



Annual Report

2021-22

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

ACTCOSS acknowledges Canberra has been built on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We pay respect to their Elders and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures and their ongoing contributions to the ACT community.

Funders and Partners

ACTCOSS received funding from:



Partners:



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What is the ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS)?

ACTCOSS is a non-profit organisation that advocates for social justice in the ACT and represents not-for-profit community organisations. We do this with support and input from our members – passionate individuals, community-managed organisations and other groups interested in a fair Canberra.

Vision

Our vision is that Canberra is a just, safe and sustainable community in which everyone has the opportunity for self-determination and a fair share of resources and services.

Objectives

- **Build capacity:** We assist and support organisations to build their capacity so they can provide a service that best meets the needs of Canberrans living in difficult circumstances
- **Promote social justice:** We make explicit and pursue a social justice agenda for the people of the ACT
- **Be an effective peak body:** We function as a peak body for the ACT community sector
- **Strengthen the COSS network:** We participate as part of the national Councils of Social Service (COSS) network.

Want to Know More?

Continue reading this report to get an idea about how we make a difference – and how you can join us to make a difference too! There are lots of opportunities for us to work together for positive social change.

You can also find out more on our website: actcoss.org.au

Chair's Report



It was an honour to be elected to the role of ACTCOSS Chairperson in November last year.

I would like to thank the ACTCOSS team for their hard work and commitment over another COVID-19 impacted year. Once again, we saw a major escalation in responses to the epidemic including a territory-wide lockdowns and mandatory vaccinations. I acknowledge the work of the ACTCOSS team during this difficult period to support the sector while also continuing its important advocacy work.

During the last year we have seen some significant improvements to governance including:

- Establishment of the Executive Committee
- Strengthening risk and audit oversight

I am also pleased that ACTCOSS has achieved improvements in its financial sustainability through a diversification of its revenue and a new 5-year contract with CSD.

I want to acknowledge the range of internal projects which put the organisation in a strong position. This includes finalisation of the Reconciliation Action Plan, office renovation, IT upgrade, rebranding, website renewal, strategic plan, membership strategy and media strategy.

This puts the organisation in a strong position to launch its next strategic plan.

I thank my Board colleagues who generously gave their time, knowledge and experience.

Finally, I thank the members of ACTCOSS for their support and commitment to ACTCOSS's work towards a sustainable ACT community sector and the achievement of social justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Halcrow', written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Halcrow
The Benevolent Society

CEO's Report



It is with pleasure that we present the ACTCOSS 2021–22 Annual Report.

Once again, we have experienced 12 months impacted by COVID-19. Despite these challenges ACTCOSS has passionately pursued its advocacy goals, embarked on major organisational projects and supported the Territory's response to the epidemic.

The ACT community services sector is undergoing major reform through the ACT Government's Commissioning Roadmap. ACTCOSS has played a critical role in providing feedback to the Government on achievements and challenges. We hope that the learnings from these initial processes will feed into improved outcomes as the roadmap continues to be rolled out.

I am proud of the work that ACTCOSS has done to continue to support the ACT Government, community sector and broader populace in the COVID-19 response. This includes information sharing, support for organisations to implement vaccine mandates, facilitating access to Rapid Antigen Testing and ensuring proper oversight of COVID-19 public health decisions.

ACTCOSS supported the delivery of the ground-breaking *Counting the Costs Report* which exposed chronic underfunding of the sector. This report has already resulted in positive changes including to the calculation of indexation. This year ACTCOSS also won more than \$400,000 of Commonwealth funding to establish the Community Sector Careers Gateway.

ACTCOSS made significant contributions to outcomes in areas including climate and energy, housing, child protection, human rights, justice reform and gambling harm. It played an active role in shaping the ACT debate during the federal election. ACTCOSS's advocacy in response to involuntary house relocations under the ACT Government's Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program led to the establishment of an appeals panel to protect the most vulnerable tenants.

Guided by the extraordinary Rachelle Kelly-Church, the Gulanga Program goes from strength to strength including significant engagement by members focused on improving cultural competency and outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Gulanga Program has also increased its contribution to ACTCOSS's policy development including a growing media presence.

ACTCOSS has also led the ACT Community Sector Multiple Enterprise Agreement negotiations.

I thank the ACTCOSS Chair Jeremy Halcrow and the ACTCOSS Board for their support. I would also like to thank our members, government partners, sponsors and other stakeholders for their ongoing collaboration.

I want to recognise the incredible ACTCOSS team who work unceasingly to advocate for fairness and justice. Thank you.

Finally, I acknowledge the strength and resilience of the more than 38,000 Canberrans who live in poverty and call on all governments to fix our income support system, invest in social and affordable housing and prioritise those who have the least.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emma Campbell".

Dr Emma Campbell
CEO, ACT Council of Social Service Inc.

Our People

Our People

Dr Emma Campbell, CEO

Adam Poulter, Deputy CEO (Jan – July 2022)

Gulanga Program Team

Rachelle Kelly – Church – Gulanga Program Manager (from Sept 2021)

Brendan Richards – Gulanga Program Support Officer (from Mar 2022)

Policy Team

Dr Gemma Killen – Head of Policy (from April 2022)

Craig Wallace – Head of Policy (to April 2022)

Geoff Buchanan – Senior Policy Officer, Research & Data (to June 2022)

Avan Daruwalla – Policy Support Officer (from Jan 2022)

Capability Team

Heather Fitt – Head of Sector Capability

Emma Hawke, CASP Development Officer (from Mar 2022)

Dr Bianca Williams – Senior Policy and CASP Officer (to April 2022)

Amber Bootle – Senior Project Manager, Career Gateways (from Feb 2022)

Leyanne Thompson – Project Support Officer, Career Gateways (Mar – July 2022)

Operations team

Stephanie Crosby – Operations Manager

Suzanne Richardson – Publications & ICT Officer

Tashi Choden – Administrative Support Officer

Patrick Johnson – Communications and Events Support Officer (from April 2022)



