Name or Pseudonym

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Which of the following statements best describes you? (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?

Have clearly defined roles and expectations
agreed targets of engagement
a requirement for clear governance in the provider and transparency in public access to all aspects of the CSO
Strong voluntary contribution
Minimal support for wages high support for projects that are supported by voluntary time input exceeding 40% of the total project cost
Some support for governance and administrative training & resourcing
Cross cultural, linguistic, sexuality, age and other demographic engagement strongly supported

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?

Simplify the reporting of the project into staged checklist reports that can be uploaded into over the life of the project so that the project essentially has a cloud based file management system. The File System includes
- Grant Application
- Letter of offer/acceptance
- Project Life Reporting Program - including diary of activities and expenditure that allows the uploading of images of receipts and tax invoices with a finalisation component at the end which enables a text about the outcomes and images uploaded throughout the project at different stages. This platform can enable the project to be monitored by the grant provider and facilitate grant acquittal as most project acquittals are often almost done but just need the final nudge to get them completed. If there appears to be delays in milestones then the grant provider can undertake due diligence to check on progress.

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?

There is still a strong need to engage with community in a face to face manner. There are many demographics that are still unable to effectively use technology and there are significant impediments to rural and regional engagement due to dismal technology support. Often the most successful community engagement and development activities as very cheap and not all that difficult to run but the impost of documentation often make obtaining and reporting the most difficult aspect of the project. There are different levels of investment and often this should be reflected in the level of government/agency/community engagement and management. I have often seen community events diminished because of calendar clashes which would have been avoided if there was more central coordination. I have engaged with 6 different council areas in the last 20 years, one local government area had a Community Engagement Officer who assisted community groups in their applications for grants. This served a number of functions, he was able to attend the training sessions to identify guidelines and preferred outcomes so that he could assist local groups to better identify goals and outcomes that met these targets. This also enabled him to develop a calendar of events and inform everyone of events that were locked in, thus avoiding significant clashes. It lead to a much more cohesive and communicative approach that led to significant cross cultural, multi-ligual, broad demographic engagement. Conversely Local Govt that simply sends out emails of grants is fundamentally flawed and I see continuous clashes that has created anger between groups that should be helping each other.

2.1 What would adequate and flexible funding look like?

The cost of delivering anything at present is fluid. Whilst it is extremely valuable to provide quotes with projects, the grant provider needs to accept that there may be price volatility that could impact on the project and retain a contingency fund so that projects that face these issues can quickly contact the grant provider and identify the issue and seek moderate assistance to still provide the same outcome. This needs to be noted however and where a project has clearly not factored in expected volatility or the

provider continually seeks assistance this may be noted in future grant applications. It may mean that grants are paid out on a staged distribution process to these agents in future.

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

Insurance, costs of infrastructure maintenance and failures in department/government agency support

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

Community groups are under great pressure. Committees are struggling for numbers, two carer families often have both parents/carers working jobs. Gone are the days when there were babysitters next door and in many cases it has become extremely difficult for young parents to engage in committees. This has led to committees often having very narrow demographics which can limit their ability to see opportunities that may be more effective in achieving goals. There is an expectation amongst committee members dominated by members of the older demographic (50yrs+) to expect to have a secretary who provides hard copy documentation for all members, and yet there is the need to transition to more modern processes. This creates a massive demand for the delivery of service. Older members expect an office with sufficient technology (printers, scanners, computers, laminators etc), and younger members expect cloud-based technology sharing, and engagement with elaborate web pages, facebook and social media accounts, advertising events have become problematic with many regional newspapers no longer having the readership of past years but costs of advertising have risen dramatically. Radio and print media is seeing reduced exposure but higher costs and effective engagement with social media is very time-consuming as it requires a process of building linkages/followers and continuous staged engagement so that effective exposure of event advertising can meet the constantly changing algorithms applied by these platforms.

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

indexation is a blunt instrument that rarely reflects actual movements in costs. Anyone who is paying a bill understands that cost of utilities are shifting at alarming speeds and the added increase in electronic engagement has increased this cost even further. Supplementation is simply not keeping pace with the actual cost movements

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?

