



wacoss

Western Australian
Council of Social Service Inc

*Ways to make
a difference*

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

www.wacoss.org.au

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ABOUT THE WA COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

OVERVIEW

The Western Australian Council of Social Service Inc – WACOSS - the leading peak organisation for the community, represents three hundred member organisations and affiliates, and 600 organisations involved in the provision of services to the community.

WACOSS is part of a national network consisting of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) and state and territory COSS's. Our national coverage strengthens our capacity to represent state interests.

We speak with and for, the 400,000 West Australians who regularly access community services each year, whose voice and interests need to be brought to the attention of government, decisions makers, media, business and the wider community.

WACOSS also works to strengthen the capacity of individuals, communities and organisations in the not for profit community services sector by providing training, consultancy and sector development activities.

OBJECTS

The objects of the Council are as follows -

- (a) to assist organisations within the community services sector with the development of socially just, professional, efficient, effective, co-operative and compassionate services, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups members of the community.
- (b) to represent the views and needs of client groups and populations to all levels of the government and non-government sector, the media and general public, in relation to social policies, community services planning and service delivery issues.
- (c) to educate community services personnel and the public about issues affecting social and community service organisations and their clientele.
- (d) to produce proactive, powerful, principled and well informed social policy.
- (e) to adopt any additional objects from time to time which objects are of a public benevolent nature.
- (f) to advocate for a united Australia which respects this land of ours, values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all.

VISION

The WACOSS vision is an inclusive, just and equitable society now and in the future.

MISSION

WACOSS, in collaboration with our membership, and as part of a national network, represents the interests of Western Australians who experience disadvantage.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-11 KEY RESULTS AREAS

- 1. Policy developed that promotes the well being of all Western Australians,
- 2. The capacity of the Community Services sector is strengthened,
- 3. Government, business and the community achieve progressive social change: and
- 4. WACOSS is self determining and viable.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Engagement with the Government of Western Australia on the development of the second Economic Audit Committee report and the implementation of the findings and recommendations of that report has been central to the work of WACOSS this year.

Achieving fair and just wages for community services sector staff in Western Australia remains a key strategy for WACOSS. Significant work in this area has been undertaken in partnership with other bodies such as Community Employers WA. The WACOSS Pre Budget Submission for 2010 estimated that the existing State Government contracts with not-for-profit community sector service organisations are underfunded by \$198m. This gap in much needed funding is threatening the sustainability of many services and in some cases the viability of organisations delivering the services. Resolving this issue is critical to the ongoing delivery of essential and quality services to the community of Western Australia.

The Western Australian community still has significant identifiable areas of disadvantage and poverty. Even with increasing economic development, our objective is to minimise the number of WA citizens experiencing this type of hardship and improve the long-term consequences for their wellbeing and capacity to enable them to participate in the community in which they live.

At a national level, the implications of the changes to Commonwealth Government processes through the National Reform agenda and the role of the Council of Australian Government (COAG) has meant that the role of ACOSS has been challenged by the development of a number of different national entities. Ensuring a strong national voice for Western Australian social policy issues will need to remain a key focus for the coming year.

The Board of WACOSS has been particularly active this year. The Governance Committee chaired by Peter Sirr with Terri Reilly and Tricia Murray as members has undertaken a number of essential activities including a review of the constitution and preparation for the development of a new Strategic Plan.

The Finance Committee chaired by Francis Lynch with Louise Giolitto and Ian Roberts as members, in conjunction with our Chief Executive Officer, Sue Ash, has worked with Nulsen Independent Support through a period of significant financial growth. At year end, the Board is considering recommendations to move toward insourcing the financial management of the organisation in the coming financial year.

The Board also appointed a Strategic Reference Group consisting of three Board members, Ian Carter, Angle Paskevicius and myself, together with three representatives of the WACOSS membership, Neil Hamilton, Ron Mell and Dr Maria Harries to work with the staff and inform other forums contributing to the various sector reform activities in which WACOSS has been engaged during the year.

I wish to acknowledge and thank my fellow Board members for their significant contributions in advancing the important work of WACOSS during the year. I especially thank Stanley Jeyaraj for his valuable contribution to the Board and the Finance Committee and welcome Norma Josephs who was elected to the Board in October 2009.

I wish to express the Board's appreciation to Sue Ash and her team for the outstanding work that they have performed throughout the year. I especially pay tribute to Sue for the way she has worked with the Board to provide effective leadership for the Western Australian community sector in general.

