Task 1 & 2

Handout 13: Consulting with others within the Community Services & Health Industry

What is a consultation?

A consultation is a process where the views of the community, stakeholders in your organisation, colleagues and others are actively sought. It is an opportunity for the community services network to talk about their needs as professional workers and the needs of their clients.

A consultation:

- Provides information
- Seeks the views and feedback of the community and others who are interested or affected by the work of your agency
- Helps to generate new ideas about solutions to community problems
- Helps to generate ideas about effective ways to help develop and empower the community
- Provides an opportunity for the community to have input into policies and programs that affect them prior to their design and implementation.

The Community Services & Health Industry is comprised of a diverse number of groups with different target groups, with different modes of delivery and service philosophies. Therefore if services are to network successfully within the sector effective consultation skills are needed.

Within the community services industry consultations occur in two ways:

- As a one-off activity where the industry, or part of the industry meet formally around a critical issue, such as the impact of the G.S.T. on low income families
- As an on-going part of the activities of an already established formal network. For example one of the roles of ACOSS is to represent the views of it’s members and in order to do this they must consult in an on-going way.