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RESTRUCTURING AND CHANGE STRATEGY REPORT

**Prepared for
Northern Territory Working Women's Centre**

By

Jillian Ritherdon

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BACKGROUND

Northern Territory Working Women's Centre

The Northern Territory Working Women's Centre Incorporated ('NTWWC'), ABN: 34580069614 is an Association registered in the Northern Territory and a Charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission. It is a Public Benevolent Institution endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

As at 30 June 2016, the Committee of Management was comprised of:

Chair:	Emily Webster
Deputy Chair:	Nadine Williams
Secretary / Public Officer:	Emma Ringer
Treasurer:	Fateneh Misaghi
Committee:	Shannon Coetzee Tina Namow Golden Noble-Harris Lauren Macaulay

NTWWC's core business is providing advice, information, representation and referrals about work-related issues to working women. It has offices in Darwin and Alice Springs. The NTWWC also provides Community Education Sessions. All services are provided free-of-charge.

In 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, the main issues for which women sought assistance were:

1. Termination of employment
2. General issues around employment conditions
3. Discrimination
4. Workplace bullying and harassment

In 2014-2015, NTWWC reported a 99% satisfaction rate from clients who had completed a first appointment with the service and a 95% satisfaction rate from case work clients.

Current staff members are:

Rachael Uebergang	Co-Director (Part-time – job share – Darwin)
Anna Davis	Co-Director (Part-time – job share – Darwin)
Lianne Blanch	Finance Officer (Newcastle. Part-time 24 hours per fortnight)
Anastasia Coroneo	Senior Industrial Liaison Officer (Darwin. Part-time 30 hours per fortnight)
Claire Pirrett	Industrial Liaison Officer (Alice Springs. Full-time)
Melly Lewis	Industrial Liaison Officer (Darwin)
Anne	Industrial Liaison Officer (Darwin. Fixed Term Position. Finished 09 September 2016)
Grace	Trainee Administration Officer (Darwin. Ends prior to December 2016)

The Issues

The funding from the Fair Work Ombudsman which equates to 69.4% of NTWWC's income, ceases on 31 December 2016. The Fair Work Ombudsman will put a new program to an open, national procurement process that is likely to be different in nature to services traditionally provided by NTWWC.

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The only other, current, major source of income is a services agreement with the NT Government for the period 01 July 2016 to 30 June 2019 and is for \$176,000 per annum plus CPI.

The two operational Directors of NTWWC have commenced discussions with the NT Labor Party, which won the recent election, with respect to:

- Funding of circa \$300,000 per annum directed towards maintaining the Alice Springs' office (application submitted).
- Potential funding for project targeted to the issue of domestic violence and work (circa \$100,000 per annum – not yet submitted).

They have also commenced discussions with the Federal Department of Employment and Office for Women to endeavor to secure alternative federal funding but with no success to date.

Whilst negotiations for further Northern Territory Government funding are promising (and will proceed with the relevant Ministers shortly), NTWWC needs to undertake the following steps:

- Develop a plan for the 'worst case scenario' which would preserve a core service
- Identify the means to 'future-proof' the organization to be more financially self-sustaining independent of government (local, NT and Commonwealth) funding

The Brief

To identify the best options to sustain the organization in a 'worst case' scenario.

To investigate the core strengths of the business to identify 'new outside-the-square-ways' of doing business, including funding sources not yet properly explored by the NTWWC, within an open and respectful consultative process that includes all staff who wish to be involved; and noting that all staff are highly skilled and highly valued. Where practical, the consultation process should also include the Committee of Management.

Approach

The approach adopted has been:

- Meetings and interviews with Co-Directors and the Chair
- Examination of Financial Statements and information provided
- Development of a base Cash Flow Forecast
 - Extrapolation of Cash Flow Forecast to development worst-middle-best case scenarios
- Completion of a Jobs Skills Matrix and its review (available on request)
- Creativity, Change and Consultation Session with staff
- SWOT Analysis

Time Line

It is noted that the timeframes were and are particularly tight considering that under the current rate of expenditure, and incorporating redundancy provisions, the organization would be trading close to insolvent by the end of February 2017; and that new business development typically takes up to a year to plan and launch.

