



**ConnectGroups Support
Groups Association WA Inc.**

ANNUAL REPORT 2016



GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of Local Government and Communities

Department of Health

Mental Health Commission

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Chairperson's Report



“The Board’s Strategic focus for 2016/2017 will be on securing recurrent funding; in transitioning to the 2015 Associations Incorporations Act, and increasing the organisations profile through a targeted marketing strategy.”

This time of year provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on what continues to be achieved by this fantastic organisation as well as a chance to give thanks to those who ensure ConnectGroups continues to thrive in providing services to its members.

A new era in overall funding of Not-For-Profit organisations at a state and national level has begun. ConnectGroups has attended briefings and had conversations with Government organisations to explore funding models. Peer support is noted as one of the cornerstones of the Stepped Model through which services will now be delivered. The Board and CEO will continue to highlight ConnectGroups’ expertise and experience as a premier organisation in providing a solid foundation for peer support in Western Australia. This will mean that our extensive member base has representation and advocacy decision making in the funding of health and mental health services going forward. The organisation worked towards preserving its strong governance and best practice standard which provided confidence to its funders. Its demonstrated reliable service provision to members, along with a strong contract management and acquittal record has been the basis for its healthy funding relationships. The appointment of a new Auditor enabled the organisation to refresh its financial oversight and met the requirements of its compliance.

The Board has had some movement regarding Directors since the 2015 AGM. Dr Maryam Omari tendered her resignation after taking up a new role, with increased demands on her time, as the Dean of Business and Law at ECU. ConnectGroups thank her for her valuable contribution to the people, Policies and Research Portfolios on the Board. Rosemary Roach, Partner at Corrs Chambers Westgarth, has joined the Board, and brings a strong legal framework which will benefit ConnectGroups. Member Directors Emilia Hay and Godfrey Baronie have settled well in their role as direct voices for ConnectGroups members in governance matters. The Board will continue to ensure its commitment to maintaining a board with diverse and high level skill sets, and in line with its approach to succession planning. I take this opportunity to thank all current Directors for their valuable contribution to ConnectGroups.

The Board will continue to ensure its commitment to maintaining a board with diverse and high level skill sets, and in line with its approach to succession planning. I take this opportunity to thank all current Directors for their valuable contribution to ConnectGroups.

The Board's Strategic focus for 2016/2017 will be on securing recurrent funding, in transitioning to the 2015 Associations Incorporations Act, and increasing the organisations profile through a targeted marketing strategy.

ConnectGroups gives thanks to its funders and partners. The support of the Department of Local Government and Communities provides a strong financial base for the organisation; the Mental Health Commission has enabled ConnectGroups to be a conduit to strengthen the community's mental health, and to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Islander communities in WA; the Department of Health has allowed us to contribute to the State's Chronic Conditions Self-Management state reform and to the City of Melville for providing ConnectGroups with its home.

My thanks go to our Patron, Dr Lyn Beazley, for continuing to support the work ConnectGroups does. Her ambassadorial role ensures that our profile in the community increases and that our members have a person dedicated to championing our cause and promoting the benefits of Support Groups. As all who engage with us know, our CEO Antonella Segre, staff, and volunteers are the engine that keeps ConnectGroups humming. On behalf of members, I and the Board extend our deepest thanks to this amazing team. Your efforts ensure that the lives of our members are strengthened and empowered on a daily basis. All of us at ConnectGroups know that the most important people in this organisation are the members. All activity and effort is for you. We hope to ensure that ConnectGroups thrives so that you can thrive.

Pearl Proud

Chair, ConnectGroups



ConnectGroups Board of Management 2015/16: From Left to right: Dr Maryam Omari, Anne Hill, Antonella Segre (CEO), Godfrey Baronie, Pearl Proud, Brian O'Keefe, Professor Lyn Beazley AO FTSE, Faye Baxter, Professor Dorothy Jones, Conrad Pires, Emilia Hay, Rosemary Roach and Kirsten Tannenbaum.

CEO's Report



“2015/16 has been a challenging year where ConnectGroups remained focused on continuing to deliver positive outcomes to its members and the wider community. Integrity and governance was the key to maintaining the trust of our members and our funding bodies.”

ConnectGroups was founded in 1983 as the Western Institute of Self Help (WISH) Inc. and is now in its 34th year. The fact that the organisation has existed for more than a third of a century is testimony to its success meeting the needs of individuals, families and the WA Self Help and Support Group community. It was with immense joy that we were nominated as Finalists for the 2016 Community Sector Excellence Awards, and the tribute enabled us to raise the profile of our members to the wider community and social services sector.

2015/16 has been a challenging year where ConnectGroups remained focused on continuing to deliver positive outcomes to its members and the wider community. Integrity and governance was the key to maintaining the trust of our members and our funding bodies. As Government handed down new reforms, it was critical that ConnectGroups continued to allocate resources to ensure it met its legal compliance while simultaneously providing quality services to its members. It will be essential for ConnectGroups to sustain robust governance, and be viewed by all those who engage with its services, as an effective and efficient organisation. We were delighted to engage with the UWA Citizenship Centre internship program, and to enter into strategic alliances with the Health Consumer Council; People with Disabilities and Men's Health and Wellbeing. The organisation met its strategic intent by addressing key priority areas, and implementing effective strategies that met measurable outcomes.

ConnectGroups has continued to advance its advocacy and research arm remaining committed to conducting qualitative research as the voice for the Self Help and Support Group community. The research has enabled us to collect data to demonstrate the key community services and impact provided by Self Help and Support Groups; presenting those findings at national and international conferences, and also as a means of preserving the organisation's health promotion status.

Looking forward, investment will need to be made to maintain our current service agreements and to better engage with philanthropists and the corporate sector as a strategy to ensure the long-term viability of the organisation. The demand on community services will increase and government

funding will decrease. The organisation will need to look at where it can apply its efficiencies simultaneously ensuring that it continues to be responsive to the needs of key stakeholders.

ConnectGroups remains committed to its real beneficiaries - our members' members. Those people whose lives are enriched by exchanging compassion, understanding and practical wisdom with other people on the same journey, other people they may never have met if not for finding a Support Group through ConnectGroups. They are why we exist and why we stay committed to advancing their voice.

