A vision for peaks

By Susan Helyar, Director, ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS)

Thank you to all the peak bodies who responded to our invitation to write articles for this ACTCOSS Update. These contributions provide a diverse and thought-provoking commentary on ACT peak body roles and the challenges they face.

There are some themes that are common across many of the articles:

- The need for peak bodies and the challenges and value add of working in partnerships across these organisations
- Grappling with the concurrent imperatives of sustaining resources for peak bodies as well as maintaining an independent voice for our constituents
- The ongoing importance of ensuring peak bodies enable access to information and sector development—including training, quality improvement and consumer engagement
- Developing the capacity of peak bodies to engage in system advocacy to bring about change for our community
- Attending to both serving the interests of members as well as leading social change in the interests of the disadvantaged or vulnerable people the community sector exists to serve

ACTCOSS values its role as facilitator of the ACT Peaks Forum. That forum meets every two months and includes peak bodies working across the full breadth of the community sector. It provides an opportunity to build an understanding of how operating environments and community needs are changing, how these changes are impacting on services, consumer groups and advocacy organisations.

It enables us to see where there is consensus and where there are opportunities to work together to be more effective advocates. At the March meeting of the forum we considered the importance and impact of increased consumer choice and control. We also agreed to build a collective understanding of what is precious and valued in...
How do we improve life for all Canberrans? How do we create an inclusive and vibrant community where everyone can live out their potential? And what have peak bodies got to do with it?

Let’s start by taking a look at The Social Compact. This document was developed by the ACT Government and community sector representatives, setting out guidelines on how the community sector and government can communicate and partner together in a mutual relationship for better outcomes for Canberrans. The Social Compact states that to achieve this, ‘the two sectors need to plan, learn and work together, building on existing strengths, encouraging innovation and making sound decisions informed by evidence’.

Peak bodies are pivotal in the two-way communication processes between government and the sector. As The Social Compact points out, ‘Peak bodies and representative groups play a vital and unique role in advocating issues.’ A peak body offers a strong voice for the community sector in areas of lobbying government, community education and information sharing.

In the ACT, as well as nationally, there is a diversity of peak body models. Such diversity is to be welcomed, as it allows peak bodies to represent a number of sectors in a range of ways. In the ACT we have over 15 community sector peak bodies, representing sub-sectors ranging from young people and families, to mental health consumers, to environmental groups, just to name a few.

A peek at peaks

By the ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS)

While ACT peaks work to assist and represent the collective interests of their own members, they also work in the interests of the broader community. One way this is occurs is through the ACT Peaks Forum. Representatives of ACT community sector peaks meet regularly at this forum to share developments in their areas and to work out how peaks can collaborate to produce better outcomes for their constituency and the broader community.

What are the roles of peak bodies?

The ACT Peaks Forum hold the following as key roles of peak bodies:

- **Policy Development and Advocacy:** the organisations have a substantial role in a systemic analysis of ACT government policy in their areas based on sound research and credible evidence, and seek to communicate those ideas to government, the sector and the broader community

- **Sector Development:** the organisations seek to empower community organisations to improve and develop their services and ensure that they provide appropriate services to their users

- **Membership:** the organisations are democratic and have strong links with members who they represent

Often direct service delivery organisations don’t have the time or resources to fulfil these kinds of roles, as their expertise and focus is on providing on-the-ground support to consumers. Peaks ensure one can live a life in which justice, equity, social inclusion and reconciliation are realised.

Our many shared goals and priorities for actions provide a firm foundation on which to build our strategic partnerships. Where we can speak together, it is critical we do so, because through our collective voice we can influence change more effectively.
organisations have a voice to government, and access to information and development opportunities which organisations might not have on their own. Peaks can also facilitate the contribution of data from direct service providers to government and give considered analysis into future policy development.