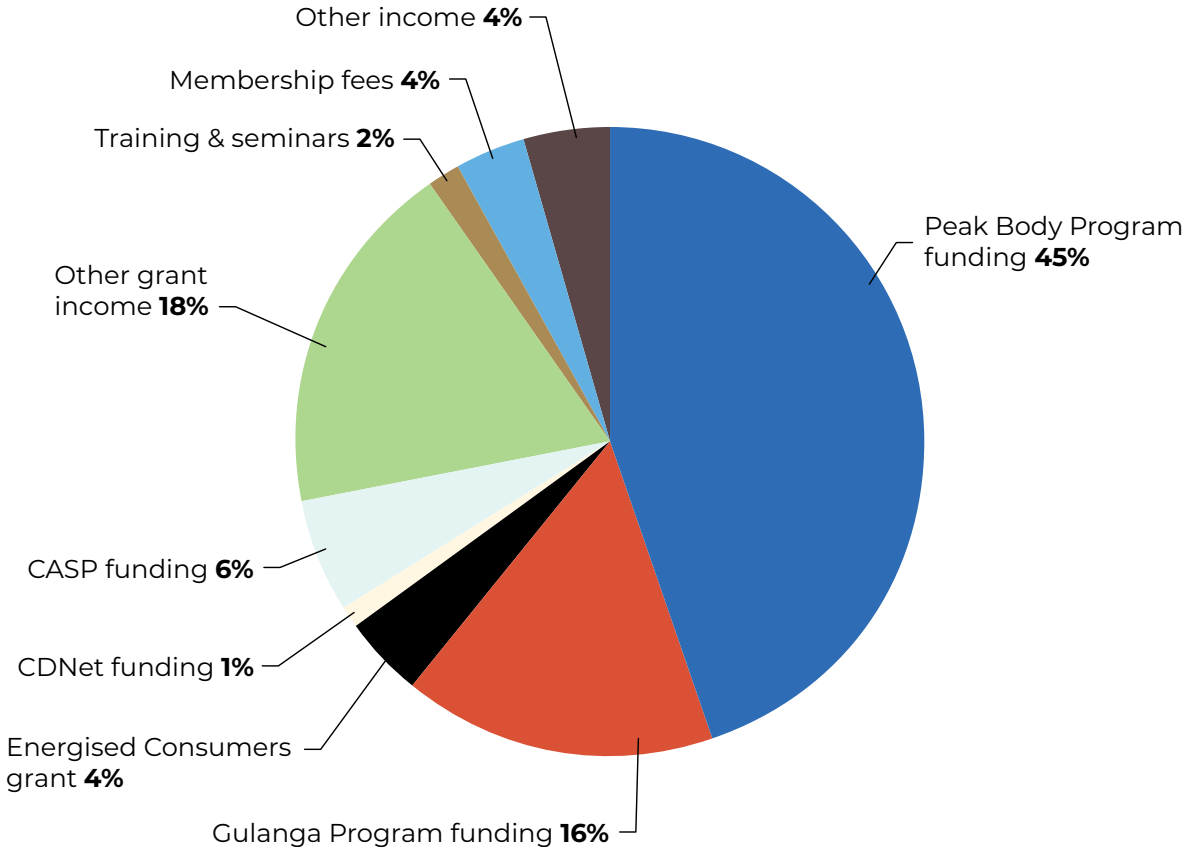
Our staff members making Mental Health a “p priori-tea”

Financial Statements

Statement of profit or loss for the year ended 30 June 2022		
	2022 \$	2021 \$
Grant funding	1,385,320	1,216,362
Other income	138,756	170,722
COVID-19 assistance	5,136	206,992
Finance income	1,860	11,707
Total revenue	1,531,072	1,605,783
Employee expenses	(1,170,014)	(1,199,771)
Accounting fees	(8,998)	(8,596)
Depreciation	(18,315)	(13,002)
External labour & consulting	(174,730)	(90,678)
Meetings & seminars	(15,001)	(16,582)
Rent	6,349	4,871
Other expenses	(120,985)	(86,531)
Total expenditure	(1,501,784)	(1,410,289)
Surplus from operations	29,288	195,494
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	29,288	195,494

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2022			
	Retained earnings \$	Operating reserve \$	Total \$
2022			
Balance at 1 July 2021	451,195	322,688	773,883
Comprehensive income attributable to members	29,288		29,288
Transfer to reserves	(226,368)	226,368	
Balance at 30 June 2022	254,115	549,056	803,171
2021			
Balance at 1 July 2020	255,701	322,688	578,389
Comprehensive income attributable to members	195,494	-	195,494
Balance at 30 June 2021	451,195	322,688	773,883

ACTCOSS Income 2021-22



Find the full financial statements for 2021-22 on the ACTCOSS website: actcoss.org.au

Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Vision Canberra is a just, safe and sustainable community in which everyone has the opportunity for self-determination and a fair share of resources and services.

Purpose ACTCOSS works collaboratively with organisations and individuals who support our vision and goals for positive social change. We advocate to government on social policy, encourage individuals and groups to take action, and provide capacity building services and resources to community organisations. We do all this with support and input from our membership.

Strategic objectives

Build capacity



Assist and support organisations to build their capacity so they can provide a service that best meets the needs of Canberrans living in difficult circumstances by:

- Providing affordable, relevant, timely and effective organisation and workforce development services and resources
- Promoting the value and importance of locally grown solutions and services
- Stewarding implementation of the ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026.

Promote social justice



Make explicit and pursue a social justice agenda for the people of the ACT by:

- Representing the views and priorities of our constituency and our members
- Getting new issues into policy and service reform agendas
- Influencing public debate and decision makers
- Holding the ACT Government to account
- Monitoring progress towards our vision for Canberra.

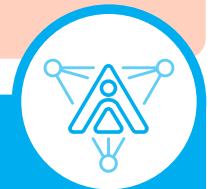
Be an effective peak body



Function as a peak body for the ACT community sector by:

