learnings to inform future practice by implementing positive changes to the activities, events and programs they were facilitating.

Outputs, key outcomes and learnings

Seven hundred and seventeen (717) individuals from 482 TEI services registered for the 30 workshops, and 472 attended/participated (or 66% of registration).

While the workshops were structured, the format was interactive and allowed for considerable flexibility in content, delivered in response to the needs in the room. DCJ District CPOs were encouraged to attend together with DCJ Central Office, peaks and TEI-funded NGOs.

It was acknowledged by all parties that lack of and miscommunication about the reform processes was the greatest challenge to overcome. Situations where communication from DCJ reaches organisation contract managers but not frontline workers was a common theme raised. Other concerns included the different awareness among CPOs and differences in approach across DCJ Districts.

An evaluation at the conclusion of the workshops demonstrated that as a result of these sessions, NGOs felt they had increased knowledge and greater confidence to engage in the TEI reform.

See Fams final report for more detail of outcomes and learnings.

1.2) Learning Circles

As part of the TEI Reform's "try, test and learn" phase, NCOSS initiated the following activities to support the development of TEI local learning circles.

a) "Data Exchange: Understanding Program Logics & SCORE Outcomes" peer learning

Facilitated by The Benevolent Society Central Coast at NCOSS in May 2019, twenty-six participants (from TEI peaks, TEI regional support and training services, NCOSS individualised support agencies, DCJ TEI reform team, the DEX team as well as select TEI direct service providers) worked to gain a shared understanding around key concepts and steps in reporting SCORE outcomes for TEI, and how the Logic model supports it.

Post-session feedback showed overall satisfaction in knowledge, confidence and usefulness. More importantly, the group identified key issues and action steps for DCJ's continuing support for the sector, captured in NCOSS' progress reports to DCJ.

b) Development and piloting of resources to support learning circles

- To support its discussions with project stakeholders as well as the work of TEI individualised support agencies in facilitating learning in regional areas, NCOSS developed the resources below. Unquantified feedback from support agencies indicated overall satisfaction on their usefulness, particularly the SCORE-TEI services matrix.
 - SCORE Outcomes Relevant to TEI Service Types (matrix, May 2019)
 - Top 5Qs about DEX SCORE (June 2019)
 - Top 5Qs about Reporting Group Clients on DEX (June 2019)
- To encourage TEI-funded interagency convenors to facilitate conversations around TEI SCORE language, NCOSS developed PowerPoint/discussion guides for piloting in three potential sites (two inter agencies and one Youth project). The resources were:
 - DEX SCORE Community domain: discussion guide
 - DEX SCORE Circumstances domain: discussion guide

In a 15-minute pilot session for approx. 12 participants, the discussion guides received over-all positive feedback, but the participating TEI-funded interagency convenors stated that undertaking similar discussions in forums would be premature due to the lack of maturity in sector understanding as well as lack of confidence among convenors to facilitate such conversations.

c) TEI Sector Assistance Forum

This has been NCOSS' most successful TEI learning circle model to date, with potential to continue into the future.

Three sessions were held (October 2019, February and April 2020), with average attendance of 25 participants/forum representing 16 key TEI state and regional peaks, sector support agencies and DCJ TEI teams.

Overall feedback indicated the forum's value in sharing learnings on sector TEI reform-readiness, providing regional feedback to DCJ on recommissioning issues, receiving timely DCJ updates, working to achieve consistent messaging across districts and to share resources for supporting the sector.

1.3) Individualised Support

In Stage 2 TEI SAS, the TEI Individualised Support project was designed to be 'service provider-driven'. This aligned with the Minister's October 2018 directive regarding organisations' 'opting in' to Pathway 1, and their subsequent move towards the TEI Outcomes Framework. Any TEI-funded service was allowed to make a request for 10 hours of support, based on their own understanding of their needs.

TEI Individualised Support provision commenced in April 2019 and ended in June 2020.

During this time, NCOSS:

- Responded to 74 requests from 72 TEI services (13 cancelled prior to commencement of support, 5 cancelled after commencement of support; and of the remaining 54 requests, 2 involved 20 hours each and one was for 15 hours).
- Coordinated the provision and completion of support activities to 54 TEI services.
- Supported and coordinated with 10 external TEI support agencies, who delivered at least 565 hours of support to TEI services.

