Settlement Sector Consultations – Review of Settlement Grants

This document provides a record of the key views and issues raised at the four roundtable consultations, as well as additional information responding to questions asked by service providers.

- Sydney Discussions – 29 November 2017
- Melbourne Discussions – 30 November 2017
- Brisbane Discussions – 1 December 2017
- Teleconference Discussions – 5 December 2017

Key issues are summarised below based on the five themes identified in the Discussion Paper.

Program Design

Q1. What types of activities will best support client outcomes under each of the two component types (Client Services and Community Capacity Building) and what are their desired outcomes?

Q2. What is the best way to ensure ethno-specific organisations benefit, with a view to sustainable capacity building?

Consultation	Key views
Sydney	- Support for the two components (Client Services and Community Capacity Building). - The program needs to remains flexible, with a broad range of activities responsive to client needs. - It is essential to continue to tailor services depending on client need. - Some concerns expressed about not retaining a specific youth stream. - Many ethno-specific organisations are highly capable and have a strong history of providing client services. - Not all ethno-specific organisations are emerging organisations in need of capacity building. However, where relevant, grant activities should focus on enabling ethno-specific organisations to assist clients. - Diversity in the type of organisations providing services under Settlement Grants is important.
Melbourne	- Support for the two components (Client Services and Community Capacity Building). - A range of examples of activities for the Client Services component were provided. - Many ethno-specific organisations are highly capable. - Improve recognition of the work of ethno-specific organisations, including their role in building the capacity of more mainstream service providers.

Consultation	Key views
Brisbane	• The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) indicated strong support from its membership base for a two-service structure. • Some concerns expressed about not retaining a specific youth stream. However, acknowledgement that youth will remain a policy priority. • A range of examples of activities for the Client Services component were provided. • Work of ethno-specific organisations supported – community capacity building for ethno-specific organisations important to address service gaps longer term and foster sustainability. • Balance is needed between funding larger settlement organisations to support small ethno-specific organisations and direct funding to ethno-specific organisations.
Tele-conference	• Sustainable community capacity building can be difficult and community leaders change regularly. • Balance is needed between funding larger settlement organisations to support small ethno-specific organisations and direct funding to ethno-specific organisations.

Service Provision and Innovation

Q3. What are some of the characteristics of a needs-based approach, including provision of tailored medium-level intensity support that the Department should address in guidance documentation?

Q4. What mechanisms would encourage innovation in the Program?

Consultation	Key views
Sydney	• General support for more intensive, medium level support case work to be introduced. • There is a range of considerations for providers to determine whether medium-intensity case support is required. • Flexibility should be maintained in the program; a one-size-fits all model is not effective. • Settlement Grants should offer non-prescriptive models. • Casework is more resource intensive. However, it may assist in reducing referral bounce-backs from mainstream services. • There appears to be dissatisfaction for some clients dealing with mainstream services (eg particular reference to *jobactive).* Clients are returning to Settlement Grant providers when needs have not been met. Barriers include access (lack of interpreters and/or multilingual staff) and availability of culturally competent services. o This issue can be exacerbated in regional areas. • Support for an innovation fund. • Clarity around 'innovation' is essential. • Innovation should respond to the emerging needs of the cohort. • Innovation funding should not be at the expense of a reduction in funding for core services.

Consultation	Key views
	• The NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) approach to funding innovation was highlighted as a useful model to examine.
	• There needs to be flexibility in terms of risk for innovation, as innovation may involve trialling a new initiative approach that lacks an evidence base.
Melbourne	• Important to maintain support for clients with a lower level of need, as well as provide support that is more intensive.
	• It is difficult for providers to determine the vulnerable cohort for medium-level intensity support and there needs to be flexibility in this regard.
	• It is important for medium level support to focus on young people and women.
	• Funding for an innovation round should be separate to the main Settlement Grants round.
	• Timeframes for innovation funding need to be flexible and responsive to emerging needs.
	• New innovative activities by their nature do not have a previous evidence base. However, a reasonable case for funding is needed.
	• Need to reward the attempt, the sharing and the learning (failures as well as successes).
Brisbane	• Support for targeted case management and maintaining flexibility.
	• Support for targeted medium-level intensity servicing. However, this should not be at the detriment of low-level support, which is also very important for many clients.
	• Medium-level intensity support is more resource intensive.
	• Useful to have a standardised assessment tool to provide guidance on the level of support for a client.
	• There appears to be dissatisfaction for some clients dealing with other services (eg Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)). Clients are returning to Settlement Grant providers when needs have not been met.
	• Innovation needs to be meaningful to address an identified need.
	• Innovative approaches involve risk – there may be failings and learnings along the way.
	• An innovation fund should not detract from core funding.
Tele-conference	• Support for flexibility in program activities.
	• Service activities will vary depending on location (regional vs metro) and client pre-arrival experiences. In some locations there may be no mainstream services for Referral.
	• With the changes to Complex Case Support (CCS) (now Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) Tier 3) it may be useful to see an 'at-risk' model embedded into Settlement Grants with more intensive case management support available.
	• Concern that an innovation fund would reduce the overall funding pool for Settlement Grants.
	• Competing for innovation funding is difficult for smaller organisations.

