Request for Tender
Evaluation of the Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy

Overview of Homelessness NSW and the Homelessness Industry Partnership
Homelessness NSW is a peak not for profit organisation that works with its members to prevent and reduce homelessness across NSW. Its purpose is to advocate and provide leadership on homelessness issues across NSW and to support effective service delivery to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Background to the Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy
Homelessness NSW is contracted by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to deliver the Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy, on the understanding that this is done under auspice and in partnership with DVNSW and Yfoundations.


The goals of the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy 2017-2020 were:

- Goal 1 – Service quality, sustainability, and good practice
- Goal 2 – Service integration
- Goal 3 – Outcomes indicators and measurement tools
- Goal 4 – Workforce Development

The goals of the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy 2020-2024 are:

1. NSW SHS are equipped to deliver quality supports and services, within a trauma informed framework
2. NSW SHS are equipped to measure and demonstrate the outcomes and impact of their service
3. NSW SHS workforce is skilled and capable at all levels, including leadership
4. SHS within NSW are supported to network and collaborate
5. SHS across NSW are sustainable
6. Across NSW, SHS provide culturally safe and competent services for Aboriginal clients and communities

Although the goals have been reworded, operationally the Strategy is being delivered as a continuation of projects under the previous strategy, with space to introduce new projects in later years. Since 2016, several key initiatives have been introduced under the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy:

- Support for service providers to achieve requirements of the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES)
- Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) Learning & Development Framework
Objectives of the Evaluation and Research Project
This project will provide:

1. Impact and process evaluation of the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy 2017-2020
2. Formative evaluation to inform the future NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy
3. Workforce training needs assessment to inform the next iteration of the SHS Learning & Development Framework
4. Assessment of organisational sustainability across the NSW SHS Program.

Key Research Questions

1. Impact and process evaluation of the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy
   • What impact did the impact of the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy 2017-2020 had on the NSW Homelessness Service Sector?
   • How well were the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy and its projects implemented and delivered?
   • How effective are communications?

2. Formation of the future NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy
   • How has the SHS Program and the environment it operates in changed?
   • What are the priority areas from development or improvement across the NSW Homelessness Industry (especially for ensuring service providers meet the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES); and service providers moving to outcomes measurement)?
   • What support does the SHS Program need to meet these priorities?

3. Formative Evaluation and training needs assessment of the NSW homelessness services workforce
   • What are the characteristic of workers in NSW homelessness services (such as: gender; age group; Indigenous status; cultural and linguistic diversity; roles; type of service work in; size of service work in; client cohort work with; level of experience; and qualification)?
   • How well do the existing SHS L&D Framework and Capability Framework meet the needs of the different segments of the NSW homelessness sector, in terms of: level of uptake; appropriateness and comprehensiveness of courses offered; facilitators and barriers to participating in training? Of particular interest is how effective the Framework is at improving: cultural competency; staff wellbeing practices; and wellbeing leadership.
   • What are the priority training areas across the NSW homelessness service workforce (noting that all services must achieve ASES accreditation within the next 3 years)?
   • How can the SHS L&D Framework and Capability Framework be strengthened?

4. Assessment of organisational sustainability across the NSW Homelessness Industry.
   • What are the characteristics of NSW homelessness services (such as: structure and size of organisation providing service; location of service; function/type of service; client groups; Aboriginal led)?
How sustainable are NSW homelessness service providers:
  o strategically (how well understand, prepare, and respond to changes in the broader external environment)?
  o financially (reliance on specific funding sources)?
  o organisational (staffing; systems; policies and procedures; contractual arrangements; and governance)?

What are the main risks to sustainability, and what would help overcome these risks (especially for Aboriginal led organisations, and organisations that are subcontracted to provide homelessness services)?

Methodology
This is to be a mixed-method research project using existing datasets, surveys, followed by more interviews and/or focus groups.

The first stage will involve conducting surveys (primarily online self-report, but may require CATI if low response rate from segments of the sector or workforce); compiling, analysing and reporting quantitative data from these surveys and existing datasets. The survey questions have been drafted by Homelessness NSW. Ideally, the contractor will test and refine the questions, and build the survey online.

The second stage will involve conducting qualitative research to: consult and gain more in-depth input from the sector; answer questions raised through the quantitative data. Gaining input from Aboriginal organisations and workers is a priority during this stage.

Internal Contact Person
The main contact for this project is the Manager of the Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy.

An Evaluation Steering Committee will be formed, comprising of representatives from key stakeholders such as: NSW DCJ; Homelessness NSW; HNSW Aboriginal Reference Group; and HNSW Policy Council. The contractor will meet with the Committee to gain input on the: Evaluation & Research Framework; Preliminary Report; Final Report.

Reporting
Interim deliverables:
  • Evaluation & Research Framework
  • Final surveys and other research tools
  • Weekly updates during data collection

Key reports:
  • Preliminary Evaluation Report – presenting quantitative research findings of evaluation, workforce training needs, and industry sustainability
  • Final Evaluation Report – presenting quantitative and qualitative research findings

Other deliverables:
  • Dataset with contact details of participants who would like to receive updates about support and programs offered by the Industry Partnership, and consent to their personal information being shared with Homelessness NSW.
  • Dataset with characteristics of NSW homelessness services who consent to this information being shared with Homelessness NSW.
Indicative Timeframes

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<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contract start</td>
<td>Mid-April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation &amp; Research Framework</td>
<td>Early May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative research tools and processes</td>
<td>Early May</td>
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<td>Quantitative data collection</td>
<td>May to mid-June</td>
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<td>Preliminary Report</td>
<td>End of June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative research tools and processes</td>
<td>Mid-July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative data collection</td>
<td>Late July to Late September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Report</td>
<td>End of October</td>
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Budget

The cost of this project is expected to be between $100,000 to $120,000.

Selection Criteria

- Either be accredited as a Qualified Professional Researcher (QPR) or hold ISO20252 certification
- Experience in program evaluation in the community sector
- Skilled in quantitative and qualitative research
- Culturally competent and safe evaluation practice
- Proposal is fit-for-purpose (balancing cost and quality)

Tender Process

Tender proposals should include:

- Company profile and capability statement
- Evidence addressing the selection criteria and value proposition
- Project plan and price schedule
- Any proposed partners and subcontractors
- References

Tenders are to be submitted to Gemma Luckett at gemma@homelessnessnsw.org.au by COB Friday 9 April, 2021.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for interview the week of the 12 – 16 April, 2021.