



EVENT REPORT

DCD Reform: Implications for the Non Government Sector

WACOSS SOCIAL POLICY WORKSHOP

2 July 2007

BACKGROUND

In August 2006, the State Government ordered a functional review of the Department for Community Development (DCD). Ms Prudence Ford was appointed the independent reviewer and presented her report to the Premier in January 2007. Of the 70 recommendations contained in the Ford Report, only one was not endorsed by the State Government; a recommendation to not expand mandatory reporting of child abuse. Mandatory reporting of sexual abuse will be introduced for some government and medical professionals.

The recommendations of the Ford Report are child protection focused and include the disbanding of DCD and the creation of two new departments. The new departments which officially came into being on 1 July 2007 are the Department for Child Protection (DCP) and the Department for Communities (DFC).

WACOSS WORKSHOP

WACOSS is the peak body of the non-government human services sector in WA. The majority of the agencies WACOSS represents are primarily funded by DCD or at the very least have substantial dealings with the department.

The implementation of the Ford Review will have a significant impact on the community sector; with existing DCD service groups to be transferred into the new departments and the non-government sector being called upon to play a greater role in service delivery.

The purpose of the WACOSS Workshop – *DCD Reforms: Implications for the Non Government Sector* was to inform the sector about: the Ford Report recommendations; implementations thus far and how the new departments will work with the non-government sector. The workshop was also designed for attendees to provide feedback to WACOSS about what they view to be the priority issues for their organisations and the sector as a whole.

Appendix 1 lists the workshop attendees.

PROGRAM

Speakers

- Mr Ian Carter, CEO Anglicare WA & former WACOSS President
- Hon Sue Ellery, Minister for Child Protection; Communities; Women's Interests; Seniors and Volunteering
- Ms Pauline Bagdonovicius, A/Director General, Department for Child Protection
- Mr Wayne Salvage, A/Director General, Department for Communities
- Ms Lisa Baker, Executive Director, WACOSS

Workshop (Facilitated by Ms Irina Cattalini, WACOSS Director of Social Policy)

- Mapping the Issues
- Development of position on issues
- Agreement on position and priorities

Mr Ian Carter

(Welcome)

Mr Carter welcomed the speakers and audience on behalf of WACOSS, and explained that the event would be an opportunity to hear from Government and feed into the reform process. Mr Carter briefly described the non-government advisory group which has been appointed to provide advice to the minister about implementing the DCD review. The members of the *Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on the Implementation of the Department for Community Development Review* are:

Ms Fay Alford	(Foster Care Association of WA)
Ms Lisa Baker	(WA Council of Social Service Inc)
Mr Ian Carter	(Alliance for Children at Risk; Anglicare WA)
Ms Colleen Hayward	(Telethon Institute for Child Health; Kulunga Research Network)
Mr Darrell Henry	(Ministerial Advisory Council on Child Protection)
Ms Lisa Laschon	(CREATE)
Mr Francis Lynch	(Alliance for Children at Risk; Mercy)
Ms Rae Walter	(Ngala; WA Council of Social Service Inc)

Mr Carter stated it was vital that the community sector feed ideas into the CAC and that in particular, practical suggestions are needed.

Hon Sue Ellery Minister for Child Protection; Communities; Women's Interests; Seniors and Volunteering -

(Overview of Reform)

The Minister expressed that this is an important period in WA for social policy, advocacy and how best to move forward. The current economic boom in WA means that most people are benefiting but the differences between those who are and those who are not is stark.

Government/Non Government Relationship

The Minister stated that all sectors have a role to play in child protection and community development but that Government needs to play the main role. However, a genuine partnership between the Government and non-government sectors is critical. The Ford Report identified a number of areas needing a partnership focus and how this can be better achieved.

Ms Ellery communicated that the Government is committed to a genuine partnership with the non-government sector and would like to be judged on actions rather than words on paper. Positive developments at present are: the CAC input into the implementation of the Ford Report; that the Industry Roundtable is up and running; and that in an effort to improve its methodology, the indexation policy for non government funding is under review.

As demand for services has grown significantly, the need for effective collaboration between Government and non-government has also increased. The Minister also explained that with the creation of DCP and implementation of the Ford Report a new demand based system of funding based on socio-economic indicators will be established. This should deliver sustainable and predictable levels of funding in WA.

