



July 2010 – June 2013

STRATEGIC PLAN

CONTACT

Australian Council of Social Service

Locked Bag 4777, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012

T (02) 9310 6200 E info@acoss.org.au

www.acoss.org.au

First published in 2010 by the
Australian Council of Social Service

Locked Bag 4777
Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012 Australia
Ph 02 9310 4844 Fax 02 9310 4822
Email: info@acoss.org.au
Website: www.acoss.org.au

ISSN: 1326-7124
ISBN: 978-0-85871-840-1

© Australian Council of Social Service, 2010.

This publication is copyright. Apart from fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism, or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Enquiries should be addressed to the Publications Officer, Australian Council of Social Service. Copies are available from the address above.

Who we are

The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) is a national voice for people affected by poverty, disadvantage and inequality. ACOSS is the peak council for the community services sector.

Our Vision

A fair, inclusive and sustainable Australia where all individuals and communities have the opportunities and resources they need to participate in and benefit from social and economic life.

Our Values

- We recognise the right of all people in Australia to opportunity, justice and equity.
- We believe in supporting people in Australia affected by poverty, disadvantage and inequality to achieve an adequate standard of living and the right to make the key decisions affected their lives
- We recognise the heritage and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the need for action that advances reconciliation and opportunity
- We value national policy solutions that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.
- We respect the civil, social, economic and cultural contributions of all individuals and communities.

The way we work

- We act ethically.
- We lead and support initiatives within the community services and welfare sector.
- We act as an independent public voice.

- We are non-party political.
- We are part of and accountable to the sector.
- We are transparent and consult widely.
- We draw on the wisdom and expertise of our diverse member base.
- We value and draw on the direct experiences of people affected by poverty, disadvantage and inequality.
- We rely on evidence to support our work and uphold high standards of research and analysis.

Strategic Plan July 2010 – June 2013

The ACOSS Board of Governors has identified four Key Result Areas in which the organisation will focus over the next three years.

The ACOSS Board will regularly review its progress against these goals, drawing on input from members and key stakeholders, and will report against these goals in future Annual Reports.

Key Result Area 1: Improve the lives of people affected by poverty, disadvantage and inequality through policy and advocacy

Goal 1. Develop policy based on independent research and analysis, real experiences and advice from the ACOSS network, the community and other sectors

Goal 2. Influence decision makers at the national level

Goal 3. Raise public awareness of issues affecting low income Australians, and appropriate policy solutions

Key result area 2: Promoting an independent, diverse, sustainable and respected community services sector

