

## Commissioning Conversations

Welcome to the seventh instalment of Commissioning Conversations.

If you are interested in regularly receiving Commissioning Conversations, please email [CSDCommissioning@act.gov.au](mailto:CSDCommissioning@act.gov.au) and ask to be added to the distribution list.

## Commissioning Website

At the end of March 2022, the commissioning website received a substantial update to make it more user friendly and engaging. We encourage all readers to check out the updated website here: [www.act.gov.au/commissioning](http://www.act.gov.au/commissioning).

Updates to the website respond to feedback received by community partners about how the website can support engagement with commissioning. In addition to restructuring it and making it easier to use, a Commissioning Calendar was added. The calendar shows when various commissioning activities are scheduled to take place, and is intended to support stakeholder planning, particularly for those who may like to be involved in multiple processes. The calendar can be found by visiting the [Sectors in Progress page](#). This page is the primary source of information about work underway across many commissioning processes.

## Peaks Body commissioning

Following feedback received on the forward approach to commissioning peak organisations in the ACT, two meetings were planned to explore issues raised. On Friday 8 April 2022, a meeting was held between Peak Bodies, and Community Services (CSD) and ACT Health (ACTHD) Directorates to collaboratively work through and agree the details in the proposed Deeds of Grant to fund peak activity from July 2022.

The meeting was well attended, including the majority of Peak Bodies and representatives from government. Peaks that were unable to attend had the opportunity to share their thoughts ahead of the meeting both in writing, and through discussions with government representatives. Their feedback was included in the meeting and incorporated into the polls to ensure their perspectives were present in the room.

A collaborative and interactive process was used to support all Peak Bodies to have their say, and to enable the group to resolve outstanding issues. Conversations were robust and solutions focussed, and the group were able to agree draft wording for the Deeds of Grant.

Another meeting between the Peak Bodies and Government is scheduled for 29 April 2022, to enable discussion on broader issues and longer-term commissioning intentions for peak activities.

## Evaluation of Commissioning Process

The Commissioning Baseline Survey is now closed.

The CSD and ACTHD Commissioning Teams would like to thank everyone who participated, for taking the time to share your perspectives and insights. We would also like to thank our NGO Sector

Partners who shared and promoted the baseline survey, there is no doubt that you contributed to the strong response rate.

We have been encouraged by the generally positive and optimistic outlook towards commissioning and relationships between government and the sector. That is not to say that all responses were positive, or to downplay the voices of those who are more uncertain about the process. Some stakeholders report being apprehensive about commissioning, and we need to consider how to manage that apprehension as the process develops. A more in-depth analysis of the findings will be published shortly.

Those of you who have been involved in commissioning processes so far will be aware of the Post Activity Survey which is being shared following sub-sector commissioning activities. We strongly encourage you to complete the survey as soon as possible following the activity. This will help us to understand what worked (and what didn't) and enable changes to be made for future processes. Stakeholders will become very familiar with this survey as it is a common tool in use across all commissioning processes. Each time you complete it however, we are asking for feedback about the specific activity you participated in, so please take a few minutes each time to let us know your thoughts.

Further information on both of these surveys can be found online at: [Evaluation of Commissioning](#).

### **Next CSD Sector Update Forum**

The next forum will take place in June 2022.

### **Codesign of Joint Government and Community Sector Reform Oversight**

The Minister for Families and Community Services hosted a Children and Family Services Reform Forum in March 2021.

The Forum brought together a range of stakeholders with an interest in:

- ensuring the needs of vulnerable children and families are met; and
- discussing how Government and non-government community sector partners could work closer together to achieve shared goals and improve outcomes.

Through the Forum, our shared goal of seeing a service system which truly supports wellbeing for all children, young people and their families was realised. This shared goal now guides our approach to broader children and families reform work.

At the Forum, it was agreed the broader children and families reform work needed a mechanism to support joint government and community sector decision-making, enabling the delivery of reform aligned action.

There was strong agreement that proposed governance mechanism/s would need to be co-designed, tactical, delivery focused and flexible to respond to emerging needs. There was also strong agreement the mechanism/s should be focussed on improving the relationship between government and the community sector.

