



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

Goldfields

Local Services Plan

March 2023

'I would first like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

Support services for Australian local communities are shifting towards an increasingly place-based and community-led approach. Through our consultations, we have listened to what communities and service providers are saying. We are committed to addressing the community needs that have been identified.

Future support services will build on the valuable network of existing services. Drawing from the strengths of our communities will help us to meet the objective of improving available support services in these regions. This will provide lasting and sustainable solutions to address longer-term issues facing our communities.

The outcomes in this Plan reflect the government's commitment to key Closing the Gap priorities by ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a meaningful say in the initiatives that impact their lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those stakeholders who provided their valuable feedback and for working collaboratively to develop this Plan. I look forward to continuing our work together to uplift and support our communities.'



Introduction

As part of ending the Cashless Debit Card (CDC), and the introduction of enhanced Income Management in Ceduna, East Kimberley, the Goldfields and Bundaberg-Hervey Bay, the Australian Government committed to extending existing support services and delivering a range of new initiatives.


The government is working with former CDC communities to deliver on these commitments, improve support services and address social issues.

This Local Services Plan (Plan) outlines the current support services available and includes service gaps, social issues and priority needs that have been identified by the community. It provides an action plan for addressing these issues and service gaps.

A number of key stakeholders including service providers, community organisations, the Department of Social Services (DSS) and other government stakeholders have been involved in developing this Plan and formulating future actions to address the identified priorities.

Goldfields Local Services Plan – Executive summary

Regional location



Population snap shot

- **Shire Of Coolgardie** – 3,478
(Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – 8.9%)¹
- **City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder** – 29,306
(Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – 7.7%)²
- **Shire Of Laverton** – 1,333
(Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – 24.4%)³
- **Shire Of Leonora** – 1,588
(Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – 10%)⁴
- **Shire Of Menzies** – 524
(Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – 21%)⁵





Engagement

Consulted – **46** Feedback – **14**

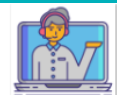





- Community organisations
 - Health services
 - Businesses*
 - State government*
 - Local councils
- *Partial/nil response

Priorities

Improving community services in the area

-  — 1. Assign a high priority to the collation of community data at the regional level to support the regular assessment, review and revision of support services
-  — 2. Investigate opportunities to support wrap around support services
-  — 3. Investigate opportunities for improved regular service provision in the Goldfields
-  — 4. Seek opportunities to utilise collaboration and existing resources to mitigate staffing and financial constraints where possible

Addressing social issues in the area

-  — 5. Address alcohol and other drug use and antisocial behaviour
-  — 6. Secure the long term viability of the Summer Response Strategy and return to Country transport services
-  — 7. Improve access to family and domestic violence services including for perpetrators to improve outcomes for families and individuals
-  — 8. Investigate options for additional emergency relief and financial capability support
-  — 9. Investigate opportunities to improve health service coverage in the Goldfields region
-  — 10. Investigate opportunities to address barriers to employment for local jobseekers

Executive summary of actions

This table provides a summary on the bodies responsible for each of the 11 actions noted in this Plan.

Department of Social Services



1. Community data collation in relation to support services in this region

2. Investigate opportunities to support wrap around services

3. Investigate opportunities for regular service provisions to Goldfields communities

5. Address antisocial behaviour and alcohol and other drug use

7. Improve outcomes for families and individuals experiencing family and domestic violence

8. Investigate options for additional emergency relief and financial capability support

Department of Health and Aged Care



9a and 9b. Investigate opportunities to improve health service coverage in the Goldfields region

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations



10. Investigate opportunities to address barriers to employment for local jobseekers

Service providers



4. Seek opportunities to utilise collaboration and existing resources to mitigate staffing and financial constraints where possible

Community groups



6. Secure long-term viability of Summer Response Strategy and return to Country transport services

Consultation approach

Overview and background



Schedule 2 of the *Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Repeal of Cashless Debit Card and Other Measures) Act 2022* notes that the Minister must:

- (b) cause consultation to occur with the following:
- (i) community organisations, including First Nations organisations, that operate in the area;
 - (ii) health services that operate in the area;
 - (iii) businesses that operate in the area;
 - (iv) the State in which the area is located;
 - (v) each relevant local council.

Approach



Delivery methods included a combination of:

- information sessions with front-line service providers and key stakeholders
- round tables (virtual)
- opportunities for written feedback.

