

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

Supporting the lower income organisations/local governments through longer term grants to enable programs or initiatives to be set up and their longevity embedded in processes.

Many funding agreements outline ineligibility for wages or staffing costs, which tend to be one of the bigger barriers for community services - staff are at capacity and volunteers are scarce due to external factors like COVID and the cost of living crisis.

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?

Working groups and sector meetings via virtual platforms is a great way for discussion and sharing of information.

Timely updates of information and processing of applications to enable organisations to continue to develop programming without being stalled by long assessment times.

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?

Have information available in multiple formats at a variety of locations that encourage communication and feedback at any time.

2.1 What would adequate and flexible funding look like?

Flexible funding would allow for a moderate change in program design due to unexpected factors (like supplier unavailability, low uptake from community) without need to return funds or create new proposal.

It would allow interested individuals or members of an organisation to apply for funding to address the government/community's priorities, when organisations are at capacity and unable to implement initiatives.

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

Staffing costs
Training costs
Qualifications - like Working with Children Checks
Some consumables like stationary or catering to support at-risk attendees

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

Inability to provide a range of services for diverse communities as funding is focused on a few priorities.

Less discretionary funds mean fewer programs.

Lack of participation due to other factors like transport.

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

Leading to community stress and anxiety, increased demand for food relief.

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?

Allow organisations to demonstrate priority needs for funding based on the alignment of their own organisational strategic plans as well as state strategies.

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

Allow interactive grant acquittals that can be completed periodically throughout the program.

Include social value measurements.

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

Options for 1,3,5 year programs.

Ability to employ or partly fund a staff member to oversee/deliver program.

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?

3- 6 months.

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

Ability to make basic modifications to program without need for approval.

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

Stronger communications campaigns for opportunities.

Can grants be open at all times - and organisations can apply and have assessments undertaken based on their availability/program timeline?

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

Donation of staffing or resources to help deliver events.
Barriers are that all CSOs seem to be at full capacity.

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

The only barrier is reduced likelihood of funding for other areas. For example, for homelessness, place based funding identifies areas like Armadale and Midland as hot spots that result in funding funneled into those locations. Other areas with this issue rising, but seek prevention funding is less successful due to less perceived need.

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

Require partnerships with contacts and roles to be identified within applications.
Acquittal requires detail analysis of collaboration activities.

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

GAPS:

- Food relief for financially at-risk but still home-based
- Access to Emergency accommodation or financial support to seek short-term accommodation
- 1:1 counselling/support

DUPLICATIVE

- Mental Health: many organisations with funding to deliver programming
- LGBTQIA+: extensive funding has saturated community interest in participation (especially school aged students)

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

Yes, however in these types of partnerships often the community-led members of the project have an expectation that the government body will take the responsibility for driving the project, coordinating activities and manage resources. There isn't a balance of accountability or involvement.