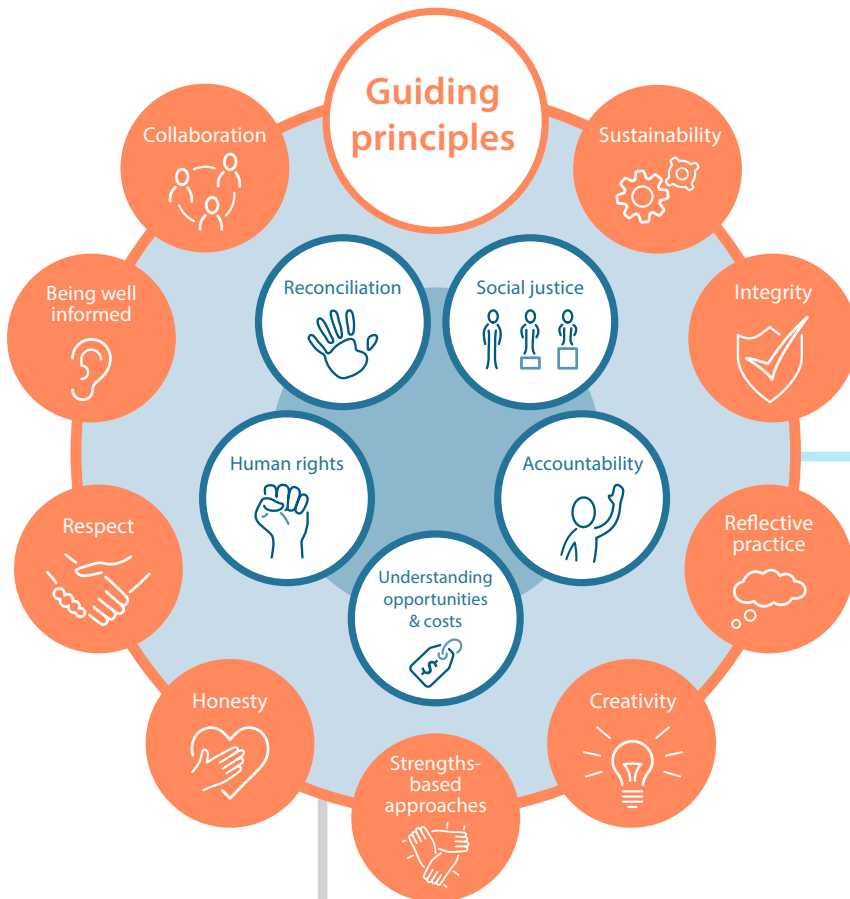
- Securing sufficient resources to sustain a strong staff team, fulfil our mandate and deliver on our ambitions
- Renewing our ICT infrastructure
- Ensuring most effective use of resources
- Expanding our membership reach and engagement
- Building strong alliances and partnerships with people's voice, service provider and business organisations
- Maximising and monitoring our impact on decision makers.

Strengthen COSS network



Participate as part of the national COSS network by:

- Contributing to and supporting social justice advocacy and capability development at the national level
- Sharing information and resources that will increase the reach and impact of COSS.



Ambitions

Social and economic policy reduces inequality

Advocacy agenda is relevant beyond election-led decision-making cycles

Not-for-profit organisations prioritise collective value generation and strong collaborations

Funding for community services ensures sustainable, effective service delivery

Growth of human capital is part of the economic agenda

Guiding documents

ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026

The Social Compact: A Relationship Framework Between the ACT Government and Community Sector

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028

2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart

2016 Congress of Australia's First Peoples Redfern Statement

2016-2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

ACT Community Shared Statements for ACT Elections



(L to R): Carmel Franklin, CEO, Care FCS; Stuart Davis-Meehan, Director of Special Works, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra-Goulburn; Sue Webeck, CEO, Domestic Violence Crisis Service ACT.

2021–22 Achievements

ACTCOSS, its members and stakeholders can celebrate the following achievements of 2021–22, reflecting the hard work of our staff, and positive outcomes that reflect advocacy and campaigns by the ACT community sector and its partners.

ACT Community Sector Careers Gateway

In October 2021, ACTCOSS was successful in winning a two-year National Career Institute Partnership grant from the Federal Government for the establishment of an ACT Health and Community Services Careers Hub. Now known as the ACT Community Sector Careers Gateway, the project will increase the awareness of career paths in the ACT’s health and community sectors.

The Gateway will work to change perceptions of work in community and social service organisations, providing clear messaging to young people and others who are looking for values-driven work by highlighting the health and community sector’s role in positive social change and supporting our community. It will also help to ensure that workers already engaged in the social service sector can better understand the opportunities available to them to achieve their career aspirations while remaining in the sector. The Gateway will be officially launched in February 2023.

ACT Cost of Living Report & Launch

ACTCOSS released two ACT Cost of Living Reports in 2021–22 (in August and in May). May’s Cost of Living Report was accompanied by a media launch in front of the ACT Legislative Assembly, led by Deputy CEO Adam Poulter, and supported by:

Jeremy Halcrow, CEO, Anglicare NSW South/ACT; Hassan Riaz, Student Advisor, ANU Students Association; Sue Webeck, CEO, Domestic Violence Crisis Service ACT; Carmel Franklin, CEO, Care FCS; Travis Gilbert, CEO, ACT Shelter; Dr Justin Barker, CEO, ACT Youth Coalition; and Michelle Colefax, acting CEO, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra-Goulburn.



Deputy CEO, Adam Poulter.

Commissioning Round Table & Advocacy

Through 2021–22, ACTCOSS convened member drop-in sessions to inform ACTCOSS’s advocacy on Homelessness commissioning processes and the Community Support Subsector, to provide feedback to the Government on achievements and challenges, as well as leading community sector engagement on the Peaks Commissioning process.

Counting the costs and indexation

ACTCOSS, as the Chair of the Industry Strategy Steering Group (ISSG), led the development and coordination of the 2021 Service Costing Project in partnership with the Community Services Directorate.

The research was conducted by UNSW Social Policy Research Centre, with the final report, [Counting the Costs: Sustainable funding for the ACT community services sector](#) jointly released with Minister Stephen-Smith in February 2022. The recommendations from this report have been welcomed by the sector and informed the Government’s revised 2022–23 community sector indexation rate.

Our work through Canberra’s second COVID Lockdown

ACTCOSS focussed on communication and support for members during the 2021 lockdowns, continuing to regularly distribute ACT Government information on COVID-19 through e-Notices. We also distributed a COVID-19 newsletter with relevant information and updates from ACT Government. ACTCOSS circulated regular ACT Health Directorate COVID-19 updates to the Community Assisted Support Program (CASP) Peer Support Network and Canberra Community Care Network.

Evaluation of the Community Development Network (CDNet)

ACTCOSS in partnership with CDNet staff facilitated and completed an evaluation of CDNet. The evaluation was conducted by an independent consultant and showed that CDNet is highly valued by subscribers as being relevant, effective and efficient and provides value for money to both the ACT Community Sector and the ACT Government.

The report outlining the findings and recommendations can be accessed [here](#). The recommendations of the evaluation will be implemented in the next financial year and beyond.