The new departments: Child Protection and Communities

The Minister explained that the question of which functions should go into which departments has largely been determined but there are still some functions yet to be allocated and or confirmed. The information below is the current configuration:

The Department for Child Protection (DCP):

- Adoption
- Child protection – children at risk
- Children and young people in care
- Foster care
- Indigenous
- Working with Children checks

The Department for Communities (DFC):

- Child Care
- Children and Youth
- Family and Domestic Violence
- Multicultural Affairs
- Parenting
- Seniors
- Women
- Volunteering

Ms Ellery explained that some services are not easily categorised and that the Government is still seeking advice about which department such services should go to. For example, there is a diversity of views about what to do with the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). Where should it sit? Should it be split? Should it go to the Department for Housing and Works? The Minister indicated that she is leaning towards keeping SAAP located within DCP, but that the final decision has yet to be made.

Ms Pauline Bagdonovicius, A/Director General, Department for Child Protection
(Overview of the Department for Child Protection: How the new Department will work with Non Government Organisations)

Ms Bagdonovicius' presentation covered the following topics

- the responsibilities of the new Department for Child Protection (DCP)
- the structure of DCP
- program management and resource allocation
- funding relationships; CDFOs and CSOs
- Non-government funding and services - final decision yet to be made but universal services will go to DFC and services specifically targeting at risk will go to DCP
- SAAP issues
- service agreements
- increased opportunities for non government delivery of services
- new framework for Government/Non-government partnership

Mr Wayne Salvage, Acting Director General, Department for Communities
(Department for Communities: Establishment and opportunities for working collaboratively with the non-government sector)

Mr Salvage's presentation covered the following topics

- background to the establishment of the new Department for Communities (DFC)
- role of DFC including social policy development, services and industry support
- DFC interim structure
- short to medium term priorities for DFC including legislative changes, function and budget transfers and inaugural strategic plan
- anticipated broad social policy development role and across government conduit
- collaboration with DCP and the non-government sector

Ms Lisa Baker, Executive Director WACOSS
(DCD Reform: Implications for the non-government sector)

Ms Baker's presentation covered the following topics:

- shared non-government positions on DCD review
- Ford Report recommendations
- WACOSS position
- Implications for the non-government sector and issues for consideration

TO DOWNLOAD THE PRESENTATIONS FROM THE WORKSHOP VISIT THE WACOSS WEBSITE: <http://www.wacoss.org.au/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=566&op=page>

Facilitated workshop

Ms Irina Cattalini WACOSS Director of Social Policy

Participants divided into three workshop streams which were used as a guide for discussions:

1. Creation and Allocation	2. Improving Child Protection Practices	3. Policy and Planning
<i>Issues:</i> The creation of the two new departments and the location of services and resource allocations within them, including contracting NGOs	<i>Issues:</i> How NGOs can contribute to the improvement of Child Protection practices through DCP guidelines, business practices, carers and an expanded role for NGOs	<i>Issues:</i> How NGOs can contribute to the policy and planning processes of each of the new departments, including broad strategy, workforce planning, interagency collaboration and performance reporting

In groups, participants mapped and prioritised issues; negotiated agreed positions and considered future actions.

Workshop Outcomes

1. Creation & Allocation

A number of key issues emerged from this stream:

Two New Departments

- Importance of relationship between the two new departments – interface and collaboration. Holistic approach to child protection and community development is needed and therefore the two new departments must have clear channels of communication. Policy must not be divorced from practice
- Concern about the apparent power differential between the two new departments; is DFC seen by Government to be of lesser importance?
- Clarification needed about the role of DFC in regional, rural and remote areas of WA
- Government needs to conduct further information sessions with the non-government sector about the new departments and their services
- Concern about where community development sits within the new structure as it is an element of all services

Location of services

- Strong message from workshop participants: SAAP should be situated in the ONE department only. Most participants believe DCP to be the most appropriate department for SAAP
- More funding for children needed within SAAP
- Whichever department a service ends up in, it is important that there be minimal disruption so that corporate knowledge/history is retained

Resource Allocation

- Non-government sector must be involved in the proposed demand driven model of resource allocation. It needs to be long-sighted and transparent. Resource allocation and funding needs to be coherent with a social vision and not piecemeal

- Concern about adequate resource allocation being afforded to DFC, target groups and supporting vulnerable adults

