

An Industry Plan for the ACT Community Sector: Supporting Sector Engagement

Background

A Community Services Industry Plan is being developed for the ACT. Industry plans provide an agreed path for the development of an industry. They provide a shared understanding of the vision, challenges, relationships and actions that shape an industry's present and future. A Community Services Industry Plan Steering Group made up of community sector, consumer, government, and union representatives will oversee the plan's development. The plan will be developed by a consultant (KPMG) engaged by the Community Services Directorate, working closely with the steering group. KPMG commenced work on the plan in December 2015. The development of the plan will be rapid, with the plan to be finalised in early 2016. ACTCOSS has been a key proponent of an industry plan to support the future development of the community sector through a period of significant structural adjustment. An ACTCOSS Policy and Research Officer will provide additional support for sector engagement in the development of the plan. ACTCOSS will play a key role in ensuring that the community sector is effectively engaged in the plan's development.



The Need for an Industry Plan

The community sector is going through a period of substantial structural adjustment but it lacks strategic and coordinated planning across the different parts of the sector. The ACT Government and ACTCOSS identified the need for a high-level strategic plan for the community sector in the ACT and region as a priority for sector development. An industry plan is needed to ensure that the community sector is well-positioned to provide sustainable, effective, strengths-based services. It is also needed to support civil society and citizen engagement that can guide the sector and hold it to account into the future.

The Role of KPMG

KPMG's initial tasks will be to develop a scoping document and consultation plan for the development of the Community Services Industry Plan.

The consultant has been asked to develop a three-year plan that will provide:

- an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the sector;
- an analysis of the industry context and an assessment of the economic contribution of the sector in the ACT;
- a vision and objectives for community services in the ACT (building on and aligned with the Human Services Blueprint);
- a discussion of diversification of revenue options for the sector;
- a discussion of contemporary procurement methodologies;
- a baseline against which change and progress can be measured;
- partnerships needed to achieve the plan's objectives;
- priorities for investment for sector infrastructure and capacity;
- recommendations for action; and
- processes to monitor progress.

The Steering Group

The Community Services Industry Plan Steering Group was formed in October 2015 and will oversee the development of the plan, working closely with the consultant. The members of the group are:

- Tim Bavinton, Executive Director, Sexual Health and Family Planning

- Maureen Cane, CEO, Volunteering and Contact ACT
- Darlene Cox, Executive Director, Health Care Consumers Association
- Louise Gilding, Executive Director, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (Replaced Sam Engele in January 2016)
- Camilla Rowland, CEO, Marymead (ACTCOSS nominee)
- Maureen Sheehan, Executive Director, Community Services Directorate (Chair)
- Helen Westwood, Australian Services Union
- Marcia Williams, Executive Director, Women's Centre for Health Matters.

ACTCOSS Support for Sector Engagement

Given the rapid development of the plan, it will be critical to ensure that the sector is kept informed of developments, advised of opportunities to contribute information and feedback, and enabled to respond effectively. ACTCOSS will work closely with the consultant to maximise sector engagement.

ACTCOSS has a dedicated Policy and Research Officer whose primary role is to support sector engagement in the development of the industry plan. As the plan is developed, ACTCOSS will actively engage with the community sector to build evidence and share knowledge needed to understand and address key factors impacting on the sector. ACTCOSS will focus on mapping the policy context in the ACT and nationally. This work will build a better understanding of similarities and differences in the drivers of change.

ACTCOSS sees the industry plan as an opportunity to gain recognition of the sector's strengths, its contribution to the ACT economy, and its ability to deliver an excellent economic and social return on investment. Our work will complement the work of the consultant, highlighting the unique attributes and contributions of the community sector in the ACT and the challenges it faces.

If you would like further information about the Community Services Industry Plan and how to have a say in its development please contact:

Geoff Buchanan, ACTCOSS Policy and Research Officer

Ph: (02) 6202 7222

E: geoff.buchanan@actcoss.org.au