Anti-Poverty Week 2021

Anti-Poverty Week (APW) was held across Australia from 17 to 23 October 2021. The week focused on reminding governments that there are two key things they can do to reduce poverty for individuals, families and children: raising the rate of income support above the poverty line and investing in social housing. We gratefully received a grant from the ACT Government to employ a part-time project officer who worked on numerous events and communications for the week.

- **Art Competition:** the ACT Anti-Poverty Week Youth Art Competition welcomed submissions of art from ACT Youth 18 years and under. The theme of the APW Art Competition was “Hopes for My Future” and we received 26 entries from young Canberrans.
- **Genevieve Jacobs in Conversation with Hugh Mackay:** ACTCOSS livestreamed a pre-recorded interview between ACT Anti-Poverty Week Ambassador Genevieve Jacobs and social researcher Hugh Mackay on Facebook
- **Take 10 to Talk about Poverty:** Throughout APW we encouraged workplaces across the ACT to take part by taking ten minutes to talk about poverty, chat about disadvantage on our doorstep and what we can do to make change. This event was a collaboration with Hands Across Canberra and included an opportunity to donate to local organisations.
- **Lighting up Canberra:** The National Carillon was lit up blue for the evenings of Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd of October to acknowledge the end of Anti-Poverty Week 2021. Telstra Tower was also lit blue on Thursday 21st.



Genevieve Jacobs in Conversation with Hugh Mackay

Other positive outcomes

- Advocacy and responses to ACT Budgets 2021–22 and 2022–23
- Meetings with the ACT Government on issues including vaccine mandates and other COVID community sector related issues
- Provision of free Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) to community sector workers and vulnerable & immunocompromised Canberrans

Strategic Objective: Build Capacity

Workshops and training

ACTCOSS hosted a number of workshops, trainings and information sessions including:

- training by Companion House on Working Cross-Culturally and Using Interpreter Services;



Training underway with CEO Emma Campbell.

- sector meetings with the ACT Government on issues including vaccine mandates and other COVID community sector related issues; engagement with offices such as the ACT Human Rights Commission, the Integrity Commission and Worksafe ACT;
- specific tailored support to members as requested in the areas of Board Governance, Financial Management and Strategic Planning;

Commissioning and procurement reform

ACTCOSS made significant contributions to the commissioning processes including responding to the ACT Government's Commissioning Roadmap. Our advocacy was informed through member drop-in sessions, with a focus on

the Homelessness commissioning processes and the Community Support Subsector. We provided feedback to the Government on achievements and challenges, as well as leading community sector engagement on the Peaks Commissioning process.

Community Assistance and Support Program (CASP)

The ACT Community Assistance and Support Program (CASP) provides community care and supports for people under 65 years with short term health conditions and their carers. Throughout the year ACTCOSS continued its work to coordinate information sharing and peer networking opportunities for frontline workers and executives, with the overall goal of strengthening the working relationship between CASP services, referrers, and the ACT Government.

Key activities throughout the year included

- Facilitating the CASP Peer Network including presentations from the ACT Housing Gateway Program, Volunteering ACT Inclusive Volunteering Pathways to Employment Program, Health Care Consumers' Association Incorporated Paediatric Navigation and Liaison Service, Parentline ACT, Capital Health Network, Canberra Rape Crisis Service, and Advocacy for Inclusion incorporating People with Disability ACT discussing single use plastics.
- Supporting the CASP Executive with the commissioning process for the Community Support Subsector.
- Launching the CASP service vacancy spreadsheet, which facilitates referrals into the CASP program and across CASP providers by detailing service vacancies and CASP provider contact details.
- Maintaining links with Community Transport Working Group and the Disability and Carers Policy Group.

ACTCOSS was successful this year in gaining a COVID Support grant from the ACT Health Directorate for the CASP Frontline Worker Wellbeing Project. The project aims to address worker issues stemming from the Covid 19 pandemic such as worker fatigue and the potential for burnout and provide additional wellbeing support to staff during the pandemic. In 2021–22 ACTCOSS facilitated a Check in Brekky, Nature Walk and Talk with Aboriginal Elder Wally Bell and Landcare Wellbeing Coordinator and produced three newsletters for CASP workers.

Peer networks

Despite another challenging year of COVID restrictions ACTCOSS continued to facilitate Peer networks in several areas, both remotely and in person, to support community sector workers.

Community Development Network (CDNet)

ACTCOSS is a member of the CDNet Steering Committee, which met four times in 2021–22. CDNet is a support network of community development workers and those interested in community development principles and practices. ACTCOSS is also proud to auspice the work of the CDNet, supporting its staff to share information about the role of community development and coordinating the ACT Community Development Community of Practice (CDCOP) providing opportunities for discussion and learning.

Human Resources Network

This network provides opportunities for community sector human resources professionals to meet and share information and practices. During the year, the Human Resources Network met four times including one joint meeting with the Reconciliation Network during Reconciliation week on Recruiting and Retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

Reconciliation Network

This network supports organisations to prepare and deliver a Reconciliation Action Plan. In addition to the joint meeting, Reconciliation Network held one other meeting in 2021–22.

Communications Peer Network

This network met twice in 2021. The network provided opportunities for communications professionals in the community sector to:

- share issues that they wanted to communicate / advocate on; and
- share strategies for communicating more effectively with community sector organisations and service users.

