



Pledge for Reconciliation and Justice

The ACT Council of Social Service Inc (ACTCOSS) is the peak representative body for not-for-profit organisations, and disadvantaged and low-income citizens of the ACT. The Council's principal objectives are the representation of disadvantaged people, the promotion of equitable social policy and the development of a well-resourced, cohesive and effective community sector.

ACTCOSS recognises that Indigenous Australia ranks with some of the world's poorest countries on almost every social indicator of well-being, and that this state of affairs is unacceptable.

ACTCOSS believes the deep disadvantage and high levels of poverty experienced by Indigenous Australians can only be properly tackled through a process which fully involves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ACTCOSS also believes that true reconciliation cannot be achieved unless it addresses what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders themselves see as 'unfinished business', including rights protection, recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as First Peoples and a treaty.

Given its role and status, and the current indefensible state of Aboriginal disadvantage, ACTCOSS pledges to work and advocate for the elimination of disadvantage, poverty and discrimination faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the ACT. In particular, we will:

- advocate for the elimination of economic, income, health and social inequalities which exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the ACT;
- strive to ensure that the rights and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are considered, respected and addressed in all our activities;
- support and advocate for the development of appropriate community services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people provided by both Indigenous run services and non-Indigenous services;
- consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to review and improve mechanisms for Government and community consultations and negotiations on issues affecting Indigenous people;
- promote recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander country, culture and history within the ACT community;
- provide appropriate support to networking and collaboration initiatives among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals in the ACT; and
- support the principles of self-determination, justice and cultural integrity.

ACTCOSS pledges to work towards these goals in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the ACT - and we commit to a process of reconciliation and mutual learning in our relationship with Indigenous Australians.

May 2002, renewed March 2005 and August 2009