

# Putting the Public First: Economic Audit Implementation

No. 6

April 2011

## Partnership Forum

On 22 February 2011 the Partnership Forum held its fourth meeting. The Forum considered key work to date on progressing sustainable funding and contracting arrangements for the not-for-profit sector, and progress with the establishment of the Social Innovation Grants Program. The Forum also welcomed a presentation by the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC), outlining Noongar community development. The latest Partnership Forum Communiqué is available at:

[http://www.dpc.wa.gov.au/Publications/EconomicAuditReport/Documents/Communique\\_22\\_Feb\\_2011\\_Final.pdf](http://www.dpc.wa.gov.au/Publications/EconomicAuditReport/Documents/Communique_22_Feb_2011_Final.pdf)

The Forum noted the significant work undertaken to date in progressing key recommendations of the Economic Audit Committee, many of which are now moving to the stage of implementation and becoming embedded in the operations of public sector agencies. Accordingly, the Forum agreed to undertake a strategic planning session in early August (preceded by a broader community Forum) on key issues for consideration and ideas for the future agenda and direction of the Forum.

The Partnership Forum's next meeting will be held in late May 2011.

Contact: Rebecca Brown, 9222 9601  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

## Procurement Reform

Following the Partnership Forum's endorsement of the *Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy* (previously the *Collaboration for Community Policy*) in late February, the draft policy was submitted for Government consideration.

The Department of Finance's Office of Government Procurement is currently running a number of workshops with representatives from the community and public sectors to develop practice guides and standard contract templates to support the draft *Policy's* implementation.

Underpinning the *Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy* is a set of 'partnership principles' developed by the Partnership Forum to govern the nature of the relationship between government agencies and not-for-profit organisations, clear articulation of the range of funding and contracting arrangements available (and guidance on when each should be used) and a focus on reducing the administrative burden currently imposed on funded organisations.

At this stage, all parties involved are working towards a 1 July 2011 release date, with new arrangements under the *Policy* to be put in place as previous arrangements expire. The Partnership Forum has also established a working group to consider the impact on current contracts and to develop a governance framework and transition arrangements.

Contact: Kylie Towie, 9222 5558  
Department of Finance

## Social Innovation Grants

The Social Innovation Grants Program was launched on 21 January 2011 by the Premier's representative the Hon. Helen Morton MLC, Minister for Mental Health and Disability Services.

Speaking at the Western Australian Council of Social Service's New Year Sector Breakfast, Minister Morton said that the Program will provide financial support for social innovation in the community sector and, together with other reforms, both increase the capacity of community sector organisations and improve services for the WA community.

Over time, the Program is expected to make a significant contribution towards establishing a culture of innovation in human services delivery.

The Program is being administered by the Department for Communities on behalf of the Premier. Available funding for 2010/11 is \$2 million with \$4 million available each year thereafter.

Applications from not-for-profit organisations can be made at any time, with applications for the first round of grants closing on 31 March 2011. The media release regarding the Program can be found at:

<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/Releases.aspx?ItemID=135500>

Details on how to apply for a grant can be found on the Department for Communities website at:

<http://www.communities.wa.gov.au/grantsandfunding/Grants/SocialInnovation/Pages/default.aspx>

Contact: Emma Colombera, 9222 9948  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

### Early Years Collaborative Project

The early years have been identified as a priority area for Western Australia, as reflected in the Comparative Australian State and Territory results of the Australian Education Development Index (AEDI) and opportunities for increased coordination and collaboration in local communities. To address this issue, the Early Years Collaborative Project Team was established to promote a culture of collaboration and partnership around early childhood development and learning. The team is comprised of representatives from key public sector agencies and community sector organisations, who are working together in order to support a collaborative and integrative approach to this issue.

The Project Team has held three workshops focused on creating an Early Years Outcome Framework for Western Australia, and practical elements required to make collaboration work on the ground.

The Final Report of the Team will present key learnings from the project, as well as options for improved collaboration and coordination of early years services to achieve better outcomes for Western Australian children. The report will be presented to the Community Services Leadership Group and the Partnership Forum in May 2011.

Contact: Emma Colombera, 9222 9948  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

### Building and Sustaining Strengthened

#### Collaborative Approaches to Public Sector Policy

Since it was convened in May 2010, the Policy Capacity and Collaboration Steering Group, comprising senior policy personnel from public sector and community organisations alike, has been working on ways to improve policy and collaboration. The group's 2010 priorities were to:

- establish a culture of partnership within the Group via a co-chairing arrangement, and equal community and public sector membership;
- develop principles for collaboration (trust, respect, responsibility, knowledge building/sharing, open/timely communication, commitment to a common goal, shared understanding/ownership/decision making) and;
- agree on a 'vision' of what effective policy and collaboration activity will need to look like to meet the complex challenges ahead.

For 2011, the Steering Group is shifting focus from theory to action as we develop concrete proposals for strengthening and sustaining collaborative approaches to public sector policy. The first meeting of the year, in February, took the form of a facilitated planning workshop and identified three areas for action:

- What works best to enable effective and collaborative policy?
- Developing capability for effective and collaborative policy; and
- Communicating and sharing information about effective and collaborative policy.

The Steering Group is now developing key strategies within these streams. Some of the early ideas being considered include: building up a 'toolkit' of ideas, methodologies and 'rules of engagement' for agencies and groups to use (e.g. getting started, when to collaborate, and how to collaborate); drawing out and promoting learning from real collaborations within and across both sectors; embedding collaboration via structures and incentives; developing a range of employee development programs (e.g. public sector and not-for-profit exchanges, shadowing, placements); and utilising policy networks, forums, newsletters and

websites. The goal is to prepare a joint Action Plan with detailed proposals for consideration by the EAC's Executive Coordinating Committee in August.

Contacts:      Ian Carter      9263 2059  
                    Lyn Genoni      9222 9538