

Media Release

Embargoed until 12:01am, Friday 25 October 2019

Community sector sets out blueprint for Thriving Communities in WA

The Western Australian Council of Social Service will today release the State Budget Submission, *A Thriving Community: Hope, Inclusion and Trust*, the peak body's platform of changes needed to enable local Western Australian communities to thrive. The annual Submission proposes a series of policy priorities for the Western Australian Government to invest in, as part of our 2020-2021 State Budget.

Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer, said that it was clear in conversations with community service organisations and the people who rely on their services that their vision is for a thriving WA community.

"They want the wellbeing of children to be prioritised and the self-determination of Aboriginal communities to be respected. A state where housing, energy, and food are affordable and accessible for everyone. They want serious action on climate change, and meaningful engagement so they can shape the communities in which they live," Louise Giolitto said.

"All of these recommendations are visions that can be achieved through action and investment from the State Government."

Proposals include developing a Whole-of-Government Child Wellbeing Strategy, committing to a WA Wellbeing Budget, investing in the care economy, increasing the stock of social housing, creating a social inclusion taskforce, supporting a just transition to clean renewable energy, and re-establishing citizenship and civics policy leadership within government.

"There is a strong sense in the community that our society has become more divided and unequal, and our systems have become harsher and more unfair," Louise said.

"Empowering communities to have sense of ownership over political and economic processes, supported by robust public and community services, can shape a more positive future for our society.

"WA was once a world leader in public participation. Enhancing community engagement in our democracy not only enables ongoing popular support for change, but also delivers better outcomes.

"When we act collectively, we can change WA and the world for the better."

The Budget Submission will be presented to The Honourable Simone McGurk MLA, Minister for Community Services, and launched to community service sector leaders and stakeholders later today.

Ends.

Media contact: Laurene Coller, Communications Officer, WACOSS, laurene@wacoss.org.au, 0419 316 557