As Individualised Support comprised the bulk of this project, the rest of this report will outline in more detail the results from NCOSS' three outcomes measurement tools:

- **Completion advice.** Received from support agencies who provided support (via one-page questionnaire accomplished at the end of support period);
- **Feedback from supported TEI service.** Received via a one-page questionnaire accomplished at end of 10-hour support period; and
- **End-of-Stage-2 survey.** High-level feedback from NCOSS TEI support agencies, received via online targeted survey in mid-July 2020.

1.3.1) Completion Advice from individualised support agencies

Forty (40) completion advice & feedback were received from NCOSS support agencies after completion of approx. 10 hours of support.

Goals and Outputs

At least 134 completed goals were identified in 40 completion advice, or an average of three (3) completed goals support period.

The most common goal/reason for the requests, and where support was provided, were (in order of cited frequency): Program Logic support and development, deeper understanding of TEI Outcomes Framework, DEX support/training for relevant staff, and TEI service/activity mapping.

The top 5 activities delivered to meet the goals were: staff training, outcomes measurement tools developed, Program Logic/outcomes aligned with DEX SCORE, TEI activity mapping completed, and support provided so staff can start DEX TEI reporting.

The table below summarises the outcomes of support. Worth noting is that in three (3) cases, the support agency deemed the achievement of goal to be of limited significant change/progress.

Table 1. Outcomes identified from Individualised Support Agencies Completion Advice

Outcomes	% of responses (n=40)		
	Significant positive change	Moderate positive change and strong engagement	Total positive
a) Achievement of Goal	55%	36%	91%
b) Change in Knowledge	59%	38%	97%
c) Change in Skills	44%	47%	91%
d) Change in Confidence	50%	44%	94%

1.3.2) Feedback from TEI service providers who received support

Twenty two (22) feedback forms were received from TEI service providers after completion of approx. 10 hours of support. This response represents just over half of the services that were supported. NCOSS stopped following up responses when it became apparent that submitting feedback was seen to be an administrative burden for time-poor direct service providers, particularly in the wake of crisis response activities due to bushfires in late 2019 and COVID-19 from March 2020, as well as other issues such as poor internet/mobile phone reception.

Table 2. Outcomes identified from TEI service providers who received support

Outcomes	% of responses (n=22)		
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total
The overall Goal identified in my Support Plan at the start of the support was achieved.	45%	50%	95%
I am satisfied with the level of knowledge I have acquired during the support period	57%	43%	100%
I have acquired new skills as a result of the support period	48%	48%	96%
I will be able to apply the new skills that I have learned during the support period.	37%	58%	95%
I feel more confident moving forward as a result of the support period.	62%	38%	100%

1.3.3) End-of-Stage-2 feedback from individualised support agencies

End-of-Stage-2 feedback survey responses were received from eight out of ten NCOSS Stage 2 TEI support agencies.

Table 3. End-of-Stage-2 feedback from NCOSS TEI individualised support agencies

Outcomes statements	% of responses (n=8)		
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total
Over-all, NCOSS' TEI Individualised Support Stage 2 was of great value to the TEI service sector.	25% (2/8)	75% (6/8)	100%
Over-all, participating in this project was worth my while.	62.5% (5/8)	37.5% (3/8)	100%
I received sufficient support from NCOSS to enable me to provide TEI individualised support.	12.5% (1/8)	75% (6/8)	87.5%
The resources from DCJ appreciably helped me to provide TEI individualised support.	25% (2/8)	75% (6/8)	100%

Insights from qualitative answers

The survey included open-ended questions in order to get high-level but hopefully useful insights. These were around:

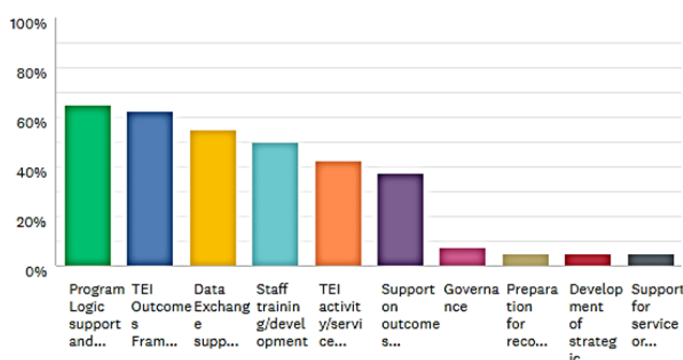
- common 'lightbulb' moments or 'turning points' that enabled the TEI service providers to meet their goal
- commonly repeated concern from the TEI service providers that still needs to be addressed
- other feedback that captures or summarises their experience in this project

The answers are described/listed in page 15.

