

PARTNERSHIP FORUM

5 October 2010

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Partnership Forum recently held its second meeting at the Kurongkurl Katitjin Gallery Room at the Edith Cowan University Mount Lawley Campus. The Forum considered a number of significant pieces of work.

Partnership Principles

The Partnership Forum endorsed a statement outlining the set of principles and associated behavioural changes required in order to practically engender a true partnership between the public sector and the community not-for-profit sector. A copy is attached.

Collaboration for Community Policy

The Partnership Forum discussed an overview of the proposed *Collaboration for Community Policy* intended to provide a clear framework for the procurement relationship between Government and the community sector. The Forum agreed to the policy containing three parts:

- *Nature of the Relationship* which identifies the key behaviours which will demonstrate the Partnership Principles in arrangements between public authorities and not-for-profit community sector service providers in the procurement context;
- *Funding and Contracting Options* which outlines the different funding and contracting options available and guides the selection of the best arrangement for particular relationships between public authorities and service providers based on the nature of the market and the community outcomes being sought ; and
- *Reducing the administrative burden* which outlines the tools that can be used to reduce the administrative burden of both sectors when managing funding and contracting arrangements, including a pre-qualification process, standard templates and streamlined reporting.

The Forum agreed to the development of standard templates to be applied across all contracts, with the templates recognising the sovereignty of community sector organisations. It was considered that the template contract should take precedence over schedules, with the content of schedules to comply with endorsed Partnership Principles and procurement guidelines. The Forum also acknowledged that there should be an agreed grievance process and the need for capacity building to support the implementation of the new policy.

The Forum agreed that any pre-qualification process must reduce the administrative burden and replace, not add to, existing processes. It was agreed that central support is needed in order to achieve a streamlined, single approach; capacity building for both the public sector and community sector; and, ensuring barriers are not created for smaller or emerging organisations.

Funding Shortfall

The Partnership Forum noted that the Community Sector Funding Working Group (CSFWG) report was still pending the completion of an analysis by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). The CSFWG is a joint public and community sector group tasked with defining and quantifying the shortfall in funding for 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. PwC was contracted by the Working Group to undertake an analysis to assist in the quantitative assessment of the funding shortfall.

Community sector representatives declared that the capacity to pay fair and competitive wages is a critical interest in resolving the shortfall. The Forum considered options for the implementation of the funding shortfall. It was decided that the Forum would meet in November to further discuss funding issues.

Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) and Social Innovation Grants (SIGs) Program

Directions papers for both programs were considered by the Forum. The direction papers were developed with guidance from a workshop attended by over 60 representatives of the public and community sectors as well as a WACOSS Social Innovation Forum.

The Forum discussed the strategic direction of the CDIF and decided to keep it as broad as possible. It was agreed that further work was required on the administrative arrangements, including alignment with new directions at the Commonwealth level.

The Forum endorsed the strategic direction of the SIGs Program to support innovation both in the way current services are delivered and for new innovative service models. SIGs funding will be allocated according to priority areas, as decided by the Partnership Forum. The SIGs program is on track to commence in January 2011 and the Forum suggested expressions of interest should be called before the end of 2010.

Next Meeting

The Partnership Forum agreed another meeting is required in November to further progress, in particular, the work on community sector funding and the SIGs Program. A community sector briefing will not take place after this meeting but will be held following the Forum's February 2011 meeting.

PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Mission:

To improve outcomes for all Western Australians through a genuine partnership between the public sector and the not-for-profit community services sector in the policy, planning and delivery of community services in Western Australia.

Principles:

1. A commitment to improve social, cultural and economic outcomes for the Western Australian community.
2. A collaborative approach to decision making and working together recognising the interdependence in the delivery of community services.
3. A partnership based on mutual respect and trust, with openness and transparency in all activities.
4. A recognition of the value and contribution of both sectors in the design and delivery of community services and the important roles each play in the wellbeing of the community.
5. An enduring commitment to the sustainability of community services.
6. A commitment to empowerment of service users in the design, planning and delivery of community services.

Behaviours:

1. An enduring focus and drive to deliver demonstrable improvements in outcomes for all Western Australians.
2. Consultation on all significant issues, including the development of policy, planning and service design.
3. Transparency in decision making, including through the sharing of data and information, basis of funding decisions and contracting requirements.
4. An interdependent approach to the planning and delivery of community services.
5. The public and community sectors will work together to ensure funding levels are sufficient for sustainable community services.
6. Engagement of citizens in the ongoing design, planning and delivery of community services through direct and indirect methods of consultation and representation in development of service delivery.