

# 2018-2019 Annual Report



wa council of  
social service

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WACOSS respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present. We acknowledge the land on which we live and work is, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

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Copies of this annual report are available from the address above.

 **WACouncilofSocialService**

 **WACOSS**

 **Western Australian Council of Social Service Inc.**

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## About WACOSS

The Western Australian Council of Social Service is the **peak body** for the community services sector and works to create an inclusive, just and equitable society.

WACOSS represents over

**300** community service organisations and individuals

&

**500** organisations involved in the provision of community services to the people of Western Australia.

### Vision

An inclusive, just, and equitable society now and in the future.

### Mission

We advocate for social change to improve the wellbeing of Western Australians and to strengthen the community services sector that supports them.

The organisation is committed to genuine engagement, authentic collaboration, and building trusted relationships with members, communities and governments.

WACOSS is one of nine peak councils of social service, collaborating across Australia to bolster the united strength and impact of each peak body, working collaboratively on campaigns of national significance.

Tackling difficult issues, systems, and attitudes that contribute to inequality and exclusion, WACOSS develops evidence-based social policy and research to inform and influence government policy to change the lives of those facing adversity.

Non-partisan and free from private interests, the organisation plays a unique and independent role within the sector.

The work of WACOSS is underpinned by seven core values which lead our strategic direction: collaboration, Indigenous culture, diversity, ethics, innovation, human rights, and recognition.



# CEO and President's Report

Changing policy direction at both a State and Federal level, significant State Government reform, increased funding uncertainty, and increasing inequality within our communities continued to be key challenges and pressures for WACOSS over the course of this year. Our response as a community service sector has been to ensure our voice is heard through our key advocacy messages, leading or participating in collaborative efforts that improve service delivery and that contribute towards a more equitable society.

Over the past year we have continued to support the collective efforts and leadership of our members through projects such as 100 Families WA, the Community Relief and Resilience program, Supporting Early Years Networks, and the development of the Food Relief Framework. These projects, through partnerships, sector-led research, co-design, and resourcing, are challenging systems, structures, and service delivery to do better in supporting people, families, and communities.

Throughout the year we have, in collaboration with the sector and Government, passionately engaged with reform consultation processes, such as the Service Priority Review and Sustainable

Health Review, and continued to participate in consultations and development of long-term plans and strategies around family and domestic violence, women, youth, and homelessness.

We appreciate the complexity and enormity of the machinery of government reform task and the McGowan Government's Supporting Communities Forum policy reform commitments. However in amongst the reform processes, the immediate needs of individuals and families cannot be foregone or placed on hold whilst implementation of the reform occurs.

We live in a country with immense wealth, but repeatedly hear stories of parents who go hungry to ensure their children are fed, of people and families who are unable to heat their home, who cannot afford to go to the doctor, or have to choose between their own health and the health of their children. Thousands of Western Australians meet every day with hunger, stigma, anxiety, fear, poor health, social isolation and despair.

Alarmingly, our members are reporting significant increases in the numbers of people seeking support. We know that it is tougher to get by for people and families living with hardship,

and even tougher again to access support they previously relied on.

It cannot be understated that provision of essential sector services saves lives – through shelter, financial relief, counselling, connection, and human kindness.

Of the many specific and ongoing issues impacting our sector, the number one concern is unsustainable services. Year-to-year service providers are under pressure to deliver more services with diminishing resources. Without sustainable funding and stable support it will become very difficult to meet the growing demand of those most vulnerable in our communities.

As the community works through the issue of shrinking resources, it is tempting to have dichotomised arguments about whether the issue is one of sustainability of services or of organisations. As a sector that provides essential supports across the vast state of WA and employs more than 90,000 people it is imperative that we mature this conversation.

The socio-economic and cultural value of volunteering to Western Australia was conservatively estimated to be \$39 billion. This figure is much greater than previous estimates based on price or economic impact alone, yet is likely





to be a significant underestimate given the limitations of the available data and analytic techniques. We know that four out of five Western Australians volunteered in 2014, donating a total of 315 million hours and on average 15.9 hours per month.

Furthermore, there are around 5,000 volunteer involving organisations in WA across the not-for-profit, government and private sectors.

In the face of discussions around sustainability and continuity of services, the community sector would be hard pressed to provide the services that it does without the generosity and time that volunteers contribute, in order to make WA a better place for everyone to live. WACOSS thanks the thousands of volunteers who support our members every day to improve the lives of Western Australians.

It is of course important to acknowledge the significant contribution that leaders in the sector make through their commitment and input to the organisation's governance. This year we farewelled Board Members Justine Colyer, Fiona

White-Hartig, and Dawn Wallam and welcomed Joanne Della Bona, David Cain and Jonathon Smith. The resilience of the sector during tumultuous times cannot go underestimated, and although it is to be commended, we need to stop relying on the goodwill of the sector to carry such burdens.

While our challenges are complex, people's needs are not. To thrive, people need to be equipped with the tools and resources that provide them with a safe home environment, a place to live, an income that meets their needs, and a community that supports them to live their best lives.

Our work cannot be achieved without the commitment and ongoing support of our members, and moreover, we thank those at the frontline in the community services sector. It is our job to amplify your irreplaceable value to all Western Australians.

*Louise Giolitto,  
Debra Zanella, and The  
Honourable Kim Beazley AC,  
Governor of Western Australia.*

Debra Zanella  
**President**

Louise Giolitto  
**Chief Executive Officer**

# WACOSS Board



**Debra Zanella**

President

CEO | RUAH



**Mark Fitzpatrick**

Vice-President

CEO | Telethon Speech and Hearing



**Ashley Reid**

CEO | Cancer Council WA



**Joanne Della Bona**

(from 26 October 2018)

Executive Director | Coolabaroo



**Amanda Hunt**

CEO | UnitingCare West



**Juan Larranaga**

State Manager | Save the Children WA



**Jennifer O'Mullane**

CEO | Local Drug Action Groups Inc.



