

WESTERN SYDNEY COMMUNITY FORUM

WESTERN SYDNEY
COMMUNITY SERVICES
INDUSTRY



**CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT**

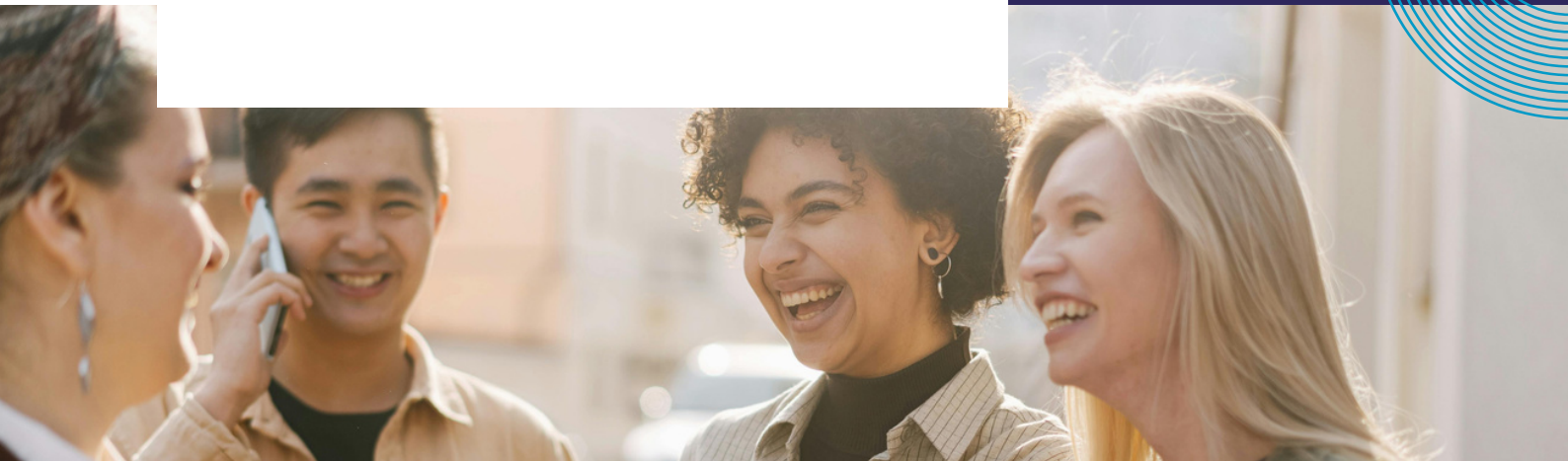
FRAMEWORK

Acknowledgement of Country

Western Sydney Community Forum acknowledges First Nations peoples as the sovereign Traditional Owners and Custodians of the unceded lands and waters on which we work and live. We pay respect to Elders past and present. We respectfully recognise all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and their heritage. We acknowledge past and present injustices and commit to walking alongside First Nations peoples.



What is continuous improvement?



Continuous improvement is an ongoing process of systematically identifying and implementing changes to improve efficiency, effectiveness, quality, or other defined outcomes. These changes may range from small modifications to everyday systems and processes to broader strategic objectives. Continuous improvement should be person centred and prioritise the lived experience of clients and communities. This could include people with disability, older people, families, children, young people or others. The continuous improvement process encourages proactively identifying areas for progress, and requires following a repetitive process of reflection, analysis, implementation and evaluation.

Why is it important?

Continuous improvement:

- Creates opportunities to identify necessary changes, gaps or issues
- Improves systemic and organisational processes
- Facilitates ownership and input from stakeholders including staff and clients
- Supports the early identification of problems and areas for improvement
- Helps to ensure responsiveness to the changing needs of clients
- Improves outcomes for individual organisations and the broader sector
- Supports professional development
- Strengthens processes to monitor and track change
- Contributes to long-term sustainable improvement and collaboration
- Can help to ensure the perspectives, priorities and goals of clients are embedded within organisational and systemic processes

How does continuous improvement align with policy?



