



Annual Report

2024-25

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 recognises 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/>

2024-25 Annual Report Snapshot



145 members



95% of members surveyed believe the community sector in the ACT is stronger as a result of ACTCOSS' activity



33 meetings with MLAs*



4 peaks meetings with MLAs organised and attended



17 peaks meetings held



85 supporter organisations for the ACT for Community campaign



3 pre-budget forums for the community sector and Treasury



177 participants in the ACTCOSS post-budget forum with Ministers (event organized in 2023/24 but held early July 2024)



230 media mentions



5 publications and reports



14 submissions to Government



2 Legislative Assembly hearings attended as witnesses



26 workshops and information sessions held



917 registrations at workshops and information sessions



24 eNotices distributed



636 eNotice subscribers

* Does not include unscheduled phone calls, meetings with ministerial advisors, informal meetings at public events or public events organised by ACTCOSS at which MLAs spoke. Includes 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

This financial year included an ACT Government election and the start of a four-year political cycle. The ACTCOSS team and our allies achieved significant policy commitments in the areas of housing and homelessness, with the most ambitious election commitments in decades. There were also important commitments in cost of living, although much work remains, especially in advancing equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Candidates' strong engagement with the ACT for Community call to action through the election campaign was particularly pleasing. And while the campaign has culminated in the ACT Government's \$10m uplift to the sector, we need to redouble our focus on this issue. This funding buys the sector time to engage with Government on making funding more sustainable for everyone, but the clock is already ticking loudly.

At the start of a new four-year parliamentary term, the ACT Government's situation is different in two important ways. Its budget situation grows increasingly dire, with the proportion of expenditure going to health growing unsustainably. Additionally, Labor is governing as a minority government, with an expanded crossbench.

ACTCOSS responded to this situation by shifting its approach to the ACT Budget. We are helping to lead the sector to provide earlier budget submissions to influence not only Treasury officials, but also other directorates which make recommendations to Treasury. This includes offering forums and workshops for the sector to discuss the approach to the ACT Government Budget. Based on meetings with the Treasurer and Treasury officials, we changed the template for our budget submission and made this publicly available to the sector. Of course, we also held our regular pre- and post-budget forums with Treasury officials and Ministers.

ACTCOSS's goal is to enhance the community sector's engagement with the budget process. This will help insulate funding for the sector and the people to whom we provide services from any budget cuts and enable us to showcase the high return on investments in social infrastructure to expand this investment.

In the context of a new Government, ACTCOSS has met with representatives from all of the parties and each of the independents last financial year. In total, ACTCOSS had 33 meetings with MLAs.

A further indicator of the work of our small policy team is its five publications and 14 submissions to Government over the financial year. ACTCOSS supported its members through 26 workshops and information sessions.

I would like to thank the whole ACTCOSS team for their thoughtful crafting of policy positions and hard work in the final run to the election. The team is starting off a new four-year term proactively and with strong strategic relationships established.

I 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 the board and management.

I particularly wish to acknowledge the contribution of Fiona Looney who stepped down from ACTCOSS Board during the year after 4 years of service. Fiona made a strong contribution to the Board, particularly as a member of our Finance and Risk Committee. We wish Fiona well for her future endeavours and hope she 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. A key focus for the Board this year has been working on our new strategic direction and the next four-year plan is close to finalisation. The new strategy will place us in a stronger position to achieve better social justice outcomes in the Territory.



ACTCOSS Chair, Jeremy Halcrow (left), and ACTCOSS staff member, Michelle Barclay, 2024 AGM.



CEO's Report

Dr Devin Bowles

Last year was an important one for community sector advocacy in the ACT, including the ACT Legislative Assembly election and the Government's first budget of the 11th Assembly.

We refreshed our relationships with MLAs, having regard for the new composition of Government. A minority government brings fresh challenges and opportunities. Each of the parties and independents is figuring out how best to progress its agenda in this new environment, adapting their strategies in response to each other. ACTCOSS is doing the same.