Consultations were supported by communications materials including PowerPoint presentations and feedback forms.

Consultation principles



The consultation approach was underpinned by the following principles:

- acknowledging that local communities have the best understanding of the issues they are facing, and insights into methods of solving these issues
- acknowledging that communities, especially Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities, prefer face-to-face engagement activities which result in higher levels of engagement
- taking an open and collaborative approach that prioritises listening
- being culturally appropriate and respectful
- being targeted to ensure all stakeholders understand the intent and objectives of the Plan
- taking a collaborative, cross-agency approach to ensure the work being done by other government departments and agencies, and state and territory governments is acknowledged.

Scope

In scope

This Plan sets out an 18-month strategy for improving services and addressing social issues in the Goldfields region for the period of 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2024.

Addressing the social issues identified in this Plan and the implementation of some of the service improvements may require substantial time and resources.

It is recognised that the priorities and actions in this Plan align with the reform initiatives in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Any future work to address actions in this Plan, should ensure consideration is made against the applicable reform initiative.

Out of scope

While this Plan does not include funding commitments or specific service delivery proposals, it provides actions that will capitalise on local knowledge and the unique strengths of communities to guide the development of future support services.

Issues where there is already extensive work being undertaken by government and other stakeholders, such as housing, are beyond the remit of support services and will not be covered in this Plan.

Limitations

It is noted that the period available for consultation and development of the Plan was limited. Data able to be used to formulate the Plan was also limited.

What we heard about data...

- Data is critical to understand needs at the regional and community level.
- Access to this data will enable government and communities to:
 - i. identify service gaps
 - ii. measure impact of changes against identified needs
 - iii. drive social and economic outcomes in the region.

These insights and evidence have informed the development of the following priority and action.

Priority 1 – Data

Improving community services

This involves assigning high priority within DSS, and relevant state government departments to the collation of data at the regional and community level.

This will support the regular assessment, review and revision of support services which is critical to affecting lasting change in addressing key social issues in the Goldfields region.

As part of the Abolish the Cashless Debit Card Budget Measure, funds have been allocated for evaluation and analysis. This includes a review into the impacts of the CDC transition and future evaluation of support services. This work is building on previous investments under the Cashless Welfare Economic and Support Services Package (2021-2022 Budget measure).

Actions for this priority are outlined in the action plan below:

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measure of success	Due date	Lead/partners
1. Collating community data at the regional/area level to assist support service assessment/ review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collating data and evidence and sharing with service providers and local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members and service providers can understand local community needs Enable effective support services design Support local organisations/ communities to develop local solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations and community members can use data to understand future needs of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2023 	<p><u>Lead</u> DSS</p> <p><u>Partners</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services Australia Community groups Service providers

Priority 2 – Wrap around services

What we heard about service provision...

- Stakeholders highlighted the importance of recognising the strengths and supporting the development of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in the region.
- They also emphasised the value of the intensive person centred, multi-disciplinary approach used by the Job Support Hubs that provide a range of intensive wrap around supports to suit the needs of clients.
- The need for place-based, community-led services was emphasised.

What we heard about accessing services...

- There are a number of barriers faced by individuals attempting to access support services and government services, including the need for identification. There are major challenges around people reinstating payments including language and communication barriers. Limited access to translators for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people makes it isolating and restrictive for clients.
- Having local, easily accessible services where people feel comfortable and can access information and the right person in a way that is more than a phone number can lead to better outcomes for people accessing support services. Walk-in and services which provide wrap around support and links to other services are considered important.

These insights and evidence have informed the development of the following priority and action.

Priority 2 – Wrap around services

Improving community services

Key priorities regarding service provision include:

- support for people to address barriers to accessing services, including transport
- supporting capacity development of ACCOs
- addressing the continued need for local, accessible wrap around support services such as the Job Support Hubs.

Progress against these priorities will be measured against the community level indicators of:

- number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander supports and services available such as ID days to remove barriers to accessing services
- number of people able to access services locally
- number of individuals accessing wrap around supports such as the Job Support Hubs.

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measures of Success	Due date	Lead/partners
2. Investigate opportunities to support existing wrap around services and ACCOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address community desire for intensive wrap around supports that build on successful services and recognise the unique strengths of local organisations and ACCOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capability of ACCOs • Increased accessibility of wrap around supports • Individuals with complex needs are able to access the supports they need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individuals accessing wrap around services • Individuals reporting positive experiences accessing and using local services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024 	<p><u>Lead</u> DSS</p> <p><u>Partners</u> Service providers</p>

Priorities 3 & 4 – Regular service provision and service provider collaboration

What we heard about improving regular service provision...

