

MEDIA RELEASE

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DECENT WAGES ONE STEP CLOSER

The ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) has welcomed the announcement of the agreement between the Australian Services Union and the Australian Government supporting a pay equity case for community sector workers – the first to be considered under the new Federal Industrial Relations system.

“The community and health sector employs 8% of the ACT’s working population, with staff working in a range of fields including community, youth, child care, caring, aged care, disability, drug and alcohol, mental health, case management, counselling, policy and advocacy, as well as administration and development. It is the community sector that works with Canberra’s most vulnerable, yet the community sector has struggled with inadequate pay and conditions,” commented Roslyn Dundas, Director of the ACT Council of Social Service.

“Surveys such as the ACOSS nation-wide *Community Sector Survey* have consistently placed annual staff turnover in the ACT community sector at 20-30 per cent, the highest in community organisations of any jurisdiction and significantly more than the national all-industry average of 18%.”

“ACT Community organisations compete with both the federal and local public service, as well as having to tackle the ACT wide skills shortage. Besides simple wages disparity, leave entitlements, access to resources and training and job security in the community sector are less than those available in the public sector.”

“This important announcement takes us one step further down the path towards decent wages for the community sector. A similar case already considered in Queensland lifted pay rates for community sector workers in that state by 18%-37%.”

**For copies of the report or more information
please contact Roslyn Dundas, Director
Ph: 6202 7200**

ACT Council of Social Service Inc.
Level 1, 67 Townshend St, Phillip
PO Box 849 Mawson, ACT 2607
Ph: (02) 6202 7200 Fax: (02) 6247 7175
actcoss@actcoss.org.au www.actcoss.org.au