

# WAPHA Stakeholder Research

## Summary of Findings

Prepared by Painted Dog Research

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# Research Approach

In March 2023, Painted Dog conducted in-depth interviews with n=17 stakeholders from organisations (commissioned service providers) currently funded by WAPHA.

A randomly selected sub-set of commissioned service providers were invited by Painted Dog Research to participate, aiming for a mix of contract values, regions serviced by the organisations, and a split between organisations using the Performance Management Framework and those not using it. Interviews lasted around 30 minutes and followed a discussion guide that covered the following topics:

- **Communication & Engagement:** Perceptions of WAPHA's communication with stakeholders both through structure communications (e.g. newsletters and forums) and direct engagement with relationship managers;
- **Commissioning:** Perceptions of WAPHA's commissioning practices including procurement and monitoring and evaluation;
- **Accountability:** Perceptions of WAPHA's approach to feedback and continuous improvement.



## Who we spoke to

### CONTRACT VALUE

Small 

Medium 

Large 

### SERVICE DELIVERY LOCATION(S)\*

North 

South 

Country 

### USING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Yes 

No 

\*Stakeholders may provide service across multiple regions.

# Strengths & Challenges

Overall, stakeholders are satisfied with their engagement with WAPHA. Average satisfaction from n=17 stakeholder interviews is greater than 4 out of 5 (where 5 is 'very satisfied') across several different areas of interaction, with all areas increasing in satisfaction since 2022.

All stakeholders experience challenges and frustrations, but many can recognise when things are beyond WAPHA's control.

## Key Strengths

- ✓ Once again, stakeholders see WAPHA's staff as a key strength of the organisation. Many mentioned having a strong, positive relationships with their contract manager who is dedicated and genuinely cares about their needs and the organisation. Stakeholders value the openness and approachability of the contract managers, particularly to take on feedback and help service providers navigate challenges.
- ✓ The move to a single contract manager continues to be well-received by stakeholders, who appreciate no longer having multiple points of contact to bounce between. While the initial transition created some uncertainty and teething issues, stakeholders are now able to see and experience the benefits of a single point of contact who understands their organisation and the sector well.
- ✓ Stakeholders continue to value the regular and informative newsletters, and have also been delighted by the introduction of the service provider panels as a format to bring service providers together.
- ✓ Stakeholders do see and appreciate WAPHA's commitment to improving the experience for service providers, particularly evidenced to them by the introduction of the PMF and the consultation of stakeholders during the formation.

## Key Challenges

- ✗ The biggest challenge felt by most service providers is the lack of long-term funding certainty resulting from short-term contract cycles, further exacerbated when extensions and renewals are not confirmed or received until close to the new financial year. This is resulting in difficulties managing the long-term strategy of their organisation, finding and retaining quality staff members, as well as higher costs incurred by regularly renegotiating contracts with subcontractors.
- ✗ Stakeholders are also looking for more transparency around commissioning and tendering, citing frustrations with investing time and effort into tenders when they are unlikely to be selected (due to there being a preferred supplier), long wait times for the result of a tender, and limited or sterile opportunities to discuss tender requirements and feedback.
- ✗ Communication from WAPHA is regular but stakeholders feel that there are important updates that are not being shared by WAPHA with the urgency required, and are disappointed when they learn about changes to policy, legislation, reporting from other providers, PHNs, or WAPHA's own LinkedIn page rather than directly from WAPHA.
- ✗ Opportunities for face-to-face interaction with WAPHA have improved over the past 12 months for some, but not all, and stakeholders are still looking to build deeper relationships and understanding with WAPHA through face-to-face visits.
- ✗ Executive-level stakeholders within service providers are also looking for more opportunities to engage with more senior level teams at WAPHA, as their contract managers are typically not empowered to have the strategic conversations these stakeholders are looking to have.
- ✗ There continues to be a misalignment between metrics and KPIs used to evaluate service delivery for many stakeholders, particularly those providing non-clinical services or operating in regional and linguistically diverse communities.
- ✗ The introduction of the PMF has been challenging for many, experiencing IT issues, challenges with preparing staff to use the platform, and increased administrative and reporting burden.

