



*We're working for
Western Australia.*

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM COMMUNIQUE

13 September and 22 November 2021 Quarterly Meetings

The Honorable Simone McGurk MLA, Minister for Community Services attended the 13 September meeting of the Forum to outline her Statement of Expectations and work plan for the Forum to address throughout the remainder of its term ending 31 December 2022. Forum members endorsed the establishment of three new working groups of the Forum to address three of the four priorities; nominated for the position of working group co-chair or as a member; and nominated potential co-opted members for specific working groups.

Proposed at the 13 September meeting, interested Forum members attended a one-hour online meeting on 27 October to discuss the WA Government's first [Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan](#) and to receive an address from COVID-19 Vaccine Commander Chris Dawson on the roll-out of the COVID-19 Vaccination across WA.

At the recent 22 November 2021 quarterly meeting, the last meeting for 2021, members invited guests to present on specific topics and received updates from its Working Groups on work to progress the priorities of the Forum.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development presented on the WA Skills Summits and other initiatives to build new workforce pipelines. Members noted the increase in enrolments in a range of courses, which will contribute to enhancing the community services sectors workforce. The Forum provided input on opportunities to further refine and support workforce planning within the community services sector, Aboriginal communities and the regions.

The Aboriginal Engagement Directorate at the Department of the Premier and Cabinet provided an update on the progress of the Government's implementation of the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, building on earlier discussions in October. Members of the Forum reaffirmed their commitment to support work on implementation of the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms. Some members have nominated to meet with the Aboriginal Engagement Directorate in addition to the Forum meetings to progress this important priority, acknowledging the importance of engagement with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in the first instance.

The **Implementation of the Homelessness Strategy Working Group** appointed a third Chair, Ms Tina Pickett, Managing Director Noongar Mia Mia. Ms Pickett brings to the group her valuable cultural insight and connection to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. The Working Group agreed to drive and oversee the implementation initiatives under the Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2025 that focuses on ending rough sleeping, building a “No Wrong Door” approach to service delivery, increasing low-barrier crisis responses and supporting innovation.

The Department of Finance provided an update on work to progress development of the State's Community Services Outcomes Measurement Framework (OMF) ensuring it promotes the procurement and delivery of culturally responsive services. In 2020, Finance allocated a temporary resource, and established a cross-sector Delivering Community Services in Partnership (DCSP) Policy Working Group and OMF sub-group to help progress work on this. The sub-group has

developed primary indicators and measures across population level outcomes for ease of use and functionality. The sub-group has also created an OMF user guide to practically assist state agencies to implement the OMF. Work is ongoing to ensure further development of the OMF aligns with the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms Implementation Plan, Agency Commissioning Plans and the State Commissioning Strategy, which is currently in development.

The **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Working Group** discussed its plan to deliver on this priority. The Forum discussed suggested amendments to the priority Terms of Reference to build the capacity and capability of organisations from a wider range of sectors to implement the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) in Western Australia, and to align with the broader cross section of organisations identified by the [Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#).

The **Roll-out of the COVID-19 Vaccinations Working Group** discussed strategies to reach cohorts from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people living with disability and Aboriginal people and communities. These cohorts are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and are experiencing barriers to accessing a COVID-19 vaccination. The Vaccine Commander and the Department of Health are identifying strategies to better engage and encourage participation by the targeted cohorts in mainstream or bespoke vaccination programs.

The Forum also welcomed Dr. Clare Huppatz, Deputy Chief Health Officer, to the meeting. Dr Huppatz answered questions and clarified specific aspects of the recently released [Community Services Worker Mandatory Vaccination Directions](#). Members also provided insight into the effects of the Direction on the community services sector and noted strategies to increase vaccination rates among vulnerable cohorts and Aboriginal people and communities, particularly in the regions.

Communiqués, and regular progress updates on the Forum and its working groups will be available on the [Forum's webpage](#).

The quarterly Forum meetings in 2022 are scheduled on 28 February, 23 May, 22 August and 21 November. The next Communiqué will be released following the 28 February quarterly meeting.

Please feel free to distribute this Communiqué to your wider network.

If you would like to register to the Forum's mailing list or have general enquiries on the work of the Forum, please email the Forum Secretariat at SCF@dpc.wa.gov.au.