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**PRACTICE POTENTIALS:
PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL
GROWTH AND QUALITY
OUTCOMES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD**

A research proposal to undertake a national study that explores the significance of professional development, support and training in contributing to quality outcomes for children in Australian Government funded children's services

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FEBRUARY 2007



Practice Potentials: Promoting Professional Growth and Quality Outcomes in Early Childhood

A highly committed and enthusiastic research team of early childhood specialists from Macquarie University and Charles Sturt University has been brought together for this project. Our proposal draws on collective expertise covering theoretical knowledge, research, policy and professional development skills relevant to understanding the relationship between staff professional growth and high quality outcomes for children participating in early childhood settings.

Team members have worked together over many years in a variety of ways, including teaching, providing professional development programs, and collaborating in research. Our combined experiences span a variety of early childhood contexts within Australia as well as Asia, Africa, Canada and Europe. We share a keen interest in professional development and quality assurance work. We believe that we can deliver a substantive research report that will strengthen the delivery of high quality services to enrich the experience of young children in early childhood settings.

The project leaders, Associate Professor Manjula Waniganayake and Dr Linda Harrison, have outstanding track records in early childhood research and evaluation. Our team comprises Ms Frances Press who has an international reputation for her work in early childhood policy. Ms Sandra Cheeseman, Ms Carol Burgess, and Dr Katey de Gioia all have extensive experience in children's services management and the delivery of professional development in a range of settings, including work within Indigenous and immigrant communities.

As the lead agency undertaking this project, our contractual obligations will be managed through Access Macquarie Limited (Access MQ), the commercial Consultancy, Training and Research Company of Macquarie University. Access MQ is a public company, limited by guarantee where Macquarie University is a sole member. The company has highly developed and comprehensive project management systems and provides services to projects in contract administration, including initial negotiations, financial management, procurement, project accounting and report production. In addition, Access MQ maintains Professional Indemnity, Public Liability and Workers' Compensation Insurance for its employees, researchers and consultants.

In this document, we provide a concise outline of our understanding of the project brief and our capacity to undertake this research study, as refined on the basis of communications with the PSC Alliance during February 2007, in particular the teleconference held on the 27th of February 2007.

1. Understanding of the Project Brief

We commend the PSC Alliance for identifying the need to establish a national research study to explore the significance of professional development of early childhood personnel as it relates to quality outcomes for children, their families and staff. There is an unequivocal body of research evidence that demonstrates the relationship between characteristics of staff and indices of quality care. Continuing professional development including participation in in-service training is a major contributor that enables the development and sustainability of high quality service delivery. The extent to which these phenomena are understood within early childhood professionals in Australia is yet to be formally researched.

Accordingly, the proposed study presents a timely opportunity to undertake this much needed work. This would facilitate Australia to adopt a strategic approach to policy development in nurturing adequately resourced professional development and support for the early childhood sector. For ease of reference, we have provided a project title that captures the above sentiments as follows: "*Practice Potentials: Promoting professional growth and quality outcomes in early childhood*". We understand that the PSC Alliance would like to re-negotiate this title following the commencement of the study.

In scoping this proposal, it is essential to establish a shared understanding about terminology and/or definitions to be used in the research study. To this end, we provide the following brief overview of the approach we have adopted for this initial proposal, emphasising that we are happy to negotiate the boundaries of these definitions as appropriate at a later stage.

- **Children's services managers:** For the purposes of this study, directors and/or managers are personnel who are responsible for the day-to-day management of children's services. They are the primary participants of this study. Exploration of their perceptions and understanding about professional development matters is the core focus of this study. It is also understood that the director/manager will be reporting her/his perceptions about professional development in relation to the experiences of their centres/services as a whole.
- **Children's services:** The study sample will be drawn from childcare centres that receive Australian government support in the form of Child Care Benefit funding. It is also envisaged that access to these services will be facilitated through the PSC Alliance in order to maximise the rate of participation in this research.
- **Professional Development:** We believe that it is essential to establish a shared understanding about the scoping of the concept of 'professional development' between the PSC Alliance and the successful tenderer who will undertake the actual study. Feedback from the Alliance on the EOI submitted in January, suggests that a broad definition of professional development is recommended. Accordingly, we will capture and analyse participants' understandings and beliefs about what professional development means to them.
- **Quality outcomes:** In the project brief, quality outcomes are defined in relation to the perceptions of the study participants, who are children's services directors/managers and staff. Accordingly, outcomes will be based on participants' assessments of services provisions, taking into account aspects such as program quality and effectiveness in meeting the needs of the children and families they serve. Where possible these outcomes are supplemented through quality assurance data collected by the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) and linked to the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC).