2) Discussion: Outcomes in Individualised Support

2.1) Completion Advice from individualised support agencies

Types of Goals



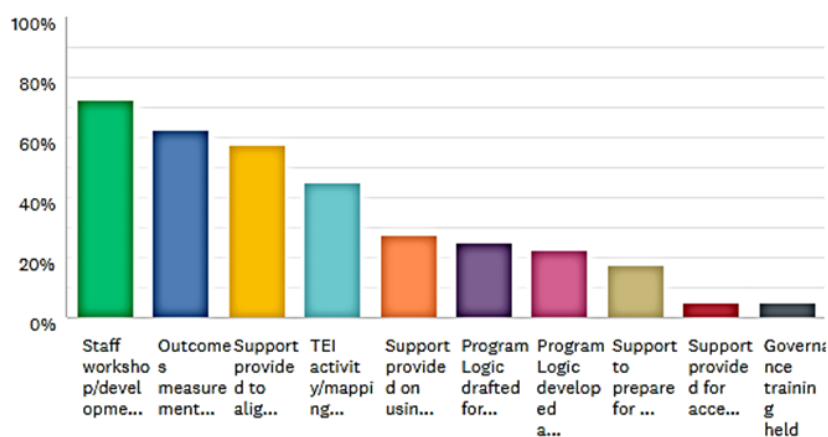
Most of the requests involved more than one goal, accounting for multiple answers in the GOAL table.

- Embedding** the TEI Outcomes Framework is the end goal in most requests, though not always explicitly stated at the request stage. The top presenting goals such as Program Logic development, DEX support/training and alignment of all outcomes with SCORE, TEI activity

mapping, and development of outcomes measurement tools are key pieces to successfully embed, and they don't always follow a linear direction in the support process.

- b) As the support process unfolded, it became clear that many services saw the need for not one nor two, but multiple 'outcomes framework', with each framework consisting of all the pieces cited above.
- c) Though "preparation for recommissioning" was only cited twice, some comments showed that this was an unspoken and very important goal, and was a reason for some managerial anxiety. Some requests presented as a need for DEX or Outcomes support, then "a range of issues at a Governance and compliance level were identified, and emotional support and advice was offered instead" (*comment from support agency*). Some support agencies may have become involved in internal 'house cleaning' as a result.

Support activities and outputs



a) Staff turn-over and need to transfer knowledge/know-how

- Staff workshop/development was cited as the top output, a real time & space to create shared knowledge/understanding among staff.
- Staff turn-over was cited as a reason for the need to hold in-house staff workshops, despite a service's previous attendance in regional and local training sessions (Program Logic and DEX). When a whole body of knowledge and know-how rests on one or two staff, much is lost when the person leaves. This is even more significant where the service has only one or two paid positions.

b) Outcomes measurement tools and Program Logic development

- These were seen as very tangible and desirable end products. Development of outcomes measurement tools were cited in 25 instances, and Program Logic in 19 instances. Each of the 19 'instances' is not necessarily equivalent to 1 Program Logic developed; multiple drafts/documents are involved in many cases.
- Within the 10 hours prescribed, support was provided in various ways, depending on time allocated and priority given. Some were via one-off in-house staff workshop ("white boarding"), some as conversations with manager/s, some focused on drafting of templates, or review of drafts.

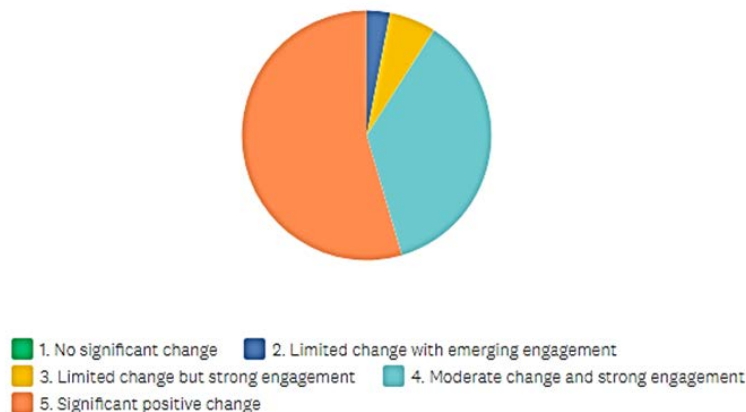
c) Access to DEX

This was a big issue, especially in 2019 and early 2020. Many who were supported in 2019 received ‘theoretical’ support. In at least two cases, support involved intensive support for DEX access and IT troubleshooting. The most value, as feedback in June 2020 showed, was when staff and support person were both able to sit down and speak to DEX directly and together.

d) Support for recommissioning

Support for recommissioning including service redesign was only cited 7x; but further comments showed that these tend to be intensive. As mentioned, though support for recommissioning is not explicitly stated, all other support activities were seen as requirements to position strongly for recommissioning.

