



Public Sector  
Commission

# Agency Capability

## Department of Communities

### Executive summary



October 2023

## Introduction

A review of the Department of Communities under the trial of the [Agency Capability Review Program](#) was carried out from January to June 2023.

The agency is Western Australia's major human services department that brings together vital services and functions to deliver disability services, child protection and family support, housing, and community and regional initiatives.

The agency is also critical to the delivery of a number of Closing the Gap targets, and it leads the state government's social response and recovery after significant emergencies.

Since its formation, the agency has faced significant challenges. Internally, this has included having 3 directors general over a 5 year period and being subject to serious corruption findings against a member of the agency's executive team.

During the same period the agency has been responsible for managing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its clients who comprise some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the state; responding to a serious shortage of housing; and coordinating the welfare response to major disasters including Cyclone Seroja and the Kimberley floods.

The observations of this review focus on a need for the agency to develop a more clearly defined and affirmed place in the human services sector; strengthen its foundations through better governance; systematically embed reform; improve contract management; and develop a more robust approach to using data to inform decision making and improve services. Improvements in these areas will help the agency deliver high quality support to the people in WA who need it most.

With a passionate and committed workforce, the findings of this review come at an opportune time and provide the agency with a blueprint for major priority reform areas.

## About the Agency Capability Review Program

The Agency Capability Review Program takes a comprehensive, whole of sector approach to improvement. It sets standards based on a clear understanding of what constitutes a high performing public sector agency in Western Australia.

The program has been trialled over 2 years (2021-22 and 2022-23) in 8 government agencies. This review is one of the last 2 undertaken to complete the trial. Reviews provide valuable insight into how agencies can improve and deliver the quality of services expected of them. The reviews also contribute to the development and improvement of the sector as a whole.

Reviews are conducted by independent lead reviewers with public administration expertise and experience. They are supported by senior executives from the government sector who are co-opted for each review as well as the Agency Capability Review team at the Public Sector Commission.

Each review is conducted against a standardised [Agency Capability Framework](#) of the 5 most significant areas of public sector management and administration. The framework is relevant and applicable to all agencies regardless of their remit, purpose, functions and services.

The framework supports agencies to ask 4 key questions:

- What are we meant to achieve?
- How well are we currently doing it?
- How do we know?
- Where can we do better?

## Agency background

The Department of Communities was formed on 1 July 2017 through the amalgamation of the:

- Department of Child Protection and Family Support
- Department of Housing (including Housing Authority)
- Disability Services Commission
- Regional Services Reform Unit
- regional coordination and engagement component of the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- communities' functions of the former Department of Local Government and Communities.

Through this machinery of government change, many of the state's human services functions were consolidated under this agency which has 11 portfolios:

- [Child protection](#)
- [Community services](#)
- [Disability services](#)
- Early childhood education and care
- [Homelessness](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Prevention of family and domestic violence](#)
- [Seniors and ageing](#)
- [Volunteering](#)
- [Women's interests](#)
- [Youth](#)

The agency is led by the Director General, Mike Rowe, who was appointed in May 2021. He is supported by 7 senior executive members with responsibility for delivering the agency's functions and services. At December 2022, the agency employed 6,090 staff (5,358 full time equivalents) working from more than 160 locations across the state. The agency has an annual budget of around \$2.65 billion.

At the time of the review, the agency reported to 6 ministers:

- Hon Sue Ellery MLC, Minister for Women's Interests
- Hon Simone McGurk MLA, Minister for Youth
- Hon John Carey MLA, Minister for Housing and Homelessness
- Hon Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Volunteering
- Hon Don Punch MLA, Minister for Disability Services; Seniors and Ageing
- Hon Sabine Winton MLA, Minister for Early Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services.

In June 2023, the Hon Don Punch MLA became responsible for the Volunteering portfolio, replacing the Hon Stephen Dawson MLC.

The agency delivers specialist advice and corporate support to the following statutory and external bodies that report to the ministers listed above:

- Adoption Applications Committee
- Care Plan Review Panel
- Carers Advisory Council
- Country Housing Authority Board
- Disability Services Commission Board
- Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group
- Ministerial Youth Advisory Council
- Housing First Homeless Advisory Committee
- Ministerial Advisory Council on Disabilities.

## Future operating environment

One of the gaps for this agency in understanding its future operating environment, and therefore the services it should be providing, is the need for better and more robust data. The agency needs to invest in the analysis of available data to better understand expected trends and community needs across its responsibilities. This is particularly important in planning for services for regional areas and ensuring resources are applied to areas of highest need.

