



## **SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM** **BOARD CHARTER 2024 – 2025**

This document outlines the key governance arrangements of the Supporting Communities Forum (the Forum). It includes the:

- Supporting Communities Forum Terms of Reference (Attachment 1);
- Supporting Communities Forum Code of Conduct (Attachment 2); and
- Conflict of Interest Register (Attachment 3).

The Forum brings together the expertise and capability of senior leaders from both the WA Government and community services sector to work collaboratively to address complex social policy issues, improve community service delivery and strengthen relationships between the WA Government and community services sector.

Secretariat support to the Forum is provided by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. If additional support is needed, this will be provided by the Government agency with lead responsibility for the topics to be addressed by the Forum during 2024 – 2025.



## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM

### TERMS OF REFERENCE 2024 - 2025

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The community services sector is a key government partner in the delivery of services to the Western Australian community, and a significant contributor to economic growth, employment and community wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable Western Australians.

The Western Australian Government is committed to working with the community services sector to maximise opportunities to deliver quality services, by building a relationship based on partnership, collaboration, mutual respect and trust between both sectors.

The Forum brings together the expertise and capability of senior leaders from both the WA Government and community services sector to work collaboratively to address complex social policy issues, improve community service delivery and strengthen relationships between the WA Government and community services sector.

#### 2. OBJECTIVE OF THE FORUM

The objective of the Supporting Communities Forum is to increase the effectiveness of services provided to Western Australians in need, by providing advice and recommendations regarding:

1. Ongoing opportunities to break down barriers between Government agencies and community services sector stakeholders to better deliver services and outcomes for all Western Australians;
2. Improvements to support implementation of the *State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services*, and transition to a focus on measuring outcomes;
3. Ongoing opportunities to maximise the delivery of quality services to the community, in particular, implementing recommendations for embedding examples of good practice in service planning, co-design, technical commissioning skills and contract management, identified by the previous Forum activities since January 2018;
4. Requests by the Council of Aboriginal Services WA and the Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA, particularly those that relate to the design, delivery and outcomes of community services for Aboriginal communities, including opportunities to prioritise and increase contracting with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations a priority under the State Commissioning Strategy Implementation Plan and under the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#);
5. Specific policy topics will be identified by the Minister for Community Services for the Forum to address during each of its two-year term; and
6. Any other matters impacting on the implementation of the *State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services*, or the delivery of sustainable services and outcomes for Western Australians, as requested by the Minister for Community Services.

### 3. COMPOSITION OF THE FORUM

The Forum will comprise of two co-Chairpersons, one from the community services sector and one from Government, a Deputy Chairperson from the community services sector, up to 14 community services sector members, and up to ten government members.

#### 3.1. Roles of the Co-Chairpersons and Deputy Chairperson<sup>1</sup>

The Co-Chairpersons are jointly responsible for leadership of the Forum including:

- chairing all Forum meetings in accordance with this terms of reference and in accordance with priorities identified for the Forum to address;
- facilitating effective and efficient flow of information to the Forum, from both the community services sector and Government ;
- facilitating good discussions at Forum meetings including effective functioning, managing the conduct, frequency and length of Forum meetings;
- communicating the views, advice and recommendations of the Forum to the community services sector and Government.

In undertaking this role, the Co-Chairpersons' responsibilities also include:

- in consultation with the Secretariat:
  - setting the agenda for the matters to be considered by the Forum;
  - ensuring information provided to the Forum is relevant, accurate, timely and sufficient to keep the Forum appropriately informed of any key developments that may have a material impact on its deliberations;
- ensuring communications with the community services sector and Government are timely, accurate and effective;
- facilitating open and constructive communications amongst Forum members and encouraging their contribution to Forum deliberations; and
- liaising and consulting with Forum members.

The Deputy Chairperson will perform the role and functions of either Chairperson in the absence of a Chairperson for any reason and be available to undertake the responsibilities of a Chairperson in instances where a Chairperson actually or potentially may be compromised due to personal or other conflicts of interest.

#### 3.2. Community sector Co-Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

The Minister for Community Services will recommend to Cabinet the appointment of the Community sector co-Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson following an expression of interest process and shortlisting by an independent selection panel. The criteria for selection will include:

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Australian Institute of Company Directors, *Director Tools: Governance Relations – Role of the Chair*, accessed at [https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/~media/cd2/resources/director-resources/director-tools/pdf/05446-3-13-mem-director-gr-role-of-the-chair\\_a4-web.ashx](https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/~media/cd2/resources/director-resources/director-tools/pdf/05446-3-13-mem-director-gr-role-of-the-chair_a4-web.ashx), accessed on 13 September 2019.

