

INFORMATION SHEET



ACT
Government
Community Services

Freedom of Information Disclosure Log Publication Coversheet

The following information is provided pursuant to section 28 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*

FOI Reference: CSDFOI CSD 20/13 (PART 1 of 3)

Full Disclosure Log entry at: <https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/home/disclosure-log>

Disclosure Log content

Information to be published	Status
1. Subject: Final documents prepared for or used during the 2018-19 Annual Reports hearings; including but not limited to briefs prepared for Minister Orr MLA and other witnesses, whether or not they appeared or were used and other entities that may hold relevant documents.	N/A
2. Notice of Decision	Published
3. Table of Contents 1 *Table of Contents 2 & 3 located at CSDFOI CSD 20/13(PARTS 2 & 3)	Published
4. Fees	N/A
5. Processing time (working days) *at 'activation' point?	41 days
6. Ombudsman decision	N/A
7. Ombudsman decision – additional comments by Omb	N/A
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9. ACAT decision – additional comments by ACAT	N/A

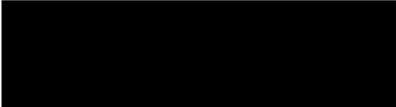
Further Information

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI REF: CSD-20/13

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Please be aware that under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*, some of the information provided to FOI applicants may be released to the public through the ACT Government's Open Access Scheme. The Open Access release status column of the table below indicates what documents are intended for release online through open access. Personal information or business affairs information will not be made available. If you think the content of your request would contain such information, please inform the contact officer immediately. Information about what is published on open access is available online at: www.act.gov.au/open-access

Applicant	THE PARAMETERS OF THE REQUEST	File No
	<p><i>"I write to request under the Freedom of Information Act 2016 final documents prepared for or used during the 2018-19 Annual Reports hearings. These documents may include, but are not limited to, briefs prepared for Minister Orr MLA and other witnesses whether or not they appeared or were used. I ask that my request be transferred to other entities that may hold relevant documents. Duplicate documents may be excluded."</i></p>	<p>Annual Report Briefing Pack for Minister Orr – Community Services & Facilities</p>

No	Description	Date	Decision	Reason for non-release or deferral	Open Access release status
1	Table of Contents	12/11/2019	Full release		Full release
2	Annual Report Hearing Brief – Strategic Objective 3 and Strategic Indicator 3	Undated	Full release		Full release

UNOFFICIAL

No	Description	Date	Decision	Reason for non-release or deferral	Open Access release status
3-4	Annual Report Hearing Brief – ACT Carers Strategy Action Plan	5/11/2019	Full release		Full release
5-6	Annual Report Hearing Brief – Strengthening Partnerships – Commissioning for Social Impact	4/11/2019	Full release		Full release
7-8	Annual Report Hearing Brief – ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026	4/11/2019	Full release		Full release
9-10	Annual Report Hearing Brief – Functions of the Human Services Registrar	10/10/2019	Full release		Full release
11-12	Annual Report Hearing Brief – Strategic Plan – Integrated Reporting Framework	6/11/2019	Full release		Full release
13-14	Annual Report Hearing Brief – Working with Vulnerable People	4/11/2019	Full release		Full release
15-16	Annual Report Hearing Brief – Joint Community Government Reference Group	8/11/2019	Full release		Full release
17-20	Opening Statement – Community Services and Facilities	Undated	Full release		Full release

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2018-19 Annual Report Hearing – 9:45am-10:30am, 12 November 2019

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ms Bec Cody MLA (Chair), Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA (Deputy Chair), Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA

SUZANNE ORR MLA

MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

OUTPUT CLASS 2.5: Strategic Policy

OUTPUT CLASS 2:5 Strategic Policy

Strategic Objectives and Indicators

1. Strategic Objective 3 and Strategic Indicator 3

Briefs

2. ACT Carers Strategy Action Plan
3. Strengthening Partnerships – Commissioning for Social Impact
4. Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026
5. Functions of the Human Services Registrar
6. Strategic Plan – Integrated Reporting Framework
7. Working with Vulnerable People Scheme
8. Joint Community Government Reference Group (NEW)