Essentially, the project brief indicates that the proposed study will yield experiential and attitudinal data from a specific group of early childhood stakeholders namely, managers/directors of children's services funded by the Australian Government. The data will cover their access to, participation in, and perceived benefits of professional development, support and training programs. We note that, within this design, there is no opportunity to gather baseline data that would enable a comparison of quality outcomes before and after the provision and implementation of professional support services. However, to address this weakness, we will include an analysis of the appropriate LSAC and Child Care Census data to examine the links between professional development opportunities and quality outcomes.

2. Proposed Methodology

The research methodology has been framed around the objectives identified in the project brief supplied by the PSC Alliance. Namely,

- *"To develop an understanding of how children's services managers view the value of professional support including training for their staff and their understanding of the relationship between professional support and development and quality outcomes.*
- *To develop an understanding of the range of measures that are effective in supporting services to implement improvements/changes in practice through in depth study of services experiences.*
- *To explore possible links between participation in professional development strategies and achieving identified outcomes through exploring a particular area of interest (eg a behaviour guidance or organisational management)."*

To enhance the study further, we propose an additional objective, as follows:

- To provide a broad national picture of the links between participation in professional development and support programs and quality outcomes

This additional objective will be the starting point for the proposed research study. It is directly linked to the proposed literature review and is based around the analysis of early childhood data from existing sources. For this purpose we will draw on relevant data from the following sources: (1) professional development needs analysis data collected by the PSC Alliance members; (2) staff participation in in-service training contained within Childcare Census data; and (3) LSAC data on staff participation in professional development as this relates to indicators of program quality. We believe that this additional research objective will increase the potential value of the proposed study through the creative and productive use of existing databases. As discussed during the teleconference on the 27th of March, this work will be carried out within the original budget costings proposed for Phase 1.

Overall, the research will be undertaken in a step-wise fashion, beginning with the broader national context to moving on to exploring practitioner perceptions and, then drilling down deeper by using a sample of case studies of children's services around Australia.

The three phase methodology proposed for this research study, consists of the following aspects:

Phase 1: National Context

The current context of professional development and support within the early childhood field will be explored through an analysis of existing sources of literature and quantitative data sources. This analysis will assist in uncovering existing patterns of participation in professional development as well as in the identification of gaps in the provision of training and support for early childhood personnel across Australia. This information will strengthen and guide the design and direction of the next two phases.

Phase 2: Field Perceptions

In this phase our primary purpose is to capture current perceptions about professional development and support held by directors/managers of child care centres from a national perspective. This data will be collected through a dedicated on-line survey questionnaire open to directors/managers of childcare centres around Australia in receipt of Australian Government funding in the form of Child Care Benefit.

Phase 3: Focus Groups and Case Studies

In order to ascertain a more specific understanding about common practices in professional development and support, a series of focus group discussions with centre directors/managers will be conducted in each state/territory and that a small sample of child care centres (approximately 8 services located across Australia) be accessed for in-depth exploration as case studies. The primary aim of the focus groups is to enable centre directors/managers to expand and clarify their perspectives about professional development experiences within a face-to-face forum with their peers. The aim of the case study visits is to discuss and document the specific professional development experiences of centre staff to uncover connectivities and understand the complexities between continuing professional development and achievements in day-to-day professional practice in these centres.

The sample of focus group and case study participants will be drawn from childcare centre directors/managers who participated in the on-line survey. That is, on-line survey participants will be invited to volunteer for a follow-up activity through a focus group and/or case study discussion. Final lists of these participants will be discussed with the PSC Alliance to ensure appropriate coverage in relation to factors such as the director's experience and training background in early childhood and the centre's location and type of centre management/sponsor.

In the Tables that follow, we provide more information in relation to the four research objectives by commenting on the feasibility of each objective (scope) and recommending specific strategies to adopt in undertaking the actual study.