The significant advocacy role of peak bodies is informed by their policy work, which is informed by their links through to the sector and the strong evidence base they bring. This work also feeds into capacity building of the sector and broader community education. The Productivity Commission’s Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector report highlights the interconnection of this work and its importance:

Not-for-Profit (NFP) advocacy, education of citizens, enabling of engagement in civic processes, and the creation of opportunities for connections, work together to form a healthy civil society. Consequently the extent of NFP activity is often taken as an indicator of the health of society.4

**Resourcing peaks**

Adequate resourcing of peak bodies is vital to ensure their capacity to best fulfil the many roles they provide. ACTCOSS is aware of the increased demand for peak support as service delivery organisations struggle themselves to deliver with reduced resources. As service delivery organisations need to concentrate on their direct service work, the support and voice of peaks becomes increasingly important in ensuring the needs of the community sector and people living with disadvantage are not ignored.

The role of peaks is particularly important in times of change. The community sector is currently experiencing significant reforms of regulatory settings and requirements, funding models are changing, and eligibility for income support is tightening. It is impossible to anticipate exactly how these changes will impact on supply of services, affect workforce needs and change the experience of people who access services. In this context, it is critical to sustain resourcing to ACT peak bodies who can work with consumer groups, service providers and the government to identify risks and respond to emerging needs. Peak bodies are uniquely placed to provide information—that government would otherwise be unable to access—about the positive and negative impacts of the changing environment on the strength and capability of the service systems which people in Canberra value and rely on.

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**Peak bodies in the ACT**

- **ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)**
  - www.actcoss.org.au
- **ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations**
  - www.actparents.org.au
- **ACT Mental Health Consumer Network**
  - www.actmhcnc.org.au
- **Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT**
  - www.atoda.org.au
- **Canberra Multicultural Community Forum**
  - www.cmcf.org.au
- **Child, Youth and Family Agencies of the ACT**
  - www.cafwaa.org.au
- **Conservation Council ACT**
  - www.consact.org.au
- **COTA ACT (Council on the Ageing ACT)**
  - www.cotaact.org.au
- **Families ACT**
  - www.familiesact.org.au
- **Health Care Consumers’ Association of the ACT**
  - www.hcca.org.au
- **Mental Health Community Coalition ACT**
  - www.mhccact.org.au
- **National Disability Services ACT**
  - www.nds.org.au
- **People With Disabilities ACT**
  - www.pwdact.org.au
- **Volunteering ACT**
  - www.volunteeringact.org.au
- **Youth Coalition of the ACT**
  - www.youthcoalition.net

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**Who should peak bodies be accountable to?**

Peaks should first and foremost be accountable to their membership and to the sector they represent. In addition, peaks are accountable to meet relevant legal requirements (such as those of the Registrar General). Peak bodies are also accountable to the funding body for their contracted outputs. Whilst there is this accountability to funding bodies, we
agree with the Productivity Commission report which recommends that:

Agency independence must be respected and contractual requirements limited to those needed, to ensure the funded service is delivered appropriately and agreed outcomes are met.5

Is there a peak for the ACT community sector?
The entire ACT community sector has its own peak body—the ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS). ACTCOSS represents the ACT community sector and Canberrans experiencing disadvantage. Our members consist of a wide range of community organisations, as well as individuals, interested in supporting the ACTCOSS vision, ‘To live in a fair and equitable community that respects and values diversity and actively encourages collaborations that promote justice, equity and social inclusion’.6 We strive towards this vision through policy and advocacy work (e.g. submissions to government, meeting with government officials), sector development work (e.g. providing training, one-on-one consultancy and phone support for community organisations), and communications services (e.g. weekly ebulletin, facilitating networks).

If you would like to find out more about ACTCOSS and how you can engage with our work, please contact us:

Website: www.actcoss.org.au
Email: actcoss@actcoss.org.au
Ph: 02 6202 7200

To find out more about the various peaks in the ACT, please see the sidebar in this article for a list of peaks and their websites.

Note: Parts of this article are adapted from prior ACTCOSS publications, including a comment on the role of peaks and the ACTCOSS submission to the 2013-14 ACT Budget.