Administration

9. CSD Staff Portfolio
10. Witness List
11. Privilege Statement
12. Program Schedule
13. Opening Statement (*to be read directly into Hansard*)

Community Services & Facilities

ISSUE: Strategic Objective 3 and Strategic Indicator 3

Strategic Objective 3: Improve the outcomes for people in the community by providing a range of support and services

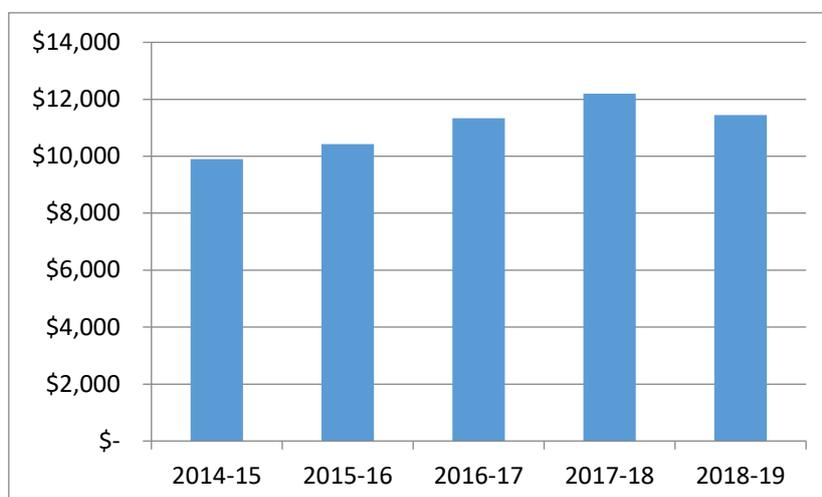
The Directorate provides funding for community organisations to deliver community development activities, counselling, referral services and emergency relief. The community organisations work in partnership with the ACT Government to build stronger communities, enhance resilience, strengthen capacity and facilitate participation of individuals and the broader community.

Strategic Indicator 3: Value of community services support programs

Table 1. Result- Strategic Indicator 3

Original Target 2018-19 \$'000	Actual Result 2018-19 \$'000	Variance
\$11,659	\$11,442	-2%

Figure 1. Strategic Indicator 3- five year trend results for value of community services support programs (Actual '000)



ISSUE: ACT CARERS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN**Talking points:**

- Last year, the Carers Strategy Taskforce (the Taskforce) developed the first three-year Action Plan under the *ACT Carers Strategy 2018-2028* (the Strategy).
- Members of the Taskforce met for five workshops to develop actions, using a deliberative approach that ensured diverse voices were heard and which encouraged robust and informed discussion of potential actions. Feedback from Taskforce members emphasised the value of this innovative approach to co-designed policy.
- Ongoing collaboration between Government and the community sector is critical to implementing actions that make a real difference for carers.
- The Action Plan includes 25 actions that are grouped across five broad themes: services and supports for carers; recognition and awareness; inclusion; support for young carers; and workforce and skills recognition.
- The Action Plan will deliver on the outcomes and priorities of the Strategy, as well as the Strategy's vision for a community that cares for carers and the people they care for, and which recognises that supporting carers is investing in Canberra's future.
- The three-year duration of the Action Plan allows the necessary time to make a genuine difference for carers, including changing community attitudes to increase awareness and recognition of the valuable role carers play in our community.
- We are six months into delivery of the Action Plan and progress has already been made with five of the 25 actions complete, including:
 - **Action 1:** The Community Services Directorate, in partnership with ACT Together, has developed and published the Carer Handbook, the go-to resource for foster and kinship carers in the ACT.
 - **Action 5:** The Office for Disability continues to support carers of people with disability to access information and services that assist them in their caring role, including through the 'Involve' newsletter and through delivery of the Integrated Service Response Program to ensure people with disability who have complex needs receive a coordinated service response.

