



DEPARTMENT OF
**FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

Meeting people's needs

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The Family and Community Services portfolio

- Created in 1998. Reflects Australian Government's focus on a fully integrated approach to social policy and services.
 - Department of Family and Community Services (known as FaCS)
 - Centrelink
 - Child Support Agency
 - Other elements



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FaCS – Introduction

- FaCS policy responsibilities include:
 - Income support payments;
 - Housing;
 - Family services and relationships;
 - Child care
 - Disability services
 - Emergency relief
 - Community development; and
 - Youth affairs and development



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Australians Working Together

- A whole of government approach to economic and social participation that provides more:
 - Assistance for the most disadvantaged
 - Emphasis on participation as a means of improving the quality of life of Centrelink customers
 - Personalised service and individual assistance through the Personal Support Programme
 - Assistance for parents, mature age people and people with a disability



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Social Coalition

- Recognises other stakeholders have a role to play in the development of social policy – not just government
- Brings community and business input to government policy and service delivery through open collaborative approach
- Solutions to complex problems
- Government as facilitator - connecting the community sector, business and individuals



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FaCS - Indirect Service Delivery

- FaCS influences and shapes the provision of community services by funding almost 13,000 service providers
- In 2001-2002, FaCS paid around \$A1.3 billion to State and Territory governments and the community sector
- Results in services such as as public housing, disability, child care, family relationships and homelessness



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FaCS Customer Service

- Binding on FaCS and influences all of its service delivery partners. Core values of:
 - Professionalism
 - Accuracy
 - Keeping people fully informed
 - Confidentiality
 - Access to information and staff
 - Prompt and responsive
 - Participation and consultation



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FaCS service delivery - through Centrelink

- Centrelink is the largest provider of FaCS services and programs
- Centrelink is paid \$A1.6 billion to deliver \$A52 billion in FaCS programs and services
- This is over 90% of Centrelink's business and 80% of FaCS work
- FaCS responsible for ensuring programs and services meet the Government's stated social policy outcomes



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The FaCS/Centrelink Relationship

- A unique relationship – both an alliance and business partnership
- Two independent and interdependent Commonwealth agencies in the same portfolio
- Both agencies report to the same Minister – the Federal Minister for Family and Community Services

The Business Partnership Agreement

- A three year agreement that sets out the payments, products and services Centrelink delivers for FaCS
- Reviewed each year to ensure it is current - Can be varied at any time
- Includes a statement of where we want the relationship to be in 2004
- Major component is Business Assurance Framework



Centrelink Customer Service

- Centrelink monitors its performance through the eyes of its customers.
 - Overall satisfaction with quality of people, services and information is 75%;
 - Customer satisfaction with level of service received on the last visit to their Customer Service Centre has increased to 84.3%;
 - Customer satisfaction with the quality of service received from Call Centres since their last call has increased to 85.3%; and
 - 87% said service experienced on last visit or phone call met or exceeded expectations.



Centrelink Customer Charter

- Public expression of Centrelink's commitment to good customer service
- It clearly and simply states:
 - How staff promise to treat customers;
 - How customers can assist staff in servicing them better;
 - Customers' rights;
 - Customers' responsibilities; and
 - How customers can provide feedback on the service they receive



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Centrelink Customer Charter

- Reviewed annually to ensure it reflects:
 - Business partnership between Centrelink and its client agencies;
 - Service needs and priorities of Centrelink's customers; and
 - Ways in which Centrelink delivers its services.

- Centrelink invites comments from:
 - Customers;
 - Representatives of community groups;
 - Staff; and
 - Client agencies.



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Centrelink Customer Experience (1)

- Experiences of customers impact on:
 - Their perceptions of and confidence in the service delivery arm of government;
 - The costs of delivering government services; and
 - The extent to which the Government's policy agenda is achieved



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Centrelink Customer Experience (2)

- Centrelink recently appointed a Chief Customer Officer.
- Centrelink working to identify potential for new technologies, eg. online transactions
- Will lead to improved services for customers and potential financial gains for government



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Australian Child Support Agency

- Was created in 1989 to assist separated parents to take responsibility for the financial support of their children.
- Focus on customer service and relationships
- Work recognised in government awards June 2002



