



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**



# Project Plan:

# Internal review of the Grandcarer Program

C1817128



## Background

The Department of Communities (Communities) is responsible for overseeing the delivery of programs and services that support children and families across the State, including grandparents who are the informal primary carers of their grandchildren.

Grandparents who raise their grandchildren provide a valuable community service. They give their grandchildren a great sense of family continuity, more frequent and consistent contact with the parents, and closer sibling ties. They also enable children to retain direct links with their family history and culture and reinforce their sense of identity and self-esteem.

Communities considers grandcarers to be categorised as:

- **Informal:** where grandparents enter into an informal arrangement, usually due to a crisis, to provide a safe and secure environment for the grandchildren.
- **Formal:** where grandparents assume responsibility of grandchildren under a Protection Order from the Children's Court or Parenting Orders from the Family Court of Western Australia.

There are currently 3,500 formally recognised grandcarers in the State, however, given that many grandparent care arrangements are informal, the actual number of grandcarers are likely to be much higher.

Communities supports formal grandparent care arrangements by recognising them in the same context as foster carers, which allows access to a range of financial supports and services.

The new Department of Communities brings together responsibility for both the formal and informal Grandparent care arrangements, policies, programs, services and supports.

## Overview of funded Grandcarer Programs

### Support Services for the Grandcarers Support Scheme

The Grandcarer Support Scheme was established to provide financial support to grandparents that had informal primary care responsibility of their grandchildren. The scheme acknowledges the important role of grandparents who provide full-time informal care for their grandchildren aged 18 years and under with a financial payment.

Wanslea engages with grandcarers to assess their needs and assist with completion of applications to the Grandcarer Support Scheme. Between 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, the scheme provided \$608,200 to grandparents that had informal primary care responsibility of their grandchildren.

### Grandcare Service

The Grandcare Service provides informal grandparent carers with ongoing support, such as counselling and support groups, respite, and social activities. When the service commenced, there were 100 grandfamilies registered, Wanslea recently reported there are 872 informal grandfamilies receiving support through this service. This figure comprises 1,200 grandparents caring for 1,600 grandchildren.



## Current funding arrangements

Communities provides annual funding in support of informal grandcarers as part of the Grandcarer Program, delivered through a partnership with Wanslea Family Services Incorporated (Wanslea). Table one below outlines the recurrent funded components that comprise the Grandcarer Program:

Service Agreement	2018-19	Expiry date	Description
Support Services for the Grandcarers Support Scheme	\$210,512	30 June 2019, with an option to extend for six months.	Provides an assessment service for an annual support payment to grandparents who have full-time responsibility for raising their grandchildren.
Grandcare Service	\$261,612	30 June 2019, with an option to extend for six months.	Provision of a telephone information line; individual consultations (informal counselling); referrals and linkages to other community services; support groups, respite, workshops and social activities.

In addition to the recurrent funding above, Wanslea has been provided with grant funding of \$125,000 each year since 1 November 2013 to meet an identified gap in their service capability, as outlined in Table two below:

Grant Agreement	2018-19	Expiry date	Description
Grandcarers Assistance Program (GAP)	\$125,000	30 June 2019, with an option to extend for six months.	Provides practical support (home help), counselling, educational assistance and additional social activities, respite and workshops.

## Outline of the program review

As part of the routine procurement cycle, a review and evaluation of the program objectives and outcomes is undertaken to assist in determining whether the services provided continue to meet current and future needs.

The program review will assess the suite of funded Grandcarer programs to:

- Determine the relevance and appropriateness of the funded services for meeting the needs of grandparents with informal full-time responsibility for their grandchildren.
- Examine the effectiveness and efficiencies of the funded service model and the outcomes.
- Identify barriers that potentially affect the sustainability of the services required to support future community needs.

The review process will be guided by standard procurement requirements, and be led by a working group of Communities staff from Policy and Service Design and Commissioning and Sector Engagement. The program review will engage management and staff from Wanslea, service users and limited external stakeholders; and provide recommendations for funding options to ensure grandcarers and their grandchildren's needs are being met.