



Our ref: DHS/19/00523
Your ref: 7221756

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Ms Nat Cook MP
Member for Hurtle Vale
PO Box 158
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Sent by email: tristan.rust@parliament.sa.gov.au

Dear Ms Cook

I refer to your application under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (the Act), received by the Department of Human Services (DHS) on 8 January 2019, seeking access to:

- *Copies of any and all documents (including but not limited to physical and electronic material) regarding DHS or Ministerial Paper 18TDHS/1046.*

Unfortunately, DHS was unable to make a determination on your application within the 30 days, therefore it is considered to be a 'deemed refusal' under section 19(2)(b) of the Act. However, DHS has continued to process your application outside of this timeframe; section 19(2)(a) of the Act provides that an agency can release documents outside of the thirty-day timeframe, and this is still taken to be a determination under the Act.

Two documents were located that fit within the scope of your request and I have determined to release these documents in full. Please find enclosed a copy of the documents released, and a document schedule containing a brief description of each document and determination in summary form.

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your FOI application, and the documents to which you are given access, may/will be published on the agency's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at <http://dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-government/premier-and-cabinet-circulars>.

If you have any questions in relation to this matter, please contact Fiona Braendler, Senior FOI Officer, on telephone 8413 9094 or by email at DHSFreedomofInformation@sa.gov.au. If you disagree with publication, you will need to advise the Senior FOI Officer within two weeks of the date of this determination.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Schutz
ACCREDITED FOI OFFICER

4 / 03/ 2019

SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS – DHS/19/00523

Freedom of information application from Nat Cook MP seeking access to copies of any and all documents (including but not limited to physical and electronic material) regarding DHS or Ministerial Paper 18TDHS/1046.

No	Author	Date	Description of document	Determination	Reason
1.	Madeleine Pattingale, AWIS Coordinator, Office for Women	06/08/2018	Briefing – 18TDHS/1046 - Women's Information Service Volunteering in Children's Centres	Released in full	No exempt material
2.			Attachment 1 to Document 1 – WIS Volunteering Program Metro Outreach Pilot – FINAL REPORT	Released in full	No exempt material

Reference Number 18TDHS/1046



Government of South Australia

Department of Human Services

TO MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

RE: WOMEN'S INFORMATION SERVICE VOLUNTEERING IN CHILDREN'S CENTRES

Decision/action required by:...../...../.....

Reason:.....

Recommendation	Response
1. That you note that WIS will continue to expand its volunteer program into Children's Centres in partnership with the Department for Education.	Approved / Not Approved / <u>Noted</u>

Comments:	
<p>For memo to Minister Gardiner please (unless he has already been advised).</p>	<p><i>Michelle Lensink</i> Hon Michelle Lensink MLC 6/8 / 2018</p>

KEY POINTS

- In 2017-18 the Women's Information Service (WIS) conducted a pilot volunteer program in two Children's Centres.
- The attached report provides a summary of the accomplishments and challenges encountered during the pilot phase and includes recommendations for moving forward.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the pilot was to assess the viability of providing WIS services through satellite volunteer programs at established community hubs. Children's Centres provide an ideal fit for the program as they already include interdisciplinary teams working in partnership with other service providers and agencies to deliver integrated services. The WIS volunteers add value to the Centre's existing programs and provide direct access to information for women in the local area.

In collaboration with the Department for Education (DE), two sites were selected:

1. Southern region – Aldinga Beach Children's Centre
2. Northern region – Parafield Gardens Children's Centre.

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By recruiting and training local women to provide WIS services in their own communities, the program provided a team of volunteers with specialist knowledge of local issues and strong community connections. Several volunteers have gone on to gain paid employment and report that being involved in the program assisted them in achieving this.

The results from the pilot have been very positive and provided benefits to both WIS and the individual Children's Centres. The program will expand in 2018-19, with DE contributing towards the program costs. WIS is currently investigating potential Centres for the next stage and will aim to have volunteers in at least two new areas by the end of the 2018/19 financial year. Attached is the final report on the pilot program (Attachment 1).