**David Cain**

(from 26 October 2018)

Executive Director Service Delivery and Design | Communicare



**Michael Piu**

CEO | St Patrick's Community Support Centre Limited



**Paul McMullan**

CEO | Outcare



**Jonathan Smith**

(from 26 October 2018)

CEO | ECHO Community Services



**Dawn Wallam**

(from 26 October 2018 until 21

February 2019)

CEO | Yorganop



**Justine Colyer**

(until 26 October 2018)

CEO | Rise Network



**Fiona White-Hartig**

(until 26 October 2018)

Chair | Regional Development Australia Pilbara



**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Juan Larranaga**, *Chair*  
**Jennifer O'Mullane**, *Board Member*  
**Paul McMullan**, *Board Member*  
**Allison Leonard**, *Co-opted*  
**Siew Cheah**, *Co-opted*  
**Graham Donnelly**, *Co-opted*  
**Justin Clark**, *Co-opted*

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**Mark Fitzpatrick**, *Chair*  
**Ashley Reid**, *Board Member*  
**Amanda Hunt**, *Board Member*  
**Jennifer O'Mullane**, *Board Member*  
**Michael Piu**, *Board Member*

## WACOSS Staff

**Louise Giolitto**, *Chief Executive Officer*  
**Dr Jennie Gray**, *Deputy Chief Executive Officer*  
**Laurene Collier**, *Communications Officer*  
**Demelza Rogers**, *Executive Support Officer (until 25 September 2018)*  
**Jackie Bosen**, *Executive Support Officer (from 25 September 2018)*

**SOCIAL POLICY**

**Chris Twomey**, *Research and Policy Development Leader*  
**Graham Hansen**, *Senior Policy Officer*  
**Sarah Turner**, *Pilbara Manager*  
**Leela James**, *Community Relief and Resilience Coordinator*  
**Alex Hughes**, *Project Manager 100 Families WA*  
**Demelza Rogers**, *Program Support Officer (from 26 September 2019)*  
**Emma Hardy Rosa**, *Program Support Officer*  
**Felicity Townsend**, *Program Support Officer (temporary contract)*  
**Carin McCashin**, *Project Officer*  
*Community Engagement (until 30 June 2019)*  
**Dorinda Cox**, *Manager Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council (from 10 December 2018 until 30 June 2019)*

**Dougie Nelson**, *Manager Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council (from 2 October 2018 until 28 December 2018)*

**Stuart Reid**, *Manager Projects and Business Development (until 30 June 2019)*

**Sue Nye**, *Manager Policy and Programs (until 30 June 2019)*

**CORPORATE SERVICES**

**Steve Crotty**, *Director Corporate Services*  
**Bree Van Haeften**, *Program Support Officer*  
**Fernanda Monteiro Soares da Silva**, *Graphic Design Coordinator, Intern (from 11 December 2018)*  
**Jaime Castilla Riasco**, *DropIN Project Officer*  
**Salil Koonja**, *Finance Officer*  
**Vikas Kumar Singh**, *Technology Officer*  
**Nataly Valencia Bula**, *Graphic Design Coordinator, Intern (until 7 December 2018)*

**VOLUNTEERS**

**Andrea Slusraczek**, *McCusker Centre Intern*  
**Carole Green**, *McCusker Centre Intern*  
**Evangeline Boulton**, *McCusker Centre Intern*  
**Melanie Clarkson**, *ER Connect Engagement Officer, Volunteer*  
**Shu-Wei Kho**, *McCusker Centre Intern*

## » Strategic Priority 1

# Championing social wellbeing for community resilience

The community services sector in Western Australia operates in a complex and challenging environment. WACOSS champions the social wellbeing of everyone in our state by analysing, engaging, and advocating with and for our community. We advance evidence-based policy recommendations that reflect community priorities to influence decision-makers and leaders to deliver better outcomes.

## STRATEGIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our annual Budget Submission to the State Government provides critical focus on the strategic priority areas for long-term and whole-of-government investment, policy development, and programs to tackle the most important social and economic issues for the Western Australian community.

The submission for the 2019/20 State Budget, *Vision 2020*, highlighted the need for action on tackling child poverty, the importance of growing the care economy and workforce, collaborative place-based approaches to deliver better outcomes, and key transformative actions to address hardship and disadvantage in WA.

The Submission was used to engage relevant Members of Parliament, ministerial staff, and public sector leaders in decision-making roles, via an advocacy and engagement strategy, in order to influence their future priorities and policies so that they had the greatest impact for those in our community who are doing it hardest. We received

strong positive feedback from stakeholders on its relevance and impact as a piece of strategic advocacy.

## OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

One of the most strategic pieces of work WACOSS led during the year was the development of the WA Outcomes Measurement Framework, in partnership with Department of Premier and Cabinet and with oversight from the *Supporting Communities Forum* Working Group. With a growing recognition that shared outcomes are vital to drive a unified vision for the wellbeing of all Western Australians, the Framework provides the scaffolding to support a transition to outcomes-focused service delivery.

A culmination of conversations with over 1000 sector representatives, and an iterative process with key stakeholders, the Framework importantly also supports whole-of-government and a whole-of-sector integration and innovation. This is of the utmost importance given that traditional service models and siloed funding programs have repeatedly failed to make inroads

to support those most vulnerable, who experience entrenched disadvantage.

The Framework was endorsed by the *Supporting Communities Forum* in June 2019, ahead of being presented to the Community Safety and Family Support Cabinet Sub Committee.

## MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT REFORM AND A SEAT AT THE TABLE

The Machinery of Government reforms have created a level of uncertainty for the sector, and reform processes have proved a challenge. At the same time, WACOSS has proactively participated in the Government's engagement and consultation processes to ensure the interests of those living in poverty and hardship are represented. These have included submissions around family and domestic violence, homelessness, local government, wage theft, and women's interests, amongst many more.

As a member of the *Supporting Communities Forum* and represented on four of its working groups, WACOSS is recognised as

an integral partner in achieving reform – by breaking down barriers between the community services sector and government, improving service design and procurement processes, measuring outcomes, and reporting on progress.

### **ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION**

WACOSS leads and collaborates with its members to advocate for the rights of people in Western Australia, which includes supporting campaigns that highlight where systems are failing people, or where policy is discriminatory, or even divisive.

