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## Forced Marriage Specialist Support Program

### Feedback for applicants

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The Department of Social Services (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Forced Marriage Specialist Support Program (FMSSP) grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance with the procedure detailed in the grant opportunity guidelines (the guidelines) and outlined in the selection process below.

#### Overview

The application submission period opened on 25 June 2024 and closed on 5 August 2024.

The FMSSP will provide personalised support to people who are at-risk of, or who have experienced, forced marriage focussing on health, wellbeing and social support. This includes services like counselling and emergency accommodation if needed.

The FMSSP will allow for flexibility in the level of support, enabling clients to access tailored support better targeted at prevention and over a longer period, reflecting the ongoing risk of forced marriage clients may face. Forced marriage often occurs in a different context to other forms of human trafficking and modern slavery, and as a result, the support required to meet their needs varies significantly.

The FMSSP grant opportunity will provide \$9.354 million (GST exclusive) to the FMSSP Service Provider from 2024-25 to 2027-28.

Access to the FMSSP will be through a 'no wrong door' approach. People at risk, and victims and survivors, of forced marriage will be able to contact the organisation themselves to determine their eligibility, or they may be referred by a community organisation or government service. People at risk and victims and survivors can access the program without having to engage with law enforcement.

There is no time limit for participation in the program and support will be provided for the duration of the period for which the client needs assistance directly relating to their experience of forced marriage.

#### Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub (the Hub) undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The Hub undertook the preliminary assessment on all applications through an open competitive, grant process. Applications which underwent preliminary assessment were provided to the department's selection advisory panel (panel) for deliberation.

The panel established by the department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

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The panel's consideration of assessed applications was based on:

- meeting the compliance requirements outlined in the guidelines
- meeting the eligibility requirements outlined in the guidelines
- how well the responses met the assessment criteria
- the extent to which applications compared against other applications
- the provision and appropriateness of the requested attachments
- whether the project demonstrated value with relevant money
- identified risks and the proposed mitigation strategies for the department and the Commonwealth.

### Selection Results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicant demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria.

The Hub notified applicants of the outcome in writing, where their applications did not meet the requirements outlined in the guidelines.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and what was quality responses to the assessment criteria.

### Criterion 1

#### Ability to identify indicators of forced marriage and other forms of modern slavery

Demonstrate how your knowledge and understanding and/or expertise working with people who have experienced complex trauma, those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and the support available to them will contribute to the operation of the FMSSP.

When addressing this criterion, strong applicants demonstrated their understanding and/or expertise:

- a) in identifying and assessing the legal, physical and psychological indicators of forced marriage, human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery as outlined:
  - i. in divisions 270 and 271 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995*, other relevant legislation, international standards, research and good practice, and based on the lived-experience of victims and survivors.
  - ii. in the Australian child protection legislation, mandatory reporting obligations, and the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.
- b) in the whole-of-government approach to tackling modern slavery, in particular forced marriage, including the criminal justice process, and ending gender-based violence, principles and priorities of the *National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-25*, the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*, and respectively trends and emerging issues.

#### Strong applications:

- clearly demonstrated an understanding of the modern slavery sector, including the extent to which the applicant had knowledge of issues affecting the sector, such as causes, reasons and emerging trends, the cultural context, and need for a trauma-informed and holistic response.

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- clearly demonstrated an understanding that children and young people are a specifically prevalent and vulnerable cohort at risk of, or having experienced, forced marriage.
- clearly demonstrated experience working with and providing services for people who have experienced complex trauma, from a CALD background and have experienced or are at risk of forced marriage and other forms of modern slavery.
- clearly demonstrated an understanding of Australia's broader response to modern slavery and ending gender-based violence through the delivery of a range of services and supports including domestic violence, refugee and asylum seeker, mental health, child protection and disability supports.

### Criterion 2

#### Provide a description of your proposed framework and model to deliver the activity

Describe how your proposed framework and model will identify and assess all indicators of forced marriage in Australia, including the risks and appropriate mitigation strategies.

