Investing in Outcomes

Making it Count for the People of WA

WACOSS Pre Budget Submission

For the WA State Budget 2011-12

Prepared for the WA State Government
October 2010

WACOSS
Western Australian
Council of Social Service Inc
Ways to make a difference

WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission
Investing in Outcomes
Making it Count for the Community of WA

Western Australian Council of Social Service
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October 2010

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the Western Australian Council of Social Service, we present the 2011-12 WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission to the WA Government.

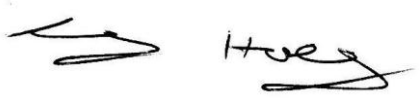
2010 has been a remarkable year for beginning the process of reengineering the relationship between the community services sector and the State Government. A critical component of this work is to build on the strengths of the community sector. It is vital that the sector's capacity to respond to community needs is restored and that Government addresses the funding shortfall estimated to be in excess of $213 million per annum. This gap is the result of funding for the sector that does not reflect the true cost of delivering services.

The continuing undervaluation of the community services sector threatens the viability of existing services and is the first hurdle that must be overcome if there is to be genuine reform in public sector service delivery. Significant progress has been made in this area but there is a long road ahead to ensure that the relationship delivers better service delivery outcomes for WA citizens, particularly those most in need.

Our State has a strong economy but not all of its citizens share its growing prosperity. The Premier, the Hon Colin Barnett has acknowledged that the State's economic growth is largely a result of a booming resource sector, and the need to provide a more targeted social dividend to the WA community. Importantly, he has also indicated that human services are often best delivered by community-based organisations, as they tend to be far closer to those that they are assisting.

The Government should also note that the WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission has been developed through extensive community based consultation. Our focus is on representing the pressing needs of those most disadvantaged in the WA community and we do this through an extensive consultative process.

The eight budget priority bids presented in this submission provide the Government with an opportunity to deliver on its promise to provide a better return to those WA citizens that need help most.



Sue Ash
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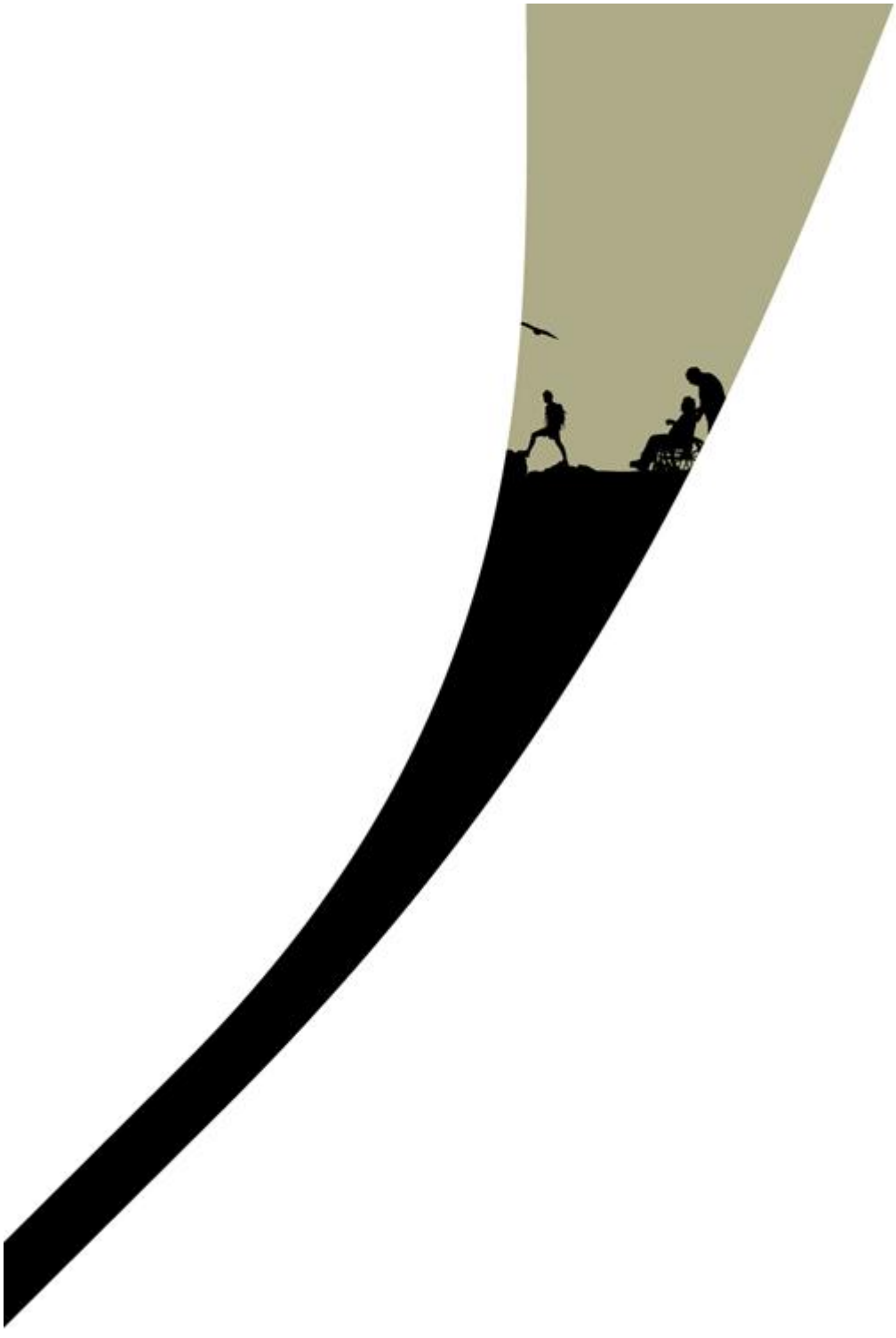


ABOUT WACOSS AND THE WA COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR

The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS), is the leading peak organisation for the community, and represents three hundred member organisations and individuals, and over eight hundred organisations involved in the provision of services to individuals, families and children in the community.

WACOSS is part of a national network consisting of the State and Territory Councils of Social Service and the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS). Our national coverage strengthens our capacity to represent the interests of people in WA across the breadth of state and national agendas.

Each year WACOSS member organisations deliver services to hundreds of thousands of Western Australians. The services we provide include health, community services and development, disability, employment and training, aged and community care, family support, children and youth services, mental health and drug and alcohol treatment, indigenous affairs, support for culturally and linguistically diverse people, victims of violence and abuse, housing and advocacy.

We speak with and for West Australians who use community services, to bring their voices and interests to the attention of government, decision makers, media and the wider community.

WACOSS PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

The WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission outlines eight key priority recommendations for the WA Government to consider in its deliberations in framing the 2011-12 State Budget.

Primarily, this submission focuses on the investment needed to sustain current services and the new or expanded service needs for the community, in service areas which are delivered by the not-for-profit community services sector.

With respect to State Government delivered services, this submission only provides recommendations on those areas where the outcomes have a significant impact on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, families and children, particularly those living on low-incomes. These areas include State Government delivery of social housing, and some aspects of the health budget.

The priority recommendations address the immediate and pressing needs of the community and plan for the longer term social benefit of Western Australia.

This submission does not provide recommendations across the entirety of Government expenditure in the State Budget, and hence does not serve as a complete shadow budget for WA. While the recommendations in this submission are focused on areas of State Government responsibility, they have been prepared with consideration of the current national policy context, including with respect to National Partnership Agreements and new initiatives arising from the Productivity Commission and the Federal Government's intentions regarding the community services sector.

The submission also provides consideration of the State Government's desire to reform the delivery of human services in WA through the implementation of the Economic Audit Committee (EAC) final report recommendations. WACOSS supports the major driver being to improve outcomes for Western Australians, and in particular, those most disadvantaged in the community.

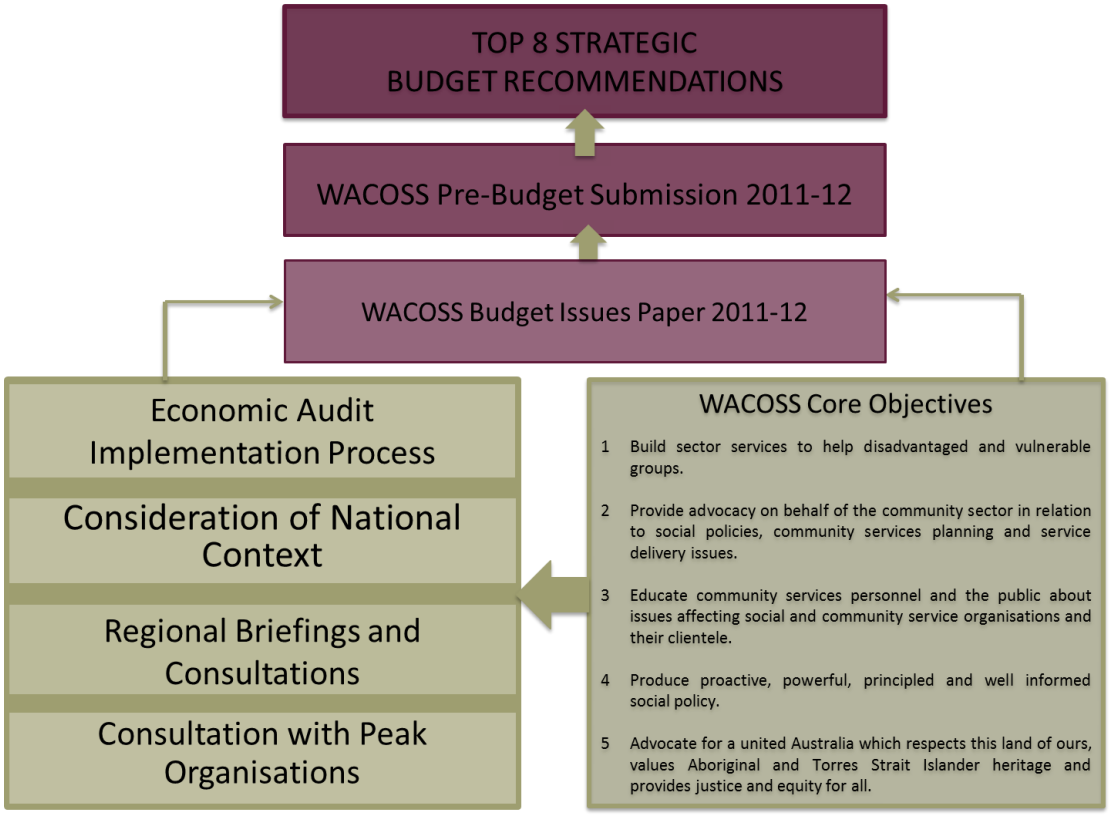
The WACOSS 2011-12 Pre-Budget Submission provides the Government with opportunity to move this agenda forward in a number of service delivery areas and importantly start the process of building sector capacity.

Built upon the expertise and experience of the not-for-profit community services sector, this submission is derived from broad consultation with representative peak bodies and agencies from across the community, including consultations in regional centres in the South West, South Coast, Mid-West, Pilbara, Goldfields and Kimberley.

Further exploration of the priority issues facing the Western Australian community services sector can be found in the WACOSS 2011-12 Issues Paper available online at www.wacoss.org.au. The relationship between this Pre-Budget Submission and the methodology adopted to inform the content of the report is shown in the diagram below.

HOW THE WACOSS PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSIONS IS DEVELOPED

The WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission is developed through the collaborative process outlined in the chart below, and based on core mission and values as the peak body for the community services sector in Western Australia.



WACOSS PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL SERVICE REFORM IN WA

WACOSS, as the peak council for social service in WA, has been working with State and Federal Governments for many years, seeking improved outcomes for the sustainability of community services.

The current State Government has responded to many issues raised by WACOSS in our 2010-11 Pre-Budget Submission, and our input to the Economic Audit Committee. The opportunity to work in partnership with the State Government on the implementation of the EAC recommendations provides renewed momentum for the reform of social services, and continues to improve the relationship between service providers and the State Government.

The EAC final report *Putting the Public First: Partnering with Community and Business for Outcomes* supports greater involvement of the community sector in social service provision, and presents the foundation for a new strategic direction in social service delivery to meet the needs of the community.

WACOSS is committed to contributing the views and expertise of the community sector to the reform process, and ensuring the process serves to build the capacity of the sector to support the needs of the community effectively, efficiently and sustainably.

The collaborative work of the State Government and WACOSS continues to reshape the relationship between the community and public sectors. It provides an opportunity for both sectors to reflect on developing innovative solutions to meet the many challenges our communities face today in delivering better community outcomes.