Aboriginal Elder Wally Bell leading the CASP Nature Walk and Talk

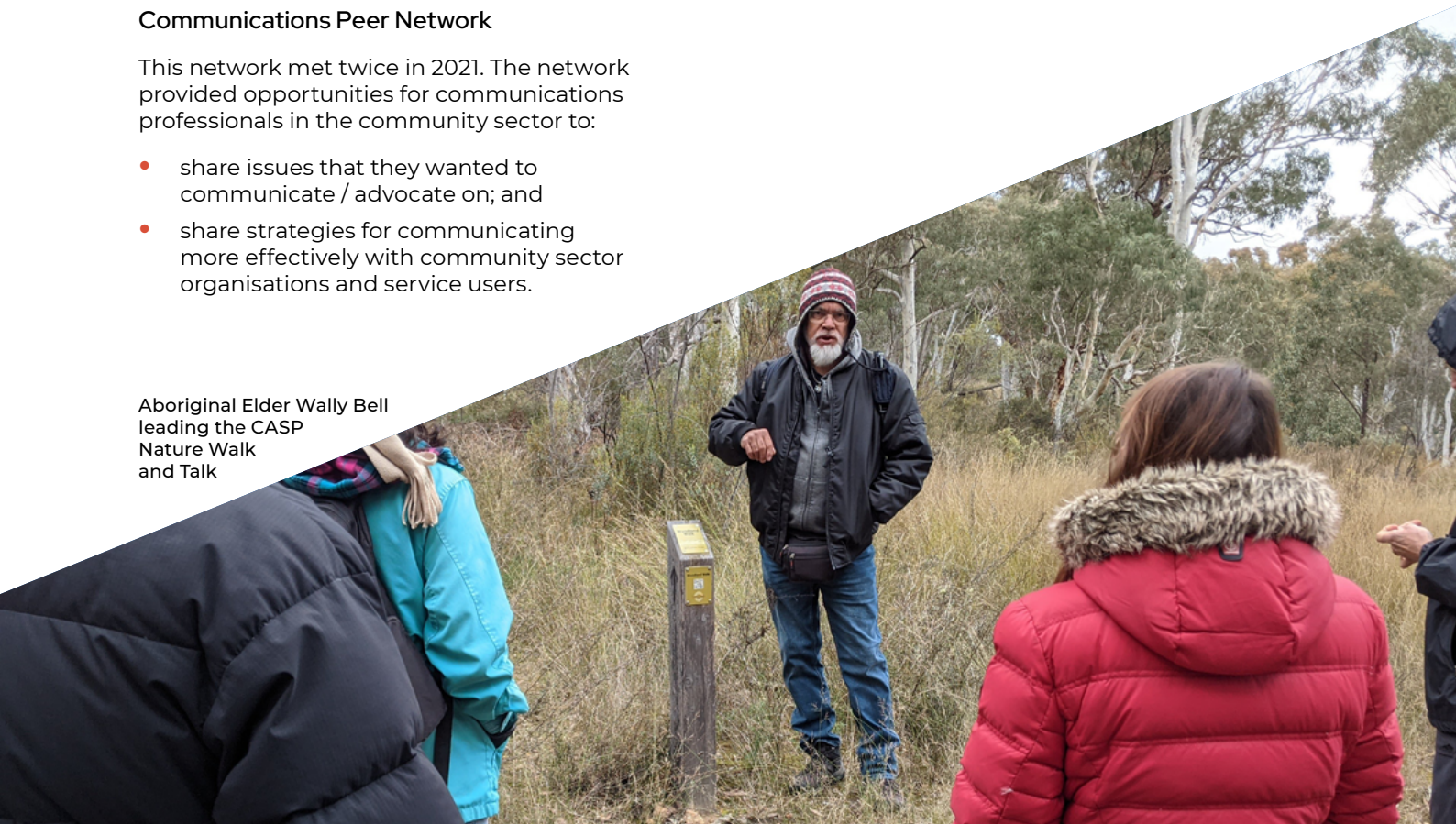
Industry Strategy Steering Group (ISSG)


ACTCOSS holds the Chair of the ISSG and provides secretarial support. The ISSG has oversight of the implementation of the ACT Community Sector Industry Strategy. The ISSG met five times in 2021–22. Its work included:

- Development and coordination of the 2021 Service Costing Project in partnership with the Community Services Directorate, with the final report [Counting the Costs](#) jointly released with Minister Stephen-Smith in February 2022.
- Planning further projects as part of the oversight and support of the Industry Strategy in areas such as building capacity in monitoring and evaluation.

Some other ways we helped build capacity

- ACTCOSS represented the ACT on the Non-Government Advisory Group to the Inter-jurisdictional Working Group to address physical and sexual abuse insurance issues.
- Working with the community sector and ACT Government on the delivery of additional community facilities and improvement of existing community facilities.
- ACTCOSS was a major contributor to the Hands Off Our Charities campaign which challenged the Federal Government's changes to ACNC rules which risked shutting down the capacity of charities to advocate and speak out.





Andrew Leigh,
ALP candidate
participating
in the forum.

Strategic Objective: Promote Social Justice

Publications

ACTCOSS produced a range of advocacy publications on the key issues impacting social justice in the ACT. These included:

- [ACT Cost of Living Report 2021](#) (Aug 2021)
- [ACT Budget Bulletin 2021–22](#) (Oct 2021)
- [Factsheet: Poverty and COVID-19 in the ACT \(Oct 2021\)](#)
- [ACT Cost of Living Report 2022](#) (May 2022)
- [Submission: ACTCOSS ACT Budget Priorities 2022–23](#) (May 2022).

2022 Federal election

The Australian Federal election was held in May 2022. ACTCOSS was active in ensuring the voices and issues affecting vulnerable and disadvantaged people were amplified to parties, candidates and voters facilitating a community forum with members and candidates in the ACT. This was an opportunity for candidates to hear about federal priorities, services and programs from ACTCOSS members.

Members heard from party/independent candidates present: Tim Hollo and Tjanara Goreng Goreng (Australian Greens), Andrew Leigh (Australian Labor Party), and independent senate candidates David Pocock and Kim Rubenstein. Candidates gave an opening pitch responding to the ACTCOSS priorities they believe are most important. At the end of the session, candidates also had the opportunity to feed back to members what they heard.



Kim Rubenstein, Independent Senate candidate participating in the forum



(From L to R): ACTCOSS Deputy CEO, Adam Poulter; Australian Greens Candidate Tjanara Goreng Goreng; ACTCOSS Board Chair, Jeremy Halcrow; Independent Senate Candidate, Kim Rubenstein; Australian Greens Candidate, Tim Hollo; ACTCOSS CEO, Emma Campbell; Independent Senate candidate, David Pocock.