As we strategise about how best to advocate for people experiencing poverty and for the community sector, ACTCOSS is thinking across the four-year election cycle. Guiding this work, our new Strategic Plan will cover four years to align with the election cycle.

ACTCOSS is coordinating the ACT for Community campaign with the other community sector peaks. This campaign aims to secure permanent increases to community sector funding that reflect the real costs of delivering services.

While it is commonplace for Governments to cry poor, the recent downgrading of the ACT Government's credit rating highlights genuine resourcing issues. In response, ACTCOSS is changing the timing and approach of our budget advocacy and supporting the community sector through capacity building and collaboration to do the same.

Our aim is to influence the directorates that are making internal budget bids for Treasury. This means bringing forward our budget submission and packaging it in a way that facilitates it being adopted in internal government business cases.

I acknowledge all of ACTCOSS's members and other community sector organisations advocating for change. Our voices are strongest together.

I continue to be grateful to the ACTCOSS Board Chair, and Board more generally. I thank them for their wise guidance and warm encouragement.

The role of ACTCOSS CEO carries many privileges, but none is greater than being able to work with such a tremendous set of staff colleagues. Their skill, knowledge and passion are an inspiration every day.

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. We are now working with members, stakeholders and staff to develop the 2026-2028 strategic plan.

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 realisation of human rights
- diversity and inclusion
- self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- inclusion of people experiencing disadvantage; and
- 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; and
- 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 2024-25, 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; and
3. a well-governed, representative and effective ACTCOSS.

To read more on ACTCOSS' Strategic Plan 2023-2025, [click here](https://actcoss.org.au/publication/actcoss-strategic-plan-2023-2025/) 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 2024-25, ACTCOSS' advocacy included the release of five publications and reports and 14 submissions to Government. The value of these submissions is reflected in ACTCOSS being invited to give evidence at two subsequent hearings in the Legislative Assembly and ACTCOSS recommendations cited in the reports of the Committees of Inquiry.

In 2024-25, ACTCOSS represented the community sector, advocating for additional support for sector sustainability and to help government to better understand the critical role of volunteers in delivering services and emergency responses in the ACT.

In addition to this, ACTCOSS utilised its strong access to the ACT Government, and participated in 33 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 2025 ACT Budget

ACT Budget roundtable consultations

In late February 2025, ACTCOSS facilitated three ACT Budget roundtable consultations for the community sector with the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. 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, 40 members represented their organisations and advocated for their budget priorities. The roundtables were so valuable for members that the sessions were oversubscribed, with a waiting list.

ACTCOSS' submission of budget priorities

ACTCOSS's budget priorities focused on the continued cost of living issues facing many Canberra households, and the increased demands on community services as a result.

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; and
- 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. 177 people attended the event, including ministers, community sector employees, and volunteers.

Anti-Poverty Week 2024

This year's Anti-Poverty Week (APW) coincided with the ACT Election. ACTCOSS used this as an opportunity to highlight the nature and extent of poverty in the ACT, and the collective action needed to end it. In 2024, ACTCOSS partnered with the St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn to co-chair APW in the ACT.

On 14 October 2024, ACTCOSS co-hosted a community forum featuring a keynote address by Associate Professor Ben Phillips from the Australian National University and a panel discussion with political candidates, Emma Davidson (ACT Greens), Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry (ALP), Thomas Emerson MLA (Independents for Canberra) and Mark Parton MLA (Canberra Liberals). Over fifty people from the community and community sector organisations were present to ask questions of the candidates and voice their priorities for tackling poverty. WIN News produced coverage of the forum and [Region Canberra published a relevant Op-Ed](#) from ACTCOSS CEO, Dr Devin Bowles.

Advocating for justice reform

ACTCOSS continued to convene regular meetings of the influential Justice Reform Group (JRG), which provides a vital mechanism for sharing information and enabling community sector organisations and justice advocates to raise issues with ACT government officials from corrections, justice health and ACT policing, as well as with the ACT Human Rights Commission and ACT Inspector of Correctional Services. ACTCOSS made a submission to the Healthy Prisons Review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre following extensive consultation with members of the JRG. ACTCOSS also meets bi-monthly with senior representatives of the Justice and Community Safety directorate to share information and participated in three Commissioning workshops hosted by the First Nations Justice Branch.

