From: Sector support COVID-19
Subject: Message from the Director General, Department of Communities
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Attachments: Week 2 - Taskforce Partnership Update_cleaned.pdf

Message from the Director General

Department of Communities

Hello everyone,

Each week there are more and more positive signs that WA is on the path to recovery. On Wednesday we passed a major milestone as public schools reopened for students.

It is wonderful to see children back in classes. I suspect also that this has been a very welcome development for those of you who have been trying to work from home while minding children – not an easy feat, I know.

The return of public schools was made possible thanks in big part to the hard work done by agencies like ours in confronting this pandemic.

I want to thank every single one of you – whether working for Communities or community-based organisations – for your contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Together we have been providing quarantine accommodation for travellers to contain the spread of the virus, working quickly to return people to remote communities to keep them safe and working in partnership to support children and vulnerable cohorts. All of these actions have played a role ensuring WA's low rate of COVID-19 infection.

In recent weeks I have heard from the sector about the issues and needs they are facing in the form of increased demand and pressure on services. I am pleased to confirm Communities is working closely with our colleagues at the Mental Health Commission and Lotterywest to facilitate access to emergency funding through a number of programs.

Communities will continue to work through the taskforce processes to look at other potential sources of support, including the allocation of Commonwealth funding or private sector support. We will see some good news on this front in coming weeks.

We will over time hear more about the economic impact of this crisis. It is our role to pay equal attention to the social impact of this pandemic.

One of the main focuses for Communities last week was in preparing an initial report on the social impact of the COVID-19 response. This report was presented to the State Recovery Coordinator, Sharyn O'Neill. It will inform State Cabinet alongside similar reports on the impact of the virus on the economy, the regions, health and the public sector.

Some of the data contained in this report will be confronting. There is a strong sense that in coming weeks and months we will see a growth in demand for a range of support services.

Difficult economic conditions will likely mean a flow-on for agencies.

I know many of you have been asking for data on the social impact of this crisis. This is the first step in providing that data. In following reports we will draw on a greater range of data sources than we would have in the past to paint a more accurate picture of where we stand.

I will have more to report about data in the coming weeks.

The Community Sector Partnership Team is continuing its work with Emma White and the community sector to review and refresh the approach of the taskforces. I have attached this week's update, provided directly from the Community Sector Partnership Team, which reflects

the work completed this week and the work that will be undertaken next week.

I would also like to say a big thank you to all who have been involved in our Tuesdays at Twelve webinar series. The feedback and discussion have been fantastic. Anyone can join and take part.

Last week's session with Health Department Assistant Director General Dr James Williamson was really informative. Next Tuesday we will be joined by Judith Stewart, Executive Director of the Department of Health's COVID-19 Planning Cell. Judith will speak on the very important subject of personal protective equipment (PPE) and the risk-based processes used to assign PPE.

In the meantime, we can celebrate those little signs that life is getting back on track.

Michelle Andrews
Director General
Department of Communities

The Department of Communities acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Western Australia and their connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their elders past and present.

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