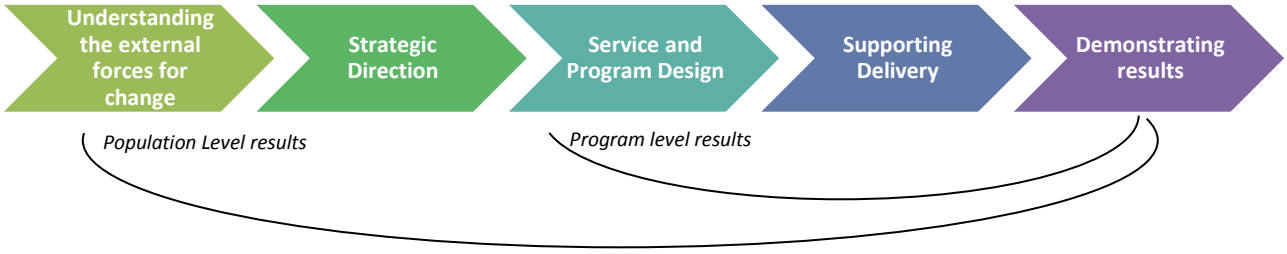
Part of this work has led to the development of a conceptual framework for improving outcomes for the community by "Changing the Way We Do Things." The framework does not yet have any formal status, but is useful for considering the different intersection points for the community services sector to contribute to the reform agenda.

The framework recognises that to achieve results that reflect the needs and aspirations of citizens, a critical shift in the way we work together is required. It captures the changing relationship between Government and the community sector and the priority to find innovative new service delivery models. It also acknowledges that community service providers (along with other key stakeholders such as business, citizens and local government) should take a proactive role in contributing to policy and planning processes.

The WACOSS 2011-12 Pre-Budget Submission has been developed within the context of this improved partnering arrangement between Government and the community sector. Our emphasis in the first instance is on building the capacity of the sector to help deliver better outcomes for Western Australians.

Changing the Way We Do Things

A conceptual framework for human services reform in WA



Comparisons with other jurisdictions indicate that WA is achieving below average outcomes in many areas. Economic and demographic changes, combined with increasing complexity in our communities, will place even greater pressure on existing services in the coming years. Key statistics include:

- 1 in 8 children in WA is considered developmentally vulnerable – the highest proportion of any State except QLD.
- 1 in 4 Western Australians will have a disability by 2026.
- By 2050, there will only be 2.7 people of working age for every person over 65 in Australia. The ratio is currently 5 to 1.

New ways of working and thinking will be needed to meet these challenges and deliver better outcomes for Western Australians.

The EAC's Final Report and statements by the Premier provide the foundation for a new strategic direction for human services delivery in Western Australia. Key components of this strategic direction include:

- A genuine partnership between the community sector and public sector in policy development and planning;
- Empowering individuals in the design and delivery of services;
- Supporting social innovation;
- Focusing on the needs of individuals, families and communities, particularly those in most need; and
- Supporting collaboration at a local level to meet community needs.

Meeting the increasingly complex and diverse needs of our communities will require an ongoing assessment of service and program design informed by:

- New and emerging models of care, focused on early intervention and support;
- Consumer/service user engagement, with increasing consumer choice and control over services they access;
- Opportunities for integrated service delivery;
- Input and upfront advice from service providers on the ground;
- Sharing of best practice and innovation in service delivery; and
- Program level performance information and data.

Ensuring sustainable and effective services will be critical to meeting the growing and diverse needs of the WA community. Key initiatives include:

- Streamlining administrative and reporting arrangements through key procurement and contractual reforms;
- Moving focus away from measuring inputs to collaboratively achieving outcomes;
- Supporting flexibility and innovation at the local level;
- Improving the sustainability of community funding arrangements; and
- Supporting capacity building through the Community Development Investment Fund.

"**I**s anyone better off?"

The ultimate objective of human services reform is to improve outcomes on the ground for all Western Australians, including the most disadvantaged.

Outcomes can be demonstrated through key indicators. These indicators should distinguish between the impact that programs have on clients (program level results) and the overall results experienced by the community (population level results).

Key indicators should be used to inform policy development, planning and service design and delivery.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2011-12 WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission focuses on key strategic recommendations that will provide targeted benefit to those Western Australians who are most disadvantaged in our community.

This submission has been developed with the conceptual framework of human services in mind. It contributes to the understanding of the external forces for change in the way that services are designed and delivered to meet the growing and more complex needs of the community.

It reflects the strategic direction outlined by the State Government in the community sector playing a greater role in service delivery. This message was conveyed by the Premier at the WACOSS Conference in May 2010:

> "*As far as the State Government is concerned, we have a broad policy position and one that was, I guess, reinforced through the Economic Audit Committee. We happen to believe, as a government, that services for people - human services - are often best delivered by community-based organisations... because community-based organisations tend to be far closer to those that they are assisting.*
>
> *They tend to be more adaptive, more flexible, able to respond to huge changes in circumstances and they are also far more successful than government in bringing in broader community support, whether it's through corporate support, volunteers, family members or whatever else."*

The submission provides recommendations for priority services and programs focused on:

- Building a sustainable community sector to deliver human services to the WA community;
- Providing affordable housing options to those Western Australian excluded from the housing and rental markets;
- Providing additional mental health funding to enable community services to play a greater role, particularly regarding early intervention and preventative services;
- Support for regional drug and alcohol rehabilitation services;
- Investing in the wellbeing of young Indigenous people;
- Providing support for reforms to early childhood health and family support services;
- Developing alternative youth employment and education pathways; and
- Supporting domestic violence and child support worker programs and justice reinvestment pilot programs to tackle community safety and justice issues.

It also focused on building the capacity of the community services sector to deliver services sustainably by paying the true cost of contracts, and enabling organisations to pay fair and just wages to staff, strengthening the viability of the community sector workforce.

This submission is built upon the expertise and experience of the not-for-profit community services sector, and derived from broad consultation with representative peak bodies and agencies from across the community, including consultations in regional centres in the South West, South Coast, Mid-West, Pilbara, Goldfields and Kimberley. WACOSS gratefully acknowledges the time and effort of all the contributors.

2011-12 BUDGET PRIORITIES

	THE ISSUES	THE PRIORITIES
1	**Building a Sustainable Community Sector**	**$218.2 million to enhance the capacity of community services across metropolitan, rural, regional and remote WA.**
2	**Affordable Housing**	**$386 million for an additional 2000 social housing dwellings, to increase public and private accommodation options in the housing continuum. This will contribute to the Affordable Housing Strategy's target of 20,000 new affordable dwellings by 2020.**
3	**Mental Health**	**$41 million for additional mental health services delivered by the not-for-profit sector.**
4	**Alcohol and Other Drugs**	**$3.2 million for two new regional drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation support services, and additional community based treatment intervention.**
5	**Indigenous Wellbeing**	**$7.25 million for healing centers and holistic wellbeing programs for young Indigenous people.**
6	**Children and Families**	**$20.6 million funding to support reforms to early childhood health and secondary support services.**
7	**Youth and Education**	**$18.1 million for additional support teams at public high schools and programs to develop alternative youth employment and education pathways.**
8	**Safety and Justice**	**$11.2 million additional funding for domestic violence and child support worker programs and expanded justice reinvestment programs.**

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

IN DETAIL

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY SECTOR

The Issues

Funding Shortfall for Community Services

During 2010, a key part of the collaborative work to implement the Economic Audit recommendations has been to address the significant deficiencies with the current model for funding community services which is unsustainable and does not reflect the true cost of delivering services.

This issue was highlighted to Government in our 2009-10 Budget submission and the Premier, the Hon Colin Barnett has subsequently acknowledged that the historical funding shortfall for community sector delivery of State-funded community services is a critical issue that will be addressed in the next State budget. The consequent inability to attract and retain employees is a constant threat to the viability of community services. Community service organisations cannot continue to pay their staff vastly less than comparable employees in the public sector, and there is limited capacity to improve the situation within current funding levels. Unless the undervaluation of the sector is corrected, the viability of many community services can not be assured.

WACOSS is part of a joint public and community sector working group (reporting to the Partnership Forum) tasked with defining and quantifying the value of the shortfall in current contracts for the delivery of community services and recommending options to address the funding concerns that provide a sustainable solution over the long term. The Partnership Forum, a key strategic advisory group in the EAC implementation process, agreed to consider the working group's findings at its October 2010 meeting prior to providing advice to the Premier on a way forward.

The Evidence

The case to build the capacity of the community services sector is compelling. WACOSS estimates that the sector is 30% under-funded. Many of the cost pressures contributing to the funding shortfall are associated with the rising costs of delivering services, especially accommodation, fuel and transport, utilities, insurance, regulatory costs (such as police clearance, working with children checks) and security needs due to the growing complexity and risks associated with service delivery.

However, the majority of the funding shortfall relates to funds required to ensure agencies have the capacity to meet fair and just salary rates. WACOSS has conducted extensive research over recent years that is strongly supportive of correcting the inadequacy of wages in the community services sector.

The undervaluation of the community services sector has implications for the gender pay gap, as over 80% of community services employees are female. WA has the largest gender pay gap (27.4%) of any State, much larger than the Australian average of 17%. This means that on average for every dollar earned by a WA full time male employee, a full time female employee earns only 72.6 cents. The national gender pay gap has remained relatively constant for the last two decades, fluctuating between 15% and 17%, the gap in WA has widened over the past two decades[1].

[1] ABS, Average Weekly Earnings, 6302.0, November 2008. Refer to WACOSS Submission to Fair Work Australia, Annual Wage Review 2010

Sector's Capacity to Deliver Services

Low salaries in social services are increasingly curbing the community sector's capacity to offer effective services based on a skilled and experienced workforce. In the 2009 ACOSS community sector survey, over 70% of respondents reported that low salaries make attracting and retaining staff more difficult.

It is also resulting in a high staff turnover rate of 23% per annum.

The poor pay of the community sector has a direct impact upon social services for clients in need. In 2007-2008, ACOSS found that 278,107 people were turned away by social service agencies, despite their eligibility for services. That is a 17.3% increase on the 237,024 people who were turned away by the same services in 2006-07; or one in 12 people.[2]

Additionally, a majority of agencies have reported tighter targeting of their services than in the past. Low retention rates and challenges in staff development and promotion heighten the stress faced by organisations that are already seeking to provide services with inadequate funding and resources.

Regional Service Capacity

The growing capacity constraints facing community services in regional WA are the most profound. WACOSS is working to assist regional service providers to build capacity through enhanced collaboration and coordination between organisations. Currently, we are working in Partnership with the Peel Community Development Group on a capacity building project. Expanding this project to the nine regions across the state would greatly improve the capacity of regional community service networks, and better inform the policy development and planning of peak organisations and governments.

[2] ACOSS Community Sector Survey 2009

Office of Community Collaboration

Voluntary and community activity is fundamental to the development of a democratic, socially inclusive society. Voluntary and community groups as independent, not-for-profit organisations, bring distinctive value to society and fulfill a role that is distinct from both the State and the market. They enable individuals to contribute to public life and the development of their communities by providing the opportunity for voluntary action. In doing so, they engage the skills, interests, beliefs and values of individuals and groups.

While Australia has a large community sector, many believe its development is hamstrung by its sometimes fractured relations with State and Federal governments, and by the absence of a coherent policy framework. In Australia, government policy is piecemeal, with no National or State policies focused on the community sector as a whole.

By contrast in the United Kingdom, the Blair Government engaged in an unprecedented set of initiatives designed not only to foster 'traditional' activities such as philanthropy, but also to broaden forms of community sector activity, deepen infrastructure support for the sector, and foster new types of community sector organisations. Partly as a result, the UK community sector is playing an ever-larger role in the national economy.

Closer to home the Productivity Commission has reported on the value of Australia's 600,000 not-for-profit organisations which contributed $43 billion to Australia's GDP, growing at an annual rate of 7.7 per cent since 2000. If you count the contribution of 4.6 million volunteers, with an imputed value of $15 billion, this would make it a similar contribution to the retail industry. They recommended that there is a need for wide-ranging reforms to remove

unnecessary burdens and costs faced by the not-for-profit sector and improve its accountability. The key messages of the Productivity Commissions' research are that more efficient regulation, improved funding arrangements and enhanced opportunities for innovation would improve outcomes for the community and the public's confidence in the sector.

The proposed reforms would directly address concerns about the multiplicity of regulatory requirements, poor collaboration between the sector and governments, and emerging capacity constraints. They would thereby create a much stronger foundation for this expanding sector.

