



# Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Commissioning Framework (the Framework)

## Frequently asked questions

October 2023

### What is the purpose of the ACCO Commissioning Framework?

The Framework is being developed in consultation with the ACCO sector and other key stakeholders to improve how Department of Communities (Communities) commissions ACCOs. This is in line with the Communities ACCO Strategy 2022 to 2032, A Call to Action 2022 to 2024 – Implementation Plan One. It aims to:

- improve outcomes for Aboriginal children, families, and communities;
- guide the way Communities will engage with the ACCO sector with the aim of increasing the number of ACCOs commissioned;
- support sustainable economic and socio-economic development opportunities for ACCOs across Western Australia; and
- provide service design solutions that are locally informed, place based and culturally appropriate.

The Framework will also be a key enabler for Communities to meet its obligations under the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) (the National Agreement) particularly in relation to [Priority Reform Two: Building the Community Controlled Sector](#).

### Why do we need a Framework?

While we provide services to the most vulnerable Western Australians, Aboriginal clients are disproportionately over-represented. The Department of Communities commissions various organisations to deliver services to clients, with a large amount of funding distributed to non-government and non-Aboriginal organisations. While there are many exceptional services already in place, these services are not always best placed to serve or meet the cultural needs specific to Aboriginal people.

### What is commissioning?

Commissioning is a strategic approach to the delivery of community services.

It puts service users at the heart of the approach to look beyond procurement of services and focus on longer-term outcomes for individuals and the community.

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Commissioning is a cyclical process of planning, purchasing, managing, monitoring and evaluating services. The aim of this process is to determine the services the community needs, whether there is a role for government in providing these services, and then designing the best approach to service delivery.

Commissioning of community services in Western Australia is guided by the State Commissioning Strategy for community services and Implementation Plan.

### **When will the Framework be delivered?**

The Framework is expected to be delivered and published on WA.gov.au in 2024.

### **How will the Framework be developed?**

Development will be based on interjurisdictional research, collaboration and consultation with relevant stakeholders including the ACCO sector, peak bodies and central government agencies.

It will be supported by a guideline that is based on consultation with relevant stakeholders and will support the successful implementation of the Framework.

### **How will ACCOs be consulted during development of the Framework?**

Communities will be undertaking a series of collaborative stakeholder engagement activities with ACCOs in early 2024 including consultation workshops, surveys and email correspondence.

### **Which ACCOs will you consult with?**

Communities will consult with ACCOs throughout Western Australia who are listed on the Office of Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC), the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) and other internal stakeholder contact lists.

Communities will also actively engage with the Council of Aboriginal Services Western Australia (CASWA) to ensure as many ACCOs as possible are identified.

### **How will ACCO feedback be incorporated into the Framework?**

Consultation activities will be instrumental in the development of the final Framework.

All feedback will be collated from consultation activities. An analysis of key feedback themes will inform a stakeholder summary feedback report that will be shared with all stakeholders via the [ACCO Commissioning Framework webpage](#).

Key themes from stakeholder feedback will then be incorporated into the draft Framework and supporting Guidelines.

### **How will the Framework be implemented?**

The Framework will be supported by the development of a Guideline which will support the implementation of the Framework.

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The Guideline will provide step-by-step guidance to commissioners within Communities on considerations during each phase of the commissioning cycle to ensure ACCOs are commissioned by the organisation in line with the Framework.

The Framework will also be implemented as part of Communities' commissioning intentions as outlined in [Communities' Agency Commissioning Plan](#) which is updated every two years.

### Where can ACCOs register their interest in participating in the workshops?

We encourage ACCOs to register their interest via [strategiccontracting@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:strategiccontracting@communities.wa.gov.au).

### How is the implementation of other ACCO Strategy actions progressing?

Communities is 12 months into **Implementation Plan One of the ACCO Strategy**, creating strong foundations for generational reform, further development and transition of services to ACCOs.

**A Strengths and Opportunities analysis of ACCOs** in the Metropolitan, Southwest, Great Southern and Wheatbelt regions (Noongar country) is now complete and Communities is reviewing a final report. This review will inform the analysis of ACCOs across the remaining regions of WA (Kimberley, Pilbara, Goldfields and Midwest-Gascoyne regions). The outcome will be a comprehensive understanding of strengths, disparities and aspirations of ACCOs across the State.

The development of an agency-wide **Shared Decision-Making Body** is planning to implement a working group made up of regional staff and representatives from local ACCOs and Aboriginal businesses. This will enable local input and shared decision-making on regional matters.

Planning is underway to co-design an **Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework** that will assess Communities' performance in response to the Strategy's goals and actions. This will help to embed an ongoing cycle of monitoring and evaluation to ensure the Strategy implementation remains on-task and accountable.

Planning is underway to develop **Implementation Plan Two**, which will be guided by the completed actions of Implementation Plan One.

Communities is leading the development of the **Aboriginal Engagement Framework (AEF)** that will guide strategic deliverables and enable culturally informed engagement with Aboriginal children, families, and communities. The AEF is being developed in a phased approach with phase one currently focusing on external engagement with ACCOs and identified representatives from across the state to progress the development of the AEF.

To foster coordinated engagement efforts and avoid duplication and confusion among shared stakeholders, collaborative engagement approaches will be applied where possible, to inform all ACCO Strategy action items.

### How will this Framework help ACCOs build capability?

The Framework will be designed to increase the number of ACCOs to deliver services for Communities and improve outcomes for Aboriginal children, families, and communities.

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It will support sustainable economic and socio-economic development opportunities for ACCOs across Western Australia and ensure gaps are identified.

### **What is Communities currently doing to help build ACCO capability?**

Communities has an ongoing commitment to empowering, building and strengthening the ACCO sector to deliver services in their local communities.

Since 2021, Communities has provided two rounds of capability building grants and a third grant round is currently in progress.

The purpose of the grants was to strengthen governance structures and ensure ACCOs could effectively and sustainably take on a greater share of the delivery of services.

In 2021, Communities partnered with Finance to provide 19 ACCOs with funds of up to \$50,000 (to a total of \$850,000). Funding was for building capacity in their organisations, improving organisational governance structures, and upskilling staff and Board members.

In 2022 Communities Aboriginal Outcomes Division provided 13 ACCOs with funds of up to \$25,000 each (a total of \$313,370) to develop knowledge and skills to participate competitively in tendering for Out of Home Care (OOHC) services.

A grants process was finalised in June 2023 to support the provision of \$50,000 each to 11 ACCOs (up to \$532,768) across WA who expressed an interest in being an Aboriginal Representative Organisation in their local community.

These grants will strengthen culturally safe service delivery within the child protection system, to support the future state-wide implementation of Aboriginal Representative Organisations.

### **How will you keep us informed throughout the project?**

Communities will update all stakeholders via email and the ACCO Commissioning Framework webpage on WA.gov.au.

If you need specific updates throughout the project, please email us via [strategiccontracting@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:strategiccontracting@communities.wa.gov.au)

### **Where can I find more information on Closing the Gap?**

You can find more information on Closing the Gap including Implementation Plans, the National Agreement, Implementation, Priority Reforms, Outcomes and Targets on the [Closing the Gap webpage](#).

Further information specific to Closing the Gap including a Community Guide specific to Western Australia can be found on the [WA Closing the Gap Implementation Plan webpage](#).

## **More information**

For additional information on the ACCO Commissioning Framework, please email [strategiccontracting@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:strategiccontracting@communities.wa.gov.au)