

Secure Jobs and Funding Certainty Leadership Group Terms of Reference

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Background

The Community Services Sector (the Sector) in NSW comprises over 7,800 non-government organisations who support over one million people.

Community sector workers are vital in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our community, including throughout the pandemic, fires, droughts and floods, as well as homelessness, domestic and family violence, and child protection.

The sector employs more than 240,000 workers; 80% of the workforce are women; a quarter are over 55 years old; half the workforce is on fixed term or casual contracts. The sector will grow by up to 62,000 jobs by 2030, including a significant proportion in regional NSW.

Short term contracts are contributing to uncertainty around funding continuity. Some of the challenges reported by the sector include, but are not limited to:

- The sector is experiencing difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, including degree qualified workers and frontline staff.
- Short-term funding combined with applying for funding, and the different application, acquittal and reporting processes for multiple sources of funding is creating a significant administrative burden on community sector organisations.
- Fluctuations in funding is constraining effective forward planning.
- Funding frameworks, pricing, procurement and competition may be forcing wages down as organisations seek to deliver more services with less funding.

'Secure Jobs and Funding Certainty for Community Services (SJFC) is an election commitment and was included on the list of focused commitments of the NSW Government. Focused commitments are those that are critical to delivering the Government's broader strategic agenda.

The SJFC Leadership Group brings together skilled and knowledgeable Government and Sector representatives to guide the development of the roadmap that will set out the actions, implementation approaches and timeframes to deliver the commitment.

Purpose

The Leadership Group provides critical advice and guidance to the NSW government on options for the identification, design and implementation of a Roadmap (plan) and program of work for NSW Government contracted service providers that aims to:

- improve job security for the community services workforce
- increase funding certainty for key community services providers
- reduce administrative burden to secure jobs and funding certainty for community services providers.

Delivering reform in these areas aims to achieve:

- better long-term economic outcomes for the predominately female workforce (superannuation, housing, families etc)
- improved employment stability and associated health and wellbeing for sector workers
- improved service continuity and planning of services funded by the NSW Government that support individuals, families and communities.

The Leadership Group will take a collaborative approach between the community services sector and the NSW Government.

The Leadership Group will align their activities, where possible, with correlating and adjacent reforms, in particular work to achieve the Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2, Building the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector.

The Leadership Group will:

- advise the NSW Government through the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion (the Minister) on matters within the scope of the Commitment
- advise on and guide the development of options to be included in a Roadmap (plan) to be presented to the Minister for consideration describing the key deliverables (what), approach to implementation (how) and timeframes (when) to deliver the Commitment, noting that some deliverables will require further design work beyond the Roadmap
- ensure there is appropriately broad and targeted engagement and participation from the community services sector and government
- provide strategic direction, instruction and guidance to the project team, implementation and working groups and others who are supporting deliverables under the Commitment.

Scope

In Scope

The Commitment will focus on NSW Government funding arrangements in the community services sector with NSW Government contracted service providers.

The Commitment will focus on commissioned services delivered by non-government organisations on behalf of the NSW Government.

The Roadmap will consider options for:

- Long term funding arrangements
 - Delivering more job security and funding certainty for our community services sector, by introducing longer-term 5 year funding arrangements for key community service providers.
- Whole-of-government pre-qualification scheme
 - Establish a whole-of-government prequalification process so that organisations don't need to repeat accreditation processes.
- Funding Framework and Jobs Compact
 - Development of a new funding framework and jobs compact.
 - Review funding models.
 - Work to standardise and streamline reporting and contract management.

Out of Scope

Contracts and services not in the NSW community services sector.

Grants (as defined by the NSW Government's Grants Administration Guide) are out of scope.

Commonwealth funding arrangements and contracts are out of scope, but collaboration is encouraged.

Timeframes and deliverables

It is intended for the Roadmap (including options) to be delivered to the Minister no later than July 2024 with an accompanying Communications Plan. Subsequent timeframes will be determined after the Roadmap is considered by Government.

The SJFC Leadership Group will meet until December 2025. Frequency will be reviewed as required and agreed by members.

Membership

The Leadership Group will be chaired by the Executive Director, Partnerships, Strategy Policy and Commissioning, Department of Communities and Justice.

Membership will comprise one senior executive representing the below organisations:

Sector membership:

- NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS)
- Representation from Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO) - AbSec
- Representation from NSW Health sector - Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (NADA); and Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC).
- Representation from Education sector - Early Learning and Care Council of Australia; and Community Early Learning Australia.
- Representation from Community Services and Justice sector – Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies; and Youth Action.
- Australian Services Union (ASU)

NSW Government:

- Department of Communities and Justice (in addition to the chair)
- Department of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Department of Regional NSW
- NSW Treasury
- Aboriginal Affairs
- The NSW Reconstruction Authority
- Multicultural NSW
- The Cabinet Office

Each member organisation will nominate an executive to be a member on the Leadership Group. Each member organisation may request a change of representative as required. The chair will consider and accept nominations.

An organisation may be added to the membership with the approval of the chair.

A delegate may attend on the members’ behalf with approval from the Secretariat.

Observers may be invited if specialist expertise is required, with the approval of the chair.

The meetings may also be attended by:

- Secretariat and project team members
- Other non-members from time to time, following an invitation from the chair.

Confidentiality

Members of the Leadership Group may have access to highly sensitive and confidential Information. The Leadership Group is a forum to exchange ideas, engage in robust discussion, and receive preliminary findings or advice without these being made public.

Members must maintain strict confidentiality in relation to any information that is shared (in any format) that is marked, described or agreed to be confidential. This means the confidential information should only be shared with executives and advisors within the members organisations, and not widely distributed across the organisation or to other organisations.

In the same way described above, members should not share or attribute individual comments made by other members.

Governance

The Leadership Group will make recommendations to the Minister.

The Leadership Group will make consensus decisions where possible, however, on significant matters where that is not possible, the range of views will be noted and included in government briefings as appropriate.

DCJ will be responsible for engagement with the Minister, including regular updates, briefings and advice. All formal representations to the Minister and the Government will be made through the Secretariat and the appropriate DCJ executive, except as otherwise agreed by members. However, Members will be responsible for briefing their executives or Ministers as required.

A small project team will be established to support the election commitment, including secretariat for the Leadership Group. The project team will conduct day to day business on behalf of the Leadership Team and other stakeholders. The project team will report to the DCJ executive.

The Leadership Team may create implementation, working or advisory groups. These groups will report to the Leadership Group via the project team or to a delegated Member.

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed as required. Amendments require agreement from the Leadership Group and approval from the Minister.

External engagement

Formal engagement with the sector and government will be undertaken by the project team or their delegate with consideration to advice provided by the Leadership Group. The project team will

present any significant engagement strategies to the Leadership Group for endorsement. This includes a detailed methodology for the Roadmap and a Communications Plan.

At each meeting, or shortly after Members will agree to the information (key point, messages and next steps) which can be shared with stakeholders. Having regard to this sector representatives may update their members on the work of the Leadership Group and the matters within scope of the Commitment.

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