



Annual Report

2023-24

actcoss@actcoss.org.au

actcoss.org.au

02 6202 7200

ABN 81 818 839 988

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

ACTCOSS acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We pay respects to their elders, past and present. ACTCOSS celebrates the historic and ongoing contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the sector and society.

Funders and Partners

ACTCOSS received funding and financial support from:



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About ACTCOSS

The ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) is a non-profit organisation advocating for social justice in the ACT and representing not-for-profit organisations. We also work closely with colleagues in the nationwide Councils of Social Service (COSS) network and the national body, Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)

Our Vision

ACTCOSS's vision is for an inclusive ACT and region where no one lives in poverty. We work to make Canberra a just, safe, and sustainable community in which everyone has the opportunity for self-determination and a fair share of resources and services.

Our Purpose

ACTCOSS works to influence Government policies to end poverty, discrimination, and exclusion within the ACT through a trusted, collective and inclusive voice.

Our purpose is also to support the community sector, helping to ensure it has adequate resources and capacity.

We walk alongside Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community organisations, communities, and individuals to support the achievement of sovereignty, justice, and self-determination.

Strategic Objectives








- **Objective one:** Improved income, wellbeing, equity, and inclusion outcomes for people in the ACT region who are marginalised
- **Objective two:** A sustainable and empowered ACT community sector
- **Objective three:** A well-governed, representative, and effective ACTCOSS.

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: <https://actcoss.org.au/>

2023-24 Annual Report Snapshot

	166 Members		96% of members surveyed believe the community sector in the ACT is stronger as a result of ACTCOSS' activity.
	43 meetings with MLAs*		8 peaks meetings with MLAs organised and attended
	16 Peaks meetings held		1 co-authored 2023 Listening Report on commissioning with accompanying presentation in partnership with ACT Government
	3 pre-budget forums for the community sector and Treasury		177 participants in the ACTCOSS post-budget forum with Ministers (event organised in 2023-24 but held early July 2024)
	254 media mentions		8 publications and reports
	21 submissions to Government		6 Legislative Assembly hearings attended
	54 workshops and information sessions held		719 attendees at workshops and information sessions
	24 eNotices distributed		643 eNotice subscribers

*Does not include phone calls, meetings with ministerial advisors, informal meetings at public events or public events organised by ACTCOSS at which MLAs spoke. Includes 8 peaks meetings organised and attended on behalf of the peaks network. Each attendance by an MLA at a meeting is counted separately in this report.



Chair's Report

Jeremy Halcrow

Our election advocacy priorities focused on four areas aligned with our strategy: housing and homelessness; cost of living; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination; and support for the community sector.

The team had real successes in the areas of housing and homelessness, and cost of living. The development of our election strategy throughout this financial year has brought the opportunity to unify our membership in common cause, reinforcing the message that not only are ACT community services significantly underfunded but that this funding shortfall threatens the essential support that so many people depend on. The goal was to explain to prospective voters that nearly all Canberrans use community services each year, often without even realising it. We serve them across the whole life span, but particularly at those points of vulnerability and life transition. Increased funding for community services not only means better support for people in need, but reduced social isolation and a healthier, more resilient Canberra community. In addition to policy commitments, we have made significant strides in improving our political leaders' understanding of the true cost of delivering essential community services.

There was less engagement from the major political parties on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination than we had hoped. From the ACTCOSS Board perspective, supporting a thriving ACCO ecosystem in the local community sector will continue to be a major area of commitment. The ACTCOSS Board is very conscious of our responsibilities to 'walk the talk' on self-determination by growing the independence of the Gulanga program. We have committed to explore constitutional reform to ensure dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the ACTCOSS board as well as a model of co-determined governance of the Gulanga Program. We are currently in conversation with Community to achieve these aims.

Finally, I want to thank our CEO, Dr Devin Bowles, for his calm and astute leadership of ACTCOSS throughout this year. I would also like to thank the whole ACTCOSS team for their hard work and commitment during the challenges of an ACT election year. I also want to thank my fellow directors for their wisdom and significant voluntary commitment of time, especially our Vice-Chair Lisa Kelly and Treasurer Blessy Pascual-Gutierrez for their substantial support to myself and management.

I also particularly wish to acknowledge the contribution of Andrew Scotford who completed his term on the ACTCOSS Board at this year's AGM. Andrew has contributed significantly to the Board, bringing a different perspective on key issues such as workforce development and capability building for the community sector, given his experience in the tertiary sector. We wish Andrew well for his future endeavours and hope he stays connected with ACTCOSS and the sector in other capacities.