Without creating an excessively expensive review process, there really needs to be more coordination. I understand that Local Government can not be seen to be the recipient of significant state funds and federal funds can't be seen to be going to state departments but there needs to be a clearly defined and coordinated tree or hierarchy in transition and assessment. To get effective cross engagement and multi-milestone achievements there needs to be cross departmental communication. To be completely honest we should have regional grant review process in the major regional towns and cities that have representation from Education, Sport, Recreation, Environment, Youth Leadership, Local Government, Health, Employment, Primary Industries and Resources. Sadly the best people for this committee are probably too busy actually doing community work but if a regions grants had to be listed at a quarterly open public meeting and then this meeting prioritised the projects prior to being sent up the food chain for funding approval it would enhance community preparations and enable some groups to get in touch with each other to further build on ideas that were discussed at the meeting. Dates would be identified that limit clashes and greater coordination would come from all agencies because the meeting would be recorded and the lists and key points public knowledge.

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

I have pointed out earlier - we need an open process for reporting. The present end of project acquittal is problematic. If there was a platform where the grant application was available, letter of approval, contract or any other documentation that pertains to the project is stored there for viewing by the applicants it would continue to focus the project on the identified targets and milestones. Add to this a acquittal process that involves being able to continually upload aspects of the reporting as the project runs its course, so when an item has been completed then the invoice/receipt is uploaded, photos from working bees uploaded, at the end the final information is uploaded with text identifying targets or milestones achieved. Lets be specific and clearly identify what you want to see reported on. If you want numbers of people and hours contributed then ask for an attendance diary for volunteers, even better, have somewhere on the platform where this can be recorded for each component of the project.

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

My work tends to be very grass root based in rural/regional communities. Having said that I would like to see the ability for coordinated projects to identify a 3, 5 and even 10 year strategy with annual grants to address components, targets and milestones to achieve the overall project. Often these long term programs can be monitored by uploading the minutes of meetings and should there be issues in achievement it is often possible for a case manager to cast a quick eye of minutes of the last couple of meetings to identify if there are areas of concern such as diminishing attendance of the meeting, contrasting support or debate.

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?

depends on the grant and the impediments to delivery

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

A contingency fund up their sleeve

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

There is no reward for being frugal. If a project comes in under budget then there is a requirement to return funds. Clearly if a group can deliver an outcome based on undertaking the tasks and processes in the application that were seen to be at fair costs when the project was applied for, if they can deliver the same tasks, processes and outcomes under budget then this should be rewarded through being able to apply to retain those funds for the benefit of future activities that achieve satisfactory public goals that do not fall outside of public goals (ie residual unspent funds from an event or construction should not be spent on alcohol or unsociable activities eg pissup and party for the committee) buuuuut if an event is held to support family friendly multiculturalism and there is residual unspent money then this could be allocated to another family friendly multiculturalism orientated event in the near future. Grant recipients who continue to deliver on targets and milestones and demonstrate abilities to optimise cost savings should be identified favourably in future applications and possibly invited to facilitate new groups in their project development.

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 need to have agreed milestones, targets and outcomes. If there was a platform for continuous reporting then groups experiencing variation could be identified during the delivery of the project. This could enable government engagement with the group and discussion on the ability to delivery on the milestones, targets and outcomes. Where there is a demonstrable issue with unanticipated cost variation then the opportunity to apply to a contingency fund for variation could be valuable, alternatively a review may enable the grant recipients to apply for variation to the agreed milestones, targets and outcomes (ie if a flood came down and an area was flooded preventing an event, then the group should be able to apply for variation to the delivery schedule without penalty), however if there appears to be issues in the grant recipients ability to delivery on the milestones, targets and outcomes then it may be possible to review the entire project and minimise government exposure (ie cut your losses early).

