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*“The ACT community sector and Government share a commitment to improve life for all Canberrans through participation in cultural, social, humanitarian, environmental and economic activities. To achieve this, the two sectors need to plan, learn and work together, building on existing strengths, encouraging innovation and making sound decisions informed by evidence.”* – ACT Social Compact

This section of the OIK provides an outline of the distinctive aspects of working with Government in the ACT.

You might also be interested in looking at information related to Grants and Tenders & Procurement.

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# ACT Government Structure

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) was granted self-government in 1988 with the first Legislative Assembly for the ACT coming into being in 1989. Before self-government, the ACT was administered by the Federal Parliament.

There are 17 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Members are elected every four years by the people of the ACT to represent them and make decisions on their behalf.

The ACT Government has responsibility for state/territory functions such as health, education and the administration of justice as well as local government functions such as roads, libraries and waste collection.

## Community Councils

The ACT Government also provides funding support to seven community councils across the ACT including the districts of Belconnen, Gungahlin, North Canberra, Inner South Canberra, Woden Valley, Weston Creek and Tuggeranong.

These Community Councils are not representatives of the local government. They are voluntary, not for profit, community based associations that act as the peak community representative bodies for their associated districts.

For further information see [www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au](http://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au)

# The Social Compact

The Social Compact is a document that outlines the principles of good communication and partnership between the ACT Government and the community sector. This social compact was developed collaboratively and forms the foundation of government and community sector organisation relations.

*The Social Compact: A Relationship Framework between the Act Government and the Community Sector* can be found here: <http://timetotalk.act.gov.au/social-compact/>

# Human Rights

The [ACT *Human Rights Act 2004*](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-5/default.asp) ('the Act') came into force on 1 July 2004, and is the only human rights Act in Australia (Victoria has the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006). The human rights in the Act are based on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and include:

* recognition and equality before the law
* right to life
* protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment
* protection of the family and children
* privacy and reputation
* freedom of movement
* freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
* peaceful assembly and freedom of association
* freedom of expression
* taking part in public life
* right to liberty and security of person
* humane treatment when deprived of liberty
* children in the criminal process
* right to a fair trial
* rights in criminal proceedings
* compensation for wrongful conviction
* right not to be tried or punished more than once
* freedom from retrospective criminal laws
* freedom from forced work
* rights of minorities
* right to education

The ACT Human Rights Act contains twenty human rights based on International agreements about how to protect values such as freedom, respect, equity and dignity. ACT Government agencies and other ACT public authorities must act and make decisions consistently with these rights.

The Human Rights Toolkit provides information organisations on how human rights are and can be utilised through the work of community organisations.

Further information about integrating Human Rights into an organisations operational documents can be found in the Standards section of the OIK.

# Involve Canberra

The National Disability Strategy (NDS) established by Federal Government “sets out a ten year policy framework for improving life for Australians with a disability, their families and carers” (Department of Social Services).

In order to take action on the strategy state and territory governments are taking various actions. In the ACT, Involve Canberra has been established to drive the agenda of social inclusion for people living with a disability, their families and carers.

For further information, see <http://www.involvecbr.com.au/>