In recent years we have been blessed with a stable board and this has contributed to a high functioning authorising environment for management and a clear strategic direction to achieve better social justice outcomes in the Territory.



CEO's Report

Dr Devin Bowles

Last year was a busy one for ACTCOSS and the organisations we represent, continuing a period of change for the sector and the people with whom we work.

The lead up to the ACT election was an opportunity that ACTCOSS, and the sector, could not afford to let pass. One of the greatest privileges of my role as ACTCOSS CEO is the access the organisation has to candidates from across the political spectrum. The election enabled a process of deep listening to our members and the community, and the chance to reflect what we learned to candidates and the media.

Following the election, ACTCOSS and the sector will refresh our relationships with Ministers, noting the different composition of the new government. Working with a crossbench, as well as the opposition, will bring a new set of challenges and opportunities over the coming four years. Figuring out how to most effectively advance the agendas of the sector and those who have been marginalised in this new environment will be an iterative process.

Commissioning is a once-in-a-generation change to the way the ACT Government plans and funds the community sector. ACTCOSS played a major role in gaining and promoting a strategic understanding of commissioning's effects throughout the Government-community sector system. With the ACT Government, we co-authored the *Listening Report* to highlight areas for improvement. Obviously, there remains much room for improvement and much work to be done. One of the challenges of commissioning is how it can create competition between organisations that normally cooperate well on behalf of shared clients. As the commissioning cycle moves on in different areas, the sector can resume its normal levels of collaboration.

There is a real opportunity to leverage the information created by the commissioning process to make a stronger case to Treasury for increased funding for the sector and better outcomes for people we serve. I hope that in the next two years, we can create new ways of engaging in the budget process.

The sector's work together for the election, and to some extent even for commissioning, point the way forward for the coming year. If the last year has demonstrated anything in our space, it is that we are most effective when we are most collaborative. ACTCOSS has a unique role as a catalyst of cooperation in the community sector's advocacy and engagement. Over the next year, I look forward to continuing to ACTCOSS synthesising the perspectives of our sector and empowering our members.

I am grateful to the ACTCOSS Board Chair, and Board more generally. I thank them for their wise guidance and warm encouragement. My staff colleagues at ACTCOSS are an inspiration with their deep passion for equity, dedication, and skill.

ACTCOSS Strategic Plan

This year, ACTCOSS has continued to use the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan to guide our work, our decision making, and our priorities.

ACTCOSS' strategic vision is for an inclusive ACT and region where no one lives in poverty.

The following values guide our advocacy, relationships and decisions:

- All people are treated with dignity and respect,
- The full realization of human rights,
- Diversity and inclusion,
- Self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
- Inclusion of people experiencing disadvantage,
- A just and sustainable future for all.

ACTCOSS' purpose, as defined through consultation with members, is to:

- Influence Government policies to end poverty, discrimination and exclusion in the ACT,
- Create a trusted, collective and inclusive voice, advocating for positive social and system change,
- Support and work with the community sector and ensure it has adequate resources and capacity,
- Walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations, communities and individuals to work towards the achievement of sovereignty, justice and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In 2023-24, ACTCOSS' activities were guided by our three strategic objectives:

1. Improved income, wellbeing, equity and inclusions outcomes for people in the ACT and region who are marginalised
2. A sustainable and empowered ACT community sector
3. A well-governed, representative and effective ACTCOSS.

To read more on ACTCOSS' Strategic Plan, [click here](#) or visit <https://actcoss.org.au/publication/actcoss-strategic-plan-2023-2025/>

Strategic Objective One: Improved income, wellbeing, equity and inclusion outcomes for people in the ACT and region who are marginalised.

Advocacy at work



In 2023-24, ACTCOSS' advocacy included the release of eight publications and reports and 21 submissions to Government. The value of these submissions is reflected in ACTCOSS being invited to give evidence at six subsequent hearings in the Legislative Assembly.

Since the end of this reporting period, ACTCOSS has seen the Government draw heavily on the recommendations our submissions have made in 2023 and 2024.

In addition to this, ACTCOSS utilised its strong access to the ACT Government, and participated in 42 meetings with MLAs this year. ACTCOSS used these meetings to further our advocacy for people experiencing poverty and other forms of disadvantage as well as the community sector.

The 2024 ACT Budget

ACT Budget Roundtable Consultations

In late February 2024, ACTCOSS facilitated three ACT Budget Roundtable Consultations for the community sector with the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD). These roundtable discussions enabled sector stakeholders to provide direct input to Treasury officials on their top priorities for the 2024-25 ACT Budget.