"It is important to know that while juggling rubber balls and glass balls, the former may bounce back when you miss but, the glass balls may crack if you let them fall. So prioritise."

(Nita Amabani)

Antonella Segre,



Rotary Community Award 2016

Connectgroups CEO Antonella Segre was presented with the Rotary Club Community Award 2016 in recognition of the exceptional social and community service offered by the organisation as a network and bridge supporting people who need help, the relevant Self Help and Support Groups.

Lesley Combes, Antonella Segre and Hon. Dean Nalder.



Community Services Excellence Awards 2016

ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc. was finalist in the WACOSS 2016 Community Services Excellence Awards for its small grants programs: Pay it Forward, Dream it Forward and Live it Forward together, under the Medium Organisation Category.

The Community Services Excellence Awards (CSEA) are a celebration of WA's unsung heroes and their organisations. The difference made to the lives of ordinary people by community services organisations is significant; whether operating locally and run by volunteers or larger and employing many people across the state. These awards are a chance to honour them.

Treasurer's Report



It is with great pleasure that I present this Treasurers' report for the year ended 30th June 2016.

We have continued to consolidate the quality of our financial management and as part of this process we have had discussions and reached agreement with our external auditor with regard to provisions being carried in our Balance Sheet. This has resulted in ConnectGroups implementing an accounting policy change to better align with the Australian Accounting Standards Board's (AASB's) standards.

Specifically, ConnectGroups have reviewed its provisions (displayed in the liabilities section of the Balance Sheet) and found that provisions to the value of \$134,168 would be better accounted for as reserves (displayed in the equity section of the Balance Sheet).

These provisions include asset replacement, conference, redundancy and relocation.

The stated surplus of \$157,955 should be viewed as a one-off anomaly brought about by a change in Accounting Policy. After adjusting for these accounting changes ConnectGroups has recorded a small surplus of \$23,827. The Board has taken the opportunity with the consultation of our external auditor to further strengthen our financial position and we have increased our reserves by the amount of \$23,827 which has resulted in the stated surplus being reduced to zero.

These measures further strengthen ConnectGroups' financial position and we are well placed to deal with future uncertainties.

A special thank-you to our CEO Antonella Segre, our Finance Coordinator Fiona Hughes and our Corporate Services Coordinator Juanaili Hultzsich for all their hard work throughout the year and continuing to deliver financial reports to the Board in a timely and professional manner.

Brian O'Keefe

Treasurer, ConnectGroups

Auditor's Certification Statement

AUSTRALIAN AUDIT

DIRECTORS:
ROBERT CAMPBELL CPA, RICA, MAICD, MSW
ANDREW SULLIVAN B Bus, FCPA
ALASTAIR ABBOTT CA, MAICD, M Forensic Accountancy

ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc

ABN: 23 041 552 831

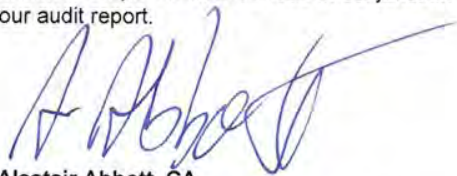
Abridged audit report For the Year Ended 30 June 2016

Scope

I have audited the abridged financial report of ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc for the year ended 30 June 2016 as set out on the following page in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the information reported in the abridged financial report of ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc is consistent with the annual special purpose financial report from which it is derived and upon which we expressed an unqualified audit opinion in our report to the members. For a better understanding of the entity's financial position and performance, as represented by the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year, and the scope of our audit, this report should be read in conjunction with the annual special purpose financial report and our audit report.



Alastair Abbott CA
Registered Company Auditor No. 486826
Australian Audit Group Pty Ltd
Level 2, 459 Hay Street, PERTH, WA 6000

DATE: 23 August 2016

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ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc

ABN: 23 041 552 831

Abridged financial report for the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015		2016	2015
	\$	\$		\$	\$
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
AS AT 30 JUNE 2016			FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016		
CURRENT ASSETS			Operating income	9,931	9,054
Cash assets	731,295	623,554	Grants	650,169	620,214
Receivables	550	1,149	Interest income	17,255	9,594
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	731,845	624,703	Other income	439	250
NON CURRENT ASSETS			Employment expenses	(445,540)	(409,807)
Property, Plant & Equipment	53,887	64,929	Program expenses	(60,280)	(113,102)
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	53,887	64,929	Administration expenses	(81,242)	(39,749)
TOTAL ASSETS	785,732	689,632	Depreciation	(13,498)	(8,403)
CURRENT LIABILITIES			Finance costs	(140)	(159)
Payables	376,554	333,894	Other*	80,901	(68,419)
Provisions	57,578	112,078	PROFIT/(LOSS)	157,995	(527)
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	434,132	445,972	Income from brokering	142,532	93,409
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			Expenses from brokering	(142,532)	(93,409)
Provisions	3,456	53,511	Capital grants	-	22,160
TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,456	53,511	Total changes in equity	157,995	21,633
TOTAL LIABILITIES	437,588	499,483	STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS		
NET ASSETS	348,144	190,149	FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016		
EQUITY			Cash flows from Operating Activities		
Retained Earnings	190,149	190,149	Receipts from operations	840,305	918,543
Reserves	157,995	-	Payments to suppliers and employees	(747,363)	(626,247)
TOTAL EQUITY	348,144	190,149	Net cash generated by operating activities	92,942	292,296
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY			Cash flows from Investing Activities		
Beginning Retained Earnings	190,149	168,516	Purchase property, plant & equipment	(2,456)	(1,008)
Profit/(Loss) for the year	157,995	21,633	Interest received	17,255	9,594
Transfers to reserves	(157,995)	-	Net cash generated by investing activities	14,799	8,586
Closing Retained Earnings	190,149	190,149	Cash flows from Financing Activities		
NOTES			Receipts from capital grants	-	22,160
			Net increase in cash held	107,741	323,042
			Cash at beginning of financial year	623,554	300,512
			Cash at end of financial year	731,295	623,554

*Note: Change in Accounting Policy

In order to provide more accurate and useful financial information the board considered it appropriate to reclassify a number provisions (existing on 1 July 2015) as reserves. This change required the provisions to be reversed and reserves to be created. The reversal of the provisions effectively reduced the expenses for the 2016 financial year and results in a higher surplus than if the change in policy had not been made.

