

# Dunedin let down by Govt policy

**PARTY SCENE**  
**David Clark**



Local solutions are not designed in Wellington – and central government seems increasingly blind to this fact.

I am hearing this view too often from agencies working with Dunedin's vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Dunedin was recently denied part-funding for a youth justice initiative called "Fresh Start" because we didn't have the stipulated number of troubled young folk here.

Because Dunedin didn't fit Wellington's "one-size-fits-all" solution, it missed out on related funding.

Dunedin's troubled youths can be helped in many ways. Unfortunately the Government did not look at other options for spending the Fresh Start money here. For example, the money could have been transferred to help the desperately under-resourced CYF care and protection team.

Dunedin missed out and it looks like current vacancies at CYF are not being filled.

Once, local civil servants reported back to Wellington on what worked locally. These people of influence are being cut from the ranks. It is now much harder for Dunedin providers to input into

the policy process.

The cookie-cutter solutions Wellington is imposing on the regions are aimed at cost-cutting. Trouble is, one size does not fit all. Experienced local agencies are underfunded for things that have been demonstrated to work, and sometimes overfunded for flavour of the day quick fixes.

Evidence-based solutions and monitoring effectiveness are important. The problem is Government has become too focused on "outputs" at the expense of outcomes for those in strife.

It shouldn't matter which pot the money comes from, as long as those in difficulty are supported out of their troubles.

**David Clark is the Labour MP for Dunedin North.**