

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM COMMUNIQUE

20 September 2022 Quarterly Meeting

The Honourable John Carey, Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness; and Local Government attended the recent 20 September 2022 quarterly meeting to discuss the priorities of homelessness and housing in Western Australia.

The Forum also had discussions on the work underway to progress identified priorities of the Forum; Federal Government policy initiatives; the Whole-of-Government Aboriginal Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Strategy; the State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services; and the Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce established by the Department of Education.

Members discussed broadly the Federal Government's policy priorities, including the Australian Government's commitment to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart; health care system reform; housing and homelessness including the National Housing and Homelessness Plan, the Housing Australia Future Fund; Skills development, early childhood and remote housing.

The Forum encouraged organisations to continue to ensure they are child safe in alignment with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The Department of Communities and the Commissioner for Children and Young People is leading the development of the child safe organisations campaign and launch of the child safe knowledge hub. The hub will be accessible to a breadth of organisations required to implement the National Principles. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet is also continuing to develop a model for the independent oversight of organisations engaged in child related work to comply with the National Principles. The **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Forum Working Group** will share the working group's view on preferred next steps to continue the momentum and progress work on this priority at the December meeting of the Forum.

The Department of Finance acknowledged and thanked the Forum for its significant contribution to the [State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services 2022](#) and initial two-year [Implementation Plan](#) which were publicly released in August 2022. Members acknowledged this important work and the integration of the Outcomes Measurement Framework (first developed by the Forum) within the State Commissioning Strategy (Strategy).

The Department of Finance is currently facilitating information sessions on the Strategy and Implementation Plan for the community services and government sectors. The information sessions held to date have been well received and feedback from both sectors has been positive. Agency Commissioning Plans developed for community services will identify specific commissioning priorities to align with the Strategy (at a whole-of-government level), ensuring that services are commissioned to meet the needs of all Western Australians, particularly the most vulnerable in our community.

The Forum noted the Whole-of-Government ACCO Strategy being developed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in consultation with key stakeholders, which will be strongly aligned to the [State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services 2022](#), focusing on increasing ACCOs' delivery of services to Aboriginal people and communities. The Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA and

Aboriginal Health Council of WA Social Services Committee, who are leading the establishment of an ACCO social services peak body, play a critical role in advising on and guiding the development of the ACCO Strategy.

The Director General, Department of Education (the Department) led a discussion of Forum members about the Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce established by the Department to set clear expectations for, and embed, effective approaches to student wellbeing and care across the Western Australia public school system. The Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce will build on and strengthen supports for student wellbeing, including better connecting and coordinating supports and improving performance data and information. The Taskforce will comprise of ten members and be supported by external advisors, interagency partners, a Primary Reference Group, a Secondary Reference Group and a Working Group.

The Honourable John Carey, Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness; and Local Government addressed the Forum about the Government's priority reforms to streamline the housing and homelessness sector to deliver the All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030 and the WA Government's commitment to a Housing First approach. In this context, the Minister has considered the range of homelessness and housing advisory groups to Government and determined to have one advisory group. The Minister advised that he had spoken personally to members of the Forum's **Implementation of the Homelessness Strategy Working Group** who are supportive of this approach.

The Forum noted and acknowledged the leadership and considerable work undertaken by Forum's **Homelessness Strategy Working Group** in the development and subsequent implementation of the Homelessness Strategy, in particular the Working Group Co-Chairs Debra Zanella and Mike Rowe.

The final Forum meeting for 2022 is scheduled on 7 December 2022. The next Communique will be released following the December 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.