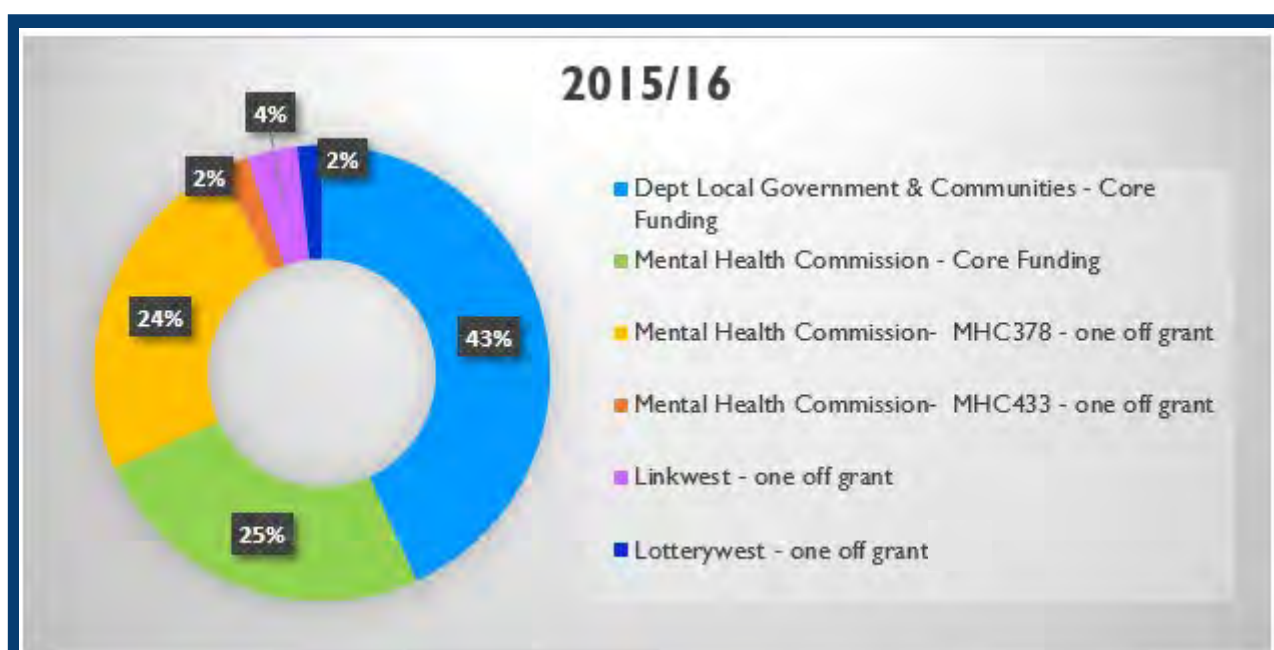
Surplus adjusted for change in accounting policy

Total 2016 surplus (above)	157,995
Impact of change in accounting policy (existing provisions)	(134,168)
Impact of change in accounting policy (new amounts transferred to reserves)	(23,827)
Adjusted surplus	-

The Abridged Financial Report has been derived from the audited special purpose financial report that is prepared in accordance with note 1 to that report.

Funding Resources

Funds Description*	2014/15	2015/16
	\$	\$
Dept Local Government and Communities - Core Funding	346,175	352,753
Dept Local Government and Communities - One off grant	10,000	0
Mental Health Commission - Core Funding (1)	200,000	203,800
Mental Health Commission- MHC184 - one off grant (2)	120,000	0
Mental Health Commission- MHC378 - one off grant (3)	0	200,000
Mental Health Commission- MHC433 - one off grant	-	16,730
Health Department - one off grant (4)	200,000	0
Linkwest - one off grant	0	29,180
Lotterywest - one off grants	38,690	14,182
Total Funding	914,865	816,645



Notes:

1. \$90,906 (2015/16 year) and \$24,913 (2014/15 year) were brokered to our members through the Pay it Forward Plan.
2. MHC184: \$4,450 (2015/16 year) and \$73,988 (2014/15 year) were brokered to our members through the Dream it Forward Program.
3. MHC378: \$15,985 (2015/16 year) were brokered to our members through the Dream it Forward Program
4. \$31,190 (2015/2016 year) were brokered to our members through the Live it Forward Together Plan.

Capacity Building and Sector Development

During 2015/16 priorities were placed in continuing to identify the most effective strategies means of to raise the profile of our Self Help and Support Group members, as well as ensuring that the service provided to our existing and emerging groups were current and relevant.

The Leadership Workshop series entered into its sixth year and a formal content review was undertaken in November 2015 as part of the organisations' continuous improvement strategy, and feedback received from key stakeholders. Workshops were revised and/or amalgamated. 19 CG Leadership Workshops were conducted and 162 Individuals attended. All training was evaluated through application of the RBA (Results Based Accountability) revealing that in 77%, participants' confidence in the topic(s) had increased post-attendance.

ConnectGroups also presented eight seminars to 103 people and participated in 66 Community Events (*promotional stalls at fairs and festivals*).

Workshops

- Succession Planning
- How to Increase Membership
- Conflict Resolution
- Defining a Support Group
- Maintaining your Self Help and Support Group: Toolkit of Do's and Dont's



New Mini Bite Series

2015/16 saw the launch of the Mini Bites Series. The series caters for small groups and are short, hands-on workshops held at the ConnectGroups office and focus on one specific topic and or activity.

1. **How to Create a Facebook Page:** Interactive action learning session introduces participants to an effective free marketing software tool that will allow them to create and distribute email campaigns (newsletters, invitations, etc.), manage subscribers lists, and track the performance of email campaigns.
2. **Introduction to MailChimp:** Interactive action learning session that introduces the basics of MailChimp and how to use it for your Self Help and Support Groups email marketing (events, newsletters, etc.)
3. **Talking your Story up:** Explores a way of thinking about the stories of Self Help and Support Groups so that they can be presented in a positive and effective way.