Investigations undertaken have included:

- 11 August 2016: Initial meeting with Rachael Uebergang (Co-Director)

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- 16 August 2016: Brief received by email
- 16 August 2016: Board of Venture Housing approves work to be undertaken by the CEO and Finance Manager with NTWWC as part of its community engagement
- 18 August 2016: Confidentiality Agreements executed by Jillian Ritherdon and Helen Stuart
- 18 August 2016: Provision of financial information
- 19 August 2016: Meeting with Co-Directors
- 26 August 2016: Meeting with Emily Webster (Chair)
- 26 August 2016: Provision of first draft of Cash Flow Forecast (worst case scenario based on de-identified staff being retained i.e. 1 FT Director and 1 ILO with \$30,000 of Business Development Funds and \$15,000 of Profile Building Funds and a surplus of \$61,483 after all redundancies as at 30 June 2017) – to be reviewed by Directors and Chair
- 29 August 2016: Staff “Creativity, change and Consultation” Session PowerPoint developed
- 29 August 2016: Individual Staff Questionnaire developed
- 01 September 2016: Meeting with Co-Directors
- 06 September 2016: Provision of Jobs Skills Matrix to Co-Directors and Chair for completion
- 08 September 2016: Receipt of completed Jobs Skills Matrix from Co-Directors
- 08 September 2016: Staff Consultation Session at NTWWC’s offices from 9.30am – 12.45pm
- 09 September 2016: Consultation and Follow-Up Session with Co-Directors
- 09 September 2016: Reviewed Cash Flow Forecast (worst case scenario above) provided by Co-Director
- 15 September 2016: Develop and review of sample cash flow models

CREATIVITY, CHANGE AND CONSULTATION SESSION

The Process

Excluding the two Co-Directors, staff who both wished and were able to be involved attended a half-day “Creativity, Change and Consultation” Session on 08 September 2016 with Jillian Ritherdon in order to:

1. Harness their ideas and creativity
2. Explore potential strengths (organizational and individual)
3. Explore areas of improvement
4. Discuss the current situation in a ‘safe’ (and de-identified reporting) setting

Staff were very open, animated and demonstrated a deep, clear and considered understanding of the organization and its current situation. They all expressed a deep appreciation for the leadership, management, support and ongoing efforts of the two Co-Directors. The consultation finished on a positive and energetic note and staff were provided with Individual Questionnaires which could be completed at the individual’s discretion.

Staff were invited to contact Jill should they have any further ideas and were provided with Tina Namow’s contact details should they have any concerns.

The two Co-Directors met with Jill on 09 September 2016 to debrief, provided their input and discuss the ideas raised.

A copy of the consultation notes is available on request. For the purposes of this report, Jill has consolidated and synthesized the information that is most relevant to the brief.