Phase I: National Context

Objective 1: *to provide a broad national picture of the links between participation in professional development and support programs and quality outcomes.*

Scope of the study	Strategies for implementation
<p>Existing national data will be gathered from at least three sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Needs analysis data available from the PSC Alliance members; ii) Childcare Census data between 2004 – 2006 iii) Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) <p>These data sources will be used to ascertain broad national trends that highlight issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived areas of need for professional development training. • Characteristics of staff participating in current provisions of professional development provided by PSC Alliance and other means. • Links between participation in professional development and service type. • Relationships between participation in 'professional development' and staff ratings of quality service provision for children, families, and staff. • Relationships between participation in professional development and outcomes for children as reflected in the LSAC study results. • Average level of staff' participation in professional development activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings from the needs analysis work undertaken by the PSC Alliance members may be provided directly to the Research Team, or key findings could be discussed during the first teleconference. • Data from the Childcare Census contains relevant professional development information about children's services staff employed in a range of service types located in each state/territory. • LSAC data (Wave 1, 2004) are available for 275 infant care providers in long day care centres / family day care homes and for 2,675 four-to-five year old teachers in long day care centres. • LSAC data (Wave 2, 2006) will be available for an estimated 1,500 two-to-three year old care providers in long day care centres / family day care homes in late 2007. • Responses to question E10 "in the last 12 months, what is your best estimate of your hours spent on professional development activities?" will be analysed for the total sample and for sub-samples of service type (LDC, FDC, preschool). • Analysis of Wave 1 data will compare the level of participation in professional development with responses to questions in the LSAC survey about quality of service provision and child outcomes. Where linked data to the NCAC are available, levels of participation will be also compared with accreditation ratings, • Analysis of Wave 2 data will depend on the timing of data release by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Phase II: Field Perceptions

Note: Objective 2 is relevant to this Phase of the study.

Objective 2: To develop an understanding of **how children's services managers view** the value of professional support including training for their staff and **their understanding** of the relationship between professional support and development and quality outcomes.

Scope of the study	Strategies for implementation
<p>To capture the perceptions of Children's Services Managers/Directors about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their beliefs and meanings of the concept of 'professional development'; • their experience of accessing professional development, support and training programs; • their perceptions of the relationship between professional development and quality service provision; • their perceptions of the relationship between continuing professional development and quality outcomes for children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an on-line survey questionnaire with open and closed questions specifically designed to enable managers/directors to report on their experiences and to express their perceptions. • Use mail-out and email contact lists to invite childcare Managers/Directors to complete the online questionnaire survey. • Promote participation in this study through endorsement by the PSC Alliance. • Invite on-line survey participants to self nominate their service to participate in a case-study and/or focus group to explore related issues in more depth. These participants will be used as a basis to identify the national sample of focus group and case study participants and locations.

Phase III: Focus Groups and Case Studies

Note: Objectives 3 and 4 are relevant to this Phase of the study

Objective 3: To develop an understanding of the **range of measures** that are **effective in supporting services** to implement improvements/changes in practice through **in depth study of services experiences**.

Scope of the study	Strategies for implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ascertain in-depth perceptions of early childhood staff' about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the actual types of professional development services available and accessed by childcare staff; • the experiences of how centres have implemented new learnings derived from staff' involvement in professional support services. • In order to establish a comprehensive picture of the range of measures that have been used by services to improve every day professional practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a series of focus groups in each state and territory. The complex nature of the links between professional development and quality outcomes suggests that an interactive discussion within focus group discussions involving centre directors/managers may yield a richer evidence base as it allows participants to respond more than once, and take into account comments made by their peers. • Two Research Team members will facilitate these discussions at each location.

Objective 4: To explore possible links between participation in professional development strategies and achieving identified outcomes through exploring a particular area of interest (eg a behaviour guidance or organisational management).

Scope of the study	Strategies for implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary purpose here is to track the perceived links between participation in continuing professional development and changes in every day professional practice when working with children and their families in children’s services. To this extent, in speaking with individual staff who have participated in formal professional development programs, we will document their experiences about aspects including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which centres undertake systematic planning and/or needs analysis before accessing professional development services; • Methods used by centres to plan and track their achievements over time; • The extent to which every day professional practice has changed through participation in professional development programs; and factors that contributed to these changes.; • If there has been little or no impact, report on the reasons for this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential sites to conduct case study visits from the indications of interest in the on-line survey, ensuring a match with the location of each focus group discussion. • The final selection of sites will be discussed with the PSC Alliance to ensure that specific criteria regarding representativeness are satisfied by these participants. • A series of structured questions will be used to achieve consistency across all locations. Likewise, opportunistic questions that emerge during these conversations will also be relevant to probe complexities that emerge during at that time.