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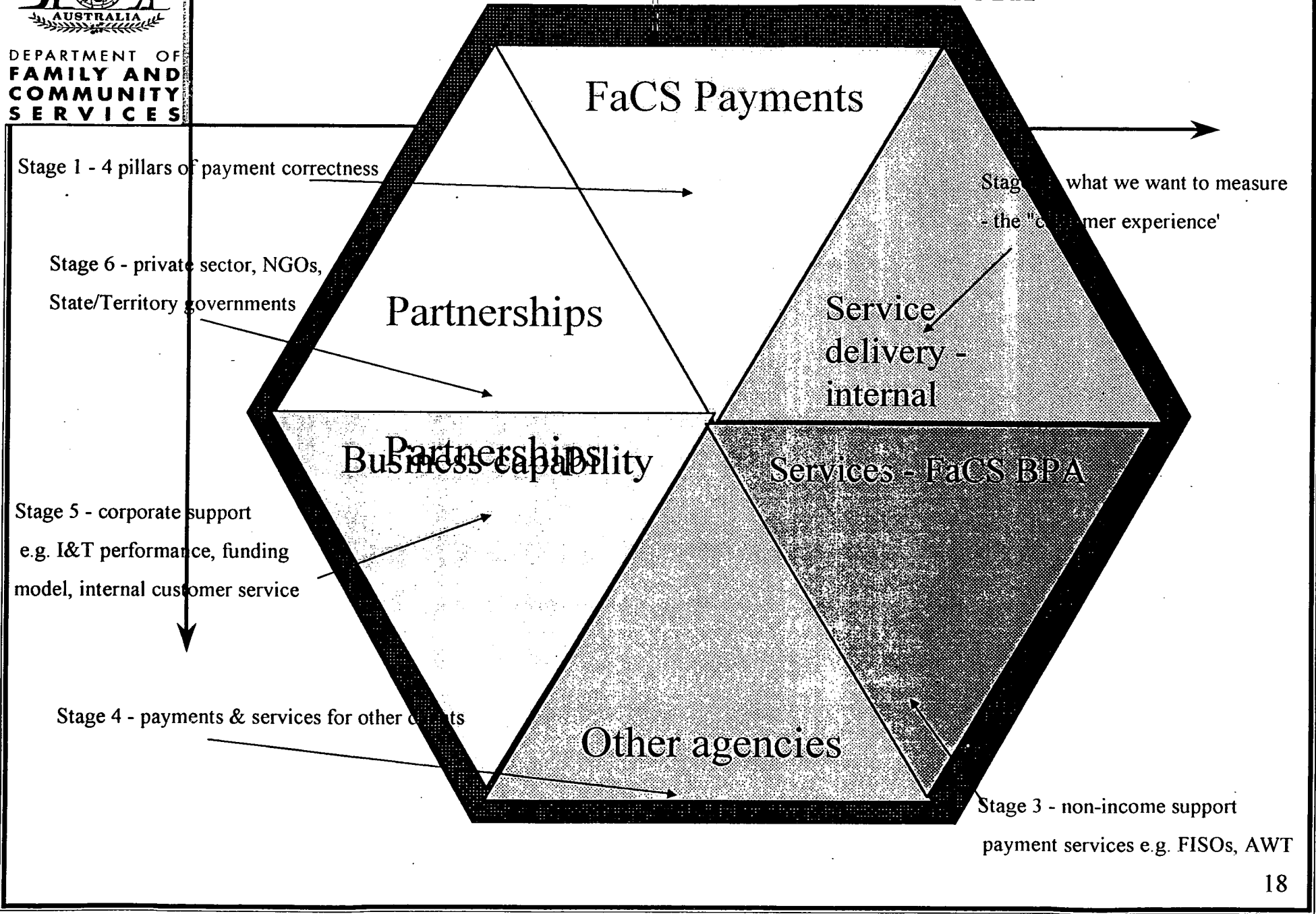
What is the Business Assurance Framework?

- Provides assurance that services are being delivered as required.
- Assists FaCS, government, and other client agencies as well as Centrelink customers and the community.
- Six areas in the Business Assurance Framework...



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Business Assurance Framework





A common set of principles

- Agreement on what is to be measured;
- Agreement on how measurement is to be done;
- Same definitions of what is to be measured are applied at all three levels of assurance:
 - Quality control
 - Quality assurance
 - External assurance
- The results are transparent



The beginning - the first stage of Business Assurance

- First stage focuses upon payment correctness - commenced 1 July 2002.
- Centrelink and FaCS have agreed upon:
 - What is to be measured (level and attribution of error in payment correctness);
 - How measurement is to be done (quality on-line system and random samples);
 - common definitions of what constitutes an error and where it has occurred; and
 - transparency (all staff are aware of what is being measured).



The second and third stages

- Second and third stages focus on customer service and service delivery issues.
- **Stage Two** to measure total customer experience by measuring good customer service using agreed common definitions
- **Stage Three** will measure the non-payment related work of Centrelink's specialist officers (Personal Advisers, Finance Information Specialist Officers and Social Workers)



Quality Control and Quality Assurance measures

- Quality Control (straight after, or at the same time as, the customer experience)
 - Exit interviews
 - Direct observation or phone service appraisal
 - The Usability Lab
 - Replay of service offer/customer interaction
- Quality Assurance (after the customer experience)
 - Customer satisfaction surveys
 - Customer complaints line
 - Feedback from other agencies (e.g.. quality of referral)



Challenges that lie ahead

- Developing a recording mechanism for data;
- Examining the inter-relationship of assurance measures and internal controls
- Examining Key Performance Indicators and agreeing how they are measured in future;
- Agreeing on the level of reporting and transparency of Assurance results; and
- Gaining staff acceptance of these measures - cultural shift.



Summary

- What has customer service got to do with meeting people's needs?
- Embracing customer service as a fundamental business tool.
- Australia still feeling its way – has not got all the answers.
- Willing to share its experiences – successes and failures – with its neighbours.