Across the range of human service portfolios, there are areas of responsibility which will demand stronger, sectorwide leadership or input from the agency including:

- better supporting the formation and implementation of targeted interventions for at risk youth
- strengthening early education programs
- supporting emergency recovery efforts
- maintaining and improving staff retention rates in a constrained labour market
- bolstering engagement with, and services to, Aboriginal people (including in remote areas).

## The review process

The review was led by 2 lead reviewers, Carmel McGregor PSM and Susan Hunt AM PSM.

### Lead reviewers

Ms McGregor is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Canberra. She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management, Fellow of the Australian Human Resources Institute, National Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia, Director of the Australian Human Resources Institute, member of the Australian Institute of Training and Development, and member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. In 2013 she was awarded the Public Service Medal for distinguished service.

From March 2012, Ms McGregor was Deputy Secretary with the Department of Defence until her retirement from the public service in 2014. Previous roles included Australian Public Service Deputy Commissioner and member of the Prime Minister's Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration.

Ms McGregor has undertaken several key performance reviews of Australian public service agencies. She has also worked with the Victorian, Northern Territory, Western Australian and New South Wales governments.

Ms Hunt has over 17 years' experience as a chief executive officer. She is a past chief executive of the Western Australian Zoological Parks Authority, Lotterywest and Healthway. She has also held senior leadership roles in business operations, conservation and Aboriginal affairs.

Ms Hunt's experience encompasses policy and planning, commercial operations and governance. She served as President of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums and Australasian Zoo Association. She edited and co-authored the first World Zoo Animal Welfare Strategy, Caring for Wildlife, and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums Conservation Strategy. She has also been a member of several boards and is presently the independent chair of the Marine Turtle Expert Panel advising on marine turtle conservation on Barrow Island; Chair of the National Anzac Centre, Chair of the Feral Cat Working Group; and Director and board member of Screenwest.

Ms Hunt was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2023 for her contribution to public administration, conservation and animal welfare.

### **The review**

The review looked at all 21 capabilities and identified 5 lines of inquiry for in-depth investigation. This involved further engagement and investigation with the agency, and research into how practices may be improved, or capability gaps addressed.

The review also identified strengths that the agency and sector can build on and share.

The review involved 6 months of investigation and research, collecting information as below:

- A comprehensive review was undertaken of a large number of published and unpublished documents.
- A number of stakeholders were consulted and written submissions were received.
- Two half day corporate executive workshops and several briefings and meetings were organised with the Director General and executive team.
- Corporate executive completed a self assessment against the Agency Capability Framework.
- Individual interviews were conducted with each corporate executive member.
- The review team met with staff relating to specific functions and visited facilities in Bunbury, Kalgoorlie and South Hedland.
- A comprehensive capability questionnaire gauged staff perceptions of the agency's capabilities.
- 'Have Your Say' invited staff to share what the agency does well, what can be improved and ideas for improvement.

## What the review found

### Key observations

- The agency has a very complex remit of responsibilities. Its core business pertains to some of the most pressing and sensitive social concerns including child protection, community services, disability services, early childhood education and care, homelessness, housing, and family and domestic violence. Furthermore, the agency provides a considerable depth and breadth of services across the state with more than 6,000 staff working from 160 locations.
- There is a strong recognition of the dedication and considerable efforts of staff, particularly those at the frontline. Staff are deeply committed and passionate about their work and strongly advocate for the clients they care for. There is an acknowledgment that the work and dedication of staff are recognised and celebrated. This should continue and be enhanced.
- The agency's more recent work on housing is acknowledged. Through a \$2.6 billion investment in social housing and homelessness measures it has added 1,356 social homes with 756 delivered in 2022–23 (397 spot purchases, 341 new constructions and 18 asset transfers), highlighting the growing impact of the agency's significant investments. The agency also has more than 1,100 social homes currently under contract or construction throughout WA including Common Ground to deliver 112 units.
- As a priority, the agency needs to strengthen relationships with ministers, state government agencies and community sector stakeholders that make up its authorising environment. In doing so, its role, operating systems and priorities need to be defined and agreed with government and key stakeholders to affirm direction and focus.
- Governance structures and systems that underpin the agency's work need refinement to better support strong and collective leadership. Structural change and clear decision making frameworks and delegations can better position the agency to deliver more efficient services and therefore better outcomes.
- The internal organisational structure needs rethinking in light of changing priorities and reform areas both within the state and nationally for example, changes to the national disability agenda as well as the national demand for housing. Likewise, it will be important to maintain a strong focus on delivery of child protection services. It is also timely to consider the alignment of some other functions, such as those in the Governance, Integrity and Reform division. Any changes should be considered on the basis of priority and risk.
- More work is needed on the question of how to provide joined up and person focused services. The agency needs to clarify and communicate how it intends to achieve this as a matter of priority.
- The agency does not have a strong track record of embedding reform. The exceptions to this are the reforms following the numerous findings and recommendations of the Whyte corruption investigation. The agency should use good practice guidance available through previous reviews to change its approach to deliver real improvements to operations and services.

