



Sector Development for Disability Representative Organisations

Feedback summary

Overview

The Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support activity aims to promote an understanding of the lives of people with disability and carers; protect the rights and dignity of people with disability and carers; and foster support for their participation in all aspects of community life.

Within this activity DSS is committed to assisting disability representative organisations to contribute to Government policy on issues that impact people with disability and carers, and to communicate Government information to their memberships and the sectors they represent.

The Sector Development for Disability Representative Organisations funding round sought to distribute funding to organisations who could best address those intended objectives. Up to \$300,000 per year was available to those who could address funding objectives and best met selection criteria within the funding allocation.

Funding under this activity is generally for enabling grant activities that focus on broad organisational, sectoral and social impacts, and is not generally for the provision of services direct to individuals or families. Organisations able to deliver national disability representations against this service offer where anticipated in this funding round.

Selection results

This funding will enable the organisations offered funding to directly deliver national disability representation by contributing to Australian Government policy on issues that impact people with a disability. In the lead up to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) this is another major investment by Government in the sector to ensure sector engagement.

DSS received 95 applications for the Sector Development for Disability Representative Organisations funding round 2014-15 which were of a very high quality, with proposals demonstrating the depth and breadth of disability representative organisations in the sector. It was an extremely competitive round and only strong and excellent proposals, which clearly demonstrated that they would deliver such national disability representation, could be funded.

Further details about such proposals are detailed for each of the selection criteria below.

Selection process

DSS considered each proposal against five equally weighted selection criteria as listed below. Only organisations which rated highly in all aspects of the selection criteria were identified as preferred applicants.

The Department also emphasised that in responding to any of the selection criteria for funding rounds, applicants needed to provide evidence to support claims about how they meet each of the criteria. During the application process, the Department provided assistance for applicants in providing evidence

including a fact sheet on the types of evidence that could be used for addressing selection criteria as well as guidance on what strong evidence looks like.

In order to focus the impact of DSS funding and provide a coordinated voice for the sector, DSS was looking to identify those proposals with a demonstrated understanding of the required impact and a national coverage with no gaps in representation.

The organisations offered funding are expected to operate within the following parameters:

- Consistency is ensured with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Representation is provided across the following key areas: cross-disability issues, women with disability, children and young people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, people with disability from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds and service providers that provide support to people with disability.
- Provision of a strong representative base that has national scope and reach and is supported by individual and/or organisational members:
 - ensuring there are no gaps in the representation of people with disability with all persons with disability able to elect to join one or more of the consortia/ organisations
 - ensuring service providers are able to be represented at a national level
 - ensuring effective representation and capacity building on national issues, such as the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- Consortia/ Organisations must demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness through a collegial, cooperative approach to the provision of policy advice without duplication of effort across the disability sector – noting that funding will not be provided to more than one organisation/ consortia focused on the same or similar issues or with the same focus or target group.
- Strategies and approaches are provided that support sector coordination and sector development where applicable, including strategies to address cross-disability issues.