- **Actions 7 and 8:** Carers were promoted during National Carers Week from 13-19 October this year, for example through the flags along London Cct, the flowerbed on Northbourne Ave and the event for young carers held in Civic Square. On 16 October, I attended Carers ACT's annual event to celebrate carers, a cocktail party for 150 carers.
- **Action 16:** Carers were included in consultation by Transport Canberra and City Services on the Better Suburbs initiative.
- We are continuing to work with our partners in Government and the community sector to achieve progress under the Action Plan and I look forward to updating the Assembly on progress next year.
- The ACT Government has committed a total funding of \$250,000 to develop the Strategy.
- The Carers Strategy Governance Group oversees the implementation of actions and contributes to reporting for the Action Plan.
- The Governance Group includes carers as well as representatives from Government and community sector organisations. This model supports the ongoing engagement of carers in the governance and implementation of the Strategy. The Governance Group met in May and September this year, and will meet again in December.

Key Information

- The delivery of the Strategy was an election commitment in the 2016 Parliamentary Agreement for the 9th Legislative Assembly.
- In 2017, the framework for the Strategy, including the *Carers Voice Panel Report* and the *Vision, Outcomes and Priorities Statement* was developed through a deliberative democracy process that involved 49 carers and members of the broader community.
- This framework informed the subsequent development of the first three-year Action Plan, which was jointly launched on 16 October 2018, during National Carers Week, by Minister Stephen-Smith and Minister Steel.
- The Carers Strategy Taskforce that developed the Action Plan included eight carers (selected from participants in the 2017 deliberative panel); representatives from five ACT Government directorates; and representatives from approximately 11 community sector agencies.
- The Group will meet in December 2019 to progress discussions about next steps and monitor the progress of current initiatives. Currently under consideration are seed funding grants for small organisations and individuals with ideas to support a more carer friendly Canberra.

ISSUE: Strengthening Partnerships – Commissioning for Social Impact**Talking points:**

- The Community Services Directorate (the Directorate) is in the early stages of scoping options for a transition to the commissioning of community services across the ACT. The Directorate has termed this initiative *Strengthening Partnerships - Commissioning for Social Impact*.
- Commissioning is a strategic planning approach that embeds community-needs analysis, ongoing strategic evaluation, and increased transparency and accountability into investment and resource allocation.
- In developing a ‘Commissioning Strategy’ the Directorate will work closely with partners to ensure that the Directorate’s investment:
 - is driven by shared social impact strategies (strategies that aim to deliver the greatest positive impact on the wellbeing of Canberrans);
 - is meaningful and delivers systems and services that meet the needs of Canberrans;
 - can be directly attributed to positive outcomes for people and communities;
 - directly supports self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities; and
 - is informed through meaningful engagement with service users.
- Commissioning will ensure our current service system is responsive to community needs, is sustainable and supports industry capacity building, innovation, efficiency and growth.
- The Directorate plans to implement commissioning incrementally across all its investment in government and non-government services. In transitioning to commissioning, our vision is to ensure that the Directorate provides investment that is driven by co-production, delivers value for money and creates shared accountability for measurable outcomes that lead to a positive social impact in the ACT.

- To support this commissioning work, the Directorate released a Discussion Paper in late September 2019. This paper outlines why commissioning is important, and presents strategies, priorities and ideas for how we intend to work with stakeholders, including service users, to design and implement a 'Commissioning Strategy' for the ACT.
- To support the release of the Discussion Paper, the Directorate will undertake a nine month stakeholder engagement process. This has commenced with a series of commissioning workshops across the ACT in October 2019.
- Stakeholder engagement commenced with Discussion Paper Workshops across the ACT during October and November 2019. These workshops were attended by approximately 120 people, representing a broad range of stakeholders.
- Community services sector funding and procurement has historically been based on growth and development of existing programs and services, supporting the continuation of 'business as usual'. A commissioning approach will instead provide strategic direction to deliver change in investment based on community and industry needs analysis and desired outcomes.

