

# Newsletter

## Pilot program promotes good governance

Twenty-eight Queensland community-based organisations that have volunteered to take part in an innovative pilot program are discovering that governance is not such a dry subject after all.

The Governance Pilot Program is being conducted for the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy by consultants Pamela Spall and Associates and Bradfield Nyland Group with 12 organisations in Rockhampton and another 16 in the Logan–Beaudesert area.

Pamela Spall said the program involved working individually with organisations using self-assessment sessions and workshops to enhance the governance processes of their boards or management committees.

“Governance is the bedrock that organisations operate on, so if they don’t have good management processes, they are placing themselves at risk,” Ms Spall said.

“Their governing bodies need to be skilled in balancing day-to-day operations with long-term strategic planning, risk management, legal compliance, financial management and succession planning.”

Ms Spall said committee members had welcomed the opportunity



MultiLink’s management committee includes (from left) Chairman Russell Lutton, Treasurer Jose Rivera and CEO Peter Forday.

to increase their knowledge of contemporary governance issues.

“They particularly appreciate the collaborative approach of the program,” she said.

MultiLink Community Services, a Logan-based migrant and refugee support organisation, has already reported positive outcomes from the program.

Chief Executive Officer Peter Forday said the initial self-assessment allowed his organisation to examine all aspects of its management committee’s functions.

“It helped us look at how we operate and to identify our committee’s strengths as well as areas for further development,” Mr Forday said.

“We have been following up priority areas identified through this process in intensive workshops, so the program is flexible and tailored to our committee’s individual needs.

“Two of the areas it has highlighted for us is the importance of ensuring our committee includes the right skills mix and that we have a governance model that fits the size of our organisation.”

As well as their current activities, the consultants will work with Indigenous groups in both pilot areas to develop programs for the committees of Indigenous organisations. They are also presenting public workshops on governance in Logan–Beaudesert and Rockhampton during August.

For more information, contact Glenda Sacre, 1300 794 611. ●●

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# Message from the Minister



With August 2007 marking the second anniversary of the launch of the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy, now is a good time to reflect on the progress of some of its major initiatives.

Much work has been done in the field of workforce and organisational development, with initiatives such as the Governance Pilot Program and Education Pathways for Community Services Careers now in train and promising long-term benefits for the community and disability sectors.

Many organisations have also taken the opportunity to build the skills and professional profile of their workers through another of the workforce development initiatives — the Communities–Vocational Education and Training (VET) Partnership. More than 660 community and disability workers are currently enrolled in this skills recognition and training program, while another 1480 have submitted expressions of interest.

An important part of the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy is ensuring organisations have tools and resources to help them operate effectively. Major resources produced so far include the Community Door website; *VOICE*, a CD-ROM of management resources for Indigenous organisations; and the Standard Chart of Accounts, a more streamlined accounting system for non-government organisations.

Further support has been provided by the 12 Queensland Council of Social Service community sector development workers who were appointed to regions throughout the state with funding from the strategy in early 2006.

Funding has also been provided to organisations for capacity-building activities. This has included about \$5.2 million for collaborative projects and \$800 000 for Indigenous organisations, as well as an allocation of \$30 million for specialist disability services.

Extensive work has been done on two initiatives to clarify the

Queensland Government's working relationship with community-based organisations — the development of Standards for Community Services and new community services legislation. Together, these initiatives will provide a framework for the government and the community services sector to work together to ensure Queenslanders have access to high-quality, safe and accountable services.

The Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy is a partnership between the Queensland Government and the community and disability sectors, with the advances of the past two years achieved through a joint effort and a commitment to shared goals.

I congratulate you on your contribution to the success of the strategy so far and look forward to our continued collaboration.

**The Honourable Warren Pitt MP**  
Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Seniors and Youth

## Website training opens doors to resources

About 50 training sessions were conducted across the state between April and June to help workers in community and disability organisations make the best use of the Community Door website, a key online resource of the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy.

The site, launched last December, provides management tools for non-government organisations, as well as information on topics such as funding, reporting and Standards for Community Services.

