

Putting the Public First: Economic Audit Implementation

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Hello and welcome to the first edition of the newsletter from the Economic Audit Implementation Team.

This newsletter is aimed at providing regular updates on progress in implementing key reforms and creating awareness about how people in the community and public sectors can contribute to this important process.

This is a busy and exciting period with a number of important projects being progressed that are aimed at improving outcomes for all Western Australians. Amongst important recent milestones, the first meeting of the Partnership Forum was held on 16 July 2010. The Implementation Team is also progressing some important work in the area of procurement reform, self directed service design and building policy capacity.

We are keen to make this newsletter as useful and informative as possible. Feedback and contributions are always welcome and can be directed to leonie.browner@dpc.wa.gov.au

Best wishes,

The Economic Audit Implementation Team.

Economic Audit - A brief history

By way of background, the Economic Audit Committee was established in October 2008 to conduct a wide-ranging review of the operational and financial performance of the Western Australian public sector.

The Committee comprised of six eminent leaders from government, business and academia, supported by the Department of Treasury and Finance.

The Committee's final report was released in October 2009. It contained 43 recommendations directed toward achieving a vision of a more collaborative and innovative public sector focused on "Putting the Public First" and giving greater attention to social issues.

The Committee envisaged that in five to ten years:

- the Government will be supported by frank and well-informed advice;
- collaboration will be a standard approach;
- community and public sector organisations will be genuine partners in the delivery of human services;
- people will have greater opportunities to exercise choice and control over how services are designed and delivered; and
- above all, outcomes achieved for all Western Australians will be among the best in the nation and will continually improve.

Implementation

The Economic Audit Implementation Team is made up of staff from the Departments of Premier and Cabinet and Treasury and Finance and the community sector.

The Team's approach to implementation is based on:

- collaboration and engagement, both internal and external to the public sector;
- proactively addressing capacity issues across both the community and public sectors; and
- focusing on improved outcomes for all Western Australians.

This has involved establishing a joint community and public sector approach to implementation. Key priority areas identified include:

- establishing the Community Development Investment Fund and Social Innovation Grants program as announced by the Premier as part of the 2010-11 budget process;
- streamlining the administrative burden on both sectors through key reforms to the contracting and funding arrangements;
- building capacity in key areas such as policy, project and contract management; and
- reforms focused on improving outcomes for individuals, families and communities such as self directed service design and community hubs.

A number of steering groups and working groups have been established with cross-sector membership to progress these priority areas.

Contact: Rebecca Brown on 9222 9601

Partnership Forum

An important and exciting milestone was the first meeting of the Partnership Forum on 16 July 2010.

The Partnership Forum brings together senior representatives from State Government agencies and the community sector to address issues of mutual concern with a view to achieving better outcomes for the community.

The Partnership Forum reports directly to the Premier. It has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of key aspects of the Government's social reform agenda.

We are fortunate to have attracted the services of Professor Peter Shergold AC who will be the Chairperson for the first 12 months of the Partnership Forum's operation. Professor Shergold is actively involved in the community sector and is a recognised thought leader on building capacity and encouraging innovation in the sector.

A key initiative of the Partnership Forum is the development of a set of principles to govern and facilitate the Government-community sector partnership in delivering human services to the community.

The Partnership Forum has already discussed essential elements to a genuine partnership between the public and community sectors, including building trust, fostering collaboration, driving social innovation and ensuring sustainable and effective service delivery.

The communiqué from the Partnership Forum's 16 July 2010 meeting can be found at www.dpc.wa.gov.au

Contact: Rebecca Brown on 9222 9601

Procurement in Partnership

A genuine partnership between community and public sector organisations, freed from unnecessarily prescriptive processes and controls, is critical to delivering services that meet citizens' needs.

Too often funding and contractual arrangements between the community and public sectors hinder the effective design and delivery of services based on community need. In many areas the relationship between public sector agencies and funded service providers is being managed predominately through short term contracts rather than ongoing partnerships.

Through a Procurement in Partnership Working Group (PiPWG) the Departments of Treasury and Finance and Premier and Cabinet are working with State Government agencies and the community sector on key reforms to demonstrate how funding and contracting arrangements can be managed more effectively through genuine partnerships.

The PiPWG will produce a policy that will: define the relationship between the two sectors; provide guidance on available funding and contracting options and when they should be used; and mechanisms for reducing the administrative burden on both sectors in managing grants and service agreements.

The PiPWG has been examining a policy scenario to identify the key issues experienced in both sectors. It will be discussing good and bad practice in current service agreements and grants as a basis for developing new templates.

Proposals for education, training and ongoing support in implementing the new policy will also be part of the PiPWG agenda.

Contact: Simone Spencer on 9222 5574

Forums and coming events

The Implementation Team is keen to get the message out about the work that it is doing and to engage with people with an interest in the reforms.

A very successful workshop on the procurement reforms and funding of the community sector was held on 6 August. The workshop was well attended and a lot of great questions were put to the presenters.

Following on from the success of this workshop we are intending to hold monthly forums open to both the public and community sectors. Each forum will focus on a specific area of interest, but also provide an update on Economic Audit implementation. The next forum will focus on the Community Development Investment Fund and Social Innovation Grants and will be held in mid-September. More information will soon be available on our website – www.dpc.wa.gov.au. Contact: Emma Colombera on 9222 9948