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

great organisations start small. There needs to be support for small groups to run small events and these small events/projects, if successful, should be allowed to grow. It may be beneficial to create a regional contact list for different projects/events that is available to the public (ie if someone wants to run a youth event then they can see others who have run youth events and see if someone ran a dinner that they heard was great they can see the contact person for that event and make contact) I am ▮ yrs old so in the ▮▮▮ camp'. I come across some amazing young people who are keen and energetic but just lack the base training and awareness of process to get events/activities up and going. I have often lamented the decline in stewardship/leadership programs in rural and regional areas - my friends in urban and metro areas have highlighted that Regional and Rural Areas are not on their own in this field. There has been a few youth development programs that seem to have started well but failed to transition their participants into the middle age area of society. They complete the course and then are kicked out of the nest. As identified earlier a regional prioritisation of projects might facilitate greater diversity as it might identify gaps.

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

STAR is useful in identifying processes needed but actual training and support for governance is unavailable unless at significant cost. Coordination and support for small CSO's is minimal unless they tag onto a pre-existing group but this creates insurance issues.

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

Insurance and perceptions of older groups of people in larger pre-existing CSO's that younger people need to do things their way. A regional prioritisation meeting open to public may facilitate linkages between like minded people. Larger CSO's and recipients of large project funding should be expected to engage and demonstrate their support for further community group development and support

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

Place based funding can often be driven by pre-existing older established groups which may contain a biased membership. This can influence the style of programs they deliver. There needs to be clear milestones, targets and outcomes that require diversity to be fostered and supported and 'trusted community organisations' should have the ability to demonstrate not just membership that is diverse but delivery of programs/projects that are diverse. Place based funding can sometimes be limiting. A small town may run a massive event which under place-based funding might be impeded in access to grants due to a lack of population. It is also important for the place-based funding to be reflective of the populations needs but also brining minority groups that are less engaged in the community into the fold.

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

Supporting letters from a multitude of different people, organisations and social groups demonstrating strong and diverse support for the project

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

Disability support seems to focus on 'physical access for mobility impaired groups' Mental Health in youth focuses on self harm and yet self development and self awareness seems to miss out. Rural events seem to hang their hat on mental health of male farmers at the moment but forgets that male farmers have female farmers and farming families. We seek to support trends that don't see the gaps because of media percieved issues that very quickly move to the next disaster without looking at the community-building stuff that happens and needs to happen 18months to 2yrs after the disaster.

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

yes

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

I am a simple person. I have always had faith that people who eat together and socialise together, get to know each other. Knowing more about a person makes it more difficult to bully them based on stereotypes. Disasters are no different, if people can get together and talk often a shared problem makes it less of a problem. Bringing people together strengthens people and the easiest way to bring people together is with food. I am a CFS member and have been since ████. When I have been involved with a major incident, the most important phase is a bite to eat when we get a break and an informal debrief. Just simply saying something about a terrible moment with those who went through it helps. My family were involved in the Ash Wednesday fire event in the hills and SE and friends and family who coped best were the ones who pulled together and participated in community activities. The recent flood event in the Murray was on my doorstep and whilst keeping everyone informed I found public meetings fuelled peoples anxiety. Simple BBQ (Snag, bread, onion & Sauce) between people who had been through so much and a few hugs helped those who needed to talk, open up over a cup of tea and a bickie. Those who weren't ready to talk enjoyed some non-flood orientated banter out the back. A quick update on where help could be obtained from was enough bureacracy for the night what people needed was a moment to just be people. We often overlook the simplest of joys. So many connections can be fostered by simple food events. I was at a fire event when a family of ████ arrived with a pot of stew and pilaf for a family who had lost everything in a house fire. The family with the burnt down house would have not said a nice word about migrants prior to the event but they are now friends with the ████ family. So often simply having local community centres that host a BBQ regularly strengthens communities and strong communities come together for each other.

6.2 What other solutions or changes could also be considered?

We need coordination - not just within departments. We need local people prioritising local projects and regional people just fitting the regional projects together not reorganising. There needs to be a one stop

shop for grants and community support to coordinate everything rather than the piecemeal approach we see now. We have Sports and Rec projects being approved without Council being aware even though it is on council land. We have country arts funding an indigenous music group that the local Ngarrindjeri elders didn't know about.

6.3 What does success look like?

People of different heritage, abilities and ages coming together for a shared experience