2018 is the 40th anniversary of WIS and provides the opportunity to promote the expansion of the volunteer program to further Children's Centres at celebratory events.

BUDGET

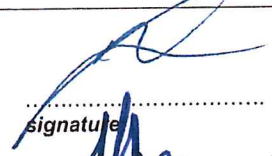

Are there financial implications

No

MEDIA/SENSITIVE:

Yes

You may wish to promote the expansion of the WIS volunteer program to Children's Centres as part of WIS' 40th anniversary celebrations.

Division	Office for Women		
Director	Fiona Mort		16.7.18
		signature	
Chief Executive	Tony Harrison		16.7.18
		signature	Date

ATTACHMENTS

1. WIS Volunteering Program Metro Outreach Pilot – FINAL REPORT

Contact Officer:	Madeleine Pattingale, AWIS Coordinator 08 8303 0519, madeleine.pattingale@sa.gov.au
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WIS Satellite Centres



Metro Outreach

The Women's Information Service (WIS) is part of the Office for Women (OFW) and was established in 1978 as the first service of its kind in Australia. The WIS provides information and referrals to South Australian women on-line, over the telephone and in person. A toll-free number is available for women in regional and remote areas. A pivotal philosophy driving WIS is empowering women through providing information and options when making significant life decisions.

WIS runs a strong volunteer program. Volunteers receive training to work in the WIS Shopfront and phone room alongside WIS Community Information Workers. Volunteers add value to the service WIS provides bringing with them diverse backgrounds and a wealth of life skills and experience. Volunteers are trained intensively for both the WIS Shopfront and telephone-help-line services and for the WIS Family Court Support program.

Since 1978 WIS has been located in Adelaide CBD and has supported women from this central position. This was initially ideal and provided access to many South Australian women. Now many barriers prevent women accessing WIS services from metropolitan areas, extending from Freeling to Sellicks Hill, a distance of 65km to the north and south of the CBD. Travel time, difficulties with public transport and complex family arrangements are just a few problems that prohibit access to services in the city. To overcome this WIS is conducting a pilot program collaborating with Children's Centres to locate services in safe locations in metropolitan satellite centres.



WIS has traditionally been located in the CBD ... now many barriers prevent women accessing WIS services from metropolitan areas, extending from Freeling to Sellicks Hill, a distance of 65km to the north and south of the CBD.





Collaboration and Co-location in Children's Centres

Locating satellite WIS hubs within Children's Centres is currently a pilot program with the intention to extend access to WIS services to women in outlying suburban communities.

Children's Centres operate with interdisciplinary teams working as an integrated service. They strive to support children and families to achieve

learning, health and wellbeing outcomes, and provide services to families who require additional support. The WIS philosophy of empowering women through information and opportunities complements the goal of the Children's Centre to provide interdisciplinary teams and integrated services.

Locating satellite WIS hubs within Children's Centres is currently a pilot program with the intention to extend access to WIS services to women in outlying suburban communities.

Location of WIS inside of Children's Centres will enable women to access vital information within the safety of their normal routines in a safe and familiar location.

Volunteers will be in roles that develop and establish skills that are directly transferrable to other workplaces, providing a credible pathway to future employment.

Benefits

Children's Centres have become a part of many families' lives. The WIS proposes expanding its reach and service delivery options by locating the volunteer program within Children's Centres. Collaboration with Children's Centres enables WIS to connect with women in their local area who may not know about WIS or have barriers that make connecting with City WIS difficult or impossible. Location of WIS inside of Children's Centres will enable women to access vital information within the safety of their normal routines and in a safe and familiar location.

Women attending Children's Centres with their children will see the WIS service and will be greeted by friendly and helpful WIS volunteers. WIS volunteers will be present at events and in programs running within the Children's Centre and associated schools. WIS volunteers will become a familiar and accessible presence, giving women access to empowering information in their own community.