Online Resources Project Manager Claire Rowland said the training had been delivered by departmental staff and Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) community sector development workers, following “train the trainer” workshops in Brisbane and Townsville.

“There are a lot of really useful tools on the Community Door website, but many people don't have the time to explore and discover it all for themselves.

“The training sessions were designed to raise awareness of what is available on the site, where it can be found and how it can help the managers and staff of non-government organisations,” Ms Rowland said. ●●



### More information

**Contact:** Claire Rowland  
**Phone:** 1300 794 611  
**Website:** [www.qld.gov.au/ngo](http://www.qld.gov.au/ngo)

### Community Door website — the first six months

**Total visits:** 15 291

**Total pages viewed:** 98 139

**Returning visitors:** 2226

**New visitors:** 8449

**Most frequently visited content:**  
Management, funding, standards, networks, *VOICE* CD-ROM

# Building links in the Brisbane Valley

Esk–Kilcoy Community Support Association, Ipswich Community Youth Service and The University of Queensland have joined forces to improve services for young people and families in the Brisbane Valley’s Esk Shire.

The association’s Community Development Coordinator, Kathryn Gossow, said their new partnership had been formed to fill a significant service gap in the local area.

“Most of the youth and family support services in this area are provided on an outreach basis from Ipswich and are delivered in a rather piecemeal way,” Ms Gossow said.

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“We aim to expand the partnership into a sustainable, collaborative group ...” *Kathryn Gossow*  
.....

“Community members aren’t sure about what services are available, who the providers are, and when and where they can access services.

“The initial aims of our partnership are to identify the key players in service provision, build relationships between them and establish processes and protocols for collaborative case management.”

Ms Gossow said that as a first step, the group would employ a project worker to develop a model for collaboration across all relevant agencies and organisations.

“The current partners are just the ‘seed’.

“We aim to expand the partnership into a sustainable, collaborative group that can offer young people and families in the area a range of integrated services.”

The Esk-based partnership was established with funding from the second round of the Building Links program.

More than \$500 000 was distributed through the program to 15 groups of organisations for collaborative activities aimed at strengthening service delivery in the community and disability sectors. ●●



Kathryn Gossow (second from right) joined Queensland Health staff at the Lowood show to promote local community services.

## More information

Contact: Glenda Sacre  
Phone: 1300 794 611

## Sector voices — insights from sector leaders



**Valmae Rose, State Manager of National Disability Services (Queensland), describes how the National Disability Services Planning Project is helping organisations prepare for a sustainable future.**

Under Disability Services Queensland’s Strengthening Non-Government Organisations funding program, National Disability Services (Queensland) has had a team of 12 facilitators working with about 70 funded disability organisations across the state for the past year. These facilitators have been supporting organisations to rethink and strengthen the way they use the needs of service users to drive planning and service delivery.

For some organisations, the work has been about revisiting who they are as an organisation — their mission, their value base, how they engage the people who use their service — and ensuring they have a strategic plan in place that reflects this.

For others, the work has focused on making decisions about whether to grow or consolidate, based on current

and future need. Some organisations have started building new partnerships with other agencies so they can respond more creatively to the needs of people in their community. Others have started working closely with people with disability and their staff about how to better meet their needs.

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“Organisations who ... reconnect and re-inspire their people are better positioned for a sustainable future.” *Valmae Rose*  
.....

On the whole, organisations who strengthen their vision and are able to reconnect and re-inspire their people are better positioned for a sustainable future. The stronger the identity of the organisation, the clearer the vision — and the easier it is to attract and retain skilled staff, managers and management committee members.

As a means of supporting disability organisations to achieve this, the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations initiatives have presented an outstanding opportunity for change. ●●

# Raising the profile of service sectors

Sector working groups in Townsville and Logan have begun rolling out local action plans for promoting the community-based services industry and the variety of job opportunities it offers.

The action plans are a key element of the pilot projects established in these two centres for the Education Pathways for Community Services Careers initiative.

Margaret Goody from Hudson Global Resources, the human resource management company providing specialist services for the initiative, said the action plans proposed a broad range of recruitment and retention strategies.

“These include public workshops about the community and disability sectors, information days, exit interviews and strategies for managing professional development, as well as image-building activities such as media training,” Ms Goody said.