3. Research Team and Our Capacity to Perform the Proposed Tasks

The Research Team will consist of early childhood academic staff employed by Macquarie University and Charles Sturt University. The Macquarie Cluster will be lead by Manjula Waniganayake. Linda Harrison will be the Team Leader for the Charles Sturt Cluster, and together, they will oversee the overall direction and coordination of this project. A casual research assistant will work with both of the academic clusters to carry out the general data collection and assist in other aspects of project work as required. A brief biographical note about relevant expertise and experience that each team member brings to this project is provided next.

Research Team Leaders

A/Professor Manjula Waniganayake Macquarie University	Dr Linda Harrison Charles Sturt University
<p>A/Professor Waniganayake has been involved in children's services in a variety of roles, working in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. She has worked with children's services staff in child care, preschools, FDC and OSHC, providing in-service training, mentoring support and conducting research. She brings in-depth knowledge of the Quality Improvement and Assurance System (QIAS) for centre-based child care through her work as a moderator and as a member of the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (ADRC). As an experienced researcher A/Professor Waniganayake has led and participated in several national and international project teams. A/Professor Waniganayake has also acquired a strong knowledge base about professional development and support needs of children's services personnel through a variety of methods. This includes being commissioned to undertake a state-wide in-service training needs study in Victoria in 1992, and being the chief investigator of the evaluation team who monitored and analysed the in-service training (IST) program provided by the IST Consortium in Victoria for three consecutive years. Together with a group of academics in Melbourne, A/Professor Waniganayake has recently published a book which articulates a strategic approach to professional development, suitable for both novice and experienced children's services practitioners. When taken together, this background overview demonstrates A/Professor Waniganayake's passionate interest in delivering high quality services to children and their families, and her contribution to this agenda through active involvement in continuing professional development and support activities for children's services personnel.</p>	<p>Dr Harrison is a senior lecturer and experienced researcher in early childhood. Her research has used multiple informants and methods to assess quality care and education in a range of home and centre-based childcare settings, and to examine the effect of different components of quality on children's learning and wellbeing. These new research directions, involve government and non-government agencies, and address unresolved issues in the application of policy to child and family life. Dr Harrison is a Chief Investigator on seven competitively funded or contracted research projects, with a budget total of \$900,000. These include the preparation of a report on <i>Child Care in Australia</i> which analysed the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children data for the Australian Dept of Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and the management of the regional component of the <i>Child Care Choices</i> project, funded by the NSW Dept of Community Services. Other contractual work includes engagement as an expert advisor with the University of New South Wales Social Policy Research Centre for the evaluation of the Partnerships in Early Childhood Program, funded under the national Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, Invest to Grow program. Dr Harrison is also collaborating with other researchers to design, conduct and evaluate the James Cahill Preschool Early Intervention Research Project. She has a sound record of working effectively with researchers and practitioners, on state and national projects. Dr Harrison's ability to produce high quality work to a timeline is also evidenced in her authorship of 2 books, 3 book chapters, 20 refereed publications and over 20 international and national conference presentations.</p>

Team Members – Macquarie Cluster

Sandra Cheeseman	Dr Katey de Gioia
<p>Sandra Cheeseman is a lecturer in social policy, leadership and management. Ms Cheeseman has worked extensively in the early childhood field as a teacher and a director in long day care settings located in both rural and urban communities. Subsequently, she worked in senior management roles for nine years as a Professional Development Consultant and as the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of SDN Children's Services. In these roles, she was responsible for planning, designing and delivering a range of professional development programs throughout NSW. Ms Cheeseman was also the project coordinator for the NSW Curriculum Framework Training Project which involved working with children's services staff in a variety of settings and she took a lead role in undertaking the project evaluation. With a keen interest in exploring the possibilities of early childhood curriculum Ms Cheeseman continues to promote debate and discussion through a range of presentations both nationally and internationally. This includes invitations to deliver numerous presentations on her current research in pedagogical leadership. Through active participation in professional forums and national organizations such as Early Childhood Australia, Ms Cheeseman also continues to extend her sound understanding of current issues impacting on children's services personnel.</p>	<p>Dr Katey de Gioia is a lecturer who specialises in management, professional practice and diversity concerns. She has a growing track record in researching and publishing in these areas. Prior to commencing full-time employment at Macquarie University, Dr de Gioia led the 'Transition from Home to School' project, a Families First initiative for the NSW Department of Education and Training. She has also worked as an early childhood teacher, director and early childhood trainer in a variety of settings. Dr de Gioia's keen interest in health promotion in early childhood settings has involved working closely with early childhood staff and families in Indigenous and immigrant communities. Dr de Gioia brings extensive research expertise and field experience with children's services personnel, based on her involvement in a number of local and national projects including the National Childcare Standards study.</p>

