

Delivering Community Services in Partnership Working Group

Terms of Reference

November 2024

Purpose

The purpose of the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Working Group (DCSPWG) is to enable genuine partnership between government and the community services sector (the sector), based on mutual trust and respect. The DCSPWG will engage both sectors in shared responsibility to ensure effective implementation of the intent of the Delivering Community Services in Partnership (DCSP) Policy and the State Commissioning Strategy (SCS). The DCSPWG will provide strategic oversight of the commissioning processes related to the DCSP Policy, SCS and its Implementation Plan.

The critical elements of the partnership between government and the sector in the delivery of community services are:

- a collaborative approach;
- interdependence;
- mutual respect;
- trust; and
- recognising the value and contribution of both sectors.

At all times, both government and the sector must remain committed to putting children, families and communities first, and seeking to secure better outcomes for all Western Australians. The relationship between government and the sector in delivering community services shall be defined and directed by this shared goal.

DCSP Policy Statement

The DCSP Policy seeks to improve outcomes for all Western Australians through a genuine partnership between agencies, the not-for-profit community services sector and service users in the planning, purchase and delivery of sustainable Community Services in Western Australia.

The DCSP Policy will facilitate this by:

- breaking down the barriers between agencies and the not-for-profit community services sector by promoting productive relationships based on the Partnership Principles and Behaviours;
- providing direction in the approach to the procurement of Community Services. This includes the requirement for sound and timely planning, genuine stakeholder engagement, co-design and relationship-based service agreement management;
- promoting flexibility, innovation and community responsiveness to better meet community, cultural and individual needs;
- clarifying when a targeted approach to procuring Community Services is appropriate and when an open tender is more appropriate;
- streamlining procurement processes, reducing 'red tape', complexities and inconsistencies, and standardising terminology to clarify the dialogue between all parties; and
- ensuring that agencies contract with the not-for-profit community services sector in a manner that supports sustainable and effective service delivery and recognises the importance of ongoing organisational viability.

SCS Statement:

The SCS aims to change the way government delivers community services in Western Australia (WA). The Strategy will drive to achieve a holistic and sustainable community services system through a commissioning approach. Commissioning is a strategic approach that will enable a fundamental shift in the system of managing the delivery of services, to provide better services to Western Australians. The future of community service delivery will be grounded in key principles applicable to both government and the community services sector.

The guiding principles of the SCS include:

- A community and person-centred approach focused on outcomes that deliver social value at an individual, community and population level;
- A sustainable system that commissions services at a fair and appropriate price, and continuously improves through the development of a competent workforce, and strengthened monitoring, evaluation and review of services outcomes;
- Inclusive services with a focus on Aboriginal outcomes and partnerships. Engagement is led and informed by Aboriginals, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities and other priority groups, ensuring needs are recognised within government strategies at a whole of system level;
- Well-led, supported and transparent system with clear roles, responsibilities and mechanisms for central oversight and system accountability.

Functions

The functions of the DCSPWG are to:

- Discuss commissioning practice, general or targeted, which will positively impact on or assist in the implementation of the DCSP Policy and SCS Implementation Plan.
- Contribute to informing State Government agencies and Community Sector organisations on a commissioning approach to procurement and contract management through the collective knowledge and experience of the working group members, and through guidance materials.
- Provide advice to and review the implementation and operationalisation of the Outcomes Measurement Framework, supporting agencies to better evidence achievement of service level outcomes for each contract.
- Monitor the implementation and progress of the Outcomes Measurement Framework to inform future policy decisions.
- Provide advice, feedback and recommendations on the implementation of Agency Commissioning Plans and commissioning approaches with a focus on the SCS guiding principles.
- Monitor the implementation of the SCS across government agencies and community services, and report to the Commissioning for Outcomes Deputies Group (via the DCSPWG minutes) including providing advice, input and updates on any relevant issues including Commonwealth not-for-profit reforms
- Provide advice and report to the Supporting Communities Forum as needed on the implementation of the DCSP Policy and SCS including the implementation of measures to address identified gaps aligned with the priority areas of the SCS and the 2024-26 SCS Implementation Plan.
- Provide advice, input and updates to the Commissioning for Outcomes Deputies Group on an ad hoc basis on any relevant issues including Commonwealth not-for-profit reforms.

Deliverables

The DCSPWG will provide status updates and recommendations to the Supporting Communities Forum and specific updates to the Commissioning for Outcomes Deputies Group.