- Lack of available residential housing, highly competitive salaries available in the mining industry, and short term funding and contracts have made it difficult for service providers to attract and retain staff.
- Difficulties securing operational funding were also identified as a barrier to delivering services in the region.
- These difficulties have contributed to a lack of service providers in the community, including in the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder (CKB) which services the broader Goldfields region.
- Additional issues raised related to the need for increased service continuity, regular opening hours for services and ensuring support services were accessible and culturally appropriate.
- One potential short term solution to these issues could be the use of specialist fly-in fly-out community service provision across the region.
- Supporting this, the Shire of Menzies noted that improvements could be made to the services offered in Menzies, stating a preference for monthly (or bimonthly) visits by Services Australia, the Department of Transport, financial assistance services and educational services surrounding the issues of mental health and financial health.⁶

What we heard about improving collaboration and addressing staffing shortages in the Goldfields...

- Numerous stakeholders noted the need for greater collaboration between service providers to minimise service duplication, improve the accessibility of services in the Goldfields and fill vacant positions in the community services sector.
- It was suggested that providing additional education and training opportunities could help attract staff to fill vacancies.

These insights and evidence have informed the development of the following priorities and actions.

Priority 3 – Regular service provision

Improving community services

Key priorities regarding service provision include:

- implement short term solutions to address service provision gaps and shortages
- improve regular visiting services in the Goldfields communities.

Progress against this priority will be measured against the community level indicator of:

- number of services visiting communities by service type.

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measure of Success	Due date	Lead/partners
3. Investigate opportunities for improving regular service provision to Goldfields communities, including utilising existing services and fly-in fly-out service provision models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the accessibility of services for residents of the Goldfields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular and accessible service provision provided by relevant agencies and service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular structured visits from a variety of service providers and agencies/ departments are implemented 	June 2024	<u>Lead</u> DSS <u>Partners</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services Australia • Department of Transport • Service providers • Local government

Priority 4 – Service provision collaboration

Improving community services

The key priority regarding collaboration and staffing constraints is to:

- address staffing shortages in the community services sector.

Progress against this priority will be measured against the community level indicator of:

- number of filled positions or collaboration between services to address identified skills shortages.

Current initiatives which could be leveraged include:

1. Maintaining/building:

Existing service provider relationships and collaboration forums.

2. National Centre for Place-Based Collaboration (Nexus Centre):

The government is engaging a ‘Foundation Partner’ to undertake foundational work, including extensive consultations, to inform the scope and functions of a potential Nexus Centre, envisaged to be an independent, non-government entity that will support partnerships between communities and governments by providing a connection point (nexus) for more effective ways of working together.⁷

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measure of Success	Due date	Lead/Partners
4. Seek opportunities to utilise collaboration and existing resources to mitigate staffing and financial constraints where possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise existing resources in the short-term to minimise the impact of staffing shortages and funding constraints to ensure services can be delivered to those who need them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased collaboration between service providers, reduced service duplication and continued ability to support community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular collaboration or referrals reported by service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024 	<p><u>Lead</u></p> <p>Service providers</p> <p><u>Partners</u></p> <p>DSS</p>

What we heard about alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and antisocial behaviour...

- Stakeholders raised concerns around the prevalence of public AOD use, antisocial behaviour, family and domestic violence and other family related concerns in the Goldfields region.
- Stakeholders have reported an increase in alcohol related hospital treatment.
- Additionally, due to the accessibility of alcohol in CKB compared to the more remote towns and communities in the region there has been an increase in the length of stay of the transitional population, and strong reluctance to return to Country. This has placed extreme pressure on the available short-term accommodation services and resulted in large numbers of people sleeping rough. For example, as at late January 2023, short stay accommodation in Trilby Cooper and the Red Cross Short Stay had no vacancies with a number of groups on the Trilby Cooper waitlist. These same groups are also engaging in public drinking and anti-social behaviour in public spaces.⁸
- Stakeholders identified the need to consider the expansion of outreach services to Coolgardie, Kambalda, Laverton and Leonora as well as to embed services within local communities.
- While existing services are generally positively viewed, stakeholders have indicated that they are not sufficient and more work is required to ensure AOD services address barriers and the core drivers of AOD use.⁹

These insights and evidence have informed the development of the following priority and action.