Some other ways ACTCOSS promoted social justice

Selected submissions

In 2020–21, ACTCOSS was proactive in making submissions and writing letters on issues of social justice including:

- [Submission: Raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility: Discussion paper response](#) (Aug 2021)
- [Factsheet: 2021 ACT Community Sector Demand Snapshot](#) (Dec 2021)
- [Submission: Inquiry into Community Corrections in the ACT](#) (Dec 2021)
- [Submission: Discrimination Law Reform in the ACT](#) (Jan 2022)
- [Submission: Inquiry into Public Health Amendment Bill 2021 \(No 2\)](#) (Jan 2022)
- [Submission to AEMC: Protecting Customers Affected by Family Violence](#) (Mar 2022)
- [Submission: Inquiry into Racial Vilification](#) (Mar 2022)

Energy justice and policy

ACTCOSS continued its work on energy consumer advocacy, working closely with Care's financial counselling team. This important work was once again funded by Energy Consumers Australia and the ACT Government, with key outputs during the 2021–22 year including:

- [Submission: Minimum energy efficiency standards for rental homes in the ACT consultation paper](#) (Dec 2021)

- [Submission: Consultation Draft - ACT Retail Electricity \(Transparency and Comparability\) Code Guideline](#) (Aug 2021)

Consultations and advisory groups

ACTCOSS hosted or participated in consultations, advisory groups and meetings to shape policy and outcomes aimed at improving social justice including:

- Evoenergy EN24 Draft Electricity Network Plan 2024–29 Submission
- Community Housing Industry Association ACT
- Healthy Prison Review
- Review of Child Protection Decision – Internal & External Review
- 2021 Anti-Poverty Week Executive Committee
- ACT Energised Consumers Network meetings
- Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission Consultative Committee
- Gambling and Racing Advisory Committee
- Canberra Gambling Reform Alliance
- Child, Youth and Family Services Program Directors Group
- ACT Raise the Age Coalition

COVID-19 response and policy

ACTCOSS distributed information about COVID-19 outbreaks in the Alexander Maconochie Centre to community sector organisations working on justice issues and facilitated a forum on the topic with the Commissioner for Corrective Services and the community sector. We also wrote to ACT Policing to ensure that extra police presence during lockdowns did not result in the disproportionate targeting or punishment of vulnerable populations.

ACTCOSS continued to circulate regular ACT Health Directorate COVID-19 updates to the Community Assisted Support Program (CASP) Peer Support Network and Canberra Community Health Network.

ACTCOSS advocated for proper oversight with regard to COVID-19 public health decisions and gave evidence to the Inquiry into the Public Health Amendment Bill. We also called for the provision of free Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) to be universally available to all Canberrans who need them, and to community sector organisations to ensure service continuity. Free RATs were then provided to organisations in the sector, allowing them to continue serving the Canberra community.

Strategic objective: Be an effective peak body

In 2021–22 ACTCOSS continued to secure additional resources to sustain a strong staff team, fulfil our mandate and deliver on our ambitions, including:

- A new Energy Consumers Australia Grant for 2022 and 2023;
- Community Services Directorate Community Support and Infrastructure Grant to assist with a much needed kitchen upgrade; and
- National Careers Institute Partnership Federal funding for the Community Sector Careers Gateway

ACTCOSS has also invested considerable time and resources internally in 2021–22, with a focus on strengthening our governance practices and forward planning.

We have developed a new Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (to be launched in November 2022) and are working to finalise our Strategic Plan for 2023 onwards. Both plans have seen valuable collaboration between staff, members and stakeholders to develop exciting goals for the future.

Our internal focus has also extended to the refurbishment of our office space in Weston, with new desks and furniture to make the space more accessible, flexible and allow for future growth.

ACTCOSS continued to build strong alliances and partnerships with people's voice, service provider and business organisations, including :

- working with the Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) and the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation & Advocacy (CAHMA) to provide critical feedback on the ACT Government's plans to decriminalise small amounts of drugs for personal use.
- partnering with Australian Lawyers for Human Rights, the Human Rights Law Centre and Civil Liberties Australia to call for an accessible human rights complaints mechanism in the ACT.
- continuing ACTCOSS's role as a member of the ACT Property Council Social Sustainability Committee, working on key community issues including transition to net zero emissions and investment in social housing.

Providing leadership as a peak body

ACTCOSS continued to engage and support our members and stakeholders through a variety of important activities on issues including:

- ACTCOSS has been leading negotiations with the Australian Services Union of a new Multiple Enterprise Agreement for the ACT community sector

ACTCOSS members strategic planning meeting



- Regular ACTCOSS member meetings during COVID-19 lockdown to share information on vaccination and testing requirements and availability, service gaps for vulnerable and disadvantaged people and working from home policies. ACTCOSS provided feedback to ACT Health wherever necessary.
- Regular ACTCOSS member meetings on Commissioning processes and concerns. ACTCOSS continues to provide feedback from these meetings to the Community Services Directorate and ACT Government officials.
- Regular ACTCOSS member meetings to share information and to offer peer support
- Regular ACTCOSS peak body meetings to build shared agendas and coordinated advocacy strategies and activities.

ACT Budget

For the ACT Budget 2021–22, ACTCOSS led consultation with the community sector by providing opportunities for the sector to highlight key budget priorities with ACT Government officials. At the release of the budget in October 2021, ACTCOSS released a [Budget Bulletin](#) and hosted online briefings for members to discuss the budget and then to ask questions and raise concerns directly with ACT Ministers. In the first half of 2022, ACTCOSS coordinated further Budget consultations with Government officials in preparation for the 2022–23 Budget. This included an event specifically for smaller organisations. We also shared a Budget submission template with members, which included advice on referencing the wellbeing framework and the Counting the Costs report.

Media appearances

ACTCOSS maintained strong relationships with local media to ensure ACTCOSS powerfully represented the views and priorities of our constituency and our members and held the ACT Government to account.

From 1 July, 2021 to 30 June, 2022, ACTCOSS distributed 126 media releases and public media alerts to ACT media. Coverage extended to outlets including 2CC, 2XX, ABC Canberra, Canberra FM, The Canberra Times, Canberra Weekly, The Riot Act, and WIN News.

Participants in the Smoking Ceremony



Smoking Ceremony by Billy Tompkins

2021 NAIDOC Week Event

ACTCOSS and The Gulanga Program worked with the ACT Community Sector NAIDOC Committee to deliver the seventh annual NAIDOC Week Event to the Canberra community. This was an opportunity to celebrate the history, culture and continued custodianship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on a cold winters day.

The event included: a Welcome to Country and a Smoking Ceremony by Billy Tompkins, traditional Ngunnawal Dancing from Tiana House; musical performances from Alinta Barlow and Johnny Huckle; and an opening address from Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Rachel Stephen-Smith. This celebration was made possible with contributions from stall holders, donors, volunteers, committee members, ring-ins and family members.