# Opportunities

Stakeholders have provided their suggestions for where WAPHA could improve processes and engagement. A key opportunity for WAPHA to delight stakeholders is to become an advocate for change and facilitating service provider networking.

## Stakeholder suggestions for improvement

- Most stakeholders recognise that many of the biggest challenges and frustrations faced (i.e., around funding certainty and reporting requirements) are beyond WAPHA's control and often stem from the federal government, however they see an opportunity for WAPHA to advocate on their behalf. Individually, service providers do not feel they have much power to voice their concerns and lobby for any change, but the weight of WAPHA representing the service providers of WA could be key to addressing the biggest challenges faced.
- Stakeholders see an opportunity for WAPHA to be create space for open and honest discussions about tender requirements, preferred suppliers, and awarded tenders. Stakeholders feel this will help them improve their tender submissions in the future, and properly assess the viability of putting time and effort into a tender submission.
- Select tenders were suggested by some as a way to help minimise occasions of putting time and effort into tenders when there is a preferred or more appropriate provider, and those in regional locations and working with Aboriginal communities feel this would be an appropriate approach to ensuring contracts are awarded to organisations with the right local or cultural knowledge.
- Stakeholders would like to see a mechanism for evaluating or acknowledging health outcomes and positive impact on the community – which cannot always be assessed quantitatively. They suggest WAPHA continues to explore ways to incorporate more qualitative types of assessment that can better reflect the health outcomes of service delivery, and works collaboratively with service providers to develop KPIs and metrics that will provide the best representation of the outcomes delivered.
- There is a strong desire for more face-to-face engagement with WAPHA, including more on-site visits and engagement with senior executives for strategic conversations..
- There is still an opportunity for WAPHA to act as a facilitator, creating a network of service providers that can collaborate and work together to provide services for the community, rather than seemingly pitting them against each other in the tender process.
- Stakeholders would like to see WAPHA promoting and celebrating the excellent community outcomes that WAPHA and the service providers funded are able to deliver, including greater representation of non-clinical services such as mental health.



# WAPHA Actions

## How WAPHA is actioning the recommendations

### STRUCTURED COMMUNICATIONS

- Establish an External Communications review and prioritisation project to improve structure and processes that are effective and fit for purpose.
- Leverage strategic / policy advice focused on potential implications of change within WAPHA's commissioning context; and, utilise CRM tools and functions to ensure targeted communications to organisations / individuals.

### DIRECT ENGAGEMENT

- Continue and strengthen direct engagement with commissioned service providers from our Contract Management, Regional Integration and Program Improvement teams.
- Consolidate current and establish new forums for engagement of metropolitan and country providers with WAPHA Executive members to strengthen relationships, collaboration and shared understanding.
- Hold two service provider networking event in the next 12 months, and evaluate for improvement / sustainability.

### COMMISSIONING / PROCUREMENT

- Where applicable implement a 2-stage process for procurement that ensures appropriate utilisation of provider resources and assessment of opportunity.
- Strengthen activities via the PHN Cooperative (cooperative of the 31 PHNs) that seek to strengthen engagement with the Australian Government regarding matters of concern for commissioned service providers

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- At 12 months from implementation of the Performance Management Framework review the agreed performance indicators. This will be to refine measures of performance and patient experience over time with provider engagement continuing to be utilised as an important component in continually improving evaluation methods.
- Convene a dedicated Service Provider Panel discussion to elicit input on the topic of Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Update and provide information to service providers regarding national PHN performance measures and how this directly relates to provider indicators.

### FUTURE RESEARCH AND ONGOING FEEDBACK

- WAPHA will continue to strengthen our approach to increasing stakeholder representation as part of our processes beyond 2023.
- WAPHA will optimise opportunities for stakeholder engagement and co-design as critical components of the commissioning process for new activities.
- WAPHA will clearly articulate in communications to stakeholders what method and contribution stakeholders are able to make, aligned with the commitments of our stakeholder engagement framework.
- WAPHA will ensure all engagement includes a feedback mechanism that provides transparency as to how information has been utilised to inform and deliver commissioning, capacity building and coordination activities.

Hunt Smarter.

