# EIFS Pre-Tender Information Session

Hi everyone, and welcome to the Department of Communities Pre-Tender Advice Session for the Earlier Intervention and Family Support Tenders.

Sorry we couldn't be with you in person, live. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we've decided to record this for you.

So welcome and thank you for coming along and watching this.

Before we start, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are gathered here today, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and pay my very deep respects to Elders past, present, and emerging, and also recognise the Aboriginal people across Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, water and culture.

So, before we start, I think it's probably good that we introduce ourselves. My name is Ben Whitehouse. I'm the Executive Director of State-Wide Services in the Department of Communities. My role is to oversee the program development and implementation of the Earlier Intervention and Family Support services.

Hi, my name is Jacqui Herring. I'm the Executive Director of Commissioning and Contracting and responsible for the commissioning and contracting activities across the organisation and will be responsible for this procurement process as well as the contracts once they're awarded, working in partnership with our Service Providers to ensure that we deliver services to the people that we're seeking to support.

The purpose of this session is to provide an overview of the upcoming Earlier Intervention and Family Support services (EIFS) commissioning activities that are coming up; the timelines and also our procurement approaches which will commence in early 2024.

In this session, we will cover the EIFS Strategy and also the current services that are being provided, the services that are being recommissioned, our procurement approaches, key activities and timelines, and getting prepared for the tenders.

The Earlier Intervention and Family Support services that are being recommissioned come out of the EIFS Strategy that was released in 2016.

The EIFS Strategy provides a framework for the alignment of the service system to meet the needs of the families that are most vulnerable in Western Australia. As you can see, the EIFS Strategy has four key focus areas:

* number one, delivering shared outcomes through collective effort.
* number two, developing and implementing a culturally competent service system.
* number three, diverting families away from the child protection system, and number four, preventing children entering care.

Currently the Department of Communities commissions a range of Early Intervention and Family Support services. They're on the screen now:

* the Aboriginal in-Home Support Service
* the Intensive Family Support Service
* the Family Support Network - which comprises the Assessment and Co-ordination stream and the Intensive Case Management stream and
* the Regional Service Model, which brings Early Intervention and Family Support services to regional areas.

This slide provides an overview of where the EIFS service system currently operates across the metro and regional areas.

The EIFS services have been designed to complement each other and deliver to families across the full spectrum of families support needs within a particular geographic area.

It is intended that EIFS services work together as part of a wider service system, building connections and client pathways between each other and one another to deliver long-term, sustainable, and positive outcomes for individuals and families.

As you can see on the screen, the Aboriginal In-home Support Services, Intensive Family Support Services and Family Support Networks are delivered and currently operate in the metropolitan area.

In regional and remote locations, the Intensive Family Support Services and the Regional Service Model currently operate.

The Regional Service Model operates in the South West, Pilbara and East Kimberley only.

EIFS has achieved a lot since 2016. I'd like to talk you through a number of the milestones and achievements.

EIFS has secured ongoing funding for the Aboriginal In-home Support Services, Intensive Family Support Services and Family Support Network, as well as the South West Regional Support model.

In 2023 the Department of Communities and Partners implemented the EIFS services in the three regional areas East Kimberley, Pilbara and the South West.

EIFS is proving to be very effective and successful in diverting children from the child protection system and preventing children from entering care.

In the 2021/2022 financial year, 87.5% of children referred to the Aboriginal In-home Support Services remained at home with their family after 12 months, which is an incredible achievement.

In the same period of time, 82.4% of children referred to the Intensive Family Support Services remained at home with their family after 12 months.

To give you an idea of the volume in the 2022-2023 financial year, Family Support Networks across the metropolitan area, supported 8,011 clients.

We know that expertise in supporting families to keep their children at home exists throughout the entire State and not just in one sector. As a result, the Department of Communities has undertaken significant consultation and engagement across all areas of the State, with all types of people in preparation for this Tender.

Between October 2022 and March 2023, the Department of Communities held information sessions resulting in nearly 140 people attending these sessions.

In 2022, Indigenous Professional Services conducted extensive community consultation involving 73 stakeholders with a further 80 providing feedback.

In June 2023, a further ACCO Sector Strengthening Session was attended by a number of 34 individuals representing 32 ACCOs from across WA.