Non-government contracting and funding

- Strong message from workshop participants: There should be no duplication/increased reporting requirements for NGOs in restructuring. NGO contracting and funding should be situated within the ONE department. Even as things are reporting requirements for NGOs needs streamlining
- Concern about having to deal with a number of various CDFOs and CSOs if they are spread across both departments with different services
- One workshop group suggested that DFC house an 'NGO funding directorate' which could coordinate all government departments' funding of NGOs
- Value of sector needs to be reflected in funding - proper costing of services so core funding is accordingly increased
- Indexation of non-government funding needs to be based on consistent formulas which reflect true rises in costs

2. Improving Child Protection Practices

Government/non-government relationship

- To better enable NGOs to contribute expertise to the improvement of child protection practices, work needs to be done first to improve the relationship between the government and non-government sectors
- The relationship should be based on mutual respect and the acknowledgement that we are working towards the same goals: to protect and improve the wellbeing of children, families, and communities
- There needs to be a more comprehensive sharing of information from DCD to non-government and better collaboration on shared cases
- Need to build protocols for interaction and shared responses to clients

Child Protection Guidelines

- Strong message from participants: the timeliness of the response to children in crisis from Government needs to be improved
- Children should be seen as clients in their own right
- Training should be undertaken together (Govt/NGOs) on guidelines for best practice in child protection. For example training for group home workers on mandatory reporting
- Government should undertake community-wide child protection principles training

Services

- New and existing services need to be integrated rather than work in disjointed isolation
- Funding for both Government and non-government children's services needs to be increased but the situation is critical in the non-government sector. Funding is desperately needed to maintain/increase the number of qualified, experienced staff who work on the front line
- There is a need to expand support services to children in care which the non-government sector can play a key role in providing if properly resourced
- Funding needs to be realistic and reflect true costs. For example regional services are generally more expensive to run than in Perth
- Need for increased funding to youth accommodation services

3. Policy and Planning

Early Years Strategy

- Non-government sector must be involved in the strategic development of the strategy and be equally resourced to implement it
- There should be an external review of the existing strategy to know what has worked, what hasn't and why
- Strategy should be based on best practice and benchmarked against interstate/international models
- Strategy, programs and funding must be about achieving clear outcomes rather than to be seen to be doing something
- Ensure strategy links across government departments and the soon to be established office of the Children's Commissioner

Child Care

- It is imperative that the review of Child Care regulations be carried through (as recommended in the Ford Report (rec # 6))
- The review needs to recognise that a one-size fits all approach is inappropriate as centres operate in different conditions – eg urban, regional, rural and remote conditions; commercially and also not-for-profit
- To develop practical regulations broad consultation across the state with providers should be part of the review
- The complexity of Child Care regulations as they are has become prohibitive for most not-for-profit community organisations
- Family Day Care Centres are having to close as they struggle with issues such as building maintenance costs and accessing suitable carers
- The Child Care workforce shortage must also be addressed

Early Intervention – Strategic Framework

- Framework should be developed closely with community sector including child health research centres, child care centres and churches etc
- Development of the strategic framework should be evidence based and the plan properly funded
- The successful development of a strategic framework and state plan for family support programs should be a high priority for the Government as these preventative measures are critical to improving social wellbeing

Workforce Planning

- The State Government has already committed resources to improve conditions and increase the number of government child protection workers. There has been no corresponding increase to support the work of the non-government sector who are also overburdened
- Participants identified pay parity between the government and non-government sectors as a key issue which needs to be addressed

Connections across Government and the non-government sector

- Need a social plan with indicators to coordinate communication between and across departments, levels of government and the non-government sector
- Need increased input from the non-government sector into government decision making; consistently not just after crises

- NGOs need multiple avenues to raise issues with departments such as identified gaps in child protection systems
- Lack of joined up social planning between DCD, local government and NGOs in regional, rural and remote areas – needs improving, particularly in regards to infrastructure

Related Issues

CDFOs/CSOs

Issues pertaining to Community Development and Funding Officers (CDFOs) and Children’s Services Officers (CSOs) were raised by a number of participants. When asked individually, to identify ‘one thing that needs improving about your relationship with DCD?’ the response from many participants was their working relationship with CDFOs/CSOs.