4. **Side by Side:** Explores skills, ethics and strategies involved in going to meetings with a support person, for both the support person and the one being supported.
5. **Top Tips when Setting up a Support Group:** Interactive workshop that supports new and emerging Self Help and Support Groups to develop their Purpose and Group Statement, an essential first step in group development and membership attraction strategy.
6. **New 2015 Associations Incorporation Act:** This session was facilitated pro bono to ConnectGroups members by Adam Levine (K&L Gates).

Topical Forums



All about the Blokes

ConnectGroups, in partnership with Men's Health and Wellbeing (formerly MAN), ran its 3rd Men's Forum for the year with the key objective of taking the Forum to the next level by defining its Terms of Reference, identifying priority areas for 2016 including potential collaborative projects.

The Forum was once again well attended with all participants actively contributing to the development of a Blue Print and the development of a toolkit "How to effectively engage with men" which will inform both agencies moving forward.

A series of tools will be developed with the assistance of partnering members who make up the working party for 'Project Toolkit: Engaging with Men'. Some of the topics that will be included in the Toolkit are: The Language of Men; Existing Practices; The Individual Seeking Support; and Service Provision.



Sharing is Caring

The aim of this forum was to bring together service providers and Self Help and Support Groups whose focus is that of supporting and addressing Carers' needs.

With the invaluable participation of CarersWA and the City of Melville's Social Justice Advocate, conversations were held about the growing concern for Carers' ability to seek assistance and relevant support services, the sharing of daily challenges and existing good practice models.

The Forum evolved into a fantastic networking and learning opportunity where participants expressed an interest in setting up a formal network of support for Carers in WA to continue the discussion around advocacy, mental health, and regional and rural needs.



All Grown Up

ConnectGroups held its "All Grown Up" Forum in alignment with WA Seniors Week on the 12th November 2015. The Forum brought together Self Help and Support Groups, and Services whose key service delivery is aimed at Seniors Health and Wellbeing. Conversations were held around key challenges such as social isolation, raising awareness of seniors' needs, and effective engagement strategies. It was also an opportunity to share good practice models and successful initiatives such as existing programs, cross referral pathways and respite initiatives.



Connecting Culture

On the 17th of March 2016 ConnectGroups held an intimate conversation at our 'Connecting Culture' topical forum for everything CaLD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse).

The event was attended by Support Group representatives, Local Council staff and CaLD specific agencies. Robust conversations were had around the definition of CaLD and what it encompasses, challenges that are faced when engaging with CaLD members within a Support Group environment, and examples of existing successful engagement strategies.



2015/17 ConnectGroups Consultative Group

The Consultative Group was established in 2012 as a direct response to ConnectGroups' Consumer Engagement Strategy. The aim of the group is to work closely with the organisation, contributing input into its research projects, events, advocacy programs and grant initiatives. Representing the Self Help and Support Group community at a grassroots level, bringing to its attention to their needs and any opportunities that may need to be actioned.

ConnectGroups would like to thank present members of the Consultative Group.

Attitudinal Healing

Escare

Families4Families

Medically Retired WA Police Officer's Assoc.

People with Disabilities WA

Pulmonary Hypertension WA

Recovery Rocks Community

Retina WA

Road Trauma Service

SandsWA

The Mankind Project



Volunteer Program

The Volunteer Program, formally launched in January 2014, has continued to enable ConnectGroups to address the extensive Members database (600+) with the intent of ensuring that all contact details of existing Self Help and Support Groups are current. Eight volunteers have continued to contribute to the organisations' strategy of maintaining proactive engagement with its members, in identifying issues and concerns, addressing them in a prompt and efficient manner. In 2015/16, 1,021 volunteer hours were recorded. Since June 2015 the volunteer program has expanded beyond the maintenance of its extensive database of Self Help and Support Groups, to a series of project based initiatives such as:

- Collation of Self Help and Support Groups Members promotional material
- Membership recruitment drive of Self Help and Support Groups with Genetic and Rare Conditions
- Membership recruitment drive of Self Help and Support Groups with Chronic Conditions
- Telephone promotion of ConnectGroups events (Leadership series and Mini Bites).

In collaboration with the CDO, the program is administered by Vanessa Wilson, ConnectGroups' Volunteer Volunteers Coordinator.





ConnectGroups Esperance Forum

ConnectGroups endeavours to ensure that its regional and rural members are able to access those services available to its metro members. A trip to Esperance was organised as a means of identifying those local needs and to also provide member groups information as to the organisation's priority areas.

On 23th-24th February 2016 Josephine Caputo (CDO), and Christine Hendricks (Projects Coordinator) travelled to Esperance in the Goldfields to engage with local community services and government agencies; and conduct a needs analysis of the region following the recent fires and high rate of suicides.

They met with the Shire Executive Team, WACHS (WA Country Health Services), the LDAG (Local Drug Action Group), and representatives from Aboriginal Health. A half-day Community Forum was also held to build awareness around the role of ConnectGroups in the peer support sector; highlight the value of community-based Self Help and Support Groups, and promote ConnectGroups small grants programs (PIF, DIF and LIFt). It was also an opportunity to catch up with 3 members of CARIADS, one of our current Pay it Forward grant recipients. This initiative was supported by EsCare and the Mental Health Advisory Council.



During 2015/16, ConnectGroups participated as a community partner in the Linkwest-led "Our Ace Community – Beyond Gambling" project. The aim of the project was to deliver a campaign to address the issue of problem gambling, at a local community level, by providing information, support, alternative activities and training within Community Centres. In its partnership role, ConnectGroups worked to increase the capacity of partner Community Neighbourhood and Learning Centres in WA by delivering workshops on the value and practice of building community-based Support Groups.

Additionally, ConnectGroups partnered with the North Metropolitan TAFE to develop an accredited training package to upskill eight (8) frontline Community Centre staff and managers toward earning seven units of competency in a Cert IV - Community Services. Six (6) frontline staff and managers completed the training and two (2) continued to complete the full Cert IV.

