

Anchor Community Care Ltd – Final Report

Empowerment Fund

Project summary

With the support of the Empowerment Fund, Anchor Community Care strengthened how it collects, analyses and uses client and outcomes data across key programs supporting children, young people and families. The project reviewed and improved Anchor's Client Management System (CCAT and related platforms), designed a fit-for-purpose Business Intelligence environment, piloted digital data collection in practice, and developed foundations for data governance and evaluation. Together, these activities aim to reduce duplication, improve data quality, and enable more robust, child-centred outcome measurement to inform practice, planning and advocacy.

Key achievements/findings

The project clarified Anchor's CMS strategy and established a phased CCAT uplift plan, avoiding costly system replacement while improving configuration for Foster Care, Kinship Care and MyLife programs. Our Young Voices, Big Impact pilot demonstrated a full digital evaluation cycle using tools such as KoboToolbox and structured outcomes frameworks to capture changes in children's wellbeing, safety and school engagement. A Business Intelligence design and early incident reporting using Power BI have begun to provide Anchor with faster, more visual insights into risk and service patterns, supported by draft data governance policies and clearer data stewardship roles.

Insights

Learnings for the Organisation

The project confirmed that data and evaluation work must be treated as core infrastructure, not an add-on, with clear ownership, resourcing and governance if it is to be sustained. Establishing a CMS roadmap, BI design and draft Data Governance Framework has shifted thinking from "fixing systems" to building an organisation-wide data ecosystem that supports practice, compliance and impact.

- Frontline input through the CMS review and Young Voices, Big Impact showed that practitioners will engage strongly with data when it visibly supports better client outcomes and reduces duplication.
- User-centred configuration (structured fields, clearer goal tracking, reduced double handling) is critical to embedding any new tools or reporting expectations.
- The project highlighted gaps in internal ICT and data capability, demonstrating that Anchor needs deliberate workforce planning and role design (e.g. data stewards, BI leads) alongside technical investments.
- Turnover in ICT roles during the project created delays and pressure on non-technical leaders, reinforcing the importance of succession planning and shared knowledge for key systems.
- Anchor learned that governance foundations (policies, roles, principles) need to be in place early to guide system configuration, BI architecture and evaluation choices, rather than retrofitted later.
- Most importantly, participatory processes such as Theory of Change workshops, joint design sessions and shared sense-making built evaluation literacy and trust across programs. These approaches helped reposition evaluation from a compliance exercise to a practical way of learning about "what works" for children, young people and families.

Learnings for the broader social services sector

The project illustrates how medium-sized community organisations can progress from fragmented systems toward "evaluation-ready" data structures by sequencing work on CMS, BI and governance, even without a full data

warehouse in place. It shows the value of starting with realistic, high-impact use cases (such as incident reporting and a pilot program evaluation) to build momentum and demonstrate tangible benefits.

- Young Voices, Big Impact demonstrates that it is possible to collect meaningful outcomes data directly from children and families in homelessness contexts, using digital tools and child-centred frameworks. This contributes to the emerging evidence base on child-centred practice in homelessness and highlights the importance of ethical, developmentally appropriate participation.
- The work underscores that sector reporting tools and constraints (e.g. SHIP and Validata) can limit outcome measurement unless organisations deliberately design complementary internal systems and BI capability.
- Early investment in data governance can help the sector maximise the value of data while managing privacy, risk and cultural expectations about how client information is used.
- The project points to the importance of funding models that explicitly improve data and ICT capability, not only service delivery, if the sector and communities want robust, timely evidence on outcomes.

Additional information

A summary of the Young Voices, Big Impact: Anchor's Specialist Homeless Children's Worker Project can be accessed [here](#). Please contact us for the comprehensive evaluation.

Enquiries

For further information about this project and its findings, please contact: avi.macmull@anchor.org.au