

News from Western Sydney Community Forum

Forum Flash

Date: 8th January 2010

WSCF's newest staff member Amy Williams!

Amy Williams is new transport development worker with Hugh Worrell. We are very pleased to have her enthusiasm, skills and youthful energy at WSCF! She most recently worked as a Policy Officer at NCOSS, has volunteered in India and is a Westie from her early years. Amy will be working full time and is contactable on 9687 8937 and by email on amyw@wscf.org.au.

CommunityNet – TRI WSCF Partnership

WSCF is developing a strategic partnership with TRI to streamline our information to you. We are prompting CommunityNet as your first port of call for all community sector information, with WSCF specific information sent through this Eflash and on our website. We will also be encouraging you to put information about your events, training, job vacancies and campaigns in CommunityNet <http://www.cnet.ngo.net.au/>

CSGP changes

Community services have proposed an historical change in the CSGP funding, splitting the current CSGP into two streams:

- services whose results have to do with 'community strengthening'
- services provided directly to children, young people and families

WSCF has been involved in the discussions and has broad support for the new framework, with some reservations with regard to availability of growth funding to support the 'community strengthening' stream. [click here to download the Community Services Communiqué and the LCSA Letter to the sector](#), which we see as a good overview of the strengths and risks of the proposal.

Interview with Alison Peters on Sector issues

Alison Peters who is the Director of the Council of Social Service of NSW has been interviewed on the Sector Workforce Issues by Miguel Ferrero (MF), training and development officer from Western Sydney Community Forum and this is a transcript of the conversation.

- 1) What is your position within the community sector?
I am the Director of the Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS).
- 2) What are the key workforce issues faced by the community sector?
 - Poor rates of pay and conditions, compared to other industries with similar skill levels and responsibilities
 - High turnover rates - "churn" of workers from employer to employer.
Employers in the sector say it is hard to retain good staff.

- An increasingly complex work and regulatory environment requires an ever increasing level of skills, experience and knowledge across all levels of the sector. This isn't just about increasing and recognising formal qualifications but also about building understanding and networks beyond particular specialisations.
- All of these factors make it harder and harder to attract people to the sector (or to studies that would lead to them working in the sector)

3) What strategies the sector could develop to address these issues?

The sector needs to

- Develop a industry plan for the sector that meets our own unique challenges to attract and retain a highly skilled and sustainable workforce. This plan needs to work for the whole sector and not just individual organisations if it is to be sustainable and therefore needs to be developed collaboratively by the sector for the sector. (for more details about what an industry plan for the sector would involve see <http://www.ncoss.org.au/resources/080708-Industry-Plan.pdf>)
- Advocate for funding that allows for effective service delivery by skilled workers and that recognises the need to invest in developing such a workforce on a sustainable basis. In other words funding that recognises the true costs of delivering services.
- Support the ASU's pay equity case! *

4) What is your advice to the community-welfare sector that could be helpful to deal with these issues?

Diversity and collaboration are particular strengths of the community sector. In a fast moving and ever more complex environment it is often hard for individual organisations, or indeed individuals, to see beyond their own organisational imperatives. What this does, though, is reduce our capacity as a sector to thrive and provide quality services that improve the outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged people. My advice to the sector is that if we are to be the best we can possibly be as individual organisations (and individual workers) we need to start with a strong foundation and that means a strong sector. We need to use our diversity and our capacity for effective collaboration to build a strong sector as the foundation from which we can all flourish. This means getting involved in the discussion and debate about workforce issues for the sector and not leaving it to others. We also need to support the ASU's pay equity case!*

*Disclosure – I am a former official and a life member of the ASU.

Corporate Sponsorship UWS WSCF Research project

WSCF has partnered with UWS on a PhD research project: *Corporate Philanthropy & Social Responsibility and Community Welfare Organisations: Finding a common*

language. – A Search Conference that brings the finding to the corporate and community sectors is scheduled for February 15th 2010.

The first stages of the research have been completed. This has involved over 100 telephone surveys and over 50 face to face interviews exploring the aims, objectives, values, decision making processes and management practices of both community based organisations and corporate funding institutions, in relation to corporate philanthropic activities. Research to date has examined the different languages, discourses, accountability practices and activities of each sector and has identified opportunities, complexities and potential issues within these partnerships.

We would like to invite you to participate in the second stage - the **SEARCH Conference to be held at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts - Monday 15th of February, 9am - 5pm, 2010 9.00am to 5.00pm.** [Click here to download the Conference flyer.](#)

Critical issues, commonalities and exploratory data identified in research will be the focus of group discussion forums and guest speakers. Guest speakers include- Asha Ramsden from Inner South West Community Development, Sparke Helmore Lawyers, Daystar Foundation and The Body Shop.

Feedback from participants during the conference will be documented and analysed as research data forming the foundation of the third and final phase where 6 community organisations and 3 corporations will be selected to participate in a total of 9 detailed case studies (over a period of six months). It is through this third and final stage that a tool set will be developed to assist in the process of establishing relationships, contracting, monitoring and evaluation in various situations.

To register online go to http://www.uws.edu.au/socialjustice_socialchange/sjsc/events_and_news

Joke Spot

Why is it that to stop Windows, you have to click on "Start"?

For a full copy of the WSCF HACC Flash

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