

Submission
No 60

Outsourcing Community Service Delivery

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The Illawarra Forum is the peak body working for community services and organisations in the Illawarra and the Shoalhaven. The Illawarra Forum supports community organisations, promotes expertise and innovation in community development, fosters industry development and advocates for social justice.

Inquiry into outsourcing service delivery in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven Regions New South Wales 4 May 2012

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Recommendations to the NSW Legislative Assembly Inquiry into outsourcing service delivery for housing, disability and home care services

1. That the NSW Government outsource housing, disability and home care services to not-for-profit organisations – community based and community managed – rather than for-profit private businesses
2. That all funding for services be long term to ensure stability and continuity for the people who use them and for the organisations which deliver them
3. That funding for services be targeted to the needs of local communities in geographic regions, particularly non-metropolitan areas, where the costs of delivering services are higher
4. That funding for services be granted or tendered to small community organisations which can respond to local needs in local areas
5. That funding for services allow some flexibility in eligibility for services to mitigate against a rigid 'silo' structure in service delivery
6. That funding for services be adequate to pay staff award wages, including the SCHADS (which replaces the NSW SACS Award) and the associated on costs
7. That funding for services cover some of the costs (such as police check and petrol allowance) associated with managing volunteers
8. That the autonomy and independence of service organisations be valued in consultations and in the formation of social policy
9. That the NSW Government work with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission to reduce 'red tape' in accountability requirements for community service organisations
10. That Fair Trading NSW develop and promote online interactive resources for community-based committees and boards of associations registered under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 in consultation with housing, disability and home care services

Our region has a vibrant sector of community services provided by 300 plus organisations, mostly incorporated associations governed by a community-based committee or board.

The community services include:

- Family services for children and families, including early intervention and foster care

- Community care services in the homes of frail older people and people with disabilities

- Social housing and supported accommodation

- Youth programs

- Community-based child care

- Community-based health services including mental health and drug and alcohol services

- Counselling services

- Neighbourhood and community centres

- Community capacity building and social inclusion programs working in areas of disadvantage and poverty

Quality services in the community services sector

The Illawarra and Shoalhaven has a substantial record in providing quality community-based services, for these reasons.

- A sense of solidarity in working with local communities

- Expertise and sensitivity in responding to local needs

- Innovation and flexibility in responding to diverse needs

- Longevity and legitimacy of community services in working with target groups in target geographical areas

- Proven reliability in fulfilling accountability requirements in acquitting funding as well as the other statutory responsibilities

- A workforce which is skilled, committed and experienced

- Regional collaboration, cooperation and networking in local areas within service areas and across target groups through partnerships or structures such as interagencies

Governance in the community services sector

Models of community-based governance according to, for example, the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 are an effective and efficient model of managing community sector services, for these reasons.

- Boards and committees draw upon the expertise of local members who fulfil this responsibility voluntarily

- These board and committee members are close to the communities they serve and can advocate for local issues

- Boards and committees have expertise in communicating local social policy issues to policy makers in government

Probity in the community services sector

The proposed Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission will be the new regulator for community service organisations providing a one-stop-shop for their interactions across levels of government; and to oversight their financial and governance practice.

Compliance in the community services sector

Community service organisations comply with a detailed range of regulation by NSW and Commonwealth legislation, as follows.

Incorporation
Child protection
Anti-discrimination & human rights
Disability
Work health & safety
Tax & superannuation
Employment & industrial relations
Privacy & freedom of information
Food handling
Complaints processes
Fundraising
Duty of care
Copyright and intellectual property