- significant and successful senior leadership experience in human service delivery or research, including relevant board (or similar) experience;
- extensive knowledge and experience of systemic advocacy and community services delivery issues across a broad range of (or multiple) sectors, including services for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse groups and communities;
- experience in driving reform and/or innovation processes within and across community services organisations;
- demonstrated ability to foster collaboration amongst board (or similar) members and to provide balanced, well-informed advice;
- ability and willingness to draw on sector networks to consult on behalf of the Forum and to engage support for the Forum's work; and
- expertise in and understanding of effective board and corporate governance.

The community sector Co-Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will each be appointed for a two-year term.

### **3.3. General community services sector membership**

The Minister for Community Services will recommend to Cabinet the appointment of general community services sector members.

To identify potential community services sector members:

- An expression of interest process and shortlisting by an independent selection panel will be undertaken.
- Complementing the EOI process and including to address any membership gaps not addressed through the EOI process, the Minister may recommend for appointment persons who did not nominate through the EOI process.

The criteria for selection will include:

- successful leadership experience in human service delivery within the community services sector or in sector-related research;
- extensive knowledge and experience of systemic advocacy and community services delivery issues across a broad range of (or multiple) sectors, including services for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse groups and communities;
- ability to work constructively with others and provide balanced, well-informed advice; and
- ability and willingness to draw on sector networks to consult on behalf of the Forum and to engage support for the Forum's work.

Taken as a whole, the appointment of the community services sector membership will:

- reflect the diversity of the communities provided with services;
- include those people who have lived experience as a consumer or recipient of community services;
- reflect the diversity of the community services sector; and
- include new and emerging leaders in the community services sector as well as established leaders.

General community services sector members will each be appointed for a two-year term. Community services sector members are appointed as individuals rather than representatives of organisations.

### **3.4. Government Co-Chairperson**

The role of Government Co-Chairperson will be rotated among the general Government membership, with one Government member fulfilling this role for each two-year term of the Forum.

### **3.5. Government membership**

General government membership will consist of the Directors General or Commissioners of the following agencies. In the event the Director General, or Commissioner is unable to attend a senior representative from the Department is expected to attend as a representative of the organisation. Note: Government membership is in an organisational capacity, not as individuals.

- Department of Communities
- Department of Education
- Mental Health Commission
- Department of Health
- Department of Justice
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Finance
- Lotterywest
- Public Sector Commission

### **3.6. Remuneration of members and Sitting Fees**

The community sector Co-Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and non-salaried members will receive remuneration and sitting fees in accordance with Premier's Circular 2022/02 *State Government Boards and Committees*. All accommodation and travel costs for Forum related work will be supported in accordance with the Public Sector Commission [guideline for reimbursement of travel expenses for members of Government boards and committees](#).

Sitting fees may be paid to eligible (non-salaried) members who attend an approved special meeting of the Forum.

## **4. MEETINGS**

### **4.1. Timing of meetings and working groups**

The Supporting Communities Forum will meet quarterly. The Forum, through the Co-Chairpersons, may establish time-limited working groups that meet more frequently. These working groups may include non-Forum members as required, including private sector organisations with a track record of demonstrating their corporate social responsibility and expertise in a specialised sector.

## **4.2. Agenda items, minutes and communication**

Proposed agenda items should be forwarded, via the secretariat, for approval by the Co-Chairpersons. Minutes of each meeting will be drafted and a communique will be issued following each Forum meeting.

## **4.3. Observers**

Observers may attend Forum meetings at the invitation of the Co-Chairpersons.

## **5. CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

### **5.1. Code of conduct**

Members are expected to adhere to the standards of behaviour in accordance with the Supporting Communities Forum Code of Conduct.

Members are expected to familiarise themselves with the contents and sign the acknowledgment provided, to indicate that they will uphold the Code of Conduct.

### **5.2. Conflicts of interest**

During their tenure, members will also be required to declare conflicts of interest. These requirements are set out in more detail in the Supporting Communities Forum's Board Charter, which is available on the [DPC – Forum webpage](#).

## **6. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **6.1. External communications**

All external communications on behalf of the Forum will be through the Co-Chairpersons, following the approval from the Minister for Community Services.

The Forum will operate openly and transparently and commits to distributing information regarding its activities widely.

### **6.2. Confidentiality**

Members may have access to information that relates to confidential Cabinet deliberations.

Members must treat this material as strictly confidential and will be required to sign a declaration to this effect.

## **7. REPORTING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

The Forum will provide regular reports to the Minister for Community Services.

An evaluation of the Forum will be conducted at the discretion of the Minister for Community Services to coincide with the renewal of Forum membership. This evaluation will inform a review of the Forum's Terms of Reference.



# SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM 2024 - 2025

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### From the Co-Chairpersons

As Members of the Supporting Communities Forum we have a role in supporting the development of strong, collaborative relationships between Government and the community services sector. In doing so we are committed to:

- actively engaging with the public and community services sectors;
- collaborating with service users, government agencies and community organisations at all levels;
- being accountable and transparent in how we do this; and
- communicating the Forum's work and achievements widely.

This Code of Conduct describes the behaviours that will help Members to work in this way.

