



Community Services Grants Program

Communiqué 7

July 2008

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This Communiqué is to provide information to CSGP services further to our most recent Roundtable meeting in July, 2008.

Specifically, this communiqué addresses:

- DoCS continuing commitment to an holistic approach to child protection measures that effectively support children, young people, families and communities
- The context for the transfer of CSGP within the NSW budget papers
- The intention of Roundtable members to be ready to respond quickly to the Commission's outcomes
- The impact of the Special Commission on funding decisions and the subsequent delay in its reporting on the timeframes for funding reform in CSGP

It was raised at this meeting that some service providers are concerned at the perceived shift by DoCS in our support of Community Capacity Building within the community. It must be noted that there has been no change in DoCS' continued commitment to a holistic approach to Child Protection. DoCS remains committed to the continuing development and ongoing success of services directed to strengthening families and communities and improving individual and community resilience. This commitment results from the view that providing coordinated child protection and early intervention requires a whole of community approach to the provision of support services and in turn reduces cases of child abuse and neglect.

Concern has been raised over the transfer of CSGP from "Community Development and Capacity Building" to "Contracted Child Protection Services" in the NSW budget papers. This change relates only to the financial reporting requirements for Treasury and is simply the area in the budget against which DoCS reports the results for the program. It is not a new program name but a recognition that child protection is a broad service system that includes prevention, early intervention, crisis and post crisis services.

The term "Contracted" used in this case refers to "essential service provision" and will provide a firm commitment to an ongoing budget for the CSGP. We need to remove the term and the concept of "Grants" from the program as grants are seen to be temporary funding and not a long term commitment to funding. CSGP is a continuing and essential program and not an optional one.

The postponement of the final report from the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services will have an impact on the timeframe for the implementation of the recommendations from the CSGP review. DoCS has indicated to the Commission in submissions and supporting letters the unique contribution of the CSGP in supporting child protection, early intervention and community strengthening. DoCS will continue to work closely with the Roundtable to be in a position to quickly respond to the Commission's outcomes.

The implementation of funding reform in CSGP will be delayed as we continue to negotiate for resources to implement the needed initiatives. DoCS has consistently argued that additional resources will enable a planned and effective development of a coordinated support system within the program. Members of the Roundtable will be working with DoCS to ensure that any implementation of the reform agenda will be properly resourced and consultative of the sector.

DoCS will also continue to work closely with the Roundtable, your representatives, on the positioning of CSGP. DoCS remains committed to supporting the contribution of services to community capacity building in local communities, family support and counselling and youth support activities. Roundtable members have advocated for services from a number of funded programs including CSGP, Brighter Futures and Families NSW that cover the full range of activities from community capacity building to targeted child protection services.

As a result of the delay in implementing the Review, and the need to provide a definite plan for the future of the program, all CSGP Service Specifications have been extended until 30 June 2009. This will ensure the continuation of the current service system until a firm commitment is received for the development of the program.

The representatives from the community services sector and DoCS remain firmly committed to working together through the CSGP Roundtable on progressing the CSGP.