In other discussions participants raised the following points:

- Significant variation between in the skills and perspectives of CDFOs/CSOs can be problematic
- Appropriate, affordable training for CDFOs/CSOs and relationship building is needed
- NGOs should have input into the recruitment/selection of CDFOs/CSOs and a role in ongoing appraisals

Moving Forward

Whilst participants had some concerns about the implications for the non-government sector of the DCD reforms, it was generally felt that the restructuring process does represent an opportunity to improve communication between the two sectors and build a more mutually advantageous relationship.

Future Actions

Government	Non-government	Together
Increase funding to social services and help make WA’s ‘economic boom’ equitable and sustainable.	Ensure non-government issues are on the Government’s agenda (brief Minister, DGs and Treasury)	Define a Social Plan for WA. The Plan would address any areas in which the State Government can improve social wellbeing and provide an agenda for government, non-government organisations, business and the community.
Conduct further information sessions with the non-government sector about new structures – especially any changes to funding/contracting	NGOs need to document the full cost of service delivery; unify and let Government know that funding levels are unacceptable (inadequate and disproportionately less than Government services)	Build an ongoing framework for non-government input into the decision making of the two new departments, based agreed to protocols for NGO/Govt interaction and collaboration (respect, communication and consistency of information sharing)
Development and commitment to cross sectoral training	Workforce Planning: undertake similar process to the successful work done in the disability services sector, also tie in to planned work by WACOSS and the Industry Roundtable	
Ensure CDFOs/CSOs operate with consistency and transparency		
Improve the flexibility of non-government funding and getting new programs off the ground		

Further input

Minister Ellery made it clear at the workshop that she is seeking practical suggestions from the non-government sector regarding the implementation of the Ford Report. An appropriate avenue for the sector to contribute to the implementation process is through the Minister's *Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on the Implementation of the Department for Community Development Review* which WACOSS sits on.

If you have any further suggestions or issues you would like to feed into CAC please contact Ms Irina Cattalini, WACOSS Director of Social Policy by email irina@wacoss.org.au or ph 9420 7222.

Appendix 1

Workshop Attendees

Name	Organisation
Alison Hay	Anglicare WA
Allison Davidson	Ruah Refuge
Amy Quigley	WACOSS
Andrew Hall	Anglicare WA
Angie Paskevicius	Mission Australia
Brian Wooller	Mission Australia
Cindy Gorton	Learning Centre Link
Coralie Flatters	Gowrie Community Services
Denise O'Dowd	Community Housing Coalition of WA
Elizabeth Mudri	Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre
Gail Palmer	Hills Community Support Group
Grace Lazuardi	Disability Services Commission
Grady Bailey	Salvation Army
Hamish Milne	Anglican Diocese of Perth
Helen Dullard	Hills Community Support Group
Helen Mein	Ngala
Ian Carter	Anglicare WA
Irina Cattalini	WACOSS
Isabell Georgiou	Holyoake Institute
Janice Mason	Learning Centre Link
Julie Waylen	Department for Child Protection
Karen Dare	Hillarys Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
Karen Hulmes	UnitingCare West
Keri Loo	Pat Thomas Memorial Community House
Kevin Goff	St Vincent de Paul Society
Lara Sappal	City of Belmont
Leah Watkins	Starfish Consulting
Leanne Parsons	My Place Foundation
Lee Roberts	Hills Community Support Group
Lisa Baker	WACOSS
Lisa Laschon	CREATE
Lynda Wennstrom	Warrawee Women's Refuge
Margaret Findson	Crossroads West
Marilyn Chapman	Gowrie Community Services
Marion Bom	Frontier Services
Marion Hailes-MacDonald	Disability Services Commission
Mark Goerke	Anglicare WA
Norma Josephs	Assisting Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS)
Pauline Bagdonovicius	Department for Child Protection
Rebecca Jamieson	Hillarys Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
Rebekah Garwood	WACOSS
Sharon Gamble	Frontier Services
Stephanie Nazer	WACOSS
Stuart Tomlinson	Community Link and Network WA (CLAN)
Sue Doherty	UnitingCare West
Susan Teather	Resource Unit for Children with Special Needs (RUCSN)

Trish McGowan
Vicki Tan
Vikki Stone
Wayne Salvage
Wayne Stevenson
Yvonne Hunt

Pat Thomas Memorial Community House
Playgroup WA
Gowrie Community Services
Department for Communities
Communicare
Crossroads West