



# State Welfare Emergency Committee

## Meeting 2 – Monday 4 May 2020

### Communique

The State Welfare Emergency Committee (SWEC) held its second meeting on Monday 4 May 2020.

Western Australia continues to successfully suppress the spread of COVID-19 but will be living with this virus and its social and economic impacts for a long-period of time, with welfare issues emerging.

SWEC members from across sectors demonstrated their commitment to collectively respond to these emerging issues by openly sharing information and working to collaborate on actions.

### Update on our actions

The State Welfare Coordinator updated members on the proactive work of the State Welfare Incident Coordination Centre (SWICC) in coordinating welfare support to people affected by COVID-19. The SWICC, housed in the Department of Communities (Communities), has been working to provide welfare support to those in hotel quarantine and will continue this work as more residents return from overseas. The agency also provides welfare support through various hotlines. Communities has also been working to find emergency accommodation and personal support services to rough sleepers.

### Operationalising the SWEC's commitment

Turning the decisions of the State Welfare Coordinator and the SWEC into action is critical to providing long-term support for the emotional and social well-being of the Western Australian community.

This task falls to the SWICC, whose role is to collect and analyse intelligence across member organisations and coordinate planning and implementation of key welfare services. The SWICC will partner closely with both SWEC members and the SHICC, and its extensive

networks of organisations. Effective delivery of welfare services can only be achieved through collective action.

The group also agreed on the need to ensure a cultural lens remains during and post-COVID-19 and what else can be done to embed this in the SWEC's ways of working.

### **Emerging issues**

Non-residents, including international students and working holiday makers, have emerged as a vulnerable cohort. Many remain stranded in Western Australia, with no form of paid income or financial support. Current support is being led by various SWEC organisations, including networks of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, as well as the Red Cross and Lotterywest. The SWEC committed to further investigating other members of this cohort in crisis, mapping existing services and determining what else can be done.

Some Western Australians continue to suffer from food supply and food security issues. The Western Australian Council of Social Services continues to collaborate closely with the State Government, led by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, in proactively managing these issues. The SWEC will continue to monitor the situation and identify emerging issues.

### **Next steps**

The SWEC will work together out-of-session to share and coordinate on key priorities and information-sharing, supported by the SWICC. The next meeting will be held 21 May 2020.