Volunteers in Children's Centres will be local women working in their own community. These women will gain skills through WIS Volunteer training and by working alongside the Children's Centre Director, Community Development Coordinator and the Family Development Coordinator. Volunteers will be in roles that develop and establish skills directly transferrable to other workplaces, providing a credible pathway to future employment. Other benefits are:

- Services that would have been more challenging to approach happily open doors to the known Children's Centre and are eager to learn about the new partnership.
- Staff of the Department for Education Children's Centre is involved in local forums and committees and will represent WIS as part of the Children's Centre team.
- Metro volunteers are linked to many community groups and have close ties that give WIS credibility and increased exposure in local communities.
- Metro volunteers have identified local services previously unknown to WIS in the city.



What does the volunteer role involve?

Essentially the WIS volunteer provides information and referrals as required. Volunteers are based in the Department for Education Children's Centres, to support women who need access to information. The volunteer will provide information using a variety of modes and channels and in varied settings. The individual Children's Centre Director, Community Development Coordinator and Family Development Coordinator will work with WIS to determine how the role best works for them, within the scope of the role description and as suits their local community.

What do our metro volunteers look like?

The metropolitan volunteers have amazing lived experiences bringing a depth and wealth of knowledge to the role they play in the Children's Centre. Many of the women interviewed for volunteer positions at the Children's Centres have highly commendable experience and qualifications in a variety of fields. Several have social work, counselling or nursing backgrounds. Some have experience with 'children and trauma' and one has worked in community development with the United Nations. They have strong connections within their local communities to specialist groups and services.

Volunteers come from a variety of diverse backgrounds:

Aboriginal	Jordan	Afghanistan
Sri Lanka	East Africa	India
Ethiopia	Nepal	Palestine

Overview of volunteer role

- WIS has a dedicated space in the Children's Centre where volunteers can chat with women about what is happening in their lives and give referrals to supportive services. Also available is a more private area for sensitive discussions.
- Metro volunteers supported by the interdisciplinary Children's Centre will work to connect with women in the Centre and facilitate community programs relevant to the local community.
- Metro volunteers will research an issue affecting women locally and the services available to assist in these issues, particularly local services, to ensure that information provided is correct and up-to-date.
- Metro volunteers will work with the Centre Community Development Coordinator (CDC) & Family Services Coordinator (FSC) and accompany them on outreach as appropriate.
- Metro volunteers give WIS presentations and attend local information sharing gatherings as a representative of WIS from the specific Children's Centre. These may include school meet-and-greet events, community group gatherings and distribution of 'WIS at the Children's Centre' Brochures to local services.
- Metro volunteers will work on portfolios (subject areas) to ensure that the information is current and useful.
- Metro volunteers may assist with filling in forms when appropriate.
- Metro volunteers will provide information and referrals to other service providers visiting or working within the Children's Centre, for example CAFHS workers.

Volunteering: a pathway to employment

Skills gained through WIS training and volunteering, as identified by WIS Metro Volunteers:

Administration

Knowledge of services

Information technology

Information sharing

- one-on-one
- at community events

Presentations to groups

- planned
- spontaneous

One-on-one client assistance

- Listening
- Identifying issues
- Identifying relevant support organisations

Networking

Collaborative working

Collaborative problems solving

Identification of own skills

Self-advocacy

Confidence



From the WIS Metro Volunteers:

"I did a WIS talk for the My Time Group that is run at the Children's Centre. It was so well received and the women there were so excited to hear about what we do. I asked for some feedback about how we get the word out and they all said more talks within the community."

"This morning Trudi is making a list of email addresses to do a bulk mail out of our electronic flyer to all the local schools, kindys and childcare centres. Planning to go as far as Victor Harbor and down to Seaford and everything in between. Darcie has been dropping into doctors' offices and the police station to make sure they know about us. This afternoon two meet-and-greets are happening. WIS will have stalls at each one."

