

update

Issue 74 • Summer 2015-16 •
Community priorities for
transport in the ACT –
accessible, affordable, fit for
purpose & sustainable

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Transport a critical foundation for social and economic inclusion

By Susan Helyar, Director, ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS)

The ACTCOSS submission to the ACT 2016-17 Budget argued that housing, educational and transport infrastructure intersect to create the opportunities and protections needed to guard against the risks and consequences of economic and social exclusion and establish the foundations for social mobility. If we do not plan for the needs of people who experience discrete, but far more often, overlapping disadvantage in the areas of housing, education and transport, we are entrenching disadvantage in our community. Our submission included the following recommendations:

- Assess investment in transport against the impact of transport infrastructure spending on increasing the affordability and accessibility of transport for people who are transport disadvantaged to access work, health and education facilities, food and other shopping amenities, and social networks

- Improve and increase access to public transport in neighbourhoods and regional centres, with a focus on increasing affordable and accessible transport for east-west travel
- Expand the 2015-16 investment to improve accessibility of bus stops, lighting and pedestrian infrastructure
- Provide funding to remedy the layouts of bus interchanges and location of taxi ranks to make them more accessible for people with disabilities
- Expand eligibility for and promotion of Flexibus to any residents in the areas covered who are transport disadvantaged.

This journal provides a forum for ACTCOSS members to provide their perspectives and advice on transport needs and infrastructure gaps. The articles shared illustrate

ACTCOSS newsflash

The ACT Government have engaged KPMG to develop an ACT Community Services Industry Plan. ACTCOSS is supporting community sector engagement in the plan's development. For information contact geoff.buchanan@actcoss.org.au or 02 6202 7222. www.actcoss.org.au

the role of transport in increasing economic participation, community engagement and social mobility.

ACTCOSS is increasing our advocacy on transport issues

because the needs or aspirations of people living with disability and frailty, people who do not have a private vehicle (for reasons of age, legal issues or income) and people working

in jobs outside of town centres and/or outside of 9-5 Monday-Friday schedules are neither visible nor addressed in transport infrastructure development in our city or region.

Community transport in the ACT

By the ACT Transport Working Group

We all recognise the importance of access to quality transport services, particularly when it is targeted at addressing transport disadvantage in our community, a fact that is supported by access to transport being identified as one of the social determinants of health.

Perhaps not as widely known as the public transport options available in the ACT, community transport operators also play an important role in meeting the transport needs of our local community. Combining community transport operations including those funded under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Home and Community Care Program (HACC), as well as the ACT Regional Community Bus Service, approximately 150,000 passenger trips are provided each year for residents of the ACT to activities such as medical and paramedical appointments, shopping outings, social and recreational activities, and home visiting programs.

The impact of these services on the wellbeing of our community cannot be underestimated. Providing flexible and responsive door to door services, our focus includes addressing social isolation and transport disadvantage, as well as providing opportunities for people to be as fully engaged in their community as they want to be. For all of us involved in the provision of community transport support in the ACT, we have so many human interest stories that can be shared from the people who regularly use our services. Whether it is creating opportunities for someone to engage in an activity that they really enjoy, watching people form new social networks, or watching a person's face light up when they see someone on the bus that they know, our passengers are at the heart of what we do every day. We have amazing stories to share that have come about purely from someone accessing community transport:

2 friends in the UK lost contact with each other. At different times in their life they each moved to Australia and ended up reconnecting on a planned community bus outing here in Canberra.

People love shopping trips, and there's nothing better than connecting with a group of people on the shopping bus. Phone numbers are exchanged, new social networks are formed and people start to look out for each other. People connect with people when they travel with community transport.

The bus runs around Canberra's northern suburbs picking up 10 mums and their children and taking them to a playgroup and then back home again. Children meet and play with other children, and mums create a new social network because they are able to connect via the playgroup.

Tony experiences social phobias and is unable to manage public transport. Community transport can pick Tony up from home and take him where he wants to go, even one on one if necessary.

All of us as community transport operators have stories such as these that we can share – stories that reinforce the vital role that community transport provides in meeting the diverse transport needs of Canberrans. The extensive reach of community transport in to the broader community includes groups for Chinese, Spanish, Croatian, housing complex health programs, targeted wellbeing programs, Indigenous Homework Club, and shopping groups for those who need assistance.