To start forming what a mechanism could look like, CSD has brought together a small and diverse time-limited working group. The role of the working group is to co-design a high-level model of what the mechanism could look like, including roles and responsibilities. The working group will not become the mechanism itself.



Working Group representatives include:

- Sharon Williams, *Our Booris, Our Way* Implementation Oversight Committee member
- Josephine Brogden, young person with lived experience
- Tracey Hall, Marymead
- Justin Barker, Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Wendy Prowse/Lauren O'Brien, ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)
- Janise Mitchell, Australian Childhood Foundation

The group has met several times and progressed work out of session to:

- consider other mechanisms/models;
- identify required skills and knowledge, potential membership and recruitment approaches, accountability mechanisms; and
- discuss how the model could be supported to be as flexible as possible and mature overtime.

The working group presented some early thoughts on the model at the CSD Community Sector Update Forum on 26 April 2022. As a result, the working group is developing a package of information to share and seek broader feedback from sector partners. This will be shared via email and at various governance groups. The package of information will include the high-level model, supported by more in-depth details on roles, responsibilities, membership and recruitment and how people with lived experience will be supported to participate in the mechanism in a safe and supported way.

## **Other Commissioning news**

### Homelessness Services

- As of 15 April 2022, 16 workshops have been organised with stakeholders. These include:
  - Round 1 on needs and outcomes:
    - ✓ Eight sub-sector workshops and a whole of sector workshop have been organised with women's services, men's services, youth's services, First Nations services, family's services, rough sleeper services, food services, and general services.
    - ✓ 236 participants including front line staff, policy officers, and executive managers from community organisations, and government officers have attended Round 1 workshops.
  - Round 2 on service design:
    - ✓ Six sub-sector workshops with men, women, youth, family, rough sleeper and complex client, food and general services have been organised. A large number of ideas on enhancing services and service system have been initiated and discussed among stakeholders.
    - ✓ Two more sub-sectors workshops, one with First Nations services, and the other one on Central Intake Model will be organised in late April before the whole of sector workshop Round 2 takes place.
- We are also actively listening to clients. As of 15 April 2022, 19 focus group discussions with people with lived experience have been conducted.
- Following Round 2 on service design, we will prepare for Round 3 where we will bring cross-sector groups together.



- In June 2022, we will bring everything we have heard and worked through together into an insights report.
- The schedule of engagement activities and progress of the homelessness commissioning are regularly updated on [Homelessness Services - Commissioning \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.act.gov.au/homelessness-services-commissioning).

#### A Step Up for Our Kids – Next Steps

- The *Next Steps* Strategy and set of companion documents have been progressed for Government consideration and are being finalised inclusive of feedback by the Critical Sector Friends group.
- Plans are underway to conduct a small set of stakeholder events to release the finalised *Next Steps* Strategy and set of companion documents. Timing is before the end of June 2022, and further details will be shared, once confirmed.
- Meetings are continuing with Service Partners to progress the recommissioning of services and extensions to existing Service Funding Agreements to take effect 1 July 2022.
- An Advance Notification of the upcoming procurement has been issued via Tenders ACT and is available [here](#). The Advance Notice has also been distributed to a range of National / State and Territory peak organisations for distribution to their member organisations.
- Regular updates on the progress of the *Next Steps* reform will be available for interested stakeholders on the [CSD website](#) and the [YourSay](#) page.

#### Non-Statutory Children, Youth and Family Services (Community Development Program, Children’s Services Program, and Child, Youth and Family Services Program)

- On 31 March 2022, CSD provided Letters of Intent to all organisations funded under these programs (Community Development Program (CDP), Children’s Services Program (CSP), and Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP)) offering a two-year extension. This extension aligns with the timeframes for commissioning discussed with CSP Advisory Committee and CYFSP Directors Group. Contract variations with organisations will be negotiated before 30 June 2022. Information specific to CSP and CYFSP is below.
- Children’s Services Program
  - The first stage of commissioning of CSP is underway. This stage is seeking to address high priority issues with the design and delivery of the current service, to enable time for a longer conversation about the future direction of the service. The CSP Advisory Committee has had several commissioning conversations leading to a decision in February 2022, that identified 3 highest priority issues for re-design. Organisations agreed that these were geography of places available for children, providing a trauma informed approach to care and education, and ongoing issues with the referral process. Three working groups were established to have more in depth conversations about each of these issues, with the intention of bringing back proposed solutions to the next CSP Advisory Group for discussion.
  - Across March 2022, each of these working groups engaged in fruitful conversations with a proactive, solutions focussed approach. A number of options were generated for CSD to investigate and gather further data on.
  - On 8 April 2022, the CSP Advisory Committee came back together to discuss the solutions provided by each of the working groups. The Committee discussed the potential solutions and ultimately decisions were made to implement a number of the proposals for the contract extension period as a pilot. The changes will be



evaluated over the next 6-12 months with adjustments made over this period if required.