Priority 5 – AOD use and antisocial behaviour

Addressing social issues

Key priorities regarding AOD use and antisocial behaviour include:

- need for improved access to and expansion of AOD services
- need for culturally appropriate services.

Progress against this priority will be measured against the community level indicator of:

- number of people accessing services, by service type.

Current initiatives which could be leveraged include:

1. Additional alcohol treatment services in the region of the Goldfields (WA):

- The Australian Government is providing funding of over \$49 million (GST exclusive) over four years to establish additional alcohol treatment services in the regions of Ceduna (SA), Bundaberg-Hervey Bay (QLD), East Kimberley and the Goldfields (WA)
- The Department of Health and Aged Care is undertaking a thorough consultation process with communities to ensure the funding addresses service delivery gaps and is in line with the needs and expectations of the four communities.
- The additional treatment services will be co-designed with the local community to ensure the support meets local needs. Funding will be used to support alcohol and other drug treatment that complements existing services, addresses service delivery gaps, and is consistent with the needs and expectations of the communities.

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measure of Success	Due date	Lead/partners
5. Investigate opportunities to utilise existing services and community plans to support individuals to access AOD services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build on existing community strengths and services to improve the accessibility of AOD services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to AOD services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individuals accessing services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024 	<u>Lead</u> DoHAC <u>Partners</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSS • Goldfields District Leadership Group (GDLG) • WA Health • WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) • Service providers • Community groups

What we heard about the Summer Response Strategy and transport services...

One strategy used to address seasonal increases in antisocial and risky behaviour from visitors to CKB is the Summer Response Strategy (SRS).

The SRS is a community-led collaborative government and non-government response to support people travelling from remote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and the Northern Goldfields to access social and economic services in CKB. It aims to improve the wellbeing and safety of visitors to CKB and to address '*increases in antisocial and risky behaviours related to a lack of experience in large towns and overconsumption of alcohol and other drugs.*'¹⁰

The SRS includes a Summer Support Hub to allow people to access or be linked to government and non-government services, engage in social activities and find information in a culturally safe way. The Summer Support Hub is viewed as a space for community members and visitors to meet, share information and access a range of tailored support.¹¹

Due to a lack of public transport between CKB and remote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities in the region, visitors to CKB often do not have a way to return home. Addressing this, the SRS includes an important transport service to provide visitors with a way back to Country via buses. This service enables visitors to return home safely and leave an environment where they may be at risk of over-consumption of alcohol or other risky behaviours. Stakeholders raised the extension of the bus service year round as a means of addressing the lack of transport in the Goldfields.

The need to secure the long term viability of the SRS has been identified as a priority for CKB and other stakeholders in the region.

The need for additional transport services to assist visitors to other communities such as Leonora with a way to return to Country was raised.

These insights and evidence have informed the development of the following priority and action.

Priority 6 –Summer Response Strategy and transport services

Addressing social issues

The key priorities to address this issue include:

- secure long-term viability of SRS and return to Country transport services.

Progress against this priority will be measured against the community level indicator of:

- number of people accessing SRS activities and services
- number of people accessing services to return to Country after visiting CKB and other Goldfields communities.

Current initiatives which could be leveraged include:

1. Goldfields District Leadership Group (GDLG):

The GDLG is a high level interagency and local government support for the region. Initiatives include SRS and Northern Goldfields community/youth engagement.

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measures of Success	Due date	Lead/Partners
6. Secure long-term viability of SRS and return to Country transport services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow for certainty and improved planning around the delivery of SRS and transport services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term planning for delivery of SRS and transport services • Increase in the impact and effectiveness of SRS and transport services in the Goldfields region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing SRS and transport service provision secured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024 	<u>Lead</u> GDLG

Priority 7 – Family and domestic violence

What we heard about family and domestic violence...