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Organisational SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
External	External
Educating women about reasonable work practice	Not well-known outside of community sector
Conciliatory – Not-litigious	Poor Branding
Empower women to be tax payers	Poor Profile
Empower women to progress their carers	Not good at “blowing our own trumpet”
Empower women to solve issues	Current financial position
Save employer’s time	Narrow scope
Stops people clogging up the legal system	HR methodology sometimes too flexible at the detriment of the organisation
Identify real workplace issues	Lack of staff diversity (age and ethnicity)
Practical	Staff employment model makes discretionary effort difficult (e.g. attending evening functions to network)
Go beyond IR – all-encompassing / holistic / healing	Name sometimes confused with “working women” in a biblical sense!
Advocates	Skill-set operationally and at board level (lack of marketing, branding, profile building skillset and attributes)
Mediators – de-escalate conflict (not \$-driven)	Need “higher energy and sense of urgency”
Support family responsibilities	Being equated to a union
Union-like but not union-based	Lack “polish”
Progressive	Degree of COM engagement and pro-activity
Knowledge / expertise	Lack of sector diversity on the COM (e.g. marketing, fundraising)
Best-practice	Lack of options for clients just having a vent – need for tirage
Feminist	Need for fee for service without diluting core feminist principles
Niche	Need for fee for service without conflict of interest nor damaging ‘niche’ service deliverables
Good reputation - trustworthy	Lack of time to develop fee for service or other innovative model
An office in Alice Spring	Cost of developing a fee for service model
High social return on investment	Resources to develop a fee for service or other model
Internal	Low use of volunteers / return-to-work assistance
Client-focussed	
Safe	
Wide-ranging and good referral sources	
All-encompassing / Holistic / Healing	
Advocates	
Welcoming and approachable	
Patient and kind	
Strong internal dynamic / team-work	
Politically savvy	
Well-organised	
Non-judgmental	
Progressive	
Good staff retention	
Kind	
One-stop-shop	
Productivity / Outcome efficient	
Flexibility	
Professional discretion	
Collegiate	
Accountable	
Wide range of professional experience	
Opportunities	Threats
Ask clients with large settlements to make a “pay it forward” donation	Financial situation – including lack of or reduced Government funding
Better use of volunteers (students, return to work candidates, retired women) to increase resources	Good staff leaving (of own accord or redundancy)
Dedicate finances to business development and profiling (Employ a BDM)	Competitors
Build a male ‘Friends of NTWWC’ donation base	Lack of time to create new model
Better use of database to fundraise	Change in Government focus
Retain NTWWC but create a new branch with its own trading name to service all members of the community (phone and	Lack of understanding of the NTWWC operational model in the broader community (i.e. not valued)

email to start) – opens funding opportunities	
Create a multi-disciplinary, workplace best practice innovation hub (see below)	Lack of in-house marketing/branding/profiling expertise
Employ a counsellor (tirage ‘venting’ from genuine after first appointment)	
Employ an in-house practising solicitor	
Education and “Foundations of Best Practice” for employers as a fee-for-service (work with an existing RTO)	
Policy writing and review service as fee for service	
Employer advice only if separate trading name and as fee for service or subscription	Conflicts of interest (can be managed)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Underway

1. The two Co-Directors attended the next Dragon Sisters’ “Smarketing 101 Workshop” (completed).
2. The two Co-Directors have applied for and been successful in obtaining a Business Development Grant with the NTG. Michelle Hanton has commenced a marketing project which includes:
 - a. Developing an immediate fund-raising and profile-raising campaign using existing data-base and direct, social media and crowd-funding
 - b. Reviewing existing marketing collateral
3. The two Co-Directors and Chair have been advised that, going forward, the organisation’s financial position should be analysed using the Cash Flow Forecast (i.e. monies in and out of the organisation as opposed to accrual accounting); with the actual monthly figures inserted as soon as determined and adjustments made to the forecast as a result. Analysing cash flow and, particularly, the timing of expenditure, is critical to determining solvency
4. The Co-Directors are undertaking further discussions with new NTG Minister with respect to specific Alice Springs funding.
5. Co-Directors have been informed of the NT Department of Business’ secondment program. More information is available from: <https://nt.gov.au/community/non-government-organisations-ngos/government-staff-secondments>
6. A review of appropriate grants should be undertaken from the website: <http://community.grantready.com.au/>

Immediate (within one month)

1. **Finance Officer**

Given the size and type of NTWWC's accounts, an experienced Finance Officer would require circa 8 hours per fortnight to manage them. The on-costs of employees (i.e. the costs over and above base salary) currently sit at 14% of wages in Australia. There is also an administrative impost if the person works remotely (e.g. scanning documents etc.) as opposed to attending the NTWWC's office. The Finance Team at Venture is available to make an onsite inspection of the financial processes to determine the number of hours required.

Whilst it is acknowledged that good Finance Officers are hard to find and the high level of corporate knowledge that NTWWC's Finance Officer possesses, given the organisation's current turnover, the size of the accounts and the fact that the Finance Officer lives interstate, discussions should commence as soon as practicable with the Finance Officer with a view to her becoming a contractor. It is recommended that NTWWC determines the terms of the engagement and that this could be a weekly set-price contract.

This can be explained as an opportunity for her to retain her engagement with NTWWC whilst permitting her the flexibility to launch her own business working for others as well (noting that, as an employee, she would need NTWWC's approval to work for any other entity – approval that could not be unreasonably withheld).

