

Communique: Industry Strategy Steering Group Meeting – 20 October 2021

This communique is sent on behalf of the Industry Strategy Steering Group (ISSG) to keep you – the community sector – informed about key issues discussed and current work in progress.

Note: there was **no communique for the 12 August meeting** which was briefly convened before the ACT went into COVID-19 lockdown.

[ACT Budget 2021-22](#)

The ISSG welcomed the key outcomes of the ACT Budget 2021-22 for the community sector including the increase to indexation, funding for JobTrainer and increases in the housing budget. The [ACTCOSS budget bulletin](#) provides analysis from the community sector informed by ACTCOSS members.

The meeting also discussed the lack of investment in the budget for ageing community facilities from which many community organisations deliver services. Community organisations pay significant rents and the quality of the buildings has not been maintained over recent years. ACTCOSS will raise the possibility of re-establishing the community facilities working group under the Joint Community Government Reference Group (JCGRG).

[JobTrainer](#)

Also announced in the Budget and discussed at the meeting was the \$16.75 million extension of the JobTrainer program to be funded by ACT and Commonwealth Government. It will include a mix of full qualifications and short courses. While the focus will be on people aged 17 – 25 years old. Community sector workers currently employed will also be eligible to apply for courses under the JobTrainer program.

[ACT Pathway Forward](#)

The meeting noted the ACT Government had released its Pathway Forward with ACTCOSS collating community sector questions for answer by the Government. ACTCOSS also indicated that they were convening a roundtable with community sector and government representatives to discuss issues and concerns regarding vaccinations, while noting that the ACT has a very high rate of vaccinations. Additional information is available on the [ACT Government COVID-19 website](#).

[Community Sector Service Costing Project](#)

The meeting discussed the early findings of the Service Costing Project with a presentation from lead researcher, Acting Professor Natasha Cortis (Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales). The research has found that there has been a long history of under-funding for the community sector and regular recommendations for all direct and indirect costs to be covered. Key findings from the research show that the risks and impacts of underfunding are felt by service users and communities, community service workers and organisations, and government agencies. Underfunding is widespread and the pressures have grown in recent years. The draft report will be delivered to the ISSG at the end of November.

About the ISSG

The ISSG monitors the implementation of the ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026 (the Industry Strategy). The Industry Strategy sets a 10-year vision for the ACT community services industry and identifies priority areas for response and outcomes to be achieved. The ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) chairs the ISSG.

The Steering Group is a working group of the Joint Community Government Reference Group (JCGRG). The JCGRG is a consultative forum focused on progressing social and sustainability issues impacting the Canberra community between ACT Government and the ACT community sector. The JCGRG is co-chaired by the Deputy Director-General Community Services Directorate (CSD), ACT Government and the CEO of ACTCOSS.

Current ISSG Membership

- ACT Council of Social Service – Emma Campbell
- Catholic Care Canberra & Goulburn – Anne Kirwan
- Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, ACT Government – David James, Josephine Andersen
- Community Services Directorate, ACT Government – Jacinta Evans, Fiona May, Jancye Winter
- Canberra Institute of Technology – James Dunstan, Sally Holdsworth
- Family Policy Section, Department of Social Services, Australian Government – Josh Ballinger
- Mental Health Community Coalition ACT – Bec Cody, Leith Felton-Taylor
- National Disability Services ACT – Kerrie Langford
- Regional Coordinator for ACT, Southern NSW, Wagga-Wagga, Boosting the Local Care Workforce
- Program, Department of Social Services, Australian Government – Renee Wallace
- UnitingCare Kippax – Michael Nurmi
- Unions ACT – Patrick Bates
- Volunteering ACT – Jean Giese
- Youth Coalition of the ACT – Justin Barker

For more information

Please contact the ISSG Secretariat on 02 6202 7200 or by email: JCGRG@actcoss.org.au