- The agency manages a significant suite of human service contracts, however poor contract management oversight and practices increase the risk that services do not meet contemporary client needs and cannot achieve value for money. The agency already has a roadmap for contract reform and, with the support of the executive leadership team, now needs to focus on implementation. Better corporate executive oversight and prioritisation of this area are also needed.
- There is a significant opportunity for the agency to use data and evidence in a more sophisticated and planned way to inform decisions, tailor service delivery and understand service effectiveness. The agency has access to a wealth of data internally and externally that should be used to inform future direction and better understand client needs.
- With a recent refresh of its values, the agency is now embedding these although it is still seen as risk averse and lacking the innovative approach needed to find solutions to difficult social problems. The executive leadership team needs to find more time for collective review and reflection so key decisions and priorities are aligned and effective.
- There is a strong will and intent that is recognised externally for this agency to engage in co-design with stakeholders, delivery partners and end users of services, particularly Aboriginal people. While there are examples of good achievements in this area, some stakeholders report they are uncertain about the parameters of co-design and concerned about the lack of consistency particularly after engagement and consultation. Further clarification on the agency's framework and parameters for co-design of government projects and policies would be useful to inform its work and the work of other agencies.
- The agency has demonstrated capability in drafting strategic policy documents. However, while informed by research and theory, implementation and change management are not adequately considered in policy design. Greater focus on these aspects is needed for policies to be successful, to meet government and stakeholder expectations, and to match the policy intent of the agency and related ministers. This includes full analysis of funding implications and strategic management of stakeholder expectations commensurate with what is being promised to be delivered.
- The agency has made concerted efforts to improve staff engagement and boost retention and attraction on the back of a period of low morale and controversy following the corruption scandal. There is evidence that this is paying off although there is still significant work to do to better support and engage regional staff, formalise workforce planning, and focus on understanding and building staff capability.
- The agency's executive leadership team is aware that its financial management needs further attention, with deficiencies in budget, budgeting and financial reporting.
- The agency has invested significant effort in reforming integrity systems and controls. This has resulted in a range of improvements to oversight, policies, prevention, education and reporting mechanisms.

- The agency's executive and broader leadership team are highly committed, energetic and working hard to achieve outcomes. There has been significant turnover in the executive structure over a number of years and this has impacted the delivery of outcomes. The current executive team is relatively new and often seen as subject matter experts in their own portfolios rather than a united leadership group. While there is a clear intent to reduce operational silos, further effort on this by the executive leadership team is important.

## Lines of inquiry

The review identified 5 lines of inquiry to inform areas of focus for the agency and direct performance improvement efforts.

### Line of inquiry 1: Defining the agency role and operating model for leadership in human services delivery

While there are some recent positive signs in specific programs, the agency is struggling to be a leader in government human services delivery.

A dedicated body of work should be pursued that sets a clear focus and articulates the agency's role in government and the community services sector. This direction and resultant work must be agreed and socialised with ministers and government central agencies. Key to the success of such an approach is to ensure the development process is robust, and tasks and priorities are agreed and understood with authorising stakeholders. This requires a strong outward focus for the agency in working with ministers and central agencies; and in building functional capacity and targeted communications. This approach will help the agency confirm ways of operating, clarify areas where government wants action and by when, identify and interrogate service gaps, enact leadership with one voice, and communicate with staff and community services partners.

There are some areas in the broad portfolio of human services where responsibilities between agencies are unclear or collaboration mechanisms are not effective to meet community and/or government expectations. These include services outside business hours, for example for youth at risk.