Across the three roundtable consultations, 39 members represented their organisations and advocated for their budget priorities.

ACTCOSS' Submission of Budget Priorities

Following the roundtable discussions, and incorporated consultation with members, ACTCOSS submitted our 2024-25 ACT Budget Priorities.

In ACTCOSS's submission, we called for the 2024-25 ACT Budget to:

- Urgently address the growing housing crisis,
- Support and enable the community sector to respond to increasing disadvantage caused by rising costs of living,
- Prioritise self-determination and community control for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The ACT Community Sector Post-Budget Forum

ACTCOSS was proud to host the ACT Community Sector Post-Budget Forum once again, where ACTCOSS members were able to hear directly from ACT Government ministers about the budget and to ask questions about investment priorities. This event was organised in 2023-24 and held in July 2024.

102 community sector employees and volunteers attended the event, with 9 ministers also in attendance.

"I just wanted to pass on my congratulations to you both, and your team, for an incredibly well-run Community Budget Forum... It was beautifully organised and well-managed. How you managed to keep everyone to time (including the Ministers) is a mystery. It was evident that a lot of thought and care had gone into planning the forum."

ACTCOSS Member

"Both Ministers and Officials have appreciated the positive engagement with ACTCOSS and your members throughout the full breadth of the process. Your participation from the Budget Roundtables through to the Budget Day Briefing and Post-Budget ACTCOSS Forum provided vital opportunities for the Government to assess the needs of the Sector and engage directly with Stakeholders within the sector.

I would like to particularly thank you for your efforts in facilitating the Post-Budget Forum. The event requires substantial engagement and planning but provides a significant opportunity for questions to be asked and answered."

Chief Minister Andrew Barr

Anti-Poverty Week 2023

For the first time in 21 years, Anti-Poverty Week (APW) was held over a fortnight in recognition of the historic Voice to Parliament Referendum. APW is a time for us all to learn more about the causes and realities of poverty and take collective action to end it. In 2023, ACTCOSS and VolunteeringACT co-chaired APW in the ACT.

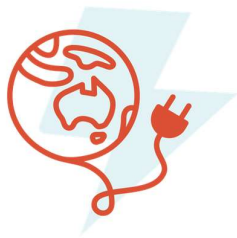
On October 20th, ACTCOSS hosted a media conference featuring community sector leaders from across Canberra. On October 25th, ACTCOSS and VolunteeringACT hosted a free community lunch at the Food Co-op Shop and Café.

Advocating for a Just Transition

Climate change disproportionately impacts people who face disadvantage, including people on low incomes, people with disability and chronic health conditions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In 2023-24, ACTCOSS continued to advocate for a fair, fast and inclusive transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the ACT.

The ICRC's draft decision on pricing

ACTCOSS's submission on the ICRC's draft determination significantly contributed to the Commission's robust justification for its final price direction decision. The final decision released by ICRC on the 23rd of May 2024 also saw a 3.8% reduction from the pricing determination foreshadowed in its draft decision. In its final decision the ICRC noted concerns raised by ACTCOSS about cost-of-living pressures and the need to balance retailer returns with affordable prices for consumers.



Ensuring an Equitable Energy Transition

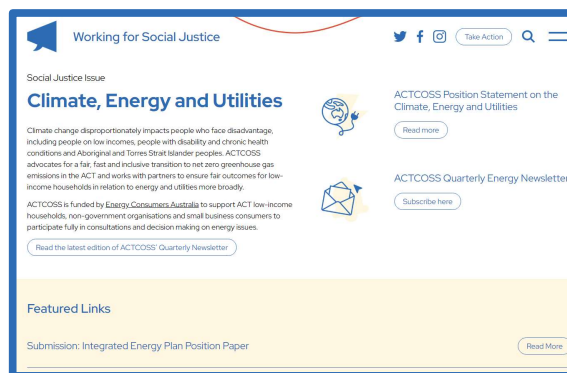
Recognising the Government's ongoing development of an Integrated Energy Plan that outlines its strategy for phasing out gas and progressing future energy systems, ACTCOSS intensified its engagement with the ACT Government's Integrated Energy Plan policy team (formerly the Gas Transition team) and other teams working on various aspects of the transition at the Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate of the ACT. The Directorate is charged with managing the transition process.

