



## **Joint submission to the Australia 2020 Summit**

### **Non-government organizations are crucial to strengthening communities, supporting families and building social inclusion**

#### **WHAT IS THIS SUBMISSION ABOUT?**

A strong, vibrant non-government (NGO) sector is critical for strengthening communities, supporting families and building social inclusion. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to building social inclusion. NGOs are best placed to work with the strengths of each community to implement policy, develop locally relevant solutions and 'join-up' local agencies to create positive social change. NGOs are also able to harness the enormous resource of volunteerism.

The NGO sector is instrumental in mediating between government and the communities it works with to make policies work 'on-the-ground'. It is vital to building social capacity. It is crucial that government harnesses the full potential of the NGO sector to effectively build social inclusion and combat disadvantage. NGOs work across all levels of government, across marginalized communities, in partnership with tertiary education and the private sector to work intensively, over the long-term, with the people most affected by social exclusion.

#### **OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

##### **New models of working**

We recommend a range of more flexible contracting procedures to allow new models of working. One way of fulfilling this could be the development of an agreement or 'compact' that outlines the shared objectives, complementary roles and principles for working with the NGO

sector. Such an agreement would focus on joint efforts to tackle disadvantage and support and build strong communities, as well as highlight the scope of the partnerships involved.

### **Funding**

We recommend that funding should focus strategically on medium and long-term outcomes and allow for sufficient flexibility in design and implementation of interventions. Expectations of sustainability should be realistic. We recommend that adequate funding is provided for proper data collection and evaluation to demonstrate how well the outcomes were achieved.

### **Slash red tape burden on NGOs**

The Government must review the red tape burden on NGOs which is severely hampering both the efficiency and effectiveness of non profit endeavour across the nation and provide little benefits to government or the community.

### **Building leadership capacity**

Leadership and innovation are two capacities that require further development in order for government and NGOs to meet the challenges of building social inclusion. One example of capacity building in this area is the Benevolent Society's Sydney Leadership program. We welcome financial support from government, business and other key stakeholders to assist with building leadership capacity and cross-sector partnerships to tackle social issues.

### **WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

The NGO sector works with the most excluded communities: vulnerable children, people with disabilities, the homeless, older people and those who are welfare dependent. Years of evidence and expertise accumulated from delivering services on-the-ground mean that NGOs are uniquely placed to work with government to help people build a healthy, safe, and fair country. A strong partnership between government and NGOs will have a greater impact on making social inclusion policy work in local communities and maximize efforts to build capabilities among communities and reduce social isolation.