- The CKB reported a 50% increase in child protection caseloads over the last three months of 2022. Elder abuse had also increased over the same period.¹² Concerns for youth and children as well as for individuals experiencing elder abuse are present across the region.
- Family and domestic violence (FDV) providers have noted increasingly high levels of demand for services. They have also stated that funding constraints have impacted their ability to expand services to meet growing demand for services such as domestic violence outreach services and emergency accommodation.
- While there are some existing FDV services for women and children in CKB, stakeholders have identified a lack of support services for men experiencing domestic violence.
- Stakeholders have stated that there needs to be a complete suite of intervention and wrap around support services to break the cycle of FDV in the region. Stakeholders noted that part of any response to FDV in the region should focus on addressing re-integration supports for perpetrators who have been in prison.
- Additional concerns raised included the lack of safe accommodations outside of CKB and the need for family support services.

These insights and evidence have informed the development of the following priority and action.

Priority 7 – Family and domestic violence

Addressing social issues

The key priorities to address family and domestic violence are:

- address the lack of support services for men in the region
- address increased demand for FDV services
- address the need for on the ground support for perpetrators of FDV
- address lack of safe accommodation options for people experiencing FDV outside of CKB.

Progress against this priority will be measured against the community level indicators of:

- number of and types of services available and accessed
- size of the waitlist for FDV services
- presence of local support services for perpetrators of FDV by service type.

Current initiatives which could be leveraged include:

1. DSS - Safe and Supported:

The first Action Plans for Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 were launched in February 2023. This will ensure systemic change for children, young people and families over the course of these Action Plans occur in a collaborative way with other portfolios affecting children and families.

2. DSS - National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children (National Plan):¹⁹

The National Plan provides an overarching framework to guide actions aimed at ending violence against women and children within one generation. Commonwealth, state and territory governments developed the National Plan, which sets out actions across the domains of prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing. The government has also committed to a stand-alone First Nations National Plan.

3. Connected Beginnings program:

This program draws upon the strength and knowledge of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities to increase children and families' engagement with health and early childhood education and care. It improves access to existing early childhood, maternal and child health and family support services to ensure children are safe, healthy and ready to thrive at school by the age of five.

Priority 7 – Family and domestic violence

Addressing social issues

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measure of Success	Due date	Lead/partners
<p>7. Investigate opportunities to build on existing services in alignment with the National Plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expand FDV services to meet increased demand provide local services for men provide intensive local supports for perpetrators of FDV address the need for safe accommodation options outside of CKB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce the impact of FDV on individuals and communities in the Goldfields and provide local supports to help break the FDV cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in locally available FDV services and reduction in instances of FDV in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of quality services catering to a variety of needs are in operation and meeting community demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2024 	<p><u>Lead</u> DSS</p> <p><u>Partners</u> Service providers</p>

Priority 8 – Emergency relief and financial literacy

What we heard about emergency relief and financial literacy...

- Stakeholders reported an increase in demand for emergency relief and financial counselling and management services in the region. Service providers have trialled tools including online financial management systems.
- Staff vacancies and competition for human resources with the mining industry, as well as a lack of residential housing, have made it difficult to recruit qualified staff to deliver the financial counselling services needed, resulting in limited service availability.
- Stakeholders highlighted the importance of education and services to support basic financial management skills.
- Stakeholders also raised concerns around the need for debt negotiation and assistance services in the region. They noted that this could include supporting clients to *‘engage with financial institutions, Debt Collectors, and other stakeholders to assist the client to understand a debt that they have incurred and to help them negotiate payment plans or waivers.’*¹³
- Stakeholders highlighted how significant unpaid debts cause stress for clients and that as debt negotiation can be overwhelming, clients may avoid these conversations *‘resulting in the debts accumulating and gaining interest, repossession of goods, and eviction.’*¹⁴

These insights and evidence have informed the development of the following priority and action.

Priority 8 – Emergency relief and financial literacy

Addressing social issues

The key priority to address this issue is to:

- address increased demand for financial counselling and emergency relief services.

Progress against this priority will be measured against the community level indicators of:

- number of people accessing emergency relief support in the Goldfields
- number of people able to access financial counselling/capability services in the Goldfields.

Current initiatives which could be leveraged include:

1. Emergency Relief (ER) support:

- The government contributes approximately \$50 million per annum, in base funding for ER nationally, shared among more than 190 community organisations.
- Since 2019-20, the government has provided \$149.5 million in additional funding nationally to boost ER services in response to the coronavirus pandemic, natural disasters, and the rising cost of living. This included \$24.3 million between 2019-20 and 2021-22 for the Australian Red Cross to provide ER and counselling support to temporary visa holders affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

2. Food Relief (FR) support:

- The government is also contributing approximately \$1.4 million per annum for FR nationally.
- The 3 Commonwealth-funded FR providers, Foodbank Australia, SecondBite and OzHarvest, are funded exclusively to increase ER providers' access to a cost-effective supply of food items, on a national scale.
- Since 2019-20, the Government has provided \$38.9 million to boost ER and FR services in response to the coronavirus pandemic, natural disasters, and the rising cost of living.

