



INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

The WACOSS Co-Design Toolkit has been developed using a Capacity Building Grant from the Western Australian Department of Finance.

WACOSS acknowledges the advice and support from the many government and community sector people who contributed its development, including the Co-Design Reference Group of the WA Partnership Forum and the consultants Dorinda Cox, Luisa Wing and Eric Dillon.

Co-Design is still relatively new to WA and experience to date shows that it is a model for collaboration that is still developing. As such, this Co-Design Toolkit is very much a 'work in progress' which we hope will continue to be developed based on experience to come. As such WACOSS is very keen to hear from users of the Toolkit about what else we can include that will add to its usefulness here in WA.

Louise Giolitto

CEO WACOSS

Co-Design is about designing and delivering community services in a partnership – an equal and reciprocal relationship – between funders, service providers and the people using services (and often their carers, families and others in their community.) Working together in this way is a better way to get things done and to really meet people's needs.

As Co-Design increasingly becomes the preferred model for service design and delivery in community services, potential participants – government agencies, service providers, service users and others – are looking for guidance on how to make it work.

This toolkit is a response to that call.

Starting with an agreed set of definitions and principles, the kit includes tools for ensuring Co-Design is the right model in the circumstances, guidance for government and the community sector preparing for Co-Design and advice on the Co-Design process.

The Toolkit does not promise to meet the requirements of all possible scenarios where Co-Design is appropriate. Indeed, one of the most valuable discussion papers on the topic 'Right Here, Right Now' explicitly states '...there can be no exact guidance, toolkits or "how-to" manuals...'

The authors of that paper point out that the examples of successful Co-Design (or 'co-

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production') that they have observed are highly relational and designed to account for many local factors.

We expect this to be the case in Western Australia too. Each Co-Design will be different. Each Co-Design process will need to be developed to suit the particular circumstances. However, there is enough common ground across programs and services for this Toolkit to be a valuable guide. This common ground is encapsulated in the Definitions and Principles Tool, developed following consultations on the WACOSS Co-Design Discussion Paper.² Also if co-design is to be adopted as policy and practice across government in WA, then it's important that we have some shared understandings and expectations about how it will happen, what and who is involved.

It has been developed by the WA Council of Social Service with a Capacity Building Grant from the WA Government. As such it has a focus on Co-Design in the context of government funded programs and services, and in particular Co-Design in the lead-up to procurement. However, many of the tools will be of use in a broader range of contexts,

including design of systems of care and support, Co-Design in the improvement of existing services, in the re-design of services and [for] service providers to respond to changing circumstances and funding models.

The key message throughout the Toolkit is the importance of keeping the focus at all times on achieving the best outcomes for the service users, their families and communities. Also it is about the involvement of the service users themselves in determining what those 'best outcomes' might be, not simply accepting Government's pre-determined view of what they might be.

The evidence is strong about Co-Design being an effective means of ensuring the best outcomes, but for this to hold true we need to be confident that we are genuinely engaging in processes that embody the principles and behaviours that have been shown to work.

This Toolkit provides guidance to ensure that Western Australia's Co-Design initiatives are informed by both our local experience and international evidence on what makes for a successful Co-Design.

1. Right Here, Right Now – Taking co-production into the mainstream. David Boyle, Anna Coote, Chris Sherwood and Julia Slay. nef, The Lab and NESTA Discussion Paper, July 2010.

2. WACOSS Discussion Paper: Co-design Principles to deliver community services in partnership in WA, 2016. Online: bit.ly/co-design-discussion-paper