"I was asked to do a small talk which I wasn't expecting ... I surprised myself with my ability. I'm now becoming more confident with the information I know and can share it. I'm amazed at how we are learning about new technologies regularly."

"I heard a presenter in our training say that men apply for positions when they have 75% of the skills required, women when they have 100%. I'm passionate about document design and have been teaching myself. I have no job experience doing it. I designed a flyer for WIS, then saw a job at a local business doing document design and went for it! I got the job!"

"I'm so excited about this opportunity. There are a lot of women and families in our community who need this kind of help."

"Now I have something useful to do. I was at home with children. Now they are at school. I am not allowed to use my qualifications here [in Australia]. At WIS I can make a difference."

"Many women come to me for advice. I'm really glad to have the 'umbrella' of WIS and to learn how to keep myself safe by offering less personal options to women in crisis."

These comments from WIS Metro Volunteers reveal an increased exposure of WIS to the community surrounding the Children's Centre and an increased provision of service.



The metro volunteers who have left WIS to go onto paid employment have expressed that the volunteer training and experience emboldened them to apply for positions and strengthened their confidence and resolve in interviews.

Costs associated with WIS satellite centres:

(All costs approximate)

Aldinga Beach Children's Centre

	\$
Trainer	500
Stationery	130
Car hire	2,014
Food	453
Minibus hire	645
Creche	1,341
Dongle	30
Phone for WIS ABCC	260
Phone for WIS worker	260
Volunteer reimb.	653
Subtotal	6,286
Staff	31,841
Total:	38,127

Parafield Gardens Children's Centre:

Trainer	500
Stationery	31
Car hire	746
Food	775
Training room	360
Creche	4,152
Volunteer reimb.	306
Subtotal	6,870
Staff	31,841
Total:	38,711

Total minus staff	13,156
Total ABCC/PGCC	\$76,838

Challenges encountered:

Training Venues

- Access to technology at training venue.
- Suitable childcare arrangements. Children's Centres require that children are to be cared for close to mother's training location.
- Affordability – budget restraints
- Availability – affordable venues not available at short notice
- Locals have more success in booking local venues.

DHS screening

- Delays, Two volunteer's screening took longer than 6 months, one volunteer is still waiting (7 months)

Attrition of volunteers

- An unprecedented number of volunteers have been 'lost' to paid employment – found jobs or more work hours since training.
- Load increases on remaining volunteers, or holes in volunteer schedules.
- Several remaining volunteers have offered to do two shifts until further recruitment occurs.
- Volunteers indicate intention to use volunteering with WIS as a pathway to employment.
- Second wave of training is required to fill volunteer schedule at the first pilot site.

Children's Centre specific

- Resources and technology available to volunteers varies between centres. WIS has supplied equipment to fill gaps.
- Volunteers have limited IT skills. Volunteers have limited skills in word processing, document preparation, electronic filing and use of email. Training is required.
- Variation in values and practices at the Children's Centres - identification of what is important at each site is required by WIS workers. Volunteer roles require minor adaption around this.

Distance

- Travel to site for training; transport of resources.
- Travel by WIS workers to oversee metro volunteers, particularly in relation to resource availability variations at sites.
- Travel to city WIS by volunteers for training purposes

Conclusion

- WIS located in Children's Centres enables women to access information locally and safely without disruption to their daily routine.
- Collaboration with Children's Centres multi-disciplinary teams will increase WIS representation in the community.
- Location of WIS in Children's Centres increases the reach and provision of WIS services.
- Local volunteers bring valuable links to community groups that increase WIS exposure and service provision.
- Volunteers develop improved confidence and learn new skills transferrable to other workplaces.
- Improving Women economic Status
- Increasing women's leadership and participation
- Improving women's safety and wellbeing

Locating WIS volunteers in Children's Centres significantly increases the visibility of WIS in the community, placing the service in vibrant hubs of family and community activity, providing safe locations for women to access vital information.