Meeting procedures

Meeting procedures are as follows:

- The DCSPWG will meet quarterly or more regularly as required.
- Meetings will be conducted in a manner determined by the co-chairs, subject to these Terms of Reference.

- Minutes must be kept of every meeting and circulated for comment prior to being formally accepted at subsequent meetings.
- Papers for each meeting must be circulated at a reasonable time prior to each meeting.
- Where practicable, the secretariat will circulate papers out-of-session.
- All members of the DCSPWG can nominate agenda items relating to community services procurement including priority areas under the State Commissioning Strategy Implementation Plan.
- Declaration of any conflicts of interest must be included on each meeting agenda.
- Agenda items will include updates from aligned groups such as the Supporting Communities Forum and the Sustainable Health Review.

Chairpersons

The DCSPWG will be co-chaired by Finance (General Manager, Government Policy and Strategy) and a community sector member. The community sector chair will be elected by the community sector representatives.

Membership

The DCSPWG will comprise of senior State Government agency and community sector representatives. Membership will be reviewed on an as needs basis. Members of the DCSPWG will be nominated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated leadership capacity, strategic thinking role at a sector or industry level.
- Proven ability to act independently in the best interests of the community.
- Capacity for collaboration and constructive criticism, and ability to be part of an effective team.

State Government members

State Government members will be nominated by the Director General or equivalent of their agency or their representative on the Commissioning for Outcomes Deputies Group based on their understanding of the community services procurement environment. State Government members are expected to be executive level staff (Director or above), with the ability to make decisions within their agency and empowered to provide updates on Commissioning activities or compliance with the DCSP Policy. Agencies are permitted to invite internal guests should they have expertise or significant interest in a specific agenda item, however this must be presented to and supported by Finance.

Members will represent the following agencies:

- Department of Communities
- Department of Education
- Department of Finance (General Manager, Government Policy and Strategy and Assistant Director, Community Services Procurement Policy)
- Department of Health
- Department of Justice
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Treasury
- Lotterywest/Healthway
- Mental Health Commission

Community sector members

Community sector members will be nominated by community sector peak bodies with terms running for a period of two years. They will be executive staff at key peak bodies that address issues in community services procurement, as well as representatives from community services organisations.

Membership will represent a diversity of services and include as a minimum five Peak organisations and five Community service organisations from the regional and metro area. Members from Supporting Communities Forum may nominate to be a member.

Current DCSPWG community sector members are:

- Aboriginal Health Council of WA
- Community Employers WA
- Council of Aboriginal Services WA
- Minderoo Foundation
- Palmerston
- RISE
- WA Association for Mental Health
- WA Council of Social Service
- Zonta House Refuge Association

Proxies

Any member of working group may appoint a proxy representative to attend and participate in a DCSPWG meeting. Proxy representatives have the same ability to act or make decisions on behalf of their agency or organisation as members have. It is the DCSPWG member's responsibility to provide their proxy with an overview of the role of the DCSPWG, including a copy of the Terms of Reference prior to them attending a meeting. It is expected government proxy representatives will continue to be executive level staff.

Expectations of members

It is expected that members of the DCSPWG will:

- commit to attending quarterly meetings; and
- advise Department of Finance if they are unable to attend the meeting

If a member fails to attend two or more consecutive meetings, membership to the DCSPWG may be terminated, unless a leave of absence has been granted by co-chairs or a proxy attends in the meetings in place of the member.

There is no minimum quorum for the DCSPWG. Matters brought before the DCSPWG for approval will be considered approved if a majority of government agency members and a majority of community sector members present are in favour.

Review of DCSPWG

An annual review of the effectiveness of the DCSPWG shall be conducted. Finance will lead the review with input from the working group's membership. Findings of the review may be presented to the Commissioning for Outcomes Deputies Group for noting.

Sub-groups

The DCSPWG may from time to time establish sub-groups to address specific issues. These sub-groups will report to the DCSPWG and will operate until the DCSPWG determines that they are no longer required.

Resources and support

The Department of Finance will provide secretariat support to the DCSPWG.

Relevant policies and resources

- [Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy](#)
- [Planning in Partnership Guide for Commissioning Community Services](#)
- [Buying Community Services Multi-Step Guide](#)
- [Supplying Community Services Multi-Step Guide](#)
- [State Commissioning Strategy](#)
- [State Commissioning Strategy Implementation Plan](#)
- [Financial Guidelines for Government Agencies Commissioning Community Services, Treasury Guidelines](#)