Redress Support Services

Feedback for applicants

Overview

Redress Support Services (RSS) play a critical role in providing emotional and practical support for people affected by institutional child sexual abuse to complete an application and interact with the National Redress Scheme (the Scheme).

Practical support includes providing information about the Scheme, assisting people to complete the Scheme's application form, and supporting people to access other appropriate services such as legal and financial counselling or other community services.

Emotional support includes providing counselling, case management, professional supervision and similar arrangements to provide people with a safe environment to engage with the Scheme.

RSS can play a key role in managing people's expectations about the Scheme by providing clear information about what the Scheme is, how it can be accessed and what a person can reasonably expect through the process of applying and potentially accepting an offer of redress.

The Government committed up to $43.072 million from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024 to fund community-based support services in every state and territory to provide support for people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse to interact with the Scheme.

The application period for RSS opened on 3 August 2021 and closed at 9:00 pm (AEST) on 13 September 2021.

Selection process

An open competitive selection process was undertaken, allowing a range of organisations that met the eligibility criteria to apply. An open competitive process ensured all eligible applicants had an equal opportunity to apply.

Applications were first screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGs). All eligible and compliant applications were then assessed and moderated by the Department of Social Services against the three assessment criteria.

The Selection Advisory Panel (SAP), with a mix of relevant policy, program and delivery expertise examined all assessments to make funding recommendations to the department's Delegate. The recommendations were based on the strength of responses to the assessment criteria and the applicant's ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the GOGs.

The SAP considered all applications and their assessment results and made recommendations on applications having regard to:

- whether the project, or any of its elements did not align with the program objectives
- value for money
- conformance with eligibility criteria
- service provider mix
- how the services and/or project will be delivered.

The SAP also took into consideration a fair and equitable distribution of funded activities across types of activities, delivery locations and recipient communities, to adequately and appropriately address service gaps or the support needs of particularly vulnerable groups of people.

Selection results

A total of 102 applications were received and screened for eligibility of these 98 eligible applications were assessed and 43 organisations were successful in receiving funding totalling $39,261,486 (GST exclusive). Successful applicants may have received less funding than requested.

Following assessment, the SAP made recommendations to the Delegate, who made the final decision to approve the funding to the successful applicants. The successful applicants had proposed activities that were eligible, appropriate and considered effective for achieving the program objectives. They demonstrated their suitability for public funding, value for money and met all of the eligibility requirements in the GOGs.

General feedback

Applicants could have generally strengthened their application by:

- ensuring they thoroughly read the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- ensuring all aspects of the criterion were addressed
- demonstrating their consideration of the Grants Program's objectives
- only included relevant information that is not ambiguous
- supported claims with relevant, reliable and current evidence
- using clear and convincing arguments that were supported by evidence, strong applicants also identified limited areas of relevant weakness
- identifying the key staff in place to deliver the activity and outlining their experience and professional qualifications to a very high standard.

Criteria specific feedback

The following feedback outlines how individual responses to specific assessment criteria could have been strengthened.

Criterion 1

Understanding of trauma informed practice

Demonstrate your understanding of institutional child sexual abuse and its impact on people, and your organisation's ability to deliver services in line with trauma-informed principles.

Strength	Example

Strong applications clearly demonstrated their understanding of institutional child sexual abuse and its impact on people, and their organisation's ability to deliver services in line with trauma-informed principles.	Strong responses clearly described:
	▪ their understanding of trauma-informed and culturally safe models of care, for example:
	
	  − provided details regarding using a strengths-based framework founded on the principles - safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment and respect for diversity
	
	  − how their organisation uses a continuous quality improvement system to ensure services are trauma informed, evidencing the provision of culturally appropriate and accessible counselling and healing and educational programs
	
	  − delivering a survivor-led approach and where required engage additional supports to ensure culturally appropriate support for all clients such as utilising interpreters, having survivors input to the type and delivery method of support and meeting survivors where they live, in their communities if appropriate
	
	  − a strong focus on cultural capability
	
	▪ how they continuously build on their understanding and knowledge of trauma informed practice. Noting the use of trauma guidelines to inform their practice and provide details of the trauma informed training and supervision staff receive as part of ongoing training.

Criterion 2

Proposed service delivery model

Describe your proposed service delivery model for the delivery of RSS in your proposed area.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly described their service delivery model for the delivery of RSS, how they would promote their services and engage potential clients to the Scheme and how they propose to meet the objectives and intended outcomes of RSS.	Strong responses clearly described: • their service reach into their proposed service coverage area included relevant information about how this would be done • their ability for promotion and engagement practices with potential clients, through engaging with their strong existing partnerships with intermediary organisations and the stakeholder networks they had built with community leaders and how they intend to hold information sessions in a culturally safe way • specific examples of how they would ensure promotional strategies are culturally appropriate and accessible, particularly in relation to people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the CALD communities • supporting clients prior to application, during the application process and the notification period, when a decision is made and include ongoing support • the provision of warm referrals for clients requiring additional services and assistance to those seeking a direct personal response • how they would support people to access a direct personal response, by having an informed discussion of the client's options, the provision of advocacy, facilitation and support throughout the process. Also noting the need to ensure that clients have appropriate safety plans for after the direct personal response is completed • how the organisation will effectively manage the activity to ensure that it achieves the grant objectives and intended outcomes of RSS.

Criterion 3

Organisational capacity

Demonstrate your organisation's capacity to deliver RSS.

Strength	Example
Strong applications clearly demonstrated their capacity to deliver RSS, including an overview of their governance structures, geographical coverage and dispute resolution policies. They included relevant information regarding experience and qualifications of their staff and evaluation strategies for the program and how they will meet the departments reporting requirements.	Strong responses clearly described: ▪ the geographic areas they intend to cover (including names of towns, cities or local government areas) and demonstrated their capacity to cover these geographical areas by providing either face-to-face or online services ▪ how they have strong organisational governance structures in place for example: a Board of Governance, Finance and Audit Committee and key operational policies (including how they are managed - necessary dispute resolution policies and procedures are in place, robust complaints and client triage processes). ▪ their dispute resolution policy how it is designed to minimise potential conflicts before they arise and to resolve conflict constructively, disputes and conflict are dealt with expediently, in line with their trauma informed practice ▪ the number of key staff that will manage and/or deliver the activity, and outlined their relevant capabilities (experience, skills and qualifications), for example to have appropriate tertiary qualifications Psychology, Social Work or equivalent plus a minimum of 5 years' experience in the sector relating to trauma informed care, such as victim support and mental health ▪ how new staff are/will be provided with a comprehensive induction, plus ongoing professional development and appropriate supervision and debriefing processes. ▪ how all staff have individualised professional development plans, which may draw on courses available through the Australian Association of Social Workers and similar institutions ▪ how their organisation has extensive experience of privacy, contract and reporting compliance, and procedures will be developed or are in place and monitored to ensure their organisation meets compliance standards ▪ how their organisation is well equipped to complete the Activity Work Plan template and provide subsequent reports against the outlined activities ▪ how the organisation will evaluate their delivery of the program ▪ the organisation's ability to successfully manage Commonwealth grant funding.