

MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES INDUSTRY GROUP FORMED

In an historic move, an inaugural industry body for social services organisations was launched by founding members today in Canberra. The Australian Community Services Industry Group will provide a national voice from an employer perspective on industry issues, such as funding and workforce supply, which affect the delivery of social services to disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians.

Founding members of ACSIG are seven of Australia's largest community service providers: Anglicare Australia, Australian Red Cross, Catholic Social Services Australia, Mission Australia, Relationships Australia, The Salvation Army and UnitingCare Australia.

Membership of ACSIG is open to all Australian not-for-profit organisations which provide community services or which directly represent providers.

"There are many groups which represent the interests of disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians, but to date there has been no industry body to help ensure the viability and sustainability of the many organisations which provide these essential services," said Kasy Chambers, Executive Director of Anglicare Australia.

"ACSIG will ensure that the shared concerns of members are represented to government and key decision-makers," said Michael Raper, Director of Services and International Operations of Australian Red Cross.

Frank Quinlan, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia, said, "our organisations cannot assist disadvantaged people without appropriate contracts and arrangements with both our funders and our employees."

"ACSIG will act as an industry representative body for governments, unions and employees seeking to address shared concerns in the social services sector," said Rhonda Lawson Street, National Director of Relationships Australia.

"The timely formation of this group reflects a desire of key service providers to better coordinate and mobilise resources to improve the effectiveness of the social service system and so to help ensure a decent life for disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians," said Toby Hall, CEO of Mission Australia.

Major David Eldridge, Territorial Social Program Secretary of The Salvation Army, said, "Over coming months we anticipate expanding the membership base of ACSIG to other community service providers to ensure that they too have a stronger voice in the future of community service delivery in Australia."

"Our primary focus is to strengthen the social services sector to ensure that ongoing needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians are met," said Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director of UnitingCare Australia.

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Contact: Michael Brown, 0418 916 936