It is advantageous to the organisation as it would permit the retention of NTWWC's financial knowledge and intellectual property, permit hours paid to reflect work undertaken and save employee on-costs, but also open the door for increased hours as the organisation grew. In other words, the Finance Contractor would be vested in the organisation's financial success.

The Co-Directors have confirmed that there is no specific mention in the EBA regarding a period of time needing to elapse post a redundancy prior to her engagement in a contractor role. The normal redundancy processes should occur and, at the expiry of the notice period, a Service Agreement should be entered into. The Finance Officer should be advised to obtain her own independent accounting advice as to any taxation implications of receiving a redundancy and then becoming a contractor.

2. **Improve Client Intake Procedures**

A review of client intake procedures needs to occur to ensure that those with a genuine workplace issue requiring a face-to-face appointment are identified separately from those who are just seeking to validate a personal viewpoint or who could be rapidly assisted with telephone advice.

The development of a short checklist of questions to ask on initial approach by the client would assist in this determination and help to eliminate 'no-shows'.

Separate clinics and/or counselling session could be offered, as appropriate, to those without genuine employment issues. These could be fee-for-service (please see below).

3. **Marketing / Business Development / Profiling**

NTWWC's brand and name is not broadly known outside of the community/feminist/legal sectors. The name itself does not accurately describe the work that you undertake (for

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example, telephone calls have been received that indicate that the caller thought NTWWC was a 'union' for call girls).

Staff expressed the desire to be "niche, "known, polished, chic but approachable" and considered the organisation currently to be "daggy and quaint". There was an expressed desire to see money and resources spent on lifting NTWWC's image and profile.

There is little in-house branding/marketing knowledge or skill-set.

The NTWWC should consider the following:

- a. Employing or contracting experienced and skilled marketing / business development / profiling expertise.
 - i. Contract
 - ii. Volunteer (e.g. retired executive woman or return-to-work WHS placement)
- b. Consider that person's:
 - i. Availability and willingness to attend after-hour functions as a NTWWC representative
 - ii. High-energy engagement and networking capabilities
- c. Development of a 'tag-line' that compliments and explains the name.
- d. Development of 30-second elevator pitches which describe the benefits and value of NTWWC to relevant audiences. These would be different depending on the recipient (e.g. what you might say to a sister feminist organisation may have a different emphasis than to a right-of-centre politician).

When seeking funding or fee-for-service work, these need to contain key words such as:

- i. Practical and not litigious
 - ii. Educating women around reasonable work practices
 - iii. Expertise
 - iv. Saving the employer and the courts' time
 - v. Stops employees clogging up the legal system
 - vi. Experts at de-escalating conflict
 - vii. High social return on investment
 - viii. One-stop-shop
 - ix. Progressive and understands the next generation of workers
- e. Review the format of marketing documents (including the annual report)
 - i. Include more graphs
 - ii. Change formatting
 - iii. More colour
 - iv. Positive photographs with positive messages
 - v. Calculate the social return on investment and include it in reporting and on website
- f. Expand NTWWC's networks by becoming a member of and selectively attending the events of organisations such as:
 - i. NT Chamber of Commerce
 - ii. Palmerston Regional Development Association
 - iii. Relevant professional associations
- g. Implement a funding campaign as soon as key marketing / profiling points above have been developed.

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4. **Pay It Forward**

The ‘core’ philosophy of NTWWC and basis of government funding agreements, is NTWWC providing free employment advice to disadvantaged women. It is, therefore, inappropriate to charge a fee for service in this area. Clients can, however, be encouraged to make a donation from settlements or when their lives are ‘back on track’ as part of a ‘pay it forward’ to other women facing similar issues. People generally value more something for which they pay and this donation could also be seen as a means to instil a greater sense of self-worth in clients.

ILOs should ensure that they ‘make the-ask’ and be provided with scripts to assist them. Scripting should include an estimate of what the case would have cost had it been undertaken using a private solicitor (not to engender a sense of guilt but to demonstrate ‘true value’.