Traditional Ngunnawal Dancing from Tiana House

2022 National Reconciliation Week

ACTCOSS once again held our National Reconciliation Week prize draw, in recognition of [National Reconciliation Week 2022](#), and Reconciliation Day (ACT public holiday). With a theme of 'Be Brave, Make Change' this year, we invited ACT community sector workplaces to share a response to the question:

How is your workplace being brave in its attempt to tackle reconciliation and make change in your community?

Each year prizes are sourced locally and from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses and artists.



The winner of the ACTCOSS Staff Encouragement Award was [Toora's Domestic Violence & Homelessness Service \(TDVHS\)](#)



The winner of the major prize draw was [Diversity ACT](#)



The winner of the ACTCOSS CEO's Award for Ingenuity in Reconciliation was [Key2 Learning College](#)

Strategic Objective: Strengthen the COSS network

ACTCOSS is part of the national COSS network and a partner to ACOSS and participates regularly in various policy networks.

- In lead up to the federal election, ACTCOSS supported, promoted and distributed ACOSS's work and commentary on federal election policies to ease poverty and disadvantage.
- ACTCOSS promoted the ACOSS's Australian Community Sector Survey to ensure representation from the ACT Community Sector.
- ACTCOSS was active in its campaign with ACOSS and the Hands Off Our Charities (HOOC) coalition to campaign against proposed changes to ACNC Regulation.
- ACTCOSS participated in the COSS Network on Energy Policy and continued to advocate for a just transition and equity impacts for low-income households, including in our ACT Budget 2022–23 submission and in our campaign work prior to the 2022 Federal Election.

Other activities as part of the COSS network

- ACTCOSS supported the COSS network in calling on the Australian Government to use the March 2022 budget as an opportunity to create a fairer future for people on low and moderate incomes.
- ACTCOSS was part of the National Raise the Age Coalition with other COSS organisations and sent a joint letter to the ACT Government from the COSS network calling for the minimum age of criminal responsibility to be raised in the ACT.
- ACTCOSS participated in nationally organised Raise the Rate Meetings and supported ACOSS in calling to raise the rate of JobSeeker payments to at least \$70 per day and to index payments in line with wage movements at least twice per year.
- ACTCOSS supported the national Everybody's Home campaign in calling for government action to urgently address the deteriorating housing and homelessness crisis.

Gulanga Program

The Gulanga Program is designed to support ACT community sector organisations to develop and improve upon good, culturally appropriate practice standards. The program employs Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and aims to provide better engagement with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and their families to access the services that will best meet their needs.

The program is supported by funding under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), which is jointly funded by the ACT and Australian governments, and the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP), an ACT Government funded initiative.

In 2021–22, the Gulanga Program prioritised work in a range of areas to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, develop cultural competency in mainstream services, and ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives inform ACT Government policy making and program development.

A key highlight of the year was the Gulanga team being invited to present at the ACT Volunteering Symposium to speak about Volunteering: A First Nations Perspective.

"People really appreciated your honesty and your suggestions on how to engage with First Nations communities respectfully. Congratulations on the presentation and the ongoing work you are doing."

"Rachelle was amazing. I never knew I was a barrier in engaging First Nations or Torres Strait Islander people. I have lots of homework to do so that I can engage these people."



The Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations presentation

Supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers

The Gulanga Program facilitates the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Sector (ATSICommSec) Network which met four times in 2021–22.

The Network enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to connect and support one another, share information, and improve coordination across the sector. It is also an opportunity to see and hear from members of the ACT Nannies Group, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB) and invited guest speakers from various agencies.

The membership of the ATSICommSec Network almost doubled, to 94 members by June 2022, as we focused on re-connecting First Nations Community Sector workers and implementing a strategy to develop the capacity of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers through specific trainings such as Aboriginal Adult Mental Health First Aid.

Training and information sessions

The Gulanga Program hosted a range of training and information sessions including:

- Cross-Sector Network forums, in partnership with Woden Community Service. Two forums were held this year focused on sharing information and support on the topics of Mental Health and Domestic and Family Violence services, with a focus on highlighting cultural safety and better practice in both mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services or programs, when engaging with First Nations people and clients.
- Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid Training accredited workshop
- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program with Julie Moore
- Strategic Indigenous Awareness: To understand our present we must understand our past, with Grant Sarra

Supporting good practice

The Gulanga Program worked with a broad range of mainstream community sector organisations throughout 2021–22 to improve their cultural competency and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives to inform their service delivery.

Meeting with over 30 organisations, some key themes of engagement were:

- How to better engage with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community
- Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Reconciliation Action Plans and the CASAT
- Program development and implementation to ensure it is culturally appropriate

Engagement with Government and consultations

The Gulanga Program provided significant input into a range of ACT Government policies, programs and consultations to address systemic injustices and culturally inappropriate responses. Focus was given this year to:

- the unacceptably high rates of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Territory
- energy policy in relation to consumer policy and hardship support as it relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- commissioning process for the Homelessness sector.

Improving cultural awareness

14th Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations – 11 February 2022

The Gulanga Program partnered with Dhunlung Yarra Service at Relationships Australia and Yeddung Murra Aboriginal Corporation, to deliver the annual National Apology event at the Tuggeranong Arts Centre. This was also a special occasion for the ACT Nannies Group, who celebrated their 20th anniversary.

The event highlighted the importance of sincere, deep acknowledgement of the hurt and intergenerational, ongoing trauma of the Stolen Generations on First Nations peoples. The strength, resilience and creativity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Canberra in addressing this impact was also celebrated through performance, song and speeches.



Gulanga program manager Rachelle Kelly-Church (centre) with members of ACT Nannies Group Coral King, Rayleen Booth, Roslyne Thorne, Bonnie Booth and founder Glyniss Church. (Photo: Elesia Kurtz, The Canberra Times)