Key Priorities

Q5. Without duplicating existing English, employment or education services, what Settlement Grants activities drive 3Es outcomes for clients? In the context of Settlement Grants, how would you define an English, education and/or employment outcome? How can Settlement Grants add value in achieving expected outcomes under the 3Es?

Q6. How can Settlement Grants service delivery be enhanced to meet the often complex needs of eligible youth?

Consultation	Key views
Sydney	- Settlement Grants should focus on complementing mainstream services and holistic activities. - Settlement grants must have clear boundaries in terms of expectations around 3Es. - A range of examples of complementary 3Es activities were provided. 3Es activities involve incremental steps identified through needs assessment. Outcomes will therefore be different across clients (based on characteristics, broader settlement needs and location. - Clients have a range of settlement issues that need to be addressed; the program should not solely focus on the 3Es. - Often broader settlement needs (eg housing and health) need to be addressed before a client can focus on the 3Es. - Support that youth remain a priority target group for the program. - Outreach support is often needed for youth with more complex needs. Servicing young people in rural and regional areas is particularly challenging. - Clarification needed on the definition (eg age range) of Youth and consistency in approach across Government programs. - Other vulnerable priority groups eligible within the program include women and people with a disability. - Government should further consider the needs of those ineligible for the program, eg: - support post-five years, in particular for young people at life transition points and women with children or caring responsibilities who are not able to access services without childcare; and - people on Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs), who are vulnerable migrants.
Melbourne	- Clients have a range of settlement issues that need to be addressed; some concern there is an overemphasis on the 3Es to the exclusion of other settlement needs. - A range of examples of complementary 3Es activities were provided. - Outcomes for Settlement Grants should be reflective of progressive outcomes for the 3Es, building pathways to an end goal. - Different strategies are required for different age groups. - Some confusion about what a "life course approach" in the program means given the five year eligibility. - Support that youth remain a priority for the program.

Consultation	Key views
	• Clarification needed on the definition (eg age range) of youth.
	• Early intervention for youth is key, activities could include focus on soft skills, building a sense of belonging and addressing disengagement with mainstream schooling.
	• Recognition of the increasing numbers of young people who are carers, have a disability, have mental health issues.
	• Government should further consider the needs of those ineligible for the program, eg support post-five years for women experiencing family violence.
Brisbane	• Clients have a range of settlement issues that need to be addressed – these may be steps towards achieving the 3Es.
	• A range of examples of complementary 3Es activities were provided.
	• A range of examples of youth specific activities were provided.
	• There are a range of specific circumstances and challenges faced by youth, which need to be taken into account.
	• Important to evaluate specific projects and follow-up on the outcomes achieved post-project.
	• Government should further consider the needs of those ineligible for the program, eg flexibility to provide support post-five years to those who do not achieve independence within this timeframe (eg elderly, women with children, women experiencing domestic violence).
Tele-conference	• Important for Government to define the employment outcomes sought from the program, particularly given there are four Government programs (HSP, AMEP, *jobactive* and Settlement Grants) that clearly state employment as an outcome for service providers to achieve. What outcomes are appropriate to each of these programs? Should providers focus on employment or employability skills? How can service duplication be prevented?
	• A range of examples of complementary 3Es activities were provided.
	• A range of examples of youth specific activities were provided.
	• Clarification needed on the definition (eg age range) of youth.
	• Government should further consider the needs of those ineligible for the program, eg support post-five years for women (often illiterate) experiencing family violence and do not take up referral to a mainstream provider.

Community of Practice (CoP) and Collaboration

Q7. In what ways could the Department address barriers and provide incentives for organisations to participate in the COP? What model could these forums take?

Q8. What strategies could providers implement to enhance collaboration within and across the sector?

Consultation	Key views
Sydney	• Support for a CoP mechanism – CoP needs to have clear intent and purpose, sharing of best practice is a key focus with support for development and local information sharing. • A CoP may operate best at the local level. • The NSW Settlement Partnership, which operates as a CoP, was highlighted as a useful model to examine. • Mindful of resourcing and cost implications for a CoP, particularly for regional and rural service providers. • Competitive nature of grants / tenders may impact the effectiveness of a CoP – crucial to ensure that trust is maintained and that providers feel comfortable to talk about failures. • Services (eg settlement, jobactive and AMEP) can better complement each other and work together – boundaries and expectations need to be very clear. • Some organisations are working in partnerships with *jobactive* providers, not in competition (recognition that *jobactive* providers are funded to find jobs for people).
Melbourne	• Support for a CoP mechanism - CoP needs to have clear intent and purpose to ensure it is more than a networking opportunity. • CoP forum should enable providers to come together to discuss common issues – may operate best at the local level and/or be thematic/issues based. • A range of views were expressed regarding the operational model, ranging from localised, state-wide to nation-wide and types of contact. • Important to ensure that ethno-specific organisations are represented in the CoP. • It may be beneficial to include other complementary service providers in the CoP. • Collaboration and partnerships are a mechanism to achieve settlement outcomes for clients, not a Key Performance Indicator in themselves. • Needs to be a recognition of the time and effort to collaborate within and across sectors. • Clarity is needed about who and what partnerships entail. • Partnerships may be more difficult to establish in rural and regional locations.