The training will improve the capacity of each participating centre to engage with at-risk members of their community. The successful participants were:

- Christina Neubauer – The Meeting Place, Fremantle
- Janis Tutisai – Hudson Road Family Centre, Bunbury
- Holly Barrett – South Lake Ottey Centre, South Lake
- Maria Cavill – William Langford Community House, Langford
- Nicola Motuzas – Bayswater Family Centre, Bayswater
- Samantha Williams – Yangebup Family Centre, Yangebup

Into the Spotlight Conference

ConnectGroups, in partnership with Linkwest held its three day Into the Spotlight Conference at the Perth Mercure Hotel from the 26th-28th of August 2015. An overwhelming amount of positive feedback was received from our Self Help and Support Group members who attended.



Day One Highlights

The first day of the conference was opened by The Hon. Tony Simpson MLA and a wonderful Welcome to Country was presented by Marie Taylor.



David Koutsoukis from Click! Colours presented the popular workshop, "Who Do You Click With?" which identified personality types and had conference attendees continuing the discussion throughout the full three days. Nathan Taylor from CEDA then led a panel discussion on Developing Strategic Partnerships.



Day Two Highlights

Ms Andrea Mitchell MLA opened the second day of the conference, followed by a presentation from Margaret Doherty of Mental Health Matters 2 around Navigating through the Mental Health System.

While ConnectGroups and Linkwest held their individual Annual General Meetings, those who did not attend went along to a 'mystery workshop' - a ukulele lesson hosted by Acid Tea! In a 40 minute session, delegates were playing like professionals and even performed two songs at the end of the AGMs for everyone to enjoy.

Following both AGMs, Peter Dhu gave an engaging presentation on How to Step into the Spotlight through your Story. That evening, guests were encouraged to join the ConnectGroups and Linkwest teams for dinner.



Day Three Highlights

The final day of the conference opened with a presentation by James Jarvis from the Department of Regional Development on Engaging and Developing Community. ConnectGroups and Linkwest CEOs Antonella Segre and Jane Chilcott then wrapped up the conference and invited guests to make their way to the Gala Lunch.



Styled in a Vintage Hollywood theme, the Gala Lunch was nothing short of spectacular with sequined table cloths, golden globe statues and feather boas. Karen Tighe from 720 ABC Grandstand was Master of Ceremonies at the event, and guests were entertained by a seven piece jazz band that later in the day had the ConnectGroups team and many Support Group members carving up the dance floor.



Self Help and Support Groups National Awareness Day

On Friday the 25th of September, 2015, ConnectGroups held its National Awareness Day Expo for Self Help and Support Groups. The Perth Cultural Centre came alive with music and friendly faces as 28 groups hosted stalls to raise awareness of their cause.



It was wonderful to see our members not only engaging with the general public, but also networking with one another and sharing resources. The sunshine and vibrant atmosphere attracted a good sized crowd of people who were eager to find out about National Self Help and Support Groups Awareness Day and the various member groups present on the day.



Certificate IV Students

The Christmas morning tea held on 17th December 2015 was also an opportunity to recognise Support Group members who successfully completed their six units of attainment towards a Certificate IV in Community Services (Facilitation of Self Help and Support Groups). This eight (8) month course model is tailored to the needs of Scholarship recipients and is heavily supported by the ConnectGroups and North Metropolitan TAFE to ensure a safe and successful experience for students.

ConnectGroups patron Professor Lyn Beazley and the Mental Health Commission representatives Louise Howe and Michael Lenny presented the scholarship holders with their certificates.

Certificates were awarded to:

- Annette Gallagher - The Compassionate Friends
- Donna Murray - Recovery Rocks
- Helen Sochaki - H.O.P.E.S
- Kim Collet - True Colours - UnitingCare West
- Lee Dhepnorarat - Even Keel Support Association
- Mariska Potgieter - Perth and WA Lyme Disease Support Network

ConnectGroups strongly endorses the value of this peer workforce development initiative as a means of empowering our Self Help and Support Groups, building and contributing to community belonging, and promoting the value of peer support.



Marketing and Communication Strategy

2015/16 has seen an increase in ConnectGroups' social media activity following the 2014/15 strategy of introducing a part-time Marketing and Communications Officer. Its use of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, and most recently Instagram, continue to demonstrate being effective engagement tools.

12 Newsletters were distributed across the year to 770 subscribers. This period experienced a steady opening rate and 173 new subscribers. The Newsletter continues to be an effective capacity and knowledge building tool.

During 2015/2016, a total of 23,560 online visits were made to the ConnectGroups online directory which demonstrates that the organisation is meeting an identified need for those individuals and families seeking support across a range of health; mental health and emotional conditions. The total website visits were 42,892 and a total of 21,528 downloads of ConnectGroups Information Resources were recorded.



Customer Perception Survey 2015/16

ConnectGroups - Self Help and Support Groups Service

The Customer Perception Survey is conducted annually by the Department of Local Government and Communities to:

- collect service user feedback,
- evaluate service outcomes, and
- identify areas for further improvement.

Key results of your service are presented in the table below as compared to the overall results of your program group:

Service outcomes	ConnectGroups - Self Help and Support Groups Service % agreed (n=83)	Community and Neighbourhood Development Services % agreed (n=1958)
I was satisfied with the service	98%	98%
The service met my needs	99%	99%
Developed knowledge, confidence and skills		
I obtained useful information	99%	90%
I feel more confident	70%	76%
I developed my skills	78%	71%
Linked to community resources		
I learnt about other helpful services and resources in my community	95%	85%
Develop support networks		
I met people I can talk to	91%	94%
I met people who I can ask for help if I need it	91%	91%
Increase community participation		
The service led me to join a club or to volunteer	27%	44%
The service gave me ideas on how to be involved with the community	74%	71%
I'm more involved with community events and activities since using this service	48%	64%

This summary should be read in conjunction with the overall report for Community and Neighbourhood Development Services. Please refer to the overall report for details on methodology and the program group results.

NOTE. Percentages may not equal 100% as the following responses are not reported in figures: Neutral, Negative, Not applicable and No response.



ConnectGroups - Self Help and Support Groups Service

Data was collected from October to December 2015.

Percentages may not equal 100% as the following responses are not reported in figures: Neutral, Negative, Not applicable and No response.