To consolidate regulatory oversight and enhance transparency, the Commission proposes a 'one-stop shop' for Commonwealth-based regulation in the form of a Registrar for Community and Charitable Purpose Organisations. They recommended to the Federal Government that an Office for Sector Engagement should also be established to drive reform and policy development at the Commonwealth level.[3]

The WA State Government has indicated its commitment to improve the funding and contracting relationship with the sector and reduce the regulatory burden, through the development of a new *Collaboration for Community Policy*.

Coupled with the recent creation by the State Opposition of a Shadow Ministry for Community Relations, and its conference resolution to work with the sector and State Government to develop a better regulatory framework for the sector, there seems to be emerging bipartisan support for this kind of direction.

The Government has established an EAC governance structure with the Partnership Forum serving as a key group leading the implementation process. The new Partnership Forum is helping to reshape the relationship between Government and the community sector, one of the key EAC recommendations.

To continue this work in the long term, WACOSS supports the establishment of an *Office of Community Collaboration* to provide leadership from within the social economy to bring it together at State and National level.

The roles of an *Office of Community Collaboration* would be to

- Support the engagement of the community service sector in the ongoing commitment of the Government to work in partnership with the community to deliver better outcomes for the community;
- Coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the new Collaboration for Community Policy;
- Provide an ongoing structure to support the relationship between the community and public sectors; and
- Supporting the initiatives of the Partnership Forum.

This would signal to the sector and the broader community that the Government acknowledges a three sector model of the economy and the important growing economic, social and political role of social economy organisations.

[3] Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector Research report, Productivity Commission, 11 February 2010

SECTOR DEMOGRAPHICS[4]

	SIZE OF THE NFP WORKFORCE
Significant, highly skilled workforce, one third the size of the public sector	**36,000 employees**
	ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO STATE ECONOMY
Significant investment of taxpayer funds in community sector outcomes	**$4.3 billion annually**
	LEVEL OF STATE FUNDING
~350 out of 600 not-for-profit community service agencies receive state funding	**$450 million annually**

[4] Community Employers WA, Presentation to Economic Audit Committee, 17 April 2009

Sector Demographics

Figure 1 below shows demographic data regarding a number of workers representative of the community services sector. The community sector workforce is overwhelmingly comprised of females, with a ratio of almost 5:1 females to males. Most workers are aged 46 and 60 years of age. Three quarters of the workforce is located in the Perth metropolitan area with 17% located in Regional areas and 8% in remote areas of WA. There is a high turnover of staff in the community services sector with 62% of workers leaving the sector within 5 years. The vast majority of community service workers earn $50,000 or less a year. Just 11% of the workforce earns $51,000 or more a year.

Figure 1: Sector Demographics[5]

DEMOGRAPHICS				
Gender			**Length of service in current position**	
	Female	83%	Less than 2 years	57%
	Male	17%	3-5 years	24%
			6+ years	20%
Age			**Length of service in sector**	
	Mean Age Range	46-60	Less than 2 years	32%
	Less than 25	8%	3-5 years	30%
	Over 60	7%	6+ years	38%
Location			**Salary**	
	Metropolitan	75%	Less than 30K	19%
	Regional	17%	31K-40K	37%
	Remote	8%	41K-50K	33%
			51K+	11%

Increased Operational Costs

Community service providers have experienced rapid increases to their operational costs in recent years, which have far outstripped any increases they have seen in the level of their contract funding. Those cost pressures have focused on rising accommodation costs for their premises, increased fuel and transport costs, rising cost of utilities, insurance premiums, regulatory costs (such as police clearances, working with children checks) and growing security costs required to ensure the safety of their staff and clients, due to the growing complexity and risks associated with service delivery.

[5] The data in this table only includes the demographics of the surveyed workforces in the Alcohol and Other Drugs, Family and Domestic Violence, Mental Health and Women's Health sectors. Sectors in crisis. A report on remuneration, retention and recruitment challenges facing the AOD, FDV, MH and WH sectors in Western Australia Resulting from the 2007 Sector Remuneration Survey, WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH), The Women's Health Peak (WHP), The Women's Council for Family and Domestic Violence, (WCFDV), West Australian Network of Alcohol and Other Drug
Agencies (WANADA), June 2008

Widening Salary Gap

The table above compares the salaries paid to selected social workers in the community services sector with those paid in the WA public service. The two groups of workers perform work that is of equal or comparable value, yet receive vastly different rates of pay.

Figure 3: Social Workers' Wages in the Community Services and Public Sectors, 2008-10 [6]

Job title	Public Sector		Not For Profit Sector		Percentage gap	Dollar gap
	PSGA levels	PSGA salaries	SACS Award levels	SACS Award salaries		
	LEVEL 1		**LEVEL 4**			
Social Worker	**2008 3rd Year**	$55,129	**4.4**	$42,402	**23.1%**	**$12,727**
Social Worker	**2009 3rd Year**	$57,334	**4.4**	$42,402	**26.0%**	**$14,932**
Social Worker	**2010 3rd Year**	$59,627	**4.4**	$43,256	**27.5%**	**$16,371**
			LEVEL 5			
Social Worker	**2008 6th Year**	$68,027	Year 3	$45,475	**33.2%**	**$22,552**
Social Worker	**2009 6th Year**	$70,748	Year 3	$45,475	**35.7%**	**$25,273**
Social Worker	**2010 6th Year**	$73,578	Year 3	$46,406	**36.9%**	**$27,172**

RECOMMENDATIONS

***Close the Funding Shortfall* - Allocate funding in order to pay service providers the true cost of service delivery of an additional $212.7 million in 2011-12 on top of the current level of contract funding, based previous costing analysis indexed to 2011-12. This will provide a 30% increase in funding to service providers in the community services sector state-wide as well as an additional index of 20% to recognise the higher costs for service providers operating in rural, regional and remote WA. This increase is necessary to ensure adequate, equitable wages for staff and secure the viability of social services for the Western Australian community.**

***Enhance Regional Service Capacity*- Expand the current collaborative model in Peel to the nine regional areas across the state to undertake a four year capacity building project, valued at $2.3m per year.**

***Establish the Office of the Community Collaboration* - This will provide strategic guidance in evolving and managing the relationship between the WA not-for-profit sector and the State Government. It is estimated the initial investment would amount to $3.2 million.**

TOTAL: $218.2 million

[6] Salaries are derived from Public Service General Agreement 2008 Schedule 3 – Specified Calling Salaries and Social and Community Services (Western Australia) Award clause 14, as updated.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Issues

Under the National Affordable Housing Agreement, Australian Governments have agreed to work together to ensure people have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation.

WACOSS supports the common thread running through the different aspects of the agreement - that housing affordability is to be addressed not just through the traditional forms of housing assistance, but by improving the operation and effectiveness of the mainstream markets for renters and home buyers. The agreement includes important, whole-of-market indicators of housing affordability, and the baseline results are of some concern to the council.

The second theme that arises from the agreement is that governments have specifically committed to improved housing outcomes for two target groups: people facing homeless and Indigenous Australians.

People Facing Homeless

The baseline performance information in this report shows that across jurisdictions, homelessness rates are higher for young people, Indigenous people and those in remote areas. There is also a concerning increase in family group homelessness.

Indigenous Australians

Across WA, Indigenous people face greater challenges accessing mainstream housing, as well as specific problems, such as overcrowding and poor quality housing, endemic to Indigenous communities. At present, the clear conclusion is that, across all jurisdictions and indicators (other than the incidence of rental stress), the results for Indigenous households are consistently poorer than for non-Indigenous households.

People with Disabilities and Seniors

The Social Housing Taskforce also identified the housing needs of people with disabilities and seniors as two critical and growing groups in need of social housing support.

The impact of high housing prices on low and moderate income earners is severe, and high rental payments limit the ability of seniors and people with disabilities to afford other basic living costs such as food, utilities, medication and transport.[7] This is especially so for people with a disability who have additional cost pressures of home modification, which increase their need for support from the social housing sector.

Corresponding with these pressures, the number of people with high needs in social housing is also growing. There are close to 9000 aged pensioners and over 7000 disability support pensioners, tenants in public housing. The number of people with a disability in public housing has doubled in the past two decades.

WA Context

The lack of supply of affordable housing remains one of the key features of disadvantage in the WA community. 20% of WA households live on less than $500 per week. This is alarming when contrasted with the cost of housing and the lack of access to affordable options. Social housing currently represents approximately 4% of the total housing stock in WA.[8] This proportion is lower than any other Australian State, and is lower than most comparable OECD nations.

[7] More than a Roof and Four Walls
Social Housing Taskforce, Final Report 2009p18
[8] More than a Roof and Four Walls
Social Housing Taskforce, Final Report 2009

Over 23,000 applicants were waiting for public housing in WA at August 2010, which equates to over 53,000 people.

The Social Housing Taskforce's report projects that this number could be closer to 65,000 if the trends of the past decade continue. Many of these people have been waiting for 5 years or more.[9]

There have been some welcome developments in the provision of social housing in WA, but there is still a long way to go to reach the 20,000 target by 2020. It is estimated that under the national economic stimulus plan, a total of 2,600 housing units across WA will be created, but it is unclear how investment will be funded to increase supply beyond the stimulus period.

As the 2009 Social Housing Taskforce Report identified, the social housing sector needs to be reformed to better support the life chances and aspirations of both applicants for housing and existing tenants.

Responding to the Taskforce

The community sector is still waiting on the Government's response to the Social Housing Taskforce through the release of its *Affordable Housing Strategy*.

Based on the briefings on the strategy provided by the Department of Housing, WACOSS anticipates that the initiatives outlined in the *Affordable Housing Strategy* have the potential to greatly increase the supply of affordable housing in years to come. However, WA requires an immediate and ongoing increase in its social housing stock through significant investment from the State Government.

While it is not possible now to quantify the likely number of dwellings the new Affordable Housing Strategy will bring on stream, we expect that the level of additional investment required by the Government could diminish in years to come, consistent with an agreed demand model policy framework. We expect the affordable housing market to achieve greater maturity and sustainability, particularly by leveraging stock growth through the community housing sector, and other directions included in the new *Affordable Housing Strategy.* The additional investment required by the state will decline, if we see this result in an increase of affordable housing stock.

The Evidence

Home owners

The cost of land and housing grew dramatically in Western Australia between the December quarters of 2003 and 2007. The median price for housing in Perth doubled, while regional Western Australia experienced similar growth.

This had a major impact on housing affordability in Western Australia, the effects of which is still being felt today. Despite the moderate contraction of house prices that has occurred in the last 18 months, the median price for a house in Perth is still 90% higher than it was in 2003 and has risen far in excess of income growth, making home ownership impossible for many low and moderate income households in Western Australia.[10]

The most recent ABS data shows that in the year to December 2009 Perth's median house price increased by 19% to $505,000. This eclipsed the previous median price peak of $480,000 recorded during Perth's housing boom in the December quarter 2007.[11] The ABS House Price Index shows that the price of established houses in Perth has increased

[9] More than a Roof and Four Walls
Social Housing Taskforce, Final Report 2009

[10] More than a Roof and Four Walls
Social Housing Taskforce, Final Report 2009

[11] ABS. 6416.0. House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities, p.12. See also http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/738C2573EB9ED2A7CA257798001B1CDB

by 11.5% in the past year. The quarterly changes (to December 2009) show that Perth was one of the main contributors to the weighted average of the eight capital cities at +5.7%.[12]

In regional WA, purchasing a home remains beyond the reach of many, with median prices in Port Hedland $702,000, Karratha $890,000 and Broome $690,000.[13]

Housing is vital in protecting individuals and families from disadvantage and social exclusion. It is becoming increasingly difficult for many low-income West Australians to secure and maintain rental accommodation, let alone purchase a home of their own.

The median rent in Perth continues to rise. From 2007 to 2009, the median rent has increased by $80, or 27.5%, from $290 to $370 per week.[14] The vacancy rate currently stands at 4.3%, up 0.8% from the same time last year. In metropolitan WA, the median rental price has increased marginally by 2.7% over the past 12 months at $370 per week. However, the regions continue to experience higher rents in some places, with the median weekly price in Broome being $550 per week.[15]

An AHURI study on the impact of housing affordability problems on financial and social wellbeing found that 70% of low-income renters are experiencing difficulty in paying rents, and 40% had been in arrears at some time in the last three years. Some 40% of lower income renters in the study moved annually in search of cheaper rents. Lower income renters in housing stress reported depriving themselves of basic goods and services in order to meet rental repayments, including meals and adequate health and/or dental care.[16]

Homelessness

Despite the economic prosperity of recent years, the number of homeless people in Western Australia has risen. As housing affordability in Western Australia has declined over the last decade, more households have become homeless.