Working with other public sector agency heads and senior leaders to identify barriers to delivery may require revisiting coordination processes and clarifying lead agencies including roles, responsibilities and deliverables of each agency.

As a next step, better shared understanding of the agency's purpose and direction along with the challenges of delivering human services may assist in building the agency's legitimacy and effectiveness. Additionally, providing staff with information about how the whole human services system works in WA would help them understand their role in it and ultimately better meet the needs of stakeholders.

The government's stated intention for the agency was to consolidate human services functions "to ensure holistic and coordinated delivery of services to families and communities in need, particularly in regional and remote areas".

The ambition for the agency was to provide a single view of a client, harnessing the former agencies' knowledge of each client's circumstances to ensure better service delivery and outcomes. While ambitious, and some work has occurred, it is important for the agency to continue to work on integrating functions and systems. Once it has



done this, reviewing the allocation of functions and where they best sit to achieve maximum efficiency will need to be examined.

### **Line of inquiry 2: Strengthening organisational governance and systems for accountability and high quality decision making**

The agency's governance, systems and oversight structures can be improved to better support staff and deliver value for money human services. Stronger governance will enable the agency to better align strategy and operations, and increase oversight of strategic priorities.

Following the creation of the single agency, a variety of processes, practices and systems guiding decisions and service delivery requires attention. While some work on understanding better practice governance is evident, the agency does not have an up to date governance framework and structure, resulting in poor coordination.

The agency should conduct a full review of delegations including regional office delegations. More broadly is the need to ensure that decision making authority is appropriate and recognises the imperative of the timely delivery of services for clients. As a positive step, the agency is developing an intranet accessible app for staff to confirm their individual statutory delegated authorities.

There are numerous examples of outdated legacy corporate systems hampering the agency's ability to deliver. For example, data for workforce planning and management is difficult to obtain from existing human resources systems.

Aside from the need to prioritise the upgrade and replacement of core corporate systems, the work underway to reform the way the corporate executive team works is timely. Team coaching, a review of executive meeting agendas and new terms of reference or executive charter are needed to clarify the purpose of the executive team, expectations, expected behaviours, commitments and focus.

Other work underway in the Office of the Director General aims to improve processes for the leadership team. A new business unit is being established in the office to better support the executive and ministers. This work is timely and should continue to be actively supported and embedded.

Acknowledging the significant work already underway, rebalancing leadership team responsibilities would be timely. Allocation of responsibilities for key outcomes and priority areas is presently unbalanced and does not necessarily reflect emerging priority and reform areas. For example, the Deputy Director General Community Services has more than 3,800 FTE, which is more than two thirds of the workforce. It is also timely to reconsider the composition of the standalone division of Governance, Integrity and Reform. Functions such as culture and business improvement could be placed in other areas like the People division or Office of the Director General for better alignment.

### **Line of inquiry 3: Progressing reforms to embed changes and learn for future challenges**

The agency has a wealth of insights on how to improve operations but has not found a way to fully deliver required reforms. It has been the subject of numerous reviews that identify many areas for action, change and improvement.

Many issues identified in earlier reviews are still creating significant capability barriers in 2023. Key themes across these reviews have included the need for the agency to:

- elevate the Office of the Director General to help shape relationships with ministers' offices
- create a more balanced structure and operating model
- replace information systems that are not fit for purpose
- approach contracting holistically and improve contract management skills
- improve governance structures and better define decision making authority.

These issues remain significant barriers to capability as the agency does not have effective systems and a culture to embed reform. The difficulty in tracking successful implementation suggests the agency could be getting better value from these significant investments. Equally important, it is a missed opportunity not to act on expert advice sought and agreed on to improve operations and services.

The executive leadership team does not have a comprehensive enough overview of the status of reforms across the agency. Better leadership oversight is needed to instil discipline around implementation across the agency. Greater oversight would also improve the ability of the executive leadership team to consider, endorse and prioritise recommendations aligned with core business and strategic direction. An overarching governance framework for reviews and recommendations would support these outcomes.

The agency does not always plan and resource reforms and actions to address recommendations. In addition, it sometimes aggregates review recommendations into themes rather than actioning individual recommendations. It could be hard to see a link between the review finding and themed response, creating a risk that problems may not be resolved despite a recommendation being actioned and closed. In contrast, the agency sometimes focuses too much on closing out individual recommendations rather than resolving underlying problems.