What did people think of the service?

98% were satisfied with the service

99% found the services met their needs

98% would recommend the service

77% found the service better than expected

Respondents most appreciated:

Opportunity to discuss	49%
Information/materials	23%
Ideas/strategies	21%
Staff	13%
Other	11%

How did the service do?

Developed knowledge, confidence and skills

I obtained useful information	99%
I feel more confident	70%
I developed my skills	78%

Linked to community resources

I learnt about other helpful services and resources in my community	95%
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Develop support networks

I met people who I can talk to	91%
I met people who I can ask for help if I need it	91%

Increase community participation

The service led me to join a club or to volunteer	27%
The service gave me ideas on how to be involved with the community	74%
I'm more involved with community events and activities since using this service	48%

Other outcomes

I will continue to use the things I learnt from the service	93%
The service made a good difference to my life	65%

Usage

In the 3 months prior to the survey, respondents used the service:

Never	15%
Once or twice	31%
A few times	35%
Many times	19%

Respondents had used the service for:

Less than 1 month	12%
Between 1 - 3 months	5%
Between 3 - 6 months	7%
Between 6 - 12 months	19%
Between 1 - 5 years	49%
Longer than 5 years	4%

Characteristics of respondents

83

24% with disability



73%

27%

Aboriginal status

4%

Aboriginal

0%

Torres Strait Islander

0%

Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Age group

0%

6%

18%

22%

15%

31%

9%

Under 18

18-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60-69

70 and over

17% Speak another language



All about Continuous Improvement

What did people think of the service	2014	2015	2016
Were satisfied with the service	97%	97%	98%
Would recommend the service	98%	98%	98%
Found the service met their needs	95%	95%	99%
Found the service better than expected	68%	72%	77%

This document was prepared by the Research and Evaluation Unit. research@dlgc.wa.gov.au
Results based on samples should be interpreted with caution as the results may not be representative of all service users.

The estimated error for 83 respondents is ± 10.31

(assuming a population of 1000, a result of 50% and a 95% confidence criterion).

For a full version of the report kindly contact Juanaili Hultzsich on Juani@connectgroups.org.au.

Small Grants Programs

Pay It Forward (PIF) Program

ConnectGroups and the Mental Health Commission (MHC) partnered in 2015 to roll out the Pay It Forward (PIF) Plan as a core service delivery program available to our Self Help and Support Group members. The objective of PIF is to empower Self Help and Support Groups to better achieve positive mental health outcomes while also promoting the group's sustainability.

The 2015/16 PIF funding round closed on the 1st October 2015. All projects had to demonstrate clear and measurable mental health outcomes consistent with the Mental Health Commission's "Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Service Plan 2015-2025" (the Plan). The Plan sets the direction for mental health, alcohol and other drug service provision for the next decade to support consumers, their families and carers to live meaningful lives within the community.

Twenty (20) submissions were received in 2015/16, thirteen (13) were approved and \$55,830.00 allocated.

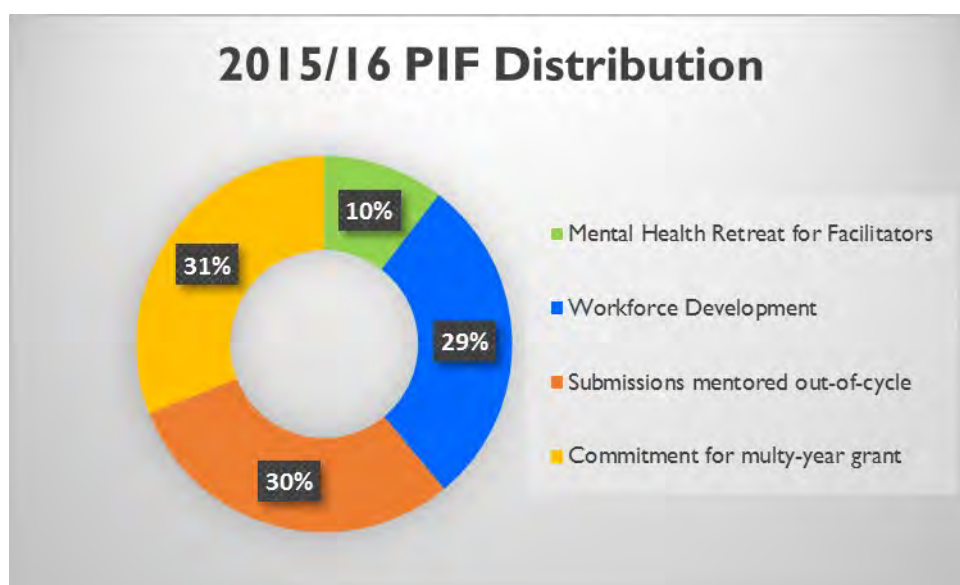
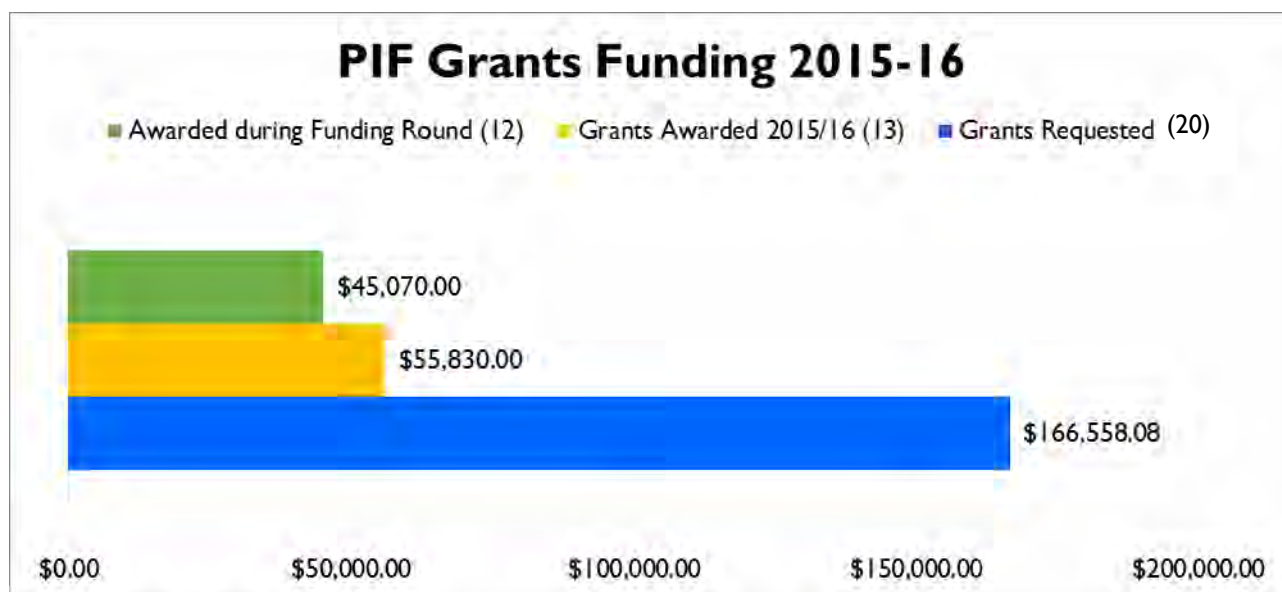
The Assessment Review Panel was pleased to award funding to the following organisations:

