

WORKING TOGETHER FOR NSW – IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

COMMUNIQUE - 23 SEPTEMBER 2009

The 4th annual meeting of the Committee overseeing implementation of the Working Together for NSW Agreement met on 23 September 2009. The Committee comprises representatives from the Forum of Non-Government Organisations (FONGA) and Directors-General, Chief Executives and their representatives from the NSW Government Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Health, Human Services, Education and Training, and Treasury.

Members reaffirmed their commitment to improve partnership and collaboration between the non-government sector and funding agencies in NSW, finding opportunities to improve the capacity of the non-government sector to deliver on major reforms, particularly in child protection and wellbeing, and disability. Strategies to reduce the red-tape burden associated with funding arrangements, and support efficiencies in NGO operations were also agreed as a priority.

The Committee was briefed on sector development in key service delivery areas underway in NSW and nationally, particularly:

- Disability and community care industry development, including exploring mutual recognition as a way of streamlining monitoring processes
- NGO workforce and capacity building under the *Keep them Safe Plan*.
- Health NGO Grants Program review.
- Department of Premier and cabinet review of opportunities to reduce red tape in the short term.
- Review of the NSW State Plan, and
- COAG better regulation reforms on fundraising legislation and standard financial reporting.

They agreed that there were significant opportunities afforded by the creation of the new Department of Human Services for having a more integrated and streamlined approach to funding reform and community development.

They discussed the approaches being explored to review the Community Services Grants program drawing on the work of the CSGP Roundtable and the emerging national social inclusion agenda. Community Services will be working to develop this program over the next 5 years with stakeholder consultation at appropriate points in that process.

The Committee agree to have further discussions about:

- the types of red tape reforms being considered to ensure that the right balance is achieved to improve the efficiency of funded NGOs, and NSW Government funding systems;
- the FONGA Sector Industry Plan – particularly to link that proposal with the substantial investment now in place to develop and support the sector, exploring aspects of that strategy that could be pursued at the national level, and a shared understanding of where the gaps are and the proposed methodology to meet those gaps, and
- the feasibility of undertaking a project to develop community indicators for NSW.

Treasury briefed members on the budget process for determining indexation on funding programs and the approach being taken with funding agencies to deliver productivity improvements to manage any gap between the indexation that is provided and wage increases.

The Committee will meet again in mid-2010.