Community transport in the ACT is currently going through the most intensive change process it has ever experienced. We are now almost 18 months into the complete rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). As a consequence of the transitional period to the NDIS, community transport

providers are experiencing a step down approach to their existing funding arrangements which is having a significant impact on matching resources to meet the demand for transport services. Many providers are at capacity for clients aged under 65 who require transport support and are waiting to transition to the NDIS. This is limiting their ability to take new referrals.

The introduction of the NDIS has required organisations to shift thinking away from traditional block funded arrangements and move toward business modelling. This shift requires a comprehensive understanding of service delivery unit costs in order to maintain viable and sustainable services. The NDIS presents opportunities for organisations, and importantly, it is providing participants with service choice and control as they are now able to select their provider of choice for their transport support.

As a unique jurisdiction, the ACT presents community transport providers with many opportunities to work together collaboratively, to share information and to learn from each other. Community transport in the ACT has historically been provided within geographic boundaries or regions. This geographic approach no longer determines who is able to provide transport support and as a result, new services have been established that operate in conjunction with existing and traditional providers. There are many positives that can be taken from working closely together to ensure that people receive the transport support they need. For example, in instances where one service is at capacity, there is the available option of referring to another service to enable the transport support.

The ACT Transport Working Group brings together representatives from regional community transport providers to discuss and share information about community transport across the breadth of Canberra. The working group includes representation from

Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) and ACT Council of the Ageing (COTA) which assists greatly in bringing a holistic perspective to community transport in the ACT. The increase in representation allows for a greater understanding of the broader transport reviews that are occurring across the ACT that are inclusive of community transport, ACTION Buses and our local taxi services.

The demand for volunteers continues to be somewhat of a struggle for many local community transport providers. The Transport Working Group is exploring innovative ways to increase volunteers to support community transport in the ACT that may include a collaborative approach to attracting, recruiting and training volunteers to the highly rewarding role of community transport driving.

Some of the challenges we face in to the future include:

- Technology is developing in relation to booking systems and the challenge is to include this development into the real time of motor vehicles to make efficiencies and improve the service to clients
- The challenge to organisations is the number of cancelled trips purely because of the nature of our client base. Their personal situations can change very rapidly at the last minute. Visits are often cancelled due to sickness, hospitalisation, memory issues and inability to manage life circumstances. These clients require support to continue living independently in the community.

The face of community transport is changing and, along with the NDIS and potential changes to the CHSP, we are ready for those changes and those challenges. Our main focus continues to be on innovation in service delivery ensuring that residents of the ACT continue to receive the transport support they need to remain actively engaged in their local community.



Join the campaign **My Vote For Housing** –
Make Housing & Homelessness the Heart of the ACT Election:

www.myvoteforhousing.com.au

We're asking all candidates and parties in the 2016 ACT Election to make a commitment to address housing affordability.

Sign up and show your support!

Authorised by Susan Helyar. My Vote For Housing is an initiative of ACTCOSS & ACT Shelter.

New transport options for people with disability?

By National Disability Services

Following legislation passed on Thursday 30 October 2015, ride-sharing service Uber is now legally operating in the ACT.

Uber uses GPS technology to locate customers while the app itself is used for payment which means no cash changes hands in the vehicle. The charge is calculated in a manner similar to taxi fares – per kilometre and per minute, and with a base fee. Under the legislation, drivers must pass a background check, have insurance and have a registered car. Uber is generally cheaper than current taxi rates.

Will this new service have a positive impact for people with disability? Perhaps it will. But there are many questions that need to be answered.

Two of the key issues around transport for people with disability that need to be considered are the cost and the availability of suitable transport. Suitability includes the nature of the vehicle and the qualities and qualifications of the driver.

The cost of suitable transport has restricted, and continues to restrict, the options for people with disability with mobility impairment. This has changed only marginally under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). While adopting an approach of what is 'reasonable and necessary' for the delivery of support to live an ordinary life, the allowance provided for transport for NDIS participants is

not intended to take people with disability beyond the reasonable options available to a notional person living an ordinary life.

The NDIS has three levels of transport support funding – two are based on the historic levels of the mobility allowance while the third is an additional lower level. At the same time, the mobility allowance has been removed for NDIS participants – leaving many people with disability with no greater funding for transport than previously. Many people with disability have high cost transport needs and low income. Uber, or any alternative ride-sharing service, will need to be cheaper, probably considerably cheaper, for it to help provide a sufficiently cheaper, but still suitable option.

