

5 things that would Strengthen the Sector: Janet Giles

Why do we need it strengthened?

Increased funding and improved service for clients- being listened to, influencing policy for the benefit of clients and the fabric of the community.

A strong community sector is good for everyone.

Barriers-

What's sexy? What gets the money?- things that make money – workforce planning and workforce development- mining and defence- Community services huge and fast growing- significant skill shortages yet no one talks about it.

You only notice community services when you use one – e.g. Mental Health Services. The sector has less power than health and education because more people across the community use and experience them - most people who access the sector have little structural power and little or no voice.

The poor, disabled and Aboriginal people don't make press (unless they are bad or mad) How is it that compulsory income management just happened with NO public debate or outrage!

1. Have a plan- make it a long one.
2. Shift the Frame (don't think of a elephant) Shift our thinking as a community to There for the Grace of God Go I rather than Thank God it's not me! There are victims/ useless/ irresponsible people and those who are in control of their lives. One is engaging- it could be me- the other is disengaging, leads to "the other" thinking. Make it real for everyone's experience.... closer than you think- Anti Poverty Week theme last year. " Ownership by everyone. Raise the profile of the work of the sector and its contribution to social cohesiveness and the economy – good examples, success stories- get the message out- build a conversation.
3. Build alliances with others and work together. Unity is strength- Division is death.
4. Increase value of the work- pay equity case, career paths, training, security of employment. Celebrate and congratulate.
5. Increase union membership and union density and work to ensure the union focuses on the big issues for the sector, not just individual disputes and industrial matters. If you are a manger encourage people to join, if you a worker- join – to give the sector collective voice, educate each other and work together to achieve more power and influence.