Advocating for a climate resilient Canberra

In 2024-2025 ACTCOSS advocated for a more climate resilient Canberra by engaging in joint advocacy campaigns such as the Healthy Homes for Renters initiative. ACTCOSS contributed to key review processes such as the ACT Government's independent review of its climate change strategy and the ACT Strategic Bushfire management Plan 2025-2030. ACTCOSS also supported academic research and collaboration on climate and health action for vulnerable populations by participating in the ACT Healthy Environments and Lives Network Steering Committee, and organising and presenting at a research ideas

generation workshop for academics and public policy officials focused on climate resilience and health.

Advocating for equitable access to energy

The transition towards an energy system reliant on renewable energy presents an opportunity to meaningfully incorporate the needs of all Canberrans into a rapidly changing regulatory framework. In 2024-2025 ACTCOSS leveraged this opportunity by:

a) Representing vulnerable energy consumers at the national level

As the ACT's representative on the Australian Energy Regulator's (AER) Consumer Consultative Group, ACTCOSS regularly consulted with community organisations and individuals supporting people experiencing energy hardship. This engagement enabled ACTCOSS to present well-informed advice to the AER on emerging energy issues and support needed for households struggling to pay energy bills,

Wins secured through this work include a commitment by the AER to review its guidelines for dealing with customers experiencing energy hardship, the inclusion of stronger protections in the AER's interim Family Violence Guidelines and a rise in the financial threshold for energy disconnections from \$300 to \$500.

(b) Raising awareness of energy hardship and energy issues affecting Canberrans

To build broader understanding of energy stress in the ACT, ACTCOSS published a factsheet on energy hardship, which received extensive media coverage. ACTCOSS also convened a bimonthly Energy Policy Consortium which enabled two-way exchange of information and consultation between ACT Government officials and community organisations.

(c) Advocating for equity in future gas pricing and network management

ACTCOSS worked to ensure a fair transition away from gas by contributing to the development of the ACT's gas network pricing proposal. The proposal will directly impact household bills during 2026–31 and have equity implications beyond this period.

ACTCOSS advocacy contributed to equity and energy justice being identified as values central to the ACT community in Evoenergy's final proposal to the Australian Energy Regulator.

**See more research,
advocacy and publications
at:
actcoss.org.au/publications/**



Debt

People with high energy debts may see their credit scores affected reducing their ability to take out home loans.

Extract from the [Energy Hardship Factsheet](#).

The 17th Anniversary of the National Apology

In February, ACTCOSS and the Gulanga Program partnered with Sisters In Spirit and The Connected Purpose, to host the 17th Anniversary of the National Apology to Stolen Generations and Australia's Indigenous Peoples.

We reflected on the injustices and trauma experienced by stolen generations, past and present, through discriminatory laws, policies and practices and were fortunate to hear stories from Johnny Huckle. This event was attended by nearly 100 people and was an important step in our reconciliation journey, as we deepen our understanding, amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, and contribute to the fostering of meaningful change.

We acknowledge the importance of truth telling so that healing can begin, and the cycles of intergenerational failures and trauma can be broken for our future generations. All those in attendance also enjoyed performances by Johnny Huckle and Jayde Mitchell.



Jayde Mitchell performing



Tracey Harris from Sisters in Spirit and Corrine Dobson from ACTCOSS listening to the Prime Minister's Apology



Johnny Huckle performing

Reconciliation Week Event: Bridging Now to Next: Cultivating Cultural Safety and Reconciliation in Community Sector Workplaces

Our Reconciliation Week event was held at the Tuggeranong Community Arts Centre on 27 May 2025 with approximately 70 people attending. Aunty Violet Sheridan offered a powerful Welcome to Country and the panellists shared their knowledge, powerful insights and powerful stories about cultural safety and reconciliation with the audience.