Criteria 1: Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded activity in one or more of the identified target groups.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 1, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example including use of evidence
The applicant demonstrated an understanding of the needs of its target groups consistent with the parameters of funding.	<p>The proposal detailed a history of working with the identified target groups.</p> <p>The proposal provided an estimation of the percentage of Australians with a disability covered by the organisation/consortium.</p> <p>The proposal showed a whole-of-life perspective on client needs and an understanding of the social model of disability that focuses on views able to be provided on barriers to participation rather than the impairment.</p> <p>The applicant demonstrated how the voice of individual people with disability or individual disability service providers can be heard and/or the proposal identified strong, national representation of disability service providers for all types of disability and all types of services.</p>
The applicant had a commitment to collaboration with other organisations.	<p>The applicant demonstrated clear commitment to collaborate with other representative organisations where there are shared interests and opportunities.</p> <p>The applicant demonstrated clear commitment to reducing sector fragmentation, reducing advice to government being focused on individual cohorts, reducing duplicative efforts and improving coordination.</p>
The applicant performs a representative function across organisations in the disability sector.	<p>A list of member/affiliated organisations within the sector cohort was included in the proposal, including the approach to collecting their opinions and satisfaction with the representative organisation's performance.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>The proposal provided evidence of a very high representation of disability service providers across a wide range of need areas, such as housing, respite, employment, therapy and community access.</p>
There was a demonstrated ability to represent the disability sector to government.	<p>The proposal provided a clear description of content and format of communications to government. An understanding of social, economic and political issues facing the sector was shown.</p> <p>The proposal demonstrated a clear peak role in representing issues at a national level as opposed to providing information and advocacy at a community level.</p>
The applicant showed how it addresses a gap in representation.	The proposal used qualitative and/or quantitative evidence to show that no other organisation currently fulfils proposed representation function.
The organisation offered activities which add value to other organisations in the disability sector.	A description of activities was included such as communities of practice, forums, stimulating innovation and partnering with researchers.

Areas for improvement

77% of applicants were determined non-compliant based on their responses to Criteria 1 because they didn't demonstrate national coverage.

Furthermore, applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 1 in a number of ways:

- providing coverage at a national level rather than in a local area
- including cross disability focus rather than a single disability
- demonstrating they are a representative organisation rather than focusing only on other functions (e.g. care provision, employment services, research)
- providing information on broader focus rather than a discrete project
- demonstrating collaboration with other organisations
- providing examples illustrating an understanding of sector-wide issues.

Criteria 2: Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the grant funding.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 2, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example use of evidence
There was a clear articulation of activities to be conducted.	A multi-phase plan of proposed outcomes and deliverables and/or existing organisational strategic plan was provided.
The applicant demonstrated robust governance structures.	Current organisational structure/operating model was included. The proposal included an overview of core responsibilities of organisations forming a partnership (e.g. approach to having one voice to the Australian Government on policy development, programme and reform issues, demonstrating strong collaboration, and coordination of effort across the sector. Or The proposal demonstrated sound governance structures and outcomes representing views of service provider to Government.
The proposal used evidence drawn from target group(s).	The proposal specified how evidence from target group(s) will be used to refine activities over time.
Consideration of geographical variations was demonstrated.	The proposal included specific strategies for both metropolitan and rural areas (e.g. use of videoconferencing).
Engagement with other organisations in the disability sector was part of the proposal.	The proposal articulated clear capacity for developing strategic opportunities to advance the rights of people with disability, identified key target organisations and/or channels of communication to ensure no gaps in the representation of people with disability or the service providers that represent them.
The project will be value for money.	A clear budget was provided. The proposal identified sustainability within the prescribed budget on a forward basis, including incorporating within the proposed governance and funding structure, new intersections, new disability types and new members over time.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 2 in a number of ways:

- demonstrating value for money, including providing a proposed budget
- describing the representation of people with disability within the defined parameters of funding
- describing how organisations/consortiums can potentially achieve a gap free approach to representation and achieve sustainability into the future within prescribed funding levels
- providing details of reporting to Government
- including more detail on continuous improvement and evaluation strategies.

Criteria 3: Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring Activities to achieve activity objectives for all stakeholders.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 3, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
The proposal demonstrated past engagement with other organisations in the disability sector.	Examples of past roundtable consultations, conferences, focus groups, use of social media were included.
The applicant has demonstrated success in driving cross disability outcomes.	The proposal provided a list of past projects, their impact on government policy and their outcomes for people with a range of disabilities.
The applicant has experience serving as a representative organisation for the disability sector.	The proposal provided examples of outreach activities on behalf of the sector including conference presentations, submissions to government (e.g. in the context of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the National Disability Strategy), media briefings, website traffic levels.
The applicant has a comprehensive membership base with national reach.	Number of members/affiliated organisations was quoted.
The proposal had a demonstrated satisfaction of member/affiliated organisations.	The proposal cited percentage of members satisfied during latest survey of members.
The proposal demonstrated that the organisation had familiarity with partnerships and collaboration.	Past examples of partnerships/collaborations with other organisations were cited within the proposal.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 3 in a number of ways:

- including greater focus on experience as a representative organisation rather than as a service delivery organisation
- explaining experience providing monitoring and reporting to government
- demonstrating the satisfaction levels of members/affiliated organisations
- identifying outcomes of previous representation activities.