The organisation takes its lead from the Australian Council of Social Service on national efforts – from issues such as the *Raise the Rate* campaign to increase Newstart and Youth Allowance, to condemning Robodebt, drug testing, and the rollout of the Cashless Debit Card. Our combined national advocacy ensured that the needs and rights of people experiencing disadvantage were front and centre in election policies and in voters' minds during the Federal Election campaign and beyond.

*Raise the Rate* gained significant traction during the period in particular, with more organisations, businesses, and governments publicly supporting a raise in Newstart and related payments. Achieving this would not be possible without lived experience advocates sharing their stories, so that we can better understand the real issues, support their experiences, and magnify their voice.

WACOSS, in collaboration with the WA Peaks Forum, has played a key role in a number of state campaigns and initiatives. This year saw the formation of the

*Make Renting Fair Alliance*, with WACOSS as a founding member, alongside the Tenants Action Group of WA, Tenancy WA, and Shelter WA. This group has formed to improve living conditions for renters in Western Australia, with a particular focus on the impending review of the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

WACOSS continues to be a committed member of *Social Reinvestment WA*, which focuses on justice reform and addressing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice system. In particular, WACOSS has engaged heavily in the coalition's campaign to secure fine default reform, to end the practice of imprisoning people for being unable to pay their fines.

As part of our consistent effort to ensure our advocacy remains effective, we explored new and better ways to produce our usual series of submissions, reports and briefings. This includes the Emerging Issues Forum, Budget Briefing, and Cost of Living report. Our submission and efforts to argue the case for a better deal for minimum wage earners through the State Wage Case are further unique and valued contributions where we have a meaningful impact for low-income and vulnerable workers.

### **A STRONG COSS NETWORK**

Being part of a strong national network that can share trends, insights, and best practice across jurisdictions adds significant value to our work within WA.

Australians are recognising that the COSS network can be a voice not just for people surviving on the lowest of incomes and experiencing inequality and disadvantage, but for everyone who has a stake in creating a

more equal, prosperous, and inclusive nation.

To achieve the goal of ending inequality and poverty, the COSS network and our allies build resilience within communities, by enabling and amplifying their insights to challenge policies, systems, and attitudes.

WACOSS staff attend and contribute to the strategic collaboration and outcomes of the nationwide network of Councils of Social Service to share learnings so we can better represent Western Australian interests. Our combined national network has almost 4000 organisations working with us. This is the foundation of who we are, and of our power to influence.

Together, across the nation, we equip our strategic partners with the compelling evidence and the big picture on the social, economic, and political need for change, backed up by the moving human experiences that motivate what we do.

### **ANTI-POVERTY WEEK**

WACOSS is represented on the Anti-Poverty Week Working Group, which campaigns and organises events to highlight the consequences of living with financial hardship. These activities are critical opportunities to also include people with lived experience of poverty in advocacy about how to address financial hardship. In 2018 this included the launch event, hosted in conjunction with Youth Affairs Council of WA; Anti-Poverty Week Breakfast, a gathering for businesses and the social sector to discuss the impacts of poverty on the lives of children and young people; and the Anti-Poverty Week Rally, calling on people to continue fighting against poverty in this country.

# » POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS

## 20 SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

Charity Fundraising in the 21st Century

Office for Advocacy and Accountability for  
Aboriginal Affairs

Financial Hardship Policy Guidelines – Electricity  
and Gas Licences

Residential Tenancies Amendment (Family  
Violence) Bill

10-Year Strategy on Homelessness

Inquiry into Reform of Business Licencing in  
Western Australia

## 9 EVENTS

State Budget Submission Launch

Cost of Living Report Launch

New Year Sector Breakfast

International Women's Day  
Breakfast

Emerging Issues Forum

WA State Budget Mid-Year Review

Pilbara Early Childhood Education  
and Care Conference

Charities: Their Nature and  
Purpose

Community Sector Budget Briefing

## 20 MEDIA STATEMENTS

Inequality is growing on  
every level

Federal Government must  
renew investment in remote  
housing

Regional training  
opportunities for community  
service workers

Community Resource  
Centres saved

Commitment of funds to  
gambling assistance ahead  
of privatisation of TAB

WA income would be  
boosted by \$377 million  
if Newstart and Youth  
Allowance raised



Inquiry into the Monitoring and Enforcing of Child Safe Standards	Inquiry into Microgrids and Associated Technologies
Termination of Strata Schemes	10-Year Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence
Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management and Cashless Welfare) Bill 2019	State Government Women's Plan
Local Government Act Review	State Wage Case 2018
State Budget Submission 2019-2020	Cost of Living Report 2018
ParentsNext Program	Wage Theft
	Safe Access Zones
	Streamline WA

Children and families need better support, ahead of Anti-Poverty Week	Commitment on Financial Counselling welcomed by peak bodies
Foodbank funding reinstatement welcomed, but more can be done	Homelessness services at breaking point – the time to act is now
Family and domestic violence funding abandoned, despite dire need within the community	Supporting regional communities to reduce alcohol-related harms
Human Rights Day – an opportunity to campaign for gender equality	Electricity disconnections at 6-year high
Single parents face a tough Christmas, according to Cost of Living in WA	Less Budget pain for households but few gains for communities
Finally, a voice for consumers ripped off by banks, superannuation, and insurance companies	Bigger boost needed to the low-paid's wages
Community keen on action on Our Priorities	WACOSS welcomes McGowan Government decision to support fairer funding for sector

## » Strategic Priority 2

Sustaining a vibrant community services sector,  
responding to the needs of diverse communities

WACOSS works alongside and with our partners in the sector to engender changes that lead to better outcomes for children, people, and families in Western Australia. We collaborate and broker with a diverse range of stakeholders, to support our members to respond to changing community needs and emerging and evolving issues.

**PILBARA PROJECT**

The Pilbara Project, with the support of Lotterywest and the Pilbara Development Commission and in partnership with Regional Development Australia, is having a well-documented and positive impact in the region. This has been achieved through capacity-building training and workshops, providing a mechanism for local conversations to inform WACOSS submissions to government,

and participating in regional reference groups with key stakeholders to help inform a whole-of-Pilbara approach to the collaboration and work of the community services sector in the region.