While the National Partnership Agreement on homelessness has seen the state deploy a number of workers in the community services sector to deliver a range of localised homelessness services and a new Foyer model for homelessness services is in development, the rate of homelessness in WA is the second worst of any State (68 per 10 000 people), and is significantly worse than the national average (53 per 10 000 people).[17]

Homelessness is particularly devastating for children, who are among the most vulnerable people in society. Compounding the problems associated with greater incidence of homelessness in the community has been the breakdown of the affordable housing system. Lower vacancy rates in social housing has increased waiting times and reduced the number of homes available for people living in temporary crisis accommodation.

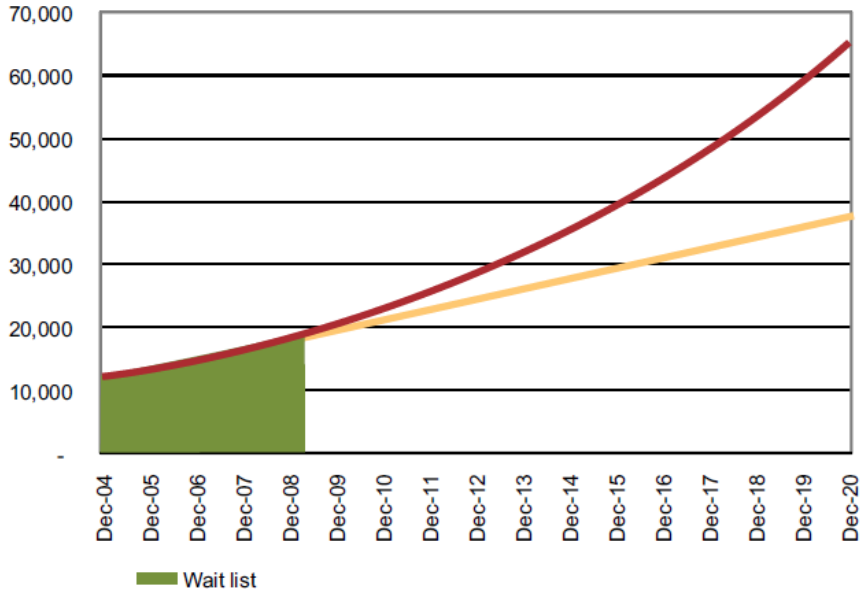
[12] ibid
[13] REIWA Property Market Indicators, Perth Median Rent. See http://reiwa.com.au/res/res-marketindicators-display.cfm
[14] REIWA Property Market Indicators, Perth Median Rent. See http://reiwa.com.au/res/res-marketindicators-display.cfm
[15] REIWA Property Market Indicators, Perth Median Rent. See http://reiwa.com.au/res/res-marketindicators-display.cfm

[16] Terry Burke and Simon Pinnegar, AHURI, Research Paper 9, 'Experiencing the Housing Affordability Problem: Blacked aspirations, trade-offs and financial hardships', January 2008.
[17] COAG Reform Council. Affordable Housing Agreement: Baseline Performance Report 2008-2009, p.45

Social Housing

The current social housing waitlist has been consistent with the 2008 forecast shown in Figure 4 of over 20,000 applicants by the end of 2010.

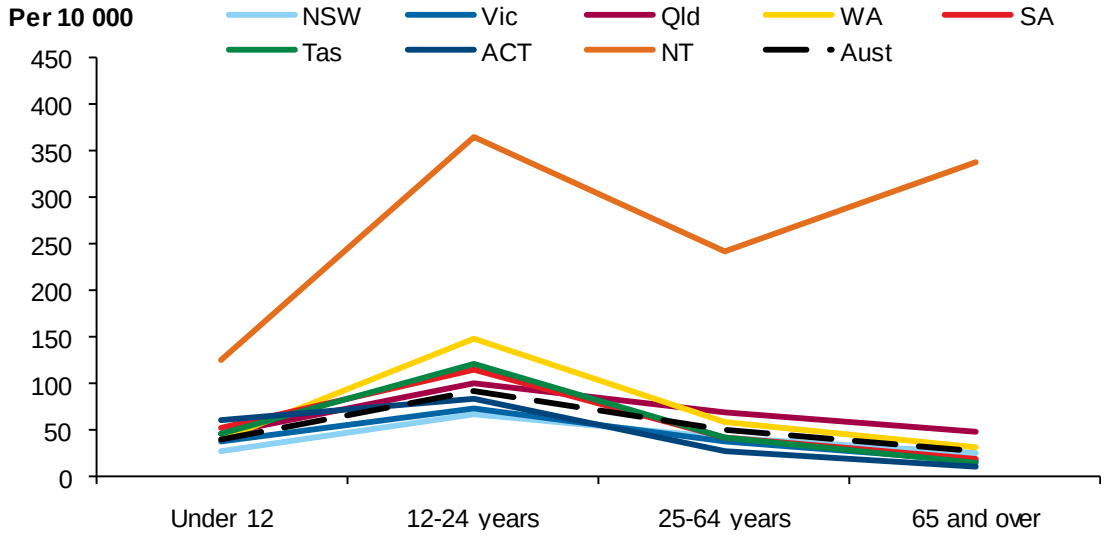
Figure 4: Rising Social Housing Waiting List Projections[18]



Homelessness – High rates for WA

WA has the second highest rate of homelessness, which is most pronounced among 12-24 year olds, as shown below.

Figure 6: Homeless rate, by age group, by State and Territory, (per 10 000 persons)2006[19]



[18] More than a Roof and Four Walls Social Housing Taskforce, Final Report 2009

[19] National Affordable Housing Agreement: Baseline performance report for 2008-09, COAG Reform 30 April 2010

Significant Gap between Housing Demand and Supply for WA

The estimated cumulative dwelling gap, as a proportion of growth in underlying demand between 2001 and 2009, is shown in the figure below. Nationally, around 178,400 dwellings are required in Australia to meet growth in demand. This dwelling gap represents 14.7 per cent of the growth in underlying demand between 2001 and 2009. Between 2001 and 2009, WA's relative dwelling gap increased by 18.5 % or approximately 30, 200 dwellings. This is higher than the national rate, and only marginally lower than NSW.[20]

Figure 7: Housing Supply and Demand, Australia and WA

Figure 7.1 Cumulative gap between housing supply and underlying demand as a proportion of the increase in demand since 2001, by State and Territory, 30 June 2009

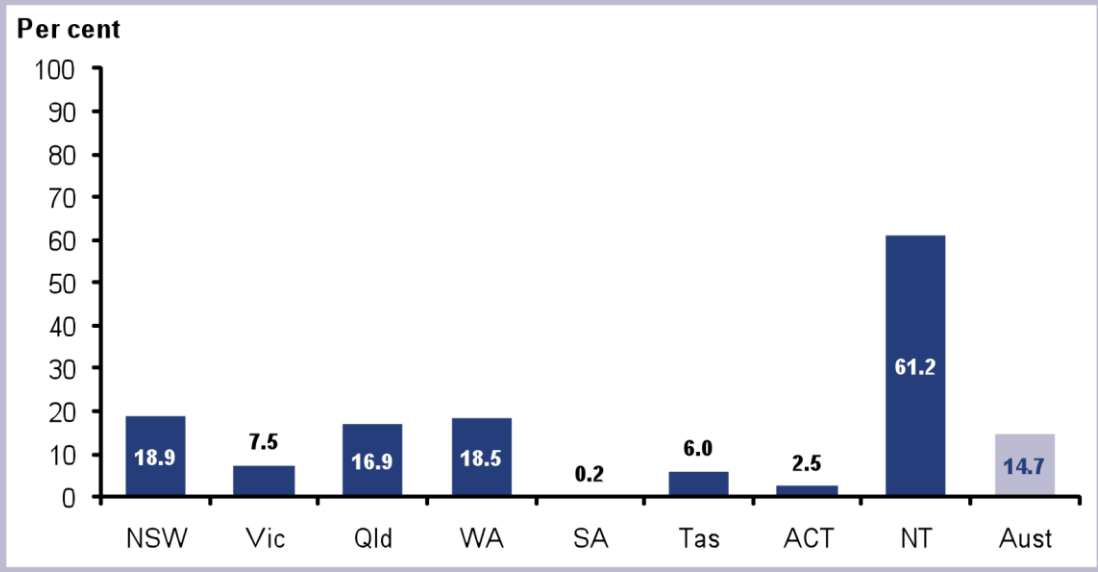


Table 7.1 Cumulative gap between demand and supply and cumulative increase in demand since 2001, by State and Territory, 30 June 2009

NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Numerator: cumulative gap between demand and supply since 2001 (number of dwellings)								
57 600	22 700	56 100	30 200	100	1 000	500	10 100	**178 400**
Denominator: cumulative increase in demand since 2001(number of households)								
304 200	304 300	332 600	163 800	59 700	17 100	17 800	16 600	**1 216 100**

RECOMMENDATION

Invest $386 million in the construction of 2000 new social housing dwellings in 2011-12 as a contribution towards increasing public and private affordable accommodation options in the housing continuum by 20,000 dwellings by 2020. The level of investment required may be higher, depending on the unit cost achievable. See the Issues Paper for more detail.

[20] National Affordable Housing Agreement: Baseline performance report for 2008-09, COAG Reform 30 April 2010 p77-8

MENTAL HEALTH

The Issues

The mental health sector is undergoing significant reform in WA. On 8 March 2010, WA established the country's first Mental Health Commission. The Commission's aim is to work collaboratively with all government agencies, community organisations and mental health professionals in the public and private sectors to transform the way in which mental health services are delivered in this state.

Major policy initiatives include:

- Establishing and maintaining a peak mental health consumer voice in Western Australia.
- The WA Mental Health Policy and Plan – to outline the State Government's policy for mental health and provide a blueprint for mental health priorities and reform in WA over the next decade.
- Establishing an advisory council that will advise on the major issues affecting Western Australians with mental health problems, their carers and service providers; and
- Moving towards purchaser-provider arrangements in relation to mental health services.

The urgent priority for the Commission is to improve the way in which individualised care is provided and coordinated for people with mental health problems.

Over the next few years, the Commission will move towards new procurement arrangements for mental health services in WA. This is consistent with the national health reform agenda, as well as the State Government's reform direction for greater choice by consumers, particularly through greater access to community-based services delivered by the not-for-profit sector.[21]

Approximately 6-7% (or $35M) of the overall mental health budget is currently directed to the community services sector, and there is already strong support for increasing outsourcing to the sector further. In line with these moves, WACOSS argues that as a transition, this proportion should increase to 12-15%, (or $76M). The community sector's peak mental health body recommends moving towards New Zealand's 25-30% in time.

However, the community services sector must be adequately resourced to take on a greater role in service delivery. There must be a significant investment in workforce development and sector capacity building. The challenge is to build and demonstrate the capacity for the community services sector to play a greater role, particularly regarding early intervention and preventative services.

Early intervention emphasis

An emphasis on early intervention should focus on mental health promotion, enabling people to recognise the early signs of mental illness and access help straight away. It is vital that the additional funding coming into the not-for-profit sector is not just focused on the acute end of service delivery, but on early intervention support services such as counselors, psychologists, and community care facilities for episodic issues.

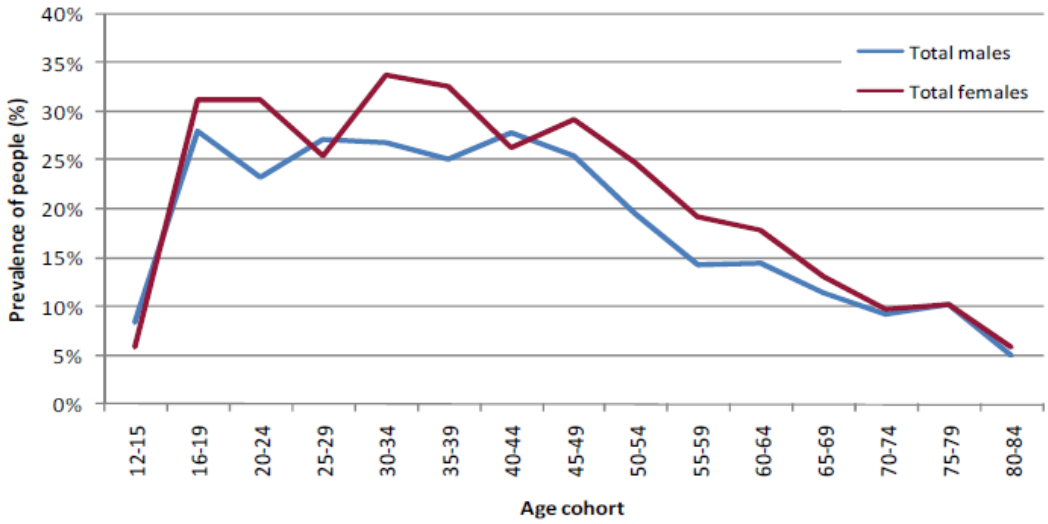
One important strategy that can empower people to be proactive about caring for and managing their own mental health is community education aimed at reducing stigma and increasing public awareness of these disorders and improving our knowledge of early warning signs.