The agency rarely defines measures for success and outcomes expected from implementing recommendations. This limits its ability to assess whether the intent of each recommendation is addressed. Instead, the agency should:

- understand the intent of the recommendations
- articulate how implementing actions based on themes addresses this intent
- outline ways to measure if the desired outcomes are realised.

There are cultural barriers to reform throughout different levels of the agency. The reasons behind this are likely to be complex and associated with criticism, fatigue and external oversight tempered with a level of sympathy which could be diluting agency accountability and performance. For any public sector agency, reviews and scrutiny are always present. The agency needs to position itself to embrace reform while maintaining business as usual.

#### **Line of inquiry 4: Improving contracting for high quality services**

The agency is responsible for the delivery of important human services to vulnerable people across WA. One of the ways it does this is through contracting of services, and the agency receives hundreds of millions of dollars each year for this purpose.

Common issues reported include:

- lack of consistent systems to manage and monitor key contract management activities
- suppliers having multiple live contracts in the agency's different legacy systems
- contracts due to expire being extended for short periods
- inconsistent contract management processes and performance dependent on skills of individual contract managers
- performance management focused on outputs as opposed to outcomes
- relationship management in contracting not prioritised
- burdensome reporting processes for suppliers.

Both agency managers and the executive leadership team recognise the need for greater staff capability in managing human services contracts. While the agency has a dedicated contracting directorate, there are also non-specialist staff in other business areas managing contracts. The contracting directorate itself has been negatively impacted by high staff turnover.

A review of human services contract management was undertaken by the agency in 2022 to improve performance in this area. The review outlined improvement opportunities that should be revisited by the agency. These include:

- building contracting capability
- clarifying roles and responsibilities for those involved in contract management
- standardising and streamlining processes, tools and templates
- registering and managing contract risks
- lifting the outcomes focus in contracts
- reviewing strategic engagement with contractors
- developing a master contracting and commissioning plan to manage contract commencements, extensions and closures
- introducing a lessons learned management approach.

In refreshing its approach to service contracts, the agency should also introduce co-branding requirements so it gets appropriate recognition for the programs and work it delivers through contracts. Leadership buy-in will be critical to ensure the contracting reform agenda has the resourcing and prioritisation required to gain traction across the agency.

### **Line of inquiry 5: Implementing evidence informed service delivery**

The agency needs to take a more strategic approach to data to help it find better ways to do its work. Legacy data sets have not been integrated and do not reflect present operational needs.

The agency is working towards giving data a higher priority, with the creation of a new Data Office and appointment of a Chief Data Officer. The work still ahead is significant and needs ongoing high prioritisation to maintain traction.

The agency needs to focus on the purpose of data in its delivery of services and in particular:

- understand client needs now and in the future
- understand how well services work to meet community need
- store and manage data so it is reliable, available and used to inform effective delivery of services, including across government where appropriate

- build internal capability in data application and use.

While the agency has started drafting a data strategy, it should be informed by a clearly mapped understanding of what data is needed to deliver on strategic direction. A gap analysis can help identify what additional data the agency needs over and above the substantial data it already collects.

The reliability of data must also be considered. Inaccurate data can create a risk for government and impact effective decision making. The agency is aware of the need for accurate and reliable data and there are specific activities underway including a data dictionary to ensure staff and stakeholders are consistent in the way they collect, share, transform and interpret data. The agency is also working on Project 12:01 to make sure key data can be accurately produced at a single point each day as a constant reliable snapshot. There are also moves to replace old information systems with modern integrated ones. These are good first steps to improve data reliability and should be continued.

Current limitations make it difficult for staff to access the data they need to inform their work and decisions. External information sets could be accessed to inform immediate decision making, planning and future services such as data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Community Insights Australia' and Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing.

Similarly, measuring the impact of agency services and programs could be strengthened by applying social impact and measurement tools that have been well tested elsewhere.

The agency can also better leverage data to enhance its work with partners and areas for improvement including:

- more transparent use of data reported under contracts for service improvement
- data sharing with partner human service agencies including identifying and addressing any legal barriers.

Community services sector stakeholders are keen to see the agency share more data, including aggregated data collected through contract reporting, to better understand community service needs.

## Areas of strength

Highlighting and sharing areas of good practice is an important element of the Agency Capability Review Program.

Sharing good practice contributes to the development of the WA public sector. The body of knowledge and data collected through reviews will be used to create a bank of valuable learnings and resources which can be used to develop solutions to common problems and shared across the public sector.

