



SERVICE REVIEW REPORT

CITY OF GREATER GERALDTON

QE II Seniors Resource Centre

Seniors Program Area

Wednesday 9 April 2014, 2pm via teleconference

1. PRESENT

The following people participated in the Service Review which was held by teleconference commencing 2pm on Wednesday 9 April 2014.

City of Greater Geraldton

Renee Ellis Manager, Community Empowerment and Development
Rosetta Finlay QEII Centre Coordinator

Department of Local Government and Communities

Lincoln George Program and Funding Officer (Chair)
Cait Ryan Program and Funding Officer (note taker)

2. BACKGROUND

The Department of Local Government and Communities provides base level funding of \$108 105 (2013-14) to the City of Greater Geraldton ('the organisation') to facilitate the QE II Resource Centre ('the service') to support seniors within the City and surrounding areas. The service seeks to improve the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of seniors living within the City. This service falls within the department's Seniors program area and aims to work with families, individuals and community groups to build capacity and enhance resilience through the development of skills, links and confidence by developing activities and programs and providing information in response to issues affecting seniors.

The current Service Agreement commenced on 1 January 2011 and is due to expire on 30 September 2015. As part of this review process, the department will be assessing future procurement planning arrangements across the whole program area.

It should be noted that service is operating under the old agreement and is yet to be taken through the procurement process.

3. PURPOSE OF THIS REVIEW

Under the Schedule 6 of the current Service Agreement, the department is able to review a service to assess the extent to which it is meeting the requirements of the agreement. The purpose of this review was to discuss the operation of the QE II Seniors Resource Centre with a specific focus on the following points:

1. How the service model is meeting agreed service specifications and the service activities contribute to the Outcome Objectives;
2. How the service is continuing to meet the identified need and is relevant and accessible to the target group;
3. What partnerships and/or linkages are in place with other community groups and relevant stakeholders including other government agencies, to support the delivery of the service; and
4. What promotional strategies are in place and/or planned to sustain or even expand the current numbers of participants/user groups
5. Emerging trends and current issues impacting or influencing the service
6. Future plans and/or possible initiatives for delivery of the service.

4. KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION BY AGENDA ITEMS

The following information is not intended as a verbatim account of the review meeting, rather a summary of the key points discussed and recommendations where relevant. Where appropriate, information obtained from other sources such as the Data Summary Sheets and Progress Reports and active contract management process is included in this report to provide further context and/or clarification where required.

1. How the service model is meeting agreed service specifications and the service activities contribute to the Outcome Objectives.

The department sought information and/or clarification on the current service model and in particular, what activities/programs were currently operating, their frequency and how these programs/activities contributed to achieving the current objectives. The following information was provided to the review:

The Service Agreement states QE II will meet the following objectives:

- The social, emotional and physical wellbeing of seniors is enhanced,
- Seniors are linked to appropriate social networks, community services and government agencies,
- Seniors are satisfied with the service they received, and
- Seniors have their needs met.

Under the terms of the existing Service Agreement, the service achieves these objectives through the following service activities:

- Develop, facilitate and provide programs for seniors through centre based coordination of social, educational and physical activities,
- Provide information, practical assistance, referrals to other community resources and social networking activities
- Liaise with relevant stakeholders to respond to issues affecting seniors through the provision of activities and programs, and
- Produce information to promote QEII Centre activities and information for seniors.

QE II Seniors Resource Centre service model is a centre based model with some outreach. The facility where the service operates is a shared space for community members and/or groups in the City of Greater Geraldton. The service has a priority booking status for this space and receives a subsidised hire rate with some hire ex gratia. Data Summary Sheet and Progress Reports for the period 1 January 2013 to

31 December 2013 indicate the service is utilised by around 31 regular senior groups (including service providers), with approximately 500 individuals attending on a weekly basis, with 5 regular community user groups also involved at the centre, including the Geraldton Orchid Society, Sun City Four Square Church and 'It's all Sorted Events'. Casual users of the centre include tourists – the 'grey nomads' – who may initially use the lounge and internet facilities but inevitably get drawn in to participate in the available activities.

