

Organisation name

Koala Action Gymie Region Inc.

2.1 What would adequate and flexible funding look like?

Funding that includes greater administrative assistance, particularly for organisations like ours that are fully run by volunteers. Any forum or activity that we organise can take up a significant amount of volunteer time and significant costs, particularly if the attendees have expectations of some kind of catering for a period where they can mingle with like-minded people. This cost, which in today's economy is significant has to be found from our own resources and we do not specifically do fund raising. We are a wildlife support organisation with very few volunteers able to assist with fundraising. This means our funds available for administrative costs etc are minimal and can only usually apply to the work allowed in the specific grants. Mostly we find volunteers are retirees and to attract more active younger people requires them to be paid as they cannot afford to just volunteer their time. Any money we do get currently with our grants for administrative costs is usually taken up with things like printing, advertising, venue hire etc.

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

For our organisation we do not have sufficient administration funding to pay for a regular part time person. We have no funding for catering for events that are full day events. As we are an organisation that does a lot of volunteer planting, weeding, watering etc we often need to cater for people who have done a very hard mornings work for us with drinks etc. This money currently comes from our minimal funds from very occasional sales of small items, cash for cans or small donations. Also our volunteers often just provide the food at their own expense. An administration assistant on an ad hoc basis would be extremely useful to our organisation and being able to organise forums and plantings with sustenance provided for participants. The current guidelines for most grants does not fully cover these expenses.

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

Our AGM this year will not be catered. We will keep it to just a meeting and presentations. We are having difficulty retaining volunteers as they can only give a certain amount of their time. Without a paid administration person we will need to cut back our project work which is extremely beneficial to our precious icons, the koalas, in our region.

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?

The department could reconsider their guidelines being so rigid. In my experience CSOs do not "waste" any funding that they are given as it is all precious.

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

Some of the questions in the online reporting are repetitive. Attachment size limits doing things in attachments which is often the easiest way to report. I spent 3 hours completing a quite short report recently. It felt like doing the grant application all over again.

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

2 years seems fine to me. Our timeframes have never been an issue for us unless a third party is involved and causing delays or if the project is weather dependent.

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?

I guess it depends of audit requirements and the availability of the organisations auditor. I would think that 3 months past the end of the grant should be sufficient.

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

We have not had any issues with this aspect with any of our grants at this stage but we have had to vary our milestones and swap around portions of the grant payments. I assume that this is flexible enough.

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

Perhaps provide more assistance with applications. I have not always found it helpful to contact and ask how to complete a question. It seems that it is more helpful to get assistance from a more experienced grant writer or CSO.

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

This seems to depend on the local government areas. Some fantastic training has been offered to us locally through our local council and this has been well received by those in attendance.

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

Larger organisations can assist by partnering with smaller organisations or even just assisting them to get started. This depends on the good will of the larger organisations and not feeling they are in competition with the emerging groups. The major barriers would be the willingness of some organisations to share.

For instance the difficulty with partnering for a grant is that there has to be one major partner who receives all of the funds and therefore has total control. As we are being encouraged to partner for grants this is creating tensions between organisations.

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

If working with more than one organisation as partners where are issues over who gets the money and manages it. There is also a need for contracts to be drawn particularly where there are issues of Intellectual Property involved.

This can work well in some situations and be extremely difficult for the 'junior' partner is others.

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

Would it be possible for partners to each be given a share of the funding so that it is truly a jointly managed operation?

6.3 What does success look like?

Great outcomes and community sharing