A continuous improvement framework aligns at the policy level across a range of focus areas. For instance, this framework aligns with the Australian Government's commitments in the 2023-25 Disability Advocacy Work Plan and National Disability Advocacy Framework 2022-25 to achieve an effective network of disability advocacy nationwide. Continuous improvement is also an important component of the new Aged Care Act 2024. Under subdivision C in the Act, it is a condition of registration for providers to work towards continuous improvement in the delivery of aged care.

The importance placed on continuous improvement is similarly reflected in policy relating to other focus areas, such as services for families and children, housing, and settlement. For example, providers of Children and Family Intensive Support services must have an evaluation plan which includes continuous improvement, and continuous improvement is included as a guiding principle in the 2025 NSW Settlement Strategy.

Purpose of the framework

The purpose of this framework is to provide a collective resource which organisations can utilise when planning and engaging in continuous improvement activities to support the delivery of quality person-centred services, which improve outcomes and access for clients. The development of this framework has been informed by the community services sector in Western Sydney.

Developing a collective approach to continuous improvement is a powerful way to foster a culture of shared responsibility and commitment to sustained engagement with systematic processes of improvement, and promote the sharing of knowledge and best practice.

This works to build collaborative movements which break down silos and align long-term strategic goals. By adopting a broad mindset of continuous improvement, opportunities to improve the community service system can be identified and harnessed more effectively. This strengthens the sector, helping to ensure that organisations have consistent, high-quality services that are responsive to the changing needs and priorities of clients.

Guiding principles

- Embedding lived experience and amplifying the voices of clients and communities
- Inclusivity and accessibility
- Empowerment
- Transparency
- Measuring impact
- Person-centred



Collective practices

In consultation with the community services sector, ten collective practices for continuous improvement were identified:

- Collecting lived experience feedback
- Encouraging joint reflection on priorities and the implementation of change
- Participating in regular learning exchanges (communities of practice)
- Providing support to embed changes into policies, training and practice
- Establishing shared priorities
- Consulting with other organisations regarding standards and priorities for improvement
- Identifying barriers and opportunities
- Defining and implementing continuous improvement processes to monitor and ensure quality service delivery
- Considering feedback mechanisms for policy and practice, procedures, external stakeholders and employees
- Measuring and evaluating impact, outcomes and deliverables

Relevant Western Sydney Community Forum resources

- Governance and Leadership eLearning modules
- Leadership Series for Emerging Leaders
- Cultural Safety and Responsiveness Workshops
- Customised In-House Facilitation and Training
- Microcredential - *Evaluation for the Community Services Sector: Evidencing our Impact*
- Support and Advisory Service
- UNSW ImpactMaker Research Collaboration





Plan-do-check-act Approach

The plan-do-check-act (PDCA) approach is a simple model that can be implemented to enact continuous improvement processes.

