



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

Family and Domestic Violence Strategic Commissioning Plan

Expert Reference Group

Terms of Reference



Background

The Western Australian State Government is committed to taking a more strategic approach to the design and delivery of services in the community, funded to community sector organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (referred to herein as ‘community services’). Western Australia’s State Commissioning Strategy for community services, developed through the Department of Finance, aims to provide greater cohesion between Government, service providers, peak bodies and consumer advocates around the development and delivery of person-centred and place-based services that are contemporary and flexible enough to meet the changing needs of services users and the community.

All Government agencies that provide funding for community services, are required to produce commissioning plans aligned to this strategic agenda. The Department of Communities has produced and released an over-arching [Department of Communities Commissioning Plan](#) (the Plan) and made a commitment to develop individual strategic commissioning plans for four discrete priority portfolios – family and domestic violence, homelessness, out of home care and child sexual abuse therapeutic services. A strategic commissioning plan sets out a long-term approach to planning and designing services and service systems. Figure 1 represents the life-cycle of a commissioning approach, organised around outcomes for clients, their families and communities.

It is proposed the Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Strategic Commissioning Plan (SCP) will set out:

- evidence based, fit for purpose, service models;
- the composition of an ideal state for community services including reform within existing services and priorities for future investment;
- a clear hierarchy of outcomes and associated measures of success;
- strategies to increase the number and type of services delivered by Aboriginal organisations for Aboriginal people;
- a strategic asset management plan; and
- recommendations for wider service system reform to support the investment in community services to have the best effect on outcomes for victim-survivor safety.

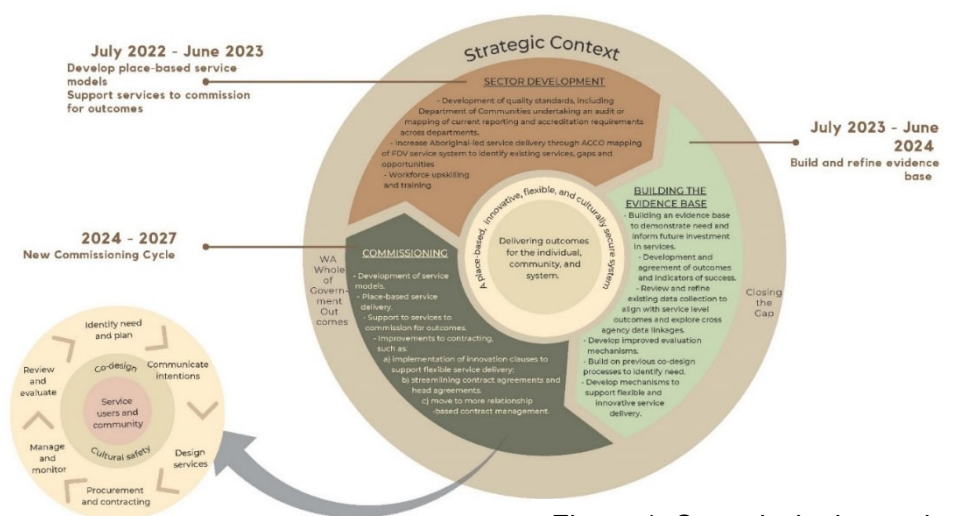


Figure 1. Commissioning cycle

Defining the service system

Responses to family and domestic violence comprise services delivered by government, the community services sector, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), through private industry and the broader community. Together they operate as a 'service system' on a continuum from mainstream to specialist, exercising voluntary and statutory functions to work towards family and domestic violence prevention, response and recovery. Outcomes for victim-survivors are determined through the individual and collective action and impact, of the component parts of the service system as a whole.

The focus of the Strategic Commissioning Plan (SCP) is setting a blue-print for the ideal composition of community services funded by the Department of Communities to the community services sector and ACCOs. Understanding that this is only 'one part of the picture' of the overall response to family and domestic violence, and that the relative efficacy of these community services is often reliant on outcomes delivered in other areas such as civil and criminal justice responses and family law, the SCP will make comment on the functions and capabilities in the wider service system that are necessary for success towards the strategic objectives of preventing and reducing family and domestic violence in the Western Australian community.

These wider system reforms will be considered and enacted through other strategic projects delivered under **Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020 – 2030 (Path to Safety)**, such as child protection reform and redesign of the Family and Domestic Violence Response Teams (as an example).