The panel consisted of Chris Lee (Head of Gulanga), Tracey Harris (Executive Director of Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation), Rachelle Toward (CEO of Pipeline Talent and Dreamjobz) and Colin Williams (Managing Director, Corroboree Services). The discussion was facilitated by ACTCOSS.



Aunty Violet welcoming guests to country at the 2025 Reconciliation event, Bridging Now to Next: Cultivating Cultural Safety and Reconciliation in Community Sector



Panel Discussion (L to R: Michelle Barclay (ACTCOSS); Colin Williams (Managing Director Corroboree Services); Rachelle Toward (OAM, CEO of Pipeline Talent and Dreamjobz); Chris Lee (Head of Gulanga) and Tracey Harris (Co-Founder and Executive Director of Sisters in Spirit).)

ACT Community Sector NAIDOC Event

The community sector NAIDOC Event was held on 3 October 2024 at the Canberra College and was hugely successful. The event moved to October to take advantage of Canberra's milder spring weather. While NAIDOC Week is officially celebrated in July, we believe that recognition and celebration of First Nations peoples should happen all year-round. Hosting the event at this time allows us to continue the spirit of NAIDOC beyond the designated week, reinforcing our commitment to ongoing cultural respect and inclusion.



Performers at the 2024 ACT Community Sector NAIDOC Event

Strategic Objective Two: A sustainable and empowered ACT community sector

ACT for Community campaign

ACTCOSS led the ACT for Community campaign, which launched in July 2024 in collaboration with the ACT Community Peaks Network. This campaign was proudly supported by 85 ACT community organisations, who actively amplified campaign messaging through their social media, mailing lists and newsletters – demonstrating a strong and united sector voice.

The key advocacy priorities – such as a population level adjustment to funding and other increased funding for the community sector – received cross party endorsement from multiple ACT candidates. These efforts were further strengthened by extensive media coverage, with 42 media mentions, including two dedicated article series negotiated by ACTCOSS with *Region Canberra*: one in the lead up to the lead up to the 2024 ACT election and another ahead of the 2025/26 ACT Budget, resulting in a total of 14 published articles from member and peak organisations. Three of these articles written by ACTCOSS.

These coordinated advocacy and communication efforts contributed directly to Labor having a dedicated community sector section in its 2024 election platform and a landmark outcome: a \$10 million investment in the community sector announced in the 2025/26 ACT Budget. This achievement highlights the power of collaboration and the effectiveness of our shared advocacy.



ACT community organisations supporting ACT for Community

Peaks Collaboration and Meetings

In 2024-25, ACTCOSS continued to work in partnership with our ACT Peak Body colleagues as part of the ACT Community Peaks Network. The group collaborated on areas of intersectionality, pooled our resources when appropriate, incorporated the needs of the various subsectors into broader ACT advocacy when appropriate. This collective work has been delivered in several ways including monthly peaks meetings, bi-monthly meetings with ACT Government, meetings with MLAs, the establishment of the Peaks Policy Group, a [Peaks 2024 ACT Election Joint Statement](#), and the ACT for Community campaign. ACTCOSS coordinated and attended 17 Peaks meetings, four Peaks meetings with MLAs and four Peaks Policy Group meetings.

“A coordinated approach to many issues is helpful. We saw the collaboration of peaks and organisations in the leadup to the election and that was very welcomed.”

ACTCOSS Member

“Great catch-up today with peak bodies representing the community sector.”

MLA

Members Forums and Peer Networks

ACTCOSS provides information and networking events for our members. In 2024-25 we held 36 members forums and peer network meetings. These provide opportunities for our members to engage in our work and discuss relevant matters with both ACTCOSS staff and each other. They also ensure we gather insights about people experiencing disadvantage and poverty through the organisations that deliver to them.

Topics of discussion included commissioning, insurance costs, community sector indexation, the 2024 ACT Election, sector sustainability, the ACT Government's Community Sector Reform Agenda, Worksafe's recommendations related to the two-worker model, peppercorn leases and community facilities, the refresh of the Social Compact, and the ACT Budget.



ACTCOSS Members Forum, April 2025

We also facilitated several peer networks which met regularly throughout the year and provided an information sharing and capacity building resource for members.