Background Information

- To support the development of a 'Commissioning Strategy', the Directorate are committed to co-production with a focus on engaging service users. Key activities include:
 - September 2019: Commissioning for Social Impact - Discussion Paper No.1 released;
 - October 2019: Discussion Paper workshops with key stakeholders;
 - November 2019: Discussion paper submissions close;
 - January 2020: What We Heard - Discussion Paper No. 2 released;
 - February - March 2020: Commissioning Strategy Development Phase: Coproduction workshops with community sector and service users; and
 - May 2020: Launch/release Commissioning Strategy.

ISSUE: ACT COMMUNITY SERVICES INDUSTRY STRATEGY 2016-2026

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to working with the community services sector and we acknowledge the significant role our community partners play in supporting and delivering on the expectations identified through government strategies and action plans.
- In order to maximise opportunities into the future, the ACT Government and the community services industry are also working in partnership to implement reform through the *ACT Community Services Industry Strategy (2016-2026)*.
- The Strategy sets a 10-year vision for the ACT Community Services Industry and identifies priority areas for development, and the desired outcomes the industry hopes to achieve over the short, medium and longer term.

The purpose of the Industry Strategy is to:

- present a shared understanding of a vision for the Community Services Industry that will assist in forward planning;
- provide the industry with the opportunity to identify priorities for investment for the 0.34 per cent levy;
- offer increased opportunities for organisations to plan and prepare for future demand and workforce requirements by identifying emerging trends;
- present a strong case for the value of the industry as a contributor to the health and wellbeing of the people in the ACT and a significant contributor to the ACT economy, which will deepen the understanding of community services within and outside the industry; and
- position the industry as sustainable, effective, and strengths-based, and align with key ACT Government reforms and initiatives.
- The Industry Strategy identifies the need for a skilled workforce to meet the growing demand for services and provide more flexible and responsive client-centred care. The first implementation plan of the Industry Strategy is the '*Workforce Plan*'.

- It is intended that the Workforce Plan will support the recruitment and retention of individuals with the skills and abilities to meet current and future needs. The Plan recognises that workforce development projects already underway will contribute to activity under the vision of the Industry Strategy, for example, within funded programs, peak bodies or led by employers.
- The five projects commissioned under the Workforce Plan are 1) identifying and supporting emerging leaders, 2) developing a framework and tools to consistently support community workers in onboarding, peer support and development, 3) workforce and career mapping that articulates, promotes and facilitates entry points to working in the sector, 4) a workforce data- and community-needs analysis to identify the current industry workforce and to project the growth and skills needed in the industry workforce in the future and 5) develop an evaluation framework to measure progress towards the outcomes in the Strategy.
- Sound progress is already being made on these focus areas and it is important to note that there is still existing funding – \$119,000 collected as part of a 0.34 per cent contribution levy collected from the sector – for the Industry Strategy that can be used to further progress activities across key focus areas.

Background Information

- The Joint Community Government Reference Group (JCGRG) has governance responsibilities for the Industry Strategy and has developed three 3-year implementation plans to achieve this vision, with the final year for evaluation and future planning.
- A subcommittee of the JCGRG, the Industry Strategy Steering Group, which comprises representatives from community and government, is overseeing the development and implementation of the first action plan, focused on workforce capability.

ISSUE: FUNCTIONS OF THE HUMAN SERVICES REGISTRAR**Talking points:**

- The Office of the Human Services Registrar (HSR) is independent within the Community Services Directorate; it is located separately from funding and policy areas. The Office of the HSR has oversight of quality and safeguards for some specialist disability support; care and protection; and community housing service providers.
- The HSR has powers to implement legislative safeguards which enable registration, ongoing monitoring of compliance with relevant standards and regulatory engagement, and the application of sanctions to regulated service providers. This includes investigating complaints that relate to the regulatory obligations of providers in these sectors.