Our understanding of the complexities of living in regional areas, and the challenges facing regional and remote locations continues to be enhanced by having WACOSS staff located in

offices such as the Pilbara. The Pilbara Manager is an important resource for others in the sector too, including government departments and peak bodies, who regularly leverage from the local knowledge and networks established through this position when they are visiting and working in the region.

**A COORDINATED FOOD RELIEF SECTOR**

Food insecurity is responsible for a growing social, health, and economic burden in Australia, largely driven by poverty. The Food Relief Framework Project, funded by Lotterywest and auspiced by WACOSS, was established to review and make recommendations about better ways of delivering relief to those who experience food insecurity around the State. A Working Group was formed and extensive stakeholder and community consultation was undertaken, for us to come up with ways together about how to ensure a more sustainable sector that is best-placed to meet the needs of the people and families experiencing food insecurity. Because food insecurity is much more likely to be entrenched



*Natural Disaster  
Resilience Training  
Karratha*



*Pilbara Leadership Training Group*

than an isolated emergency, we also looked at developing deeper understandings about why it exists.

The Framework has established a roadmap for change. We recommended that the response to food insecurity needs to move beyond the philanthropic and not-for-profit sector, where it has been traditionally delivered from, to all segments of civil society. From building the capacity of the person who is food insecure to find a pathway out of food insecurity, to equipping service providers and programs with adequate resources, to evidence-informed approaches, to leveraging corporate social responsibility from the commercial sector, to policies that tackle inequities, to government leadership.

The inaugural Food Relief Roundtable, hosted by the Premier in early 2020, will generate more widespread and coordinated commitment to address food insecurity in Western Australia.

### **A SEAT AT THE TABLE ON OUT-OF-HOME CARE IN WA**

WACOSS has been playing an important role on issues of concern to the sector and community, working with and across Government to broker

relationships on a number of emerging issues. Many of these reflect the challenges evolving from machinery of government changes, manifesting as uncertainty in roles and contracts, discontinuity in sector engagement mechanisms and processes, and rushed tender processes. One key example is in relation to child protection service reform.

During the reporting period, WACOSS raised concerns with the State Government on behalf of the sector about the Out-of-Home Care service model presented to services tendering for contracts. A funding model was proposed without sufficient consultation, raising concerns that resourcing levels were not sustainable for the level of care needed, particularly as the response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse recommendations on child safe standards will impose a much higher level of trauma-informed care.

In response to our engagement and advocacy in partnership with the sector (particularly the Children's Policy Advisory Council), the Department of Communities Director General formed an independent OOHCR Reference Group, with representation from the sector

with independent co-chairs. The immediate focus of the group is to work with the Department to resolve and progress issues with OOHCR service and funding models.

The reference group also highlighted the need to include Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in the reform, and to focus on the wider context to reduce the number of children coming into care. Due to our collective efforts the tender process has been suspended for at least 12 months while these issues are resolved. Meanwhile progress is being made on working with existing services to tackle barriers to better outcomes, such as increasing family reunification support.

### **SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS**

WACOSS has continued to advocate for a greater role for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in the design and delivery of services in WA, pushing the WA Government to develop and advance its commitments to procure more services from Aboriginal organisations.

Throughout the year WACOSS and the Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council held a



series of roundtables to develop partnership values and practices that aim to enhance outcomes for Aboriginal children and families, by improving how ACCOs and other community service organisations work together. The end result was a seminal report on the systemic, cultural, and inter-agency barriers and challenges to developing services in partnership in WA, *Partnering with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver trusted services with stronger outcomes*.

### **SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO BECOME DISASTER RESILIENT**

17 workshops were presented to community service organisations in regional and metro locations across Western Australia as part of the National Disaster Resilience

Program. This was an Australian Government initiative supported by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to recognise and promote innovative practices to make our communities safer, stronger, more resilient, and better-prepared to manage emergency situations. Workshops highlighted the need to plan for business continuity while also responding to the immediate impact on communities when a natural disaster occurs.

The project received the Community Award in the 2018 Western Australian Resilient Australia Awards.

### **REGIONAL TRAINING AND CONSULTING**

WACOSS has been delivering workshops around Western Australia, aimed at building

the skills and knowledge of regional community services through the provision of tailored professional development, that were not otherwise available to these providers. Local training opportunities were identified through extensive surveying of sector representatives, with more than 30 workshops designed and delivered to meet these needs. In some cases this involved adaptation of existing WACOSS training products and in others it required development of new workshops.

These workshops were often over-subscribed, and there was consistently excellent evaluation results on measures of the quality of the training and the skills and knowledge of the trainers, showing that this professional development was highly regarded across the regions.

*Louise Giolitto  
and Jennie Gray at  
the 2018 WACOSS  
Conference*





## » Strategic Priority 3

# Supporting collective efforts of our members to shape society

WACOSS has a strategic responsibility to lead and facilitate forums, networks, and processes that result in cross-sector collaborative practice, and to identify cross-sector partnership opportunities that strengthen the sector. The impact of this work has benefits to service users in our communities through improved referrals and sharing of resources, and provides an avenue of peer feedback on policy and development.

### ENCOURAGING WIDER ADVOCACY OF ISSUES

WACOSS has a core function to advocate on behalf of the community services sector and communities, in order to achieve a more just and equitable Western Australia for all. To do this, we need support for issues that matter from both within and beyond the sector.

The Advocacy Toolkit was a resource designed and produced by WACOSS to enable and empower everyone to be an advocate for change for an issue they are passionate about, which in turn helps policy and decision makers find the best solutions to persistent problems.

To further nurture the collective voice of a sector – which in Western Australia employs nearly 100,000 people, representing seven per cent of the state's workforce – the organisation developed a

strategy to engage the strongest allies we know: staff at the front-line of our community services organisations.