The project's success in advocating for vulnerable and small energy consumers is evident in key documents published by the ACT Government regarding the transition and future energy systems. The final Integrated Energy Plan released in June 2024 makes several references to ACTCOSS on supporting a fair, fast and inclusive energy transition in the ACT, and makes prioritising those who need help the most a core pillar of the new IEP.

Read more about our Energy work...
In our Quarterly Newsletter:

Or on our website:

Both can be accessed at: https://actcoss.org.au/social_justice_issue/climate-energy-and-utilities/



The 16th Anniversary of the National Apology

In February, ACTCOSS and the Gulanga Program partnered with Relationships Australia Canberra & Region, Dhunlung Yarra Service, and Tuggeranong Arts Centre to host the 16th Anniversary of the National Apology to Stolen Generations and Indigenous people of Australia.

The event was a heartfelt gathering, where community were able to come together and reflect. With the theme, “The Healing Journey”, it was crucial that this event made space for truth telling, as this is integral to healing. All those in attendance were fortunate to hear stories from Sharon Lee Williams, Glyniss Church and Miah JagoeShaw and performances of strength and resilience from Joel Bulger, and Wallabindi and band.

Together, we reflected on the injustices and trauma experienced by stolen generations, past and present, through discriminative laws, policies, and practices. We acknowledged that these practices continue even today, as demonstrated by the alarming rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being removed from their families.

“I just wanted to thank you for the invitation to today’s commemorative event of the Apology..... Always moving and very sobering as truths were being told by the amazing people speaking and singing.

I brought along 2 of my colleagues... who have never been to such a raw and emotional event. They were both extremely appreciative of the opportunity. .”

Event attendee

Pictured: Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony by Joel Bulger

Pictured over the page: Event attendees and performers





Working Together For Our Booris Symposium: It Takes A Village

This Symposium was organised in partnership with the Our Booris, Our Way Implementation Oversight Steering Committee. An organising committee has been established to design and facilitate the symposium comprising of members from Our Booris Our Way, ACTCOSS' Gulanga Program, Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Corporation and the Aboriginal Children's Advocate.

The Symposium was supported by Gugan Gulwan Aboriginal Youth Corporation, Winnunga Nimmytyjah Aboriginal Health Service, Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation, Yerrabi Yurwang Aboriginal Child and Family Service, Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation and Mental Health For Mob.

The purpose of the symposium was:

- To provide a platform for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and key stakeholders to share knowledge and updates in relation to the child protection system and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT.
- To focus on developing and fostering collaboration between service providers.
- To provide an avenue for community and people with lived experience to contribute and be heard.

"It was the best symposium I have ever been to."

"It was excellent, I wish there could be another."

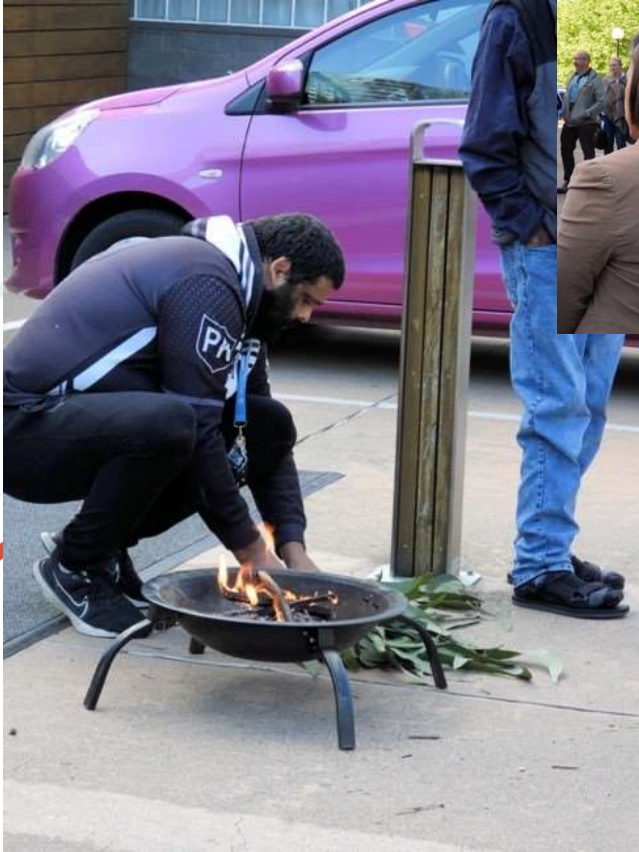
Symposium Attendees

The Gulanga Program, the symposium organising committee and community did everything possible to ensure the symposium was a safe, honest, community led, and driven symposium focused on truth telling. The Dhunlung Yarra team from Relationships Australia was engaged to provide culturally safe counselling support, as it was anticipated some people may feel uncomfortable and/or triggered by the content of the Symposium.