Criteria 4: Demonstrate your organisation’s capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the activity objectives in the selected target group/s.

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 4, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example use of evidence
Individuals within the organisation have suitable skills and experience.	Specific projects that are relevant to the target groups that have previously been led by individuals within the organisation were detailed.
Governance structures are sound for the applicant.	National structure including role of affiliates/rules for obtaining affiliation was specified.
Strong financial controls are in place for the applicant.	Details of financial management systems, including internal policies, procedures and quality improvement mechanisms were included.
Some individuals within the applicant’s organisation have lived experience of a disability.	There is a significant proportion of people with a disability within the organisation’s leading personnel. Or The organisation demonstrates how the needs and views of people with disability are represented by service providers and able to be communicated to Government.
Organisation has a strategic plan in place.	Details of the strategic plan and approach to risk management were included.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 4 in a number of ways:

- including greater detail of continuous improvement strategies within governance structures
- providing more explicit detail on the skills and qualifications of individual staff members
- explaining how the governance of the organisation enables it to operate at a national level.

Criteria 5: Describe how your current or proposed organisation structure fulfils the activity requirements (as defined in the Programme Guidelines “Organisations representing people with disability” and/or “Organisations Representing Service Providers that support people with disability”).

Preferred applicants demonstrated a wide range of strengths in relation to Criteria 5, as shown in the table below.

Strength	Example
The applicant demonstrated representation of, and collaboration within, the disability sector.	A list/number of affiliated organisations was included. A collaborative approach involving other peak disability organisations was proposed.
The applicant has experience providing advocacy to government on behalf of the sector.	Examples of previous policy advice provided to the government relevant to the organisation’s target groups were included.
The applicant has representation of the disability sector at a national and international level.	The application provided examples of leadership on national initiatives and in international organisations forums and provided evidence of forums and a sound membership base to inform its representations.
The proposal demonstrated the organisation had a broad range of networks within and beyond the disability sector.	The proposal included a list of organisations previously worked with, including in the disability sector, research bodies, related community sectors, media and government.
The application had coverage of a diverse range of people with a disability.	Examples were provided of activities related to disability across the most vulnerable groups: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with a disability; Children and Young People with Disability; Women with Disability and/or people with a disability from a wide range of cultural and geographic backgrounds and the wide range of types of service providers that represent them.

Areas for improvement

Applicants could have strengthened their responses to Criteria 5 in a number of ways:

- addressing any potential gaps in the organisation’s activities, which would leave out some people with a disability
- clarifying rules for other organisations affiliating with the disability representative organisation
- forming strategic alliances broadly across the disability sector
- providing greater detail on how the organisation responds to feedback from its members/affiliates
- identifying how the organisation plays a representative role at a national level
- providing a model of representation based on the need for assistance in life areas rather than based on the representation of needs based on medical diagnosis.

Further Feedback

To register to receive further feedback, please email grants@dss.gov.au providing all of the following details:

- Organisation name, as used on the application for funding (legal name or trading name, if different from the legal name);
- The Application ID issued by DSS upon receipt of the application for which feedback is sought;
- The name of the funding round(s) as per the application pack materials and application form (feedback for more than one funding application can be requested in the one email);
- A contact name and telephone number; and
- A contact email address.

To be eligible to receive feedback for the Sector Development for Disability Representative Organisations round you must register by **Friday 13 February 2015**.

The Department will undertake to provide individual feedback to organisations within 12 weeks of the closing date for registrations. Please refer to the [DSS Feedback Policy](#) for more information.