Goal 4. Promote the social and economic contribution of the sector

Goal 5. Work to strengthen the cohesion and coordination of the sector

Key result area 3: Strengthen the capacity of the organisation

Goal 6. Diversify and strengthen resource base

Goal 7. Ensure effective, transparent and accountable governance

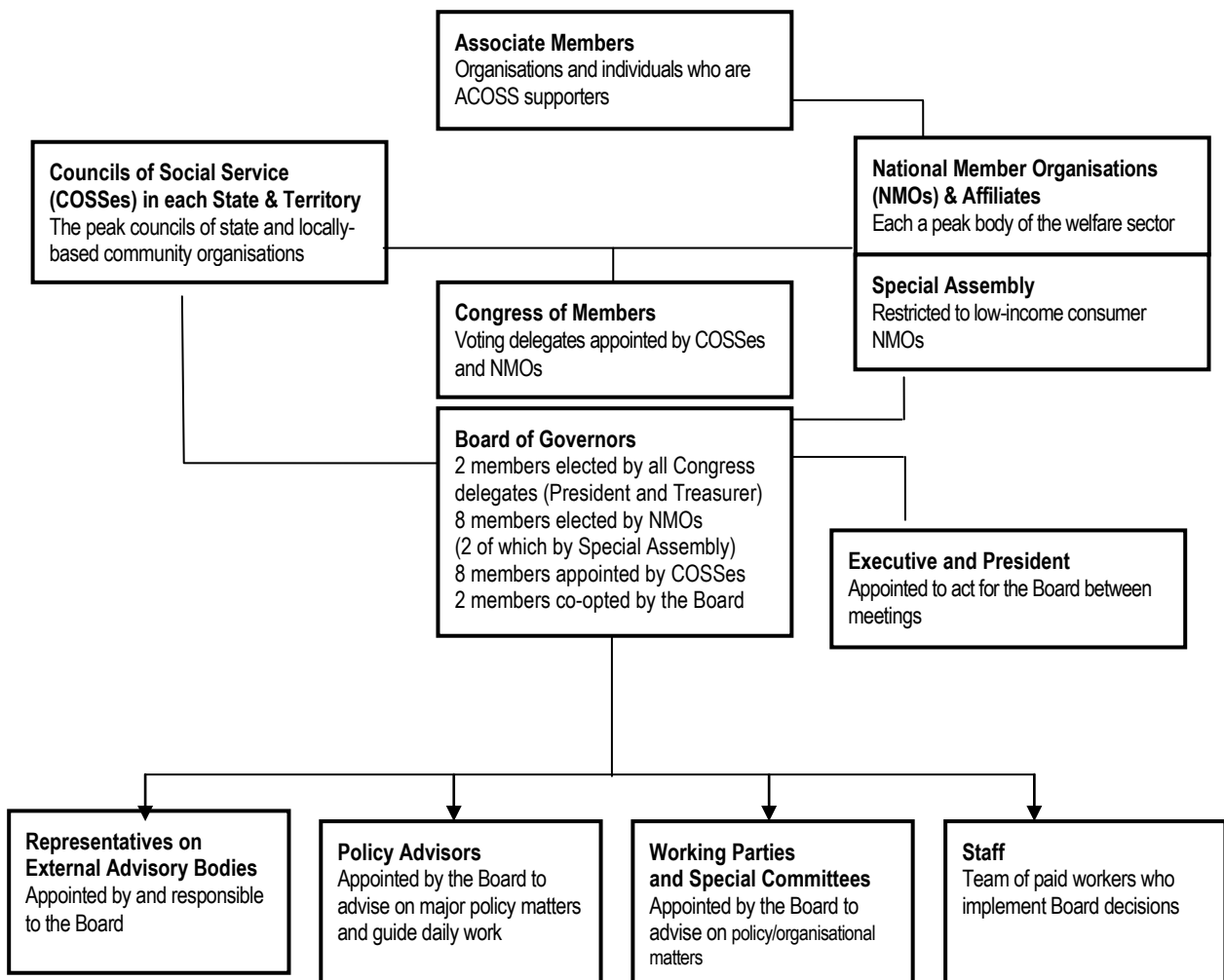
Goal 8. Maintain a well-managed organization

Key result Area 4: Effectively engaging with the ACOSS Membership

Goal 9. Be a strong representative body for ACOSS Members

Goal 10. Encourage members to contribute to and participate in our work

Structure



Key Result Area 1: Improve the lives of people affected by poverty, disadvantage and inequality through policy and advocacy

Goal 1. Develop policy based on independent research and analysis, real experiences and advice from the ACOSS network, the community and other sectors

Strategies:

1.1 Identify policy areas that will have the greatest impact

- Board to identify high priority policy areas
- Regularly review policy focus

1.2 Prepare reports, papers and submissions that are timely and of a high quality

- Initiate policy research and projects of strategic priority to Australians affected by poverty, disadvantage and inequality and/or to the sector
- Respond to reports of national significance
- Conduct appropriate consultation process in development of policy positions and publications
- Produce substantive material that adds to the body of knowledge and understanding that informs social policy

1.3 Maintain and enhance the policy advisor network

- Consult policy advisors in the development of key policy positions
- Annually review the policy advisor network

In August 2010, the ACOSS Board adopted the following high priority policy areas in light of the funding sources and current resources available:

High priority policy areas

- Economics and tax
- Employment, education and training
- Income support
- Health, particularly oral health
- Climate change and energy efficiency
- Community services and sector development

In addition, the ACOSS Board committed to working in partnership to contribute to advocacy in the following policy areas, subject to available resources:

- Housing and homelessness
- Gambling
- Indigenous policy
- Disability
- Human rights
- Law & justice
- Refugees & asylum seekers
- Violence
- Water
- Early childhood development and child protection

Goal 2. Influence decision makers at the national level

2.1 Build constructive relationships with national public policy making bodies

- Organise regular meetings with relevant federal parliamentarians, Departmental officials and other decision makers
- Communicate with relevant decision makers when specific issues arise

2.2 Advocate ACOSS policies to key public policy decision makers

- Advocate policy positions in meetings with parliamentarians
- Respond to key policy positions and announcements
- Engage in relevant parliamentary and other policy processes
- Provide quality and timely advocacy on key social policy issues

2.3 Build networks and alliances with members and other sectors

- Develop, maintain and review strategic alliances
- Strengthen existing networks and alliances

Goal 3. Raise public awareness of issues affecting low income Australians, and appropriate policy solutions

Strategies

3.1 Ensure that ACOSS is regularly participating in all forms of public discussion and media

- Initiate discussions via media and other contacts
- Respond to key issues

3.2 Develop campaigns directed to all stakeholder groups on selected ACOSS policy issues

- Identify priority policy issues requiring campaign activity
- Develop targeted campaigns around identified priority issues