Please see the ACTCOSS website for this article’s footnotes: www.actcoss.org.au/publications/newsletter.html

Peak bodies and dialogue with government

By Will Mollision, Executive Officer, Families ACT

The recently refreshed social compact between the ACT Government and community sector emphasises that, ‘The foundation of The Social Compact is a collective commitment to a robust and effective relationship’. Among the principles identified as central to the compact are ‘respect and open communication’. Implicit in all this is the reliance on the partners having equal status. Yet a clear impediment to this equality is the funding relationship. Community sector organisations are very aware of their financial dependence and this can seriously constrain frank conversation.

Government at a territory and national level funds peaks with the expectation (clearly articulated in service agreements) that a core activity will be advocacy. This arrangement promotes accountability in the relationship with the community sector.

The funding of peaks is essential if the ‘robustness’ in communication is to be a two-way process. The sector must have a voice that is not muted out of concern for adverse consequences of speaking its mind.

However, peaks are also in a fragile situation. Despite their brief to advocate, they are often seen as ‘too critical of government policies’ and can be pressured to ‘cease their public advocacy’.1

Given the recent events in Queensland, where a number of peaks including the Youth Affairs Network and Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies were defunded without notice, it is important for the sector not to take peaks for granted. No one enjoys criticism and respect is key to all feedback, but government should consider its funding of peak bodies as a sign of strength.


Families ACT is a peak body supporting organisations working with children, young people and families in the ACT and surrounding region. www.familiesact.org.au
Peak collaboration

By Emma Robertson, Director, Youth Coalition of the ACT

Much has been written and discussed about collaboration, integrated service delivery and models of partnerships to achieve common work throughout the community sector in recent times. Peaks are no exception and collaboration among peaks in the ACT has been key to achieving outcomes for both the sector and the broader Canberra community.

The peaks network in the ACT is, like the sector, diverse and varied, ranging in both the issues they are concerned with, and the constituents they represent. As community service agencies with a distinct and specific kind of service delivery, the expertise amongst peaks in sector development, policy development, and advocacy, places them in a unique position to target collaborative efforts.

Of course this is not a new phenomenon, and the range of stakeholders with whom peaks have undertaken this work is also varied. Examples from the Youth Coalition's experience range from the development of The Junction Youth Health Service, which saw the Youth Coalition work with the sector to auspice the service while it was being established, to the more recent establishment of the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Association (ATODA), which was driven by the ATOD sector, both government and community, following a number of years of this work being supported by the Youth Coalition.

Peaks in the ACT, while working together to feed in to large forums such as the Joint Community Government Reference Group, also regularly collaborate to present training, develop submissions or papers, or advocate on issues of common concern.

What seems clear about the successes in this work is that it relies on the relationships between the organisations, trust, identification of common goals and the time to develop and achieve these. Examples where collaboration in peak work has been driven by other factors, such as de-funding a number of peaks and forming one, have often lead to long periods of stakeholders needing to work through these fundamentals anyway, but in an environment of adversity and loss, as opposed to one of coming together naturally for mutual gain.

The Youth Coalition's experience in developing a close working relationship with Families ACT (FACT) over the last few years highlights this experience. Initially the two organisations came together under the banner of working collaboratively to support agencies in the youth and family support sectors as their funding stream merged. The Youth Coalition and FACT worked together to facilitate a joint sector submission to this process. Following this piece of work the organisations identified further opportunity to work together in delivering common training to stakeholders.

This emerging working relationship was then challenged by threats to funding and pressure from the funding body to look at merging, which led the organisations into discussions around this in response to crisis.

Fortunately, as funding for both organisations was secured, over the last 18 months the Youth Coalition and Families ACT have been in a position to come together and identify values, interests, and common goals, and importantly articulate how areas of difference in the organisations work add strength and value to the work we do together.

This careful consideration has allowed the two organisations to work closely on a number of projects, develop joint policy positions, and also pursue separate projects, including collaborative work with other organisations. How the Youth Coalition and Families ACT work together in the future will be determined by the strong relationship between the organisations and ultimately by the needs of the people we represent.

The Youth Coalition's work with other peaks in the ACT includes formal partnerships with ATODA and the Mental Health Community Coalition to deliver the Comorbidity Bus Tour Project, and the bi-monthly Training and Professional Development Calendar, both of which are activities that recognise the value of cross sector collaboration to deliver better outcomes for people accessing community services.