“Each organisation in the working group will choose one or two strategies to trial, and the group will evaluate the outcomes.”

A similar workforce development pilot project has been established in the Roma–Charleville area as part of the Queensland Government’s Blueprint for the Bush.

Initial research is being undertaken with local community-based organisations, government agencies, education institutions and business groups in preparation for developing action plans focusing on recruitment and retention in rural and remote Queensland.

The next major Education Pathways activity is a collaborative workshop for peak bodies and community-based organisations to help prioritise action areas and determine future directions for the overall initiative.

This workshop is planned for late August 2007. ●●



Among those attending the June meeting of the Townsville working group were (from left) Lindy Edwards, Sera’s Women’s Shelter, and Paula La Rosa, Centacare.

## More information

**Contact:** Glenda Sacre  
Margaret Goody

**Phone:** 1300 794 611 (Glenda)  
0418 794 479 (Margaret)

## Interim report

An interim report on the Education Pathways for Community Services Careers initiative is now available on the Community Door website at [www.qld.gov.au/ngo](http://www.qld.gov.au/ngo). The report outlines research findings and issues, as well as proposals for future activities in the initiative.

# Funding boost for Indigenous organisations

Grants totalling more than \$800 000 are opening up new opportunities for capacity building in many of the state’s Indigenous community organisations.

The grants were provided through two initiatives — the Strengthening Indigenous Non-Government Organisations and Strengthening Rural Indigenous Non-Government Organisations funding programs — for targeted work in areas such as financial management, business planning, reporting and organisational restructuring.

Rockhampton-based Darumbal Community Youth Services is one of about 30 organisations to benefit from the grants.

Darumbal Manager Margaret Hornagold said her organisation would be using the funding to obtain specialist assistance for refining its policies and procedures.

“We plan to work with Finline Consultancy, a company that specialises in providing management and other services for Indigenous non-government organisations,” Ms Hornagold said.

“We want to make sure our policies in areas such as risk management, human resources and occupational health and safety are in line with the standards being introduced for community service organisations.

“This kind of work is also important for the good governance of our organisation — for demonstrating accountability and best practice in client services and taking care of our staff.”

Ms Hornagold said managers, staff and clients from Darumbal would be participating in workshops and focus groups as part of their policy-making activities.

“We’re looking forward to the opportunities these activities offer for developing our organisation and ensuring it is competitive in the field of funding and human service delivery.”

One-off grants under both Strengthening Indigenous Non-Government Organisations funding programs will continue to be available during the next two years. ●●

## More information

**Contact:** Graham White **Phone:** 1300 794 611

# Workforce Development Awards launched in Cairns

About 45 sector representatives joined staff from the Department of Communities and Disability Services Queensland to launch the 2007 Minister's Awards for Excellence in Workforce Development in Cairns on 1 June.

In his opening address, the Minister for Communities, Disability Services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Seniors and Youth, Warren Pitt, paid tribute to the dedication and professionalism of the state's community and disability organisations.

"The awards provide an opportunity for these organisations to showcase successful strategies for developing and supporting their workers and continuously improving client services," Mr Pitt said.

"Traineeships, mentoring, staff exchanges, pre-employment programs and culturally inclusive workplace practices are just some of the ways that organisations are building the capacity of their workforce."

**"The awards help to inspire, educate and motivate organisations."** *Morris Marrinon*

Mr Pitt said skill development and staff retention were integral to long-term success and sustainability, especially when many sectors and industries were currently facing skill shortages.

"I encourage all organisations who are doing good work in this field to nominate for the awards and share their experiences and learnings."

Morris Marrinon, CEO of Cootharinga Society of North Queensland, a 2006 award winner, was guest speaker at the launch.

"The awards help to inspire, educate and motivate organisations," Mr Marrinon said.

"Our staff greatly value the award we received last year and appreciate the industry recognition we received.

"We look forward to participating again in 2007 and benefiting from the opportunity to share best practice." ●●

## More information

**Contact:** Health and Community Services Workforce Council

**Phone:** 3234 0190



Minister Pitt met guests at the launch of the 2007 Workforce Development Awards.