Achievement of Goals



a) Progress towards achievement of Goals was rated positive by support agencies in at least 91% of responses (30/33). This is highly commendable, and roughly corresponds to 95% cited by the TEI service providers who provided feedback at the end of support.

b) Of the 3 TEI service providers cited as not having achieved their goals:

- One had to close for good. *“There was a lot of support given to this organisation by a number of people. The shutdown of the service, shows that while a number of tools were given to this organisation, they did not move forward with the process.”*
- One involved program redesign that involved a change in location, working on ‘points of dispute’ with DCJ district, and halting face-to-face support due to COVID-19. Support for the 6-month contract extension will continue on to Stage 3.
- One was due to staff change and poor timing. *“This stage had been quite complex and frustrating because of a number of issues...which resulted in changes to their activity mapping and therefore DCJ not setting (service) up in DEX. Also while (staff) was on leave, (new staff who was filling in) asked to meet with me and nothing from that meeting was passed on to (other staff).*

c) The best-rated outcomes were achieved where much work was done prior to support agencies’ visits. Support visits also served as opportunities to manage performance anxiety. In some cases, support activities exceeded those outlined in Support Plans.

- *Four (4) Program Logics were drafted for different services. Staff were very organised, undertook mapping of programs and outcomes prior to first Program Logic workshop. They just needed to go through a simplification of what it all means, not get lost in the detail. (Work included) reducing panic and calming down performance anxiety; “you’re not being tested”.*
 - *All outcomes listed in the Entry Interview and Support Plan were more than met...Worked with them to meet TEI reform targets and milestones.. on their Activity Report to align activities to TEI... Program Logics, Governance issues with previous Board, rewrite of their Constitution...implement special resolutions for Board elections and new Constitution. New Board Induction....preparation of surveys to get participant/client feedback.*
- d) Distance support requires new solutions, where detailed review of documents, systems and processes is involved.

Change/Progress in Knowledge



- 1. No significant change
- 2. Limited change with emerging engagement
- 3. Limited change but strong engagement
- 4. Moderate change and strong engagement
- 5. Significant positive change

- a) Change/progress in Knowledge was rated positive by support agencies in 31 out of 32 responses (97%). This compares to 100% rating given by the TEI service providers who provided feedback.
- b) Progress in knowledge did not happen for the service that closed down:

While a lot of information and examples were given, not just in face to face meetings, but through phone calls, emails etc., the organisation seemed to be “out of their depth” with the whole process.

- c) The comments below cite the area of knowledge that was of most value:
- *Positive feedback on the flow chart I (support agency) developed which took them through the process and where to find relevant information in the huge amount of data that is out there*
 - *Clearer expectations from the funding body requirements and clarification of points of dispute*
 - *Working with Shire Council Senior Management to realise importance of TEI in their overall operational planning.*

- *Increased ability to successfully implement theory of change and program logic models. Increased understanding of activities and alignment with Human Services Outcomes Framework.*
- *Included how to measure outcomes for drop-ins to the hub as well as case work. Initial work was around services/programs for young people. Turns out that work with parents is happening in depth as well, but outcomes not being properly measured. Explored ways to measure outcomes for group cohorts, including library outreach – across all domains (skills, knowledge, and confidence).*

Change/Progress in Skills



- 1. No significant change
- 2. Limited change with emerging engagement
- 3. Limited change but strong engagement
- 4. Moderate change and strong engagement
- 5. Significant positive change

