

AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES INDUSTRY GROUP: An open letter

8 April 2009

We warmly invite all Australian not-for-profit community service providers to consider joining the Australian Community Services Industry Group (ACSIG), which has been founded by seven of Australia's largest national community service providers - Anglicare Australia, Australian Red Cross, Catholic Social Services Australia, Mission Australia, Relationships Australia, The Salvation Army and UnitingCare Australia.

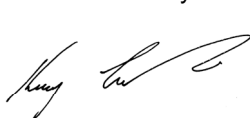
The purpose of ACSIG is to provide a national voice from an employer perspective on industry issues affecting the delivery of social services to disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians. Through ACSIG we will:

- Identify the key issues impacting on service delivery and the community sector's longer-term sustainability, e.g. adequacy and sustainability of funding, workforce supply, retention and skills.
- Ensure the shared concerns of members are represented to government and key decision-makers.
- Influence government policy and practice that impact on the effectiveness of community service delivery, e.g. regulatory requirements, administrative compliance, funding accountability.
- Act as an industry representative body for governments, unions and employees seeking to address shared concerns in the social services sector.

An outline of ACSIG's purpose, objectives, membership, operating values and constitution is attached.

Any one of us would be delighted to discuss possible membership with you. Alternatively, you may wish to discuss membership with Joe Zabar in the first instance, on 0427 448 402.

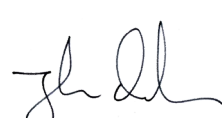
Yours sincerely



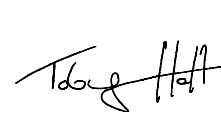
Kasy Chambers
Executive Director
Anglicare Australia



Michael Raper
Director of Services
and International
Programs
Australian Red Cross




Frank Quinlan
Executive Director
Catholic Social
Services Australia



Mr Toby Hall
CEO
Mission Australia



Rhonda Law Street
National Director
Relationships
Australia



Major David Eldridge
Territorial Social
Programme Secretary
representing Australia
Southern Territory
and Australia Eastern
Territory



Lin Hatfield Dodds
National Director
UnitingCare Australia



AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES INDUSTRY GROUP: Brief Outline

Purpose:

The purpose of the Australian Community Services Industry Group (ACSIG) is to provide a national voice from an employer perspective on industry issues affecting the delivery of services to disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians.

Objectives:

The objectives of ACSIG will be to:

- Identify the key issues impacting on service delivery and the community sector's longer-term sustainability, such as adequacy and sustainability of funding, workforce supply, retention and skills.
- Ensure the shared concerns of members are represented to government and key decision-makers.
- Influence government policy and practice that impact on the effectiveness of community service delivery, e.g. regulatory requirements, administrative compliance, funding accountability.
- Act as an industry representative body for governments, unions and employees seeking to address shared concerns in the social services sector.

Membership:

In order to provide a focal point for the sector, major national providers of community services will be the foundation members of ACSIG. Any other service provider that undertakes community services at a national level, or in a majority of States and Territories, will be eligible for membership, and to nominate a person for election to the Board. All members must be, or directly represent, not-for profit social service providers and be willing and able to comply with the Group's agreed operating values.

Operating values:

Members of ACSIG must comply with the following operating values:

- Better meeting the needs of disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable Australians in a sustainable way is the primary interest of the Group.
- The interests of community service providers as a whole are placed ahead of the interests of any individual member.
- The Group will act together on shared concerns on industry issues unless there are compelling reasons to act separately; however, any individual member is free to act and speak in their own right.
- Members of the Group will act transparently and collaboratively.
- Where possible and appropriate, the Group will favour the longer-term sustainability needs of the Sector over short-term objectives.

Constitution:

A formal constitution will be developed for the Group, the detail of which will be finalised once the Foundation membership is determined and their roles and responsibilities are agreed. The issues to be covered in the Constitution include but are not limited to:

1. Objectives and Purpose

- Purpose (above)
- Activities to be performed (in the first instance these will be limited to advocacy, representation and advice to Government, but the Group may later decide to provide a range of member services)
- Operating values (above)

2. Structure

- Board membership (Up to 9 members: 7 Foundation members, comprising large national NFP community service providers that are willing and able to comply with the Group's values; and up to 2 members from the wider industry who would be elected for 3-year terms, coming from any other national NFP community service provider organisation; and an ex-officio observer participant seat on the Board for ACOSS)
- Types of membership (to be determined)
- Annual membership fees (to be determined)

3. Operation of ACSIG

- Meetings
- Decision-making processes
- Communications protocols
- Public office holders
- Conflicts of Interest
- Complaints and termination of membership