



## **Open Government Partnership Submission | 30 March 2018**

### **Suggested Commitment - Open Collaboration Innovation Fund**

Create an open innovation fund specifically designed to support innovators and organisations working on open government projects to collaborate or partner with agencies to do research, develop projects, ideas and services to deliver open government.

An open opportunity challenge where rather than a top down approach (where government presents ideas and mandates what you fund), you are open to hearing ideas from the outside and create a platform to support collaborations with one or multiple agencies.

#### **Context**

Open Government is a relatively new thing in Australia and it is not very well promoted. Not many people know about it or know how to engage with it.

All of the current commitments are being developed internally with little public participation or civil society, or private sector collaborations to help in delivering commitments and our shared objectives.

Open Government is a fantastic opportunity to show leadership and to create a new market of social entrepreneurs and support an emerging thriving ecosystem of small businesses working on helping governments and big business be more open, transparent and responsive to citizens.

Many international governments who are part of the Open Government Partnership such as UK, USA, Germany and Mexico understand this and actively support and fund the development of open government services and programs. In the UK and Germany it is International Development Departments who are mainly funding because they see the global benefits.

Funding is limited here in Australia and there is no pathway to approach agencies and the procurement rules preclude innovative ideas and partnerships getting off the ground.

Overseas big businesses and philanthropists are helping fund and partnering with civic tech organisations and open government innovators. Impact investors and venture capital firms are interested in open government solutions but the sentiment here is our government isn't promoting open government or open to co-funding projects, so there are little incentive or enthusiasm to invest.

Only you, the government can create the legitimate market place to help others service your needs.

The current innovation funding schemes are good but restrictive and top down or focussed on partnerships with universities, whose timelines and objectives are not suited to delivering impact or projects fast. Start-up initiatives are often focussed on open data. There is more to open government than open data.

An open innovation fund and collaboration fund would fit is well with the current innovation funding platform and truly open up new opportunities for public participation and support small businesses and not for profits.

The other area of opportunity is for open government innovators to partner with your existing service providers to help make their services align with open government objectives and data standards.

Collaborative solutions

## Outcomes

- Increase innovation in open government, civic tech space in Australia
- Capacity building through collaboration
- Engaging with the private sector partner providing existing services to help make them more open and transparent
- Champion a new ecosystem of entrepreneurs and innovators in the emerging global civic systems, driven by technology
- Support best practice
- Solve critical issues through greater openness and transparency
- Create healthy respectful partnerships
- Create an open, thriving environment for innovation to occur

## Participatory Design Process

- Consult with a broad range of stakeholders government and non-government to design the format of fund
- Gather case studies, local and international
- Review innovation projects in this space to access best practice, levels of funds and internal resources required to get projects off the ground and supported
- Research funds that exist globally and locally for comparison
- Co-design the format of the fund with wide range of potential collaborators
- Allow people to pitch ideas to government - a bottom up approach rather than a top down approach
- Monitor the fund's performance in terms of impact of projects, iterate.

## Precedents

Collaborative Solutions Mobile Government events NSW funding initiative in 2011 where a number of agencies under the umbrella of Department of Trade and Investment pitched their 'problems', participants (external service providers) were then able to pitch them back ideas, and then 'buddied' with the relevant agency to develop solutions. This event led to the creation of the open government service, Common Ground.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-funding-innovation>

- research and develop a process, product or service
- test your innovation ideas
- collaborate with other organisations

<https://opensource.com/government/14/5/three-open-government-funders>

The Sunlight Foundation, Google, and the Knight Foundation are three organisation fundings small business to create open and transparent government.

**Related to these values:**

Technology and Innovation for Openness and Accountability, Civic Participation

Relates to Digital Transformation, Public Sector Integrity, Access to Government Information, Trust, Public Participation

**Addresses these global themes\*:**

Access to information, open data, E-Government, Feedback Loops, Public Participation, Open contracting and procurement, public service delivery, science and technology,

\* These themes are taken from <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/theme/>

**Applicable Open Gov Commitments from last plan**

Commitment 2.2. Data Sharing

Commitment 2.3. Government digital transformation

Commitment 3.3. Government data accessibility

Commitment 4.3. Open contracting

Commitment 5.2. Enhancing public participation

Submitted to : [ogp@pmc.gov.au](mailto:ogp@pmc.gov.au)

**Proposed by** Mel Flanagan and Rachael Stewart of Nook Studios

Nook Studios is small privately-owned company of researchers, storytellers, makers, and open government advocates.

Mel has been actively involved in Open Government since 2012 when she introduced participatory design and collaborative service design methods whilst making Australis's first open government web service, Common Ground, for NSW Resources and Energy.

Common Ground is an engagement tool to help communities easily access maps and other useful information about exploration and mining activities, including explanations of the role of community in the decision-making process for any potential activity in NSW. Nook is currently working on data storytelling and community/industry engagement tools to help governments deliver on their objectives to be open and more responsive to citizens.

Mel is a member of the Open Government Partnership International Working Group for Natural Resources, and strongly connected to open contracting and open data community.

[Mel.flanagan@nookstudios.com](mailto:Mel.flanagan@nookstudios.com)