- a) Change/progress in Skills was rated positive by support agencies in 29 out of 32 responses (91%). This compares to 95% rating (20/21) given by the TEI service providers who provided feedback.
- b) Unsurprisingly, the take-away skills that were cited as being of most value were staff ability to develop Program Logic, using DEX and measuring outcomes with appropriate tools.
 - *Developed 3x Program Logic. One prepared by the staff was very basic and I had to work to get that up to an acceptable standard. The final ones drafted and sent to DCJ were acceptable.*
 - *(There were challenges around) Identifying how to measure outcomes for playgroup which was complex- e.g. language issues for Tamil, managing volunteer social work students to do work on administering surveys, survey design/practical tools connected.*
 - *DEX Score Workshop with whole team including NDIS Aged Care worker as internal resource re. DEX reporting and using experiential tools to capture evidence of outcomes including notebook, day book, voice recording, direct data entry. Confirmed appropriate tools and techniques for gathering evidence of outcomes for clients and then scoring these outcomes in DEX.*
 - *Excellent, using DEX as per guidelines, and now teaching other staff, has a measurement outcomes framework and can adapt new programs and activities as needed.*

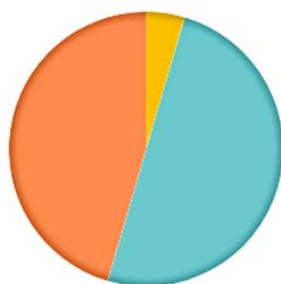
Change/Progress in Confidence



- a) Change/progress in Confidence was rated positive by support agencies in 30 out of 32 responses (94%), slightly more conservative than 100% rating (21/21) given by the TEI service providers who provided feedback.
- b) The comments below reflect the factors that affect confidence level.
- *Some challenges internally in the organisation are being addressed, but the nature of the service (24/7), the cultural context in this remote location and the significant change required to transition to a trauma-informed service provision, increased accountability and the ongoing maintenance of a very large site is very complex.*
 - *Has been required to make significant change to the location of delivery of TEI program including outreach and is open to making necessary change.*
 - *Small size has an adverse impact on staff confidence, part time work also affects continuity of ideas (2 days a week).*

2.2) Feedback from TEI service providers who received support

Achievement of Goal



- a) Progress towards achievement of Goals was rated positive in 21 out of 22 responses.

- b) The lone TEI service provider who neither agreed/disagreed that their goal was achieved had received support very early in the project.

Increased understanding of Theory of Change across Agency-ACHIEVED. Report to summarise themes and assist implementation of Theory of Change and Program Logic framework-PARTIALLY ACHIEVED. Design customized templates- Standard templates were provided. The report was very simple and perhaps I had unrealistic expectations.

- c) Despite over-all satisfaction, some comments cited reasons for partial completion and the need for more time.

- *Our primary goal was achieved for CYFS (SOFA) program. However, this was not finalised for our Community Builders program due to the need to divert the remaining support from this goal to focus on the recommissioning process...arose from the unexpected advice from our local DCJ CPO that our CYFS (SOFA) program would need to be completely redesigned to meet their identified needs for the district priority groups in order to enter into negotiations around them potentially 'purchasing' this program for a contract length of 1 year plus potential 4 years.*
- *Understanding of DEX reporting and SCORE is not complete, mainly due to lack of resources and time.*
- *Major challenge is need for more time to ensure that TEI/outcomes thinking is embedded throughout every part of the service –i.e. culture change.*
- *Significant progress has been made through several workshops and research undertaken to develop the outcome measurement tools. This is mostly finalised for our Supported Playgroup, with slightly more work required to complete for Parenting Groups and Case Management.*

Satisfaction with Knowledge Acquired



■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Agree
■ Strongly agree

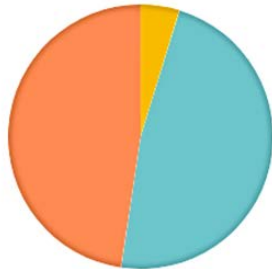
- a) 100% (21/21) of TEI service providers who gave feedback were satisfied with the new knowledge that they received during the support period.

- b) The following were cited as new knowledge that was of most value:

- *The research document that (support agency) sourced was very useful, and served to underpin our Program Logic.*

- *More than anything, I have gained confidence that our program logic is fit for purpose and I have someone to consult if needed.*
- *Advice on the process for developing the outcome measurement tools and for working with the team towards cultural change.*

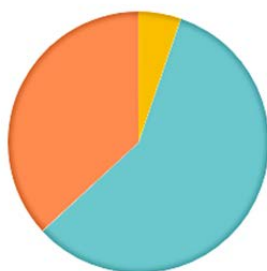
New Skills Acquired



■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Agree
■ Strongly agree

- All but one (20/21) of TEI service providers who gave feedback agreed that they acquired new skills during the support period.
- The following were cited as new skills that were of most value, which are consistent with new knowledge acquired:
 - *Reporting on TEI Goals (outcomes), but still need training in DEX*
 - *Yes, we have greater skill in developing the outcome measurement tools.*
 - *Client Score Assessment: Circumstance, Goals, Satisfaction*
 - *Operational plan*

Applying New Skills



■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Agree
■ Strongly agree

All but one (20/21) of TEI service providers who gave feedback agreed that they will be able to apply the new skills acquired during the support period.