Team Members – Charles Sturt Cluster

Carol Burgess	Frances Press
<p>Ms Burgess is an early childhood lecturer and course coordinator of the Bachelor of Teaching (birth to five) at CSU. Ms Burgess' research for her Master of Education, focussed on the provision of quality professional development for early childhood teachers. Over the years, Ms Burgess has built up a strong record as a highly skilled trainer by planning and delivering numerous continuing education sessions in the areas of conflict resolution, networking, staff management, staff appraisals and leadership development for both qualified and unqualified children's services personnel. Of particular interest is her recent initiative to design and deliver a professional development program for rural family day care personnel, and her presentations to the Aboriginal Early Childhood Services Support Unit in Dubbo. Through her ongoing consultancy work for the NSW Department of Community Services and as the chairperson of the Bathurst Early Childhood Intervention Services, Ms Burgess sustains her active engagement with professional development matters in the field.</p>	<p>Ms Press is a senior lecturer in early childhood at Charles Sturt University (CSU). Prior to commencing her position with the CSU, Ms Press was Director of the Office of Child Care within the NSW Department of Community Services and has had considerable experience in managing policy matters. Ms Press has also been the co-director and a primary contributor to national and international policy-related reports, including the <i>OECD's Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care: Australian Background Report</i>. She was a consultant for the whole-of-government <i>NSW Initiative for the First Three Years of Childhood</i>, and produced an extensive literature review for the NSW Department of Community Services regulatory review - <i>The costs and benefits of proposed changes to the children's services regulation in relation to staff-to-child ratios and group size</i>. Most recently she has completed a major report on early childhood policy for the National Investment for the Early Years (NIFTeY) and the Commissions for Children and Young People in NSW and Queensland. Ms Press' experience and expertise on policy work provides a sound foundation to investigate and analyse professional development matters impacting on the delivery of high quality services for young children and their families.</p>

This project is strongly endorsed by the respective Heads of Departments at each University. It is proposed that the work-load for this study will be shared between the two universities, with two academics partnering to manage specific tasks as appropriate. These details will be confirmed at the time of developing the final proposal.

Project management will be undertaken by Access MQ. The company has experience with various sectors of the community including government, industry, corporate entities, aid agencies, individuals and charities. Since its establishment in 1989, Access MQ has managed more than 2000 projects, with an annual gross project revenue of over \$14 million in 2005.

Past and current national clients include the Queensland Department of Industrial Relations and Treasury, Education Queensland, Department of Family and Community Services (FaCSIA), NSW Department of Education, NSW Roads and Traffic Authority, EXODUS Foundation, Northern Land Council (NLC), Alzheimer's Australia NSW, Cape York Partnerships, NRMA, GIO Insurance Ltd., Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM).

4. Proposed Works Program – Tasks and Time-Lines

	Specific strategies to achieve stated objectives	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Phase I	Develop a detailed research proposal for the study	*						
	Collect and analyse data from existing sources	*	*					
	Undertake literature review & identify key themes	*	*					
	Prepare and submit ethics application to Macquarie and CSU	*	*					
	Conduct a teleconference with the PSC Alliance (#1)		*					
Phase II	Design the on-line survey questionnaire	*	*					
	Launch & manage the on-line survey			*	*			
	Harvest & analyse the data from the online survey			*	*	*		
	Conduct a teleconference with the PSC Alliance (#2)			*				
	Prepare Report #1				*			
	Conduct a teleconference with the PSC Alliance (#3)				*			
Phase III	Focus groups - onsite visits			*	*	*		
	Case study - onsite visits				*	*		
	Focus groups – Harvest and analyse data				*	*	*	
	Case study – harvest and analyse data				*	*	*	
	Prepare Report #2 (preliminary focus group and case study data)					*	*	
	Conduct a teleconference with the PSC Alliance (#4)						*	
	Prepare draft Final Report (complete focus group and case study data)						*	*

5. Proposed Budget

The following budget is based on the specific strategies to be deployed as explained in the methodology section, in accordance with the discussions held with the Alliance in February 27, A summary of the budget is presented below, with a justification of the items and explanation of the costings. A detailed budget statement is also attached.