As a result of this consultation, some of the service names have been changed.

Going forward for this Tender, the Regional Service Model will be renamed to become the Regional Family Support Hub or known as the Hub.

The service streams that will exist within the Hub will be renamed as follows:

* the Early Diversionary Support Network will now become the Support Network
* the Community Intensive In-home Support will now become the Community Intensive Case Management and
* the Statutory Intensive In-home Support will be renamed Regional Intensive Support.

Now moving to what is going to be commissioned in 2024 and 2025.

The following services will be commissioned:

* the Family Support Networks in the metropolitan area
* Intensive Family Support Service in the metropolitan and regional areas, as well as
* the Regional Family Support Hub in the South West area.

Services that won't be commissioned are:

* the Aboriginal In-home Support Service and
* the Regional Family Support Hub in the East Kimberley and the Pilbara.

These contracts will be extended.

Here [slide] are the locations of the services that will be commissioned.

The Family Support Network metropolitan will be commissioned in four corridors:

* the Armadale/Cannington corridor
* the Midland/Perth corridor
* the Mirrabooka/Joondalup corridor, and
* the Fremantle/Rockingham corridor.

The Intensive Family Support Service in the metropolitan area will be commissioned in nine separate locations. Armadale, Cannington, Fremantle, Joondalup, Mirrabooka, Midland, Peel, Perth, and Rockingham.

The Intensive Family Support Service in regional areas will be commissioned in the Goldfields, Great Southern, Murchison, West Kimberley and Wheatbelt.

The Family Support Hub Regional will be commissioned in one location, which is the South West.

The Intensive Family Support Service regional and the Family Support Hub regional will include outreach to other areas.

I'm now going to talk a little bit further about the procurement approach.

So, the next couple of slides, we'll actually go through the commissioning approach and the procurement approach for the EIFS services.

Communities will be undertaking a different commissioning approach for EIFS services in metropolitan and regional locations.

We are undertaking this process as we recognise that families supported by EIFS services in regional locations are predominantly Aboriginal families.

In some locations, such as the West Kimberley and Goldfields, Aboriginal families make up approximately 90% of the clientele being supported within EIFS.

As such, it is important that the procurement approach supports locally based ACCOs and Aboriginal businesses to tender for these services as a priority.

In the next two slides, we will run through these approaches in more detail.

The procurement process in the metropolitan region for the Family Support Network and Intensive Family Support Service will involve a Draft Request [for Tender] being published on Tenders WA, for feedback and comment.

It will also involve an Open Advertisement and competitive Request for Tender.

Respondents will firstly provide a written response to qualitative criteria, then attend an interview to provide further information.

Please note, non-ACCO Respondents will need to partner with an ACCO to deliver the service and develop a genuine Partnership Plan with their ACCO partner.

The procurement method for regional locations will also involve a Draft Request [for Tender], to enable people to provide feedback.

This will be followed by a Registration of Interest that is restricted to ACCOs on Tenders WA. ACCOs who registered their interest as lead agencies for a service, will be invited to submit an ACCO restricted Request for Tender.

ACCO Respondents will firstly provide a written response to qualitative requirements, then attend an interview to provide further information.

In the event that there are no suitable ACCO Respondents, there will be an Open Advertisement and competitive Request for Tender. It should be noted that non-ACCO Respondents will need to demonstrate a genuine partnership with an ACCO to deliver the service and develop a Partnership Plan with their ACCO partner.

ACCOs and Aboriginal businesses have provided feedback previously which clearly indicates that current commissioning practices are difficult to navigate and can be a deterrent to ACCOs and Aboriginal businesses, particularly those that are smaller place-based organisations.

To support the sector, particularly the ACCO sector and smaller place-based ACCOs, Communities has built in several commissioning components.

These components include:

* an early release of the Draft Request for Tender to allow Respondents the opportunity to provide feedback. This will enable interested parties to provide feedback regarding the clarity of the requirements within the Request document. This also supports Respondents having additional time to prepare for the RfT opening period.
* the staggered release of the Request for Tender for the different services to allow Respondents time to apply for multiple programs. The use of consistent qualitative criteria across all of the programs, will reduce the burden on Respondents, particularly if they are applying for multiple services.
* we’ve also included both a written and interview assessment to support greater participation in the Tender process. The interview component supports a more flexible and culturally appropriate approach for the sector, particularly ACCOs, to enable them to provide information to support their response to the written Request for Tender.
* extended the Request for Tender period from a standard four to six weeks to allow more time for Respondents to complete.

