



Parent Pathways consultation summary

Consultations ran from early July 2023 to the end of September 2023 and included:

- workshops, attended by over **280 parents** from diverse backgrounds and locations
- virtual one-on-one consultations (via Services Australia and a contracted organisation)
- responses from **over 2,000 ParentsNext participants** to an online survey
- feedback from parents on what we heard from them on the new voluntary service
- **56 formal submissions** from stakeholders, including providers
- roundtables and workshops with **over 40 community organisations**, peak bodies and other interested stakeholders. A list of organisations consulted is below.

1. Antipoverty Centre	2. National Indigenous Australians Agency
3. Anti-Poverty Network SA	4. National Indigenous Employment and Training Alliance
5. Australian Council of Social Service	6. National Self-Employment Association
7. Australian Resources and Energy Employer Association	8. NESA ParentsNext Interest Group
9. Australian National University	10. National Women's Safety Alliance
11. Brave Foundation	12. Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association (RCSA)
13. Brotherhood of St Laurence	14. Secretariat of National and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
15. Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare	16. Settlement Council of Australia
17. Chief Executive Women	18. Settlement Services International
19. Community Colleges, Australia	20. Single Mother Families Australia
21. Corporate Culcha	22. Social Economic Empowerment Department (SEED)
23. Council of Single Mothers and their Children	24. Swinburne University
25. Early Years Advisory Panel	26. TAFE, NSW
27. Economic Justice Australia	28. TLK Community College
29. Equality Rights Alliance	30. The National Rural Women's Coalition
31. FamilyCare Shepparton	32. The University of Sydney
33. Global Sisters	34. UN Women Australia
35. Harmony Alliance	36. Uniting Care, Australia
37. Jobs Australia	38. University of New South Wales
39. Jobs Victoria	40. University of Tasmania
41. Kiama Community College	42. Wesley Mission
43. Mid North Coast Community College	44. Western Australian Council of Social Services
45. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance	46. Women's Alliances
47. National Employment Services Association (NESAs)	48. Women's Economic Equality Taskforce

The table below outlines the key themes which emerged from the consultations with parents and stakeholder groups which informed the design and development of Parent Pathways.

Key themes	Feedback	Design elements
Parent's priorities	Priority for parents is raising their children. Parents aspire to pursue education and employment goals when they're ready and able.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant choice when to start the service and for how long (until youngest child turns 6) • Ability to opt-in, opt-out or pause servicing • Voluntary service
Parent's needs	Parents have complex and varied challenges they need to navigate before they can focus on education and employment goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded eligibility to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ parents receiving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carer payment ▪ Special benefit ○ Available to parents not on income support but who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Under 22 years old ▪ Early school leaver ▪ First Nations • Parents and carers accessing parenting payment remain eligible.
Access to the service	Parents need a voluntary service that is accessible to all parents who need help to plan for their future education and employment goals. It should prioritise parents who have higher needs for support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning a mentor for the duration of support • Qualified or lived experience mentors • Mandated mentor to participant ratios
Supportive and knowledgeable staff	Parents want staff who deliver the service to be respectful, qualified, empathetic, and have lived experience to help them connect with the supports they need to reach their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant choice when to start the service and for how long (until youngest child turns 6) • Ability to opt-in, opt-out or pause servicing • Voluntary service • Community outreach for promotion.
Choice of how to engage	Parents want to be able to make informed choices and need to know what they're committing to. They want to know what the service offers, how it's offered, what it requires of them and how it will help them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent choice in servicing mode (phone, in person etc)
Flexibility	Parents need access to a mix of delivery methods (face to face, online, outreach).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance for participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$1,250 per year for every parent spent at parent discretion ○ Pooled funds - \$600 one off – provider discretion
Financial supports	Financial and other supports would help parents to engage in the service, for example to assist them with costs of attending appointments, or with study fees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach
Communication	Services, especially in-person services, need to consider location-based challenges.	