The Youth Coalition would like to acknowledge the ongoing support and input of the ACT peaks network, in particular our partnership work with Families ACT, Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT, and the ACT Council of Social Service.

Youth Coalition of the ACT
Ph: 02 6247 3540
Email: info@youthcoalition.net
Web: www.youthcoalition.net
The Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC) is the peak organisation for the community managed mental health services in the ACT. MHCC shares the peak role in the mental health sector with the Mental Health Consumer Network, which works with and for people with lived experience of mental illness, and Carers ACT, which has responsibility for representing and supporting mental health carers.

It is generally assumed that a peak is established to serve the interests of its members, in MHCC’s case, the ACT community managed mental health services. While this is true, the primary reason for MHCC to serve its members is to strive for a future in which the people who use community managed mental health services are able to participate fully in the wider community and enjoy the same social connections and supports that we all aspire to.

This requires a peak organisation, such as MHCC, to be more than a mouthpiece for its members. It also calls for MHCC to be leading and supporting quality improvement in services and, more fundamentally, reform of services and the sector when there are compelling reasons for change.

So, MHCC has regular contact with its members through various forums, such as sector development forums and managers and EOs forums, but also hosts quarterly community forums and supports, and is advised by, a body of people with lived experience and mental health carers, known as the Caucus. Four seats on the MHCC board are reserved for mental health consumers and carers.

MHCC is committed to the range of roles normally adopted by peak organisations:

- MHCC represents the community managed mental health sector to the ACT Government and other stakeholders. It sits on a range of committees and working groups, and visits politicians and senior public service officers
- It shares information, through its ebulletin, forums, and other networks
- MHCC advocates through its policy activities, such as the development of position papers, analysis of government initiatives, and submissions regarding the ACT Government budget and emerging issues of importance to members and people with lived experience
- It works with other peaks and stakeholders, in particular the Mental Health Consumer Network, Carers ACT, Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Association, Youth Coalition, and ACTCOSS to increase the impact of its advocacy
- Because MHCC is serious about improving the lives of people with lived experience, it gives a high priority to working with community managed mental health services to grow and improve services

MHCC sector development initiatives include:

- Workforce Development and training. Several years of planning and research culminated last year with the publication of *A Real Career- A Workforce Development Strategy for the Community Mental Health Sector of the ACT*. The vision of the strategy is for a qualified and professional sector, properly equipped to offer the best support possible support for individuals working through the recovery process. The centrepiece of the strategy is a career structure that for the first time provides a clear career path for recovery workers in the sector. The structure encourages continuous learning and development, making a Certificate IV in Mental Health a mandatory minimum qualification to progress to higher levels in the career structure. The strategy also breaks new ground by including a parallel career path for peer workers who use their lived experience to support recovery
- Community managed mental health services will be required to report against the National Standards for
Mental Health Services from June 2013, and MHCC has established a Quality Improvement Network to support services to develop their own quality improvement policies and processes with a focus on quality rather than compliance.

MHCC is acutely aware of the potential cumulative impact on the mental health and broader community sector of a number of reforms, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Partners in Recovery, and the ACT Community Sector Reform Project. To support the capacity of the sector to embrace these reforms, MHCC is organising three workshops to examine the current situation and set a strategic direction toward a sustainable future for the community managed mental health sector. MHCC has contracted Ian Dixon, a consultant experienced in creating, developing and sustaining cross sector partnerships, to facilitate a process that will empower the sector to take responsibility for its future and so enable it to provide quality, sustainable services.

As a peak body MHCC offers more than a voice for a community of shared interests. Representing its members is important, but only if the needs of people with lived experience and their carers are met through quality services which support social inclusion. To that end MHCC understands its role as leading and facilitating change so that this sector can continue to be a vital element in mental health service provision and in the broader community sector in the ACT.

Mental Health Community Coalition ACT Inc.
Ph: 02 6249 7756
Email: admin@mhccact.org.au
Web: www.mhccact.org.au

The Conservation Council is the peak non-government environment organisation for the Canberra region, representing more than 37 member groups who in turn represent over 13,000 supporters. We have been the community’s voice for the environment in the Canberra region since 1979.