Peer Network	Members
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Sector Network	121
Reconciliation Peer Network	75
Human Resources Peer Network	61
Communications Peer Network	49
Justice Reform Group and Justice Network	87

“As well as being an important source of information and learning, these engagements provided important networking activities as well as important forums to provide input to ACTCOSS’s advocacy and thinking.”

ACTCOSS Member

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Sector Peer Network

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Sector (ATSIComSec) Network is a key 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.

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. In 2024-25 we held the ABCD Approach training workshop with 25 people attending and an informal Meet and Greet at Northside Community Services, focusing on service updates and networking with 20 community development workers.

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

Learning and Development

In 2024-25, ACTCOSS organised a wide range of training for our members, the public and government employees. This included, AI for community organisations, AI policy workshop, Child Safety Standards Scheme, communicating impact with better data, creating a successful campaign workshop, cultural awareness training, grant writing workshop, insurances and legislative updates for community organisations, LGBTIQ+ training, media skills training, multicultural training, reading ACT budget papers, the ACT Wellbeing Framework, the Sector Sustainability Knowledge Hub, and Working with Vulnerable People requirements for community organisations.

Our training was popular, with a total of 917 registrations across 26 workshops and information sessions.

In addition, ACTCOSS provides free access to resources and information in respect to organisational capacity building and advocacy matters via our website at [Publications - ACTCOSS](#), [Capacity Building Resources - ACTCOSS](#), the [Sector Sustainability Hub](#) and [Gulanga resources](#). Many of our online information sessions are also available for free on our [YouTube channel](#).

Information Session: Communicating impact with better data:

“Short session that really helped to focus on the purpose of collecting the data and why we need it.”

“Greatly appreciate ACTCOSS providing this opportunity to learn about and discuss how to better use data to demonstrate impact. This is a critical issue for our organisation and the sector to prove our worth to government and other funders, and to the community more broadly. Thank you!”

Information Session Hidden Vulnerabilities: Cybersecurity and Essential Community Services

“Clear explanation of cyber risks and the checklist is very helpful.”

Cultural Awareness Training

In 2024-25, the Gulanga program delivered three cultural awareness workshops for the community sector and government, led by Ngunnawal Traditional Custodian Bradley Mapiva Brown. These sessions deepened participants' understanding of Ngunnawal traditions, cultural values, and protocols, enriching their appreciation of the ACT's unique cultural heritage and landscape. This training plays a vital role in fostering respectful engagement, strengthening relationships with First Nations communities, and promoting culturally informed practices across the region.

The ACT Community Sector Careers Gateway

The ACT Community Sector Careers Gateway continues to be a vital bridge between passionate job seekers and meaningful careers in the community sector. ACTCOSS staff and dedicated Careers Ambassadors actively championed the sector at the 2024 Careers Expo and across nine school career days, sparking interest and raising awareness about the rewarding pathways available in community-focused work.

"It was great to visit the Erindale College Careers Expo today as part of the ACT Community Sector Careers Gateway team.... I enjoyed discussing with year 11 & 12 students their hopes, dreams and career aspirations. ... And letting them know about all of the wonderful options for working in the ACT Community Sector."

Career Ambassador



ACT
**COMMUNITY SECTOR
CAREERS GATEWAY**

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

Member Engagement

In September of 2025, ACTCOSS undertook an annual survey of its members.

- 95% of members surveyed believe the community sector in the ACT is stronger as a result of ACTCOSS activity.
- 95% of members surveyed believe ACTCOSS's advocacy, policy and sector development reflect their priorities.
- 98% of members surveyed believe ACTCOSS activity reflects a sound understanding of the issues that affect the community sector and people experiencing poverty.
- 98% of members surveyed feel supported, informed and engaged as a result of ACTCOSS activities (*an improvement from 82% of members feeling supported, informed and engaged in 2023-24*).
- 95% of members surveyed believe that their ACTCOSS membership represents value for money.

"Thanks for all the work you do to make the ACT a more equitable community."