A full list of Commonwealth-funded ER and FR services is available at serviceproviders.dss.gov.au

3. Problem Gambling Financial Counselling:

provides specialised financial counselling services to support eligible people affected by problem gambling, by helping to address their financial problems, manage debt and navigate out of financial crisis. Financial counsellors can provide direct case work or one-on-one intensive support, including the provision of information, advocacy and/or negotiation. Client eligibility to receive Problem Gambling Financial Counselling is restricted solely to people unable to pay their bills or are at imminent risk of not being able to do so.

4. Commonwealth Financial Counselling and Financial Capability (CFC/FC): services help eligible people to address their financial problems, make informed choices and build longer-term capability to budget and manage their money. CFC/FC services are voluntary, free and confidential. Client eligibility to receive CFC/FC services is restricted solely to people unable to pay their bills or at imminent risk of not being able to do so.

5. Digital and financial literacy:

DSS is currently investigating opportunities to support the digital and financial literacy capabilities of communities in former CDC locations.

Priority 8 – Emergency relief and financial literacy

Addressing social issues

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measures of success	Due date	Lead/partners
<p>8. Investigate options utilising existing services and community plans to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support increased access to financial literacy and capability services • meet demand for emergency relief support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to financial literacy and emergency relief services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater number of individuals and families are able to access services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to financial/digital literacy support • Emergency relief providers able to meet increased demand for services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024 	<p><u>Lead</u></p> <p>DSS</p> <p><u>Partners</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Government • Service providers

Priority 9 – Health coverage

What we heard about health coverage...

- According to WAPHA, key health concerns for the broader Goldfields-Esperance region include chronic disease, alcohol and other drugs and access to services.¹⁵
- The need for improved health services and coverage is a priority across the Goldfields region.
- The CBK noted that at times, they are '*reliant on specialist FIFO psychiatrists and other medical practitioners from all over Australia*'.¹⁶
- The Shire of Menzies identified a lack of adequate health coverage in the Menzies town centre stating that there is only one nurse present in town from Monday-Wednesday.
- They also noted that '*the Royal Flying Doctor Service visits the Menzies Nursing Post once a month*' and that there is a '*lack of St John Ambulance volunteers to cover Menzies Town Centre ambulance cover*'.¹⁷ The lack of St John Ambulance volunteers is felt across the region.
- Stakeholders indicated that current health coverage for the Coolgardie LGA is insufficient. There is an urgent need for GP services, with no GP present within the community for extended lengths of time which creates challenges for elderly clients with no transport as they cannot access services.¹⁸

- The lack of health coverage impacts the health and wellbeing of community members across the Kambalda and Coolgardie communities.
- The WA Primary Health Alliance 2020-2024 Needs Assessment identified the priority needs of the region as improving mental health supports, increasing the accessibility of mental health supports and improving mental health supports for young people.¹⁹
- According to the WA Primary Health Alliance 2022-2024 Needs Assessment for the Goldfields – Esperance region, mental ill-health was the third leading cause of disease burden in the region. Suicide contributed to 5% of all deaths in the Goldfields region between 2014 and 2018.²⁰
- The remoteness of the Goldfields communities and staff shortages present challenges to the accessibility of mental health services. In Coolgardie, it was reported that the online mental health support referral process could take up to seven months.²¹

These insights and evidence have informed the development of the following priority and actions.

Priority 9 – Health coverage

Addressing social issues

The key priorities to be addressed include:

- need for improved health coverage and services across the Goldfields region including in CKB, Coolgardie, Laverton, Leonora and Menzies
- need for education around healthy eating in region
- need for improved mental health services.

Progress against these priorities will be measured against the community level indicators of:

- number and variety of health services and days of coverage
- length of wait times for mental health services in the Goldfields region
- number of individuals accessing mental health services.

Current initiatives which could be leveraged include:

1. Healthy eating initiatives:

run by Judumul Aboriginal Corporation, the Laverton School and Leonora District High School.