Cootharinga Society of North Queensland CEO Morris Marrinon highlighted the benefits of the awards for organisations and their clients.

## New information online for disability organisations

Up-to-date information about disability-specific initiatives in the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy is currently available on the Disability Services Queensland website.

Visit [www.disability.qld.gov.au/sngo](http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/sngo) to find information about funding, training and other assistance available through the strategy.

Links are also provided to related initiatives and projects, including:

- the Disability Sector Quality System
- the *Disability Services Act 2006*
- the Fair Level of Funding Project.



# Building links in Monto

The Monto Community Development Council has taken advantage of recent Blueprint for the Bush funding to research disability service needs throughout the region.

The funding, provided through Building Rural Links, a Strengthening Rural Non-Government Organisations initiative, will allow the community to gather data on disability support services and facilities in the Monto area.

Andrew Crowther, of the Monto Community Development Council, said the council was hoping the study would provide valuable information across a range of areas, including who required services, what, if any, services they were currently accessing and what services they would like to see provided.

"It is more than just looking for new and additional services from government," Mr Crowther said.

"It is also about identifying how we can coordinate and make best use of the services and systems

already available, whether they be local or those delivered by outreach services. It is about building capacity within our own community.

"We are also hoping that if we can develop a methodology for gathering this type of information in a rural community it can be shared with other regions so they don't have to start from scratch."

"It is also about identifying how we can coordinate and make best use of the services and systems already available..."

*Andrew Crowther*

Monto Disability Action Support Group President Gaylene Howell said the Eidsvold Aboriginal Housing Group, Bluecare Monto and Health and Education Services would be involved in the project. ●●

## More information

**Contact:** Karen Jones  
**Phone:** 1300 794 611



## Plans for new centres underway

Community organisations in Burdekin, Dalby, Lockhart River, Charters Towers and Longreach will receive initial funding of \$17 500 each to begin planning rural multi-tenant service centres.

The funds are part of the first stage of the Blueprint for the Bush's Rural Multi-Tenant Service Centre initiative.

The initiative aims to encourage community organisations, local governments, private providers and government agencies to co-locate and work collaboratively.

The organisations will use the initial funding to develop business case proposals to determine the feasibility of their rural multi-tenant service centre models.

Further funding of up to \$1 million will be available to each location to meet the costs of establishing a combined service centre in the next three years. ●●

## Our Place, Our Future funding

Three rounds of this funding program have been offered since December 2006.

The latest round closed on 30 July. The next round closes on 22 October 2007.

## More information

[www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/regional/blueprint/funding/](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/regional/blueprint/funding/)



(From left) Wide Bay–Burnett Rural and Regional Communities Officer Adrian Tantari, Gaylene Howell and Andrew Crowther met recently to discuss the research to be undertaken with Building Rural Links funding.

# Disability funding focuses on children

Children with a disability and their families are the focus of a large share of the latest funding that Disability Services Queensland has distributed through the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy.

A total of \$3 million has been provided to three organisations for increasing early intervention services — the Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland, the Sunshine Coast Children's Therapy Centre, and MontroseAccess.

The Cerebral Palsy League's Service Development and Policy Manager, Geoff Rowe, said the funding would expand the capacity of his organisation, and the disability sector as a whole, to provide specialist services for children with a disability and increase their access to the community.

"The major aims of the early intervention funding program are to strengthen the family's capacity to support their children's growth and development, and to support children and their families to access mainstream community activities, such as local playgroups and social and recreational services," Mr Rowe said.

"The program should have a significant impact across the state." *Geoff Rowe*

"One of the exciting parts of this program is that a whole group of children and families who haven't been able to access these activities and services will now be able to do so."



The Hart Walker increases Bianca Power's mobility and her access to community activities and services.

Mr Rowe said the new funding had allowed the Cerebral Palsy League to employ 22 early intervention workers from a range of backgrounds across the state.

"These workers will be based in Rockhampton, Hervey Bay, Toowoomba, Brisbane, Ipswich and the Gold Coast and include physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, psychologists and early childhood educators.

"We will also be establishing a new team of four staff in Townsville.