Our journey toward a just and equitable future lies within the strength of the people who hold the same values as WACOSS, people working at the frontline who know the stories of our communities and believe in a better future for everyone. To reach this audience, Social Service Member Organisations can now offer their staff the opportunity to become a *WACOSS Champion*. Champions are able to take advantage of the tangible benefits of their organisation's membership, while also individually staying up-to-date with and being invited to join campaigns against poverty, disadvantage, and inequality. The benefit of this is twofold; fostering a collective voice of experienced front-line staff, and giving them a chance to be even more part of the movement for change.

### CONNECTING EARLY YEARS NETWORKS SUPPORT PROJECT

The first years of life are a critical time in a child's development and investment in the early years has been shown to deliver the most significant returns in outcomes across the life-course. With this knowledge, and with support from our members and funding from a number of sources including Department of Communities, Woodside, and Lotterywest, WACOSS established the Connecting Early Years Networks Support Project in 2015, supporting almost 50 place-based Early Years Networks across the state.

WACOSS is proud to have been involved in this project, which achieved many successes. This included enhancing the sustainability of networks by hosting annual forums and conferences featuring world leaders in child development; connecting networks across the state through the online EYN portal; delivering tailored support to EYNs including the development of strategic plans; producing resources and tools for networks to advocate for early years' issues and build

*Our journey toward a just and equitable future lies within the strength of the people who hold the same values as WACOSS: people working at the frontline who know the stories of our communities, and believe in a better future for everyone.*



**Aunty Charmaine Pell, Louise Giolitto, Aunty Millie Penny, and the Honourable Simone McGurk MLA at the New Year Sector Breakfast**

the capacity of their network; promoting and strengthening partnerships across the state; and championing the views and voice of EYNs in WACOSS's annual Budget Submissions. The Connecting Early Years Networks Support Project concluded on 30 June.

### **100 FAMILIES WA PROJECT**

Collaboration between nine project partners for the 100 Families WA project entered its second year, achieving significant milestones. In the co-design of the project – with the Community Advisory Group comprised of members who are experts by experience – 400 families were recruited to participate in the longitudinal quantitative data collection. 100 families have since gone on to participate in fortnightly qualitative interviews, for researchers to understand the experiences of entrenched disadvantage and hardship.

Some of the early findings from the baseline data have identified the heavy impact of financial adversity on families, and the desperate measures many turn

to, such as payday lenders, which end up snowballing and spiralling out of control. The result of outstanding debt places people in significant hardship, and many have experienced relationship breakdowns and stress-related health issues attributed to debt.

The next steps of the project will be to continue analysing and interpreting collected data, and the bigger questions about how the project's findings can be implemented.

### **HARDSHIP - A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

WACOSS hosted our inaugural Community Conversation on Hardship, in October 2018. A panel comprised of people with a combination of lived expertise and coalface service delivery experience from around the State shared stories about the struggle to break the cycle of poverty. Presentations were insightful, heartfelt, and highlighted how unfair our system is.

These accounts were the spark for a broader dialogue involving audience members and also subsequent WACOSS submissions. This event was run in partnership with, and was broadcast on, Perth community radio station RTRFM.

### **LIVED EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK**

Across Council of Social Service Lived Experience Framework is being designed with the input of people who are experts by experience from around Australia. The Framework lays out recommended policies that can guide government, stakeholders, and providers regarding the partnering of people and groups with lived experience for co-production purposes. The development of this much needed resource is being led by WACOSS, and it is a direct extension of the organisation's work in the reporting period. It will have relevance and applicability in many scenarios, and there is already extensive endorsement for its use from many segments of the sector.

## » Strategic Priority 4

# Leading a strong, innovative, and sustainable organisation

WACOSS encourages leaders who build and progress the long-term objectives of our organisation and our sector, and empowers staff to participate in the sustainability and viability of the organisation, and the role it plays as the peak body of the community services sector.

### REGIONAL REPRESENTATION AND SUPPORT

As the Pilbara Manager has been integral in connecting WACOSS with the work of the sector in the Pilbara, so too is travelling to regional and remote areas of our state to engage with and identify needs of community services and their communities. One of our goals is to ensure our senior leaders travel to regional and remote locations as often as possible.

In the last year, the Board held one of its monthly meetings in Karratha, which included meetings with local sector stakeholders. During the visit, WACOSS convened a Place-based Forum, for regional and metropolitan providers to learn about a range of initiatives across the State, especially the Pilbara. With more than 70 representatives joining, the Forum was a great networking event. The site visits in Roebourne also gave the Board members the chance to hear firsthand about some of the challenges and opportunities that this community is experiencing.

### CULTURAL SECURITY

To continue the organisation's commitment and support of the *Looking Forward, Moving Forward* (Minditj Kaart-Moorditj Kaart) partnership with Curtin University, staff at WACOSS are learning from our Noongar Elders Aunty Millie Penny and Aunty Charmaine Pell, who attend meetings and events to provide expertise and guidance to improve organisational cultural safety.

Our efforts to close the gap of knowledge between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians were also advanced through staff development in Cultural Safety Training with Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation, a member of WACOSS and of the Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council. The two-day intensive training package is designed to assist teams to develop the tools and practices that make their services culturally secure. WACOSS staff were proud to be the inaugural participants of this new Yorgum workshop.

### SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS FOR THE SECTOR

The DropIN team create design solutions for WACOSS and the sector, this year successfully re-designing the ERConnect portal, an online searchable portal that allows users to search for emergency relief based on the person's needs and location.

