



Meeting Notes and Actions

Supporting Communities Forum

Meeting #3

Location	Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, West Perth – Level 14, Yonga Meeting Room (MS Teams Option)		
Date	Wednesday, 4 September 2024	Time:	2:00 – 4:00pm
Members	Lanie Chopping (Government Co-Chair), Dan Minchin (Community Sector Co-Chair), Sandy McKiernan (Deputy Chair), Shirley Bowen, Jodi Cant, James Christian, Justine Colyer, Matt Fulton, Louise Giolitto, Mark Glasson, Tim Grey-Smith, Emma Jarvis, Maureen Lewis, Kylie Maj, Kelda Oppermann, Sharyn O'Neill, Jenna Palumbo, Melissa Perry, Pauline Roberts, Lisa Rodgers, Emily Roper, Wendy Rose, Mike Rowe, Jo Sadler, Colin Smith, Vicki-Tree Stephens		
Secretariat	Community Policy Unit - Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) SCF@dpc.wa.gov.au		
Invited Guests	Lara Connor (Department of Finance), Julie Armstrong (Min. Winton's Office), Lorna Pritchard (Lotterywest, attending as proxy) Lexie Morton (Department of Health) and Jennie Gray (Women's Legal Service WA), Chad Stewart (Department of Communities, attending as proxy), Fiona Hunt (Department of the Premier and Cabinet, attending as proxy), Sarah Charbonneau		
Apologies	Mike Rowe, Emily Roper, Colin Smith, Emma Jarvis, Matt Fulton, Lisa Rodgers and Mark Glasson		

AGENDA ITEMS

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1.1 Acknowledgement of Country, Welcome and Apologies

Co-Chair Lanie Chopping opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country, welcoming members to the third meeting of the Supporting Communities Forum (Forum).

1.2 Conflict of Interest Declarations

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1.3. Confirmation of Meeting Notes from 19 June 2024

Forum members endorsed the minutes, noting all actions as complete with the exception of Forum Co-Chair engagement with the [Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia](#) (AACWA). On **22 August 2024**, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Tony Buti, announced a new iteration of the AACWA, with Gail Beck and Marty Sibosado re-appointed as Co-Chairs. Forum Co-Chairs will engage the AACWA's new Co-Chairs to discuss collaborative working arrangements following a period of orientation.



1.4 SCF Work Plan

Forum Co-Chairs provided an update on the Forum's draft Work Plan, which outlines the Forum's three priority areas and supporting objectives, actions and deliverables for the priority working groups. Following the receipt of finalised project plans and terms of reference from the priority working groups, the updated Work Plan will be provided to the Hon. Sabine Winton, Minister for Community Services for consideration and approval.

Co-Chairs also provided an update on the Forum's efforts to establish links with the [Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council](#) (MMAC). In July 2024 the Hon. Tony Buti MLA confirmed that Wendy Rose, CEO of Kin Disability Advocacy, is the MMAC's representative on the Forum, and invited Forum Co-Chairs to attend the MMAC's next meeting in October 2024. Forum Co-Chairs will present on the Forum and its Work Plan for 2024-25 and will work collaboratively with the MMAC to jointly shape collaborative working arrangements, identify avenues to progress the Forum's priorities, and explore opportunities to address the needs of Western Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

2. PRIORITIES – WORKING GROUP REPORT

Members noted a Status Update Paper detailing recent activities of the Carers Working Group (WG) to progress work on implementation of the *Carers Recognition Act 2004* in Western Australia. The Carers WG met on 12 June 2024 to align on the group's purpose and objectives and discuss proposed revisions to the Carers Priority Terms of Reference (ToR) to sharpen its focus and deliverables, in light of the time-limited nature of the Carers WG. Work is underway to develop a Project Plan, aligned with the draft ToR which will be considered by working group members at its September meeting.

The [Carer's Advisory Council](#) provides advice to the Minister for Community Services on issues affecting carers. The Carers WG has also invited representatives from the Carers Advisory Council and Carers WA to provide a briefing on their critical function, work and role to implement the *Carers Recognition Act 2004* in WA, and to ensure the work of the Carers WG complements the work of the Council.

Forum members were provided with a list of Carers WG members for their noting. The Carers WG intends to meet more frequently in between quarterly Forum meetings and will provide a substantive update including a finalised Carers Priority ToR and Carers WG Project Plan at the Forum's November meeting.

2.1 Child Safe Organisations Working Group

Members noted an update from the Co-Chairs of the Child Safe Organisations Working Group (CSO WG) on work planned to build capacity and capability to implement the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) (National Principles) in WA. Forum Co-Chairs expressed their gratitude to Dr Shirley Bowen, Director General of the Department of Health, for her work as CSO WG Co-Chair to date, and to Mike Rowe, Director General of the Department of Communities, for taking on the CSO WG Co-Chair role effective 30 July 2024.