We represent the interests of a wide range of community conservation organisations in the region, as well as the broader environmental interests of all ACT residents.

Our broad mission is to achieve the healthiest environment possible for the benefit of both Canberra residents and the natural environs of the Canberra region.

We work to achieve an ecologically sustainable and zero net carbon society through advocacy, education, research and engagement with community, the private sector and with government. Our work and activities are governed by our Constitution and a four year Strategic Plan.

The Conservation Council is active in a number of campaign areas including:

- biodiversity conservation—protecting our unique ecological communities and the bush capital
- climate change—a regional, national and global challenge
- planning—the right things in the right places
- transport—connecting people and places
- waste—being efficient through closed-loop systems
- water—smart use of a scarce resource
- sustainability—governance for a smarter, sustainable Canberra

We have a strong commitment to sustainability based on recognition that sustainability has universal...
goals spanning the boundaries of the environment, social services and the economy. Over the years we have been very mindful of the need to ensure that measures to protect the environment are done in a socially just manner.

It is for this reason that we have often partnered with ACTCOSS on environment policy issues. This approach also supports our view that a key feature of the sustainability process is bringing together key players to work together to sort out solutions to problems which may seem to have competing sectoral interests. We believe that through dialogue and integrated approaches we will be able to identify ways of addressing problems which meet social, economic and environmental needs in both the short term and in the long term.

Some examples include:

- In 2012 in expressing our support for the energy efficiency retailers legislation we strongly promoted the need for a key target audience to initially be low-income households
- During 2009-11 ACTCOSS was part of our discussion group on Canberra 2050—developing a sustainable vision for the ACT
- In 2008 ACTCOSS was a key partner with us on our energy efficiency roundtable—which put together a series of policy proposals on improving energy efficiency in the ACT
- From 2005- 2007 ACTCOSS was a key part of our ACT Collaboration—a group of environment, social and business groups discussing common pathways towards sustainability
- In 2003 the Conservation Council and ACTCOSS jointly published a paper on water efficiency and water pricing, with a particular emphasis on the addressing the social implications of the water pricing increases
- In 2002 the Conservation Council and ACTCOSS worked together on input into the ACT Sustainability Policy
- Over many years ACTCOSS and the Conservation Council have worked together on transport issues

Our unique environment underpins the social and economic fabric of the ACT. Our vision is for the highest quality environment for the Australian Capital Territory region. We support a compact, ecologically sustainable, liveable and socially inclusive Canberra which embodies the principles of carbon neutrality and zero waste.

We look forward to maintaining this ongoing working relationship with ACTCOSS to deliver this mission.

For more information on the Conservation Council please contact us on 02 6229 3200 or info@conservationcouncil.org.au

Working across the spectrum of housing issues

By Leigh Watson, Executive Officer, ACT Shelter

About our ACT Shelter

ACT Shelter is an independent peak community organisation, funded by the ACT Government to provide strategic advice and advocacy on housing policy issues that affect people on low to moderate incomes. We have a 25-year history of promoting housing justice in the ACT across all housing types—social, private rental and home ownership.

Our work is informed by policy research, close collaboration, networking and consultation with community based organisations and other relevant stakeholders working on housing and related issues. Addressing housing as a human right and working across the continuum of housing matters, our advocacy appropriately and necessarily encompasses the broad area of homelessness: its causes and impacts, the homeless support system and of course, prevention.

ACT Shelter’s members include organisations and individuals who have an interest in ensuring the availability of affordable, secure and appropriate housing in Canberra. Members come from diverse backgrounds—many are from the homelessness support sector while others are involved
in the provision of housing. To encourage member and community participation in identifying important issues we hold regular forums and special meetings.

We belong to a national Shelter network via which we advocate for national reforms through the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the Homelessness National Partnership which is driving much of the recent change in the ACT.

The Shelter staff work closely with the dedicated and professional committee who identify strongly as a team working together to promote housing justice.

