MEDIA RELEASE

10 July 2017

From 33 months to 18 – Community Resource Centres see their contract terms slashed

Linkwest, the Peak Body for Community Resource Centres (CRCs) and Neighbourhood Centres (NCs) in Western Australia, is very disappointed at the announcement that CRCs’ new contract terms have been slashed by nearly 50% from 2 years and 9 months (33 months) to just 18 months.

“The entire Community Resource Centre sector was just preparing to hear the result of their tender submissions – which were submitted on the basis of a 33 month term – when this announcement came through.” says CEO Jane Chilcott. “After all the blood, sweat, tears and time that goes into preparing these submissions, to hear that contract terms were being cut so severely, was devastating.”

“This move also runs counter to the Labor Government’s Supporting Community Policy, which talks of improving government procurement processes and providing greater funding security to the Community Services Sector.”

“We are, however, pleased to hear that CRCs will be able to resubmit their pricing models to reflect the new, reduced contract length.”

The cited reason for the cut to CRC contract terms is to enable a review of the WA Community Resource Centre Network to ensure it is providing good value for money.

“While we appreciate the need for the WA Labor Government to mitigate its inherited debt, and are grateful that a review will occur prior to any major changes to funding, this move, as with the proposed changes to the funding model for Neighbourhood Centres, directly impacts the sustainability of these services and puts all the staff employed at these Centres under a cloud of uncertainty.”

Linkwest hopes, as the Peak Body for CRCs, to be able to work in partnership with the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development to ensure a clear and transparent review process that will result in the best outcomes for regional and remote communities.

Community Resource Centres provide vital access to government and community services to those in the regions, many of whom either have no computer, limited Internet access or limited digital literacy. With more and more State Government services being made available exclusively online, this point of access – and the support of staff for those with low digital literacy – is becoming increasingly vital.

For more information, contact

Jane Chilcott
Linkwest CEO
jane.chilcott@linkwest.asn.au
(08) 9485 8929
BACKGROUND: Community Resource Centres

Located in around 100 regional and remote communities throughout Western Australia, Community Resource Centres (CRCs) are friendly, locally owned and operated service and information centres. The centres are not-for-profit organisations that are independently owned and operated by their local community.

CRCs undertake community, business and economic development activities, and are a central point for locals, visitors and businesses, providing access to government and community services and information. As more and more government services go online, this access point is an increasingly critical function of the CRCs, particularly for those without access to computers and/or reliable Internet services.

Sample of services which now must be accessed online:

- School Bus services
- Crimestoppers
- Accessing a Firearm
- Applying for driving tests
- Medicare
- MyGov
- MyAgedCare

The CRCs also provide high quality video-conferencing services, enabling communities to directly access services that are otherwise unavailable in the regions. These include parenting programs, women’s health services and even court appearances.

BACKGROUND: Linkwest

Nedlands-based Linkwest is a small not-for-profit organisation that is largely funded by the State Government’s Department of Communities and the Department for Primary Industry and Regional Development. Linkwest is the peak body for community resource centres and neighbourhood 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 27,000 Western Australians currently use these centres each week. 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.

Go to:

www.linkwest.asn.au
www.facebook.com/Linkwest