The Gulanga Team are extremely proud of their efforts in coordinating the Symposium, we feel it was a successful, one-of-a-kind, Aboriginal-led event, highlighting the experiences and elevating the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. It was a privilege to share the space with the great Aboriginal leaders of our community, and to also be able to support and invest back in our local community through the people and services we engaged to bring the symposium together. We would also like to thank the staff of Beryl Women Inc, who supported our Aboriginal mums and carers to be able to attend by providing free day-care on site.

Pictured over the page: ACT Community Sector Employees, Volunteers, and ACT Government Employees and Representatives at the Symposium.

Bottom right: Performance by Tahalianna Soward-Mahanga



Strategic Objective Two: A sustainable and empowered ACT community sector

The 2023 Listening Report

ACTCOSS welcomed the opportunity to work collaboratively and in partnership with the ACT Government in the development of the *2023 Listening Report*. The joint analysis ensured a more comprehensive process to identify both challenges and opportunities for meeting the ambition of the Government's reform agenda set out in the Commissioning Roadmap.

ACTCOSS recognised the constraints of the annual Budget process and the limitations this places on the recommendations in the 2023 Report. ACTCOSS will continue to work with Government on implementing the Action Plan.

Peaks Collaboration and Meetings

In 2023-24, ACTCOSS used its unique position to substantially enhance coordination across the community sector by increasing meeting frequency with the ACT Peaks. Previously we met *ad hoc* a few times a year, however, this financial year we met 16 times through coordinated meetings twice a month – this included a face-to-face strategic meeting and an online meeting to discuss commissioning. This work to reconnect the Peaks has positioned the group well to make the most of the ACT Election.

To amplify our voice to Government, we met with Ministers and MLAs eight times as a collective. These meetings were coordinated by ACTCOSS with attendance from a diverse range of community sector leaders. Each meeting included a targeted discussion with the MLAs to step through the key agreed priorities found in the Joint Statement.

This strategic investment enables ACTCOSS to leverage the information-gathering and advocacy functions of the peaks. The insights ACTCOSS has gained from this network are unparalleled and we will continue to nurture this relationship in the upcoming year.

Learning and Development

In 2023-24, ACTCOSS continued to host training and information sessions for community sector organisations, as well as the public and government employees.

These sessions were well attended, with a total of 719 attendees across 54 workshops and information sessions.

Grant Writing Workshop: "Great workshop. I will be recommending it colleagues"

Grant Writing Workshop: "I have a better understanding of what to look out for and focus on when writing grants - what Gov are looking for specifically! Thank you for the great workshop."

Training Attendees

Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit

Climate change is an increasing issue for everyone, and the impacts are growing for the community sector and the clients we serve. The ACT Government and community are relying on community organisations to build strong structures and skills to respond effectively to the challenges and impacts that climate change presents such as bushfires, floods and heat waves. ACTCOSS viewed this as a priority project for the sector and has been involved in the exciting initiative of developing a toolkit for the community sector to adapt to climate change.



ACTCOSS invited members to be a part of this project to have input into the design of the kit to ensure that it helps position community organisations to develop climate change adaptation plans. As part of the project, one community organisation will pilot the toolkit later in the year to develop a climate change adaptation plan. ACTCOSS will provide support to the organisation in using the toolkit and evaluate the toolkit's use so that it can be implemented widely in the community sector in the future.

Pictured: ACTCOSS CEO, Dr Devin Bowles, and ACTCOSS Members at the Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit workshop in 2024.

The ACT Community Sector Careers Gateway

Since its launch in February 2022, the Gateway has seen substantial success, with over 15,000 people navigating to the website. In April 2023, ACTCOSS invested in enhancements to the Gateway, improving the accessibility of the site and adding a highly requested job advertisement feature.

While ACTCOSS has a long-standing public profile as a peak body for its systemic work, its job notice board is less known to those seeking to transition into a career in the community sector. Transitioning the job notice board from the ACTCOSS website to the Careers Gateway means that the Gateway can now operate as a one stop site for resources *and* job vacancies.

"We've successfully filled the two positions advertised with ACTCOSS... Thank you"

ACTCOSS Member

This latest instalment has received support from more than 12 organisations, with 20 job ads being posted to the site in the last few months of this reporting period. Your organisation can do the same! Head to <https://communitysector.org.au/> and spot a job ad today!