Advise tangible outcomes to amounts e.g. \$X ensures that a woman will be supported to X

5. **Friends of NTWWC**

All staff were comfortable with men being “Friends of NTWWC” on condition that they did not receive voting or membership rights.

6. **Patron**

Consider appointing a strong, well-connected NT woman (or someone with a strong connection and regular attendance in the NT) as NTWWC’s patron. The person needs to be available and committed to assisting NTWWC in growing its profile.

7. **Volunteer Resources**

Any changes to NTWWC’s business model (in both best and worst case scenarios) will require significant resources and pose a considerable impost on the time of the two Co-Directors. To alleviate them and other staff from routine administrative tasks, NTWWC should consider seeking volunteers from the following sources:

- Retired (potentially with expertise) women (enquire with COTA)
- Students (law, social work, graphic design, communications, psychology – enquire with CDU)
- Return-to-work placements (enquire with Connect and other similar organisations)

Apart from direct enquiry with relevant organisations, NTWWC could put out a general call for volunteers on its website and Facebook page.

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Medium-Term (next 2-4 months)

There was an expressed desire from staff to play to NTWWC's core strengths (expert employment advice in a holistic and feminist service) whilst not compromising core values. It was agreed that whilst the organisation was and should remain feminist and there should be no dilution of the feminist brand, this should not be to the point of excluding men in a service or services provided under a different trading name.

The philosophy expressed was [sic] "to support women, you also need to support men and the broader community in obtaining flexible work practices".

Concerns were also expressed around the high number of women who access the service only wishing to vent or endeavouring validate their viewpoint without any real workplace issue. It was expressed that these clients "sucked the oxygen" out of the staff and the service but might have issues that would respond well to counselling on a fee-for-service basis, and, thus, free up time for more disadvantaged women with genuine workplace issues. An in-house counsellor would also be able to assist traumatised clients involved in serious workplace issues and thus assist in closure and conciliation as part of the free service. (And noting the previous recommendation for improved intake assessments).

There was strong agreement that there needs to be diversification and the development of a range of services.

Key Recommendations include:

1. **NTWWC Core Brand**

NTWWC core brand be retained and be the 'emergency department' free service for disadvantaged women experiencing genuine workplace issues.

- a. All women would receive their first session free-of-charge
- b. All women with genuine workplace issues would not be charged but would be asked to 'pay it forward' at an appropriate time
- c. Women without a genuine workplace issue would be referred to the fee-for-service counsellor (see below).

Please note:

Given the financial situation of the NTWWC, if additional funding is not secured by **30 November 2016**, NTWWC will need to adopt a restructuring process involving the redundancy of some staff (please see the Restructuring section below).

2. **New Employer Service under separate trading name (fee-for-service)**

A new trading name and brand be established under the NTWWC name to create a separate, fee-for-service for employers using a progressive, employee-focussed approach providing both advice and education, most particularly in the Domestic Violence training and education, policy support and consultation/advice.

- a. Market and develop the organisation as one that assists employers to be best practice so that they are not in a position of being sued ('non-litigious' approach) and saving the employer time whilst laying the foundations of best practice.
- b. Telephone and email advice only initially
- c. Sign up for one year and any employment advice you need is covered
- d. Education Programmes

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- i. Foundations of Best Practice
- ii. Domestic Violence and Anti-Bullying and Harassment
- iii. Webinars for remote and regional employers
- e. Policy and procedure writing and review (NT jurisdiction only)
- f. Target Not-for-Profits and small businesses
- g. Ensure conflicts of interest are managed (appropriate information “Chinese Walls”)

3. **New Community Workplace Advice Centre (new funding to be sourced)**

A new trading name and brand be established under the NTWWC name to create a Community Workplace Advice Centre available for all in the community

- a. It would initially provide ‘clinical’ workplace advice by telephone and email
 - i. As it grew, it would need a separate office (noting that there is one upstairs) as it would be necessary to ensure the NTWWC remained a safe, women’s space.
 - ii. It would also be a holistic, caring for people, service
- b. It would attract broader funding opportunities**
- c. It would ‘play’ to NTWWC’s existing expertise and knowledge
- d. It could incorporate some fee-for-service
- e. Project planning would need to investigate telecommunication upgrades, insurances, trading names, legal and accounting requirements, amongst other issues.

