Welcome!

Welcome to the October edition of the Funding and Contracting Services (FaCS) Bulletin!

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Supporting Communities Forum

On 13 September 2017 the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) announced that a Supporting Communities Forum will be established. The purpose of the Supporting Communities Forum, which will include members from government agencies and the community services sector, will be to support the implementation of the Supporting Communities Election Commitments, which are overseen by the Community Safety and Family Support Cabinet Sub-Committee. This will include making recommendations to break down barriers between government agencies and community organisations to improve service delivery, identifying opportunities to streamline community services procurement processes across government departments, supporting a collaborative funding trial and supporting the development of a framework to measure outcomes across the community services sector. The Supporting Communities Forum will build on the relationships created between government and the community services sector through the Partnership Forum, and will ensure that these relationships are extended to a broader range of stakeholders.

DPC launched an Expression of Interest (EoI) calling for people with leadership experience within the broad community services sector to nominate for the positions of Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and 13 community members for the Supporting Communities Forum membership. The EoI has now closed and a selection panel is currently reviewing the 66 applications received, in addition to others identified through a search process which included use of the OnBoardWA Register.

The members of the selection panel are:

- Chris Hall AM, CEO MercyCare;
- Professor Colleen Hayward AM, Head of Kurongkurl Katitjin Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Equity and Indigenous, Edith Cowan University; and
- Kim Lazenby, Director Social Policy Unit, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The panel will provide a recommended shortlist of candidates for these positions to the Minister for Community Services and the Premier in the near future. The final decision on appointments will rest with the Premier, subject to approval by State Cabinet. All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the selection process in due course.

The current intention is for the Forum to meet for the first time on 14 December 2017.

A further update will be provided in the near future, however in the interim queries can be directed to scf@dpc.wa.gov.au.
The Delivering Community Services in Partnership (DCSP) Policy, implemented in July 2011, seeks to improve outcomes for all Western Australians by building a genuine partnership between Public Authorities and the not-for-profit (NFP) community sector in the policy, planning and delivery of sustainable community services. In order to support the Western Australian Government’s Supporting Communities Election Commitments and to recognise advances made over the last six years, a need to review and update the DCSP Policy and supporting documentation has been established.

The Funding and Contracting Services (FaCS) unit is responsible for undertaking the stakeholder consultation process, engaging a range of stakeholders from both the government and NFP sectors. A short survey was recently circulated to both sectors as the first opportunity for the NFP and government sectors to have a say on how successful the DCSP Policy has been in achieving its aims; whether the DCSP Policy Partnership Principles and Behaviours have been followed in the procurement of community services to date; and what aspects of the DCSP Policy could be improved.

Feedback from the consultation process will be used to explore opportunities to improve the DCSP Policy. FaCS will provide updates on the outcomes of the consultation process on a dedicated webpage. Proposed amendments will be incorporated into a draft revised DCSP Policy and submitted to the Community Safety and Family Support Cabinet Sub Committee for endorsement.

Updates will be provided in future editions of the Bulletin and the Policy and Practice Newsletter.

**Longer Terms for Service Agreements**

In line with the WA Government’s Supporting Communities Election Commitments, when planning for a new community services procurement government agencies are being encouraged to consider whether a total service agreement term longer than five years is suitable for the service requirements and the not-for-profit (NFP) sector.

An initial service agreement term of three years with two 12 month extension options should no longer be considered the default for community service procurements. When determining the appropriate duration of the service agreement, government agencies are advised to consider the sustainability of the sector, the level of competition for the services available, the potential for change in the market, and any other relevant considerations.

In order to provide sustainability for NFP organisations, an initial term of five years (as a minimum) should be applied. Setting a shorter initial term with extension options (i.e. a three year initial term with a two year extension option) should only be considered by exception and should be supported by market research to ensure the term is appropriate for the sector.

Market research may also indicate that a service agreement term longer than five years is most appropriate. If a government agency decides to establish a service agreement that is longer than five years, it is possible to seek an exemption from the State Supply Commission’s Open and Effective Competition policy via the agency’s Accountable Authority. Agencies should not be discouraged from seeking an exemption to develop a service agreement with a longer term if there are demonstrable benefits for government and the NFP sector.