The service identified they deliver a daily program of a variety of activities aimed at enhancing the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of the seniors engaged with the service. The service advised they actively aim to deliver new programs each year to meet the needs of centre users. Programs are delivered across a diverse range of pursuits, including arts and crafts, life skills, support groups, education and skills development, and physical and emotional wellbeing. Examples of activities delivered cover a range of pursuits including mosaics, art classes, craft groups, knitters and crochet group, mah-jong, line dancing, walking groups, gardening, bereavement and loss support groups, a computer room and 'gentle gym' classes for the more active participants. QEII indicated that programs are flexible and adjusted regularly to meet the need of users. The service noted that they respond to the issues expressed or identified by seniors, through the flexibility of their program and the constant ability to introduce new programs and adapt programs as needed.

Although users of the service were highly engaged while they were at the centre, the service is looking at further and alternative group programs through the facilitation of off-site activities. As a result, the service is holding some sessions away from the centre, for example the Friendship Group meet at the Dome café and the Fishing Group meet at the wharf to conduct their activities. The service is also investigating the opportunity to include service delivery at other areas frequented by their demographic within the City, ie. Drummonds Cove.

Seniors engaged with the service participated in the department's 2012/13 Customer Perception Survey. The results identified a high level of customer satisfaction across most areas, including satisfaction with the service (97%), having needs met (95%), obtaining useful information (87%), feeling more confident (85%) and gaining new skills (92%). By way of further consultation the City recently conducted a Citizens Jury/Community Panel process which utilised 40 randomly selected citizens from within the City, with a direct correlation to the City's demographic. The Panel members were provided information and insight into the City's functions, including the range and level of services. The results from the Panel processes were that the services at the QEII Centre were highly valued and their continuation was unanimously supported. The support for the QEII centre is evidenced through the establishment of the Seniors Advisory Committee which comprises Councillors, City staff and Centre users. This committee of Council provides a pathway for seniors' concerns to be raised at a local government level.

The service provided the department with a copy of the newsletter it distributes through the centre across a range of mediums including online and printed hard copies. There was some discussion about embracing new technologies in order to reach potential participants and this would be welcomed by the department.

Information provided at the review indicates the service is developed and delivered consistent with the service agreement by effectively providing information, practical assistance, referrals and social networking opportunities. During the review the service advised of its flexibility to adapt the means that these can be delivered to service users, for example, through the recent introduction of Wifi and how this can be utilised with the centre participants.

2. How the service is continuing to meet the identified need and is relevant and accessible to the target group.

As per the service agreement, the Target Group states:

- *Primary – Seniors living in the City of Greater Geraldton and surrounding Local Government Authorities*
- *Secondary- Seniors organisations and groups, and Service providers working with seniors in the community*

However, the service indicated that as a subset of this target group, the focus of their programs and activities is all seniors aged 55 and over.

The Department sought information on how the current target group was engaged and what strategies were in place to ensure that it remained accessible to people within the target group. The following information was provided to the review:

Although programs and activities facilitated by the service are open to all seniors in the target age group of over 55 years a few of the programs such as gentle gym can attract a slightly younger group of 50 years plus. The service advised that the target group are reached through emailing members, newsletters, word of mouth and online advertising and links.

The City of Greater Geraldton (as a result of the amalgamation with Shire of Mullewa) and the surrounding local government areas remain the service delivery area for the service. The department acknowledged the size of the delivery area and consistent with the level of funding, cautioned that the service be cognisant to provide activities and programs that lead to a sustainable service model. Other towns like Dongara, Kalbarri and Northampton also have their own seniors groups, and the service attempts to link with these services through information sharing and program promotion. Representatives from these towns also attend activities conducted in Geraldton such as lawn bowls tournaments, quiz afternoons and Seniors Week activities.

