



## **NCOSS Insurance: Bulk Buying Scheme**

Are you having problems obtaining public liability insurance? The good news is that the Council of Social Service of New South Wales (NCOSS) is developing a bulk buying insurance scheme for non-government organisations.

A bulk-buying scheme operates by purchasing insurance using the combined buying power of several organisations to drive down the premium price and negotiate improved policy coverage. NCOSS Insurance aims to implement their bulk-buying scheme by March next year. In the meantime they are encouraging organisations to register their interest in the scheme through the NCOSS website [www.ncoss.org.au/insurance](http://www.ncoss.org.au/insurance) or via the insert in this Newsletter. Registration is an important component of developing the Scheme as it provides a deeper understanding of insurance within the community sector as well as stronger negotiating power when talking with brokers and underwriters.

Sandra Handley, the Project Officer responsible for establishing the Scheme, is currently developing eligibility criteria and Scheme methodology, researching existing community bulk buying schemes and providing insurance information to community sector organisations experiencing difficulties with public liability or other insurances.

One information area requiring particular attention is that many community organisations are not aware of what their policies cover. Some organisations have discovered they were not covered for certain activities and were unaware they had specific exclusions on their policies. Provided below is a brief outline of important points to be aware of.

### **Do you have adequate public liability insurance?**

Most funding agreements require organisations to have a minimum of \$10m public liability cover with some agreements requiring \$20m. Generally \$10m is considered the minimum cover community service organisations need to have to ensure they are adequately protected.

### **Does your public liability insurance cover all your activities?**

*Do you have any exclusions?* An exclusion is an activity that the insurance company has decided is too risky or they do not want to provide cover for which could mean that your organisation does not have public liability insurance cover for certain of its activities. Having no exclusions listed on your policy does not mean you are automatically covered for all the activities you are undertaking. If in doubt, check with your broker.

*What activities are you providing now that are different from when you first filled out a proposal form or last renewed your policy?* Have you recently started providing excursions, do you now run a playgroup, or perhaps you have commenced a regular community barbecue? If you have not informed your insurance company about these activities they may not be covered by your public liability insurance. Check with your broker.

*Where are you operating from?* Check you are covered for all the locations you run services from? If your organisation runs a regular group away from its offices, e.g. at the local school,

ensure that location is noted on your policy.

*Who is covered under your policy?*

Generally, the organisation, its employees and volunteers are covered under a public liability policy. However it appears that volunteers who do not have a visa that allows them to work in Australia may not be covered under public liability insurance. Talk to your broker if you have volunteers in this category.

Finally when asking your broker about insurance issues, **always get the answer in writing!** Why? Let's say you ring your broker to ask if your community bbq is covered in your policy, the broker says yes. There is an accident at the bbq and you put a claim in to your underwriter who says "we did not cover you for a bbq". In this case, if you obtained an answer in writing from the broker you can make a claim on the broker's insurance. If you didn't, it would be very difficult to prove the broker's response.

If you have any queries about insurance please contact Sandra Handley, NCOSS Insurance on 9211 2599, ext 104.

## **NGO Management Support Unit**

In 1999, the Council of Social Service NSW secured funding from NSW Health to undertake a study of Health NGO Training Needs. The study concerned itself with identifying the training needs of both paid managers and board members in relation to their respective roles in managing health NGOs.

The training needs identified in the final report\* for both managers and committee members, were many and complex, and it became obvious that they needed to be met in a customised and flexible manner. The area of highest need for managers was *Human Resource Management* and for committee members, *Planning and Evaluation*. The degree of need indicated for committee members was consistently much higher than that indicated for managers. This finding should be considered with an understanding of community management as a developmental model. The skill development of volunteers over time, through their involvement in management committees, is a central community development principle for many NGOs.

Competency levels varied significantly for both groups according to the income base of the NGO. NGOs with a smaller income base indicated that they 'required training' more than those NGOs with larger income bases. This was to be expected. Interestingly enough however, there was minimal significant variation in competency levels according to the location of the NGO.

The study showed that NGO managers were more likely than committee members, to have received training in the past twelve months. The majority of respondents, both managers and committee members, described their current level of training as inadequate and this was pronounced for committee members, 76% of whom considered their training level to be inadequate.

The final report found that multiple and interrelated barriers to training exist for both groups. Many of these relate to inadequate resources, the lack of relevant training and accessibility for NGOs in rural and regional NSW and the time available to attend external courses.

As a result of this study, [NCOSS has established a Management Support Unit \(MSU\) to](#)

facilitate access to training and resources on management & governance for NSW Health funded NGOs.

MHCC is represented on the Advisory Committee for the Unit and will keep members informed of services and opportunities as they arise in addition to representing member's interests.

**The MSU will assist Health NGOs with:**

- the provision of training to meet identified needs
- the development of management support options for NGOs
- the enhancement of the role of health peak bodies in the provision of management support to their members and
- the development of statewide policies that will strengthen the relationship between Area Health Services and funded NGOs

In the first instance, the MSU has established a variety of resources and information on training programs and also current issues relevant to the management of NGOs on the NCOSS website. Topics covered include accountability, leadership and promotion, planning and evaluation and human resource management.

Elizabeth Priestley, Project Officer for the MSU is keen to hear from anyone with suggestions on other relevant issues not previously mentioned. Or you may know of training programs that were particularly beneficial in improving skills in management or governance. You can contact Elizabeth Priestley at NCOSS on 02 9211 2599 or by email [liz@ncoss.org.au](mailto:liz@ncoss.org.au).

Don't forget to look up the website at [www.ncoss.org.au/msu](http://www.ncoss.org.au/msu)

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\* Mahoney, Catherine 2000 *The Body Corporate, A training needs analysis of NSW Health funded NGOs in relationship to Management and Governance*. NCOSS publication

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