Disability services

- The ACT Government transferred responsibility for the regulatory oversight of National Disability Insurance Agency registered disability service providers to the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission (the Commission) from 1 July 2019.
- HSR regulation and monitoring of care and protection, unregistered specialist disability services and community housing providers continues beyond 1 July 2019. However, work is underway to further clarify the HSR's ongoing role in overseeing the non-NDIS registered disability sector in the ACT.

Care and Protection Services

- The Care and Protection Organisation Standards align with relevant recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Community housing services

- The National Regulatory System for Community Housing is currently undergoing a review. This is a legislated review to ensure the continued efficacy of the community housing regulatory system.

Background Information

- The Human Services Registrar (HSR), situated within the Quality, Complaints and Regulation (QCR) Branch of the Community Services Directorate was established to have oversight of a number of service delivery sectors where risks were identified for the service user.
- The 2018-19 ACT Budget provided funding of \$2.6m for two years for resources to manage risk and oversee service quality, through regulation of an increased number of human services support providers delivering services to vulnerable Canberrans.
- The primary and preferred method of ensuring compliance is through regulatory engagement – the HSR and the organisation working together, voluntarily, to achieve and maintain compliance. Intervention powers are generally only used if the non-compliance is significant and requires more than regulatory engagement to ensure change is made and compliance is achieved.
- There are currently 32 registered providers across the care and protection; and the community housing sectors. These include:

○ Care and protection organisations	14*
○ Providers of community housing	20*

* Does not sum to 32 as some providers are registered for both sectors.
- At this time, it is unknown how many disability service providers will not proceed with registration within the first 12 months of operation of the Commission in the ACT, thus coming under the jurisdiction of the Human Services Registrar. It is likely that amendments to the *Disability Services Act 1991* will be pursued to facilitate identification of unregistered providers operating in the ACT.
- The ACT retains responsibility for the investigation of complaints about disability service delivery that occurred prior to 1 July 2019.
- A commitment was made to implement recommendations by the ACT Auditor-General to improve the oversight of community organisations delivering Out of Home Care and related services in the ACT. This resulted in amendments to the *Children and Young People Act 2008* to provide regulatory powers over Care and Protection organisations.
- The National Regulatory System for Community Housing was implemented in the ACT in 2014 following introduction of the *Community Housing Providers National Law (ACT) Act 2013*. The system seeks to reduce the regulatory burden for community housing providers and act as a safeguard to vulnerable tenants, and government and private investment in community housing. This approach was in line with the pre-existing ACT system.

ISSUE: STRATEGIC PLAN – INTEGRATED REPORTING FRAMEWORK**Talking points:**

- In 2018, the Community Services Directorate (the Directorate) launched its ten-year Strategic Plan, which provides a long-term approach to the achievement of its core purpose and outcomes.
- The Strategic Plan's Integrated Reporting Framework provides an opportunity to transition from reporting on counts of activities undertaken to more meaningfully on the outcomes the Strategic Plan has set for the Directorate to achieve.
- Reporting will be strongly driven by the seven core outcomes embedded in the Strategic Plan. These are:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership;
 - Independence and dignity;
 - A secure place to call home;
 - Safe from harm;
 - Inclusive communities;
 - Leadership, advocacy and vision; and
 - Sustainable and integrated services.
- The Integrated Reporting Framework includes three tiers of reporting, including:
 - Strategic Reporting – to track performance against the seven core outcomes identified in the Strategic Plan.
 - Critical Indicators Reporting – to provide the Directorate's Strategic Board of Management with a regular overview of organisational health, to monitor strategic risks and drivers for change.
 - Divisional Business Reviews – to monitor progress against divisional plans, including highlighting areas of risk, capability needs and resource allocation.
- The indicators embedded in the Integrated Reporting Framework will be reviewed annually. The annual review will ensure the Directorate's is responsive to changing needs and able to address emerging

sustainability concerns. The annual review will also consider the appropriateness of the indicator set and make necessary changes against the Framework.