Please contact FaCS if you would like assistance with the exemption process.
FaCS Staff Exchange Program

FaCS has participated in two exciting staff exchanges so far this year, with not-for-profit (NFP) organisations Greenbushes Community Resource Centre (CRC) and Linkwest.

The FaCS Staff Exchange Program is an opportunity for two FaCS officers to spend a day (or a half day) at a NFP organisation, learning about how the organisation operates. FaCS then hosts a reciprocal visit: an interactive day where the organisation engages with the FaCS team and undertakes activities to improve their understanding of current procurement issues.

On 22 September 2017 FaCS hosted Angie Cornish from the Greenbushes CRC. Angie took the opportunity to arrange the visit while she was in Perth attending other training; FaCS will visit the Greenbushes CRC later in the new year. FaCS officers Lizzie Skelton and Elysia Washer had a wonderful day learning about the amazing work undertaken by Angie and her team and the outcomes the CRC’s services have achieved. Angie also impressed the whole FaCS team with her speech during the morning tea! The day also included several activities to help Angie better understand community services procurement from a government perspective, which hopefully will come in handy when Greenbushes CRC responds to future tenders. Angie said that Lizzie and Elysia “did a great job” and that “it was great to see the process from the Department of Finance perspective”.

On 5 September 2017 FaCS officers Emily Bulbeck and Carmen Lim visited peak body organisation Linkwest. Emily and Carmen had a very insightful day learning about the programs Linkwest provide to support community and neighbourhood centres. A presentation was provided by interns completing Masters in Social Work at the University of Western Australia, which demonstrated the impact that placed-based services like CRCs have on both communities and individuals. The Coordinator of Kalannie CRC, Bree Franz, also provided her valuable perspective on procurement and co-design.

FaCS hosted Lily Auld and Mihaela Nicholaecon 26 October 2017. The day included an overview of FaCS’ role and some training exercises, which everyone enjoyed—especially the tender evaluation activity to determine which chocolate biscuit represented the best ‘value for money’! Lily had the following feedback after the exchange: “A fabulous day of professional development! We feel well prepared to assist our member Centres in the challenges of procurement in the community services sector. The staff exchange has aided a shared understanding of strengths of Neighbourhood and Community Resource Centres, whilst understanding the challenges of community services sector procurement. Thank you to the FaCS staff for making us feel very welcome.”

FaCS’ Staff Exchange Program has been running since 2012, with a diverse range of NFPs taking up the opportunity to participate.

Education and Training Update

Below are the upcoming FaCS workshops for 2017. Places fill up quickly, so make sure you register now to secure your spot!

Introduction to Service Agreement Management ..................Thursday 2 November 2017
Costing and Pricing ............................................................Tuesday 21 November 2017

While all workshops are open to both Government and the NFP sector, please check the website for more specific information.

To book a place at one of our workshops, click on the workshop name or visit our Workshops and Events website.
From the Stable Door -
An Update from FaCS Director, Kate Ingham

Earlier this month FaCS circulated a survey to both the government and not-for-profit sectors seeking feedback on the Policy. A whopping 341 responses were received and the FaCS team is now working through the data in preparation for the next engagement process. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey – your feedback is invaluable.

The FaCS team welcomes Brendan Sykes to the team for his last rotation of the 2017 Department of Finance Graduate Program. Brendan is quickly coming to grips with the world of community services. Steve is pleased that he is no longer the only male in the FaCS team; well, at least for the next few months anyway. Welcome to the team Brendan!

On a personal note I recently competed in the Alcoa International Horse Trials held in the picturesque Fairbridge. I was lucky enough to take out the top spot in the ‘Country Saddlery’ category. I am even more proud of my horse Asti Aspiration, who won the ‘Best Performed Off the Track’ horse. It’s great to see that hard work and dedication pays off. I’m currently preparing my horse to travel to Adelaide for the Australian International Three Day event. Below is a photo of my pony and I in action at last year’s event: it’s starting to get very exciting!

Want More Information?
For more information please visit the Department of Finance website.

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