Why our work is important

Few people would be unaware that Australia is experiencing a housing affordability crisis that shows little sign of easing. A range of influences, including international economic factors and lack of planning over time to ensure housing supply meets demand for housing has produced this situation. The ACT is not immune. Indeed the territory has one of the least affordable private housing markets in the country: it has the highest median house prices after Sydney— with median house prices doubling between 2000 and 2003 and continuing to rise steadily since that time. Private rental prices in the ACT are the most expensive in the country which Commonwealth Rent Assistance does little to ameliorate.

ACT Shelter recognises that this national crisis in housing affordability has unique characteristics and impacts in the ACT and acknowledges the renewed interest of ACT and Commonwealth governments in this area in recent years. Despite this interest, challenges remain in the areas of housing supply, housing planning and the intersections of welfare and housing policies. Affordability, access, and security of tenure continue to be pressing issues in the private rental market and there are challenges in the provision of public and community housing. Shortcomings in the housing and related systems contribute to the large numbers of Canberrans who are homeless each night, an unacceptably large proportion of whom are unable to access assistance and safe shelter.

Given this situation, ACT Shelter feels that it is now even more important to be a strong voice advocating on housing issues that impact on people on low to moderate incomes. We recently released a comprehensive policy statement—Towards a Fairer Housing System in the ACT: Priorities for Change—that provides an overview of the broad range of issues that impact on housing in the ACT and will underpin the organisation’s work over the next three years.

The intention of the policy statement is to support the efforts of the ACT Government and the Canberra community to improve the housing situation for everyone in the territory, particularly those most vulnerable to housing insecurity and housing poverty.

To receive a copy of the ACT Shelter policy statement, or to receive the ACT Shelter Update e-newsletter, please phone 02 6247 3727 or visit the ACT Shelter website:

www.actshelter.net.au
Forty years ago a couple of Canberrans saw the Council on the Ageing (COTA) operating in Victoria and decided that older people in the ACT needed such an organisation. An advertisement was placed in the Canberra Times and a public meeting was held. This was the birth of Council on the Ageing in the ACT. While the organisation has continued with similar values and principles, the nature of our effort has changed over the years.

This is exacerbated by the fact that the number of older people is the most rapidly increasing demographic group in the ACT. This is common for all categories over 50 years old and is particularly true for the ‘80 years plus’ category. The increase in our older population is one reason why COTA, as an organisation, operates in a changing environment.

COTA was established in recognition of the absolute lack of services available to older people in the ACT. For the first twenty years of COTA much of the effort went into identifying what was available in the larger cities and actively working to bring these services to the ACT.

COTA has either established or assisted in the establishment of a large number of organisations which provide services and support in a variety of vital areas. The organisations include:

- Abbeyfield Society
- Alzheimers ACT
- Belconnen Seniors
- Carers ACT
- Community Options
- Handy Help
- Home Help
- Meals on Wheels
- Northside Community Services
- Older Womens Network
- Respite Care
- Self Help Organisations United Together (SHOUT)
- U3A
- Woden Seniors
- Southpaw Stroke Club
- Stroke Association
- Retirement Village Residents Association

Since the mid 1990s the task of identifying gaps and inequities in services has remained. However, the responses have changed. COTA continues to advocate for more effective hospital, medical, dental and aged care services. Transport and mobility, as well as affordable accommodation also remain priority issues.

Paralleling this has been the provision of information and services for older people. The Seniors Information Service, Housing Options advice and community education programs are examples.

Seniors Week is another example of this broadened response. Seniors Week is a COTA event which is from 17 to 24 March this year. It is more than an opportunity to entertain or even provide new challenges for older people. The week demonstrates the vital role that older people play in the Canberra community. This is particularly relevant in this Centenary year.

**Services**

COTA provides an information service for seniors and people concerned about seniors. We provide information about a wide range of services and other matters relevant to older people, including:

- accommodation and housing options
- ACT Seniors Cards
- referrals to community organisations
- government services
- Home and Community Care (HACC) Services
- services for older people and their carers
- social groups
- support groups

If you would like information about any of these (or other) topics, please contact COTA:

Ph: 02 6282 3777
Email: contact@cotaact.org.au
Web: www.cotaact.org.au
Welcome...