The most recent CSO WG meeting on 6 August 2024 focussed on a draft ToR, Project Plan and Children's Week event concept brief, with the importance of refocussing CSO WG objectives on organisational readiness to implement and embed the National Principles. The Department of Education and Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) have been invited to join the CSO WG, and members also received a presentation from the Department of Communities on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) shared with members its recent work to support organisations to become child safe, having received grant funding from the Department of Communities. The need to elevate this work under the remit of the Forum and CSO WG was raised, as was the importance of sector-led initiatives more broadly.



Forum members discussed the significant amount of Commonwealth work underway in relation to child sexual abuse and emphasised the importance of prioritising this topic within the context of implementing the National Principles. Members acknowledged it is essential that organisations move beyond simple policy compliance to affect improvements in day-to-day operations and practice. To move forward, gaining an understanding of what aspects of the National Principles have been implemented across sectors is also crucial to supporting effective implementation for WA. Organisations of varying size, as well as regional and remote organisations must be considered, and equally accounted for when undertaking any overall understanding and assessment, specifically in consideration of relative resourcing and capability to implement the National Principles.

2.2 Delivering Community Services in Partnership Working Group

The Department of Finance (Finance) provided Forum members with an update on the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Working Group's (DCSP WG's) recent meetings and actions. The DCSP WG is an existing cross-sector group established to ensure effective implementation of the Delivering Community Services in Partnership (DCSP) Policy and [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 (CASWA) along with the Co-Chairs of the DCSP WG, to shape a discrete piece of work for the Forum relating to deliverables focussed on the SCS Implementation Plan (IP) Priority #2, 'Improve and increase contracting with ACCOs', to be confirmed following Government consideration of the draft SCS IP 2024-26. SCS IP – Priority #4, 'Sustainability of Services', will also be explored by the DCSP WG.

Forum members discussed the importance of accurately reporting, and measuring commissioning efficacy, against desired outcomes, and the Department of Finance indicated that it is maintaining a long-term view of commissioning agencies implementing outcomes-based funding models. The Department of Justice and Mental Health Commission also expressed their commitment to outcomes-based funding models, while acknowledging that the transition from activity-based funding would take considerable time and effort.

Forum members further 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. A case-management approach, involving a single-entry point was also raised by Forum members as a possible solution, in addition to the need for improved rationalisation of grant and commissioning arrangements to simplify processes.

3. STRATEGIC POLICY FOCUS TOPICS – FOR ONE-OFF DISCUSSION

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.

3.1 Women's Health Justice Pilot

The Department of Health and Women's Legal Service WA presented to the Forum on the Women's Health Justice Pilot (WHJP), a collaborative initiative which integrates legal services with women's health centres in Kalgoorlie and Northbridge. Launched in 2023, the WHJP aims to meet the needs of women experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV), providing wraparound support services which combine and co-locate health, legal, physical and psychosocial supports. With a focus on person-centred and outcome-focussed services, the WHJP is underpinned by sustainable health reform principles and recommendations, including the 2019 Sustainable Health Review.

Members discussed the importance and efficacy of co-locating services, especially with respect to multi-faceted and 'cascading' social challenges such as FDV, where additional legal and health needs often emerge throughout the process of service delivery. Opportunities for replicating the co-funding models underpinning the WHJP in other community service settings was explored; and ensuring Commonwealth, State and local governments, as well as ACCOs, are collaboratively involved in projects is essential to ensure



effective services are delivered. Members emphasised how co-funded, co-located initiatives must also be 'place-based', placing decision-making power in the hands of local communities and contributing to program efficacy.

Forum members described the importance of examining and promoting successes of WHJP model to improve the case for ongoing funding and ensure best practice approaches are implemented in other areas. How pilot programs can become permanent, and the importance of Government transparency regarding the likelihood of ongoing funding for innovative projects, were raised and discussed. Ensuring initiatives are underpinned by Government reforms, priorities and commitments can act as an essential foundation to prepare the authorising environment to support programs that are not only money-saving and money-earning but also provide a multi-faceted, whole-of-person, approach to improving health and wellbeing.

3.2 Mindfulness and Awareness in the Workplace

Forum members noted a presentation from the Youth Involvement Council Inc. (Council) on mindfulness and meditation in the workplace. Having been incorporated into the Council's programs, these practices have resulted in improved emotional regulation, greater awareness of emotions, improved and more respectful communication and greater willingness to resolve conflicts among young people engaging in programs. Staff at the Council also take part in mindfulness practices, facilitating effective communication and supporting staff to process challenging aspects of their work.

Forum members took part in a short mindfulness meditation session to gain a deeper understanding of the practice and discussed the potential benefits of mindfulness in supporting community services staff to debrief and deliver effective services. Members further noted how mindfulness practices support the Council in its efforts to meet the needs of and support young people who have experienced trauma.

4. CLOSING

The meeting closed at 4:04pm.