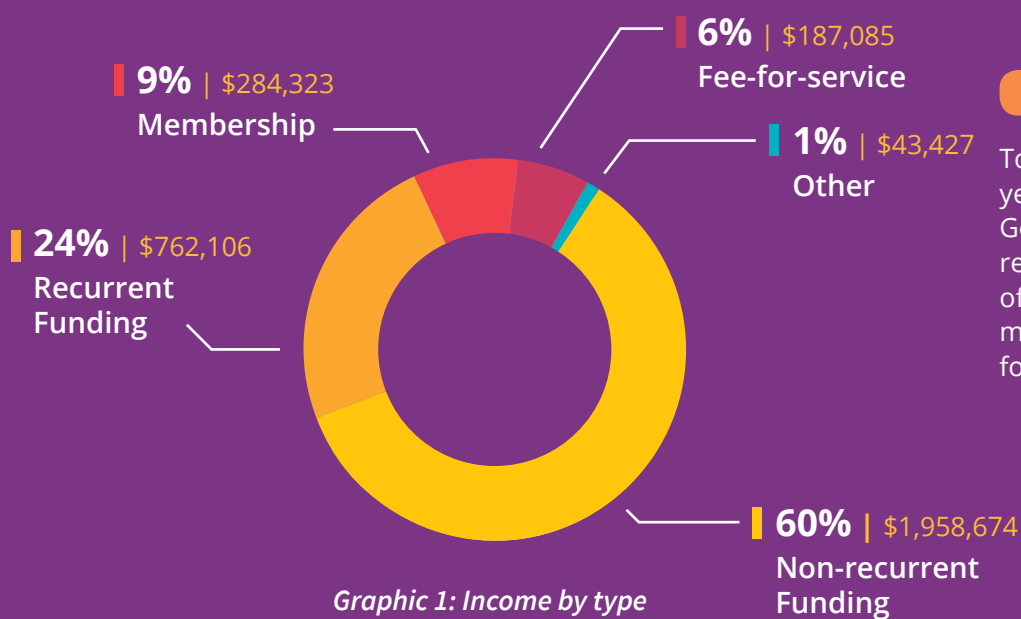
The team have continued to build their brand and knowledge of the sector, which has been reflected in the projects entrusted to them by the community services sector, and in the work produced for member and non-member organisations.

### MOVING ON

WACOSS has been a fixture in the building at City West Lotteries House, West Perth, for more than 20 years. Over time the organisation's needs outgrew the space, so when an opportunity to design and fit out an office space in West Leederville was presented, it was too good to refuse. The office will move in August 2019.

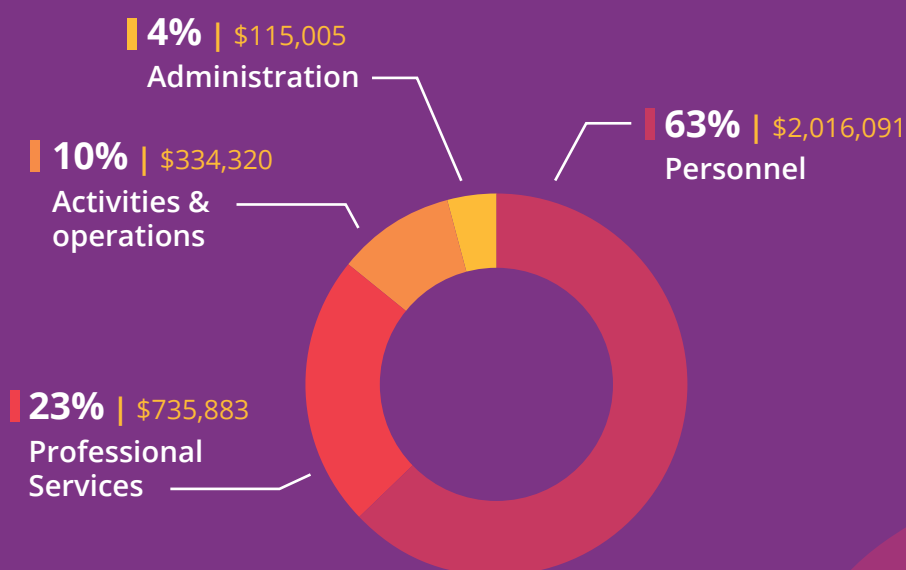
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The financial position of WACOSS remains stable with net assets of \$1,074,307, an increase of \$34,316 on the previous financial year. At balance date, 91% of total assets were held in cash or receivables, with current assets coverage of current liabilities at 2.1 : 1.



### INCOME

Total income for the financial year was \$3,235,615. Government funding (84%) remains the primary source of revenue together with membership (9%) and fee-for-service (6%).



### EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure for the financial year was \$3,201,299. Personnel (63%) remained the largest expenditure type, together with professional services (23%) and activities and operations (10%).

### General Note:

*It should be recognised that the nature of the WACOSS's activities are such that individual projects and major events have the capacity to materially alter specific areas of income and expenditure year-on-year.*



# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND REPRESENTATION

## Stakeholder Engagement

- 6718 Balagarni Group
- ACCO and Non-ACCO Roundtable Working Group
- ACOSS Climate and Energy Working Group
- ACOSS Housing and Homelessness Working Group
- ACOSS Income Support and Employment Policy Network
- ACOSS Media and Communications Working Group
- ACOSS Community Sector Policy Network
- ACOSS Tax Working Group
- ACOSS Directors Working Group
- AGL Customer Council
- Anti-Poverty Week State Committee
- ACNC CSI Advisory Group
- Centre for Social Impact (CSI) Advisory Board
- CEOs for Gender Equity
- City of Perth RAP Reference Group
- City West Lotteries House Board
- Community Employers WA (CEWA) Board
- Consumer Advisory Committee
- Councils of Social Service Policy Leads
- Data Sharing Advisory Group
- District Leadership Group - Pilbara
- Early Years Networks Reference Group
- Elders Yarn (Roebourne)
- East Pilbara Interagency meeting
- East Pilbara Youth Engagement Partnership Meetings
- Economic Regulation Authority Consumer Consultative Committee (ERACCC)
- Gas Marketing Code of Conduct Consultative Committee
- Hardship Utility Grants (HUGS) Steering Committee
- Housing Advisory Roundtable (HART)
- Hedland Collective
- Hedland Community Safety Action Group
- Hedland Community Safety Advisory Forum
- Hedland Early Years Network
- Hedland Youth Stakeholders Action Group
- HUGS Service Centre Working Group
- Joint Commissioning Committee
- Karratha Early Years Group
- Local Government Act Review - Stage 1
- Local Government Act Review - Stage 2
- Looking Forward and Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Translation Group
- Looking Forward Moving Forward Governance Group and Research Project
- Looking Forward Moving Forward Workforce Group
- Looking Forward Moving Forward Cultural Security Group
- Law Access Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Make Renting Fair Campaign Alliance
- Midland ER Network
- Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council
- National Consumer Roundtable on Energy
- Navigating Through Life: Aboriginal Expert Reference Group
- Newman Early Years Network
- North Metro Emergency Relief Forum
- Out of Home Care Reference Group
- Pilbara for Purpose
- Pilbara Health Workforce Working Group
- Protection and Care Working Group