The service recently worked alongside the City of Greater Geraldton in the development of the Positive Ageing Strategy, including facilitating a workshop held at the centre. This strategy, developed by seniors for seniors, will be used as a tool to identify strategies to meet the expressed need of service participants, and seniors in the City. During the workshop, strategies and actions were developed against the following themes: Arts, Culture and Education; Communication Information and Civic Participation; Outdoor Spaces and Buildings; Social Participation, Respect, Health and Inclusion; and Housing, Transport and Employment. The service also takes advice from the Seniors Advisory Committee, endorsed by the City and established to advise on senior issues in the region. The committee, chaired by a local councillor, meets bimonthly and is comprised of senior citizens, the QEII coordinator and representatives from a number of user groups.

*A copy of the workshop report has since been forwarded to the department.

Evidence provided at the review indicated the service is continuing to meet the identified need of service users and that the programs and activities are kept relevant and accessible to the target group also provides access to service providers who are working with seniors in the community, related to health, education and wellbeing.

3. What partnerships and/or linkages are in place with other community groups and relevant stakeholders including other government agencies, to support the delivery of the service?

The Department sought information regarding the partnerships/ linkages that are in place currently with other community groups or government agencies to support service delivery. The following response is noted from the QEII Resource Centre;

The QE II Seniors Resource Centre has linkages and informal partnerships with several community based and government agencies to support the delivery of the current service. These include Health, Education, and Wellbeing services that enhance seniors' participation the community.

The Coordinator also indicated the organisation had been exploring opportunities to engage other agencies to provide sessions and/or events. These include social interaction and health and wellbeing groups.

The service, as part of its daily operations, links all seniors with other relevant seniors' programs and networks as a core business practice, as appropriate. QEII have been linking outside community services with centre users, including but not limited to, aged care providers, (eg. (HACC, Hearing West and Independent Living Centre) services offering social interaction (Rotary Club of Batavia Coast and Cultural Trust Inc), community services (Food Bank, and Silver Chain) and education (Durack Institute of Technology and Strathalbyn Christian College). They also advised of unique links for example, in September 2013 a visit from the Ambassador for Ageing, Noelene Brown. As previously mentioned, the service maintains links with local government and other government departments, such as the Department of Sport and Recreation and the federal Department of Health. The service is also developing new methods for seniors using the service to remain linked with individuals and outside services, through the introduction of Wifi as part of the National Broadband Network. This has enabled further social connections as well as providing valuable links to the above mentioned resources, as an example a webinar from Centrelink.

The introduction of both the Friendship and Discussion groups, were a result of informal discussions the coordinator had with participants using the centre, highlighting another way the service seeks to adapt the programs, or indeed introduce new ones to suit the needs of centre users.

The review acknowledged that the service is actively sustaining current partnerships and/or linkages as well as developing new partnerships when identified. The

department would also like to note the broad range of partners and stakeholders relevant to the engagement of seniors that supports the delivery of the service.

The service noted that currently it is difficult to take on any new partnership as both the service and outside partners are at capacity. Any potential for further partnerships is worth considering, however as previously mentioned the service needs to consider its sustainability. An example of this was the request for a Podiatrist to visit the centre, unfortunately due to the shortage of podiatrists the Centre is unable to facilitate the request to provide this service at the Centre.

4. What promotional strategies are in place and/or planned to sustain or even expand the current numbers of participants/user groups

The Department sought information on what promotional strategies the service has in place and/or planned to sustain or even expand the current number of participants a/user groups. The following information was provided to the review:

The service has identified that the needs of seniors are shifting as a new generation of seniors comes through, in particular a shift in focus to new technologies. The service is working towards creating more opportunities to provide new technologies as well as using it to promote their service, including the possible development of a Facebook page and email access to reach further into the community and promote their programs are being investigated. Advertising in the local papers, Midwest Times and the Geraldton Guardian, can prove costly and as a result occurs only when promoting significant events such as Seniors Week, and as is the case in many regional and remote communities, word of mouth is employed regularly. Everything Geraldton, an online media portal, is also used to promote the service's activities and programs. The service also mentioned that some people are accessing the programs after younger members of the family have attended and as result bring in their senior relative.

Other promotional activities discussed included the newsletter which has a distribution of 500 hard copies, as well as online versions available through emailing members and on the City's website.

