Information for the media

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Getting the facts

When responding to a media enquiry, the Department’s media liaison officers will often gather information by consulting several sections within the agency and even other government agencies. So that we can action your enquiry and get a response back to you as quickly as possible, we need:

• Your name and the media agency that you represent
• Your email and telephone contact details
• Your enquiry/questions in an email to: media.liaison@housing.wa.gov.au
• Your deadline

Media liaison staff will respond to your enquiry by email to the address you provide, often following up with a telephone call also.

24/7 ONE STOP MEDIA CONTACTS

mail media.liaison@housing.wa.gov.au
phone (08) 6217 4077

For general information about the Department:

www.communities.wa.gov.au
(08) 6217 6888
An overview of the Department of Communities

The following information will in many instances give you useful context and background for your enquiry.

The Department of Communities (Department) is responsible for the delivery of child protection and family support, community grants, funding and initiatives, education and care regulation, disability services, housing and regional services reform.
Child protection and family support

The Department protects and cares for Western Australian children and young people who are in need, and supports families and individuals who are at risk or in crisis.

We work proactively with families to build safety around children, and prevent the need for children to enter the out-of-home-care system. We also support children and young people who are in out-of-home care to thrive by working with community sector organisations and foster carers to provide them with a safe, stable environment.

We provide and fund a range of child safety and family support services throughout the state including mandatory reporting investigations and training, Working with Children Checks, fostering and adoption services, counselling and outreach programs, crisis accommodation, homelessness services, and emergency services support.

Quick links
- Working with Children
- Hardship Utility Grant Scheme
- Homelessness Services
- Education and Care Regulatory Unit

Media contacts 6217 4077
media.liaison@housing.wa.gov.au
Community grants, funding and initiatives

Communities works in collaboration with Western Australia’s community services sector to oversee the delivery of programs and services that support and strengthen the State’s diverse communities. It is committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for seniors, young people, women, volunteers, carers, children and families.

Communities provides annual funding to more than 130 community sector organisations and local governments to deliver a range of services and programs throughout Western Australia. It also coordinates the Cadets WA program, which currently involves more than 8,000 young people across Western Australia.

Funding is allocated to services such as:
- Carers and grandcarers
- Volunteering
- Children and families
- Youth
- Seniors
- Sector support
- Community and neighborhood development
- Individual and family support
- Financial counselling

Quick links
- Education and Care
- Seniors Card
Disability Services

Communities works to advance opportunities, community participation and quality of life of people with disability, to provide services and supports, and to fund non-government agencies to provide services to people with disability, their families and carers.

Communities also partners and collaborates with disability sector organisations, business and government, and other stakeholders to improve participation, inclusion and access for people with disability across the community.

A number of projects and services are delivered in order to facilitate better outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers. We work to continually improve processes for disability service providers and build capacity across the disability sector. These initiatives include: the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Local Coordination services, the Disability Justice Centre, therapy services, Country Resource and Consultancy, and the administration of Disability Access and Inclusion Plans, required by public authorities.

Quick links


Media contacts

- 6217 4077
- media.liaison@housing.wa.gov.au
Housing

The Department of Communities operates state-wide across the land, housing, property finance and human services sectors to provide affordable housing opportunities for people who would otherwise be unable to access housing through the private market. Communities also assists with housing finance through its Keystart home loans business, and provides rental assistance options for people in need.

The Housing portfolio includes:

• managing public rental dwellings that currently provide a home for more than 64,000 Western Australians on low incomes, making Communities the biggest landlord in Western Australia
• managing around 5,300 Government Regional Officers’ Housing (GROH) properties
• providing housing for 112 Aboriginal communities in remote locations
• working in partnerships with the private property sector to develop affordable housing opportunities
• operating a bond assistance loan service to assist people enter the private rental market

Public rental housing is provided for low-income households who are often unable to obtain secure and affordable accommodation in the private rental sector. Public housing is available for those in need for the duration of their need, not necessarily a ‘house for life’.

Some client groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, older people, people with disabilities and singles also experience difficulties accessing housing in the private market.

The rent paid for public housing is calculated at 25 per cent of a household’s gross assessable income. Assessable income includes most Centrelink and Veterans’ Affairs benefits and any pay derived from employment.
Waiting list

Applicants for public housing need to meet a number of income and asset limits to firstly be eligible, then to remain on the waiting list and subsequently to remain in public housing.

The time an applicant waits for public housing is influenced by several factors: the area in which housing is being sought, the turnover of properties in that region, the type of accommodation and number of bedrooms required, and the number of people ahead of the applicant on the waiting list.

Maintenance

All maintenance tasks are prioritised into one of four categories being emergency, urgent, priority, and routine maintenance.

The Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy

The Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy (DBMS) provides an appropriate balance between supporting tenants and protecting their neighbours and the wider community from unreasonable and illegal behaviour.

Complaints are investigated and if a complaint is substantiated it can result in a ‘strike’. If a tenant receives three disruptive behaviour strikes within a 12-month period, eviction action may be commenced. Ultimately, the decision to terminate a tenancy rests with a Magistrate’s Court.

If the strike is for serious behaviour—including vandalism to neighbours’ properties—the tenant may receive a first and final warning. If the substantiated behaviour is deemed ‘disruptive’ (for example, excessive noise) the tenant will receive a strike. Not every complaint will result in a strike. This is because we must be fair to the tenant and a complaint must be substantiated for a strike to be recorded.
Regional Services Reform

Regional Services Reform

Communities is working to address the significant historic gap between the life outcomes of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal West Australians in regional and remote areas, with a current focus on the Kimberley and Pilbara.

The vision for regional services reform is for Aboriginal families in regional and remote Western Australia to be more resilient and for Aboriginal communities to be stronger.

Our work focuses on long-term, systemic change. It aims to improve outcomes and provide Aboriginal people in regional and remote areas with access to the life opportunities enjoyed elsewhere in the State.

Reform concentrates on three concerns:

• Improved living conditions that enable families to prosper and don’t hold them back
• Supporting families to build their skills, and overcome any barriers to doing so, through improved service redesign and delivery
• Education, employment and housing opportunities, and support for families to take them up

Collaboration between the State Government, Aboriginal people, Commonwealth Government, local governments and service providers is integral to the implementation and the success of regional services reform.