

No wrong doors at Walgett one-stop-shop

There are no wrong doors for people in Walgett needing a helping hand from the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), thanks to a new one-stop-shop which opened in December 2010.

The new centre allows people in Walgett and surrounding areas to easily access a range of FACS services – from housing advice to reporting child protection issues, financial support for carers to seniors' card applications – all from one single location. More than 1,000 clients have been helped in the six months since the centre opened.

Assistant Director General Service Delivery Improvement, Peter Muir, said access centres such as Walgett eliminated the need for people to have to repeat their story at multiple offices.

"The focus is on providing quick and effective information, advice, assessment and referral to connect people with the support they need.

"For staff it means that decision-making is as close as possible to the people who use our services. They have a better understanding of the range of clients' needs and work closely with colleagues with different areas of expertise," Peter said.

"This will help us reach people earlier and more effectively with prevention and early intervention services to provide clients with more positive outcomes.

"It's a different way of working for our department, and a more coordinated approach is making a positive difference to local communities," Peter said.



People visiting the access centre have said they are happy with one point of contact and feel better informed about a broader range of services available to them.

Walgett resident Jacqueline regularly uses the access centre, along with her two granddaughters and her son, who has mental health needs.

"Having this office here with everyone in it has made things so much easier for me and my family. Things are starting to change in Walgett since you (the access centre) have been here," said Jacqueline.

FACS access centres have also been established in Nyngan and Wilcannia, with more planned for other NSW communities in disadvantaged regional and remote areas.

Establishing these access centres is one of many reforms being implemented to better integrate services across the department for clients.