Pictured: ACT Community Sector Career Ambassadors Penelope and Luise at the ANU Law Expo.

Career Ambassadors and ACTCOSS Staff also attended a wide range of Career Expos throughout 2023-24, showcasing the exciting job opportunities available in the sector.

Peer Networks

ACTCOSS hosts regular meetings and coordinates correspondence between members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Sector Peer Network, Community Development Network, Communications Network, Reconciliation Network and Justice Network.

You can find out more or sign up to join a peer network on our website, <https://actcoss.org.au/community-sector-resources/peer-networks/>.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Sector Peer Network

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Sector (ATSIComSec) Network is a core part of Gulanga's functions, and great pride is taken to grow and nurture it. ATSIComSec is an important mechanism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community sector workers to stay connected and support one another. In 2023-24, ATSIComSec met 6 times, and membership grew 106 people in June 2024.

“ATSIComSec has always been an excellent way to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers come together to share where they work and what they can do for the community. Some of the feedback over the years has been that workers find it a great support place for where workers could come to seek support around how they can feel better supported in their workplace especially when they are the only Indigenous worker. The Gulanga Program was created and still remains to provide support and information to all services who would like to provide better services to their Indigenous communities. It provides a non-judgemental environment to deliver Cross Cultural workshops along with specific training tailored to the needs of the service. Principal and protocols were developed to assist services with ways to recruit and retain Indigenous staff, the importance of when Welcoming to Country or Acknowledging Country is appropriate and many more... Gulanga did and continues to work towards addressing social justice issues for our mob. I hope it will continue to do so in the future.”

ATSIComSec Member

Community Development Network (CDNet)

The [Community Development Network of the ACT](#) & Region (known as CDNet) is a support network of community development workers and those interested in community development principles and practices. Achievements for the 2023-24 financial year include:

- Two Community of Practice sessions were held over the year with attendance of 20-30 people at each. They focused on wellbeing for community sector workers and U Shape Us, a creative game for fostering community connections through Asset-Based Community Development.
- CDNet ran an informative Partnerships Brokers Training session for community sector workers.
- The CDNet email list continues to be an extremely valuable resource for the ACT community sector and has over 2,500 subscribers.

ACT Community Sector NAIDOC Event

The community sector NAIDOC Event was held on July 4th 2023 and was hugely successful. This year, we were lucky enough to have been joined by federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, the Honorable Linda Burney MP. It was great working in partnership with other community sector organisations, to celebrate and showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.



Pictured: ACT Community Sector Employees and Volunteers celebrating NAIDOC Week.

Far right: The Hon. Linda Burney MP with former Head of Gulanga, Rachele Kelly-Church.

Strategic Objective Three: A well-governed, representative and effective ACTCOSS

Member Engagement

In April-May 2024, ACTCOSS undertook an annual survey of its members.

- 96% of members surveyed believe the community sector in the ACT is stronger as a result of ACTCOSS activity;
- 92% of members surveyed believe ACTCOSS activity reflects a sound understanding of the issues that reflect the community sector and people experiencing poverty;
- 82% of members surveyed feel supported, informed and engaged as a result of ACTCOSS activities; and
- 94% of members surveyed believe that their ACTCOSS membership represents value for money.

"I greatly value the role that ACTCOSS plays both in the community sector and in the community more broadly in advocating for social justice"

ACTCOSS is "a vital part of the community sector"

ACTCOSS Members

Our recent survey affirmed for ACTCOSS that our advocacy and other work is representative of the concerns of our members. The top concerns of ACTCOSS members in 2024 (Housing and Homelessness, Sector Sustainability, Poverty and Cost of Living and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Self-Determination) are well aligned with ACTCOSS' priority areas as featured in our 2024 ACT Election platform and campaign.

Member Forums

This financial year we continued to host casual Member Forums, where ACTCOSS members could come together with our staff to discuss issues facing the sector, their organisations or the broader ACT community.

While often only a small group, these forums are filled with passionate discussion, useful information sharing and contributions to current or future advocacy opportunities. Our staff and regular attendees find them very useful as a pulse check on what is important to our members.

This year, key topics of discussions included the referendum for a Voice to Parliament, a Lived Experience Workforce panel and discussion, ACT Government Insourcing and 2024 ACT Election priorities.

Many of these discussions will continue with members into 2024-25.

Diversified and expanding income sources

In the 2023-24 financial year, ACTCOSS secured

- Additional funding from Energised Consumers Australia to support our ongoing advocacy work in the energy space, spearheading the national energy transition.
- New funding from the ACT Government Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to support the development and implementation of a Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit for the Community Sector.
- Additional funding from the ACT Government Chief Ministers office to support Anti-Poverty Week activities.