Please familiarise yourself with the Code of Conduct and sign the Acknowledgement.

**Daniel Minchin**

**Lanie Chopping**

Co-Chairperson  
Community Services

Co-Chairperson  
Government

**March 2024**

### Ethics and Accountability

This Code of Conduct explains the behavioural standards for ethical and accountable conduct.

It should be read in conjunction with the Supporting Communities Forum Board Charter and Terms of Reference.

#### Personal Behaviour

The community expects Forum Members to carry out their roles with integrity, and with regard for both the Government's policies and priorities and the public interest.

This applies during Forum meetings and when representing the Forum in the community.

Community sector members are appointed as individuals on the basis of their experience and networks in the community services sector and not as representatives of specific organisations. Government sector membership is in an organisational capacity.

Members of the Forum will:

- be well informed about the role and purpose of the Forum;
- actively contribute to its work plan;
- engage with their personal networks to progress the work of the Forum;
- put the public interest ahead of their own and other Members' personal and pecuniary interests by acting with loyalty, in good faith, ethically and with integrity.

## ATTACHMENT 2

### Communication and Official Information

Information regarding the Forum will be circulated widely through communiqués and other channels.

Forum meetings are not confidential. Occasionally, however, specific information may be identified by the Co-Chairpersons as confidential.

Members will:

- actively communicate the work of the Forum through their personal networks;
- respect the confidentiality of information identified by the Co-Chairpersons at all times; and
- respect the boundaries of their role by not using information obtained through the Forum for personal, commercial or political gain.

### Fraudulent or Corrupt Behaviour

Fraud is defined as dishonest activity causing actual or potential financial loss to a person or organisation.

Corrupt conduct occurs when a member uses or tries to use their position for personal advantage or to the detriment of others.

Community confidence in ethical decision making, and in the Forum, is put at risk if fraudulent or corrupt behaviour occurs.

Members will:

- not engage in fraudulent or corrupt behaviour; and
- report suspected instances of this behaviour to the Co-Chairpersons who will consider the appropriate response.

### Use of Public Resources

We are required to use the Government's resources responsibly.

Members will:

- avoid unnecessary and/or inefficient use of public resources;
- maintain appropriate documentation to support claims for sitting fees, travel and accommodation and use of other public resources; and
- ensure that public resources are only used for Forum related business.

### Record-Keeping and Use of Information

Correspondence and documents created or received relating to the Forum's business are considered to be government records, and as such are subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

Members will:

- ensure that recorded information under their control (in paper or electronic form) is stored safely and appropriately; and

- be diligent in handling Forum records and sensitive documents.

### Conflicts of Interest

When personal, social, commercial or political activities interfere or have potential to influence the Forum's work, a conflict of interest may exist which must be resolved.

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived to exist, or potentially exist and take various forms.

For example, information received through the Forum may lead to perceived or real conflicts of interest by giving advantage to an employer or interest group.

It's not necessarily a problem to have a conflict of interest but it must be declared and managed accordingly.

Members will:

- report actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest to the Co-Chairpersons or Executive Director, Community Policy Unit, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, prior to a meeting; and
- ensure that relationships with individuals, organisations and groups known to them do not affect their ability to provide impartial and reasonable advice.

### Reporting Suspected Breaches of the Code

Suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct can be reported to the Co-Chairpersons or to the Executive Director, Community Policy Unit, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The Co-Chairpersons or Executive Director will consider an appropriate response following advice from the Public Sector Commission.

### Acknowledgement

I acknowledge and accept the Supporting Communities Forum Code of Conduct.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 2024

Note that Directors General and Commissioners are also bound by the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and the code of conduct for their home agency. This Code of Conduct reflects similar behavioural standards





## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM 2024 – 2025 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

It is the responsibility of each Member to inform the Forum Co-Chairpersons or the Executive Director, Community Policy Unit, Department of the Premier and Cabinet of an *actual conflict, potential or perceived conflict of interest*, consistent with the Supporting Communities Forum Code of Conduct. This can be done verbally or in writing at any time, but it is important that it occurs before discussion of a relevant meeting agenda item.

This Register is used by the Forum Secretariat to record conflicts of interest brought to the attention of the Co-Chairpersons of the Supporting Communities Forum.

The 'Conflicts of Interest Declaration' is a standing agenda item at quarterly meetings of the Forum, and may also be declared and discussed at a Forum meeting.

For more information regarding conflicts of interest, and examples of what constitutes an actual, potential or perceived conflict, please contact the Forum Secretariat at [SCF@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:SCF@dpc.wa.gov.au).

Name of Forum Member	Description of Interest	Date of Disclosure	Actual, Potential or Perceived	Action Taken (Record, Restrict, Recruit, Remove, Relinquish, Resign)
<i>e.g. SMITH, John</i>	<i>Board member of agency ABC</i>	<i>7/3/24</i>	<i>Perceived</i>	<i>Record</i>