The second consideration is the availability of suitable transport options. In many cases, for those who cannot drive and have no access to extensive family support for their transport, their alternative transport needs to be equivalent to accessible taxis or buses. This will usually require not only a suitable vehicle but also a suitably trained and qualified driver.

Beyond accessible taxis, this kind of non-customised accessible transport is mostly located with specialist disability service providers. Additionally, specialist disability services have also been a source of affordable or free transport to participants in their programs – to enable their attendance. This often includes collection to or from their home

or near to it and the support service – because of their limited capability or mobility. Providers may also transport clients to connect with other community access activities.

For some people with disability in the ACT, this is a vital part of the way in which their transport needs are met.

But, providers may no longer be able to afford to keep these vehicles on the road. As elsewhere in Australia, ACT provider transport services have consistently run at a loss and have been heavily subsidised.

Now that block funding of disability support services will largely cease in the ACT, those that run vehicles are faced with increasingly hard choices. They must implement greater cost recovery from clients whose travel was previously supported by the block funding and/or improve operational efficiencies if they are to retain these services. Many will have to consider not providing transport at all.

Various approaches to resolve the issue of transport availability and its cost for those on low or restricted incomes have been floated, and tried, in the past; particularly coordination and multimodal arrangements, combining different transport types.

Most, if not all, have failed. The cost or difficulty of providing the individual transport component has been too high, while lower

cost group-based options such as combined community transport or shared shuttles have required complex coordination that has not been possible to achieve.

Uber, or similar ride-sharing services, and the use of technology, may provide a solution by enabling much more flexible and efficient utilisation of the existing resources.

But, we do not yet have enough information to understand whether this opportunity is truly a possibility for people with disability.

For example, it is not known on a sector-wide basis what kinds of vehicles are available in the disability sector and how, where and when they are currently utilised.

National Disability Services (NDS) aims to fill this data gap with a study that will also explore the new regulatory and operational environment in the ACT.

Some of the questions the NDS work will look to address include:

- Are there suitable vehicles, with suitably trained drivers available in the disability sector to transport people

with disability at the times they want it?

- Can such transport be provided at a price sufficiently cheaper than taxis to make a real difference to the cost for people with disability?
- Can Uber and/or the regulatory environment accommodate a model of vehicle hire involving disability service organisations?
- Will a new technology (app) based solution – such as Uber – be sufficiently universal for people with disability and their carers; and, if not, are there other suitable and cost-efficient ways to communicate?
- Are there additional options, for disability service providers to meet the needs of their clients and supplement providers' income?
- Will the arrival of Uber prompt a more flexible and cooperative approach to the use of existing transport options?

The study and engagement on this issue is expected to be completed by mid-2016. By undertaking it, NDS expects to be able to provide a much better picture of the real possibilities for

improving transport for people with disability in the ACT – addressing both their accessibility and affordability issues. The goal is to facilitate organisations to take advantage of this new opportunity; and achieve a win/win outcome.

In this approach, there is clearly a connection with community transport, taxis and buses. But, the intent is not to engage directly about them. Rather, the aim is to identify and, if possible, facilitate the broader and better use of transport resources that have, till now, never been considered as part of the ACT's public transport infrastructure.

Any disability organisation interested in being part of the study, can register their interest with NDS by emailing NDSACT@nds.org.au.

National Disability Services website: www.nds.org.au



Flexible Bus Service

The Community Transport Coordination Centre and the Flexible Bus Service are designed specifically for senior citizens and those with a disability who are at risk of social isolation because of lack of access to regular transport systems.

The Flexible Bus Service provides door to door shuttle services Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 1.30pm linking passengers

with shopping centres, hospitals, medical appointments and social connections.

Bookings can be made by phoning the Community Transport Coordination Centre on 02 6205 3555.

The service operates in the Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden, Weston and inner south areas and uses wheelchair accessible minibuses.

The service is much more than a lift from one point to another. It provides the opportunity for the passengers to make new friends with people of their own age and circumstances and reduces the risk of social isolation in the target group.

Transport must be accessible as well as affordable

By Robert Altamore OAM, Executive Officer, People With Disabilities ACT

Now is a critical moment for Canberra on its journey to being an access city of the future.

