



Briefing on Implementation of the ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026

Background

The ACT Community Services Industry Strategy (available to download here: <http://www.actcoss.org.au/sites/default/files/public/documents/2016-ACT-Community-Services-Industry-Strategy-pdf-version-1.pdf>) was developed because it was recognised that although community services are well-established, they are undergoing a period of significant change, with new models of service delivery, new ways of doing business, and a stronger focus on achieving social and economic outcomes.

The Industry Strategy was developed to help community services and funders to navigate this period of change and jointly contribute to growing a strong and sustainable industry into the future. The ACT Government recognised that development of a strong industry will have significant benefits not only for the community but also for government.

ACTCOSS believed it was critical to explore why and how government and services are working differently to address the causes of inequality and exclusion, responding effectively to the needs of our community now and into the future, and better aligning organisation goals and structures to the expectations of people who access services, workers, volunteers, governing bodies and funders.

The Industry Strategy says an inclusive, equitable and sustainable Community Services Industry will:

- Deliver quality services to create more connected communities which will support vulnerable individuals and families to be empowered and to fully participate in their communities and to take charge of their own future
- Undertake community development to create social value, build social capital and improve living conditions
- Put the needs of our clients and communities at the centre of everything we do
- Be a trusted voice on the needs of our communities with a strong evidence base that will shape policies and engage in social planning for the Territory and its regions

The Industry Strategy was developed over the past two years:

December 2015	CSD convenes a forum for JCGRG members and the Community Sector Reform Advisory Group to consider the need for a Community Services Industry Strategy.
January – May 2016	Community organisations engaged by KPMG via focus groups and interviews to provide insights and concerns regarding development of sustainable community services in the ACT and region.
January – May 2016	Research and briefings shared by ACTCOSS with community organisations and government officials to inform consideration of previous investment and future need for investment in development of effective community services.
May 2016	Workshop was held by KPMG to guide the development of the Industry Strategy. In this workshop a number of activities and ideas were captured.
July 2016	Industry Strategy released. Can be accessed here .
September 2016	Commence Implementation of the Strategy.
November 2016	JCGRG agreed to develop three three year plans to guide the implementation of the strategy. Workforce capability development was highlighted as high priority.
December 2016	ACT State of the Community Sector Report published. Can be accessed here .
Nov-Mar 2017	ACTCOSS and Community Services Directorate (CSD) reviewed the current investment in workforce development by ACT Government at the request of JCGRG and reviewed alignment of current activities against the priorities identified in the Industry Strategy. An Industry Strategy Steering Group was established to oversight and guide implementation.
June 2017	Stakeholder workshop convened to identify priorities for a Workforce Plan. Attended by 70 community organisations, CSD, Skills Canberra and ACT Health.
July 2017	ACTCOSS worked with CSD and the Industry Strategy Steering Group to develop a draft Workforce Plan.
August 2017	The JCGRG endorsed a Workforce Plan to be implemented in 2017-2020. The JCGRG also agreed other Industry Strategy implementation plans would be developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Research, Planning and Evaluation Plan to be developed in early 2018 and implemented 2018-2021 • Sustainable and adaptive models through which the community services sector could grow to meet community needs would be explored during 2018-2019, so that an agreed plan could be implemented in 2019-2022
September 2017	ACTCOSS worked with CSD and the Industry Strategy Steering Committee to categorise and scope activities listed in the Workforce Plan.

First stage of implementation – Workforce Planning and Investment

The Workforce Plan reflects the priorities and actions identified in the Industry Strategy and outlined in more detail at the stakeholder workshop in June 2017. It will support the community and government to:

- Grow the workforce to meet current and future needs
- Improve retention of the current workforce
- Strengthen capability and career development
- Cultivate leadership and succession planning

A full list of actions is provided at Attachment A.

The actions in the Workforce Plan are divided into three categories:

- Foundation actions (to be funded using the remaining funds from the 0.34% levy)
- Actions that can be progressed through short-term specific projects (to be funded using the remaining funds from the 0.34% levy and additional funds if needed, which would have to be secured either from existing sources or via new budget allocation)
- Capacity Building actions (to be progressed via existing roles and responsibilities and additional funds if needed, which would have to be secured via a new budget allocation)

The Actions shaded in **green** could be progressed in 2017-18

Foundation data and frameworks

The foundation actions provide a baseline against which to evaluate the plan, confirm the evidence base for subsequent actions, and inform decision-making around the sequencing of future actions. These actions should be funded from the levy. Foundation Actions are

- 1.1. Identify current and future workforce requirements
- 1.2. Articulate, promote and facilitate entry points to working in the sector, including to specialist roles
- 3.1. Develop a tool to map the pathways across a career and across the sector

Short-term specific projects

Short-term specific projects are discreet actions that have been suggested by the sector. While some are dependent on the foundation work outlined above, a number of these actions could commence this financial year.

Implementation of these projects will be prioritised following a survey of stakeholders in October seeking their views on priorities. These short term projects should be funded from the levy and additional funds if needed, which would have to be secured either from existing sources or via a new budget allocation.

The short-term specific projects that could commence this financial year are:

- 1.2.3. Develop and implement a communication strategy to promote the work and opportunities available in the ACT community services industry
- 1.2.4. Improve industry knowledge of the variety of ways volunteers can support the mission of community organisations
- 1.4.1. Develop student placement resources for employers
- 2.2. Develop agreed framework and tools to support on-boarding, peer support, supervision, coaching and mentoring
- 3.4. Develop organisations' capacity to backfill workers while on training or leave (i.e. scope the establishment of a relief pool of workers for community services)
- 4.3. Fund access to leadership development opportunities
- 4.4. Align leadership practice with Industry Strategy vision and values

Specific actions that are **dependent on data and frameworks developed through the foundation actions** but could be **scoped and funded in 2018-19** are:

- 1.4. Improve placement opportunities and support (for students and/or professional growth)
- 2.1. Develop industry-wide good practice guide for retention, with a particular focus on different strategies for different cohorts within the workforce
- 4.1. Develop and implement strategies to support knowledge transfer

Capacity building actions

Capacity building actions are those which are dependent on the foundation actions and/or require a wider scope and longer timeframe. These actions could be progressed via existing roles and responsibilities (eg peak body activities, review of workforce development programs within specific funding programs) and additional funds if needed, which would have to be secured either from existing sources or via a new budget allocation. The capacity building actions are:

- 1.3. Engage and develop connection of employers with VET and higher education providers
- 3.2. Review existing workforce development programs in order to plan to reduce gaps and increase access
- 3.3. Build capacity in mainstream organisations to work with people and communities who experience marginalisation or have complex needs
- 4.2. Develop an approach to identify key and emerging leaders in the industry