Key aligned projects and policy frameworks that will inform, and be informed by development of the SCP include the following (noting this list is not exhaustive):

- National Agreement on Closing the Gap, particularly work towards ACCO capacity building, self-determination, socio-economic targets 12 and 13;
- Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy;
- Primary Prevention Framework;
- Perpetrator Response Framework;
- refresh of the Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework;
- Roadmap for reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care (child protection reform); and
- strategic commissioning plans for homelessness, out of home care and child sexual abuse therapeutic services.

Scope of work

Communities in consultation with the community services sector and ACCOs, is working towards two primary deliverables:

1. a business case to Government for an uplift on funding for family and domestic violence refuges and safe houses, to address immediate viability and sustainability concerns. The draft business case is to be completed by September 2022; and
2. a family and domestic violence Strategic Commissioning Plan by 30 June 2023.

The **business case** will seek funding from Government to maintain existing service models. It is about providing the funding required to meet contemporary costs of service delivery for women's refuges and safe houses to provide for sustainability of services through the life of their current contracts.

The **Strategic Commissioning Plan (SCP)** will provide evidence-based direction about reform of existing family and domestic violence services funded by Communities (existing investment), the priorities for future investment towards an ideal state (desired outcomes) and the priorities for asset (building) redevelopment and refurbishment. In scope of this plan is all Communities contracts (service and grant agreements) for family and domestic violence services funded into the community sector and with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. For the purposes of this work 'services' is inclusive of:

- direct responses to people at risk of, or experiencing family and domestic violence including services for children; and
- services for person's using violence.

Services may be provided on a continuum from primary prevention, through early intervention (pre-crisis response), crisis responses and healing and recovery. Primary prevention and community-led prevention initiatives are in scope with consideration to the role specialist services play in formally and informally supporting prevention efforts including via community education. However, the SCP will not address the wider infrastructure required for community-wide primary prevention initiatives, due to:

1. emerging work on primary prevention being led concurrently by the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing and Communities; and
2. primary prevention initiatives are specialised in their own right and engage / require different types of infrastructure and different skills in the workforce.

Informing principles

Development of the SCP will be informed by the following grounding principles:

- **Access and inclusion** to enable people of all age, ability, sexuality and cultural background to have access to services that meet their unique and diverse needs.

- **Aboriginal-led responses for Aboriginal people** that recognise the primary importance of connection to culture, family, community and country for promoting safety and wellbeing.
- **Children** exposed to family and domestic violence experience significant and lasting harm and must be counted and treated as **clients in their own right**.
- **Service models informed by evidence** with a focus on person-centred, place-based and holistic approaches to safety, health and wellbeing.
- **Purpose built infrastructure** noting that the buildings community services operate from, particularly accommodation services, have a significant impact on service model efficacy and client outcomes.
- **Opportunity for innovation** to enable service models to continually improve and adapt in response to emerging evidence and changes in client and community need.
- **Understanding community services in the wider service system** for consideration of service model design and reform implications for the wider service system to enable best effect of community services investment.
- **Reducing contract administration to increase service provider flexibility** to meet client and community need in line with agreed outcomes.
- **Services for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) clients** must be delivered by organisations that have demonstrated experience in working with CaLD communities and are committed to delivering these services in a culturally appropriate and safe manner.

The Expert Reference Group

The Expert Reference Group comprises representation from the family and domestic violence services sector and Curtin University as follows –

Member	Organisation	Contact
David Cain	Communicare	dcain@communicare.org.au
Liza Balmer	Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council	liza.balmer@npywc.org.au; ea@npywc.org.au
Leanne Barron	Starick Services	ceo@starick.org.au; leanne@starick.org.au
Philippa Boldy	Anglicare	philippa.boldy@anglicarewa.org.au
Donna Chung	Curtin University	D.Chung@curtin.edu.au
Andrea Creado	Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services	andrea@ishar.org.au
Tanya Elson	Ruah Community Services	tanya.elson@ruah.org.au
Alison Evans	Centre for Womens Safety and Wellbeing	alison@csw.org.au
Damian Green	Stopping Family Violence	damian@sfv.org.au
Sarah Johnston	Mawarnkarra Health Service	programsmanager@mhs.org.au;
Kelda Oppermann	Zonta House Refuge	koppermann@zontahouse.org.au
Pettina Pitt-Lancaster	Gawooleng Yawoodeng Women's Refuge	manager@gwrefuge.com.au
Russell Pratt	Desert Blue Connect	russellp@desertblueconnect.org.au
Mandy Reidy	Finlayson House Goldfields Women's Refuge	mandy.reidy@finlaysonhouse.com.au
Laurel Sellers	Yorgum Healing Services	lsellers@yorgum.org.au
Caroline Walker	Coordinator Housing and Homelessness Services	cwalker@wungening.com.au

Social Ventures Australia

Social Ventures Australia has been contracted by Communities to assist with this work.

