

Working Together for NSW: Human Service CEOs & FONGA Annual Implementation Meeting

Communiqué – August 2007

Directors-General from the Departments of Health, Housing, Education and Training, Community Services and Ageing, Disability and Home Care met with FONGA representatives for the second annual meeting to implement the *Working Together for NSW* agreement. The meeting, held on 6 August 2007 focused on:

- Assessing progress against joint projects commenced in 2006-07;
- Agreeing on joint projects to be implemented in 2007-08, and
- Discussing the long term approach to implementing 'Working Together' principles.

Progress on 2006-07 Projects

Significant progress has been made on projects under the **Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Development and Support** initiative, particularly:

- √ A **standard chart of accounts** has been developed for use by NSW NGOs – the tool was adapted from work done by the Queensland University of Technology and Queensland Treasury. Training on the tool has been provided to NGOs across health, community services, HACC and disability sectors. For more information go to:
http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/building_stronger/enterprise/CofEproject.html
- √ A standard framework for **peak body Funding and Performance Agreements** was developed in conjunction with the sector. The purpose of the framework is to achieve consistency in how Government agencies in NSW set out the responsibilities and performance indicators for peaks across all sectors. The framework will now be progressively implemented by agencies – starting with DADHC peaks in 2007-08. NSW Health is also leading a project to look at **improved reporting capacity for peaks** with particular reference to information systems required for data reporting by peaks. If agencies are interested in the standard framework they should obtain a copy through their peak agency.
- √ The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) has engaged the services of Aged and Community Care Services to adapt the successful **'Its Your Business'** resource for trial by a group of Home and Community Care (HACC) services. The resource is used by the sport and recreation sector to assist their NGOs with governance, financial management and planning activities.
- √ The Department of Housing completed a review of **models of shared services in community housing** - backroom / back of office functions. The review was undertaken to determine the extent to which collaborative approaches across organisations might lead to operating and cost efficiencies, improved viability and client service delivery. This review will form the basis for further work in this area in 2007-08. The report will be available on the Department of Housing website shortly.
- √ A project to explore opportunities and identify strategies for 6 **Aboriginal out-of-home care services** funded by the Department of Community Services started in 2006. The objective of the project is to expand the capacity and capability of these services. The project has been very well received by participants, and expanded to include a further agency. The future of the initiative will be assessed when it completes in 2008.

The other major joint project completed in 2006-07 was the **Regional Human Service Planning Project**. The project was aimed at identifying key success factors of NGO participation in regional human services planning processes, as well as developing a practical document that could be used as a planning resource for Government and NGOs. Three case studies were used as examples of good practice in Home and

Community Care services (New England), Families NSW (Nepean) and the Illawarra Area Management Group.

The resulting 'Good Practice Guide' is now being actively promoted across Human Service agencies and by NCOSS. For more information go to:

<http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/site/govinfo/154.html>

Joint work in 2007-08

FONGA representatives and Directors-General agreed to focus joint work in 2007-08 on the following activities:

- √ Undertaking Stage 2 of the **Shared Services** in Community Housing project and complementing that with work to:
 - Analyse and evaluate existing models of shared service delivery for possible promotion and application in other NGO sectors;
 - Develop a good practice guide including support tools to assist NGOs in implementing shared service arrangements.

At the request of FONGA representatives the project will also explore opportunities for efficiencies arising from service amalgamations and mergers, following a recent positive experience of a voluntary amalgamation between two drug and alcohol NGOs that included close involvement and assistance from the peak.

The project will be jointly undertaken by NCOSS (on behalf of the NGO sector) and the Communities Division of the Department of Community Services.

- √ DADHC has started a project to examine Commonwealth / State overlaps with a view to identifying potential areas for **streamlining accreditation and reporting requirements**. This project is linked to the design of a Quality Assurance Systems for DADHC funded and operated services. The results of this project will be scrutinized by other human service agencies and the possibility of applying similar approaches explored. The main features of the project are to:
 - Examine and understand the issues and impact on NGOs of different Commonwealth and State accreditation systems and the subsequent reporting burden for NGOs with multiple funding sources;
 - Identify leading practices in quality systems;
 - Develop a single set of requirements for quality processes that encompass the full range of DADHC programs and delivery arrangements, and their links to other government and industry quality requirements

The work will build on previous work by the Mental Health Co-ordinating Council to develop a generic quality framework.

There was discussion about a proposal by NCOSS to develop an **NGO Workforce Development Strategy**. It was agreed that there would be ongoing dialogue on this issue, and NCOSS were encouraged to continue scoping this piece of work using as a first step workforce modeling data on the mental health, drug and alcohol NGO workforce (with the assistance of workforce experts in NSW Health).

The Directors-General emphasized the extent of joint work already underway with the NGO sector on workforce development – such as statewide NGO workforce capacity building by NSW Health; disability workforce planning by DADHC; national community service workforce profiling; and national mental health workforce capacity planning. As a result there is no commitment to another joint project at this time.

Working Together Principles

The group has consistently acknowledged that implementing *Working Together* is much more than the joint work on specific projects such as those described in this communiqué. Both FONGA and NSW human service agencies recognize that there is substantial effort across both the government and NGO sectors in NSW to work together to improve client outcomes. Future meetings will give emphasis to existing consultative mechanisms and working out how this forum can be used to best effect to streamline those arrangements. Human service agencies will create a profile of current consultative mechanism and FONGA has agreed to provide information about how it is mobilizing its members and linking with other peaks to actively and practically apply *Working Together*.

The Committee will use this information to report to Government in 2008 about *Working Together* Agreement implementation.

Next meeting

Directors-General and FONGA representatives will next meet in mid-2008.

August 2007 – meeting participants

Participants at the August 2007 meeting were:

FONGA Representatives

<i>Linda Frow</i>	A/Director, Council of Social Service NSW, A/Chair of FONGA
<i>Leah Godfrey</i>	Executive Officer, Western Sydney Community Forum
<i>Larry Pierce</i>	Executive Director, Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies
<i>Brian Smith</i>	Executive Officer, Local Community Services Association
<i>Annabel Senior</i>	Operations Manager, Community Services, Mission Australia - Lambton
<i>Ginger O'Brien</i>	Illawarra Forum

Directors-General & Senior Officers (Human Service Agencies)

<i>Brendan O'Reilly</i>	Director-General, DADHC, Chair of Human Service and Justice CEOs
<i>Neil Shepherd</i>	Director-General, Department of Community Services
<i>Michael Coutts-Trotter</i>	Director-General, Department of Education and Training
<i>Mike Allen</i>	Director-General, Department of Housing
<i>Deb Picone</i>	Director-General, NSW Health
<i>Linda Mallett</i>	A/Deputy Director-General, Department of Community Services
<i>Sonja Stewart</i>	Executive Director, Communities Division, DoCS
<i>Carol Mills</i>	Deputy Director-General, DADHC
<i>Samantha Taylor</i>	(Secretariat) Executive Director, Human Services CEOs Forum