- Regional Youth Stakeholders Network Meeting
- Sustainable Development Goals WA Network
- Social Reinvestment WA Coalition
- Social Reinvestment WA Executive Committee
- Social Reinvestment WA Fine Default Reform Sub-Committee
- Steering Committee for the Centre for Parenting Excellence
- Shelter WA Advisory Committee on Homelessness
- SEMC Recovery and Community Engagement Sub-Committee
- South East Metropolitan Emergency Relief Forum
- State Training Board's Steering Committee
- South West Metropolitan Partnership Forum/Imagined Futures
- Supporting Communities Forum
- Supporting Communities Forum Data Sharing and Linkage Working Group
- Supporting Communities Forum Outcomes Framework

- Working Group
- Supporting Communities Forum Procurement Reform Working Group
- Supporting Communities Forum Our Communities Report Working Group
- UWA Social Policy & Practice Research Consortium
- WA Social Research Network
- WA Women's Health Conference Steering Committee
- Water Corporation Customer Advisory Panel
- Western Australian Council on Homelessness
- West Pilbara AOD Management Group

#### WACOSS Reference Groups

- Children's Policy Advisory Council (CPAC)
- Connecting Early Years Networks Project Reference Group
- Community Relief and Resilience Forum
- Food Relief Framework Working Group
- State Emergency Relief

#### Committee (SERC)

- WA Peaks Forum
- WACOSS Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
- WACOSS Strategic Reference Group

#### Partners, Sponsors, Supporters, Funders

- Anglicare WA
- ANSON
- Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS)
- Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)
- Australian Red Cross
- Australian Scholarship Fund
- Bankwest
- Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre (BCEC)
- Castledine Gregory
- Centrecare
- Centre for Social Impact (CSI)
- City West Lotteries House
- City of Cockburn
- City of Kwinana
- Commissioner for Children and Young People
- Community Housing Industry





- Association
- Connecting Up
- Consumers of Mental Health WA
- Curtin University of Technology
- Department of Communities
- Department of Finance
- Department of Health
- Department of Justice
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Financial Counsellors' Association of Western Australia
- Financial Counselling Network
- Geraldton Regional Community Education Centre
- Google
- Headspace (Pilbara)
- Hesta
- Horizon Power
- Jacaranda Community Services
- John Curtin Institute of Public Policy
- Linkwest
- Local Drug Action Group
- Lotterywest
- John Curtin Leadership Academy (JCLA)
- McCusker Foundation
- Mercycare
- MODAL
- Morgan Stanley
- National Disability Services (NDS) WA
- Navigating Through Life: Aboriginal Expert Reference Group
- Ngala
- Nous Group
- People with Disabilities Western Australia
- Pilbara Development Commission
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Reconciliation WA
- Regional Services Reform Unit (RSRU)
- Relationships Australia
- Rise Network
- Rod Lillis, Crunch Consulting
- Ruah Community Services
- Rural Health West
- Shelter WA
- Slater and Gordon
- Social Policy Practice and Research Consortium, UWA
- Social Research Network WA
- Stopping Family Violence
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Synergy
- Telethon Kids Institute
- Tenancy WA
- UnitingCare West
- University of Queensland
- University of Western Australia
- Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)
- Wanslea
- Water Corporation
- Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH)
- Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA)
- Woodside Development Fund
- Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia
- YMCA



# MEMBERS

## Social Service Organisations

- 55 Central Inc
- Aboriginal Health Council of WA
- Aboriginal Males Healing Centre
- Access Housing Australia Limited
- Access Plus
- AccordWest
- Adoption Research & Counselling Service Inc
- Advocacy WA
- Advocare Inc
- Albany Youth Support Association
- Allambee Counselling
- Amity Health
- Anglicare WA
- Armadale Community Family Centre
- Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS)
- Australian Association for Infant Mental Health Inc WA Branch
- Australian Association of Social Workers WA Branch
- Australian Red Cross
- Avivo Live Life
- Baptcare Ltd
- Bladder and Bowel Health Australia Inc
- Blind Citizens WA Inc
- Bloodwood Tree Association
- Broome C.I.R.C.L.E. Inc
- Cahoots
- Calvary Youth Services
- Mandurah Inc
- Cancer Council Western Australia
- Carnarvon Family Support Service Inc
- Catholic Outreach
- Centacare Family Services Geraldton
- Centacare Kimberley Association Inc
- Central Agcare Inc
- Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees
- Centrecare Inc
- Child Australia
- Childcare Association of WA Inc
- Chorus
- Citizens Advice Bureau of WA Inc
- Communicare Inc
- Community Employers WA
- Community Legal Centres Association (WA) Inc
- Community Vision Inc
- ConnectGroups - Support Groups Association WA Inc
- Coolabaroo
- Desert Blue Connect
- Developmental Disability Council of WA
- Eastern Region Domestic Violence Services Network Inc (Koolkuna Women's Refuge)
- Echo Community Services
- Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka
- Employment Law Centre of WA Inc
- EON Foundation Inc
- Escare Inc
- Even Keel Bipolar Support Association Inc
- Facilitatrix
- Family Day Care WA Inc
- Family Inclusion Network of Western Australia Inc
- Fibro & Us - Fibromyalgia Support Group Inc
- Financial Counsellors' Association WA Inc
- Foodbank WA
- Foothills Information & Referral Service Inc
- Foundation Housing Ltd
- Fremantle Multicultural Centre WA Inc
- Fremantle Women's Health Centre Inc
- Genetic and Rare Disease Network
- Glyde-In Community Learning Centre Inc
- Goldfields Women Health Care Centre
- Goodstart Early Learning
- Gosnells Community Legal Centre Inc
- Greenfields Family & Community Centre Inc
- Haemophilia Foundation WA Inc
- Harold Hawthorne Community Centre
- Harvey Community Resource Centre Inc
- HelpingMinds
- HepatitisWA Inc
- Hope Community Services Inc
- IBN Corporation Pty Ltd



