



## **SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FORUM** **COMMUNIQUE – MEETING 18 June 2018**

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The Supporting Communities Forum met on 18 June 2018 for its second quarterly meeting this year at Dumas House, West Perth.

The function of the Supporting Communities Forum is to support the implementation of the State Government's Supporting Communities policy to improve the quality of services to vulnerable Western Australians.

The Forum's work is informed by, and supports public sector reform processes currently underway in Western Australia and Forum members are regularly updated on these initiatives. At the June meeting, the Forum received a substantial briefing from Grahame Searle, Director General of the Department of Communities (the Department) on changes underway within the new Department, followed by a wide ranging discussion.

Grahame Searle summarised the major changes underway within the new Department in response to the Machinery of Government reforms:

1. The new departmental structure, its purpose – “collaborating to create pathways that enable individual, family and community wellbeing” – the need to adopt person-centred, locally driven and outcomes focused ways of working (People, Place and Home) and the challenges involved in implementation.
2. The Department's aspiration is that it will be a policy and values driven organisation which puts people, families and communities at the centre of its activities.
3. The new structure amalgamates the former Departments of Child Protection and Family Support and Housing with the Disability Services Commission, the Regional Services Reform Unit, the communities component of the former Department of Local Government and Communities and the regional coordination role of the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
4. The new executive structure for the Department will be implemented from 1 July 2018 comprising a single Locality Manager responsible for managing integrated services in each region. Specialist roles will be retained. From 1 July the new departmental structure will be in place in the Kimberley Region, from 1 March 2019 in the Great Southern and the remaining regions anticipated by 1 September 2019.

This was followed by an update on the work of the Public Sector Reform Unit within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet by Emily Roper, Director Public Sector Reform. The PowerPoint slides of these presentations are available [here](#).

The Supporting Communities policy includes a range of commitments designed to improve and streamline community services procurement practices across State Government agencies. For this reason, Minister McGurk has requested that the Forum provide advice to the review of the Delivering Community Services in Partnership (DCSP) Policy (the Policy) before the final draft Policy is considered by Government.

To assist the Forum to prepare its advice to Minister McGurk, the Forum's Procurement Working Group considered the draft Policy on 7 June followed by a discussion at the Forum led by Tim Marney and Vicki O'Donnell in their roles as Co-Chairs of the Working Group. Kate Ingham and Steven Hill from Department of Finance, Funding and Contracting Services also provided an overview of the review of the Policy. The PowerPoint slides of this presentation are available [here](#).

It was acknowledged that the Department of Finance had consulted extensively regarding the review of the Policy.

The key points that arose during the discussion were:

- lack of consistency with regard to the implementation of the Policy across the public sector;
- co-design of services with the not-for-profit sector should be a requirement of government agencies and this intent should be reflected directly in the Policy;
- a cultural competency orientation is needed to ensure that individuals and groups with particular cultural needs are supported in procurement processes and in-service planning implementation and review;
- the intellectual property of not-for-profit agencies participating in procurement processes requires stronger protection;
- there is a need to develop inclusive 'lessons learned' processes to promote improvements in procurement and for training of procurement staff within government agencies to reinforce cultural change;
- there should be greater consultation and involvement with the sector in the planning of procurement processes, such as collaborative funding approaches; and
- a number of specific changes were proposed to the Policy such as the need to increase the minimum notice period in service agreements from three months to nine months.

Detailed notes concerning the Forum's comments on the draft Policy are available in the meeting notes for the 18 June meeting [here](#). The Chairperson has now written to Minister McGurk.

At the inaugural meeting of the Forum in March, seven working groups were established to address the priorities for the Forum as identified by the Premier and reflected in the Forum's terms of reference:

1. **Procurement Working Group** – this group has provided advice to the Forum regarding the draft DCSP Policy and will focus on four themes including co-design, practice review, outcomes-based commissioning and consolidation opportunities.

2. **Homelessness Working Group** – this group has developed a high-level draft project plan informed by a full-day planning session on 29 June 2018 and is working collaboratively with other key stakeholders who are active in this policy area.
3. **Data sharing and Linkage Working Group** – a key focus of this group will be to provide comments on the Government’s discussion paper on the proposed data sharing legislation.
4. **Outcomes Working Group** – this group will give strategic oversight and guidance to the work being carried out by WACOSS and DPC to develop an outcomes measurement framework for the State with a focus on:
5. **Our Communities Report Working Group** – the group has developed a project plan and will set up the intent and parameters for the Report, but will not be responsible for developing the Report for Government.
6. **Communication about the Forum Working Group** – the group’s preliminary project plan focuses on preparing a communication plan to inform the community sector and broader community about the work of the Forum.
7. **Collaboration Working Group** – the group’s project plan and discussions are still in the preliminary stages, but will focus on debunking some of the myths about collaboration and addressing questions regarding collaboration in practice, consumer participation, learning from failures and barriers to collaboration.

It was noted that all the working groups’ areas of focus are interrelated and processes need to be in place to ensure that all members are well informed of the work being undertaken by each group to minimise the potential for duplication and overlap.

The Forum also considered a number of topics for more detailed discussion at its meetings scheduled in September and December. In addition to the previously identified Sustainable Health Review, these include:

- cultural competency – to be led by Kate George and Maria Osman;
- a discussion paper on data sharing legislation - to be led by Darren Foster and Pip Brennan;
- models of individualised and personalised services - to be led by Julie Waylen; and
- a presentation by Compassionate Communities.

Beyond the Forum’s regular meetings, the Chairperson and Deputy welcome opportunities to meet with public and not-for-profit organisations to hear the range of views on the potential work of the Forum and ways in which it can engage with stakeholders and communicate its work and achievements.

These meetings, which are continuing, have been well received. These discussions have built relationships that will assist the Forum to draw on advice and the networks of 14 not-for-profit organisations, the Departments of Treasury and Finance, LotteryWest and the Western Australian Local Government Association.

The Chair of the Forum will be providing to the Premier, as requested an update on the progress of the Forum to date.

The next meeting of the Supporting Communities Forum will take place on 17 September 2018.

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