[21] See Information Sheet No. 1: http://www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au/whats_new/whats_new_mhc/whats_new_mhc_info1.aspx

The Evidence

Nearly a quarter (24.3%) of Australian youth - people aged 12-25 years - have anxiety, affective or substance use disorders, and a variety of other mental illnesses. There are just over 1 million people aged 12-25 with a lifetime diagnosis of a mental illness who have experienced symptoms within the last 12 months (478,000 males and 526,000 females).

Figure 8: Mental illness Prevalence Rates by Age and Gender[22]



Significant Financial Costs to Community

Australia faces substantial costs arising from mental illness in young people. In 2009, the financial cost of mental illness in people aged 12-25 was $10.6 billion, with $7.5 billion (70.5%) resulting in productivity lost due to lower employment, absenteeism and premature death of young people with mental illness. Additionally, the value of the lost wellbeing (disability and premature death) was a further $20.5 billion. The cost is estimated as $31,014 per person per year.

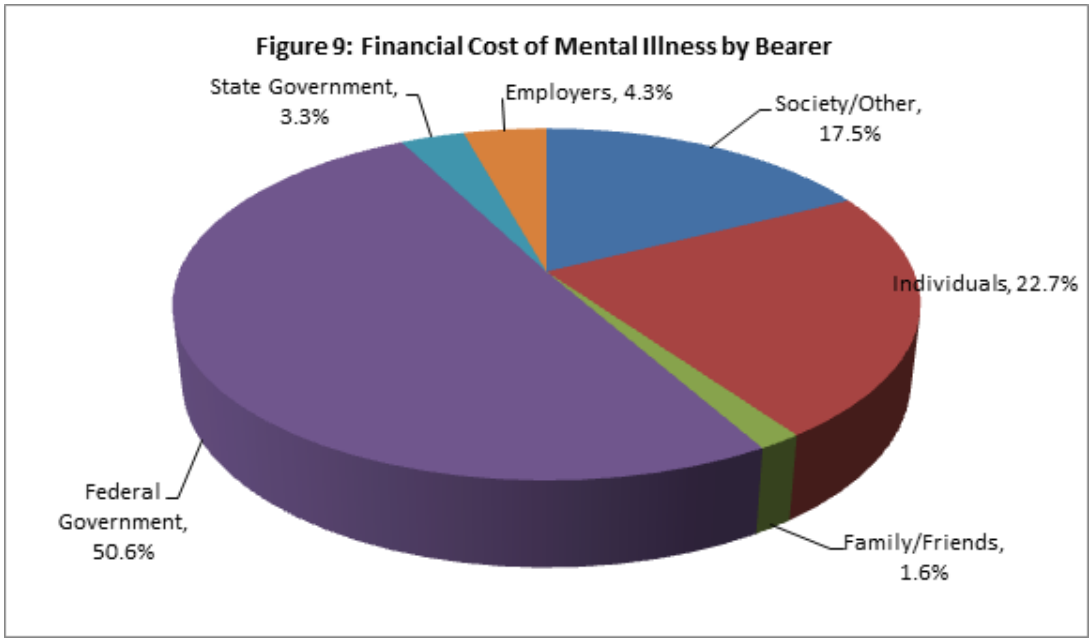
The Australian government bears the bulk of the financial costs - 50.6% (mainly through taxation revenues forgone and welfare payments). While the State bears less of the direct costs, the impacts of mental health issues in the WA community are profound, and warrant greater state government investment.

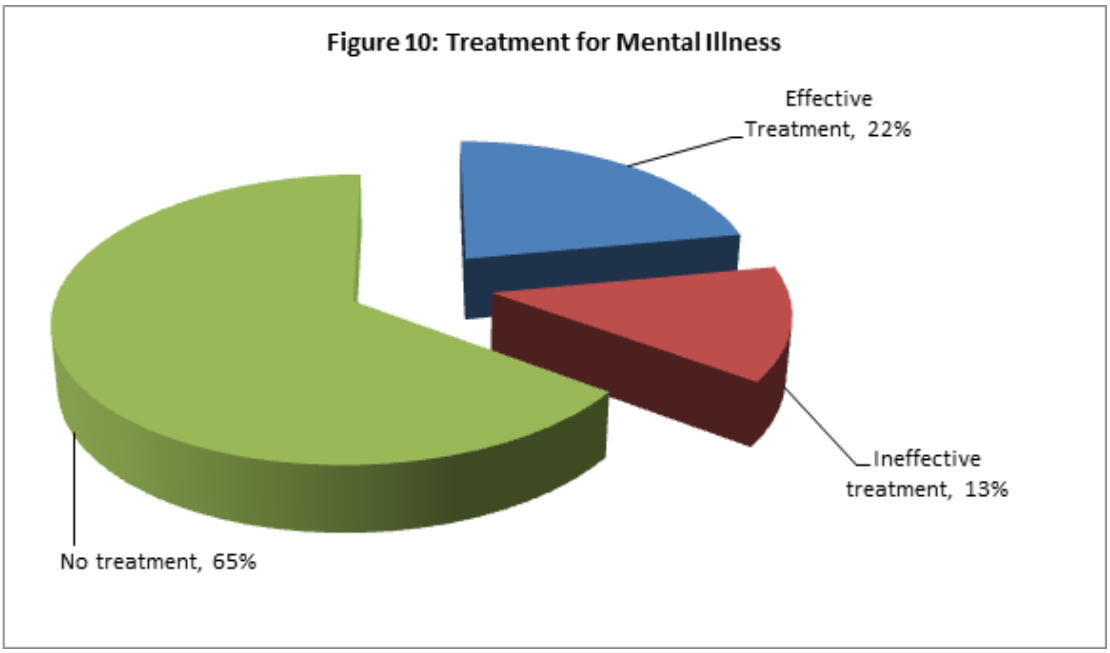
The ineffective nature of some treatments is also a financial cost. While most people with mental illness do not receive any treatment for their condition, for others the treatment that is received is often not effective. Figure 9[23] shows the financial costs of mental illness by bearer of those costs, and Figure 10[24] shows the effectiveness of treatment received.

[22] Access Economics (2009). *The economic impact of youth mental illness and the cost effectiveness of early intervention.* (p.13). See http://www.headspace.org.au/_uploads/documents/2009%20media%20releases/CostYMH_Dec2009FINAL.pdf

[23] ABS (2009), cited in Access Economics (2009). *The economic impact of youth mental illness and the cost effectiveness of early intervention.* (p.51). See http://www.accesseconomics.com.au/publicationsreports/search.php?searchfor=mental+health&from=0&search=Go

[24] ABS 2009, cited in Access Economics (2009). *The economic impact of youth mental illness and the cost effectiveness of early intervention.* (p.39). See





RECOMMENDATION

Provide increased funding of $41 million for additional mental health services delivered by the community services sector.

TOTAL: $41 million.

http://www.accesseconomics.com.au/publicationsreports/search.php?searchfor=mental+health&from=0&search=Go

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

The Issues

People with severe alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues face an increased risk of social isolation and exclusion, poverty, homelessness and contact with the justice system. As a social justice issue as well as a crime prevention strategy, we must ensure that vulnerable West Australians have access to high quality, timely and effective treatment services. Such interventions represent significant cost savings later down the track.

The 2006-07 Federal Budget provided $73.9 million over five years for the *Improved Services for People with Drug and Alcohol Problems and Mental Illness initiative*, which forms part of the Australian Government's contribution to the COAG mental health package. The funding was to support a variety of service improvement activities such as: revising internal policies or procedures; workforce training; professional development and clinical support; developing sustainable partnerships with the wider health network; and data collection to support continuous improvement.[25]

While these initiatives are welcome, access to a full range of services, especially in regional areas, is still limited. Locally based residential services in the Goldfields and in the Southwest are needed.

The Goldfields Community Drug Service Team (CDST) is located within the Centrecare Goldfields Agency, and caters for the unique needs of the large regional mining and remote communities in Goldfields Esperance region. They aim to provide services to individuals, their families, service providers, community groups, employee assistance programs and to the community as a whole. However, the community has identified a need for a residential facility in the region that can provide specialist clinical services.

While the services in the Goldfields and the Southwest do not necessarily need to be Aboriginal-specific, there is a need for them to have a particular focus on the provision of services to local Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people in particular are less likely to access metropolitan residential services

It is apparent that community corrections clients are putting significant additional demands on the non-government drug and alcohol sector. Ongoing funding is required to support a program targeting Indigenous men, women and youth offenders for AOD community-based treatment intervention.

If appropriately resourced to respond to need, a focus on community corrections clients has the potential to reduce re-offending and future prison numbers. It also complements the Government's current law and order agenda.

Investment in strategies to reduce recidivism and offender and prisoner numbers should be a greater priority. Evidence shows that simply injecting more funds into the prison system to cope with the increasing numbers of offenders does nothing to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour.

Early intervention with young offenders has the best potential for rehabilitation and future meaningful participation in society, and should be our priority focus.

[25] Media release - $29.9 million in grants to drug and alcohol treatment services. See http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr07-cp-pyn109.htm

The Evidence

Community based alcohol and drug intervention can reduce the frequency of relapse and recidivism at a fraction of the cost of incarceration, yet expansion of WA's prison capacity continues to be a significant priority of the Government.

The Department of Corrective Services asset investment program is funded at $262m and has committed to adding 2590 beds to the system between 2009-2014, at a total cost of $640m.[26] Currently it costs approximately $100,000 per year to house a prisoner and $11,000 to manage an offender on a court based order.[27] Comparatively, youth justice services in the Kimberley and Pilbara were funded $3m in 2010-11 with an additional $27,000 in grants for the broader sector, a mere fraction of their budget.

There is an obvious economic and social benefit in investing more heavily in programs that focus on prevention and rehabilitation for young people with alcohol and other drug issues at risk of coming into contact with the justice system. While there are limited sector wide evaluations of services to corrective services clients, including individual outcomes and reduced criminal activity or recidivism, the data from recent evaluations by Outcare and Holyoake are compelling.

Figure 11: Total Social Costs per year ($million), by illicit drug type[28]

	Cannabis	Cocaine	Opiates	Amphet.	Other	All drugs
Health effects						
Dependence-related	$1,195	$113	$2,386	$274	-	$3,968
Non-dependence related	$0.1	$25	$137	$68	-	$229
All use	**$1,195**	**$138**	**$2,523**	**$341**	**$49**	**$4,247**
Crime costs						
Dependence-related	$101	$135	$1,714	$2,795	$521	$6,765
Non-dependence related	$319	$27	$30	$244	$68	$687
All use	**$1,919**	**$162**	**$1,743**	**$3,039**	**$589**	**$7,453**
Road accident costs						
Dependence-related	$0	$0	$261	$203	$0	$464
Non-dependence related	$0	$0	$46	$148	$0	$193
All use	**$0**	**$0**	**$307**	**$351**	**$0**	**$658**
Total costs						
All use	**$3,115**	**$300**	**$4,574**	**$638**	**$638**	**$12,357**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Allocate $2.4 million to establish therapeutic drug and alcohol services in the Goldfields and South West. In addition, provide ongoing funding starting with $1.12 million for 2011-12 to support a program targeting Indigenous men, women and youth offenders for community based treatment intervention.

TOTAL: $3.2 million

[26] 2010-11 State Budget Overview, p14.
[27] Costs estimated from the Department of Corrections WA Annual Report 2009
[28] Annual social costs of drug use in Australia is estimated at $12 billion. The integration of homelessness, mental health and drug and alcohol services in Australia, Paul Flatau, Elizabeth Conroy, Anne Clear and Lucy Burnsfor the Western Australian Research Centre UNSW-UWS Research Centre August 2010

INDIGENEOUS WELLBEING

The Issues

Aboriginal people face disadvantage on a number of fronts, disproportionate to non-Aboriginal people and at all stages of life. Many social indicators show that WA has lower outcomes for Indigenous people, second only to those in the Northern Territory.[29]

A holistic model of service provision that acknowledges past injustices and builds on individual and community strengths will begin to address the disparity that currently exists.

The Commonwealth Government has primary responsibility for Aboriginal affairs, and a range of strategies are being pursued to address disadvantage through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). However, WACOSS argues that the State Government should also play a complementary role in supporting healing and reconciliation initiatives, beyond the priority 'closing the gap' measures.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation is an Indigenous-run, national not-for-profit organisation. It was established in 2009 to support community-based healing initiatives to address the traumatic historical legacy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of colonisation, forced removals and other past Government policies. It aims to provide practical and innovative healing services, with a particular focus on Stolen Generation members and their families.

