



Positioning Aboriginal services for the future

Only by anticipating the future can we hope to shape it.

What is this project?

This project is about positioning the Aboriginal community controlled sector for the future.

Aboriginal community controlled organisations have been providing services to Aboriginal people in Victoria for more than thirty years.

Some organisations are working well, however parts of the sector have been struggling in a difficult and ever changing environment.

Organisations and governments understand that high quality service provision is an essential part of improving outcomes for Aboriginal people.

This project aims to ensure Aboriginal people receive the best possible services into the future by examining the question of *'What will make a strong Aboriginal community controlled sector in 2025?'*

If we can answer this question then we can look at what needs to be done now by both the sector and by government to plan effectively for the future.

Why is this important?

Planning for the future is important to ensure all Aboriginal people receive the best possible service. If we don't anticipate the future how can we hope to shape it?

How will this benefit us?

This project provides a great opportunity for CEOs and board members to take time out from day to day activities to think about the future both for the sector and for their own organisations. It also provides an opportunity to talk openly with departmental staff outside normal work activities.

Participating in this project will give you an opportunity to shape the outcome as well as learn from the process.

It is also important that staff from both government and organisations participate to ensure the outcome provides a balanced view.

What time commitment will this require?

Participating in this project will involve an initial interview of 1 –2 hours with the project facilitators some time in November 2006 and attendance at a two day workshop in February 2007. Information collected through the interviews will form part of the background material for the workshop.

It's recommended that both the CEO and the Chair of the Board of participating organisations be involved in both the interview and the workshop.

Background

Recognising that governments need to better coordinate the way they work with Aboriginal organisations, the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) in Victoria established a Joint Agency Working Group to see what government and the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector can do cooperatively to seek better outcomes for Aboriginal people in Victoria.

The purpose is to look at what government and the sector can do together to help ensure the sectors continued viability.

The Working Group includes people from:

- Australian Government - Departments of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Health and Ageing, Transport and Regional Services, Employment and Workplace Relations and Attorney-Generals;
- Victorian Government - Departments of Human Services and Justice (Consumer Affairs Victoria) and for Victorian Communities (Aboriginal Affairs Victoria);
- Community sector - Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association, Aboriginal Housing Board of Victoria, Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association and Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency.

At VACCHO's suggestion, the Working Group decided the first step should be to identify a common vision for the future between Government and the Community sector.

To make this happen, a smaller steering group of OATSIH, DHS, AAV, VACCHO and VACCA was requested to organise a project looking at positioning Aboriginal services for the future.

The Nous Group and Effective Change have been contracted to help do this work.

How are we going to do this?

There are many different ways to think about the future. The Working Group decided that the best approach would be to use scenario planning.

What is scenario planning?

Scenario planning is not about trying to predict the future; instead, it organises our thinking about what the future might look like.

Scenario planning distils information into set of stories about the future, each one a possible world that we might someday have to live and work in.

Once we're clearer on what could happen in the future, then we are better able to make decisions today that can lead us in the direction we want to take.

Scenario planning involves a number of steps:

1. Identifying a central question we want to think about
2. Collecting evidence and examining trends
3. Identifying key drivers or themes that will impact on the key question
4. Creating a set of scenarios which are pictures of a possible future
5. Developing stories from the present to those possible futures that help us understand what they might mean

How can organisations be involved?

There are around 170 Aboriginal community controlled organisations across Victoria. Unfortunately because of the large number not everyone can be involved in this first workshop.

Potential participants have been selected on the basis of the complexity of the services they deliver with a particular focus on health, housing and community services. Other organisations have also been selected based on their capacity to bring a different perspective to the discussions.

Invitations will be sent to these organisations inviting them to participate and to contact members of the Steering Group if they are interested.

Timetable

The following table provides an outline of the key tasks and timeframes for this project. As the project develops we will provide you with more information on exactly when you can expect to be contacted for an interview and when the workshop will be held.

| <i>Task</i> | <i>Date</i> |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Project planning | September 2006 |
| Background research | October 2006 |
| Interviews | Nov. - Dec. 2006 |
| Workshop | February 2007 |
| Final report | March 2007 |

Who can I contact for further information?

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact any of the members of the Steering Group listed below:

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Alternatively you can contact the contractors supporting us in undertaking this process:

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