Susan Helyar
Director

Susan is committed to working with leaders across Canberra to building a more just and inclusive community, where everyone lives with dignity. Her career has focused on making a difference—as a social worker, in policy roles in ACT and Commonwealth governments and most recently as the leader of services development advocacy work for UnitingCare Australia. Susan’s direct practice included working in community health, mental health and disability employment. Her social policy work included service development and policy reform across the lifespan. She supports development of the social work profession as a field educator with the Australian Catholic University.

Farewell...

Mike Duval-Stewart
Sector Development Officer

Mike joined the ACTCOSS team in November 2012, in a contract Sector Development Officer position. Mike’s contribution to the development of resources and support to ACT community organisations through sector development initiatives has been valued. We wish Mike all the best with his future endeavors, and look forward to Mike continuing contact with the ACT community sector.

What’s ACTCOSS been up to?

Since the Summer newsletter, we have been promoting justice, equity, social inclusion and reconciliation in the ACT by...

Running seminars

- Financial Management - Mar 2013
- Consumer Directed Care - Mar 2013
- 1 Day Appreciation of Torres Strait Culture Awareness - Mar 2013
- Board Basics and Legal Obligations - Feb 2013
- MEA Enterprise Bargaining: Follow up forum for employers - Feb 2013
- Formalising Partnerships Workshop - Feb 2013
- Recruitment and Retention in the HACC Sector: A preliminary discussion - Feb 2013
- Social Compact Training Session - Jan 2013
- Raising the Standard - Nov 2012, Mar 2013

Producing publications

- MEA forum with Jobs Australia - Nov 2012
- Joint submission on the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs Inquiry into the Value of a Justice Reinvestment Approach to Criminal Justice in Australia
- ACTCOSS Budget Priorities, submission to the ACT Budget 2013-14
- Formalising Partnerships Toolkit
- Comment on Review of Current Homelessness Costing Structure: Proposing Alternative Costing Model Options December 2012 Consultation Paper
- Care Planning in ACT HACC funded organisations
- Comment on Review of the Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002
- Comment on Development of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan Discussion Paper

Other activities & events

- Attended ACOSS conference ‘Community: The Heart of the Economy’ - Mar 2013
- Close the Gap Afternoon Tea - Mar 2013
- Weston Community Hub Morning Tea to celebrate the 5th Anniversary of the National Apology - Feb 2013
- ACT & Region Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Elders photo day - Dec 2012

Visit www.actcoss.org.au for publications, upcoming seminars, and other news.

Formalising Partnerships Toolkit

This kit is aimed at small to medium NGOs interested in formalising a partnership with a view to seeking new funding or revising the way recurrent funding is applied to service delivery.

Find the toolkit here: www.actcoss.org.au
The ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS) is the peak representative body for people living with low incomes or disadvantage, and not-for-profit community organisations in the Australian Capital Territory.

ACTCOSS acknowledges Canberra has been built on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We pay respects to their Elders and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and ongoing contribution to the ACT community.

ACTCOSS
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Fax: 02 6281 4192
Email: actcoss@actcoss.org.au
Web: www.actcoss.org.au

ACTCOSS welcomes feedback. Please visit the ‘Contact’ page on our website for our feedback form, or contact us using the details above.

ACTCOSS training
Fri 5 Apr 2013
Aboriginal Culture, History and Heritage Training
Wed 10 Apr 2013
Riding the Boundaries: A workshop for community workers
Wed 17 Apr 2013
ACNC Information Session

Events
27 May - 3 Jun 2013
Reconciliation Week
Wed 5 Jun 2013
ACT Community Sector Budget Forum

For more information on ACTCOSS training and events, please call us on 02 6202 7200, email actcoss@actcoss.org.au, or visit us at our website: www.actcoss.org.au

Update is a quarterly newsletter that provides an opportunity for issues relevant to ACTCOSS’ membership to be discussed and for information to be shared. Views expressed are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy views of ACTCOSS.