

Message from the Director General

Department of Communities



Hi everyone,

It has now been six weeks since a State of Emergency was declared in Western Australia and two weeks since the State Emergency Welfare Plan was enacted in response to the impact of COVID-19.

As respected and integral community partners, I know you are passionate about working collaboratively and that there has been a large amount of work undertaken to ensure we support the most vulnerable people in our community. That is why I wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to you and thank you for the role you have taken in helping set up and participating in our task forces.

I am learning that circumstances change extraordinarily fast in a pandemic and that there is a need to constantly test and review our responses to ensure that it is still the best approach. When we set up the task forces we were operating in a context where the modelling of the impact of COVID-19 was extremely worrying and we were all trying to anticipate the right response in a worst case scenario. Six weeks on we have an opportunity to see the benefit of the preventative actions taken in our community and it is very pleasing to note that the modelling is now significantly different.

My leadership team and I have had a lot of feedback from many of you and I want to reassure you that I have heard you. Whilst many of you have welcomed the partnership approach embedded in the task forces and you believe they are a useful vehicle, some of you have provided feedback that the task forces haven't always felt like a genuine partnership. You have felt frustrated by what you perceive as bureaucratic responses and you want a greater visibility over the decision making process.

I and the Communities Leadership team are committed to listening to you and strengthening our partnership.

We need to refresh the approach of the task forces in light of the changed environment we now find ourselves in, with a reduced health emergency but a looming economic and social one with limited and redirected resources.

Therefore, I would like to focus next Tuesdays at Twelve Webinar to discuss the taskforces further. In preparation for the Webinar I would appreciate it if you could take the time to consider and provide feedback to the following three questions regarding the task forces and our joint role in this important work:

1. How will you judge that your taskforce has been successful (ie. what does success look like)?
2. What are the behaviours we want to individually and collectively commit to as we work together in the Taskforces?
3. Are there any other burning issues that need addressing to enable the Taskforces to be successful?

You are invited to join the Tuesdays at Twelve Webinar by clicking on the following link - <https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/tuesdaysattwelve>

I hope you are able to join me and I thank you again for the important contribution you are making in our communities.

Michelle Andrews

Director General

Department of Communities