Plan

Consider the current situation and seek input from stakeholders

Do

Implement the change, collect data and document the decision-making process

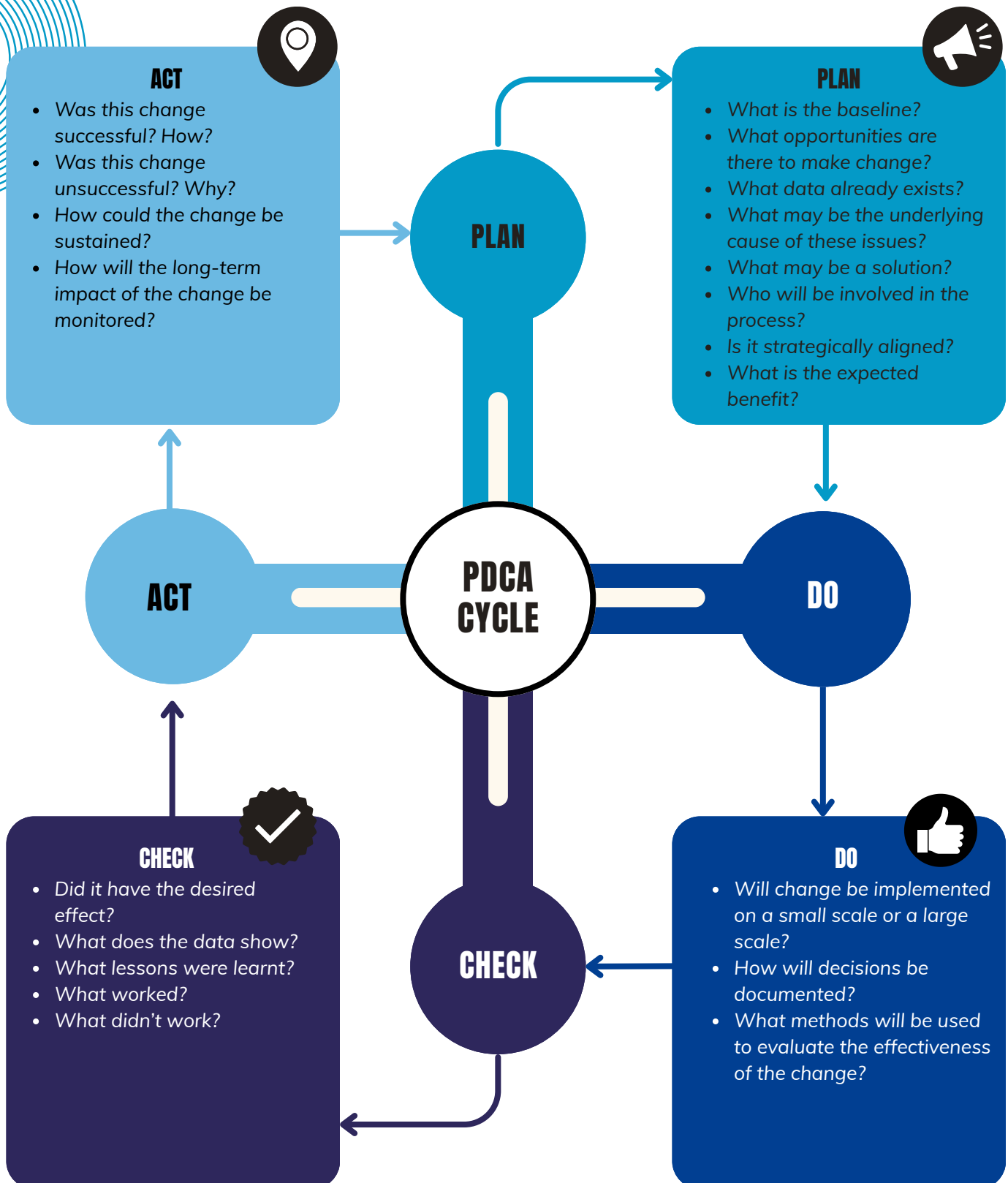
Check

Evaluate the impact of the change

Act

Implement the change on a broader scale or return to the planning stage

The PDCA cycle



Appendix - Template: Evaluation, Planning and Continuous Improvement Policy

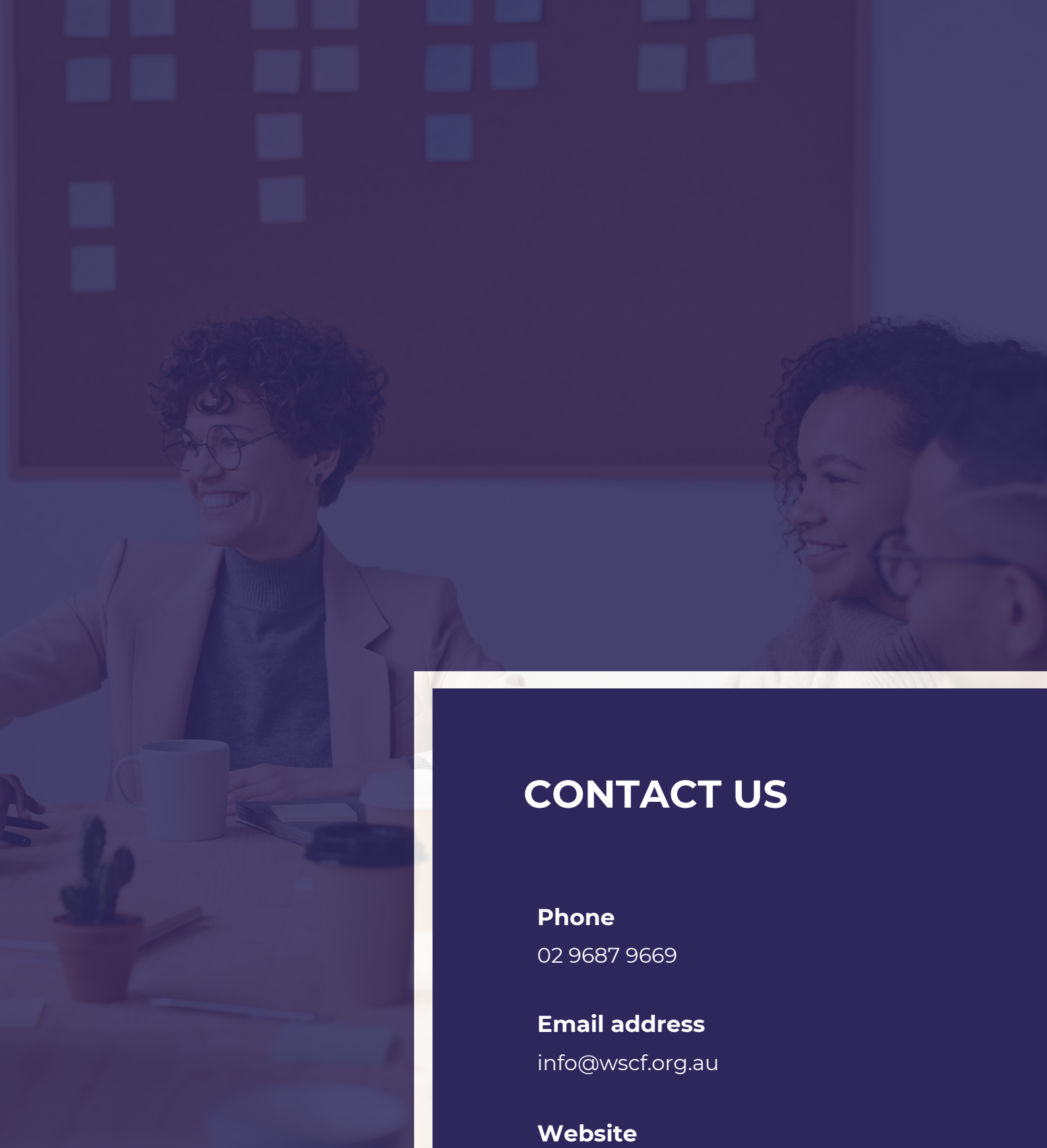
Primary Responsibility: *[Insert position name]*

Policy Statement:

[Insert organisation name] is committed to continuous improvement to ensure that the Organisation continues to provide high quality, relevant, contemporary services. Ongoing planning and evaluation of services are integral to *[insert organisation name]*'s continuous improvement processes to ensure that the needs of the community are understood and are being met effectively and efficiently, and that the Organisation complies with the standards and requirements of registering/funding bodies.

Procedures:

- The collection of formal and informal feedback and the evaluation of services assists *[insert organisation name]* to improve:
 - Information dissemination and promotion of services; projects, events and other initiatives;
 - Safety, quality and responsiveness of services;
 - Training and development of the workforce, including assessment strategies;
 - Communication with clients and stakeholders; and
 - Administrative systems.
- The planning and evaluation of *[insert organisation name]* is the responsibility of *[insert position name]*. They will ensure that the process includes participation of:
 - Employees, contractors, students and volunteers;
 - Clients and partner organisations;
 - Key stakeholders from registering/funding bodies; and
 - Other relevant stakeholders such as *[insert stakeholder names]*.
- The effectiveness and relevance of services delivered by *[insert organisation name]* will be reviewed and evaluated from time to time using a range of evaluation tools. These tools include but are not limited to *[insert evaluation tools]*.
- *[Insert organisation name]* encourages clients, partner organisations and other stakeholders to participate in formal and informal evaluation and feedback processes to ensure that the Organisation understands the needs of the community and that the services are relevant and of high quality. This information assists to continually improve all aspects of service provision.
- *[Insert position names]* are expected to contribute to evaluation, planning and continuous improvement processes.
- *[Insert organisation name]* employs various strategies to collect feedback, monitor and review services and to use this information in the planning and improvement processes of the Organisation. These strategies include but are not limited to:
 - *[Insert strategies]*.
- The outcomes of these processes can be made available to *[insert position and stakeholder names]*.



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