"Thank you for continuing to represent the interests of marginalised people in the ACT."

Survey Respondents

The member survey covering the 2024-25 period confirmed that ACTCOSS is highly regarded by our members across our advocacy, policy and sector development work. Members consider that ACTCOSS understands their priorities in the ACT community and that these priorities are reflected in our work.

The top concerns of ACTCOSS members in 2024-25 were housing and homelessness, mental health, poverty and cost of living, and sector sustainability. ACTCOSS's advocacy and policy work on the increasing complexity of need in the ACT, housing support for people experiencing poverty, energy costs, and sector development and sustainability reflect these priorities.

2024 ACT Election Candidates Forum

This financial year, ACTCOSS hosted an exclusive Candidates Forum for our members, designed to foster direct and meaningful engagement with political candidates. To make the event interactive and inclusive, we adopted a 'speed dating' format – candidates rotated between tables, giving every member the opportunity to speak with each candidate in small group discussions. This innovative approach encouraged open dialogue and ensured diverse member voices were heard in the lead-up to the ACT election.



Candidates participating in the 2024 ACT Election Candidates Forum, with Dr Devin Bowles

“Thank you ACTCOSS for hosting this year’s ‘Meet the Candidate’ event for the ACT election, it was an opportunity to talk with candidates from all parties about the needs of community and the community sector”

ACTCOSS member

“Such a privilege to be able to connect with so many people playing vital roles in supporting our most vulnerable – thank you!”

Candidate

Diversified and expanding income sources

In the 2024-25 financial year, ACTCOSS secured:

- two years of funding from Energised Consumers Australia to support projects that enhance our ongoing advocacy work in the energy space, spearheading the national energy transition; and
- funding from the ACT Government Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to support nine community sector organisations to develop Climate Adaptation Plans using the Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit we previously developed. This work will also see ACTCOSS develop a Sector-Wide Adaptation Plan.

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 in 2024-25 was to coordinate and facilitate activity for all employers, while also trying to negotiate an agreement for our staff. At the time of writing this report, the MEA is part of a Supported Bargaining process with the FairWork Commission, initiated by the ASU. We hope it will be completed in early 2026.

2024 Annual General Meeting

In November 2024, ACTCOSS held its Annual General Meeting. At this meeting, the members voted on nominations to the Board, which saw Blessy Pascual-Guitierrez (*Woden Community Services Ltd*) re-elected as the Treasurer for a further 3-year term. Two other board members were re-elected: Fiona Looney (*Relationships Australia Canberra Region*) and Melissa Bell (*Barnardos Australia*). The meeting thanked outgoing Board member Andrew Scotford, who after six years of service was unable to serve another full term.

Details of the full ACTCOSS Board can be found on page 25 and our website, <https://actcoss.org.au/>.



Participants at the 2024 AGM



Returning Officer, Farzana Choudhury



Treasurer, Blessy Pascual-Guitierrez

Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025		
	2025 \$	2024 \$
Government and other grant funding	1,523,557	1,440,093
Other revenue from operations	126,387	111,820
Other income	34,994	67,028
Total revenue and other income	1,684,938	1,618,941
Employee expenses	(1,386,716)	(1,232,462)
Depreciation and amortisation	(57,521)	(60,885)
External labour & consulting	(84,739)	(153,571)
Other expenses	(114,377)	(177,616)
Finance expenses	(1,923)	(3,459)
Surplus/(loss) from operations	39,662	(9,052)
Other comprehensive income		
Total comprehensive income for the year	39,662	(9,052)

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025			
	Retained earnings \$	General reserve \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2024	178,478	681,626	860,104
Surplus/(loss) for the year	39,662	-	39,662
Transfer to reserves	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2025	218,140	681,626	899,766

Find the full financial statements for 2024-25 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