Multiple Enterprise Agreement (MEA)

ACTCOSS continued to work with a number of sector employers, the Australian Services Union (ASU), the ACT Government and an industrial relations consultant to progress the completion of a new MEA. Our role in this process has been to coordinate and facilitate activity for all employers, while also trying to negotiate a valued agreement for our staff. At the time of writing this report, the MEA is part of a Supported Bargaining process with the FairWork Commission, implemented by the ASU. We hope it will be completed in early 2025.

2023 Annual General Meeting

In November 2023, ACTCOSS held its Annual General Meeting. At this meeting, the members voted on nominations to the Board, which saw Jeremy Halcrow (*The Benevolent Society*) re-elected as the Board Chair for a further 3-year term. We also welcomed three new Board Directors: Lauren Anthes (*Women's Health Matters*), Lucy Hohnen (*St Vincent De Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn*) and Zakia Patel (*Multicultural Hub Canberra*).

Details of the full ACTCOSS Board can be found on page 28 and our website, <https://actcoss.org.au/>.





Reconciliation Action Plan

ACTCOSS is currently amidst its third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This Innovate RAP outlines the actions necessary to equip ACTCOSS for its work towards the improvement of opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACTCOSS' primary purpose is the advancement of social justice. This includes speaking out against systemic racism, and linking our policy and capability work to Closing the Gap outcomes. To realise the vision of Canberra as a just, safe and sustainable community in which everyone has the opportunity for self-determination and a fair share of resources and services, we must first achieve reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This RAP comes at a crucial time. Now More Than Ever, the fight for justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will – and must – continue ([Reconciliation Australia, 2023](#)).

Cultural Learning Framework

In 2024, ACTCOSS finalised their Cultural Learning Framework, which outlines several ways ACTCOSS' staff and leadership are committed to improving their knowledge of historical and current issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Anti-Racism Training with HUE

In November 2023, all ACTCOSS Staff attended an Anti-Racism Training presented by [HUE](#), a social justice organisation run by two women of colour. This training enabled ACTCOSS to improve our understanding of the problem and informing our work in developing an Anti-Racism policy.

Peer-based Learning

With funds for training and development always tight, ACTCOSS have introduced peer learning activities. Once a month, an ACTCOSS staff member will research and share a significant date or event from our [Reconciliation Calendar](#). Together, we learnt about Native Title, the establishment and abolishment of ATSIC, and many more significant events.

Artwork by Rachele Kelly-Church. "Connected Communities"

Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024		
	2024 \$	2023 \$
Government and other grant funding	1,440,093	1,586,616
Other revenue from operations	111,820	195,542
Other income	67,028	12,544
Total revenue	1,618,941	1,794,702
Employee expenses	(1,232,462)	(1,239,120)
Depreciation and amortisation	(60,885)	(59,934)
External labour & consulting	(153,571)	(167,093)
Other expenses	(177,616)	(257,959)
Finance expenses	(3,459)	(4,611)
Surplus/(loss) from operations	(9,052)	65,985
Other comprehensive income		-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(9,052)	65,985

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024			
	Retained earnings \$	General reserve \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2023	187,530	681,626	869,156
Surplus/(loss) for the year	(9,052)		(9,052)
Transfer to reserves	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2024	178,478	681,626	860,104

Find the full financial statements for 2023-24 on the [ACTCOSS website](https://actcoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/ACTCOSS-2024-Financial-Statements-Final-Signed.pdf) or visit <https://actcoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/ACTCOSS-2024-Financial-Statements-Final-Signed.pdf>

