

**Chairperson's Report
for the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the
Community Services, Health, & Education Industry Training Council
operating as Community Skills WA (CSWA)**

The Chairperson's report is provided in accordance with the requirements of the Community Services, Health, & Education Industry Training Council constitution (operating as Community Skills WA (CSWA)) and its Service Agreement with the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD). The report provides an outline of CSWA's strategic progress, issues, and activities during 2023/2024.

Community Skills WA continues to represent the Community Services, Health and Education sectors across Western Australia and provide the vital link between industry and training based on having built strong connections with key stakeholders. From the beginning of July 2024, CSWA coverage has grown to include the Sport, Fitness and Recreation sectors, which requires the development of new connections and understanding of sector demographics and challenges.

The provision of a new 5 year funding contract in early 2024 represents an opportunity to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones, with certainty and a focus on long term strategic goals that support sustainability and lasting change. The reinstatement of strategic meetings including Training Council Chairs, CEOs and Ministers McGurk and Minister Beazley also represents an opportunity to strengthen the relationship with the State Training Board and DTWD and demonstrates the value of the Training Council network in WA.

The recent commencement of project work by HumanAbility has also provided an opportunity to demonstrate CSWA's value as a conduit for disseminating and gathering information from the key stakeholders across our sectors to inform future training products. For example, the recent HumanAbility roadshow in WA provided clear evidence of the strong connections CSWA has developed across the State and the level of trust in the organisation's ability to listen and respond with training solutions.

In 2023-2024, the Community Services, Health and Education sectors have continued to experience exponential growth, increasing their share of the overall WA employment market to 329,954 as at February 2024, which is more than double the mining or construction sectors. The growth of the workforce has been supported by strong engagement with VET qualifications, with CSWA's sectors consistently demonstrating the highest level of enrolments in fee free and lower fee, local skill qualifications and skill sets delivered in WA. Despite this strong engagement significant challenges are still reported in the attraction and retention of staff particularly in regional and remote locations, due to housing shortages, cost of living pressures and the increased demand for services.

Despite the challenges, recently developed training solutions such as the Community Support skill set continue to demonstrate the value of place-based solutions led by community. The delivery of this skill set in regional and remote locations continues to increase as the value of building a scaffolded approach to training is recognised. Following the development of these pathways and the connecting of dots by the CSWA team, examples of the development of a local sustainable workforce are continuing to emerge.

In addition to the expanded utilisation of the Community Support skill set the development of 2 new units of competence and accompanying resources under the Playgroup Project have also already created opportunities for young women in regional

and remote communities to engage with training and build their knowledge of child development milestones and identify potential career pathways. This qualification has now generated significant interest across the State and once again demonstrates CSWA's ability to develop real solutions that can lead to lasting change.

Delivery of the Certificate II Community Health and Wellbeing qualification as a pre-traineeship continues to create opportunities for school students to gain a taste of the many and varied careers that exist across the Community Services and Health Sectors. The planned expansion of delivery via Aboriginal RTO's following the development of learning and assessment resources by CSWA will also further solidify its role as a pathway to a multitude of roles within the sector.

In addition to the development of training pathways and resources, CSWA continues to gain recognition for its broader advocacy across all sectors but particularly for regional and remote communities and the Aboriginal workforce across all sectors. This has seen CSWA invited to participate in discussions at both state and national levels and is in response to our demonstrated approach of listening and undertaking a co-design approach, which aligns with the priority reforms identified in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. In the 2024/25 year, CSWA looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop long term sustainable training solutions which support place-based solutions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the CSWA Executive Director, Caroline Thompson and the small but highly committed team at CSWA for their outstanding work over the year. I also thank the CSWA Board who continue to promote and support the work of the Training Council, as well as providing expert advice and advocacy when required.

Neil Guard
Chairperson
November 2024