



## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM 2024 - 2025

### COMMUNIQUE – Quarterly Meeting #3 – 4 September 2024

At the 4 September meeting of the Supporting Communities Forum (Forum) members discussed the Forum's Work Plan, which will include the core objectives and actions relating to the Forum's three priorities:

- Implementation of the National Principles in Child Safe Organisations;
- Application of the *Carers Recognition Act 2004* in Western Australia; and
- Implementation of the State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services.

The Work Plan will be finalised following the receipt of Project Plans and Terms of Reference (ToR) from the Priority Working Groups, and provided to the Honourable Sabine Winton, Minister for Early Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; and Community Services for consideration and approval. Members noted Wendy Rose, CEO of Kin Disability Advocacy, is confirmed as the Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council (MMAC) representative on the Forum. The Forum Co-Chairs have been invited to the October MMAC meeting to present on the Forum and its Work Plan for 2024-25.

The Carers Working Group (Carers WG) provided an update regarding recent activities, including proposed revisions to the Carers Priority ToR. The Carers WG is scheduled to meet later in September to progress work on a Project Plan aligned with the Carers Priority ToR. 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. Forum Co-Chairs expressed their gratitude to the Director General, Department of Health as CSO WG Co-Chair to date, and to the Director General, Department of Communities for taking up the CSO WG Co-Chair role effective 30 July 2024. Forum members noted work underway to finalise the CSO Priority ToR and CSO WG Project Plan and a Children's Week Concept. Forum members discussed the need to engage with the new Ministerial Youth Advisory Council, the significant amount of Commonwealth work underway regarding child sexual abuse, and the possibility of expanding the membership of sub-working groups to ensure the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are implemented. Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) work to support organisations to become child safe was also raised.

The Department of Finance (Finance) provided an update on the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Working Group (DCSP WG), 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 \(SCS\)](#). Discussions will take place with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Council of Aboriginal Services WA along with the Co-Chair of the DCSP WG, to shape a discrete piece of work regarding deliverables focussed on the SCS Implementation Plan (IP) Priority #2 - 'Improve and increase contracting with ACCOs', to be confirmed following the consideration by Government of the draft SCS IP 2024-26. The SCS IP – Priority #4, 'Sustainability of Services', will also be explored by the DCSP WG. Members discussed the progress of agency commissioning plans, the importance of maintaining a focus on outcomes, and the complexity of, and need to rationalise grants processes and commissioning arrangements for community sector organisations.

Forum Co-Chairs thanked members for submitting one-off topic suggestions to be discussed during the second half of Forum meetings, including examples of best practice, shared learnings, and effective collaboration. At the meeting, the first topic was presented by the Department of Health and Women's Legal Service WA on the Women's Health Justice Pilot, an initiative to integrate legal services with women's health centres in Kalgoorlie and Northbridge. Launched in 2023, the pilot program provides wraparound services and integrates health, legal, physical and psychosocial supports, with a focus on person-centred services. Forum members raised the importance of celebrating successful programs and initiatives, discussing how co-funded models might be implemented in other settings and how successful programs might make the case for ongoing funding.

The Youth Involvement Council Inc., a Hedland-based not-for-profit organisation, then provided Forum members with a presentation on meditation and mindfulness in the workplace. Members discussed how mindfulness has been incorporated into the Youth Involvement Council's programs, bringing about benefits such as improved emotional regulation in children, the ability to manage transitions and resolve conflicts. Members discussed the importance of mindfulness for staff wellbeing, especially during de-briefing processes. Members further noted how mindfulness practices support the Council in its efforts to meet the needs of young people who have experienced trauma.

The next quarterly meeting is on Wednesday, 27 November 2024. Meeting notes, once endorsed by the Forum, Communiques 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).