When addressing this criterion, strong applicants:

- a) described trauma-informed, sensitive processes, including:
  - i. proposed eligibility criteria for the FMSSP, including self-referrals, risk assessments, and empowerment of victims and survivors.
  - ii. their proposed approach to avoid fraudulent claims, and their processes for escalating potential fraudulent or corrupt claims to the department.
  - iii. how they would meet legal requirements for consent-seeking, confidentiality and privacy, consistent with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Australian Privacy Principles*.
  - iv. identified potential key risks and mitigation strategies for delivering the activity, including how they would escalate higher risk cases for appropriate risk mitigation support and referral, including possible referral to the AFP, state/territory police or child protection authorities.
  - v. identified how victims and survivors would access legal, health, mental health, FDSV and other services as needed, including the FMSSP 'ineligible' cohort.
- b) described how they would:
  - vi. build supportive and effective referral pathways to facilitate victims and survivors' access to the program through a diversity of 'soft entry points' via relevant organisations, professionals and frontline workers in the education, health, mental health, legal, FDSV, multicultural and community service sectors, and across the community, including after hours and public holidays support for emergency and critical needs of victims and survivors.
  - vii. analysed and identified potential service gaps for referral.
  - viii. transition victims and survivors out of the program, including regular reviews to assess their progress, changing needs, risks and circumstances, and offer post-exit support, where needed.
  - ix. complement relevant forced marriage, coercive control and consent awareness raising/educational activities in Australia, including the Anti-Slavery Australia *SpeakNow* campaign.

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### Strong applications:

- clearly demonstrated current examples of high quality and culturally competent services, tools or procedures the applicant has developed and/or used to assess the indicators of forced marriage in Australia, including providing safety and contingency planning procedures to ensure people who are not eligible for support under the FMSSP are still supported and referred to other services.
- clearly described how the applicant would ensure victims and survivors' have access to appropriate services based on the individual's needs by providing opportunities for face-to-face, online and telephone access and afterhours access to address urgent and critical needs of victims and survivors.
- clearly described how the applicant would collaborate with other services, including leveraging existing relationships and identifying the need to establish relationships with other organisations who are active in providing support to those who have experienced modern slavery, to build supportive and effective referral pathways to facilitate victims and survivors access to the program.
- clearly demonstrated a model that is reflective of the requirements for the journey of a client from entry into the program to exit from the program.
- clearly outlined the applicant's approach to awareness raising activities through the development of a comprehensive community engagement and communication strategy, ensuring proposed activities are complementary to existing awareness raising/educational activities.

### Criterion 3

#### **Describe your experience, expertise and capacity to deliver the activity**

Describe how your organisation will deliver services across Australia, including regional and rural areas, while retaining enough flexibility to allow for tailored service and achieve value for money.

When addressing this criterion, strong applicants:

- a) provided an overview of their organisation, including systems, governance structures, geographical and national coverage, dispute resolution policies and procedures, and how these would support successful implementation and delivery of the activity on time and within budget.
- b) described the relevant experience, qualifications, skills and knowledge of staff who would deliver the activity, including how their organisation would ensure staff continue to be appropriately skilled and supported.
- c) described their prior experience in delivering similar grants or programs; or how their organisation's prior experience proves capability to deliver this grant activity.
- d) described their approach to community engagement and ability to leverage existing relationships and build networks and partnerships within the community and across the sector to deliver the activity, including ability to work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders, law enforcement, and other government agencies and state and territory governments when appropriate, to deliver the activity.
- e) described their experience in working in a trauma informed way with children and young people.

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### Strong applications:

- clearly demonstrated the capability of the applicant and current structures that are in place to accommodate the activity, including established governance arrangements and examples of how the applicant will engage with forced marriage victims and survivors throughout Australia, including in regional or rural locations.
- clearly demonstrated examples of collaborative work with relevant stakeholders, including child protection agencies, the Department of Home Affairs, law enforcement, community organisations and other key stakeholders that ensures victims and survivors have an opportunity to access the support they need.
- clearly demonstrated the experience of the applicant in working with children and young people, through the delivery of existing services using an evidenced-based, trauma-informed model developed for working with children and young people.

### Individual feedback

Individual feedback will be provided for this grant opportunity.

Requests for individual feedback will only be accepted within 30 days of receipt of the outcome of your application. Feedback will be provided within 60 days of receipt of the request. Applicants seeking individual feedback should submit requests to [peopletrafficking@dss.gov.au](mailto:peopletrafficking@dss.gov.au).