	Meetings attended	Apologies
Jeremy Halcrow, The Benevolent Society Chair	6/6	–
Lisa Kelly, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT Vice Chair	6/6	-
Blessy Pascual-Gutierrez, Woden Community Services Treasurer	4/6	2
Andrew Scotford, CIT Student Association Ordinary Director	2/2	–
Melissa Bell, Barnardos Australia Ordinary Director	5/6	1
Fiona Looney, Relationships Australia Canberra & Region Ordinary Director	5/6	1
Amanda Tobler, Associate Member Ordinary Director	5/6	1
Tracey Hall, Sexual Health Planning ACT Ordinary Director	5/6	1
Sue Webeck, Domestic Violence Crisis Service Ordinary Director	5/6	1
Zakia Patel, Multicultural Hub Canberra Ordinary Director	2/4	2
Lucy Hohnen, St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn Ordinary Director	5/6	1
Lauren Anthes, Women's Health Matters Ordinary Director	6/6	-
Maurice Walker, ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body nominated board member Ordinary Director	2/3	1

Organisation Members

A Gender Agenda

ACT Disability, Aged & Carer Advocacy Service Inc.

ACT Down Syndrome

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Inc

ACT Playgroups Association Inc.

ACT Shelter

ADACAS

Advocacy for Inclusion

Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT Inc

Amnesty International ACT/SNSW

Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT

ANTaR ACT

ANU Students' Association

Argyle Community Housing

Asthma Australia

Australian Association of Social Workers ACT Branch

Australian Multicultural Action Network

Australian Red Cross - ACT/SE NSW

Barnardos Australia

Beryl Women Inc.

Canberra and Queanbeyan ADD Support Group Inc.

Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation & 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

Capital Health Network

Capital Region Community Services

Care Inc

Carers ACT Inc.

CHC Affordable Housing

Children Australia

Communities@Work

Community Options

Community Services #1

Companion House

Conflict Resolution Service Inc.

Conservation Council ACT Region

Council on the Ageing ACT

Directions Health Services

Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Doris Women's Refuge Inc.

Duntroon Community Centre

Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Environmental Collective Housing Organisation Inc.

Everyman Australia Inc

Families ACT Inc.

Fearless Women Incorporated

GetAboutAble

Grand Pacific Health

Havelock Housing Association Inc

Health Care Consumers' Association

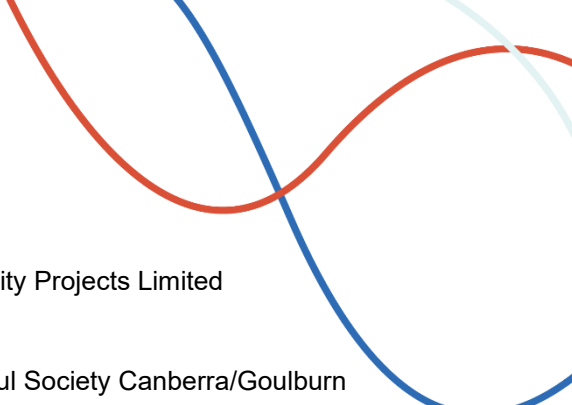
Hepatitis ACT Inc

Jigsaw Australia

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
Rednose
Relationships Australia Canberra & Region
Religious Society of Friends Canberra Inc.
Roundabout Canberra
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
Tender Funerals
The Benevolent Society
The Smith Family
Toora Women Inc.
Tuggeranong Link Community Houses and Centres Inc
UCA Canberra Region Presbytery
Uniting Children and Families ACT
UnitingCare Kippax
VolunteeringACT
Warehouse Circus Inc.
Wellways Australia
Woden Community Service Inc.
Women With Disabilities ACT
Women's Health Matters Inc.
Women's Legal Centre ACT.
Women With Disability ACT
Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation
Youth Coalition of the ACT
YWCA Canberra
ZamZam Foundation

Associate Members

Admanlaby, Z
Bourke, E
Buchanan, G
Carty, J
Cox, K
Craig, J
Dolan, A
Fitt, H
Haque, M
Helyar, S

Jap, M
Kitchin, J
Lucas, D
Messant, P
Moore, C
Street, E
Tobler, A
Vicencio, K
Wensing, E

Thank you!

actcoss@actcoss.org.au

actcoss.org.au

02 6202 7200

ABN 81 818 839 988