2. WAPHA:

in conjunction with other stakeholders, have developed priorities for improving the health and mental health services and outcomes of the Goldfields-Esperance region.

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measures of success	Due date	Lead/partners
9a. Investigate opportunities to improve health coverage in the Goldfields communities including CKB, Coolgardie, Leonora, Laverton and Menzies by referring the issue to WA Health and liaising with relevant stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve health coverage and services available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members are able to access health services as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent coverage is secured that better suits community needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024 	<u>Lead</u> DSS <u>Partners</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Health • Service providers • Local councils • WAPHA
9b. Investigate opportunities to improve mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve access to mental health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members are able to access mental health services as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in wait times and increase in number of people accessing services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024 	<u>Lead</u> DSS <u>Partners</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Health • Service providers • Local councils • WAPHA

Priority 10 – Employment

What we heard about employment...

Extremely low employment, lack of available labour and lower education participation, retention and achievement of outcomes contribute to a tight job market and place constraints on industry development. These factors also have significant consequences for the community services sector and small business by creating difficulty recruiting and retaining staff.

Despite high job vacancy rates, there are a number of complex barriers faced by individuals in gaining and maintaining employment in the region. Interlinked social and health issues such as low education attainment, poor mental health, AOD issues, lack of a driver's licence, lack of relevant experience/training and housing insecurity/homelessness contribute to difficulty obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment.

What we heard about employment wrap around services...

Feedback from stakeholders indicated that intensive wrap around support models that connect individuals to the required services are effective in supporting them to overcome barriers to employment.

One stakeholder noted that:

*'Anecdotally this service has been noted to have filled a gap, a link that heightens the accessibility of support to the people that need it. The right environment can also help in identifying the factors why some clients (for example) might be resistant to referrals to programs and then how to work around this for a client outcome (such as skills for an education and employment program).'*²²

These insights and evidence have informed the development of the following priority and action.

Priority 10 – Employment

Addressing social issues

The key priority is to:

- address barriers to employment for local jobseekers.

Progress against this priority will be measured against the community level indicators of:

- number of jobseekers accessing support services gaining employment
- number of jobseekers accessing pre-employment support services.

Current initiatives which could be leveraged include:

1. DEWR Initiatives

- **Workforce Australia:** The mainstream employment service which operates across non-remote Australia. It includes a digital employment service/platform and a network of providers delivering personalised and tailored support.

- **Workforce Australia – Transition to Work:** A demand driven program that provides intensive pre-employment assistance to disadvantaged young people aged 15-24 who are at high risk of facing long-term unemployment.

- **Workforce Australia Local Jobs:** Supports the development and implementation of tailored approaches to accelerate reskilling, upskilling and employment across Australia and seeks to provide tailored responses to support local labour markets.

- **ParentsNext:** A pre-employment program that aims to help parents plan and prepare for employment before their youngest child starts school.

- **Time to Work Employment Services:** Aims to assist adult sentenced Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander prisoners to access the support they need to better prepare them for job seeking, employment and reintegration into the community upon their release from prison.

2. DSS - Community-led Solutions-Economic Development (CSED):

Through funding for community-led capital infrastructure projects, the CSED grant opportunity will create new self-sustaining and short-term employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and promote sustainable economic growth for rural communities.

3. Goldfields Esperance:

- **Development Commission strategic plan.**

- **Regional Action Plan:** developed from the 2021 WA regional Skills Summit.

4. NIAA:

currently deliver employment services in remote Australia under the Community Development Program (CDP).

Action	Intent	Outcome	Measure of Success	Due date	Lead/partners
10. Investigate opportunities to utilise existing services and plans to address barriers to employment for local jobseekers, including access to services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support individuals to access employment services and overcome barriers to employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater number of individuals are able to access employment services and overcome barriers to employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of individuals accessing employment services and obtaining employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024 	<u>Lead</u> DEWR <u>Partners</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSS • Service Providers • NIAA

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Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drugs
CDC	Cashless Debit Card
CIRCA	Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia
CKB	City of Kalgoorlie Boulder
CLSS	Community Led Support Services
DoHAC	Department of Health and Aged Care
DSS	Department of Social Services
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
FDV	Family and Domestic Violence
FIFO	Fly-in fly-out
GDLG	Goldfields District Leadership Group
LGA	Local Government Area
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
SRS	Summer Response Strategy
WA	Western Australia
WAPHA	WA Primary Health Alliance