The Healing Foundation focuses on three main areas:

- Capacity building;
- Healing promotion, education and training; and
- Research and evaluation.[30]

The Australian Government has provided funding of $26.6 million over four years to 2013-14 to assist the establishment and operation of the Healing Foundation. However, Aboriginal organisations have suggested the funding level nationally is too low to make a meaningful impact, and that a state contribution would strengthen capacity.

Health, education and employment are three social indicators that Aboriginal young people fare particularly poorly in. Community organisations across the State are delivering successful employment, health and fitness, education and wellbeing programs to Aboriginal communities where there is a high level of disadvantage.

The programs are delivered across metro, regional and remote locations. While a number of programs receive ad-hoc project funding, in a number of cases it is due to end soon. A commitment is needed from State and Federal Governments in order to ensure that these programs can continue to be delivered. Furthermore, the community would benefit from an expansion of such programs that focus on young people.

[29] National Indigenous Reform Agreement: Baseline performance report for 2008-09, COAG Reform Council, 30 April 2010, p148

[30] See http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/progserv/engagement/Pages/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_healing_foundation_.aspx

The Evidence

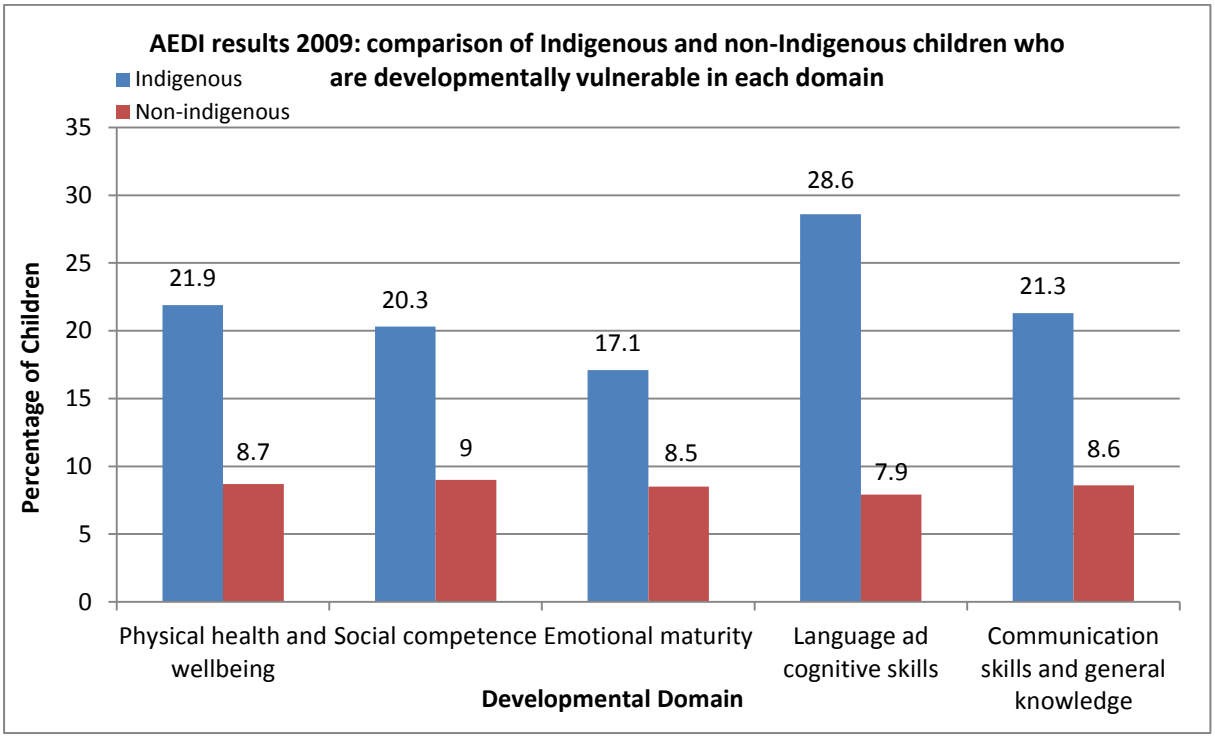
Nationally, compared to non-Indigenous children, Indigenous children are:

- 2.9 times more likely to die at birth;
- 5.4 times more likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS);
- 2.6 times more likely to have a neural tube defect;
- 5.4 times more likely to be born to a teenage mother;
- 9.2 times more likely to be in out of home care;
- 3.2 times more likely to die from an injury; and
- 2.0 times more likely to be born with a low birth weight.

In some instances, WA:

- rates are worse than the national rate, placing Indigenous children at even greater disadvantage in this State; and
- performs below the national average for Indigenous child health on a range of indicators. This includes a higher rate of children born of low birth weight, lower immunisation coverage, a higher rate of teenage births, a higher rate of deaths from injury, and fewer children achieving literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

Figure 12: Comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Children[31]



[31] A Snapshot of Early Childhood Development in Australia Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) National Report 2009

WACOSS believes that reconciliation can be advanced by addressing indigenous disadvantage using a human rights framework. Human rights issues cannot be excluded from the reconciliation discussion if we are to close the gap on life expectancy, health and wellbeing, and education and employment.

Reconciliation Action Plans are a positive, practical way to achieve better wellbeing outcomes, in that they transform 'good intent' and symbolic reconciliation into practical, measureable targets for organisations that promote Aboriginal engagement in employment, education and other social wellbeing indicators.

In line with this, and in conjunction with a sustained investment in vital social services for Aboriginal people across the state, WACOSS recommends that a state reconciliation council is established. This should operate in close collaboration with Reconciliation Australia, the national peak body responsible for promoting reconciliation. WA is the only State that does not have a centralised reconciliation body. We believe this undermines the social capital of the goodwill that exists in business, community organisations, the Indigenous network and the wider community.

WACOSS recommends the State Government further extends its commitment to Indigenous Western Australians by supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation, which was established and funded to focus on community capacity building, healing promotion, education and training. While the Federal Government has provided $26.6 million over four years to assist the establishment and operation of the Healing Foundation, some Aboriginal organisations have suggested the funding level nationally is too low to make a meaningful impact, and that a state contribution would strengthen capacity.

WACOSS is calling for additional resources to support a universal approach, integrating education, employment, health programs, parenting and relationship support. These services will build on the good work of initiatives like the Aboriginal Healing Project in the Public Health Unit and the Mooditj Healing Program out of Waratah.

The community sector has an important role to play in delivering complementary services that promote a strengths-based approach to healing and reconciliation.

"In the context of the movement towards reconciliation, it has become increasingly evident that reconciliation entails more than acknowledgement of prior occupation and ownership, expressions of apology or regret, and the granting of (limited) native title and land rights, as important as these are.

While ever the social, cultural and economic circumstances of Indigenous Australians remain parlous and Indigenous people vulnerable, social justice is lacking and there is no firm basis for true equality, respect and co-existence. The success of the reconciliation process is integrally linked with addressing Indigenous disadvantage."

(Australian Human Rights Commission)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Invest in Aboriginal healing centres across WA by matching the Commonwealth commitment, and establish a Reconciliation Council - $6.65M

Provide project funding for Aboriginal organisations to expand the capacity of youth programs - $1.2M

TOTAL: $7.25M

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Issues

Children who are healthy, well educated, nurtured, and have access to services when they need them are more likely to remain out of contact with the justice and state care systems, less likely to live in poverty or experience disadvantage, and more likely to remain in the education system for longer. It is incumbent on us to invest in our kids' wellbeing now in order to reap the benefits as a community later.

The provision of early childhood services in WA has suffered significant under-investment for a number of years. Numerous parliamentary committee inquiries have exposed the inadequacies of the system, particularly in terms of health and developmental outcomes for children.[32]

We know for example that in January 2010 there were 6,405 children in the metropolitan area waiting for child development services and waiting times are getting progressively worse.[33] We know that birth rates have increased by thousands yet there has been no comparable increase in child health nurses to enable them to support families.[34]

Various parliamentary committee inquiries have recommended that the Government establish a Department with a Minister with portfolio responsibility for early childhood education and development, family services and childcare.[35]

Those inquiries have shown that in Victoria and South Australia especially, a coordinated response to the early years is successful.

Both the Healthy Child - *Healthy State: Improving Western Australia's Child Health Screening Programs* report in May 2009 and the *Inquiry into the Adequacy of Services to Meet the Developmental Needs of Western Australia's Children* report in August 2009 recommended that the Western Australian Government reform the management of early childhood health and education policies along the lines undertaken in South Australia and Victoria.[36]

We are looking to the state government to make a leadership decision about the future of early years in WA. We need a shared understanding of the outcomes we want to see for West Australian children, and some agreement on what will best achieve these outcomes. We also need a way of measuring and monitoring our progress so we can assess the impact we are having on children.

WACOSS acknowledges that the EAC process offers opportunity for the

[32] Healthy Child - Healthy State: Improving Western Australia's Child Health Screening Programs (2009); Inquiry into the Adequacy of Services to Meet the Developmental Needs of Western Australia's Children (2009); Invest Now or Pay Later: Securing the Future of Western Australia's Children (2010); Destined to Fail: Western Australia's Health System. Volume 2: Community Health Sector (2010).

[33] Education and Health Committee Inquiry Report. (2010) (p.ix). *Invest Now or Pay Later: Securing the Future of Western Australia's Children*

[34] Education and Health Committee Inquiry Report. (2010) (p.ix). *Invest Now or Pay Later: Securing the Future of Western Australia's Children*

[35] Education and Health Committee Inquiry Report. (2010) (p.ix). Invest Now or Pay Later: Securing the Future of Western Australia's Children

[36] Education and Health Committee Inquiry Report. (2010).(p.181). Destined to Fail: Western Australia's Health System. Volume 2: Community Health Sector. See http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/%28Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID%29/DB2BFDA0BADC32E54825771B0012CC7F/$file/Report+6-+Vol+2-+CtyHealth+Care.pdf

community sector to be engaged with State Government about service delivery reform. A dedicated project team for the early years will be established to explore new ways of coordinating the work between different public and community sector service providers to achieve better outcomes for children in the early years.

The community sector continues to recommend the establishment of a centralised coordinating body in the form of an Office for Early Childhood. WACOSS recommends that such an office should be informed by the lessons arising from the work of the EAC Early Childhood Project Team.

Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting was implemented on 1 January 2009. Teachers, nurses, doctors, midwives and police officers are required by law to report to the Department of Child Protection any belief that they have of child sexual abuse, in the course of the paid work. The implications of introducing such legislation are significant. The process of mandatory reporting is new to the 90,000 mandatory reporters subject to its requirements, and as such, there are a number of issues that have arisen. Some of these are around fear of reprisal and confidentiality, others are around making sure that staff are appropriately trained to deal properly with the added responsibility they now have.

By 2012, mandatory reporting will be expanded in WA to include all forms of abuse. It is anticipated that while many of the families coming to the attention of the mandatory reporting system will require assistance, their situations may not always need ongoing tertiary child protection intervention. When a child protection response is required, a referral to the local family support hub may be made.

To manage the increased demand on these services, significant reforms have taken place. These reforms will change the way in which services assisting vulnerable children and families are delivered in this state.

Whereto.org is WA's state-wide network of integrated services that support children, individuals and families. These family support hubs will assist families to address any identified needs, but keep them out of the child protection system when their involvement is not necessary.

While an increased focus on delivering more integrated, higher quality services is welcome, it will come at a cost to the community organisations who will be delivering the services. To effectively manage the increase in demand, the State Government must provide adequate funding commensurate to this significant reform measure.

As a baseline, ChildFIRST, the Victorian equivalent, received $4.7 million in funding to provide services to up to 1760 families under stress.

In addition, $3.8 million was provided for the child protection department to pilot an early childhood development worker in every ChildFIRST catchment, to build stronger partnerships between ChildFIRST/family services and early years service providers.

This provided targeted intervention for vulnerable babies and infants aged 0-5 years through the appointment of early childhood development specialists within each of the 24 ChildFIRST/family services catchments.[37]

[37] See http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/news-archive/?a=434594

The Evidence

WACOSS acknowledges the recent investment in child development services in WA - $49.7 million over four years. Forward estimates suggest that $12.4 million should be invested each year until 2013-14. However, many children will still experience delays in accessing the services they need, as indicated in Figure 15. This funding also does not address the shortage of child health nurses that are urgently needed.

