

Outsourcing Community Service Delivery

Organisation: Southern Community Care Development Inc

Name: Ms Melinda Paterson

Date Received: 20/04/2012

Partially Confidential



1034-1036 Old Princes Hwy
ENGADINE NSW 2233

Tel: 9548 6000 – 9520 3000

Web: www.sccci.org.au/sccd

Email: info@sccd.org.au

ABN: 65 737 679 035

SUBMISSION FOR INQUIRY INTO OUTSOURCING SERVICE DELIVERY

Who is SCCD?

Based in Sutherland Shire in South East Sydney, Southern Community Care Development Inc. (SCCD) is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation. SCCD was formed in 2008, to work towards improving the quality of life and quality of care for people with disabilities, frail older people and carers. SCCD does not provide direct services to these groups, but is a community development organisation that conducts research and sector development projects to further four key principles:

- Information, referral, assessment and provision of appropriate services;
- Care co-ordination;
- Consumer rights and participation; and
- Quality Improvement.

SCCD receives funding from various sources, including core recurrent funding through the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program for Sutherland Shire HACC Development Officer, and one-off funding grants from HACC and Sutherland Shire Council during 2011/12 financial year for Sutherland Shire Community Care Information Project and Southern Sydney Centre Based Day Care Project, which also covers St George area. Individually and together, these projects aim to:

- Strengthen the capacity of the community care service infrastructure to deliver quality services, which respond to client needs, including special needs groups;
- Strengthen interagency and community relationships and understanding of community care;
- Promote better practice in the development of a strong cohesive community care system; and
- Provide information about relevant Government objectives, policy and guidelines to agencies and related care services.

SCCD currently employs three part-time staff and is managed by a voluntary committee of workers from local HACC and related aged, disability and community care agencies, including a private for-profit provider. Some management committee members are involved in SCCD as a part of their paid positions, others attend meetings in their own time; one member is currently on extended leave. Further information about SCCD projects and its governance structures, including all policy and practice documents, can be viewed by the general public at www.sccci.org.au/sccd.

Background to Submission

The SCCD management committee and staff want to provide input to this Inquiry for two reasons, which also define the content of the following submission:

- we believe the Inquiry would benefit from hearing about the experiences of a very small non government organisation;
- we have considerable knowledge about the HACC Program and the community sector generally through our community development work since 1998 (extending from our origins in our umbrella organisation, Sutherland Shire Community Care Network Inc).

Due to time constraints and reasons detailed within the text, this submission is brief; however, we would attempt to provide further detail should the Inquiry Committee require it. Where possible, we have included Terms of Reference letters in brackets to assist readability.

Experiences of a small NGO

With only one fulltime staff member and an offsite management committee, SCCD relies heavily on a multi-skilled worker to manage day-to-day operations of the organisation. As well as meeting the requirements of an annual workplan determined by the funding body, which involves providing policy advice to government and peaks and supporting 45 HACC-funded provider organisations individually and 100+ aged and disability providers through e-bulletins, phone/email/in-person consultancy services and several out-of-office meetings and presentations each week, the HACC Development Officer (HACC DO) supervises two staff, a contract bookkeeper, drafts internal policy, budgets, oversees work health and safety, payment of invoices etc. Her 35 hours is now classed as part time under the Social Community Services, Home Care and Disability Services Modern Award and pays considerably less than her counterparts in government, although she clearly has wider responsibilities than many of them (f). SCCD staff do not have an HR Department, IT support etc and, like many NGO workers, volunteer additional hours beyond what we employ them for. We would like to pay them more, but our funding does not allow it. Ironically, it is the width and depth of skills and knowledge that our HACC DO/Manager has, and her ability to manage the demands of her workload, that make her such as a good community development worker. She understands the challenges and needs of her NGO clients because she works daily within the same context as those who are struggling to provide direct services, to meet accountabilities for public monies and to continuously improve, while complying with legal, industrial and financial legislation, and also trying to be a part of government policy review and change (d).

Indeed, this Inquiry coincides with several significant issues for small NGOs like SCCD, including preparation for monitoring against the new Community Care Common Standards, reclassification of staff under the new Award, preparation for the HACC split to two contracts and the usual end-of-financial-year planning; at SCCD, we're also doing annual staff appraisals, client surveys, organisational planning, budgets and the normal cycle of policy reviews. There are other Inquiries we would like to give input to also, but do not have the resources (e). We therefore want to take this opportunity to urge this Legislative Assembly Committee to make some groundbreaking recommendations for future consultation and community sector capacity building, such as financial grants and incentives to enable small NGOs to have input and the opportunity to share with you the dynamic and creative models we see local community providers develop every day through the necessity of their meager resources. We are concerned that it is only the large, well resourced organisations who get to have their say and effectively direct government policy to their further advantage in Inquiries like this one (j), because they have available staff hours to write their own submissions, money to pay consultants or marketers, and they also often dominate the membership of peaks who are consulted by government. Indeed, our HACC DO often has the experience of attending State level meetings and consultations (after re-prioritising her workload at the last-minute) and finds that she is alone, or in a very small minority, of small NGO voices. This is particularly evident in Disability, which is dominated by very large and loud providers, who have significant influence.

Experiences of the HACC Program

Sutherland Shire HACC DO, Melinda Paterson, has been in her current role for over 15 years and conducted several research projects related to the HACC Program prior to that. Since 1996, she has seen the transfer of HACC funding and administration in NSW from several departments to one, as well as the inclusion of the Home Care Service of NSW in the Ageing, Disability and Home Care Department (ADHC) and the transfer of service delivery between government and non-government providers at a local level. She strongly supports the need for a mix of government and non-government providers (a) to provide for the variety and complexity of service users' needs and choice. In Sutherland Shire, for instance, we know that for some people, the Home Care Service is their 'service of last resort', whether due to behavioural issues (because the Home Care Service has to take them and can draw on specialist staff or resources within the Department), specific staff skills or language (due to the size of its staff pool) or the fact that it is the only provider in some areas (c) where there is limited resource allocation, skills to meet certain needs and/or the 'market' is unattractive to other providers. Conversely, there are service users who need or prefer the care of a small, local NGO, including people from migrant or indigenous backgrounds who have had bad experiences with governments. It is worth noting, too, that large church-based providers can appear or function like bureaucracies and/or some service users do not wish to access services with perceived or actual religious overtones. The HACC

DO knows of instances where HACC service users have received uninvited phone calls from clergy employed by HACC providers.

In the HACC Program, there have clearly been advantages for the NGO providers of the funding body itself experiencing challenges such as workforce recruitment and retention, escalating costs etc. A number of responses originating in the Home Care Service and ADHC-run Disability services have been extended to benefit the whole sector, including OHS initiatives, training resources and policy documents; it is impossible to know, of course, if the Department would have helped the sector with these problems had it not experienced them firsthand. Again, on the flipside, there have been questions about probity and accountability (b) in relation to the funding body-as-provider. Previous Inquiries have heard, for instance, that the Home Care Service does not keep a waiting list, as other HACC services are required to, and appear to get funding allocated off the top of the State budget, while NGOs often have to tender for new funding and so-called 'viability funding' for all but the Home Care Service was abolished several years ago. Likewise, all HACC services are subject to quality monitoring and funding accountability processes (c), but there is a perception that NSW Health auspices are not treated with as much stringency as NGOs (i). It is also very common for people performing identical job roles to be paid much higher in Health and Local Government auspices than their counterparts in NGOs (f), which makes it harder to attract and retain workforce.

Please do not hesitate to contact our Manager, Melinda Paterson, for further information.

Roslyn Morton
Chairperson