- In Town Centre Inc
- Indigo Junction
- Injury Matters
- Italo-Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre Inc
- Jewish Care WA Inc
- Joondalup Family Centre
- Joongari House – Wyndham Family Support Inc.
- Juniper
- Justice, Ecology and Development Office, Catholic Archdiocese
- Kalparrin
- Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
- Katanning Regional Emergency Accommodation Centre Inc
- Key Assets
- Kidsafe WA Inc
- Kilfinan Australia
- Knights of the Southern Cross
- Lamp Incorporated
- Langford Aboriginal Association
- Lesmurdie Community Care
- Life Without Barriers
- Linkwest Inc
- Living Proud Inc
- Local Drug Action Groups Inc
- MacKillop Family Services
- Margaret River Community Resource Centre Inc
- Melville Cares Inc
- Men's Health and Wellbeing WA Inc
- Men's Outreach Service Inc
- MercyCare Ltd
- Midland Women's Health Care Place Inc
- Milligan Community Learning and Resource Centre Inc
- Mission Australia
- Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Corporation
- Murdoch University Guild of Students
- Nardine Wimmin's Refuge Inc
- Newman Women's Shelter
- Ngala
- Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation
- No Limits Perth
- Nulsen Disability Services
- One World Centre
- Orana House Inc
- Outcare Inc
- Palmerston Association Inc
- Pat Thomas House Inc
- Patricia Giles Centre Inc
- Peel Community Development Group
- Peel Youth Services Inc
- People with Disabilities WA Inc
- Perth Asian Community Centre
- Perth Inner City Youth Service
- Pivot Support Services
- Playgroup WA Inc
- Reconciliation WA
- Regional Alliance West Inc
- Regional Development Australia Pilbara
- Relationships Australia Western Australia Inc
- Richmond Wellbeing Inc
- Rise Network Inc
- Rostrata Family Centre Inc
- Ruah Community Services
- Samaritans
- Sandalwood Family Centre
- Save the Children WA
- Second Harvest (Australia) Inc
- SMP Lifeskills2work
- So Change Inc
- Social Ventures Australia Ltd
- Society of Professional Social Workers Inc
- South Coastal Health and Community Services
- South Lake Ottey Family & Neighbourhood Centre Inc
- South Perth Senior Citizens Centre
- South West Counselling Inc
- South West Emergency Care for Children Inc
- South West Refuge Inc
- Southcare Inc
- St Bartholomew's House Inc
- St John of God Outreach Services
- St Patrick's Community Support Centre
- St. Vincent de Paul Society WA Inc
- Starick
- Sussex Street Community Law Service Inc
- Tenancy WA
- The Claddagh Association of Western Australia
- The Family Planning Association of WA Inc
- The People Place Busselton Inc
- The Salvation Army WA Social Program
- The Shopfront
- The Smith Family
- The Spiers Centre Inc
- Tom Price Youth Support Association Inc
- Tuart Place
- Uniting Church Community Service and Outreach Network
- UnitingCare West
- Volunteering WA
- WA AIDS Council
- WA Blue Sky Inc
- WA Fairhaven
- WA Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies
- Wanslea Family Services

- Waratah Support Centre SW Inc
- Waroona Community Resource Centre Inc
- Welfare Rights & Advocacy Service
- West Stirling Neighbourhood House
- Western Australian Aboriginal Leadership Institute
- Western Urban Associates (WA) Inc (Street Chaplains)
- Wheatbelt Agcare Community Support Services Inc
- Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence Services (WA)
- World Vision Australia
- Wungening Aboriginal Corporation
- Yaandina Family Centre Limited
- YMCA WA
- Yorganop Association Inc
- Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation
- Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia
- Youth Futures WA Inc
- YouthCARE
- Zonta House Refuge Association Inc

### Associate Organisations

- City of Cockburn - Community Development and Services
- City of Nedlands- Community Development Department
- City of Swan Lifespan Services Community Development Team
- Helen Gryzb & Associates
- Sync 7
- UWA - Division of Social Work & Social Policy

### Social Service Individuals

- Alvero Huertas
- Ann Deanus
- Ann White
- Anna Presser
- Ashlee Pitcher
- Brian Cooper
- Brodie Lewis
- Chrystie Flint
- Cyndi Giles
- Felicite Black
- Frances Tubridy
- Helen Creed
- James Paxman
- Jessica Karlsson
- Jo Buontempo
- Joe Calleja
- Katie Norwell
- Kylie Hansen
- Louise Lamont
- Maria Harries
- Mark Fitzpatrick
- Michael Grove
- Michelle Gust
- Michelle MacKenzie
- Noel Harding
- Shauna Gaebler
- Sonia Hall
- Stephanie Ball
- Taziva Magwa
- Therese Smith
- Vicki Hamersley
- Vik Jeyakumar
- Wendy Simpson

### Associate Individuals

- Alison Xamon
- Alison Wright
- Anabelle May

- Ashlee Bastow
- Beth Jones
- Cameron Poustie
- Carol Wakely
- Chrissie Fearon
- Dave Kelly
- David Gilchrist
- Debbie Millard
- Diana Ryan
- Elizabeth White
- Fabiola Pinheiro
- Francine Kickett
- Janet Boateng Serwah
- Jeff Simper
- Judy Eastham
- Kate Hawes
- Katie Hunt
- Lana Snook
- Linda Savage
- Lisa L Baker
- Megan Plaster
- Nandita R Naroth
- Rewi Lyall
- Rhuwina Griffiths
- Samuel Dent
- Shirley van Schagen
- Simon Colquhoun
- Stephen Dawson
- Sue Ellery
- Sue Lines
- Yen Hawkes

### Life Members

- Anne Sinclair
- Brenda Harper-Nelson
- Moira Rainer
- Peter Sirr
- Sue Ash AO
- Terri Coughlin



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# WACOSS stands for an inclusive, just and equitable society.

We advocate for social change to improve the wellbeing of Western Australians and to strengthen the community services sector that supports them.

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