A Public Transport Improvement Plan has just been announced.

We are investing in light rail.

There is a debate about our open space and urban renewal; shared zones for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists have been introduced.

And Canberra is the first city to legalise ride share arrangements.

This article asks whether Canberra will make the right decisions to be an access city of the future – a city in which both social attitudes and social infrastructure work together to include all people in the community's social and economic life. For this to happen we need a transport system which is accessible, affordable and fit for purpose.

Such a transport system is one in which the various modes of transport – pedestrian, vehicle, bus, light rail, taxi, on demand services – work together to provide seamless accessible transport of people between home, school, workshops, and places of culture and recreation.

In addition to the practical reasons supporting an accessible transport system, there are a number of legal, policy and planning considerations which align to make accessible transport a pressing priority for Canberra in 2015. These include:

- Commonwealth and ACT Disability Discrimination Laws
- The Commonwealth Disability Strategy and InvolveCBR which is Canberra's commitment under the strategy and includes a focus on transport from next year
- The ACT Human Rights Framework; and Articles 9 and 20 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
- Canberra is a whole of jurisdiction launch site for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Solid investment in mainstream community infrastructure is needed to ensure our city reaps the benefits of NDIS and maximises social and economic participation by people with disability.

A seamless, accessible transport system does not happen by accident. Indeed, often people can start with good intentions, do all the right things, follow all the right guidelines and even involve people with disabilities in the decisions. But despite their efforts, things go wrong and the outcomes create access barriers instead of enabling access. Regrettably some of the recent innovations in Canberra have resulted in access disasters. Examples are the Bundah Street shared zone and the Belconnen bus interchange, both of which were mentioned in the discussions in PWD ACT's Access Q & A Forum held on 23 October 2015.

Canberra's light rail promises to be accessible. However, this is of no practical benefit if other parts of the transport system are not accessible. If the light rail from Gungahlin to the City is accessible but the bus from the City to Barton is not accessible then a person with a disability who lives in Gungahlin cannot get to and from their work in Barton. Connectivity and a seamless path of travel are vital.

In Canberra, people with disabilities, through the current access campaign, are raising the consciousness of the need for an accessible and affordable transport system, not just for themselves but for all those in the community who need transport to participate in daily life – the very young and the very old, people who do not drive, and people who for financial or other reasons need to rely on public transport. That is why People With Disabilities ACT is working with ACTCOSS and other community organisations on transport policy.

We bring our lived experience of disability to the discussion so that the design, construction and operation of our transport systems includes those features which make them accessible for us. Transport should be the enabler and not the barrier to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the daily life of Canberra.

People With Disabilities
ACT website:
www.pwdact.org.au



**People With
Disabilities**
ACT Inc

Why transport is tricky

By Jane Thomson, Policy Manager, COTA ACT

When COTA ACT held a forum recently to explore some creative options for getting senior non-drivers around, we expected about 35 people to come. On the day, about 70 seniors turned up – there weren't enough tables for them all – and they were extremely interested in what our creative presenters had to say. But what the event highlighted was that transport is perhaps the number one local issue for older people who can't drive – or who expect not to be driving soon. It was also very evident from the discussion that many older people aren't aware of the (albeit quite limited) options that there are in Canberra for older non-drivers.

There was enthusiasm for the idea of a hub-and-spokes based system using buses (to and between hubs) and taxis (out to the 'spokes' in the suburbs) for the price of a bus ticket. It's an idea that seniors have been raising with COTA at various forums for a long time, and now it's being piloted by the ACT Government and NICTA (National ICT Australia). The system, if it works, would address the problem of infrequent suburban services, but would still leave some elderly people with a long walk to the bus stop (where the taxi picks up).

There was interest, also, in the Uber option, although many of the forum participants doubted whether they could manage the 'app'. Predictably, there was controversy around light rail, although as someone pointed out, a tram is more or less 'an electric car that holds a lot more people'. Presenters from community transport and the Flexible Bus

Service also spoke and listened to what the older audience wanted from their transport system.

So what do they want? Well, when participants were asked what they'd ideally like in a transport system, they said they wanted a system that was reliable, cheap, responsive, flexible 'if I'm willing to share, let me share', safe (not just the infrastructure but the journey itself), cohesive (taking into account the whole journey, including the walking part), connected, and responsive to older people's real wants and needs. As someone said, 'We want transport that supports our social circles, not just to medical facilities and formal "older people's" events.'

