

PARTNERSHIP FORUM
22 February 2011
COMMUNIQUÉ

On 22 February 2011 the Partnership Forum held its fourth meeting. The Forum considered key work to date on progressing sustainable funding and contracting arrangements for the not-for-profit sector, and progress with the establishment of the Social Innovation Grants Program. The Forum also welcomed a presentation by the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC), outlining Noongar community development.

SOUTH WEST ABORIGINAL LAND AND SEA COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Members of the SWALSC outlined the Noongar community's vision, priorities and proposed community development framework, aimed at building up the Noongar community through self direction. Forum members expressed appreciation for the strength and power of the presentation and acknowledged the desire for Noongars to achieve economic independence and the desire to move away from dependence on government. The presentation also highlighted the partnership potential between the Noongar people, government, industry and the community sector to develop, manage and deliver effective Noongar community development programs in the South West. The Forum provided its full support and appreciation for the work of SWALSC.

SOCIAL INNOVATION GRANTS PROGRAM – SELECTION PANEL

The membership of the Social Innovation Grants (SIGs) Program Selection Panel was considered by the Forum based on nominations from both the public and community sectors. The Forum considered recommendations for nomination in terms of broad categories including innovation, business, entrepreneurship, consumer, community sector not-for-profit organisations and commercial organisations.

The Forum noted that applications for the first round of Grants close on 31 March 2011 and it is anticipated that the SIGs Selection Panel will submit its first recommendations to the Premier in May 2011.

PROCUREMENT AND COMMUNITY SECTOR FUNDING

The Forum considered the draft *Collaboration for Community Policy*, developed jointly by the public and community sectors (now titled *Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy*). The draft Policy provides the overarching framework to guide key contracting reforms and describes the ongoing partnership between Government and the not-for-profit

sector. It outlines the range of funding and contracting arrangements and guidance on when each should be used.

While community sector members of the Forum were supportive of the Policy framework, key revisions of the Policy document were agreed as follows:

- All contracting arrangements are to be indexed in accordance with Government policy;
- The standardised service agreement documentation is to specify standard rise and fall provisions that facilitate price reviews during the life of a contract (including ensuring the capacity of Organisations to meet their legal obligations);
- Contract specifications to focus on outcomes sought and avoid prescribing inputs such as staffing levels and salaries; and
- Where there are surplus funds at the end of the contract term and services have been delivered to the quality and quantity specified in the contract, repayment of this surplus by an Organisation must not be sought by Public Authorities.

The Forum agreed that a working group of representatives from the public and not-for-profit sectors be convened to progress development of the governance framework for the implementation of the proposed funding and contracting reforms, reporting to the Forum at the end of April 2011.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT FUND

The Forum noted ongoing work with the establishment of the Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF), including developments both nationally and internationally to support social enterprise. The Forum discussed the way forward for the CDIF and agreed to continue the work, taking into account current social enterprise initiatives in WA and outcomes from developments nationally, supporting similar arrangements.

CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

The Forum agreed that consumer engagement is critical across the human service procurement reforms. Three key aspects of consumer engagement were acknowledged, those being:

- Consumer engagement is a multi-level process built on key principles;
- There should be respectful engagement with those who need and use community services and have views about how those services should look like and how they should be delivered. These service users should be involved in terms of service design and the allocation of resources; and
- Some service users may not be willing to exercise their rights or are unable to exercise those rights due to legalities.

It was noted that discussion has taken place with service users who, at the Partnership Forum debrief in October 2010, had voiced their concerns around the level of consumer engagement. These discussions would be incorporated into actions currently being taken by the Forum to progress consumer engagement across all aspects of the Forum's work.

PARTNERSHIP FORUM FORWARD PLANNING

The Forum noted the significant work undertaken to date in progressing key recommendations of the Economic Audit Committee, many of which are now moving to the stage of implementation and becoming embedded in the operations of public sector agencies. It was agreed that this provided the Forum the opportunity to consider its ongoing work agenda, including addressing key issues affecting Western Australian communities.

Accordingly, the Forum agreed to undertake a strategic planning session in early August (preceded by a broader community Forum) on key issues for consideration and ideas for the future agenda and direction of the Forum.

NEXT MEETING

The Partnership Forum's next meeting will be held late in May. Further information will be provided closer to the time.