This slide gives an overview of the proposed commissioning process. It might be a little bit difficult to see, so the PowerPoint will be made available, and it includes timelines, key activities, and dates for each of the programs being commissioned.

A slide outlining each program, including key dates will follow in the next couple of slides.

Please do note though that these activities and dates are anticipated, and we are awaiting Delegated Authority approval. So, whilst we don't anticipate them changing, they may, and we will obviously advise you via your registered email address.

This slide outlines the proposed timeline for the Hub South West commissioning activities:

* the key dates for these activities including the Draft Request for Tender release and the Registration of Interest, is in January
* the restricted Tender release date will be between February and March 2024
* interviews will commence in May 2024
* negotiations and consultations with Providers are due to commence in August 2024 with the aim of having service agreements awarded in November 2024 and new contracts commencing in 2025.

The proposed dates for the FSN commissioning activities include:

* the Draft Request for Tender being released in January 2024
* the Tender release date is between February and March 2024
* interviews commencing in May 2024
* negotiations and consultations with Providers commencing in August [2024]
* Service Agreements being awarded in November and new contracts commencing in April 2025.

This slide shows the anticipated dates for the Intensive Family Support Service [metropolitan] commissioning activities, and they include:

* the Draft Request for Tender being released in February 2024
* the Tender release date is in March 2024
* interviews commence in June 2024
* negotiations and consultations with Providers will be due to commence in October
* Service agreement award will happen in January 2025 and new contracts are due to commence from June 2025.

The regional service locations for Intensive Family Support Service will include:

* a Draft Request for Tender and Registration of Interest release date in February 2024
* the restricted Tender release date will be in March 2024
* interviews commencing in June 2024
* negotiations and consultations with Providers commencing in October
* Service Agreement awards occurring in January 2025 and new contracts commencing in June 2025.

So, there are a number of things that organisations can do to become prepared for the release of these Tenders, which are all due to start in early 2024.

It is important that you are prepared for this process.

Please ensure that your organisation's details and nominated contact are up to date on Tenders WA. There have been many instances where the details listed on Tenders WA are out of date and organisations have missed out on applying. So, it is really important that you get your details up to date on Tenders WA.

Please also check the incorrect email addresses and names including spelling mistakes as these also will mean that you don't receive the information that you need to. To ensure you are made aware of the Tender as soon as it is live, please also check this information is correct as soon as possible.

For the Registration of Interest and direct negotiation, Communities procurement processes recognise and source from Supply Nation and the Aboriginal Business Directory of WA. Please note the Office of Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, ORIC, is not a recognised source.

All right, we're nearly there - let's just recap.

Commissioning for the Family Support Network, Intensive Family Support Service and the Hub in the South West will be commencing shortly with a Draft Request for Tender being released over January or February 2024 and our release of Tender intended to be for February or March 2024.

Regional services will be procured using a Registration of Interest and [ACCO] restricted Tender Request.

All existing service contracts will be extended to align to the procurement timelines.

The Aboriginal In-home Support Service and the Hub in the East Kimberley and Pilbara will not be part of this commissioning process.

Please note, we have outlined our proposed commissioning approach and timelines. We are currently finalising and getting Delegated Authority approval for this work. We don't anticipate any changes. However, if there are, we will endeavour to contact you to outline these changes.

Further to this info session, if you have any questions or require clarifications, please contact the EIFS Project Team on the email address provided. Communities will also release a more detailed Frequently asked Questions Fact Sheet that will be made available on the EIFS website.

Thanks so much for staying around and listening to our presentation. We know it's a lot of information, so we appreciate it.

We are here to answer any questions that you have. So please do reach out and ask any questions and we are really looking forward to receiving your proposals and tender documents and working with you as our Partners in delivering services to support vulnerable children.

Thank you [Ben]

Thank you [Jacqui]