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PRESS RELEASE

Linkwest congratulates new WA Government

LINKWEST INC congratulates Mark McGowan and WA Labor for their election victory over the weekend.

One of the priorities for this incoming government is to address the State’s budget deficit, and to trim unnecessary spending.

Place-based services such as Neighbourhood and Community Resource Centres are core to building stronger, and more cohesive and resilient communities. These services bring their communities together to help identify local gaps and priorities, and empower them to develop and drive local solutions for their needs.

Linkwest encourages the incoming government to invest in place-based services, which will enable funds to go directly to where they can be most efficiently used: locally, to address local issues. To ensure equity of access, this investment needs to include a reversal of the previous government’s decision to cease subsidising accommodation and maintenance costs to a number of community place-based services.

We urge government funders to ensure competitive service tendering and procurement is used with caution for selecting service providers.

An organisation’s ability to address tender document selection criteria does not always mean they are best placed to deliver services to the community, particularly when community engagement and knowledge is required.

“The social capital of existing connections and trust is central to the success of a place-based approach, and could be badly damaged through a competitive tender process.” says Linkwest CEO, Jane Chilcott.

Place-based services offer the ideal platform to tackle the issue of unemployment. The reintroduction of funding for locally based Adult and Community Education will enable place based services to offer pre-employment or reemployment training in a non-threatening environment, where trust and confidence can grow.

We thank the outgoing government for working cooperatively with us and our members during their tenure.

We look forward to building on the positive relationship we had with many members of the Shadow cabinet now that they are in government.
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BACKGROUND: Linkwest
Nedlands-based Linkwest is a small not-for-profit organisation that is largely funded by the State Government’s Department of Local Government and Communities and the Department for Regional Development.

Linkwest is the peak body for neighbourhood and community resource centres in Western Australia. It offers targeted and relevant training and support to those working in small community-managed not-for-profit organisations.

Linkwest, with a staff of six, offers crucial support to more than 150 members, including over 100 regional and remote organisations. More than 100,000 Western Australians currently use these centres. The centres provide a friendly, welcoming place where local people can meet to learn, gain new skills, make friends and feel part of their community. They also provide a safe, affordable space for playgroups, community and support groups to gather.

Former Premier of Western Australia, Professor Carmen Lawrence, is Linkwest’s official patron. She has been a patron for the past six years.

The history behind the organisation goes back to 1978 – for many years it was known as Learning Centre Link, until it was renamed Linkwest in 2011.