- The plan provides a clear roadmap for the next ten years. On 1 July 2019, the Directorate moved into the implementation phase and has begun to cement the Strategic Plan into its core business.
- Reporting on the new framework will commence iteratively from 1 July 2019, with first quarter reporting available from November 2019.

Key Information

- The Strategic Plan is collectively owned by the Directorate's staff who, through a collaborative and robust engagement process, worked on its development.
- *Empowering People: Community Services Directorate Strategic Plan 2018-2028*, aims to support the achievement of meaningful and life-changing outcomes. These are:
 1. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership* – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a strong voice, are decision makers on issues that impact them and lead in the achievement of positive life outcomes.
 2. *Independence and Dignity* - Individuals have access to information and supports that empower them to make informed decisions and undertake valued leadership opportunities in their communities.
 3. *A secure place to call home* – People have equitable access to secure homes that are appropriate, affordable and meet their needs and circumstances, in order to support whole of life outcomes
 4. *Safe from harm* – People feel safe in their homes, community, and when accessing services. Social influences on personal safety such as culture, gender and intergenerational trauma are considered in policy and program development.
 5. *Inclusive communities* – People feel a sense of belonging in their communities. They are valued, respected, have a voice, and are able to access formal and informal networks that support them to achieve whole of life outcomes. Local services take a whole of community approach and focus on building connections, local solutions and individual self-determination.
 6. *Leadership, advocacy and vision* - The Directorate is an organisation where we access leadership opportunities and are guided by strong values. It is able to set a vision for reform within the broader human services system and advocates for this change through strong and respectful leadership approaches.
 7. *Sustainable and integrated services* – Services are accountable, transparent, collaborative and evidence-informed. They champion innovative, digital and integrated responses that support clients to direct the outcomes that are important to them. Continuous improvement is driven by a robust evaluation and review cycle.

ISSUE: WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE**Talking points:**

- The Working with Vulnerable People Scheme (the Scheme) aims to reduce the risk of harm or neglect to vulnerable people in the ACT. The Scheme requires those who work or volunteer with vulnerable people, including children, to have a background check and be registered.
- The ACT Government continues to review and improve the Scheme to ensure we have the best measures in place to continue to protect children and vulnerable people from the risk of sexual, physical, emotional or financial harm or neglect.
- New provisions in the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act (2011)* commence from 1 July 2020. These amendments will prepare the ACT to participate in nationally consistent National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) worker screening arrangements and registrations will be monitored by NDIS worker screening units.
- From 1 July 2020, workers employed by NDIS providers in the ACT will be required to comply with the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework – this includes worker screening checks.
- Amendments will be made in 2020 to the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act (2011)*. These amendments will introduce key changes to the Scheme, including continuous monitoring, information sharing and disqualifying offences to fulfil the ACT's obligations in relation to national harmonisation of Working with Children Checks, and the Royal Commission recommendations.
- The recommendations made by the Legislative Review must align with national harmonisation efforts in response to several Royal Commission recommendations.
- The ACT is working with the other jurisdictions and the Australian Government to achieve national harmonisation of Working with Children Checks, consistent worker screening and information sharing across jurisdictions.

- Work continues between the Community Services Directorate and Access Canberra, to ensure robust and consistent worker screening, as well as streamlined registration processes.
- The focus of this work will be to ensure the best outcomes for vulnerable Canberrans, while reducing the regulatory burden of the Scheme on employers, community organisations and Access Canberra.

