

The Collective Consortium

Purpose

Our vision is of engaged and inclusive communities that are working to tackle their own complex social problems through collaboration and collective action.

The Collective aims to transform the way we work to support the most vulnerable and break the cycle of disadvantage by bringing resources, tools, partnerships, capacity and capability that empowers local communities working together in genuinely collaborative ways, taking action to solve their own problems, and reducing dependence on government.

Background

The Collective was launched in July 2014 by NSW Family and Community Services Minister Gabrielle Upton, Minister for Disability Services John Ajaka and Treasurer Andrew Constance, to bring together cross-sector stakeholders with shared values and common interest to leverage the social capital in communities to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. The model demanded that FACS staff be given “permission” to work creatively and collaboratively in support of the community.

In 2016 NCOSS led the successful tender of a Collective Consortium to transition The Collective out of FACS and to deliver a sustainable model for collaborative engagement for the future. FACS provided a one-off fund of \$300,000 for 2 years to enable the Collective Consortium to demonstrate the model and its independence from government.

Phase 1 of the Consortium project was exploratory, reviewing the proposed life cycle model of the Collective Consortium against the legacy of The Collective NSW and in reference to the specific contexts of the 3 identified project regions of Western Sydney, Northern Rivers and the Far West of NSW.

As to be expected, this context has revealed some evolution in thinking and we anticipate that it will continue to evolve as the work progresses. This evolution will impact the form of the Consortium including its partnership level agreements and the operating memorandum of understanding.

Objectives

As stipulated in the Program level Agreement between Department of Family and Community Services NSW (FACS) and Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS), the service delivery/performance objectives of The Collective in the first 2 years of operation are as follows:

Backbone Support for collective impact projects across NSW.

The Collective will:

- Broker partnerships between private sector, philanthropic, government, academic and community partners to develop local solutions to local social challenges
- Build the capacity of partners and potential partners to understand each other's context and potential
- Develop effective relationships between partners working to solve 'wicked problems'
- Focus on one or more of the FACS Strategic Objectives to break rather than manage disadvantage for FACS clients where a client is defined as someone who falls into a cohort of disadvantage as described in the FACS Strategic Statement.

Develop sustainable business model for The Collective.

The Collective will:

- Enable the concept of The Collective to be independent from government by the end of the two year funding period
- Demonstrate that The Collective model can be sustainable over a minimum period of 5 years from the contract commencement date and include diversified funding (financial and in-kind) support
- Have appropriate governance arrangements to manage diversified funding and deliver the deliverables in this RFT, including a risk management strategy.

In addition, The Collective has agreed to include a focus on measurement and evaluation, and communications and knowledge transfer in their work as recommended by the Collective Impact framework.

Memorandum of Understanding

Purpose and Scope of this MOU

- The intent of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to outline and formalise the collaborative partnership in the form of a ‘Consortium’ between NCOSS and participating organisations (‘Members’).
- This MOU outlines broad agreement between NCOSS as the lead agency and Consortium Members. The MOU will be supported by more detailed individual agreements where appropriate, which will be developed in consultation with each participating Member.
- Members agree that this MOU is not a formal legal agreement but each party will use their best endeavours to ensure that they fulfil their commitments as set out in this MOU.

Consortium Values and Principles of Operation

- The Consortium is committed to working collaboratively to ensure the successful delivery of the Collective Projects. The following principles will guide how the Collective Consortium does its work.
 - Members will value and respect each other
 - Members will work to develop and execute on shared goals
 - Members will be clear and respectful about individual and shared intellectual property
 - Members agree to communicate within and between member organisations
 - Members agree to be transparent about decisions and make information available to all members of the Consortium
 - Members agree to measure the impact of our work and continuously improve our model and processes.
- In order to achieve the successful delivery of Collective Projects as determined by the contract with FACS, the Consortium is committed to the following:
 - We recognise the need to pro-actively engage a diversity of cross-sector stakeholders in our efforts to enable significant community-wide change.
 - We understand that to achieve change we need to make a long-term investment in the work that we do.
 - We will ensure community ownership of the collaborative projects we facilitate through a co-design and partnership implementation approach.
 - We will establish a sustainable model that delivers collective action across communities and social issues in NSW.
 - We will disseminate information and improve public knowledge about collaborative projects.

