

Organisation name

HAWKESBURY AREA WOMENS & KIDS SERVICES (The Women's Cottage)

Email

[REDACTED]

In which state or territory do you service or operate? (Select all that apply)**1.1 What would a partnership between CSOs and the government that achieves outcomes for Australians being supported by the community sector look like?**

Regular conversations / meetings.
Genuine listening.
Assessing for gaps and emerging needs.
Specific ongoing concern and potential response on the impacts of the referendum on first nations people / communities.
Special focus on time limited community and service provider needs (eg: National Redress).
Genuine follow through.
Forward clarity and transparency of funding and funding increases so services can plan ahead and secure ongoing work force.

1.2 How can CSOs and government streamline the sharing of information, particularly through utilising technology to effectively engage, distribute, share, influence and inform in a timely and efficient manner?

Updates to DEX to fix short comings.
Portals for info sharing / review.
Online reporting (and consistency on format and expectations... It current changes a lot from year to year...

1.3 How can government ensure the community sector, including service users, and those not able to access services, have an opportunity to contribute to program design without imposing significant burdens?

Short online surveys more often.
All processes by mindful of and in line with trauma informed practice.
Demonstrate taking feedback on board and applying it... not s=just survey for survey sake.

2.1 What would adequate and flexible funding look like?

responsive to changing social issues and emerging needs.
longer contracts that can be reviewed and increased during the contract period.
assessment of state government social policy gaps and shortfalls and review of where advocacy and/or joint funding partnerships may be needed... specifically around supporting the Federal 10-year DV plan to reduce violence against women and children.

2.2 What administrative and overhead costs are not being considered in current grant funding?

Back-office functions such as book keeping and overall service management

2.3 How are rising operational costs impacting the delivery of community services?

In 2 ways, the costs for running the service are increasing considerably and the stress on clients / community increase the needs and distress of clients / community served.

2.4 What have been your experiences with and reflections on the supplementation and change to indexation?

reduced clarity and consistency on what % of increase will be received and when.... and sometimes not applied to whole funding year.

2.5 How can CSOs and the department work together to determine where funds are needed most to ensure equitable and responsive distribution of funds?

Build in assessment and review of gaps and emerging community needs into all levels of partnership conversations and decision making.

Pilot funds on projects aimed at meeting emerging needs / gaps that can be replicated in other areas.

2.6 How can government streamline reporting requirements, including across multiple grants, to reduce administrative burden on CSOs?

integrated online reporting that is not always changing in format that can cover off on multiple grants if required.

3.1 What length grants are CSOs seeking to provide certainty and stability for ongoing service delivery?

minimum of 5 years, with the capacity to review and increase funding based on community needs during the life of the contract.

3.2 What timeframes should the government aim for, at a minimum, to provide final outcomes on grant variations/extensions before the current grant ceases?

asap please. For example, our contract (National Redress) ends in 2024 and the program ends in 2028... to retain staff and give clients consistency and reassurance we need at least 6 months' notice on government's intentions of ongoings funding and funding levels.

3.3 What funding flexibility do CSOs require to enable service delivery and innovation?

Ability to put up a case for increased funding to meet emergency needs and gaps within existing funding cycles.

3.4 What flexibility is required by CSOs in acquittal processes to support and encourage sector innovation?

as per previous questions:

Ability to put up a case for increased funding to meet emergency needs and gaps within existing funding cycles.

Pilot funding for demonstration projects

3.5 How can government improve the variation process, with consideration that CSOs must demonstrate alignment with the grant agreement and provide evidence of value for money outcomes?

clear pre-identified agreements on measures that will indicate success, but also some flexibility on legitimate reasons / changes that may impact this planning.

having capacity to work with existing organisations on the measures that are best suited rather than a one size fits all approach.

4.1 How can the government ensure opportunities are available for new and emerging organisations to access funding?

Listen to existing services on gaps and emerging needs.

Explore options for engaging new / emerging organisations that is not predicated on reducing funding to existing organisations that can demonstrate their effectiveness.

DO NOT base funding of new organisations on money saving.

4.2 What programs, supports and information are already available for smaller CSOs to help build capacity of the organisation? Are these working?

Communities of practice work well to pool ideas and expertise, increase effectiveness and get best outcomes for client groups.

More consistent contact points for partnerships with funding body.... eg: we have had I think maybe 5 - 8 different contacts in the past few years.

4.3 How could larger CSOs support smaller CSOs? What are the barriers to providing this support?

there is a risk that larger orgs can swallow up smaller locally placed organisations and/or be favoured for funding contracts but not delivery services at a local level.

again, genuine participation and equal valuing through communities of practice is a good thing.

5.1 What is your experience with and reflections on place-based funding approaches?

place based approaches are the most effective, responsive and respectful in meeting local needs and identifying gaps and emerging needs.

there is a risk in funding large organisations to provide statewide services in that only shop front services with no local workers on the ground.

5.2 What innovative approaches could be implemented to ensure the grant funding reaches trusted community organisations with strong local links?

understand who the trusted local services are and enter into robust and respectful conversations with the services that are doing the work.

5.3 Which areas do you consider have duplicative funding or gaps you think need to be addressed, and what is the evidence?

not sure on this.... what I do know is that ongoing case work support and responding to women still living in domestic violence is a major gap in funding policy at both a state and federal level.

5.4 Where there is a community-led change initiative, could shared accountability to community and funders (government) strengthen service delivery?

yes.... finding out who is responding to gaps in service provision and increase funding to demonstrate what can be done in other areas.

6.1 If any, what are the problems or challenges you think have been overlooked?

ongoing case work support and responding to women still living in domestic violence is a major gap in funding policy at both a state and federal level.

6.2 What other solutions or changes could also be considered?

finding out who is responding to gaps in service provision and increase funding to demonstrate what can be done in other areas.

6.3 What does success look like?

responsive and flexible funding policy and service provision that can pivot quickly to meet gaps and emerging needs.