



# Community Services Directorate February 2016 update

## A message from the Executive Director

Welcome to 2016 and thank you for all of your hard work supporting Canberra's vulnerable people throughout 2015.

I thought it timely to provide a brief update about a number of projects relevant to the community sector: ministerial changes; the development of a Community Services Industry Plan; the removal of prequalification requirements; the roll-out of the BNG tool; the establishment of the Human Services Registrar; and the *Better Services* initiatives.

Many of you have been working on these projects and I thank you for your valuable contributions. I look forward to working with you in the year ahead on these and other areas. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any queries.

*Maureen Sheehan, Executive Director, Service Strategy and Community Building*

## New Ministers

The ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA, recently announced the new ministry to lead the ACT this year. Yvette Berry MLA will be the senior Minister in the community services portfolio, responsible for the expanded portfolios of Housing, Community Services and Social Inclusion along with Multicultural and Youth Affairs and Women.

Chris Bourke MLA will be responsible for Children and Young People, Disability, Small Business and the Arts and Veterans and Seniors, along with for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. For more information see <http://www.andrewbarr.com.au/>

## Community Services Industry Plan

As part of the ACT Government Community Sector Reform Program, a considerable amount of background work has been undertaken on changes





impacting the community sector in the ACT.

During this background work, it became evident that a Community Services Industry Plan would help position the sector to be able to respond to the challenges which lie ahead and help secure the future sustainability of the community services sector in the ACT.

In September 2015, an initial Community Services Industry Workshop was held and an ACT Community Services Industry Plan Steering Group was established.

The Industry Plan is now being developed, with KPMG engaged on behalf of the Steering Group to undertake this important work. A scoping paper has now been published at:

<http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/hcs/community-sector-reform>

A policy officer position has been funded within ACTCOSS to contribute to sector engagement.

See: <http://www.actcoss.org.au/>

## Prequalification update

On 10 November 2015, the Director-General, Community Services Directorate, Ms Sue Chapman wrote to community sector providers to advise that the prequalification framework previously utilised in community service procurement would not continue.

This is because quality assurance mechanisms have changes alongside significant changes to the way community services are procured. Many providers are now regulated by the Human Services Registrar: community housing providers; specialist disability service providers since the commencement of the NDIS Trial in the ACT; and community care and protection providers since the commencement of new services under *A Step Up for Our Kids*.

The work undertaken by community sector providers to attain prequalification is recognised by the Human Services Registrar. Supporting good governance and viability for community service provision continues to be a feature of CSD's community sector reform program.

## Human Services Registrar

More than 140 community service providers are now regulated by the Human Services Registrar (HSR). Regulation of the community services sector in the ACT focuses on capability and compliance against the





standards relevant for the provider.

The HSR operates under a risk responsive regulatory framework, which ensures that regulation is proportionate with the risk managed by community sector providers, their size and scope.

In 2015, the HSR has commenced compliance monitoring for community housing providers, continued to assess new specialist disability service providers and developed a regulatory program for community care and protection providers. 2016 will see an increasing focus on compliance monitoring and engagement in the disability and care and protection sectors as these areas mature.

Managing risk is a key feature of service delivery and governance for the community sector.

While the HSR operates independent of contract management and policy areas of government, understanding risks as they emerge is an important role for the HSR. Regulatory assessors work with regulated providers to understand the 'risk of doing business' and to support community sector providers to develop and monitor effective risk management plans that are appropriate for their services.

The Human Services Registrar can be contacted at [csd.humanservicesregistrar@act.gov.au](mailto:csd.humanservicesregistrar@act.gov.au)

## New business tool to cut red tape

The ACT Government is ready to roll out a new online tool to improve quality and reduce red tape for service providers.

The tool is a tailored version of Standards & Performance Pathways (SPP), a leading online service for completing service and quality standards, compliance activities, as well as for managing risk and quality performance. SPP is provided by BNG NGO Services Online.

SPP supports community sector organisations to understand quality standards and compliance requirements, and maps equivalent requirements across regulatory, industry and legislative frameworks. SPP's interface allows a user to select from a comprehensive list of Australian community standards and regulatory frameworks to select those that apply, or may apply, to their organisation. The user is then guided through a step-by-step self-assessment of the specific requirements of a standard. Integrated within the platform are a number of business tools to self-assess level of compliance and support an organisation to meet requirements, providing a sector capacity building resource as well as administrative assistance.

If you have any queries you are welcome to contact Ms Jancye Winter on [jancye.winter@act.gov.au](mailto:jancye.winter@act.gov.au) or (02) 6207 0038.



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## ***Human Services Blueprint and Better Services***

The *Human Services Blueprint* - which aims to reform services so people get the right service, at the right time, for the right duration – was launched in early 2014 and currently incorporates three “flagship” *Better Services* initiatives: the Gateway, providing assistance for a range of community services relating to housing, disability, children, young people, families and women; *Strengthening Families*, supporting families with multiple complex issues; and the *West Belconnen Local Services Network*, which is working with residents, service providers and businesses to meet local needs.

The *Better Services* initiatives are already making real differences. In 2014-15, the *Gateway* assisted with 2571 public housing applications, helped 22 people experiencing homelessness, provided 332 people with disability grants and 1217 people met with a Gateway partner.

Since commencing, the *Strengthening Families* initiative has trained over 150 lead workers and assisted 59 families with 276 family members. Sixty one per cent were single parent households and thirty nine per cent of family members were children aged between three and 11.

The *West Belconnen Local Services Network* saw the establishment of the Network Leadership Group and the launch of the first *West Belconnen Commitment to Community* based on locally identified priorities. Information Sharing Protocols and a Community Development Framework are among some of the supporting frameworks that have been developed to help local services deliver better outcomes for the community.

*Better Services* initiatives will be evaluated against the *Human Services Blueprint* Triple Aim of Individual, Population and System. For up to date information about the *Human Services Blueprint* and associated *Better Services* initiatives see [www.betterservices.act.gov.au](http://www.betterservices.act.gov.au)

## **Additional information and queries**

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