Based on the discussion at the review, the service is currently meeting its service requirements in relation to the promotional strategies enlisted as well as sustaining and expanding current numbers of participants and user groups. This is evidenced by the examples above and through the service's future planning aligned with the City's Positive Ageing Strategy.

5. Emerging trends and current issues impacting or influencing the service

As noted above, there is a new generation of senior citizens engaging with the centre, and as a result a shift in the needs of those particular seniors' groups. New technologies are a particular focus for this imminent generation of seniors. The service has included a number of programs that assist in addressing this new focus and is continuing to identify ways to advance this area for senior's development. For example the service assists seniors with their personal laptops and ipads and

provides a computer room manned by a volunteer who can assist to answer any user queries.

Transport has also been noted as an emerging issue. Currently the service has no capacity to include transport as an option to bring seniors into the centre, however, this has been identified as becoming a bigger issue as service users become less mobile due to their advancing years. The cost of a community bus is significant, and the City, having discussed this issue previously, is considering developing a number of partnerships to address some of the concerns surrounding the operation of a transport service. The department suggested contacting Lotterywest to discuss any proposals and provided examples of other Local Governments purchasing a bus for a similar purpose. This is something the service will investigate further.

Service delivery occurs in a shared space that is hired at a subsidised cost from the City. There are some concerns expressed by the service about the use of a shared space, and also an identified goal to have the space as a seniors-only centre. In the interim, the service has sourced additional funds from the City to create a seniors exclusive storage area and enclose the patio area in order to create a more usable space.

The department acknowledges that the service is adapting to the shifting needs of seniors and is incorporating appropriate programming to deal with the other issues impacting or influencing the service.

6. Future plans and/or possible initiatives for delivery of the service

The Service is developing plans and initiatives for the effective delivery of the service. The potential for the service is currently limited only by the service's financial and personnel resources. The incorporation of the Positive Ageing Strategy into the daily operations of the service is an indication of the service's capability to provide new initiatives. This will also assist the service to identify aspirations, both short and long term, leading to the development of future plans for the service as appropriate.

As discussed previously, there are also plans for shifting program delivery to focus on the needs of the new generation of seniors, this includes the use of new technologies, and how people access the service with a key focus on life-long-learning.

Further development of the computer room is proposed, with scope for video conferencing, including Skype with health professionals in Perth, thus reducing the pressure and cost for participants to travel to and from Perth.

The service evidenced through the review their ability to make future plans, thinking ahead to possible initiatives for service delivery. The service understands and regularly responds to its target group in relation to service delivery. The department commends the service and their ability to identify need, and provide a response to the needs of the seniors within the community.

5. SUMMARY

Based on the discussions during the review, ongoing active contract management and information provided in Data Summary Sheets and Progress Reports, the department is satisfied that the organisation is meeting the objectives in accordance with the service agreement. The organisation articulated that it is able to adapt to emerging trends and shifts in focus of the target group and that the service is effectively linking seniors to social networks, community services and government agencies. The organisation is also actively implementing strategies to continuously improve service provision and address the needs within the seniors community.

The review confirmed that the organisation has a sound understanding of the needs of seniors in the Greater Geraldton area which enables the service to provide appropriate activities and programs to the community of seniors in which they engage. The organisation provided evidence it is operating in an efficient and effective manner as demonstrated throughout the review with examples of programs and strategies employed in actively maintaining and developing new programs for all users and partners of the service that are relevant to the target group. The department recognised the sustained commitment to address the ongoing needs of seniors at both the organisation and service level.

The department also noted that the service provides a central hub for a range of seniors programs and activities and that there is no alternative structures, services or other networks operating in the area of a similar scale or for the same purpose. In addition, the value and relevance of the service to seniors is evidenced by the fact that other key providers (including community groups, non-government organisations and government agencies) use the services (or its premises) as a point of contact to engage seniors in the local area on a range of issues such as health and wellbeing.

The review therefore supports the continuation of funding to the City of Greater Geraldton for the QEII Seniors Resource Centre service for the duration of the current service agreement.