Child health nurses provide crucial support in the areas of maternal, infant and family health in the early years. They can assess a child's health and development in its first stages of life, before problems have a chance to escalate. They also provide important support and information about many aspects of parenting, maternal and family health to families. They have long been regarded as a 'gateway' to a wide range of support services for mothers and babies.

There are 310 Child Health Centres across Western Australia. WA is currently 105 maternal health nurses short of the basic health needs of newborn children. Too few nurses and too many parents mean that they are not able to meet the potential of their role. While we welcome new initiatives to better coordinate child health services, WACOSS maintains the call for investment in more child health nurses to address the shortfall that currently exists.

Figure 15: Changes in waiting times for child development services, 2008-09[38]

	Waiting time between referral and assessment (months)			
Discipline	**Oct-08**	**Sep-09**	**Dec-09**	**Change 2008-09**
Speech pathology	8	15	16.6	108%
Occupational therapy	8	11	13	62%
Paediatrics	9	9	10	11%
Physiotherapy	6	10	11	83%
Clinical psychology	6	9	9	50%
Social work	4	4	5	25%

RECOMMENDATIONS

Informed by the work of the EAC Early Childhood Project Team, establish a single coordinating body to achieve better outcomes for children aged 0-8 in WA - $2M. This includes the provision of services to address the shortfall in the number of child health nurses - $11M

Provide funding to support the provision of secondary services in WA, including the roll-out of family support hubs in Western Australia - $7.6M

TOTAL: $20.6 million

[38] Education and Health Standing Committee Invest Now or Pay Later: Securing the future of Western Australia's Children, Report No.5 in the 38th Parliament.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION

The Issues

Anecdotal evidence and youth worker testimonies indicate that young people perceive youth workers differently to other trained professional adults.

Because of this, youth workers are often able to access, build relationships with, and serve young people in ways that many school counsellors, psychologists and chaplains cannot. They may point young people to a range of services that address problems in a holistic way, such as: counselling; health and employment services; accommodation and financial services; and other NGOs. Whilst WACOSS understands the Federal Government's 'Youth Connections' program has the potential to fill some of this service gap, the new service model requires four types of services to be delivered within one program, so capacity is limited. In the West Coast region, for example, Youth Connections funding only allows for the appointment of two youth workers to work in 52 schools.

From 2011, each public school will be allocated a notional entitlement to a School Psychologist through an open, transparent and equitable resource allocation formula that takes account of the size and complexity of each school. School Psychologists within a region will then be allocated to schools or networks of schools.

WACOSS recommends that youth workers are provided to each school in the same way that school psychologists are. Ideally, these two support staff would be part of a suite of supports provided at each school, including:

- Nurse
- Chaplain
- Psychologist
- Youth Worker
- Aboriginal Liaison
- CaLD Liaison

From 2011, there will be eight education regions across Western Australia. In each region, there will be up to 75 networks, each with up to 20 schools, both primary and secondary. Network Principals will support these networks. The regions are:

- North Metro
- South Metro
- Kimberley
- Pilbara
- Midwest
- Wheatbelt
- Southwest
- Goldfields

It is unclear what impact the changes to the education system will have, especially in terms of how at-risk young people can remain engaged in the education process. While there has been an assurance that there will be more support available to schools, it is up to independent decision makers within the school environment to decide which kinds of supports they require. With a fewer number of education regions taking in a greater number of schools, it is highly likely that many young people will fall through the cracks.

The Federal Government's Youth Connections program provides funding to 14 service providers across the state, to deliver four different service models. In WA, Youth Connections Providers must offer a mix of community based learning programs, as well as an intensive case management, youth-focused outreach service. WA's funding allocation from the Commonwealth to deliver Youth Connections is $7.4M, meaning each provider receives approximately $500,000, if allocated evenly.

Alternative education programs are a vital means of ensuring that vulnerable young people who disengage from the education system can still achieve educational attainment. These programs increase self-esteem and personal responsibility. Programs such as Youth Futures (formerly Joondalup Youth Support Services) COMET and Communicare's VIP Plus are just two examples of successful programs that exist across the State.[39]

WACOSS recommends that, as a minimum, the State Government through the Departments of Education and/or Training and Workforce Development provide funding for alternative education programs to operate for young people in each of the eight regions across WA. If alternative education programs were State funded, providers would be more able to deliver the full range of Youth Connections services.

The Evidence

While Western Australia's youth unemployment rate at 17.9% in July 2010 was well below the national rate at 22.8%, youth unemployment rates have remained high over the past decade in Australia and in WA.[40] Internationally, we have continued to fare poorly in this regard.

This high prevalence of youth unemployment for teenagers (15-19 year olds) has individual and societal costs that result from unemployment among these groups.

Currently, service providers tell us that this issue is particularly relevant for young men people leaving care around the age of 15 years old.

Often they are exiting the system with no prospects or possibility of attending school or TAFE, getting a job, or accessing housing.

Helping young people to break down these barriers encourages them to make a valuable contribution to their community through successful education and employment. This kind of intensive, personalised support can have positive outcomes over a number of social indicators.

Researchers of a Philadelphia-based mentoring program found that after 18 months of spending time in a mentoring relationship, young people were:

- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs;
- 52% less likely to skip school;
- 27% less likely to begin using alcohol;
- 37% less likely to skip a class;
- More confident of their performance in school work;
- One-third less likely to assault someone; and
- Get along better with their families.[41]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase support for at-risk young people, by providing:
$14.2m million for funding for youth workers in every public high school in the state ($90k x 158 schools); and
$3.15 million funding for alternative education programs for each education region (8) as a minimum.

TOTAL: $18.1million

[39] COMET program: costed at $394,485 PA
[40] Source: ABS Cat. 6202.0 Table 16
[41] Tierney, J.P., Grossman, J.B., and Resch, N.L. (1995) Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures

SAFETY AND JUSTICE

The Issues

Properly functioning systems of safety and justice are at the heart of developed democracies. A key role of the state is to ensure that people feel safe in their communities and protected by a justice system that is effective, accessible and accountable. This requires a balance of approaches which not only provide disincentives to crime but actively address the issues which can lead to crime.

Domestic and Family Violence

WACOSS calls on the State Government, through the Department for Child Protection, to increase funding to all refuge services to allow them to employ a dedicated, full time, domestic and family violence outreach worker.

Outreach workers provide a valuable service for women escaping domestic and family violence. They provide support for women who do not necessarily need refuge-style crisis accommodation but who require some help to get their lives back on track when leaving or having left a violent relationship. They also play a valuable role in supporting women leaving refuge services, assisting them to obtain and maintain secure accommodation and rebuild their lives following violence.

Women and children escaping domestic and family violence are often required to navigate through a large number of processes in order to access the help and support they need to rebuild their lives. This can include accessing support from Centrelink, Department of Housing, Department for Child Protection and the legal system. Accessing these services can be onerous, especially for women in crisis situations.

Outreach workers, often based at refuges, provide a vital link for women in need of support and case management. They can provide support for finding and sustaining housing, dealing with government departments, or obtaining a Violence Restraining Order (VRO). However, outreach services are provided on an ad-hoc basis across the state, rarely with specific funding and often pieced together from existing refuge funding and other grants. Investment in specific outreach services would enable women to remain in their home, or provide assistance in obtaining and sustaining alternate accommodation. This decreases the risk of homelessness and enables women to retain connections to employment, education and social supports.

Women's refuges and safe-houses

Women's refuges and safe-houses in WA need additional funding to enable them to adequately provide case-management and therapeutic programs to children and young people. This service should be delivered within crisis support services as part of a vital early intervention and prevention strategy.

Children are exposed to violence through living in a violent home, witnessing violence, as well as in some cases directly experiencing violence themselves. Witnessing or experiencing domestic violence can profoundly affect children. Experiencing this trauma can have negative implications for children, developmentally, emotionally, socially, and physically[42]. However, studies have shown that children are able to recover or work towards recovering from trauma once in a safer, more stable environment[43]. Interventions can work to equip children with safety and protective

[42] Australian Childhood Foundation, 2007.

[43] Mullender, A., Kelly, L., Hague, G., Malos, E., & Imam, U. (1999). Children's needs, coping strategies and understandings of woman abuse. Coventry, UK: Economic and Social Research Council.

behaviours skills and interrupt the intergenerational transmission of trauma and violence[44].

Non-refuge based domestic and family violence counselling services

Community organisations report that as well as investment in refuge-based services, more investment is needed to support organisations who provide services to women seeking help outside of the refuge model. There are many women who prefer accessing services that are not refuge-based. These might include family and relationship counselling, legal advice, or information and referral to other community services. The funding pressures on these organisations are immense as they struggle to continue to provide services to a greater number of clients with no increase to their core funding levels.

As an example, Relationship Australia's Family Abuse Integrated Response (FAIR) program is currently funded at $410 000 per annum. The program's funding has not increased over the past 6 years of operation, despite a constant increase in demand for the service, and increased staffing and operational costs.

WACOSS argues it is highly likely that the 23 other Department for Child Protection funded agencies delivering vital services are also under similar funding pressures.

Justice reinvestment programs

Expansion of WA's prison capacity continues to be the most significant element of the Department for Corrective Service's asset investment program, which is funded to the tune of $262 million. Comparatively, youth justice services in the Kimberley and the Pilbara will receive almost $3 million in 2010-11, while non-government organisations will receive $27,000 in grants.[45]

Despite a massive investment in expanding prison infrastructure, WACOSS does acknowledge the renewed focus on offender management and support services to rehabilitate offenders and to reduce recidivism. Diverting young people from the justice system improves that young person's life chances, and eases the burden on corrections facilities. The focus on employment and training for offenders to equip them with the skills they need to successfully re-integrate into the community is crucial, as is the investment in youth justice services, particularly in regional WA.

However, preventative service funding represents just a fraction of the Corrective services budget. At a recent community forum on Integrated Offender Management, Judge Dennis Reynolds, President of the Children's Court of Western Australia echoed WACOSS' concerns when he said that at present there seems to be an undue focus on catching and convicting offenders, and that this must be combined with prevention, deterrence and rehabilitation.

WACOSS believes that the government could achieve better community outcomes and restrain escalating costs through a balance of programs which aim to prevent vulnerable people resorting to crime in the first place, as well as giving the appropriate support to prisoners once in the corrections system. Preventative measures have a long history of reducing crime and the need for investment in punitive punishments and prison infrastructure.

A justice reinvestment framework, while addressing the structural causes of crime, has the added benefit or providing a secure funding line for a number of

[44] Ehrensaft, M., Cohen, P., Brown, J., Smailes, E., Chen, H., & Johnson, J. (2003). Intergenerational transmission of partner violence: A 20-year prospective study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *71*(4), 741-753. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.71.4.741.

[45] The Government of Western Australia. 2010-11 Budget. Budget Paper No.2.

culturally specific diversion and treatment programs. At present, many of these programs are provided on an ad hoc basis with nothing to ensure their sustainability, even when demonstrating positive outcomes.

Justice reinvestment is a localised criminal justice policy approach that first emerged in the United States. It has been championed by the Australian Human Rights Commission as a proven strategy to reduce crime. Under this approach, a portion of the public funds that would have been spent on covering the costs of imprisonment are diverted to local communities that have a high concentration of offenders. The money is invested in community programs, services and activities that are aimed at addressing the underlying causes of crime in those communities.

WACOSS believes a justice reinvestment strategy would be particularly beneficial in disadvantaged Aboriginal communities, where the level of Aboriginal incarceration remains unacceptably high. As at 30 June 2009, 41.6% of all adult prisoners and 74% of all juvenile detainees were Aboriginal.[46]

A justice reinvestment framework can drive greater efficiencies in the corrections system by addressing the root causes of offending behaviour and increasing the community's capacity to respond to and deal with problems at a local level, before coming into contact with the justice system. It involves tailoring a mix of appropriate services at the local level. All of these services could form part of a coordinated justice reinvestment response to tackling the high incarceration rate of Indigenous West Australians.

For justice reinvestment to be successful requires partnerships and government departments working together. Effective programs need the cooperation of the courts, police, juvenile justice or corrections, health, as well as NGOs and the broader community. Justice reinvestment also requires community involvement and participation - Indigenous communities must be meaningfully engaged and consulted, and be a key part of the decision-making process.[47]

WACOSSS therefore supports a proposal for the WA Government to expand justice reinvestment programs in the five local government areas where the Indigenous prison population is the highest.[48]

The Evidence

International research shows: [49]

- Domestic violence is the single biggest health risk to Australian women.
- Female Australian murder victims were most likely to have been killed by their male partners.
- Gender based violence globally is the most widely spread and socially tolerated of human rights violations.
- Worldwide, an estimated 1 in 5 women will be victim of rape or attempted rape sometime during their life.