Participants were asked what kind of transport that might entail. The responses included 'door to door transport when you want it', transport available at short notice, emergency transport options to take pets to the vet, and 'travel that supports our journey as people – not just to the journeys that you choose'. They wanted supportive transport that reflects their mobility and accessibility needs, helps non-drivers avoid being isolated in their homes, and is available out of business hours when social functions happen.

Transport was also a key issue that arose in the context of COTA's recent work (2015) on age-friendly communities in Canberra. The project collected feedback from nearly 200 older residents of Canberra about what helps and hinders an 'age-

friendly' community. The ability to walk around the local area, to the shops, parks and local facilities, and to get outside the area to socialise and participate in civic life, was prioritised by the majority of survey respondents. Concerns about broken, unusable or non-existent footpaths were the most common response to the question 'what would you like to change about your neighbourhood'. People particularly disliked footpaths with 'dead ends' – i.e. which end in a seemingly random spot far from facilities – and without curb ramps for walkers and wheelchairs.

It is well recognised that mobility within and outside a local area is a vital 'social determinant of health'. ACT Government policy stresses the importance of walking, cycling and public transport over increasing car use, but for seniors and others with limited mobility due to disability or health conditions, financially disadvantaged families with small children, and people living in areas not well-served by public transport, the current options are fairly limited. If you can't walk, you can't cycle, and the bus comes once an hour to a bus stop 700 metres away – and you have to give up your licence – you've lost most of your independence in one fell swoop.

Finding transport options that fully meet the needs and wants of seniors and other transport-disadvantaged groups is going to be really tricky, and government and community will need to think well outside the square and

into the future. There are a lot more questions than answers but these questions need to be at the forefront of policy-makers' minds. How do you plan a housing strategy that doesn't leave the poor and elderly transport-isolated? How do you fund transport needs that fall outside the personal budgets allocated to people on the NDIS or an aged care package (or for people who are not disabled or aged)?

We're now seeing the advent of Uber and Go-Get and these increase the choices available to the average Canberran – but

how about the non-average Canberran (such as a senior who can't drive, use a smart phone or afford Uber)? Is there potential for the taxi industry to adapt its services to woo niche markets such as seniors and people with disabilities, who value safety, reliability and wheelchair-accessibility, among other things? Where is 'community transport' going and how do we fund and support it? Will the whole problem be solved by the advent of light rail and (eventually) driverless cars? And finally, would there be value in

facilitating an increase in simple neighbourliness, where people who have cars support those who don't?

If you'd like to find out more about COTA ACT's research, please contact jthomson@cotaact.org.au.

COTA ACT website:
www.cotaact.org.au



Travelling by bus

By Erin Gillen

I quickly became a regular bus user after arriving in Canberra as a fresh faced first year university student from regional NSW. Having access to public transport was liberating and it took me everywhere. I soon became the expert in all things public transport for my uninitiated friends.

It wasn't until I had been in Canberra for two years that I began catching the bus at night. I was terrified. During that first ride I sat near the driver and stayed alert; at some point travelling on buses at night became so routine that I relaxed a little but always chose a seat at the front. I developed the habit of holding my keys in my hand as I disembarked at night to make it clear to anyone else getting off at my stop that I was not far from my destination.

I spent a lot of time standing at bus stops at night trying to exert some form of assertiveness in silence, hoping that this would protect me, that a possible attacker would be warned off. When I travelled at night, dressed up to meet friends and sometimes carried a bottle of wine, other bus goers would stare. I felt their judgment – that I was 'one of those girls' that you disapprove of. One night I was disembarking the bus at midnight and asked another woman if I could walk with her. There was a group of men on the street that were making me anxious. She responded, 'Sure, but I'm not sure what protection I will be.' As we walked two deserted blocks we

discussed how disconcerting it was to travel alone at night, but how we did it anyway.

I learnt that precautions were not only required at night. Where possible, I would sit next to women on the bus who were unlikely to stare down my shirt, start a conversation that would make me uncomfortable, or invade my personal space with unwanted physical contact. In many ways, catching the bus made me aware of the reality of the world for women: in public spaces men feel they are entitled to have full access to our attention and we are alert to potential danger.