"At the end of the day, the program should have a significant impact across the state," Mr Rowe said. ●●

## More information

Strengthening Non-Government Disability Organisations

**Contact:** Annett Cummings

**Phone:** 3224 6435

Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland

**Phone:** 3358 8011

**Website:** [www.cplqld.org.au](http://www.cplqld.org.au)

## Program to assist with complex behaviour

Expressions of interest are now invited from service providers in the disability sector to participate in a new mentoring program to be offered by the Queensland Centre for Intellectual and Developmental Disability.

The program is for service providers and their staff who work with people displaying complex behaviours. It includes workshops and mentoring to help staff broaden their knowledge, skills and networks in positive behaviour support. The program will run for a 12-month period during 2007–08.

Funding for the program is being provided by Disability Services Queensland as part of the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy.

Applications to participate in the program must be submitted by 13 September 2007. ●●

## More information

**Email:** [qcidd@uq.edu.au](mailto:qcidd@uq.edu.au)

[madonna.tucker@uq.edu.au](mailto:madonna.tucker@uq.edu.au)

**Website:** [www.disability.qld.gov.au/sngo](http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/sngo)

## News in brief

### Community Services Bill 2007

The Minister for Communities, Warren Pitt, introduced the Community Services Bill 2007 into Parliament on 13 March 2007. It proposes new laws that set out clear processes for the Department of Communities to provide funding and other assistance to organisations, and for ensuring services are high-quality, safe and accountable.

The new laws will be implemented after the Bill is debated and passed by Parliament. To view the Bill, visit [www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/strengthening\\_ngos](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/strengthening_ngos)

### Email discussion group for Standard Chart of Accounts

An email discussion group has been established for organisations to ask questions and share information about the Standard Chart of Accounts. To join, email your details to [dyo@qut.edu.au](mailto:dyo@qut.edu.au) or visit <https://olt.qut.edu.au/bus/DYO> (click the 'Standard Chart of Accounts' link).

An online survey was also conducted during July on the Standard Chart of Accounts. Feedback will identify areas where organisations need further help to implement the new accounting system.

The Standard Chart of Accounts was developed by the Queensland University of Technology and Queensland Treasury, and rolled out as part of the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy during 2006.

### New officer to work with Indigenous organisations



Lynda Ah Mat is a recent addition to the Strengthening Indigenous Non-Government Organisations team. She is based in Cairns and will work with organisations in Far North Queensland communities, including Yarrabah, Aurukun, Napranum, Coen, Thursday Island and Pormpuraaw.

Born and raised on Thursday Island, Lynda has completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in anthropology. For the past eight years she has worked in the Department of Education, Training and the Arts in Cairns where most recently she managed a curriculum and resource development unit supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in vocational education and training.

## Update from QCOSS

a major partner in the  
**Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy**



### Focus on peer support

One of the major activities the QCOSS community sector development workers have been involved in during the past few months is facilitating peer support among community organisations.

The following examples show some different ways the peer support program is being rolled out in regional areas.

#### Gympie

Organisations in the Gympie area formed their peer support group specifically to carry out "self-audits" based on each of the Standards for Community Services. The group meets about every five weeks for one or two hours to look at a particular standard and discuss their current policies and organisational systems in relation to that standard.

#### Gladstone

The Gladstone group began through its link to the monthly Gladstone interagency meetings and is focusing on providing peer support, strengthening the sector as a whole, encouraging collaboration and improving service delivery in the region. Currently, a small number of organisations are meeting for about 1½ hours each week to develop policies and procedures for effective service delivery.

#### Greater Brisbane and Moreton regions

Monthly lunchbox sessions are planned for the Greater Brisbane and Moreton regions. These sessions will be face-to-face gatherings about general aspects of the Standards for Community Services. Participants are invited to discuss challenges in implementing the standards and to share supporting resources.

## We want to hear from you

You can help us keep readers up to date with the latest news from the Strengthening Non-Government Organisations strategy.

We encourage you to tell us about some of the activities and experiences of your organisation and the kind of stories you would like to read about in this newsletter.

For more information or to join the mailing list for this newsletter, contact:

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