The supporting consultants are:

- Jen Ehlers (jehlers@socialventures.com.au)
- Nancy Tran (ntran@socialventures.com.au)
- Emily Low (elow@socialventures.com.au)
- Irmke Bonte (ibonte@socialventures.com.au)

Roles and responsibilities

The **Expert Reference Group** will:

- provide information, advice and guidance on the strategic direction and content of the business case and strategic commissioning plan;
- contribute to, review and comment on draft products;
- develop a hierarchy of outcomes and associated indicators of success;
- assist with financial analysis including through discussion about the parameters, underpinning assumptions, operating processes (of refuges and safe houses), operating costs (including costs absorbed or funded through alternative sources) and relevant client information including nature, intensity and duration of support;
- design consultation processes including sector workshops;
- support sector communication; and
- lead engagement with victim-survivors to obtain relevant information to inform planning.

Social Ventures Australia will:

- collate and analyse key inputs including contractual information, data, research and information about asset condition;
- facilitate sector workshops to seek information and feedback about key elements of the business case and commissioning plan; and
- attend the Expert Reference Group as an informer and to elicit feedback to the aforementioned functions.

The **Department of Communities** will:

- provide secretariat for the ERG;
- prepare the financial analysis, for consideration and feedback by the ERG;
- prepare the business case and strategic commissioning plan, with input from SVA and in partnership with the ERG;
- lead sector communication and engagement; and
- lead broader stakeholder engagement including via the Path to Safety Steering Group, the Department of Treasury, the Department of Finance and the Commonwealth Government.

Sector communication

Communities and the ERG will work together to support a transparent process that enables all family and domestic violence services to have visibility to the development of the business case and strategic commissioning plan, and the opportunity to contribute via dedicated engagement.

At a minimum, sector communication will include:

- a monthly webinar convened by the Office for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence that includes 'commissioning' as a standing item;
- an updated Commissioning webpage that includes copies of the agenda and minutes (key outcomes) from the ERG meetings.

At a minimum, sector engagement will include:

- a workshop to discuss the draft financial analysis for women's refuges and safe houses (estimated to occur in August 2022); and
- design labs (on-line and in-person) between September 2022 and June 2023 to inform the strategic commissioning plan.

Expert Reference Group Meetings

Confidentiality and conflict of interest

Members may have access to information that relates to confidential government information. Members must treat this material as strictly confidential and will be required to sign a declaration to this effect at the commencement of their tenure.

Attendance

Members are expected to attend all meetings in person or video link. Proxy representation is not permitted unless discussed with the Chair.

Resignation

Members may resign in writing to the Chair.

Duration of term

The Expert Reference Group will be convened for a period of 12 months to oversight development of the business case and strategic commissioning plan for family and domestic violence services. The terms of reference will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Meetings

Agenda and papers: Meeting papers will be circulated electronically by the Secretariat five business days prior to each meeting. Proposed agenda items should be forwarded to the Chair for inclusion. Draft minutes will be sent to members for feedback and confirmation within five days of the meeting.

Guests: From time to time, members may, through the Chair or by meeting decision, invite other stakeholders or experts to participate in discussions or provide presentations on issues relevant to the agreed purpose of the group. The final decision to invite guests rests with the Chair.

Meeting frequency: Meetings are to be held fortnightly initially however may extend to monthly depending on workload and business matters arising. Meetings and consideration of issues may also be scheduled out of session.

Meeting location: Meetings will be hosted on Communities' premises or other locations by invitation. Participation via TEAMS will also be offered for all meetings.

At the commencement of every meeting, an acknowledgement of country and values moment must occur. These are to be standing items on the agenda.

Approval

Approved by Project Lead:

Nicole Leggett
Executive Director | Office for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence |
Strategy and Partnerships.
23 June 2022