- Acquired Brain Injury Support Group
- Alongside
- Angelhands Inc.
- Autism West Support Inc.
- Dads in Distress WA
- Depression Support Network Albany Inc.
- Learning and Attentional Disorders Society of WA (LADS)
- Medically Retired WA Police Officers Association
- Mummy Mentors WA
- Perth and WA Lyme Disease Support Network
- Retina Australia WA Inc.
- The Grief Centre of Western Australia
- Transmen WA




Stories from the Pay it Forward grants awarded during the 2014/15 year and completed in 2016 can be accessed through ConnectGroups website.

Project Summary



Dream it Forward Program

ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc., in partnership with the Mental Health Commission (MHC), delivered the 2015/16 funding round of our innovative program targeted at supporting community-led social and emotional wellbeing initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities across WA. The Dream It Forward program focuses on reducing risk factors and using a range of activities to support community protection against mental distress in families and their communities based on locally-identified needs and solutions.



The Dream It Forward funding round closed on 22 February with 66 submissions received from across the state and represented multi-disciplinarian approaches to strengthening, sustaining or adding value to community-led projects. An Assessment Panel awarded 17 projects following a rigorous review process.

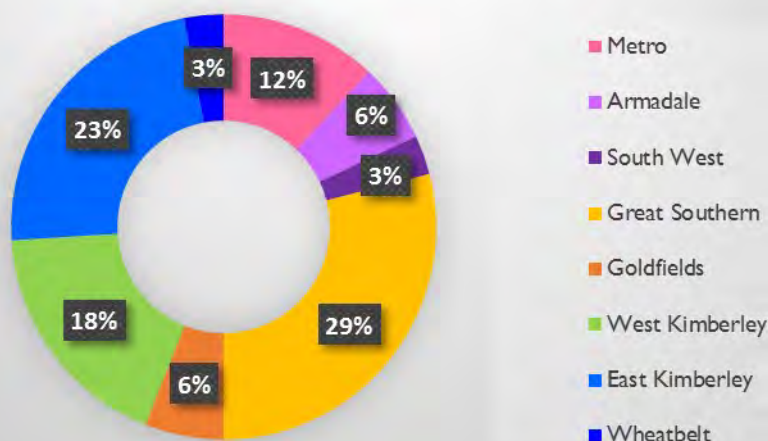
- Koolkuna - Eastern Region Domestic Violence Network - Early intervention with children at-risk of family and domestic violence in Altona / Metro
- Joanne Della Bona (Community) - Women's yarning retreat model for women of Gosnells / Metro
- Aboriginal Men's Service Network Group - Community engagement with focus on domestic violence / Armadale
- Tambellup Community - Community healing camp / Tambellup (Great Southern)
- Katanning Grassroots Netball Program - Support to participate in netball tournaments as diversionary intervention / Katanning (Great Southern)
- Tambellup Grassroots Netball Program - Support to attend NAIDOC netball tournament as diversionary intervention / Tambellup (Great Southern)
- Dreamtime Committee Mount Lockyer Primary (Albany) Program - Supporting the high retention and performance of Aboriginal students at Mount Lockyer Primary / Albany (Great Southern)
- Borden Development Group Incorporated - Shared oral and visual stories / Borden (Great Southern)
- Nyunnga-Gu (Women Belong) Community Group Leonora - On country healing camps for women and support of yarning group / Leonora (Goldfields)
- Kalumburu Tramalla Strong Women's Group - Practical support to further the work of the Group: camping, technology / Kalumburu (East Kimberley)
- Kurrungku Catholic Education Centre - Women's yarning group / Billiluna (East Kimberley)
- Waringarri Aboriginal Arts - Art Talks Workshops - therapeutic art therapy / Kununurra (East Kimberley)
- Lilman Saints Football Club - On country healing camps for Aboriginal players / Halls Creek (East Kimberley)
- Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service - Support of the Derby Men's Group / Derby (West Kimberley)
- Nagula Jarndu - Yawura Jandu Aboriginal Corporation in partnership with Broome Recovery Centre - Ngagula Jarndu Art Centre women's yarning group / Broome (West Kimberley)
- Nyoongar Wellbeing & Sports Aboriginal Corporation - Nyoongar Resilience Hiking Project / Narrogin, Northam and Bunbury (Wheatbelt and South West).

The response to Dream It Forward was overwhelming as the program gained traction as a state-wide community-led initiative around positively impacting Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing, and healing. The grants reflected a direct response to the 2015 - 2025 Mental Health Plan supporting system-wide reform, prevention, and mental health promotion direction.

