

Forum Flash

3 April 2009

Service network projects ended with no rhyme or reason

Western Sydney Community Forum and TRI Community Exchange (TRI) have been informed by Communities Division of DOCS, that our contracts for the Service Network Projects for Western Sydney will not be renewed.

Our funding agreements for these projects state that this funding is renewable. However, DOCS have told us they want to 'test the market' to see what other ideas might be out there. New Service Specifications will be developed and the projects put out to a selective tender process for which both WSCF and TRI will be invited to tender.

We have a number of concerns:

- We have not been approached in the past year to indicate that what we were delivering was not what DoCS wanted nor given any chance of modifying the project direction - DOCS said that the performance of the project was not under question.
- There has been no discussion or indication of this decision at the consultative mechanisms established by DoCS to advise the FNSW projects in the area - the Families NSW Implementation Group (FIG) and the SNP Reference Groups
- There has been no evaluation of the project to ascertain its impact / value to the sector
- This process and decision goes against the DOCS Funding Policy released in 2006, point 6.4, Performance Managed Renewable Funding
- These processes are in contradiction to the "Working Together for NSW - An agreement between the NSW Government and NSW non Government Human Services Organisations". Inclusive in this document are the following statements:
 - ensure that the views of non-government organisations are sought and fully considered in social policy priorities and changes to human service programs
 - establish appropriate opportunities for non-government organisations to fully participate in human services planning and evaluation processes
 - implement and upgrade its funding policies and practices in a manner which builds constructive relationships with the non-government human services sector

In addition to this, WSCF and TRI are also concerned about the tendering process and impact of this decision from an organisational and service delivery perspective. It is our experience that the tender process will result in the loss of knowledge and experience which will create a significant period of disruption to the continued support for family and children services, ultimately affecting the community.

The possibility of highly skilled staff being made redundant through this needs to be avoided, especially in this current economic climate.

As you are aware, the viability of small organisations, such as WSCF and TRI, is becoming more difficult to maintain. Funding removed from a project that we had been led to believe was renewable for the next two years has a negative impact on our ability to plan for our financial sustainability.

Additionally, we are concerned about the impact of this decision on the credible reputation that we have built up over many, many years. Both organizations are extremely proud of the achievements the projects have made including:

- Development of communication strategies via a website, weekly newswire and information distribution through interagencies
- Support provided to services in practitioner forums, group work calendars, learning and development opportunities
- Collaborative practices to support increase access to services by CALD and ATSI families
- Working across sectors with the aim of enhancing access to services by all families with young children
- Development of various partnerships to build the capacity of service systems to meet the needs of families with young children

Needless to say this decision has come as a complete shock to both organisations and we hope you will support us in the evaluation process of both projects.

Regards

Paula Chegwiddden and Lisa Foster

Chairpersons for WSCF and TRI Community Exchange (respectively)

Be part of CSGP Campaign!

We'd like report back to the sector that we are getting good feedback about the CSGP campaign on Treasury. Karyn Paluzzano (Penrith MP) a great supporter of the Campaign as she mentioned to the community sector reps in her area that she'll be more than happy to do whatever she can do for the CSGP Campaign at the Parliament. Also other good news came from Blue Mountains that Phillip Koperberg, Secretary Assisting the Minister for Emergency Services will support CSGP Campaign in his speech at the Parliament. (We've got this news when we were preparing the e-flash, we'll know the actual speech by next week).

Whenever you meet with your local MPs deliver the message again and again until they clearly tell us how they can support the CSGP campaign. The CSGP is the only program with a strong capacity to work across family and community needs and the program has received no increase in funding since 1995. To find out more, go to the LCSA website, www.lcsa.org.au

e-Flash Survey

Western Sydney Community Forum sends around an electronic newsletter every fortnight to keep Western Sydney organisations up to date on what's happening at WSCF. We send it around and get feedback rarely through formal and informal connections. We've decided to do a very short survey to evaluate and make essential changes if needed. We kept the survey very short knowing everybody is busy with their work. Please [click here](#) to go to the survey and if you feel that you have lots to discuss with us and the survey doesn't provide that space for you please contact Semra Guler on 9687 6974 or send an e-mail to semrag@wscf.org.au

'The Apology One Year On' Forum feedback

As most of you will remember Western Sydney Community Forum held an 'The Apology One Year On' Forum in February to discuss the impact of the formal Apology on individuals, workers and organisations. We had amazing interest from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and very good attendance on the day. The day was very moving for the organizing group as much as attendees. Instead of asking people to fill out evaluation form for the event (it didn't seem very appropriate as the spirit in the room was on a very different level) we asked participants to tell us anything about the day. We'd like to share the feedback of participants of After Apology Forum. [Click here to download the document.](#)

For further information on the day contact Semra Guler on 9687 6974 or send an e-mail to semrag@wscf.org.au

Invitation to Child and Family Worker Forum "Celebrate, Collaborate and Connect": Monday 20 April

The purpose of WSCF Service Practice Forums is:

- i) To look at successes and impact of FNSW projects in the region
- ii) Offer opportunity to meet and network with colleagues
- iii) Discuss ways of working together

[Click here for your personal invitation.](#)

Invitation to Collaboration/Partnership Forum: Wednesday 22 April

This forum will explore successful collaborative practices including service delivery, sharing of resources, funding, consolidation/ governance, amalgamation and sustainable practices.

[Click here](#)

Some Tips on how to access Salary Packaging through PBI

WSCF was successful in its application for PBI (Public Benevolent Institute) Status which has enabled the organisation to offer salary packaging to its employees.

[Click here for full Information sheet.](#)

Joke Spot

S/He had a photographic memory that was never developed