

Communique: Joint Community Government Reference Group

Meeting #121

18 November 2021

This communique is sent on behalf of the Joint Community Government Reference Group (JCGRG) to keep you – the ACT community sector – informed about key issues discussed and current work in progress.

Acknowledgement of Country

ACTCOSS is committed to reconciliation, acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, and pays respect to elders past and present.

Community Sector Service Costing Project

The meeting was provided with an update on the [Services Costing Project](#) being undertaken by the University of New South Wales Social Policy Research Centre. The Industry Strategy Steering Group (ISSG) meeting was briefed on the draft report at its meeting on [20 October 2021](#). The report draws on a literature survey, a small number of in-depth interviews, and survey results from community sector leaders. The research identified that the risks of underfunding were being felt by: service users and communities, community service workers, community sector organisations, and government agencies.

The Report provides clear evidence of poor cost coverage in the ACT across multiple service activities. The findings show that under-costing is widespread and pressures on services and community sector organisations have grown in recent years, particularly with the impact of COVID-19 over the last 18 months.

The meeting noted the ACT Government's review of indexation was announced in the October 2021-22 budget and that the report will provide useful evidence for this exercise. Community sector representatives look forward to participating in the indexation review. A final report will be submitted late November after which ACTCOSS will organise a community sector roundtable to present findings in December.

Social Compact Update

The finalisation of the updated Social Compact has been delayed due to the impact of COVID-19 and the recent ACT lockdown. Representatives from the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) will provide an update and plan for a release out of session before the first meeting of the JCGRG in 2022.

Community Facilities Working Group

ACTCOSS raised community sector concerns regarding the ongoing underfunding of maintenance and upgrades to ACT Government owned community hub properties. ACTCOSS reported recent advocacy on the issue including letters to Minister Steel in April and October 2021, input into the February 2021 Planning Review and a position statement for the October 2020 ACT Election. CSD representatives provided background on the existence of a community facilities working group which has not operated for several years. ACTCOSS will develop a paper on re-establishing a community facilities working group

to be circulated out of session and ACT Property Group will be invited to participate in a dedicated JCGRG meeting in 2022.

ACT Budget Process

CMTEDD representatives noted that the 2022-23 ACT Budget is expected to be held in August 2022. Government consultations on the process should begin in December 2021 and are likely to follow a similar process to this year. ACTCOSS raised the benefit of 2021 online consultations which allowed smaller community sector organisations to be involved in the process and suggested maintaining some online consultations in 2022.

About the JCGRG

The JCGRG is a consultative forum focused on progressing social and sustainability issues impacting the Canberra community between ACT Government and the ACT community sector. The JCGRG is co-chaired by the Deputy Director-General Community Services Directorate (CSD), ACT Government and the CEO of the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS).

The JCGRG also has an ongoing Industry Strategy Steering Group (ISSG). The ISSG monitors the implementation of the ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026 (the Industry Strategy). The Industry Strategy sets a 10-year vision for the ACT community services industry and identifies priority areas for response and outcomes to be achieved. ACTCOSS chairs the ISSG.

Current JCGRG Membership

- ACT Council of Social Service – Emma Campbell
- ACT Shelter – Travis Gilbert
- Capital Region Community Services – Mandy Green
- Carers ACT – Lisa Kelly
- Conservation Council ACT – Helen Oakley
- Council on the Ageing ACT – Jenny Mobbs
- Families ACT – Will Mollison
- Mental Health Community Coalition ACT – Bec Cody
- National Disability Services ACT – Kerrie Langford
- Volunteering ACT – Jean Giese
- Youth Coalition of the ACT – Justin Barker
- Department of Social Services, Australian Government – Josh Ballinger
- Education Directorate, ACT Government – Kate McMahon
- Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, ACT Government – Sam Engele, David James
- Community Services Directorate, ACT Government – Anne-Maree Sabellico, Jancye Winter, Jacinta Evans, Jessica Summerrell
- Health Directorate, ACT Government – Jacinta George
- Justice and Community Safety, ACT Government – Andrew McIntosh
- Transport Canberra and City Services, ACT Government – John Bowdery

For more information: Please contact the JCGRG Secretariat on 02 6202 7200 or JCGRG@actcoss.org.au