Key Information

The Legislative Review 2016 has been completed. The implementation of a small number of recommendations remain outstanding. Work is progressing on legislation and regulation amendments to enact these recommendations in 2020. These are:

- introduction of disqualifying offences, as part of national harmonisation of Working with Children's Checks;
- further clarity on the definition of protected information and precision around what constitutes 'regulated' activity;
- regulation to enable inter-jurisdictional information sharing to prepare the ACT to participate in nationally-harmonised Working with Children's Checks and the national database National Reference System (WWCC NRS); and
- review of risk assessment guidelines (Access Canberra).

Background Information

- The *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* (WWVP Act) aims to reduce the risk of harm or neglect to vulnerable people in the ACT.
- The WWVP Act requires those who work or volunteer with vulnerable people to have a background check and be registered. From 1 July 2020, workers from registered NDIS providers will be required to have a NDIS worker background screening check.
- The WWVP Act was reviewed in 2016-17 and the Government agreed to the Review Report's recommendations.
- Access Canberra, the Directorate and the Office of the Chief Digital Officer are engaged in a multi-disciplinary project to improve the registration process and streamline risk assessment. This includes moving to a digital process for registration.
- A review of the Scheme is a legislative requirement at year three and year seven of implementation. The final legislative review will be centred on the Risk Assessment Guidelines for the scheme. A review of the risk assessment guideline is underway in Access Canberra.

ISSUE: Joint Community Government Reference Group

Talking points:

- The Joint Community Government Reference Group (JCGRG) is a consultative forum focused on enhancing the open and transparent relationship between the ACT Government and community sector to progress social issues impacting the Canberra community.
- The most recent meeting of the JCGRG was on 7 November 2019.
- At this meeting JCGRG members expressed support for the recommitment to the Social Compact, and agreed that this will be collaboratively progressed by the ACT Government and our community partners.
- This will involve the formation of a community of practice between ACT Government Directorates and community sector partners. This will be a platform for information sharing, guidance and collaborative problem solving to embed the principles of the Social Compact.
- The JCGRG have also agreed to progress a review of the current strategies and reform initiatives across ACT Government to determine areas that are, or will, support the implementation and objectives of the Industry Strategy.
- The JCGRG were also further consulted on the Wellbeing Index, and variations to the Territory Plan for housing choices and community facilities.

Key Information

- The JCGRG monitors sector viability matters in the community sector and provides strategic advice to the ACT Government, operating under the principles and undertakings of the *Social Compact* (2012).
- The JCGRG comprises representatives from the ACT community sector, including peak networks, service providers; executive representation from ACT Government Directorates with a social and community perspective; and the Australian Government. Members are appointed as representatives of their networks rather than as individual representatives. The co-chairs are the Deputy Director-General of the Community Services Directorate and the CEO of ACTCOSS. ACTCOSS provides secretariat support.

- Under the JCGRG sits the Industry Strategy Steering Group
 - The purpose of the Steering Group is to monitor the implementation of the *ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026*. The Steering Group is also responsible for developing and monitoring the Strategy's three implementation plans.

Background Information

- ACTCOSS has briefed you on recommendations from the Industry Strategy Workforce Plan. It should be noted that this has not been formally agreed by the JCGRG. Pending approval by the JCGRG these recommendations will then be escalated to you for endorsement and public release.

Opening Statement – Community Services and Facilities

Members, thank you for providing us all with the opportunity to view the 2018-19 Annual Report with fresh eyes and to highlight the Community Services Directorate's many programs, policies, initiatives and events which support our vision for an inclusive community where all Canberran's have the best options and opportunities to be fully active members of our community.

Across my portfolio of Community Services and Facilities, I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting many of our community partners who, with the assistance of funding from the ACT Government, achieve effective, inclusive and positive outcomes that improve the lives of all Canberrans.

To achieve systematic change, we need to foster inclusive and supportive communities through productive partnerships and sustainable relationships. Throughout 2018-19, we continued to work in collaboration to strengthen partnerships across government and with the community.

