

Organisation name

Coffs Harbour Older Women's Network

1.1 What would a partnership between CSOs and the government that achieves outcomes for Australians being supported by the community sector look like?

It would be a collaborative partnership with like minded organisations who want to achieve the same type of outcomes for the benefit of the community, government and collaborative partners.

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?

By using same effective knowledge based technology to engage across relevant partners, stakeholders and government

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?

Fully engaging with the community can lead to better outcomes for all, including new and innovative ways of ongoing improvements.

2.1 What would adequate and flexible funding look like?

If the project has been thoroughly researched, needs analysis business case and or situation analysis (concept target market, competitive situation, SWOT strengths, marketing analysis, key issues, environmental factors, opportunities in SWOT analysis) and strategic business plan, which would include timelines, outcomes and ongoing funding to enable outcomes to be achieved. One of grant funding isn't long term project sustainable.

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

Depending on the type of project the administrative costs and overheads need to be actual, where most grant funding it is based on estimates.

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

Acquiring suitable staffing is the biggest operational cost that can have huge impact on the success of the project, if there is high staff churn that can delay and have blow out costs.

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

All projects business plans should include expected CPI modifications. To not include expectations like indexation is underestimating the real costs.

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?

By engaging with community sector organisation on the ground that have the knowledge of the real local issues is the equitable and responsive way to distribute funds.

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

By adopting multipurpose technology solution that is fully integrated, thus reducing double handling and administrative costs.

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

This all depends on the type of project and its life span. There could be worthwhile projects that have a 2-3 years life span for sustainability with other projects feeding off the original project/s.

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?

Again this depends on the needs analysis and what the project is aiming to achieve. Minimum for a best case grants should be 12 months with the provision of extending the funding with proven outcomes that support the extensions.

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

This all depends on what type of innovation and costs associated to delivering the service.

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

When a project has completed its timeframe and all expenditures are included acquittal is just part of the process.

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?

It is important that projected budgets for projects grants include percentage of variation in the costings with a variation clause be factored into the grant agreement for out of the ordinary staffing cost blowouts.

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

The government needs to ensure it stays informed about new areas of opportunities by engaging in relevant business chambers and industry associations.

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

Same as above, smaller community sector organisations need to stay informed about areas of opportunities and by building staffing capacity with relevant training.

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

Collaborative partnering with relevant organisations that can benefit and grow opportunities.

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

This is not an area of knowledge for me, apart from the benefits of collaborative partnering, which I believe is a more beneficial pathway for all, including the communities in which we work.

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

Demonstrated successful organisations with local knowledge and skills that the community trusts is a good start.

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

There are many duplicative areas of existing funding that needs to be addressed.

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

Yes this is possible, if it is really community engagement led change initiative that strengthens the overall community and not concentrate on certain areas of the community.

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

Sustainability of innovative growth developing projects due to lack of ongoing funding.

6.2 What other solutions or changes could also be considered?

More engagement with the community by the government, including local government.

6.3 What does success look like?

Sustainability of objectives, employment growth, new and innovative ways of thinking and doing, factored succession plans for successfully transferring the business operations to new management, if required.