Partner Organisations of the Collective Consortium

The Collective Consortium is made up of:

- NSW Council of Social Service
- UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance
- Design Innovation Research Centre, UTS
- Community Builders Australia
- Benojo

The Consortium has a number of converging partners who will be called upon to provide advice and services where appropriate.

Chair, Facilitation & Secretariat

- NCOSS will Chair, facilitate and provide secretariat for the Collective Consortium.
- NCOSS, as party to the contract with FACS to deliver the Collective, will be determinative in all decisions directly associated with the contract, and has responsibility to execute on the requirements of the contract in all operational matters arising for the Collective Consortium.
- NCOSS will be consultative with Members in matters surrounding the Collective Projects.
- NCOSS will act as adjudicator in conflicts that arise between members.
- NCOSS will commit that in this role it will be researched, impartial, and will keep the Collective Consortium's core purpose as a guiding principle.

Roles & Responsibilities of Members

NCOSS is the lead agency for the Collective Consortium. NCOSS has overall responsibility for the quality of the work delivered through the Consortium. NCOSS has responsibility to lead and manage the Consortium. NCOSS has responsibility for liaison with the funding body and overall responsibility for reporting requirements and ensuring compliance with the Program Level Agreement. NCOSS has responsibility for reporting progress to Members in a timely and consistent fashion.

All Members share some general responsibility as part of the Consortium, including but not limited to the responsibility to be actively engaged in the Consortium and to work towards our shared vision, fostering an environment that enables collaboration and innovation to achieve better outcomes.

NCOSS is responsible for the provision of a centralised backbone service. NCOSS will oversee the development of, and commitment to:

- Brokering and maintaining effective partnerships and relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders
- Creating a common agenda agreed upon by the stakeholders
- A shared measurement and evaluation system
- Ongoing capacity building and knowledge transfer

Partner Organisations of the Consortium will be responsible for delivery of expertise and services as appropriate and where required in the delivery of the Collective projects.

Conflicts of Interest

- It is the responsibility of Members to identify, declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in relation to the activities and decisions of the Collective Consortium.

- NCOSS will be available to discuss any issues relating to possible or actual conflicts of interest with Members.

Disbursement of Project Funds

- NCOSS as lead agency for the Consortium will hold responsibility for, and governance of, all funding received through the Consortium for the delivery of services.
- Individual subcontracts developed between NCOSS and Members will detail the distribution of funds.

Meeting Frequency

- A Consortium Steering Committee (made up of the Members & Converging Members) will meet as required at NCOSS offices, 52 William St. If this venue is unavailable NCOSS will source an alternate location. The purpose of this meeting will be to provide progress updates on the delivery of Collective Projects.
- Meetings of NCOSS and the Consortium to progress work of the Collective Projects will be held as required for Members to do their work effectively.

Expert Advisory Board

- An Expert Advisory Board (Board) will be sourced and engaged by NCOSS to be in place by Q4 2016, to provide oversight of the operations of the Collective Consortium and in the delivery of the Collective Projects. Board members can be recommended by Members. The Board will meet quarterly at NCOSS offices, 52 William St. Terms of Reference for the Board will be agreed by the Board, including length of service.
- Kathryn Greiner will Chair the Board in its first instance to provide continuity in operations.

Review and Evaluation

- Members will commit to a review and evaluation of the operations of the Consortium in addition to a review of the extent to which the Consortium has met its objectives.
- The date, style and method of evaluation will be determined by a working party of Consortium Members on agreement of this MOU.

Review of the terms of reference

These terms will be reviewed by February 2017