



Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth

Working together to enhance the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people.

**CONSULTANCY BRIEF
FOR
NATIONAL DATA NETWORK PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

ADDRESS EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST AND ENQUIRIES TO:

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INTRODUCTION

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (the Alliance) is seeking a consultant to undertake project management and the development of a Business Plan for implementation of a National Data Network for Children and Youth.

BACKGROUND

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth is a national collaboration whose purpose is to facilitate the generation and translation of knowledge to enhance the well-being and life chances of Australian children and young people.

The Alliance has two primary objects:

1. To promote collaborative research and agenda setting for children and young people in Australia.
2. To promote the application of research to policy and practice for children and young people.

The Alliance will broker new research collaborations and enable multidisciplinary groups to address a consensus research agenda. It will enable innovative funding arrangements and efficient and effective utilisation of existing data resources. It will seek to attract the best skills and ensure that national research infrastructure is effectively employed. The Alliance will link national and international research, policy and practice, and seek support from State and federal governments, corporations, and philanthropic organisations.

The Alliance aims to build collaborative infrastructure to support the national research effort regarding children and youth. The national data network proposed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth will be a mechanism for linking and sharing data so that the best use can be made of our national information resources without compromising standards of privacy or intellectual property. The Alliance aims to achieve much greater value from all Australia's current investments – research, policy and practice investments, to improve outcomes for children and youth.

Further detail about the Alliance is available on its website: <http://www.aracy.org.au>

MODEL OF NATIONAL DATA NETWORK

The preferred model for a National Data Network centers on the Alliance establishing the technical and organisational framework for stakeholders to share data. This framework would allow 'owners' to provide networked access to their databases, under conditions that they set individually and possibly database-by-database. The Alliance role becomes one of enabling rather than operating the network. Further details are outlined in the Expert Round Table Background Papers. (Attached)

OUTCOMES OF CONSULTANCY

1. Production of an Options Paper describing the proposed Data Network operational and governance model and incorporating the elements agreed at the Data Network Expert Round Table (16 June 2003). Circulation of this Options Paper to key stakeholders for comment and input.
2. Production of a Business Plan for progressive implementation of the agreed model for the Data Network including the identification of costs, timetable and technical requirements. The Business Plan will also identify potential funds within government, philanthropy and private corporations, and recommend on the best way of presenting the project to maximise success.
3. The consultant will also coordinate action on the demonstration and pilot projects identified at the Data Network Expert Round Table and integrate the outputs of these projects into the Business Plan. This will include coordinating the development of a dictionary of terms – a basic taxonomy that ensures that all stakeholders have a common understanding of the key elements of the data network.
4. Project Manage a second Data Network Expert Round Table which may involve international experts to obtain endorsement of the Options Paper and key elements of the Business Plan.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The specific Terms of Reference for the consultancy are:

- Identify the key steps in implementing the National Data Network.
- Identify key stakeholders in the National Data Network. This would need to include stakeholders with a particular interest in collection, management and use of information regarding children and youth.
- Map potential data contributors to the Network. Interview data custodians and identify datasets suitable for early linkage as distinct from those where linkage and sharing will be a more long term goal. This will involve distinguishing potential early wins and lighthouse achievements.

- Map potential users of linked data about children and youth. This will need to occur in concert with the Alliance agenda setting process and involve liaison with the two leaders of this process: Professors Ross Homel and Jan Carter, to establish the information needs being revealed, and to identify some research projects or questions that could be enabled or answered by data sharing and linkage.
- Review information about data networking and sharing available in the public arena (internet and publications)
- Identify examples of information sharing and strategies for data management and sharing in Australia and overseas, that could inform the overall process.
- Identify international experts who could contribute to our planning and implementation.
- Identify and describe current Australian examples of effective data sharing and linkage
- Coordinate the development of a taxonomy and dictionary of terms to ensure that all stakeholders have a common understanding of the key elements of the data network.
- Produce the Business Plan for implementation of the National Data Network.

THE SUCCESSFUL CONTRACTOR will be able to demonstrate an appropriate track record in consultancy work of this nature.

They will have skills in:

- Project management
- Strategic Information Planning
- Information management
- Business Planning
- High level written and oral communication skills

DELIVERABLES

- Options Paper
- A detailed Business Plan for implementation of the National Data Network.
- Second Expert Round Table
- Report outlining the information specified in the Terms of Reference above.
- Regular verbal liaison with Project Coordination Manager and Alliance steering group during the consultancy. A teleconference to discuss a half page dot-points style progress report will be required every 6 weeks.

FUNDING

The maximum value of the contract will be \$70,000.

METHOD OF WORKING

The consultant will work to a small steering committee and report to the Program Coordination Manager. The consultant is expected to help build the collaborative relationships that will underpin the successful implementation of this National Data Network. The consultant will also link via the Program Coordination Manager, with other key initiatives being progressed simultaneously by the Alliance eg the Clearinghouse feasibility study, agenda setting process, and communication strategy.

TIMETABLE

The contract is expected to be completed 4-6 months after commencement.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST MUST INCLUDE

- An outline of how the work will be completed
- Details and qualifications of personnel who will be involved
- Reference projects or sites which demonstrate the capability of the team to conduct the work
- Timescale and milestones
- Budget breakdown

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Expressions of interest will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the project requirements
- Demonstrable capability to conduct projects of this nature – including both project management and information planning skills
- Qualifications and experience of staff to undertake the work
- Value for money

DEADLINE: Expressions of interest to undertake this work must be received by **29 August 2003**.

ATTACHMENTS

Expert Round Table Background Papers
Expert Round Table Record of Proceedings