Welcome to the December edition of the FaCS Bulletin, the final issue for 2018. It has been a huge year for FaCS and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the government agencies and community services organisations who contributed to the revision of the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and an enjoyable, well-deserved break.

The FaCS office will be closed over the Christmas period from close of business Friday, 21 December, reopening Wednesday, 2 January. We look forward to working with you again in the New Year.

We’re Updating Our Training for 2019 – Stay Tuned!

In November and December, FaCS delivered the pilot workshops for our new suite of training sessions: Procuring Community Services and the DCSP Policy, Planning in Partnership, Developing and Measuring Outcomes, and Managing Service Agreements. The pilot workshops received a very positive response, and our presenters (Steve Hill, Chana Henry, Jennifer Dass, Jacqueline Eley and Sophie Parnell) were pleased to receive so many insightful and interesting questions from participants.

Thanks to all attendees from community services organisations and government agencies who provided meaningful and useful feedback on how these workshops can be further improved. We are now updating our range of workshops in line with your feedback, so when we deliver them in 2019 they will be even more interactive and engaging. Workshop dates will be advertised in the FaCS Bulletin and are published on the Finance website.
Mental Health Commission releases Engagement Framework and Toolkit

The Minister for Mental Health has released the Working Together: Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Engagement Framework 2018 – 2025 and Toolkit.

This Engagement Framework and Toolkit is specific to engaging with and achieving outcomes for people affected by mental health issues and alcohol and other drug use, and was created through a co-design process. The Engagement Framework and Toolkit has been co-designed with a variety of stakeholders including a Steering Committee comprising consumers, support persons, peak bodies and service providers. Comprehensive feedback during the consultation period from government agencies, non-government and community organisations, consumers, families, carers and the general community was invaluable to informing the development of the Engagement Framework and Toolkit.

The Engagement Framework and Toolkit will be useful for government agencies, community services organisations, consumers, families, carers and the broader community.

Find out more about the Framework and Toolkit or read the full Minister’s media statement.

New Service Agreement Management Plan Template and Guide

FaCS is pleased to announce the release of the new Service Agreement Management Guide and Service Agreement Management Plan Template. These resources will assist government agencies to effectively plan and manage service agreements by building strong relationships with service providers.

The Service Agreement Management Plan Template and Guide will be live on the Finance website in early 2019. Please contact FaCS if you would like to provide feedback on the new template or guide.

Service Agreement Variations

Service agreement variations are a useful tool to manage any changing aspects of service delivery and challenges that may become apparent through service agreement management, ensuring the service adapts to service user needs and is achieving the desired outcomes. A service agreement variation can be used for multiple purposes, such as extending the term of a service agreement, amending KPI’s or changing the volume of services.

Service providers and government agencies can enter into negotiations at any time during the life of the service agreement to discuss key aspects of the service agreement including service levels and sustainability factors.

Please contact FaCS if you would like to discuss service agreement variations.
Equal Remuneration Order in Community Services Procurement Processes

In July 2012, the Fair Work Commission Australia issued an Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) impacting the remuneration paid to social and community services workers under the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHCDS) Award 2010 and the Social and Community Services (SACS) – Western Australia Award 2002 (the Awards). The ERO aims to achieve equal remuneration for men and women workers undertaking work of equal or comparable value by increasing wages for roles historically undertaken by women, and requires wage increases of between 23 and 45 per cent over an eight-year period from December 2012 to December 2020.

The ERO covers:

- Employers throughout Australia in the Social, Community and Disability Services Industry and their employees in the classifications listed in Schedules B and C of the SCHCDS Award; and

- Any employer that supplies labour on an on-hire basis in the Social, Community and Disability Services Industry in respect of on-hire employees in classifications covered by the Awards, and those on-hire employees while engaged in the performance of work for a business in that industry.

- Service providers are reminded to factor in all costs of complying with all matters necessary for the performance of the service agreement when submitting an offer. This includes complying with all relevant State and Commonwealth laws and awards legal obligations to employees, as highlighted by clauses 13.3 and 15.1 (d) of the General Provisions for the Purchase of Community Services by Public Authorities in the Price Schedule section in the Community Services Request templates.

To ensure all relevant costs are factored into service delivery costing and offer pricing, it is advisable for government agencies to consider the ERO when conducting due diligence on offers received in response to community services requests. Service agreement managers may need to engage in discussions with service providers due to the impact of the ERO. FaCS will continue to run Costing and Pricing Workshops in 2019 to assist service providers to consider the ERO when costing their services.
From the Stable Door
Update from FaCS Director, Kate Ingham

It’s that time of the year again when we reflect on our achievements for 2018 and look forward to a well-earned break and quality time with those that matter most in our lives before we tackle the year ahead.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to such a successful year for FaCS. This year we have launched two whole-of-government policies that supported the government delivering its election commitments. The Aboriginal Procurement Policy (APP) and the revised DCSP Policy are the result of a huge amount of work undertaken by our team and valuable input from government agencies, the Aboriginal business sector, and the community services sector. The team were responsible for hosting the Aboriginal Business Expo in March and the Western Australian Disability Enterprises (WADE) Expo in October. Both expos were a great success, providing government agencies with an opportunity to learn more about their buying options under the APP and the Australian Disability Enterprise Initiative. Thank you to all who contributed to this important work.

Looking forward to 2019, FaCS will continue implementation of the DCSP Policy with a range of training workshops in Perth and regional WA. The Supporting Communities Forum is progressing its work, and FaCS is leading some exciting projects as part of the Procurement Reform Working Group (the Working Group). FaCS will be undertaking research and consulting with peak bodies, government agencies and the Community Services Procurement Review Committee to identify good procurement practice, which will form the basis of procurement practice and capability building initiatives for government agencies as part of the Working Group’s Practice Review Project Plan. FaCS will also be assisting the Working Group with a co-design project to support government agencies to implement the co-design requirements of the DCSP Policy.

FaCS’ Policy and Research Officer Jennifer Dass has taken a secondment opportunity in the Social Policy Unit at the Department of the Premier and Cabinet until May 2019. We will miss Jen but we know she will be an asset to DPC and the work of the Supporting Communities Forum.

December also sees the end to the competition season for me and my fur kids, and this year it ended in style at Equestrian in the Park on the foreshore at McCallum Park. I was involved in running the event and was fortunate enough to compete (photo below) and come home with a ribbon and some exciting prizes. It’s nice to be able to give back to the sport I love.

Remember that this time of year can also be confronting and challenging for many members of our community including colleagues, friends and family. So take the time to do more of what makes you happy, and if you get the chance to give back to the community during the Christmas season please do. One small act can make a huge difference.

Wishing everyone a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.