



WA Peaks Communique

Peaks unite to support procurement fairness and protect community service workers' employment

Homelessness services in Western Australia are expecting their eight-contract rollover in 10 years by the end of March 2019. It is expected these rollovers will not include any additional funding to reflect the cost to community-managed homelessness services of the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) or indexation to reflect the growing cost of delivering services. It's also anticipated there'll be little scope for organisations to renegotiate their contracts to reduce the expected deliverables in order to account for the increase in costs.

Services directly impacted by this include women's refuges and dedicated youth homelessness services.

With funding agreements for several State government funded programs across a range of community service programs up for negotiation in coming months, multiple peak bodies have united to support Community Employers WA and the WA Council of Social Services' advocacy to secure fairness in procurement to reflect obligations of community services to pay workers in accordance with the ERO.

On 11 March, CEWA, Linkwest, Shelter WA, WA Association for Mental Health, WACOSS, WA Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies, Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services and Youth Affairs Council of WA came together to discuss the urgent situation facing homelessness services and its implications for other service sectors.

During this meeting, peaks discussed the need for collective action by the homelessness sector and other service sectors to force government to act on this issue.

As peak bodies, we recognise the impact the ERO and indexation is having on employment security for the workforce, the majority of whom are women. We also recognise the flow on effects to sustainability and continuity of services as well as the ability of organisations to employ workers with necessary skills to support our community. Ultimately, this impact rests on the quality of services people receive and the outcomes they experience.

We believe this situation is in direct conflict with the spirit of the ERO and Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy.

CEOs and Board chairs representing the community services sector are urged to inform their respective peak of the ERO's impact and the unwillingness of the State Government to provide sustainable funding.

It's now critical for organisations contact their relevant Minister and Local Members of Parliament to alert them to the impending loss of services in their community, and urge them to advocate to the Treasurer as a matter of urgency.

To support providers in this effort, CEWA and WACOSS have prepared template letters and budgets for you at: <https://wacoss.org.au/news/funding-and-contracting-advocacy-resource-hub/>