

PARTNERSHIP FORUM
16 July 2010
COMMUNIQUÉ

The Partnership Forum recently held its inaugural meeting at Carers WA. Key public sector and community sector representatives were joined initially by the Premier who opened the meeting.

The Hon. Colin Barnett MLA, Premier of Western Australia, charged the Partnership Forum with the responsibility for strengthening the relationship between the Government, public sector and community sector towards a genuine and collaborative partnership in the delivery of human services to the Western Australian community. The Premier stated his belief that the community sector is better able to reach out and connect with people than the public sector and, therefore, is best placed to meet the diverse needs of our community. The Premier outlined his vision for the future period of prosperity in Western Australia to be seen as a time at which the community came together and looked after people properly – the more vulnerable and disadvantaged would be given greater care and support and there would be more opportunity for all Western Australians to participate and benefit from the State's prosperity.

Professor Peter Shergold AC, appointed independent chair of the Partnership Forum, reinforced the Premier's comments and set the ball in motion highlighting that the delivery of better services for the public in Western Australia is the Forum's ultimate goal and driver. He reiterated the view of the Premier that the Forum's emphasis should be on achieving practical results.

The Partnership Forum acknowledged the unique opportunity and responsibility it has been provided and the significance of its obligation to report directly to the Premier on progress.

The Partnership Forum agreed its task is to engender substantive, long-term change to improve outcomes for all Western Australians. At the outset, it confirmed a number of critical issues requiring immediate attention. These include:

- Endorsing key principles and behaviours to strengthen the relationship between the public and community sectors;
- Streamlining the administrative burden on both sectors through the implementation of a Collaboration for Community Policy to guide the ongoing funding and contractual relationship between both sectors;

- Ensuring that improved arrangements are publicly evaluated on an on-going basis;
- Advising on and making recommendations with respect to the funding shortfall in the delivery of human services by the community sector on behalf of the public sector; and
- Establishing a Community Development Investment Fund and Social Innovation Grants Program as announced by the Premier as part of the 2010-11 Budget.

Partnership Principles

The Partnership Forum commenced development of a set of principles to govern and facilitate the Government-community sector partnership in delivering human services to the community. Essential elements of a genuine partnership between the public and community sectors were discussed including building trust, fostering collaboration, driving social innovation and ensuring sustainable and effective service delivery. The Partnership Forum agreed to the development of an aspirational statement outlining the set of principles and associated behavioural changes required in order to practically engender true partnership. The Forum agreed to sign-off on the partnership principles at its October 2010 meeting.

Collaboration for Community Policy

The Partnership Forum noted that work was underway by the public and community sectors to progress the development of a Collaboration for Community Policy to clearly articulate and guide the range of contractual and funding relationships between Government and the community sector. The Partnership Forum discussed the option for a pre-qualification process for community sector organisations in a desire to streamline processes and tasked the Procurement in Partnership Working Group to progress options for reform and report back to the next meeting in October 2010.

Funding Shortfall

The Partnership Forum acknowledged the historical funding shortfall for community sector delivery of State-funded community services as a critical issue to be addressed. It tasked a joint public and community sector working group with defining and quantifying the value of the shortfall in current contracts for the delivery of community services and recommending options to address the funding concerns that provide a sustainable solution over the long-term. The Forum agreed to consider the working group's findings at its October 2010 meeting prior to providing advice to the Premier on a way forward.

Community Development Investment (CDI) Fund and Social Innovation Grants (SIG) Program

The Partnership Forum welcomed the Premier's announcement as part of the 2010-11 Budget to establish a CDI Fund and SIG Program. The Partnership Forum reflected on the importance of both funds in assisting community sector organisations to build organisational capacity or develop as social enterprises and in supporting social innovation in the delivery of human services by the community sector.

The Partnership Forum confirmed as a priority the need to establish appropriate criteria and governance arrangements for both funds in order to maximise opportunities and investment.

Membership

The membership of the Forum is currently:

Professor Peter Shergold AC, Centre for Social Impact (Chair)
Ron Alexander, Director General, Department of Sport and Recreation
Sue Ash, Chief Executive Officer, Western Australian Council of Social Service
Carlo Calogero, State Manager, National Disability Services (WA)
Eddie Bartnik, Mental Health Commissioner, Mental Health Commission
Ian Carter, Chief Executive Officer, Anglicare
Ron Chalmers, Director General, Disability Services Commission
Peter Conran, Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
John Gherardi, President, Western Australian Association for Mental Health
Chris Hall, Chief Executive Officer, UnitingCare West
Debbie Karasinski, Chief Executive Officer, Senses Foundation
Joan McKenna Kerr, Chief Executive Officer, Autism Association of Western Australia
Terry Murphy, Director General, Department for Child Protection
Jenni Perkins, Director General, Department for Communities
Grahame Searle, Director General, Department of Housing

NEXT MEETING

The Partnership Forum agreed to meet quarterly with the next meeting scheduled in October 2010. A communiqué will be released following each meeting.