



Under One Umbrella

The Merger News

Friday, 6 March 2015

Welcome to the first edition of *The Merger News*

Released fortnightly, keeping you up to date with what's going on with the STAR-Cosmos merger.

Executive appointments A lot of work has been happening to get this team finalised. Applications have been called for from those where there are duplicate roles and the successful candidates will be announced within the next two weeks.

CEO happenings This month Catherine and Ralph aim to recruit and confirm the Executive team, and begin developing an IT strategy, HR strategy, legals and leading the consolidation process of the new organisation (phew – that is a lot of work!).

The Future Board Made up of members of the STAR and Cosmos boards, this group is called the Merger Sub-committee until there is an official, legal organisation. The group has met once already to discuss the organisational structure and will now start looking at governance policies and the feedback from the values workshops.

Culture workshops Passionate discussion in our culture workshops this week showed that the merger of Cosmos and STAR is an opportunity to create a strong values based culture. As a first step in preparing for the merger on 1 July, attendees in the four workshops began defining the agreed purpose and some common language for the new organisation. The next step is to collate all the feedback and present it to the Executive team, then the Merger Sub-committee of the Boards of

STAR and Cosmos. We'll then get together as a whole organisation to work out how we develop our culture.

Timeline Have a question about when things will all start to happen? Take a look at the timeline attached to this newsletter. Some things are not yet confirmed but we thought it was better to get this out to you so you get an overall idea of how we see things shaping up. We'll keep updating them, and you, when there are changes.

Consultation on draft structure Time is ticking away.... get your ideas and thoughts on the draft structure in by 17 March. At Cosmos, send your ideas, concerns and thoughts to info@cosmos.org.au and at STAR, add your thoughts to the issues register at the front desk or email through to Megan Cunningham at megan.cunnigham@startas.org

Feedback so far We've had some really useful feedback so far about the draft structure. Here are some of the issues that have been logged with a brief response:

 **1.Reception Role:** *there is not one specific reception role on the structure and yet phones still need to be answered, issues triaged and there needs to be a friendly face at the front counter – should someone be selected as the receptionist for the organisation?*

Response: The operational side of this team is yet to be decided.



2. Project Officer (PO) Role *within the Service Development area: unsure how they work and what functions they will share?*

Response: The PO positions sit with the Business and Service Development area. Tasks are still to be allocated, however the positions may share some key functions.

Head Office As they say "all good parties are in small spaces". But before we start thinking about a party, a sub-committee is looking at how the people based at Cosmos' New Town office can be physically accommodated in the new entity. A tentative move in date of end of April has been flagged – but we will keep you posted. All concerns and ideas to be given to Chair of the Sub-Committee, Darryleen Wiggins at dwiggins@startas.org.

Name campaign What's in a name? Plenty if you are a merged STAR/Cosmos disability service. While "Galaxy" may be off the list we know that there are some other terrific ideas out there. Megan Cunningham will be running a campaign to generate the new name so please forward any thoughts to her at megan.cunningham@startas.org.

Client feedback We are also keen to get ideas from our clients about what they would like to see to improve and strengthen services in the merged organisation. Anna Holliday (an independent consultant) will run workshops in March (dates to be confirmed). We'll keep you in the loop.

Some more questions, answered

1. Can clients be charged one payment for day support and residential?

Answer: At the moment the finance team is working through lots of issues about how we

bill and receipt clients in the future. The intention is that as much paper work as possible is reduced for clients so we certainly do want to aim for one payment system.

2. How do we ensure the "family" feel of the two small organisations is retained in a larger merged entity?

Answer: It is the people on the ground who make that difference to the clients. The Executive team's role is in ensuring all staff are empowered to continue making clients' experiences positive and meaningful – in other words, to continue working in the same way you always have. As the merger transition unfolds, all employees are invited to feed into the development of policies, processes and systems so that we can enshrine our focus on providing quality services to individuals and, at the same time, continuing to value families.

3. How do we communicate with and value staff in a larger organisation?

Answer: Crucial to the new organisation is the development of communications and staff engagement strategies. These will take the best of what STAR and Cosmos currently does - as well as any new ideas - and incorporate it all into plans for the new organisation. In the meantime, we are communicating with you via a number of methods: this newsletter (to come out fortnightly); the issues register; staff meetings; culture workshops; and CEO visits to sites and meetings. For Cosmos, the Cosmos Employee Facebook group is another forum.

Remember: support is available Not sleeping at night? Worried about the future? Talk to your manager, talk to your CEO and seek support from your colleagues. If you feel you need a neutral ear to listen to you, we can support you through the external support service, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).