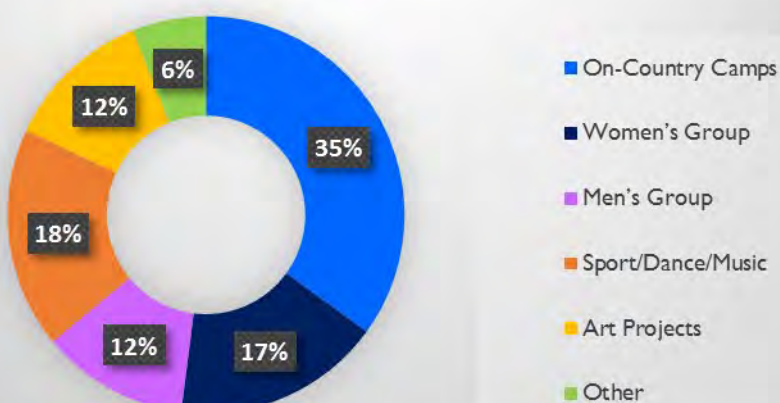
Project Summary

TOTAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED	APPLICATIONS AWARDED	TOTAL DOLLARS REQUESTED	DOLLARS AWARDED
66	17	\$601,870.04	\$85,007.00
100%	26%	100%	14%

DIF 2015/16 Awarded by Region



DIF 2015/16 Awarded by Project





Live it Forward together

In 2015 ConnectGroups entered into a two year Grant Agreement with the Department of Health to run a Pilot Program. The goal of LIFt was increase the number of Chronic Conditions Self-Management Support Groups, and expand referral services and self-management activities across WA, through the provision of practical assistance to Chronic

Conditions Support Groups in the community. Activities aligned with the aims and outcomes of the WA Chronic Health Conditions Framework 2011-2016, and the WA Chronic Conditions Self-Management Strategic Framework 2011-2015.

As part of the Grant Agreement, ConnectGroups identified and expanded referral services to regional and rural WA, with development of an online chronic conditions directory. The organisation identified 233 rural Support Groups and services and uploaded their information onto ConnectGroups website. All entries are updated and monitored by the ConnectGroups volunteer program, an initiative which will enable the directory to maintain currency and relevance. Support Groups who are not yet members are invited to apply for membership.

ConnectGroups has conducted a number of activities to serve the objectives of this project. Strong relationships have been fostered with Support Groups and Services, and service delivery to those that engaged with the Pilot extended beyond the LIFt scope; into ConnectGroups core service delivery areas. This has enabled the grantees to apply for membership; access its Leadership Training; networking events and subscribe to the E-Newsletters which provides sector wide information. The grants process itself reflected its intent of ensure continuous improvement throughout the longevity of the pilot program.

During 2015/16, there have been two rounds of the Live It Forward together small grants. The brokering component has successfully been conducted, with the full \$50,000 awarded to a total of 27 Support Groups. LIFt 2015/16 Grants:

Round One

- Angelman Syndrome Association WA
- Bunbury Parkinson's
- Coeliac WA
- Duchenne Foundation
- Fibromyalgia Support Network Inc
- Haemophilia Foundation WA
- Kalamunda Prostate Cancer SG
- LADS WA
- Leukodystrophy Australia
- Lung Information and Friendship for Everyone
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- Prost! Mens Health Exercise 4 Prostate Cancer Inc.
- Pulmonary Hypertension WA
- Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of WA

- Trigeminal Neuralgia
- Wheatbelt Wheezers

- Williams Syndrome Foundation

Round two

- Attitudinal Healing WA
- Cancer Support WA
- Cystic Fibrosis WA Post-Transplant Support Group
- Endometriosis Perth Sisterhood of Support
- High Risk Foot Clinic
- ME/CFS and Lyme Association of WA Inc.
- Multi-Systemic Infectious Disease Syndrome (MSIDS)
- Pelvic Pain Support Group
- Thyroid WA Support Group
- Yarraly Mid-West Lung Support Group.

Snapshots of Mental Health Initiatives

Mental Health First Aid

In early 2016, ConnectGroups was successful in its application to the Mental Health Commission under the Suicide Prevention Small Grants Scheme, for funding to provide MHFA to its members on a wider scale.

Three (3) rounds of MHFA will be delivered by accredited MHFA trainers to targeted Self Help and Support Group members throughout 2016-17.

"Shining the Light on Rural Mental Health".

ConnectGroups CEO Antonella Segre and Project Coordinator Christine's Hendricks participated at the Rural and Remote Mental Health Conference in Bunbury "Shining the Light on Rural Mental Health", and presented "The Pay it Forward Programme" as an effective prevention and mental health recovery model.

Over 200 delegates were present at the opening of the Rural and Remote Mental Health Conference in Bunbury.

Men's and Women's (Yorgas) Community Day

Our staff members Christine Hendricks, Josephine Caputo and Georgia Booth attended The Champion Centre in Armadale on November 16th and 18th 2015 to participate on the Men's Community Day and the Women's Community Day, showcasing services and initiatives supporting the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.



Acknowledgments

ConnectGroups Board and Staff thanks and acknowledges the Department of Local Government and Communities, its Minister the Hon. Tony Simpson MLA, Director General Jenny Perkins, Director Ray Peters and Staff Helen McGinty and Kay Channer; The Mental Health Commission Commissioner Tim, Marney and Director David Axworthy and staff Michael Lenney; Andrew Brock and Louise Howe for their constant support and belief in the work that we do and in their ability of sharing our vision.

It extends its thanks and gratitude to all of the organisations whose support has been a key to its growth and development. A special mention to:

Department of Health

Mark Slattery

Lara Stone

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Mayor Russell Aubrey

CEO Dr Shayne Silcox

Christine Young

Leanne Hartill

Lotterywest

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Jacque Thomson

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Cheryl Bridge

Lara Sappal

Lena Charlick

Jennifer Lowe

WACOSS

Irina Cattalini

Our Consultants

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Adam Levine

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Gerry Tuite

Maxine Drake

Samantha Connor

Scott Carlisle

Shaun Nannup

Carers WA

Consumers of Mental Health WA Inc.
(CoMHWA)

Development Disability WA

Fremantle Family Services

Health Consumers' Council WA

Linkwest

Mates in Construction

Men's Health and Wellbeing

MIFWA

People with Disabilities WA

Southcare Inc.

South West Partnership Forum

UWA Citizenship Centre

VolunteeringWA

WA Primary Health Alliance
(WAPHA)

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Susan Steers

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Michelle Yao

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**ConnectGroups Support
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