

Putting the Public First: Economic Audit Implementation

No. 6

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Hello,

The Social Innovation Grants Program was launched on 21 January 2011 and applications for grants are now open to not-for-profit organisations. This edition of the newsletter includes articles on the Program's launch, the key accomplishments of 2010 and expectations for 2011. The Economic Audit Implementation Team is looking forward to an exciting year of embedding many of the Economic Audit reforms.

Social Innovation Grants

Following the Partnership Forum's endorsement of the *Collaboration for Community Policy* in late February, the draft policy was submitted to the Premier for Cabinet consideration. The Office of the Premier has since changed the title of the policy to the *Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy* – to better highlight the true intent of the policy (and based on feedback from both sectors).

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.

The Department of Treasury and Finance's Office of Government Procurement is currently running a number of workshops in consultation with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and representatives from the community sector to develop practice guides and standard contract templates to support the *Policy's* implementation.

At this stage, all of the parties involved are working towards a 1 July 2011 release date, pending Cabinet endorsement and in the understanding that new arrangements under the *Policy* will 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 broad approach for transition.

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Social Innovation Grants

The Social Innovation Grants Program was launched on 21 January 2011 by the Premier's representative the Honourable 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 the remainder of the 2010/11 financial year is \$2 million with \$4 million available each year thereafter.

Applications are open at any time to not-for-profit organisations - however to be considered for the first round of grants, applications need to be received by 31 March 2011.

The media release regarding the Program can be found at:

<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/Results.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>

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Early Years Collaborative Project

The early years have been identified as a priority area for Western Australia. The need to improve performance in the early years is reflected in the Comparative Australian State and Territory results of the Australian Education Development Index (AEDI), which ranks WA sixth overall for early childhood development. To address this issue, an Early Years Collaborative Project Team (the Project Team) was established with the aim of improving outcomes for Western Australian children. 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 held its first workshop on the 8 February with an independent facilitator. The focus of the workshop was to consider an Early Years Outcome Framework for Western Australia. The second workshop, on 1 March, focused on the practical elements required to make collaboration work on the ground in Western Australia, and included wide-ranging discussion of the key elements of successful collaboration at a local level and examples of collaborative projects that have already been implemented successfully.

A third meeting is planned for early April 2011, with the aim of reviewing and agreeing to the Outcomes Framework for WA, finalising principles for collaboration on the ground, and nominating possible trial sites for collaborative projects. It is proposed that a final report of the Project team will be presented to the Community Services Leadership Group and the Partnership Forum.

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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.

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South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council's Presentation to the Partnership Forum

SWALSC members gave a presentation at the beginning of the most recent Partnership Forum meeting on 22 February. The presentation covered Noongar vision and priorities as represented by SWALSC, and also outlined a community development framework aimed at building up the Noongar community through self direction. The presentation highlighted the partnership potential between the Noongar people, government, industry and the community sector to develop, manage and deliver effective Noongar community development programs in the South West. The Partnership Forum acknowledged the desire of SWALSC to lead this project and offered assistance in any way SWALSC may find useful.

Forward Planning for the Partnership Forum

Options will soon be considered for the future of the Partnership forum. Up until now, the Forum has been focused on the Economic Audit Committee reforms, but those reforms are in the final stages of policy development and many are moving through to implementation. That means the Forum is entering a new stage of its life and its scope and agenda must be reviewed. A meeting is currently being scheduled for July or August for forward planning. In view of its progress on the reforms, the Partnership Forum will also be reviewing the various working groups and other consultation and engagement arrangements. It is expected that the work of the Forum will advance into broader issues of mutual concern to the community and public sectors.

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Upcoming Events!

A Partnership Forum meeting is being planned for May or June. It is intended to hold a community sector briefing before the Forum meeting. This will inform the Forum's planning discussions. More details will be provided later.

A self-directed service design workshop is to be held in May or June 2011. Details are to be provided.