

Name or Pseudonym
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1.1 What would a partnership between CSOs and the government that achieves outcomes for Australians being supported by the community sector look like?
One where CSOs are invited to contribute like you are doing with this survey. In my eight years as a CSO in the Upper Hunter, I have rarely been asked to provide feedback. I think an annual or every two years conference would be wonderful with an online option to attend featuring best practice and speakers from other states or overseas doing great things. If Councils were given some training funding to send their CSOs even better, as the budgets are SLIM. We are always looking for money to run everything...
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?
Facebook - create a CSO NSW network where posts and reminders can keep CSOs informed, with links to relevant research papers, grants, opportunities for collaboration
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?
This is a really big survey... I think short surveys or feedback request that will take 5-10 minutes are more likely to get responses.
2.1 What would adequate and flexible funding look like?
There needs to be a opportunities for quick response grants - ie for smaller projects eg under \$5k that you can submit a grant application online that doesnt require masses of detail just the basics - project name, target, proposed outcome, cost.
2.2 What administrative and overhead costs are not being considered in current grant funding?
Time to source quotes, prepare grants, follow up with aquittals
2.3 How are rising operational costs impacting the delivery of community services?
Councils have no budget provision for projects so pretty much all projects need to be funded externally. This takes time, and you get sick of having to look for pots of gold all the time to run what are essentially core community projects eg NAIDOC week, Australia Day, Reconciliation Week, Mental Health, Volunteer Support, Seniors....
2.4 What have been your experiences with and reflections on the supplementation and change to indexation?
Not sure
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?
CSOs are at the coal face. They have the networks, they know how to get projects up off the ground and they know how to get people to participate. We in rural areas often don't have the same needs as our city counterparts. Access to services, facilitators, speakers is a big challenge. If there could be some 'sharing' opportunities with our city cousins that would be great. eg. if a metro council was funded to host an NDIS expo or LGBTQI forum... how good would it be if that same expo/information could be taken 'on the road' by building into it an incentive to share the concept with regional areas.
2.6 How can government streamline reporting requirements, including across multiple grants, to reduce administrative burden on CSOs?
Please do not make us have to acquit grants by providing evidence of where the funds were paid from! Provision of an invoice is sufficient, we shouldn't have to supply evidence of payment through general ledgers or otherwise.

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

Short short short. I love smartygrants because some of my info is stored for future applications. I do not want to be writing 1000 words to justify why we need the funds for X project. I want to write one or two paragraphs. I want to get one or two quotes.

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?

8 weeks

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

A quick response grant fund with a bucket of money that can be accessed /applied for throughout the year as opportunities arise.

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

We should provide the invoices and a paragraph or two on the project outcome with opportunities to upload photo or video as evidence it took place. These photos or videos could then be used by the Dept to showcase successful projects (eg on Facebook CSO network) and inspire the next round of applicants. Sometimes it's not wanting to 'copy' another project but seeing an element of a project then adapting it to suit your community needs.

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?

Projects do twist and turn. Given that it may have been 6 months ago you applied for the funding, to when you get the project off the ground, people change roles, priorities change eg your community might be focusing on drought recovery then in 6 months it's all about bushfires/resilience. If there can be flexibility in that a positive outcome was achieved in that community by doing XYZ, as the main priority rather than following original grant to the letter.

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

Better network opportunities for CSOs eg via social media, email newsletters

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

We all establish networks and community links in the course of our day to day work. It would be good to have a 'go to' coordinator of CSO advocate that you could email to say - hey I need help with pulling this or that together.

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

Distance. Our council is not keen on letting us travel long distances to attend interagencies especially if there is more than one person wishing to attend. This is a barrier as the opportunity (eg two or three times a year) to meet other CSOs in the region would be hugely beneficial to share contacts, knowledge and skills. We would need DCJ to instruct our council to let the CSOs attend eg 2 networking opportunities a year as part of their funding, then it might happen.

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

It's great when you are the recipient place! It does help when you have been advised that your area is a focus area with one department or the other, as with that there is an expectation that services or funding or both will follow. We take what we can get.

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

CSOs are well placed to know whos 'who' in the community and what organisations have a good track record with delivering projects. I'd say they are crucial partners in the process.

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

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

Not sure