Grants

Over 2018-19, the ACT Government further invested in peer support, independent advocacy, self-help groups and capacity building across small, volunteer-run organisations. We enhanced the ACT grants program, with the creation of a grant category for multicultural community organisations to participate in the National Multicultural Festival and through a series of community meetings about how the ACT Government can maximise the outcomes of future grants processes.

Commissioning

The Community Services Directorate is also now in the early stages of scoping options for a transition to the commissioning of community services across the ACT. The Directorate has termed this initiative *Strengthening Partnerships - Commissioning for Social Impact*.

To support this commissioning work, the Directorate released a discussion paper in late September, outlining why commissioning is important and presenting strategies, priorities and ideas for how we intend to work with stakeholders and service users to design and implement a 'Commissioning Strategy' for the ACT.

To support the release of the Discussion Paper, the Directorate will undertake a nine-month stakeholder engagement process. This commenced last month with a series of commissioning workshops across the ACT.

Commissioning is a strategic planning approach that embeds community needs analysis, ongoing strategic evaluation, increased transparency and accountability into investment and resource allocation.

The Directorate plans to implement commissioning incrementally across all its investment in government and non-government services. In transitioning to commissioning, our vision is to ensure that the Directorate provides investment that is driven by coproduction, delivers value for money and creates shared accountability for measurable outcomes that lead to positive social impact in the ACT.

Commissioning will ensure our current service system is responsive to community needs, is sustainable and supports industry capacity building, innovation, efficiency and growth.

Industry Strategy

The ACT Government is committed to working with the community services sector and we acknowledge the significant role our community partners play in supporting and delivering on the expectations identified through government strategies and action plans.

The ACT Government and the community services industry are also working in partnership to implement reform through the *ACT Community Services Industry Strategy (2016-2026)*.

The Industry Strategy identifies the need for a skilled workforce to meet the growing demand for services and to provide more flexible and responsive client-centred care. The first implementation plan of the Industry Strategy is the 'Workforce Plan'.

The five projects commissioned under the Workforce Plan are:

1. identifying and supporting emerging leaders;
2. developing a framework;
3. workforce and career mapping;
4. workforce data and community needs analysis; and
5. evaluation.

It is intended that the Workforce Plan will support the recruitment and retention of individuals with the skills and abilities to meet current and future needs.

Carers Strategy

Carers in our community reflect Canberra's diversity and provide unpaid care for a range of reasons to family members, friends or neighbours who are living with disability, a physical or mental health condition, or are frail aged. Some provide care to children and young people who are unable to live with their families.

From my experience growing up in a family that cared for and loved many children in foster care, I have a deep understanding of the value in providing care and the way it can bring you closer to loved ones and can give a new sense of purpose and identity.

I would like to acknowledge all carers who were part of the Carers Voice Panel and the Carers Strategy Taskforce. The Panel and Taskforce developed the *ACT Carers Strategy 2018-2028* and the first three-year Action Plan under the Strategy.

These carers worked closely with my colleagues Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith and Minister Chris Steel, to develop and implement a Strategy that provides us with a vision for the kind of carer-friendly city we want to see here in Canberra.

Not only did they help develop a vision and shared priorities for supporting and recognising carers, but they also helped to establish concrete actions that carers agreed would support that vision and bring it to fruition.

I am proud of the way deliberative democracy principles have underpinned the development of the Strategy, demonstrating this Government's commitment to engaging differently and more effectively with our community, and including people whose voices might otherwise not be heard.

The *ACT Carers Strategy* is a 10-year Strategy, demonstrating this Government's ongoing commitment to supporting carers in our community and the Action Plan contains 25 actions that fall under five themes: services and supports for carers; recognition and awareness; inclusion; support for young carers; and workforce and skills recognition.

The actions and initiatives under these themes are ambitious but achievable. They guide support for carers and respond to the challenges they face, while recognising the essential contribution carers make to our community.

Conclusion

The ACT Government is very active in the Community Services space and is at the national forefront of reforms that will foster our community services sector and help those organisations and individuals the care for our most vulnerable.

ENDS