## Strong threads throughout the agency

The agency is doing good work in many areas and it is important to recognise its strengths. This is an agency with a large workforce and footprint that reaches across all corners of the state. It has big responsibilities and a significant potential to create positive change.

Despite a challenging remit and complex operating context, the agency continues to deliver critical services and support to clients and achieves some commendable results. Since 1 July 2021 for example, the agency has added 1,300 new social homes to the public housing stock.

Key to the work of the agency are passionate and strongly committed staff who continually go above and beyond for their clients. Teams across all locations across the state work hard and want to substantively improve the situations facing clients.

Examples of standout work:

- Ngulluk Marr, a Noongar term meaning “All Hands”, is an inclusive process enabling all staff to contribute to shaping important agency plans. It is used to develop the strategic directions statement, decide business improvement priorities and make the agency a great place to work. It reflects the importance of connection to each other, work and the people the agency serves. It demonstrates the agency’s commitment to come together as an organisation.
- Corporate values were refreshed in 2022 and are embraced by staff and leadership.
- There is strong and positive feedback from community sector stakeholders on the way the agency has partnered with them to design and deliver the Boorloo Bidee Mia and the homelessness strategy.
- The Target 120 program is achieving good results and demonstrates how data is being used to inform service design and evaluation.
- There has been strong progress in leveraging new ways of working to increase housing stock including alternative construction techniques, spot purchasing and using small and medium builder panels.

### Case study: Staff engagement and inclusion

The agency has steadily increased focus on staff engagement and experiences including through a greater emphasis on retention and attraction.

Moments that Matter is a model intended to help shape the agency into an ideal workplace and employer of choice. It is based on 12 key areas that aim to capture staff experiences from first to lasting impressions.

Moments that Matter places staff at the centre of their own experiences and is customised to the individual and their unique work area to:

- establish what a great, motivating staff experience looks like
- improve retention and attraction, with the primary focus on retention
- deliver on staff feedback about what makes the agency a great place to work
- further develop an engaged and motivated workforce to achieve the Strategic Direction outcomes.

Moments that Matter is being embedded into routine business practices by:

- incorporating its principles into onboarding new staff
- providing tools, resources and development opportunities for managers aligned with the agency’s Leadership and Management Development Framework
- creating a ‘Communities Employee Recognition Site’ for staff to show appreciation of colleagues and managers.

## Case Study: Aboriginal engagement

Engaging effectively and appropriately with Aboriginal people, families and communities is of critical importance across all areas of the agency's remit. The agency has previously been criticised for lacking cultural sensitivity and competency. This has been acknowledged and the agency has recognised that it needs to do better for clients. It is now on a journey to improve and there is a genuine commitment and endeavour to partner more effectively with Aboriginal people and communities.

There has been growing momentum and expectation at both national and state levels to deliver improved partnership and self determination for Aboriginal people and their communities.

The agency is committed to the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) Strategy 2022-2032 that places Aboriginal people at the core of the agency's planning and service delivery. The agency led the way in developing the state's first ACCO strategy which demonstrates its determination to empower the right people in the right places to get the right outcomes.

An early example of the agency partnering with ACCOs to deliver a successful community led initiative is the delivery of the Boorloo Bidee Mia Homelessness Hostel in Perth during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. Agency and ACCO representatives continue to attend regular governance meetings that contribute to the continuous refinement of service delivery and asset management. Having successful initiatives like this in place is a legitimate platform for the agency to lever future successes. As ACCOs expand into new areas of service delivery, the agency needs to continue to support capacity building.

The agency is increasing cultural representation in its workforce by employing Aboriginal people to support its agenda and remit. The percentage of Aboriginal staff was 2.7% in September 2018 and in 2022 it had increased to 5.9 %. This is higher than the aspirational WA public sector target of 3.7 % and is more than double whole of sector figures (2.8 %) from the same reporting period.

The agency is committed to developing cultural capability for its staff. An Aboriginal information hub provides all staff with access to information on cultural protocols, cultural learning, language and culture, Closing the Gap National Agreement, state and agency responsibilities, and general resources. The agency has developed bespoke cultural awareness training.

The agency's approach to strengthening Aboriginal engagement is supported by the Aboriginal Outcomes division and underpinned by an Aboriginal Cultural Capability Reform Program.



We are proud to deliver our services from Whadjuk Noongar boodja. We acknowledge and pay respect to Elders, Traditional Owners and Custodians from the many land and language groups of Western Australia.

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