

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM

COMMUNIQUE

2 March 2022 Quarterly Meeting

At the recent 2 March 2022 quarterly meeting, the first meeting for 2022, the Forum received updates from its Working Groups on their work to progress the priorities of the Forum, and invited guests to present on specific topics of interest to the Forum.

The Forum's **Implementation of the Homelessness Strategy Working Group** discussed its progress to deliver on this priority, noting the recent establishment of the Office of Homelessness by the Department of Communities, and the recent appointment of a ministerial portfolio for Homelessness under the Hon John Carey BA MLA, Minister for Homelessness. The Forum discussed progress of the Homelessness Action Plan 2020-2025 and the Working Group's plan to progress this priority for the remainder of the Forum's term by invigorating strategic initiatives, maintaining implementation momentum, and defining future priorities.

The **Department of Finance** is currently finalising requirements for the initial implementation of the State's Community Services Outcomes Measurement Framework (CS OMF), which will include communications to both government and community services sector stakeholders, the roll-out of education and training events, an update of procurement templates, and release of an OMF user guide for implementation.

The Department of Finance also provided an update on work to progress development of the [State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services](#) (Strategy) and its implementation plan, and the plan to publish both documents post endorsement by Government. The implementation plan will focus on embedding enablers of the Strategy as a foundation for both government and the community services sector to transition to commissioning. The Strategy and its implementation plan will ensure alignment with implementation of the State's CS OMF, and support prioritisation of Aboriginal empowerment in alignment with the commitments made under the [Closing the Gap National Agreement](#) and [Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy](#).

The **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Working Group** provided an update on its program of work to identify demonstration projects that highlight the opportunities, best practice and learnings related to implementation of the National Principles, to share across sectors based on a revised terms of reference. The working group is finalising a survey to help identify exemplars and emerging practices of National Principle implementation across Western Australia.

Forum members noted the significant program of work and progress by the **Roll-out of the COVID-19 Vaccinations Working Group** to support the roll-out of vaccinations to a number of vulnerable cohorts. This included:

- the launch of the Vaccination Community Funding Program (VCFP) and implementation of a Accelerated Aboriginal Vaccination Plan in December 2021;
- two webinars by the Department of Health and WACOSS in December 2021 for frontline workers to equip them with the tools they need to have persuasive conversations with vaccine-hesitant communities and dispel any myths they may have about COVID-19;

- implementation of Door-to-Door vaccination teams for the Aboriginal Communities across the State to encourage uptake of vaccination for families and individual Aboriginal People;
- participation by trusted Aboriginal Leaders and Elders in pre-engagement and vaccination delivery strategies, funded by the VCFP; and
- implementation of bespoke strategies through consultation with culturally and linguistically diverse communities leading to vaccination clinics being held in Temples, Mosques, Synagogues and Churches.

Acknowledging that the Vaccine Commander and the Department of Health are well-equipped and networked with a number of vulnerable and priority communities, the Forum supported the Working Group's recommendation to be wound up, with the Vaccine Commander to maintain any remaining functions of delivering vaccination-related services.

Forum members appreciated and benefited from updates and information shared by the Departments of the Premier and Cabinet, Health and Communities. This included updates on Public Health and Social Measures, testing and isolation protocols, changes to close contact definitions, the provision of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) to community service organisations and to WA households, and the critical worker furloughing policy.

Forum members noted the Department of Communities, WACOSS and the community services sector are working together to ensure the most vulnerable people in WA are supported through the COVID-19 pandemic and have access to the latest information and resources to ensure continuity of service delivery. Information on the community services sector COVID-19 webinars hosted by the Department of Communities and WACOSS are available [here](#).

Forum members also noted information about the role of the State Health Incident Coordination Centre (SHICC) in managing and coordinating the State's COVID-19 response, and the role of the State Welfare Incident Coordination Centre (SWICC) in supporting the Department of Health and the SHICC in coordinating welfare services during COVID-19. Information on the relative effectiveness and usefulness of RATs versus PCR tests, and the COVID-19 Care at Home policy was discussed. Members also received updates on a number of recently published COVID-19 public communications resources, including the WA Government's [Guide to Managing COVID-19](#), translated information and other key links and resources for members to share with their wider networks.

The remainder of the quarterly Forum meetings in 2022 are scheduled for 23 May, 22 August and 21 November. The next Communique will be released following the 23 May quarterly meeting.

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

Please feel free to distribute this Communique 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.