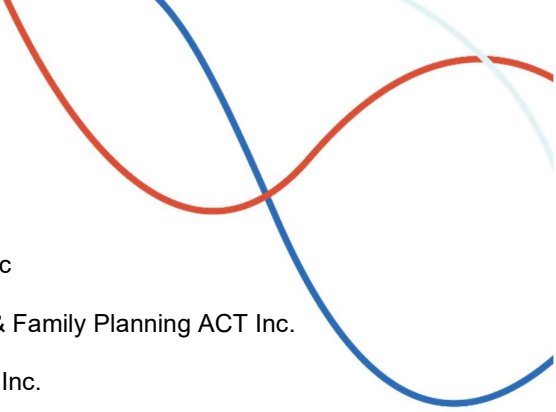
ACTCOSS Board

Director	Board meetings attended	Apologies
Jeremy Halcrow, The Benevolent Society Chair	6/6	–
Lisa Kelly, Carers ACT Vice Chair	5/6	1
Blessy Pascual, Woden Community Services Treasurer	5/6	1
Andrew Scotford, CIT Student Association Ordinary Director	6/6	–
Melissa Bell, Barnardos Ordinary Director	6/6	–
Fiona Loaney, Relationships Australia Canberra & Region Ordinary Director	3/6	3
Amanda Tobler, Associate Member Ordinary Director	5/6	1
Tracey Hall, Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT Ordinary Director	5/6	1
Sue Webeck, Domestic Violence Crisis Service Ordinary Director	5/6	1
Cathi Moore, Associate Member Ordinary Director (until November 2023)	2/2	1
Alicia Flack-Kone, ACT Down Syndrome Association Ordinary Director (until November 2023)	2/2	–
Zakia Patel, Multicultural Hub Canberra Ordinary Director	3/4	1
Lucy Hohnen, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn Ordinary Director	4/4	–
Lauren Anthes, Women's Health Matters Ordinary Director	3/4	1

Organisation Members

ACT Disability, Aged & Carer Advocacy Service Inc.	Canberra Refugee Support Incorporated
ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Inc	Canberra Youth Residential Services
ACT Playgroups Association Inc.	Capital Health Network
ACT Shelter	Capital Region Community Services
Advocacy for Inclusion	Carers ACT Inc.
Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT Inc	CHC Affordable Housing
Amnesty International ACT/SNSW	Communities@Work
Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT	Community Options
ANTaR ACT	Community Radio 2XX Inc
ANU Students' Association	Community Services #1
Australian Association of Social Workers ACT Branch	Companion House
Australian Red Cross - ACT/SE NSW	Conflict Resolution Service Inc.
Barnardos Australia	Conservation Council ACT Region
Beryl Women Inc.	Council on the Ageing ACT
Canberra & Q'yan ADD Support Group Inc.	Dementia Australia ACT
Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation & Advocacy	Directions Health Services
Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy (CAPaD)	Domestic Violence Crisis Service
Canberra Community Law	Doris Women's Refuge Inc.
Canberra Institute of Technology Student Association	Duntroon Community Centre
Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF) Inc.	Environmental Collective Housing Organisation Inc.
Canberra Police Community Youth Club (PCYC)	Families ACT Inc.
Canberra Rape Crisis Centre	Fearless Women Incorporated
	GetAboutAble
	Grand Pacific Health
	Havelock Housing Association Inc

Health Care Consumers' Association
Hepatitis ACT Inc
Justice action
Karinya House Home for Mothers & Babies Inc
Karralika Programs Inc.
Kidsafe ACT
Marymead CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn
Menslink Inc.
Mental Health Community Coalition ACT
Mental Health Foundation
Mental Illness Education ACT
Meridian Inc
Multicultural Hub Canberra
My Coaching My Future
Nexus Human Services
Northside Community Service Ltd.
Palliative Care ACT
Parentline ACT Inc.
Perinatal Wellbeing Centre
Prisoners Aid (ACT) Inc.
Rebus Theatre
Relationships Australia Canberra & Region
Religious Society of Friends Canberra Inc.
Roundabout Canberra



SEE Change Inc
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
The Benevolent Society
The Smith Family
Toora Women Inc.
Tuggeranong Link Community Houses and Centres Inc
UCA Canberra Region Presbytery
Uniting
VolunteeringACT
Warehouse Circus Inc.
Wellways Australia
Woden Community Service Inc.
Women With Disabilities ACT
Women's Health Matters Inc.
Women's Legal Centre (ACT Region) Inc.
Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation
Youth Coalition of the ACT
YWCA Canberra
ZAMZAM FOUNDATION INCORPORATED

Associate Members

A. Ware

A. Dolan

A. Applebee

A. Tobler

A. A. Acosta

B. Orr

C. Moore

D. Addison

D. Lucas

D. Tshering

E. Wensing

E. Bourke

E. Street

F. Clapin

F. Tito Wheatland

G. Buchanan

H. Fitt

I. Kennard

J. Craig

J. Lynch

J. Crosby

J. Kitchin

J. Carty

K. Cox

K. McDonald

K. Vicencio

M. Brown

M. Haque

P. Messent

P. Kendall

P. Kaur Saggu

P. Humphries

R. Bailey

R. Refshauge

S. Helyar

Z. Admanlaby

Thank you!

actcoss@actcoss.org.au

02 6202 7200

actcoss.org.au

ABN 81 818 839 988