Consultation	Key views
Brisbane	• Support for a CoP mechanism - Settlement Grant providers already share information well but there is room to do this better. • CoP should be adequately funded. • Value in the relationships that are built in face-to-face meetings. • Examples of communication tools to facilitate a COP were provided. • Settlement Grants providers need to work closely with mainstream service providers and have a role in building the cultural competency of mainstream services.
Tele-conference	• Broad support for a CoP - need to ensure a clear distinction between a CoP and other networking opportunities. • A range of possible models was offered. • Some concern about the role and capacity of Settlement Grants providers to educate mainstream providers in dealing with clients of different ethnicities and working in culturally sensitive ways.

Administrative Improvements

Q9. What type of guidance would organisations like the Department to provide to assist with greater program clarity?

Q10. What do you consider to be the main barriers to service providers increasing their reporting through the DSS Date Exchange (DEX) Partnership Approach?

Consultation	Key views
Sydney	• Expectations for the 3Es should be articulated in guidelines, so organisations understand what their role is. • More hands on DEX training is required. • Reporting framework should provide more scope for organisations to show what is actually being done and achieved. • Concerns about the time consuming nature of DEX data entry. • Improved visibility need on how DEX information is being used by DSS/Government. Some concern if it is used for direct provider comparison purposes.

Melbourne	• A range of matters requiring clear documentation (Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GoGs) and funding round documentation) were identified including:
	  o expectations for and reporting on the Community Capacity Building component,
	  o definition of medium-level support,
	  o expectations around the 3Es.
	
	• More and improved DEX training is required.
	
	• Clarity needed regarding Intermediate outcomes.
	
	• Reporting framework should provide scope for organisations to show the large amount of qualitative work.
	
	• Collection and entry of information into DEX is time consuming and concern whether the Partnership approach offers return for investment.

Consultation	Key views
	• There is an absence of adequate DSS support for implementation of DEX Standard Client/Community Outcomes Reporting (SCORE).
Brisbane	• Clear articulation of community capacity building intent and activities is needed.
	• Clear documentation (GoGs and DEX) is needed in relation to the Community Capacity Building component. In particular, who is the 'client'" (given the current reporting structure is focused on an individual client) and changes in reporting to this affect.
	• Medium level case management needs to be able to be reportable in DEX (to recognise the more resource intensive nature of this work).
	• Need to identify how to quantify and report against innovation.
Tele-conference	• DEX reporting is problematic. Concern that activities get lost in the system, not reflected in reporting.
	• Some concern regarding DSS support for providers, eg: not enough places in local training and difficulty in accessing the DEX Helpdesk.
	• Grant Agreement Managers appear not be very familiar with or proficient in using DEX.
	• Improved visibility need on how DEX information is being used by DSS/Government, eg program review, planning and designing.
	• CoP could be used as a mechanism for improving program clarity and to address issues with DEX, in particular ensuring consistency in approach/reporting.

Responses to questions asked (all sessions)

Program and policy settings:

- Eligibility for the program is remaining the same. However, the five-year eligibility only applies to the Client Services component.

- The Community Capacity Building component relates to small, new and emerging community groups (that may or may not have been established within the last five years).

- Ethno-specific organisations are able to apply for services under both components, not just under Community Capacity Building.

- Youth services will be part of the general Client Services component and there is no restriction of youth in terms of age.

- There is no intention to return to one or two year grants.

- Service area sizes remain similar to previous funding rounds, ie it is up to the provider to nominate the area to be covered.

- There will be no weighting in the selection process for consortia bids, or larger service areas.

- There will be no minimum qualifications for staff specified in the funding round.

- There will be no employment placement target in the settlement grants program.

Other:

- Eligibility of HSP clients for Settlement Grants – Settlement Grants activities can be undertaken concurrently with HSP as long as the service is not a duplication eg case management services. Settlement Grants workshop/information sessions can occur concurrently with HSP.
- Collaboration is a key focus for the program, partly due to the successes from the partnership models in the Youth Transition Support (YTS) pilot.
- 3Es - Complementary employment services could include pre-employment skills development and capacity building with mainstream services. Service providers will not be expected to provide job placements for clients.
- There is a gap for some clients who are not eligible for HSP Tier 3 services, but who require more intensive services than currently provided under Settlement Grants. This issue was identified through the Evaluation.
- The YTS evaluation is being finalised, a decision on the future of the pilot has yet to be made by Government. The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) is developing some guidance on learnings from the YTS, which will be made available to the settlement sector.
- There have been a range of changes to the AMEP, including improved flexibility, under the new AMEP Business Model.

Administrative arrangements and Reporting:

- DEX is not used to compare individual organisations. DEX is used to demonstrate the benefits achieved by the program, including whether the program is servicing the target clients.
- The HSP System is compatible with DEX.