

### Message from the CSIF team

Since the September newsletter some new staff have joined the CSIF team. Leonie Middleton continues to manage the team while Alexandra Brown and Daniel Marshall have taken over from Matthew Arnold and Rebecca Hiscock. Any enquiries or feedback can still be sent by email to [csif@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:csif@dhs.vic.gov.au) or 03 9616 7660.

Contents of this Newsletter:

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Previous Newsletters are available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/pdpd/csif/index.htm>

### Workforce strategies

A 'Workforce Workshop', with key representatives from community sector peak bodies, community sector organisations, unions, and training bodies was held in January 2006 to determine practical strategies for implementing the workforce project initiatives. Initiatives for discussion at the workshop were grouped into the following 4 project areas:

1. Joint recruitment, employment and staff banks;
2. Graduate and trainee programs;
3. Training and competencies; and
4. Marketing.

Workshop participants chose to discuss options in relation to 3 of the 4 project areas. At the conclusion of the workshop, several workforce strategies were suggested for implementation including:

- A 'staff bank' modelling project;

- The development of a competencies database; and
- The implementation of a marketing campaign to raise awareness of professions in community service organisations (CSOs).

The CSIF Reference Group met in late February to discuss priorities and how best to progress the workforce initiatives.

In addition, the CSIF project team are progressing:

1. WorkHealth and Workcover projects. A separate project to select preferred providers and to make general information available through a single information portal is underway; and
2. Portability of Long Service Leave. The CSIF team are considering how best to research options for portability of Long Service Leave across community sector organisations.

### WorkHealth update

The Funded Agency Channel has been engaged to develop a WorkHealth information portal (which will include OHS and WorkCover information). The information portal will provide a resource site for agencies, and will include information, as well as links to other relevant sites.

In order to determine the best content for the WorkHealth portal, a WorkHealth Working Group has been convened. This group met for the first time on 19 January 2006. Participants included staff from Broad Insight, Northern Support Services, Annecto, Children's Welfare Association of Victoria and DHS.

Key dates for the project were outlined as follows:

- Site architecture and topic summary completed: End February
- Content approved: March
- Testing: April
- Information published live: May

The Funded Agency Channel will collect and collate information for the site, and develop the site

architecture; but they will be asking agencies to assist in providing good content and links to relevant sites. This group last met on Wednesday 22 February. For further information please contact Ms Ruth Gould, Content Developer, Funded Agency Channel, DHS, telephone 03 9616 2608 or email [ruth.gould@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:ruth.gould@dhs.vic.gov.au).

### CSO Networks update

Last year, 38 Networks including over 180 CSO's located across the state, were funded to establish processes, systems and structures that contribute to reducing the administrative demand on CSO's.

In December 2005, three CSO Network Workshops (two regional and one metropolitan) were held. The CSIF Network Workshops were organised to bring funded networks together to share information and experiences, to discuss any issues or problems they may have faced, and to share ideas and strategies for moving projects forward and overcoming barriers.

The workshops were well attended, with most networks being represented by at least one organisation. The discussions at the workshops were productive, with agencies freely sharing both positive and negative experiences, and actively engaging in discussions about approaches to business improvement. In the main, the discussions focused on 'teasing out' the key issues and benefits of the network process to date, with the aim of sharing strategies, and brainstorming 'solutions' to problems. Four key areas of discussion emerged from the workshops:

**Issues:** Key problems experienced by networks: different organisations working together for the first time, without previous collaboration; limited timeframe to get projects operational; geographical distance between some organisations; and delay in appointing the right staff to lead project initiatives, causing delay in project implementation.

**Strengths and benefits:** Key benefits and positive outcomes arising from network initiatives: networks confronting long term issues, and

developing sustainable solutions; the development of new and broad working partnerships between organisations; and new business capabilities and capacity being built within community sector organisations.

**Success essentials:** Key strategies/factors considered important for success in networking projects: good relationships between network organisations; involvement of CEO's in the project and deliverables; and a common understanding of project directions and outcomes between organisations.

**Lessons:** Key learnings and factors for improvement: the need to carefully plan the process and timeline prior to project commencement; for DHS to limit jargon and complex language in documents; and for organisations to maintain regular contact during the project.

The process of sharing information and strategies was considered highly beneficial by participants, with many indicating that the workshops had helped provide fresh ideas, and renewed enthusiasm. In addition, the process of sharing problems, issues and experiences was welcomed, with agencies glad to hear that they were not alone in problems encountered.

A number of action areas were agreed to. Further information sharing was a key action, with many organisations establishing informal processes for getting together with like project groups to share resources and ideas. In addition, the DHS CSIF team agreed to pursue other activities to assist CSOs with efficiencies more broadly, such as group purchasing or a preferred provider process for common resources.

If you are interested in finding out more about any of the CSO Networks, including contact details for networks, go to the CSIF website at:

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/pdpd/csif/index.htm>

### Spotlight on CSO Networks

The OHS Network for Disability Supports was the first CSO Network launched by Minister Garbutt for "annecto – the people network" and their partner organisations, DASSI and Golden City Support Services. Have a look: [www.ohsnetwork.org.au](http://www.ohsnetwork.org.au)

The ICT Centre is another CSO Network initiative in the North and West Metropolitan region and led by Mambourin Enterprises Incorporated, with Broadmeadows Disability Services and Nadrasca Incorporated as partners. The ICT has requested the inclusion of information on the initiative for other CSOs (see next column). For more information please contact the ICT Centre via email ([info@ictcentre.org](mailto:info@ictcentre.org)) or phone (03) 9849 2772.

### Other news

Nonprofit Purchasing has recently contacted the CSIF team offering information that may be of interest to people working in the sector. We have included a brief description of what NPP is below and their contact details. While DHS does not endorse this organisation or any other business, we are aware that some CSOs use their services and others may be interested. You can contact them directly if you are interested in their services.

Nonprofit Purchasing was established in October 1996 to help nonprofit organisations increase their discount on purchases.

Nonprofit Purchasing collates individual organisations' buying activities and directs their collective buying power towards improved prices for the group. Nonprofit Purchasing claims to deliver savings of up to 25% for Stationery, 3% for Fuel, 30% for Telco and 6% for Energy.

For further information contact Martin Thorley ([martin@npp.com.au](mailto:martin@npp.com.au); 03 9899 5322) or see [www.npp.com.au](http://www.npp.com.au).



**The ICT Centre**

By the community sector, for the community sector

### The ICT Centre... & prizes!

The ICT Centre is open for business!

The ICT Centre is committed to providing **excellent Information and Communications Technology (ICT)** to Victorian CSOs. The Centre acts as an expert virtual ICT Department that takes care of an organisation's technology, freeing staff to focus on serving the community. Founded by three Victorian CSOs to meet the needs of the community sector, The ICT Centre is an ICT service you can trust.

As part of delivering improved ICT products and services to CSOs, a Common Needs & Solutions Survey is being carried out. The survey is easy to fill-out - just click on the 'Common Needs Survey' link at <http://www.ictcentre.org>.

Here are three reasons to take part in the survey:

- It takes only 10 minutes to complete
- You'll receive a report summarising the survey's findings
- The end result is better ICT products and services available to your organisation!

And **one in every five** survey participants wins a prize of a 256MB USB flash drive! The survey's Grand Prize of a top-of-the-line computer kit from Viewsonic was recently won by Eastern Access Community Health.

To request a **free and no-obligation strategic ICT plan** for your organisation and to complete the survey online, browse The ICT Centre website at <http://www.ictcentre.org>.