ACTCOSS Board

Director	Attended in 2021–22	Apologies
Jeremy Halcrow, Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT Chair (from Nov 2021)	4/4	–
Francis Crimmins, YWCA Chair (to Aug 2021)	–	–
Andrew Rowe, Associate Member Vice Chair	6/6	–
Hassan Riaz, ANUSA Treasurer (from Dec 2021)	3/3	–
Bruce Papps, Associate Member Treasurer (to Aug 2021)	–	–
Andrew Scotford, CIT Student Association Ordinary Director	6/6	–
Cathi Moore, Associate Member Ordinary Director	6/6	–
Alicia Flack-Kone, ACT Down Syndrome Association Ordinary director	6/6	–
Fiona Loaney, Relationships Australia Canberra & Region Ordinary Director (from Nov 2021)	3/4	1
Liam McNicholas, Northside Community Service Ltd Ordinary Director (from Nov 2021)	3/4	1
Lisa Kelly, Carers ACT Ordinary Director (from Nov 2021)	4/4	–
Melissa Bell, Barnardos Ordinary Director (from Nov 2021)	4/4	–
Mainul Haque, Associate Member Ordinary Director (from Dec 2021)	3/3	–
Rosie Fisk, Care FC Ordinary Director (Nov 2021 – May 2022)	1/3	2
Bec Cody, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT Ordinary Director (Nov 2021 – Jun 2022)	1/3	2
Beth Slatyer, Associate Member Ordinary Director (to Nov 2021)	2/2	–
Dorji Tshering, Associate Member Ordinary Director (to Set 2021)	1/1	–
Sarah Murdoch, Anglicare Ordinary Director (to Sep 2021)	0/1	1
Elizabeth Samra, Associate member Ordinary Director (to Aug 2021)	–	–
Darlene Cox, Health Care Consumers 'Association Ordinary Director (to Aug 2021)	–	–
Amanda Tobler, Community Services 1 Ordinary Director (to Aug 2021)	–	–
Diane Bakon, Associate Member Ordinary Director (to Aug 2021)	–	–

Members

Member Organisations

A Gender Agenda
ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations
ACT Disability, Aged & Carer Advocacy Service Inc.
ACT Down Syndrome Association Inc
ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Inc
ACT Playgroups Association Inc
ACT Shelter
Advocacy for Inclusion
Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT Inc
Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT
ANU Students' Association
Argyle Community Housing
Asthma Australia
Australian Association of Social Workers ACT Branch
Australian Red Cross - ACT/SE NSW
Australian Unemployed Workers' Union - Canberra Branch
Barnardos Australia
Benevolent Society, The
Beryl Women Inc.
Canberra & Q'yan ADD Support Group Inc.
Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy
Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy (CAPaD)
Canberra Community Law
Canberra Institute of Technology Student Association
Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF) Inc.
Canberra Police Community Youth Club (PCYC)
Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
Canberra Refugee Support Incorporated
Canberra Youth Residential Services
Capital Health Network
Capital Region Community Services
Care Inc
Carers ACT Inc.
CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn
CHC Affordable Housing
Communities@Work
Community Connections
Community Medics Australia Limited
Community Radio 2XX Inc
Community Services #1
Companion House
Conflict Resolution Service Inc.
Council on the Ageing ACT
Dementia Australia ACT
Directions Health Services
Diversity ACT Community Services
Domestic Violence Crisis Service
Doris Women's Refuge Inc.
Duntroon Community Centre
Environmental Collective Housing Organisation Inc.
Epilepsy Association ACT (Inc)
EveryMan Australia Inc.
Families & Friends for Drug Law Reform (ACT) Inc
Families ACT Inc.
Family Drug Support
Food Cooperative Shop, The
Foundation for Indigenous Recovery & Development, Aust. (FIRDA)
GIVIT
GROW - ACT
Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
Havelock Housing Association Inc
Health Care Consumers' Association
Hepatitis ACT Inc

Isaac's Band of Brothers & Sisters Inc.
Justice Action
Karinya House Home for Mothers & Babies Inc
Karralika Programs Inc.
Kidsafe ACT
Koomarri
L'Arche Geneseret
Lone Fathers
Majura Women's Group
Marymead
Mengineering
Menslink Inc.
Mental Health Community Coalition ACT
Mental Health Foundation
Mental Illness Education ACT
Meridian Inc
Nexus Human Services
Northside Community Service Ltd.
Palliative Care ACT
Parentline ACT Inc.
Pegasus Riding for the Disabled Inc.
People with Disabilities ACT Inc.
Perinatal Wellbeing Centre
Positive Youth Incorporated
Prisoners Aid (ACT) Inc.
Rebus Theatre
Red Nose
Relationships Australia Canberra and Region Inc.
Religious Society of Friends Canberra Inc.
Roundabout Canberra
RSI & Overuse Injury Association of the ACT, Inc.
SEARMS Aboriginal Corporation
Sexual Health & Family Planning ACT Inc.
Sharing Places Inc.
Sisters In Spirit Aboriginal Corporation
Softlaw Community Projects Limited
St John's Care

St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn
Technology for Ageing and Disability (ACT) Inc
Ted Noffs Foundation
Tenants' Union ACT
Tender funerals Canberra region
The Australian National University Postgraduate
and Research Student Association
The Cancer Council ACT
The Mill House
The Smith Family
This Is My Brave Australia Inc.
TJILLARI Justice Aboriginal Corporation
Toora Women Inc.
Tuggeranong Link Community Houses and
Centres Inc
UCA Canberra Region Presbytery
UnionsACT
Uniting
UnitingCare Kippax
VolunteeringACT
Warehouse Circus Inc.
Wellways Australia
Woden Community Service Inc.
Women With Disabilities ACT
Women's Electoral Lobby(Australia), Inc
Women's Health Matters Inc.
Women's Legal Centre (ACT Region) Inc.
Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation
Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal
Corporation
Youth Coalition of the ACT
YWCA Canberra

Affiliate Members

Victim Support ACT
Wellcare Australia

Associate Members

Z. Adamaly	K Duggan	J Kitchin	H Rocek
L. Akauola	P Dwyer	N Kitchin	P Rokic
J Anlezark	S Ellerman	J Le	S Rosenberg
C Ansted	J Esdaile	D Lucas	A Rowe
D Bakon	A Ferguson	K Lyttle	P Saggi
V Begonja	L Grehg	K Martin	E Samra
A Boisen	A Gupta	J McGee	C Sefian
E Bourke	M Hansen	B McKail	B Slatyer
J Carty	M Haque	A McLaughlin	U Srivastava
H Cornthwaite	S Helyar	P Messent	G Stevens
K Cox	L Hemmings	C Moore	H Swift
J Craig	L Honcope	L O'Brien	D Tshering
J Crawford	P Humphries	K Ormston	R Vassarotti
T Davidson	L Jard	W Palmer	E Wensing
T Dodwell	L Kelly	B Papps	C Wheatland
M Douglas	P Kendall	R Refshauge	

Member numbers for 2021-22

- Associates: 66 (14 new)
- Organisations: 130 (3 new)
- Affiliates: 2

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