Strategies to achieve stated objectives	Estimated Cost
PHASE I:	\$7,460.00
Including undertaking literature review and identifying key themes, collecting and analysing data from existing sources, conducting a teleconference with the PSC Alliance (#1), developing a detailed research proposal, preparing to obtain ethics approval for the study.	
PHASE II:	\$30,750.00
Including creating and managing an online survey - including design of the on-line survey questionnaire, conducting two teleconferences with the PSC Alliance (#2 and #3), securing ethics approval for the study, harvesting and analysing the data from the online survey, prepare preliminary report #1.	
PHASE III:	\$56,970.00
Select sites and participants for focus group discussions and case studies, arrange and conduct on-site discussions with focus group and case-study participants, collation and analysis of focus group and case study data, prepare Draft Report #2, conduct a teleconference with the PSC Alliance (#4), prepare Final Report.	
Subtotal	\$95,000.00
Project Travel	
Travel costs for travel to 8 Capital cities *	\$16,405.00
Subtotal	\$16,405.00
Total	\$111,405.00
GST	\$11,140.50
Total Project Fee	\$122,545.50
Optional Project Travel to two regional Centres	
Optional travel costs for travel by two project consultants to two regional centres (as may be identified by the Alliance)**	\$3,845.00
GST	\$384.50
Total Optional Travel Costs	\$4,229.50

*Project Travel Costs include flights to 8 Capital cities by two project consultants, 1 night's accommodation, sustenance and incidentals, transfers and mileage.

** Optional Project Travel include additional costs of flights from capital cities to regional centres by two project consultants, 1 night's accommodation, sustenance and incidentals, transfers and mileage.

Justification/Explanation of budget changes (as per teleconference discussions between PSC Alliance, Project Consultants and Access MQ 27/2/07)

Phase I: actual costs are slightly less than the estimate presented in EOI.\

Phase II: these costs now include the cost of on-line survey primarily because we have shifted the focus groups to Phase III.

Phase III costings include a core cost of conducting focus groups and case studies in each state/territory capital ($N = 8$). It is assumed that the PSC Alliance will meet the on-site expenditure at each location such as venue hire and the hospitality for these participants. Each visit will be organised for research teams to conduct the focus group and visit the case study service. This will require a two-day/two-night trip by two members of the research team. Research team members' time is costed at two 7-hour days per trip.

A separate costing has been included for an optional inclusion of two regional focus group discussions. These would be added on to a capital city trip. Please note that case studies could also be included in the regional location, but that these would replace a capital city case study. The total number of case studies would remain at 8 (as noted in the Proposed Methodology, page 3). The cost of running the Focus group in regional NSW has not been included in this budget as it will be carried out by Charles Sturt University consultants free of charge.

Travel estimates are based on the above implementation strategies. Airfares have been estimated for trips from Sydney to each of the other capital cities, with an additional mileage or air cost for a CSU member to get to Sydney. Accommodation and per diem costs are calculated for 2 nights/days for each trip. CSU staff have an additional accommodation cost included for the Sydney focus group/case study. Transfers have been estimated at the full cost of getting to and from airports, to and from site venues, etc. However, if it is possible for Alliance members to provide some of the transport, especially to and from the focus group venues and case study services, this would reduce this component of the costs. Additional travel estimates have been included for the optional visits to regional centres.

PROPOSED INVOICE SCHEDULE (as per teleconference discussions between PSC Alliance, Project Consultants and Access MQ 27/2/07)

On signing	20% of the Total Project Fee
On completion of Phase I (April 2007)	30% of the Total Project Fee
On completion of Phase II (July 2007)	30% of the Total Project Fee
On completion of Phase III and submission of draft Final Report (September 2007)	20% of the Total Project Fee