3.3 Speak at and attend conferences and other public forums

- Identify conferences and other events at which ACOSS should have representation
- Seek opportunities to present at and/or attend identified events

Key Result Area 2: Promoting an independent, diverse, sustainable and respected community services sector

Goal 4: Promote the social and economic contribution of the sector

Strategies

4.1 Monitor the impact of public policy on service delivery

- Conduct regular surveys of the sector on specific issues in addition to a major comprehensive annual survey
- Produce and analyse an annual survey of member satisfaction and feedback

4.2 Demonstrate the social impact of the community services sector

- Use advocacy opportunities to showcase innovative and effective services to government and the community
- Seek other avenues to demonstrate the social impact of services

4.3 Develop and influence public policy affecting the community services sector

- Conduct regular consultation with member organisations on current issues affecting the sustainability of the sector
- Research, analyse and report on public policy issues affecting the sector
- Advocate policy solutions to key government decision makers

Goal 5: Work to strengthen the cohesion and coordination of the sector

Strategies

5.1 Establish coalitions around key issues

- Identify key issues requiring sector collaboration
- Initiate establishment of coalitions around key issues

5.2 Consult COSSes regularly around key issues

- Communicate regularly with COSSes
- Review key issues register regularly

5.4 Regularly review the protocol and communications plan between ACOSS and COSSes

- Protocol and communications plan reviewed on a regular basis

Key Result Area 3: Strengthen the capacity of the organisation

Goal 6: Diversify and strengthen resource base

Strategies

6.1 Annually review structure and rate of membership fees

- Conduct membership fees review annually
- Adjust fees as required

6.2 Identify and pursue funding and other resource strategies

- Continue to work with government on increasing ACOSS's National Secretariat Program funding
- Identify and evaluate alternative funding options
- Identify and evaluate other resource strategies
- Pursue promising strategies to strengthen resource base

Goal 7: Ensure effective, transparent and accountable governance

Strategies

7.1 Ensure the Board has in place relevant and updated policies

- Conduct an audit of the Board's policies and procedures
- Revise or write policies and procedures that are out of date or missing

7.2 Review ACOSS Constitution

- Initiate review of ACOSS constitution
- Undertake regular reviews of ACOSS Constitution

7.3 Review the Board's performance on a regular basis

- Conduct a Board review annually

7.4 Apply an appropriate risk management framework for ACOSS

- Develop a risk management framework for ACOSS
- Review the Board's risk management strategy annually

Goal 8: Maintain a well-managed organisation

Strategies

8.1 Ensure ACOSS is an employer of best practice with well trained, supported and satisfied staff

- ACOSS has in place appropriate performance management policies and procedures
- Provide opportunities for staff development

8.2 Implement policies and procedures

- ACOSS maintains and implements a complete policies and procedures manual
- Review policies and procedures on a regular basis and review or write policies and procedures that are out of date or missing

8.3 Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan

- Initiate development of a RAP
- Continuously implement RAP
- Review on a regular basis

Key result area 4: Effectively engaging with ACOSS members

Goal 9: Be a strong representative body for ACOSS members

Strategies

9.1 Ensure ACOSS has a strong membership that reflects the diversity of the sector

- Review membership and identify gaps
- Initiate contact with potential new members in key areas

9.2 Continue to improve membership communications and engagement strategies to encourage more active member engagement in ACOSS's work

- Regularly review membership communications and engagement strategies
- Initiate new strategies to enhance member engagement

Goal 10: Encourage members to contribute to and participate in our work

Strategies

10.1 Ensure ACOSS reflects the diversity of the sector in its communications and messaging

- Produce a series of communications including the ACOSS Website, online newsletter, journals, policy forums and the annual conference

10.2 Ensure effective and regular communication with members about policy focus and directions

- Issue a regular bulletin to members
- Update members as required when high profile issues arise

10.3 Active engagement with members and potential members through a program of communication activities

- Engage with members and potential members through diverse communication activities
- Regularly review member communications activities

10.4 Communicate regularly with our members about ACOSS work and policy and sector development

- Maintain ACOSS's current communications platforms with members (including website, IMPACT magazine and media releases) and review regularly
- Organise regular policy forums, including ACOSS annual Conference, Seminars on issues of interest to the sector, NMO meetings, workshops on key issues

Publications and Resources

- ACOSS Papers and Factsheets - reports and analyses.
- Australian Community Sector Survey - annual survey of issues facing the sector.
- IMPACT – quarterly magazine of news and analysis.
- Australian Journal of Social Issues - quarterly journal.
- Federal Budget Priorities Statement - ACOSS's position on policy and funding priorities.
- Federal Budget Briefing.
- ACOSS Annual Report.
- ACOSS information gateway - www.acoss.org.au.