The bus gave me an insight into a Canberra that not everyone sees – the diversity of people I would come across everyday was a highlight: the acquaintance from class, the kind woman who gave me two dollars once when I didn't have any cash for a bus ticket; the tourists travelling to the National Gallery or Parliament House; the school kids; the pensioners; the Mums with their babies in prams. There is a comradery on buses, where you help other people by letting them know which stop they need to get off at or when the next bus is coming.

I'm in fulltime employment now and have purchased a car. I miss the daily commute – those thirty minutes when I would read or daydream or observe other people. Getting on a bus is a thrill again, like when I first came to Canberra; it is also a return to the familiar.

Go Social, all around Canberra

By Chanel Cole, Project Officer, Belconnen Community Service

Elaine has been a regular with Belconnen Community Service's (BCS) transport service since she moved to Belconnen from Lismore five years ago. She's made quite a few friends through the transport service, including the drivers. "The drivers are excellent and they really look after us all," she tells me. "Make sure you put that in."

Elaine lost mobility after four successive hip operations and a long recovery from a fall that left her with a broken pelvis. "When I first got up, I couldn't walk, stand or anything. I had to start from scratch," she says. Elaine appreciates the wheelchair accessible lift in the new commuter and says she doesn't miss driving around in her car at all. "Let the drivers have the hassle," she grins.

Elaine's ongoing rehabilitation schedule means she doesn't have much time for social activities

during the week, so the Go Social program on Saturdays works well for her. "I thoroughly enjoy the Saturday trips. I've put my name down for every one," she says. "They're lovely. I particularly enjoyed the Handmade Markets; there's another one just before Christmas which I hope we can go to."

I discover Elaine has a 101 year-old dad, that she contracted polio at age 11 and recovered fully with exercise, and that she is an accomplished crafter who sews, crochets, does silk ribbon work and knits. The covetable cardigan Elaine wears is her own work.

BCS transport driver, Paul – who is at the wheel when I meet Elaine – has a wide knowledge of Canberra history and loves giving his clients mini guided tours, when time permits. Paul says clients like Elaine make his job, "the best in the world. You can't beat this job," he declares.



Elaine bids driver Paul a fond farewell until next time.

"There's not a day when you don't look forward to going to work. I'm very lucky".

Go Social activities run every Saturday. The new wheelchair accessible commuter comes right to your door and pick up generally begins from 10am. Seats are limited to 10 passengers, so advance bookings are essential.

Go Social also runs a Shopper Shuttle service every Monday from around 10am, visiting a variety of shopping destinations around Canberra.

To find out more about transport@bcs, or to book with Go Social, contact the team on 02 6278 8124, email transport@bcsact.com.au, or visit www.bcsact.com.au. You can also talk to the team to find out more about week day Go Social activities including our new Home Visiting Service.



Elaine shows how to use the wheelchair access.



ACTCOSS honours John Wood's contribution to social justice

John Wood has been a member of ACTCOSS since the mid-1970s.

John is an advocate and activist for consumer rights, participatory urban planning and social change.

John was President of ACTCOSS from 1986-1987.

John has also been a public officer and member of the ACOSS Board. Amongst the many contributions that John has made to seek a civil society, a few of the key ones are:

- Founding member of the ACT Welfare Rights and Community Legal Centre
- Founder of the Rupert Public Interest Movement
- Founder of the National Freedom of Information Campaign
- Life member of the Australian Consumers Association
- Former Deputy Commonwealth Ombudsman.

John said in the COSS history that when President of ACTCOSS, he and others felt ACTCOSS had become a bit staid and accepting of ineffectual position we were then in, as far as influencing the Federal Department of the Capital Territory. This was pre self-government.

John said, 'My eye fell on a wild man from the north John Tomlinson, who had for many years been an activist social worker in the Northern Territory... the rest is ACTCOSS history, he delivered a lively and challenging service to ACTCOSS and kept the ACTCOSS bureaucracy very much on their toes.'

At the ACTCOSS 2015 AGM the membership voted to honour John Wood's outstanding work. ACTCOSS will write to John to advise him that we have honoured his enormous contribution to ACTCOSS, social justice and strengthening our community. We will also publish an article honouring his work our Annual Report 2015-16.

We would like to thank Cathi Moore (Associate Member) for making this timely and worthy nomination.