4. **Remote Telecommunications**

Consider the new forms of remote technology that permit staff to work from home providing a seamless telephone service.

5. **Multi-Disciplinary Workplace Innovation Hub (funded and fee-for-service)**

Establishment of a multi-disciplinary workplace employment advice innovation hub. This could include:

- Employ an in-house, practising Lawyer
 - This would assist in accessing different funding
 - Fees could be charged on a sliding scale and lower than industry standard; and some pro-bono
- Employ an in-house Counsellor
 - Enables NTWWC to ensure the quality of counselling
 - Assists in resolving closure issues
 - Fees could be charged on a sliding scale and lower than industry standard; and some pro-bono.
- Explore entering into an arrangement with a RTO to facilitate workplace education

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Review

Flexibility versus Best Interests

Whilst laudably a 'best-practice' and progressive employer, NTWWC needs to ensure, going forward, that these practices are balanced with the best interests of the organisation. A diversity of employees from different life-stages assists considerably in the availability of organisational representation after-hours (which can be either on a 'time-in-lieu' basis or a discretionary one).

The impost on remaining staff should also be considered when providing flexibility (that is fair to the employees and the organisation). It is necessary sometimes to say 'no' to requests for flexibility if remaining staff are too stretched but this can be communicated in a 'soft' way and explaining the reasons.

Committee of Management

- The Committee of Management needs to ensure that there is a diversity of backgrounds, sectors (including the corporate sector) and skill-sets (e.g. marketing) on its Committee.
- It also needs to ensure that the Committee of Management is engaged and pro-active and understands its role in supporting the NTWWC and develops a sense of urgency around organisational risk.

It should be acknowledged that not making a decision is effectively making a decision.

RESTRUCTURING SCENARIOS

It is acknowledged (and hoped) that additional funding will be received that will negate the need for a restructure. Nonetheless, the Committee of Management is strongly advised to rapidly determine their chosen course of action and, should new funding be obtained, continue with strategic planning to 'future proof' the organisation by adopting appropriate new, non-government income streams.

An Excel Workbook outlining potential scenarios has been developed in the absence of the time and resources normally used in the change management process to fully investigate an organisational restructure (change management is generally a three to six month process with resources placed inside the organisation).

The Excel Workbook has been provided to the Co-Directors and is:

- **A tool to model decisions**
- **Draft only - limited by time and access**
 - Needs to be refined by the Co-Directors with their in-house IP and in accordance with the decisions made
- **Worst case only**
- **Indicative and intended as thought-guiding only!**
 - Indicative of cash in and out of the organization in three (3) scenarios to determine critical cash flow points, and, at this point, should be read as a guide, not as a budget per se.

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- They assume that staff members are able to accommodate a reduction in hours or changes to their workplace conditions (such as no staff development budget as required by the EBA)
 - They do not take into account situations such as a departure on maternity leave and the requirement to fill a temporary maternity leave contract
- A **basis** for the development of a more exact **cash flow forecast** once final decisions on the future direction of NTWWC are made by the Committee of Management

REDUNDANCY 'BEST PRACTICE'

A few tips:

- Offer counselling
- Never make a role redundant on a Friday or before a public holiday
- Ensure the person has support, particularly getting home and that there is someone at home
- Check-in on the person over the next few weeks

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

A few tips:

- Use SMART methodology (Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Assignable, Realistic, Timely)
- Project plan by asking
 - **What** is the outcome sought? (Final objective)
 - **How** will it be achieved? (All the tasks required to achieved it)
 - **Who** will achieve it? (Assign responsibility for each task)
 - **When** will it be achieved by? (Assign a time for each task to meet objective)
 - **How much** will it cost? (Develop a budget)
- Consider the following:
 - Technology
 - Environment – offices / political / local
 - Risk – legal / insurance / WHS / organisation
 - Resources – staff / money / assets

Please do not hesitate to contact Jillian Ritherdon on 0419 665 397 should you require clarification or further information.

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