- The CSP Advisory Committee provided feedback that the process has been very productive and that organisations have felt that they have been able to have input throughout the process and felt their ideas were listened to.
- Child, Youth and Family Services Program
  - CYFSP Directors came together on 29 March 2022 to have the next conversation in the commissioning process. This conversation sought to map out the scope of the redesign and what this commissioning process might look like including: what is the problem that the commissioning process will be solving; the relationship between CYFSP and other parts of the service system; who are the stakeholders that need to be part of the process; and the major pieces of policy and reform agenda that will be involved. The information gathered from organisations at this meeting will inform the design of the commissioning process for CYFSP.

### Alcohol and Other Drug sector

- Alcohol and Other Drug Policy has been leading co-design consultation for development of the next ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan (Action Plan). Consultation has included opportunities for government, and non-governmental organisations in the alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) and related sectors to provide feedback on their key priorities and actions for minimising ATOD related harms. There have been opportunities to provide responses to the Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021 Review, the Discussion Paper on the approach to the next Action Plan, and AOD Commissioning Workshops, which were held in early 2022. From this, an extensive list of Priority Areas, Objectives and Actions were consolidated and presented at an interactive whole of sector workshop to prioritise what could be included in the next Action Plan. This process forms a key component of the 'strategise' phase of the Commissioning process as outlined in the Commissioning Roadmap.
- The people who have contributed to the co-design process have provided valuable insight into what can be done to ensure meaningful sector-wide action and improve the quality of life of our community. Co-design is now at the final stage of sector-specific consultation before formal drafting of the Action Plan and public consultation takes place in the coming months. If you would like to get involved, please contact AOD Policy at [AODPolicy@act.gov.au](mailto:AODPolicy@act.gov.au) before 3 May 2022.

### Chronic Conditions

- The second Chronic Conditions sub-sector Commissioning Roundtable was held on 6 April 2022 for existing sector partners and other interested organisations and stakeholders. Just over 40 people participated in the online workshop, representing 23 different organisations and Government areas. A full report will be made available on the Chronic Conditions Commissioning webpages.
- Key issues discussed included:
  - Need for better integration of services between NGO service providers, public health services and private practitioners to improve the effectiveness of care.



- Capital Health Network’s recently published Needs Assessment for chronic conditions (PowerPoint presentation available on the CHN website).
- Future services will need to consider how to help clients manage the impacts of climate change, increased use of interpreters and other engagement strategies, including telehealth, to ensure equity of access by all community members, and application of trauma-informed responses where required.
- Comprehensive strategies to ensure consumers and people with a lived experience are involved in the commissioning process.
- Next steps are to progress contract revisions for current sector partners from 1 July 2023, plan consumer consultations, progress the sub-sector’s needs assessment, and develop an outcomes framework to initiate the design phase of commissioning. The next stakeholder roundtable is planned for mid-2022.

### Community Support sector

- Commissioning in the community support subsector (CSS) benefited from a well-attended Roundtable on 31 March 2022, which solicited views from a diverse range of stakeholders about the future of ACT Health Directorate investment in the subsector. A listening report, which will identify the full spectrum of views captured at the Roundtable, will be circulated in the second half of April. This will be followed by a second discussion paper that will canvass a broad outline of the CSS program that will replace the CASP, FFS, and Transitional Care from 1 July 2023. The discussion paper will also broach the subject of how outcomes in the CSS will be procured from mid-next year, and seek stakeholders’ views on a range of potential models.

### Useful Links

Joint ACT Government [Commissioning website](#).

For additional information on **ACT Health Directorate** commissioning health services in the community visit [Commissioning health services in the community | Health\(act.gov.au\)](#).

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