



## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM 2024 - 2025

### COMMUNIQUE – Quarterly Meeting #2 – 19 June 2024

At the 19 June meeting, the Supporting Communities Forum (Forum) Co-Chairs advised members of work underway to develop the Forum's 2024-25 Work Plan, which will guide the Forum's priorities, objectives, deliverables, and key milestones. The work plan will be provided to the Honourable Sabine Winton, Minister for Early Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services for approval. The structure of future Forum agendas was discussed, noting a new approach will be trialled enabling the first half of the meeting to focus on priorities of the Forum, and the second half facilitating discussions on one-off topics raised by Forum members, including examples of best practice, shared learnings, and effective collaboration.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Working Group (CSO WG) provided an update on work planned to build capacity and capability to implement the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) in WA. Re-established in May 2024, the CSO WG held its first meeting on 11 June 2024 and identified key themes relating to the implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and key priorities for the CSO WG going forward. Forum members also noted the robust and diverse membership list of the CSO WG.

An update from the Carers Working Group (Carers WG) was provided, with their first meeting held on 12 June 2024, with discussions focussing on the application of the [Carer's Recognition Act 2004](#) (Act), current issues relating to the recognition of carers in WA, and the purpose and objectives of the Carers Working Group in 2024-25. Forum members discussed a set of revised objectives for the Carers Priority Terms of Reference and noted the Carers WG membership. The Carers WG meeting in July will focus on developing a project plan and communications strategy.

The Department of Finance provided an update on the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Working Group (DCSP Working Group), an existing cross-sector group established to ensure effective implementation of the Delivering Community Services in Partnership (DCSP) Policy and the [State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services \(SCS\)](#). The membership and Terms of Reference of the DCSP Working Group are currently under review, with the current focus on finalising the SCS Implementation Plan 2024-26 for release in coming months. Work is underway to shape a discrete piece of work to deliver under the [SCS Implementation Plan 2022-2024](#), likely to be under priority two, 'Improve and increase contracting with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)' in consultation with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and the Council for Aboriginal Services in WA (CASWA).

DPC's Aboriginal Engagement team and CASWA presented to the Forum on the whole-of-government [Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation \(ACCO\) Strategy](#) setting out how WA Government agencies can work with ACCOs to deliver effective, community-led and culturally appropriate community services. The ACCO Strategy provides high-level strategic policy direction to guide Government agencies when commissioning community services to increase opportunities for genuine partnerships between Government and the ACCO sector. CASWA supported the alignment of the ACCO Strategy with Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement), and reinforced the need for ongoing effort by all parties to enliven all priority reforms of the National Agreement. Forum members discussed the importance of sector and agency engagement with CASWA to ensure effective implementation of the ACCO Strategy key objectives, and the need to engage effectively with ACCOs in order to maximise opportunities and outcomes.

Forum members noted an update on the Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce by the Department of Education. The Student Wellbeing and Care strategy aims to set clear expectations and embed effective approaches for student wellbeing and care across the WA public school system. The recently launched Student Wellbeing and Care – Future directions outlines the role of schools in supporting students experiencing ill mental health. The strategy provides guidance and supports to schools in implementing effective whole-school approaches to student wellbeing, including effective case management processes, evidence based social emotional learning programs, the role of staff with student services responsibilities, the scope of practice for the School Psychology service, policy change and the development of approaches to the measurement of student wellbeing. Forum members discussed the importance of connecting with external service providers, the role of effective case management in connecting with those services, and the need to concurrently support staff wellbeing.

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 4 September 2024. Meeting notes, once endorsed by the Forum, Communiqués from each Forum meeting and more information on the Forum is available on the [Supporting Communities Forum's webpage](#). Please feel free to distribute this Communique to your wider network. If you have any questions or would like to register to the Forum's mailing list, please email the Forum Secretariat at [SCF@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:SCF@dpc.wa.gov.au).