Confidence in Moving Forward



Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree
Strongly agree

All of the TEI service providers (21/21) who gave feedback agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more confident moving forward.

- *I feel more confident to guide our TEI Staff as well as our TEI staff are more confident in knowledge of the process required to meet funding requirements from service delivery to reporting on the DEX.*
- *The changes of staff made it difficult to measure the overall outcome from the start as well as not being able to access DEX. I would have liked to have more time to learn about the scoring ones (sic) I put it into practice to feel confidence that I'm doing the right thing. That being said, I do feel like I have gained a lot from the few hours of training and can't wait to start using what I have learned.*

2.3) End-of-Stage-2 feedback from individualised support agencies

a) 'Lightbulb moments' or turning points that enabled achievement of goals

- *The value of the program logic in helping them articulate their actual outcomes and how to use it to plan and evaluate programs is an empowering tool in their toolkit.*
- *That they already had the knowledge that just needed to adapt it to the new system*
- *Translating the mapping into DEX for services was a real turning point. Once they were on DEX, it was like everything became easier for them to understand*

b) Commonly repeated concern from TEI service providers

DEX was cited as the most repeated ongoing concern.

- *Flexibility of DEX and what it will allow them (TEI services) to use themselves.*
- *Appropriateness of linking/fitting actual outcomes to DEX categories.*
- *Lack of familiarity with the whole reporting approach.*
- *Understanding DEX - what questions could best relate to short term outcomes, how to develop surveys with questions on Goals, Circumstance and Satisfaction, how to translate results to DEX measures.*
- *Privacy concerns for clients via MyGov portal.*
- *Hiccups with getting access (to DEX) is the biggest barrier. Some had initial troubles with Auskey, then the problem resurfaced moving to MyGovID. Sometimes it is a board member*

that is the only one that can sort the issue, and they are often too removed or busy to deal with the issues.

Other concerns by TEI service providers as cited by support agencies:

- *Lack of cultural connection / safety measures for aboriginal people.*
- *Inconsistency between individual CPOs resulting in different messaging about the process. E.g one CPO demanding that the service provider had to sign a confidentiality agreement before commencing their contract negotiations.*

c) Remarks that capture the support agency's experience

- *The TEI support program has developed in strength over the last year. At the beginning there was not as much support for practitioners as there is now. NCOSS and DCJ partnership has developed into a strong and effective process.*
- *As a provider of assistance, I have found that this has given us tremendous insight into where some services are at. This is because you get to see and learn things they might not ordinarily tell you or, they don't necessarily realise what they need. Therefore, I feel that as a result of this additional insight, we are better placed to know and understand what the sector needs in terms of support beyond the Stage 2 assistance.*
- *The ability to 'touch base' with other support providers was very beneficial. It would have been helpful for DCJ to provide more examples of 'excellent' Program Logics. The overall biggest challenge for the orgs I worked with was timing- many were just so overwhelmed with the amount of time needed to do program logic, DEX etc during the COVID challenges.*
- *The new DCJ tools are terrific and extremely valuable; however, given the extent of the change for services, there is still a need for face to face / one on one support to translate and shift from outputs to outcomes measurement.*

d) Other concerns cited as part of individualised support agency experience

- *(Independent) Consultants not being able to get a AusKey DEX Login was prohibitive*
- *Conflict of interest with some peaks acting as both peaks and consultants*
- *Program Logic initially too complex until DCJ developed a standard "good practice template"*
- *The engagement process with clients around their support plan needs to stay flexible as a number of the services needed to change their support requirements as things with DCJ at the district level changed.*
- *Some services have been given 5 year contracts but still have limited ideas about what is required with their outcomes measurements. There is no funding for these services in Stage 3 which is a gap.*
- *(Services) not having budgets to purchase and (pay for) the ongoing fees for a data system.*