ACTCOSS staff farewell



Keith Brandy
Gulanga Program Officer

In December Keith Brandy, a member of the Gulanga team, finished up at ACTCOSS. Keith had worked with ACTCOSS for five years and brought his passion

for cross-cultural dialogue and shared learning to his role. Over the past two years Keith grew the seminar program in Gulanga, providing seminars on recruitment and retention, racism in the workplace and community engagement. These seminars were always full and participants valued the content and the opportunity to work through these issues in group settings. Keith was valued by other peak bodies and community service organisations, who

felt comfortable making contact to ask questions and seek advice on how to deal with challenges in working well with service users and staff from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Keith worked closely with mainstream community organisations on shared community engagement events in NAIDOC Week and to promote the Close the Gap campaign. In his last 12 months, Keith worked with other men to develop a men's resource that focused on building awareness of the issues that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, encouraging men to seek support to deal with these issues and providing information about the services available in the ACT. This resource will be published in 2016. We thank Keith for his important work at ACTCOSS and will miss his upbeat vibe around the office.

The ACTCOSS office will shut down over the Christmas/New Year holiday period, starting 21 December 2015, and returning 4 January 2016. The ACTCOSS team wishes you a safe and happy holiday season.

Learning & development calendar

Training / Forum	Date / Time	Cost: Member / Non-member / Corp. or Govt.
Reconciliation		
Reconciliation Peer Network Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Thu 17 Mar 2016 9.30am - 11am	Free (RSVP required)
Community Sector Managers		
Community Sector Managers Peer Network Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Wed 24 Feb 2016 9am - 10.30am	Free (RSVP required)
Agile Management Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Thu 23 Jun 2016 9.30am - 4.30pm	\$180 / \$250 / \$300 (incl. GST)
Emerging Leaders Development Program		
Strategic & Business Planning Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Tue 9 Feb 2016 9.30am - 12.30pm	\$90 / \$125 / \$150 (incl. GST)
Introduction to Grant Writing Facilitated by YellowEdge	Tue 23 Feb 2016 9.30am - 12.30pm	\$90 / \$125 / \$150 (incl. GST)
Effective Communication Facilitated by YellowEdge	Wed 16 Mar 2016 9.30am - 12.30pm	\$90 / \$125 / \$150 (incl. GST)
Managing Performance & Difficult Conversations Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Fri 29 Apr 2016 9.30am - 12.30pm	\$90 / \$125 / \$150 (incl. GST)
Leading & Developing Teams Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Fri 29 Apr 2016 1.30pm - 4.30pm	\$90 / \$125 / \$150 (incl. GST)
Improving Quality & Impact of Services		
Building Better Boards: The ACTCOSS Governance Workshop Program Session 1: Board Governance & Strategy Presented by ACTCOSS Session 2: Financial Management Presented by Betty Ferguson	Thu 4 Feb 2016 Session 1: 9.15am - 12.45pm Session 2: 1pm - 4.30pm	Single session: \$90 / \$125 Both sessions: \$165 / \$235 (incl. GST)
People Powered Services		
Community Development Peer Network Facilitated by ACTCOSS & CDNet	Tue 2 Feb 2016 9.30am - 11.30am	Free (RSVP required)
Human Resources Peer Network Facilitated by ACTCOSS	Thu 3 Mar 2016 9.30am - 11.30am	Free (RSVP required)

Find out more about our learning and development opportunities and how to register at the ACTCOSS website: www.actcoss.org.au

Next issue:

Update Issue 75, Autumn 2016 edition

What we want the Canberra community to be by 2020

Members are welcome to contribute articles on the theme.

Copy deadline: 8 February 2016

Space is limited! To guarantee your spot, let us know as soon as possible.

Email: communications@actcoss.org.au

Ph: 02 6202 7200

Issue 75 will be distributed in March/April.

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Dalane Drexler, ACT Mental Health Consumer Network	Lesley Harris, Associate Member
	If you would like to contact the Committee, please contact ACTCOSS.

www.actcoss.org.au



The ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS) is the peak representative body for people living with low incomes or disadvantage, and not-for-profit community organisations in the Australian Capital Territory.

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

ACTCOSS

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ACTCOSS welcomes feedback. Please visit the 'Contact' page on our website for our feedback form, or contact us using the details above.

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Update is a quarterly journal that provides an opportunity for issues relevant to ACTCOSS' membership to be discussed and for information to be shared. Views expressed are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy views of ACTCOSS.