[46] Department for Corrective Services. Annual Report. 2008-2009. See http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_files/about-us/statistics-publications/dcs-annual-report-2008-2009.pdf

[47] http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/Media/speeches/social_justice/2010/20100320_justice_reinvestment.html

[48] In order of priority - Broome, Halls Creek, Swan, Derby, Stirling. Costing is based on funding provided to youth justice services in the Kimberley and Pilbara ($1.48m each), multiplied by the 5 priority areas (footnote #1), taken from 2010-11 State Budget papers (p.681).

[49] (United Nations State of Population Report: 2005) and The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA), Round Table Discussion at Parliament Paper 24 March 2006.

- 1 in 3 women will be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused, usually by a family member or an acquaintance.
- In Australia (along with Canada, Israel, and South Africa – between 40 and 70 per cent of female murder victims were killed by their male partners.
- Although abused women often lived in fear, many were/are trapped by fear of community disapproval or reprisal.

Nationally and in WA:

- Domestic violence costs the Australian economy more than 8 billion dollars per year (Access Economics Report: 2004)
- All 35 women's refuge and safe houses in WA are full. 50% of all women who need emergency accommodation and two out of every three children are turned away.
- Police figures show WA domestic violence reports are up 47%, from an average of 32 a day in 2004 to 47 a day in 2005.
- Children accompanying women to refuges need to be treated as clients in their own right. Current funding levels from Government need to be inclusive of this as part of early intervention and prevention strategies.
- There are acute shortages in services for rural and remote areas. The majority of women and children seeking help in these areas are Indigenous.
- Increasing numbers of women escaping domestic and family violence with their children are being placed in caravan parks and cheap motels and hotels due to a critical shortage of vacancies in women's refuges.

Justice reinvestment programs overseas have shown:

- In the US, imprisonment rates are dropping in places where justice reinvestment is being implemented. For example, there was a 72% drop in juvenile incarceration in Oregon, after money was reinvested in well-resourced restorative justice and community service programs for juvenile offenders.
- Texas reinvested $241 million in treatment programs and improved probation and parole services, instead of in prisons. There was a saving of $210.5 million in the 2008–2009 financial year and the Texan prison population stopped growing for the first time in decades.[50]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide additional funding of $3.75 million for domestic violence and child support worker programs including increasing funding to allow for:

- **Domestic and Family Outreach Workers for each women's refuge service in WA - $1.7 million; and**
- **Child Support Workers in each women's refuge service in WA - $2 million.**

Expand the scope and capacity of justice reinvestment programs in the five local government areas where the Indigenous prison population is the highest - $7.45million

TOTAL: $11.2 million

[50] Justice Reinvestment: a new solution to the problem of Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system. See http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/Media/speeches/social_justice/2010/20100320_justice_reinvestment.html

CONCLUSION

WACOSS is calling on the WA State Government to make a strategic investment from the expected billion dollar surplus at the 2010-11 mid-year review back into the WA community.

WACOSS believes that this windfall revenue should be reinvested in areas of social infrastructure and services that will support the community now and into the future.

We call on the Government to recognise the vital role of social services in our community by committing to enhance the capacity of community services across metropolitan, rural, regional and remote WA by investing as a minimum an additional $223 million in 2011-12.

This is a very critical issue for West Australians and without this level of funding the viability of sector services across the State will be threatened.

In a two speed State economy where the benefits of economic growth are not always shared equally, the State Government must also take steps to ensure the living standards and quality of life of those most disadvantaged is not further deteriorated. The Government needs to ensure that the 2011-12 State Budget endorses policies that assist people doing it tough.

This submission has focused on themes of prevention and early intervention services, and the need for investment in foundational social infrastructure, particularly in regional WA.

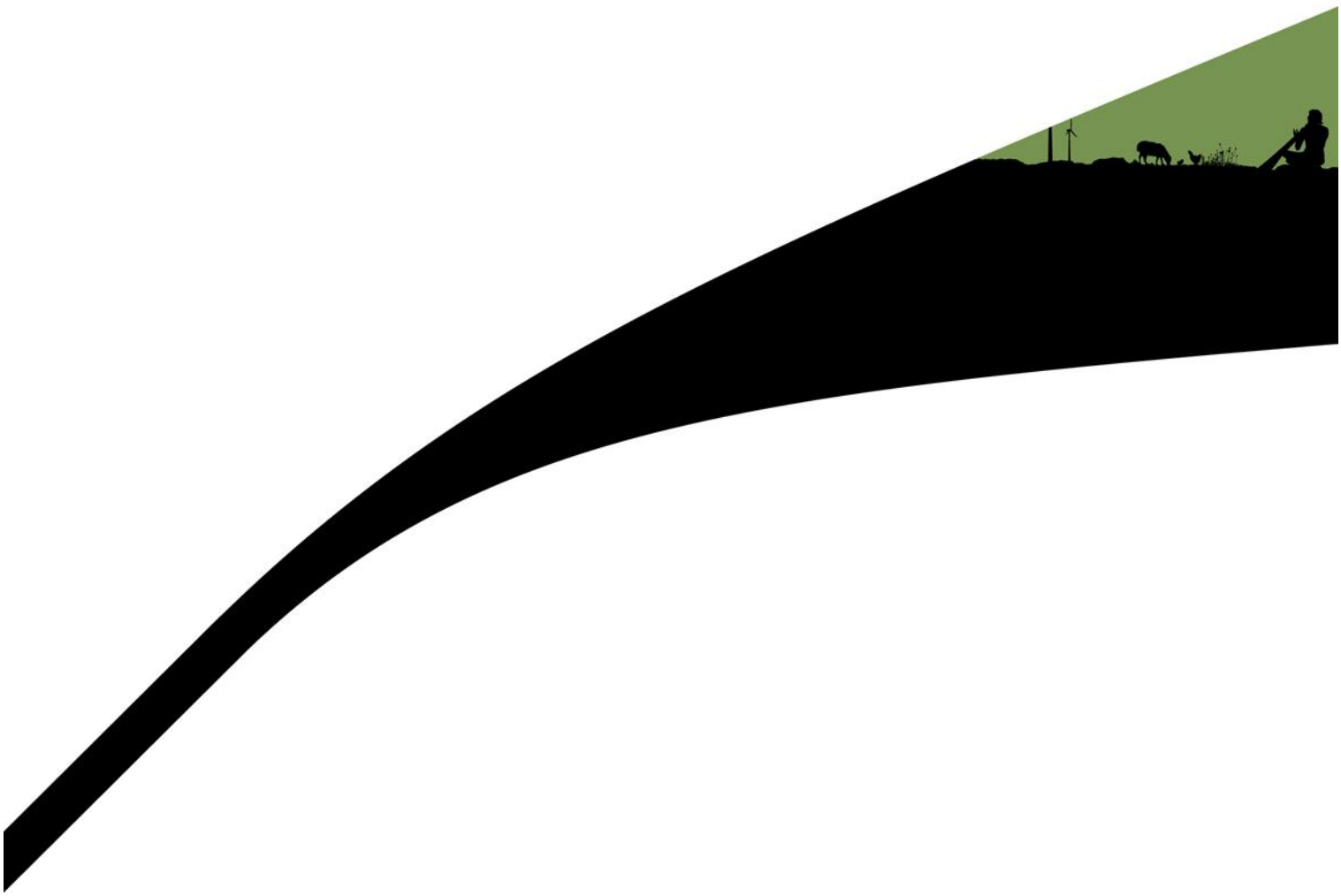
WACOSS advocates that the Government's funding priorities must focus on Indigenous reconciliation and healing; early childhood; immediate social housing investment; additional mental health services to be delivered by the community services sector; more regional drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation support services; alternative youth employment and education pathways; domestic violence and child support worker programs; and expanded justice reinvestment programs.

WACOSS is encouraged by the Government's desire through the EAC implementation process to reform the delivery of human services in this State as a means to achieve better citizen outcomes. It provides a unique opportunity to move to a system of social reform which delivers greater equality for all, ensuring that people on low incomes and facing disadvantage will have better access to essential services like health, education and housing.

We urge the WA Government to financially support policy commitments in this budget that deliver greater equality for everyone, particularly those who are living on the edges and in poverty in this State.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Alcohol and Other Drug	AOD
Australian Council of Social Service	ACOSS
Australian Early Development Index	AEDI
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	CaLD
Community Drug Service Teams	CDST
Consumer Price Index	CPI
Council of Australian Governments	COAG
Domestic and Family Violence	DFV
Economic Audit Committee	EAC
National Partnership Agreement	NPA
Not-for-Profit	NFP
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	OECD
Pre-Budget Submission	PBS
Regional Price Index	RPI
Wage Price Index	WPI
Western Australian Council of Social Service	WACOSS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Each year, WACOSS consults widely with the not-for-profit community services sector on the preparation of its Pre-Budget Submission. Peak organisations and other key stakeholder representatives in the non-government community services sector play a critical role in the preparation of the WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission by providing data and information about the key service pressures in the community and assisting to establish priorities. We also greatly appreciate the input from government agencies and other engaged stakeholders. WACOSS gratefully acknowledges the contributions, ideas, thoughts and recommendations submitted by each of the following contributing community service organisations.

Aboriginal Legal Service
Access Ability
Access Housing
Activ Industries
Aged & Community Services WA
Albany and Regional Volunteer Service
Albany Youth Support Group
Alliance for Children and Young People
Alzheimer's Australia W.A Ltd
Anglicare WA
Australian Crime Prevention Council
Australian Red Cross
Bedingfeld Park Inc. Aged Care Facility
Billy Dower Youth Centre
Broome Family Violence Prevention Legal Service
Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service
Broome Youth Coordinating Network
Carers WA
Centacare
Central Inclusion Support Agency
Centrecare
Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health
Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre
Community First International
Community Housing Coalition of WA
Community Legal Centres Association of WA
ConnectGroups
Council on the Ageing WA
Development Disability Council
Djooraminda
Drug Arm – Youth Options
Drug ARM WA Inc. - Rosella House
Ethnic Communities Council of WA
Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre
Financial Advocacy & Relief Agency
Financial Counsellors Association of WA
Foundation Housing Ltd
Fremantle Multicultural Centre
Gay and Lesbian Community Services
Geraldton Regional Community Education Centre
Geraldton Resource Centre
GIFSA Goldfields Individual & Family Support Association
Golden Mile Community House
Goldfields Community Legal Centre
Goldfields Family Counselling Services
Goldfields Men's Health Group
Goldfields Public Health Unit
Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission
Great Southern Community Housing Association
Great Southern Institute of Technology
Great Southern Population Health Unit
Headwest Brain Injury Association of WA
Health Consumers' Council WA
Home and Community Care Services
Horizon Power
Interworks
Kalgoorlie Boulder Shire
Kalgoorlie Boulder Volunteer Centre
Karrayili Adult Education Centre
Kimberley Interpreting Service
King River Play Group
KinWay Broome
Kullarri Employment Services
Lake Clifton Herron Progress & Sporting Association
Learning Centre Link
Mandurah Baptist Church Youth Coordinator
Men's Outreach Service Inc, Broome
Men's Resource Centre
Men's Sheds
Men's Advisory Network
Midway Community Care
Mid-West Community Services Network
Mid-West Development Commission
Mid-West Gascoyne- Area Consultative Committee Inc
Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre
Mission Australia
Murdoch University
National Disability Services
Palmerston
Peel Community Development Group
Peel Community Legal Service
Peel Early Years Group
Peel Senior Net Association Inc.
Peel Volunteer Resource Centre
Peel Youth Medical Service
People with Disabilities
Pilbara Association of Non-Government Organisations
Rangelands NRM Coordinating Group
Red Cross Carers Respite Centre
Regional Development Australia
Relationships Australia (WA)
S.T.A.Y. Short Term Accommodation for Youth
Salvation Army
Shelter WA
Shire of Broome
Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley
Silver Chain Nursing Association
Small Business Centre Goldfields
Southern Aboriginal Corporation
Southern Regions Leadership Group
St Vincent De Paul Society
Step Up LOAN
The Peak Body of Women's Health
Virtual Sync
Volunteering WA
WA Association for Mental Health
WA Chamber of Commerce & Industry
WA Country Health Service
WA Network of Alcohol & Other Drug Agencies
WellMan (Goldfields Men's Health Group)
Women's Health Resource Centre
Women's Council for Domestic Family and Violence Services
Women's Health Care Centre
Wunan Foundation
Wyndham Early Learning Activities Centre
Yilgarn Local Drug Awareness Group
YMCA
Youth Affairs Council of WA
Youth Futures

wacoss

Western Australian
Council of Social Service Inc