



SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM Meeting #8 - Meeting Notes and Actions

Date	10:00am to 12:00pm
Time	Dumas House, Level 4 – Yonga Meeting Room and MS Team option
Location	Michelle Scott (Co-Chair), Jodi Cant (Co-Chair), Kate George (Deputy Chair), Louise Giolitto, Dan Minchin, Tricia Murray, Sandy McKiernan, Debra Zanella, Felicite Black, Justine Colyer, Emma Jarvis, Melissa Perry, Denver D'Cruz, Kelda Oppermann, Mike Rowe, Lisa Rodgers, Dr. David Russell-Weisz, Dr. Adam Tomison, Lanie Chopping, Ralph Addis, Lindsay Hale, Sharyn O'Neill, and Emily Roper.
Members	Community Policy Unit - Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) SCF@dpc.wa.gov.au
Secretariat	Honourable Sabine Winton, Minister for Early Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services; Julie Armstrong (Minister Winton's office); and Lara Connor (Department of Finance); Esme Bowen (Chair - Carers Advisory Council), Natalia Kacperek (DPC), Nicole O'Keefe (Department of Health); and Gail Beck (Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA).
Invited Guests	Felicite Black, Kate George, Sharyn O'Neill, Dr. David Russell-Weisz and Dr. Adam Tomison.
Apologies	10:00am to 12:00pm

1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1.1 Acknowledgment of Country

Forum Co-Chair Michelle Scott acknowledged the Whadjuk Noongar people, the Traditional Custodians of the land throughout Western Australia, and paid respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

1.2 Welcome (opening remarks, introductions, and apologies)

Forum Co-Chair Michelle Scott welcomed members, guests and acknowledged apologies.

1.3 Confirm the meeting notes and actions from 7 December 2022

Members noted and confirmed the meeting notes from the 7 December 2022 meeting, noting there were no actions arising from the last meeting.

1.4 Conflict of Interest Declaration

No conflicts of interest were noted for this meeting.

1.5 Address by Honourable Sabine Winton BA BPS MLA, Minister for Community Services

The Honourable Sabine Winton, Minister for Early Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services attended the meeting to thank and address members as the new Minister leading the work of the Supporting Communities Forum (Forum).

The Minister thanked members for their important contribution and participation as valued Forum members, and for being flexible and adaptable in advising and delivering on Government priorities and reform.

The Minister acknowledged the significant pieces of work progressed by the Forum and the important role of the community services sector as a key Government partner.

2. STRATEGIC POLICY AND REFORM

2.1 Unpaid Carers – Disability and Aged Care (*Carers Recognition Act 2004*)

Ms Esme Bowen, Chair of the [Carers Advisory Council](#) provided members with an update on the important role of carers (including unpaid carers) as key partners in the delivery of high-quality care.

Members noted:

- Carers are a hidden workforce, and there is concern around insufficient recognition of carers.
- the [Western Australian Carers Recognition Act 2004](#) as the key legislation which recognises the role of carers in the community.
- The *Western Australian Carers Recognition Act 2004* defines a carer as a person who provides ongoing care, support and assistance to a person with disability, a chronic illness (which includes mental illness) or who is frail, without receiving a salary or wage for the care they provide.
- the Carers Advisory Council is established by the Act, and has up to 10 members appointed by the Minister for Community Services. All members are either carers or have knowledge of matters relevant to carers. The Council:
 - reports to the Parliament of WA on compliance with the Carers Charter by relevant service providers; and
 - provides general advice to the Minister on carer-related matters.
- the [Carers Charter](#), which outlines how carers are to be treated and how they are to be involved in delivering services that affect them and their caring role.

Ms Bowen led an impactful discussion on both the challenges and positive initiatives that can better support carers throughout Western Australia.

YACWA discussed its role to support Carers and key information sourced from young people as carers.

Members discussed the importance to raise awareness. Members further discussed examples of best practice in their organisations and were particularly encouraged to identify staff that take on a carer's role beyond their regular jobs, and to consider supporting such staff in accordance with the object of the *Carers Recognition Act 2004* and the Carers Charter.

2.2 State Commissioning Strategy Implementation Plan

Lara Connor, General Manager, Department of Finance, updated members on the State Commissioning Strategy Implementation Plan.

Members noted:

- the Agency Commissioning Plan (ACP) Framework developed by the Department of Finance has been released.
- the ACP Framework will guide government agencies in developing their ACPs and provide a mechanism to clearly communicate with the community services sector and government how line agencies are driving change at a departmental, program and individual service level, with a five-year commissioning schedule to be included.
- ACPs are to be published biennially by commissioning agencies and will outline and act as a key tool to communicate about an agencies upcoming commissioning work.
- the Department of Finance is investigating options for community service organisations to access online commissioning training modules being developed for the public sector.

- governance arrangements to support implementation of the State Commissioning Strategy are in place, including the Commissioning for Outcomes Deputies Group and amending the Terms of Reference and membership of the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Working Group.

Members acknowledged the importance of embedding the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy Working Group as part of the governance structure for implementation of the Strategy.

Forum members indicated their strong interest to continue informing the work to implement the priorities in the State Commissioning Strategy Implementation Plan.

2.3 PeoplesWA Data

Natalia Kacperek, Director, Office of Digital Government, updated members on the PeoplesWA Data.

Members noted:

- PeopleWA is a whole-of-government data linkage asset that will contain de-identified information on individuals and their contact with services provided by participating government agencies.
- Integration of Community Sector Organisation data into PeopleWA would allow organisations, WACOSS, researchers and government to evaluate the impact of commissioned services on outcomes, improve service delivery, and take a person-centred view.
- Integration of data across government and the community sector in PeopleWA would also enable measurement of outcomes in the Outcomes Measurement Framework.

Members valued the update and detailed work underway; and discussed the intent of the data asset and linkage system, and the State Commissioning Strategy as a potential mechanism to enable consistent data collection and integration.

More about the data asset system will be publicly available in August 2023.

2.4 The Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce

Lisa Rodgers, Director General of the Department of Education, updated members on the Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce.

Members noted:

- The Department of Education has commenced comprehensive consultation to inform implementation of the Taskforce's six goals.
- Consultation with staff and families has occurred in 85 regions throughout WA. The Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce will help to build on and strengthen supports for student wellbeing, including better connecting and coordinating supports and improving performance data and information. The Taskforce aims to set clear expectations for, and embed, effective approaches to student wellbeing and care across the Western Australia public school system.
- Improving student wellbeing will require a holistic approach across government and community services. Contributing considerations include creating a positive and inclusive school culture, supporting staff, increasing mental health services across the community and promoting teaching and learning which are protective factors for children and young people.
- Work is focusing on 'public education'. Student services vary in schools. Having standard and shared guidance to ensure sufficient guidance and support is available in schools is key.

Based on strong interest expressed by members on the topic of Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce, it was agreed that an in-depth discussion would be beneficial.

A one-hour special (optional) meeting will be organised to discuss this topic further and contribute to informing this important work undertaken by the Department of Education, including sharing of case studies and learnings from Communicare Academy in WA and youth workers legislation in NSW and Victoria.

3 WORKING GROUP REPORTS

3.1 Building Capacity and Capability to Implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Members noted an update and discussion by the Working Group which is chaired by Lanie Chopping and Tricia Murray. The Working Group met on 16 March 2023, and working group members presented examples of how their organisations are implementing the National Principles, with others to present their implementation journeys at the May working group meeting.

The Working Group also agreed to bring together a range of organisations engaged in child-related work for a workshop in this year's Children's Week in October, to showcase examples of implementation of the National Principles and to further support organisations to implement them.

Updates were provided on the **Child Safe Organisations Campaign (campaign)** and the **Child Safe Knowledge Hub (Hub)**. Members noted:

- A **campaign** plan is being developed by the Department of Communities (Communities) and builds on last year's campaign launch during Children's Week. In 2023 and in 2024 the campaign will target organisations, children, young people, families and carers.
- The **Hub** will provide a central location for organisations to access and stay up to date with information and resources. The Hub is an integral part of the campaign as stakeholders will frequently be directed to the Hub, including:
 - organisations engaged in child-related work, across all sectors in WA;
 - families and carers; and
 - children and young people.
- Communities will be seeking the views of the Working Group on its needs to inform the Hub, including webpage design and location, preferences and need for media types and structure of information and resources. The Working Group will next meet in May 2023.

4 Thank you and closing

The meeting closed at 4.30pm