Chris Hall
President

BOARD MEMBERSHIP 2009-2010

Chris Hall	Board President	2 Absences
Francis Lynch	Board Vice President (October 2009 - June 2010)	1 Absence
Angie Paskevicius	Board Vice President (July 2009 - October 2009)	1 Absence
John Ambrose	Member	3 Absences
Ian Carter AO	Member	2 Absences
Zane D'Mello	Member	2 Absences
Louise Giolitto	Member	1 Absence
Norma Josephs	Member (Elected October 2009)	
Stanley Jeyaraj	Member (Completed term October 2009)	1 Absence
Tricia Murray (formerly Lee)	Member	
Terri Reilly	Member	3 Absences
Peter Sirr	Member	3 Absences

BOARD COMMITTEES

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Francis Lynch	Chair
Louise Giolitto	Member
Stanley Jeyaraj	Member (July – October 2009)
Ian Roberts	Member (October 2009 – June 2010)

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Peter Sirr	Chair
Terri Reilly	Member
Tricia Murray	Member

STRATEGIC SECTOR REFERENCE COMMITTEE

Chris Hall
Ian Carter
Angie Paskevicius

FINANCIAL REPORT

NULSEN – INDEPENDENT SUPPORT

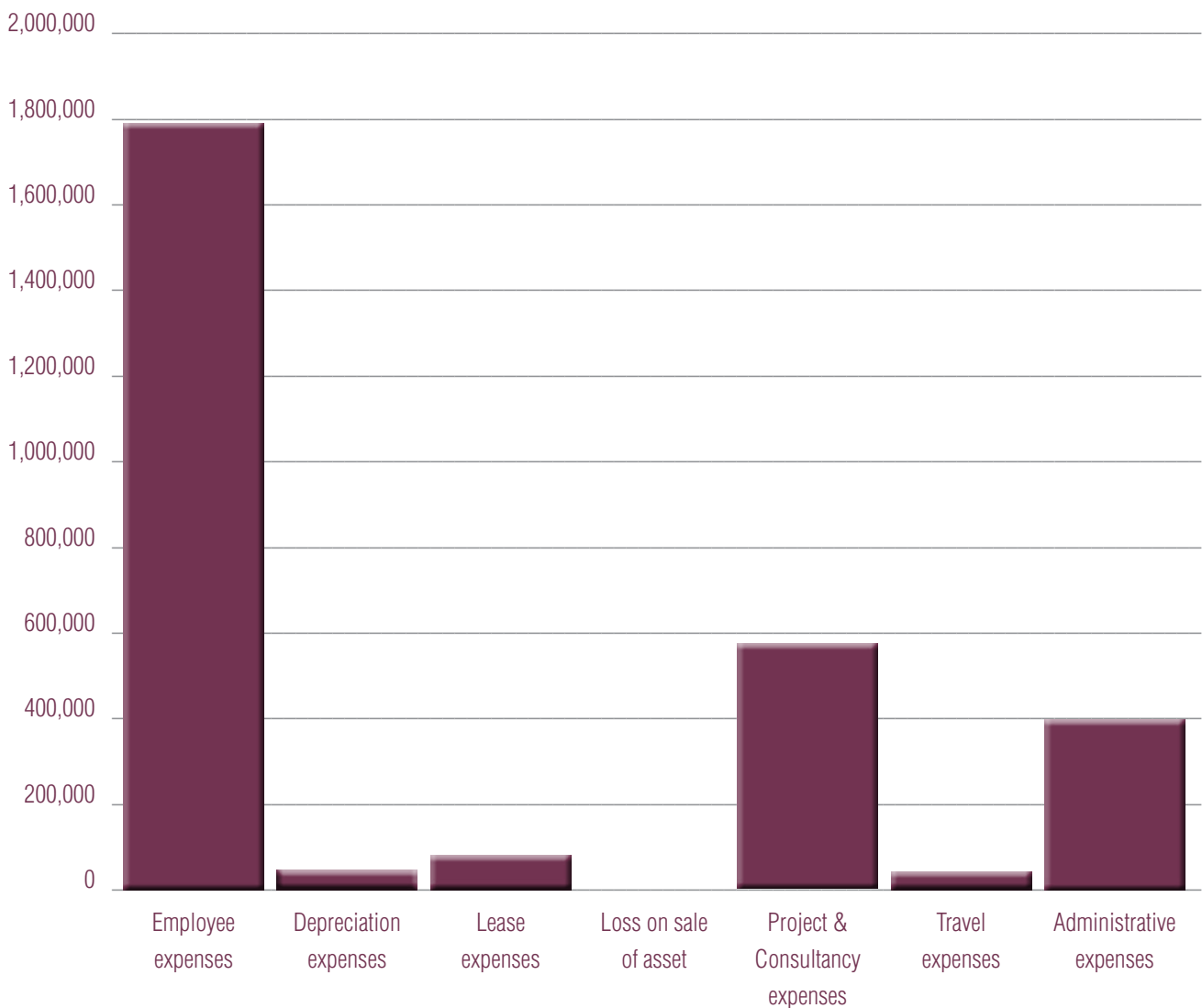
Nulsen – Independent Support provided Accounting, Payroll and Financial Management support to WACOSS in 2009-10. Additional Payroll services were undertaken with the recruitment of over 30 new staff under the Community Jobs Fund Programs.

By year end, the WACOSS Board was considering a proposal to move financial management in house. Our thanks to Heather Blyth and the team at Nulsen for their work with WACOSS through a period of change and growth.

FINANCIAL POSITION

Total Revenue for Ordinary Expenses \$2,988,634.

WACOSS 2009/10 Graph of Expenditure



MEMBERSHIP

At the close of the 2009-10 financial year, the WACOSS Membership consisted of:

- 194 Social Service Organisation Members
- 25 Social Service Individual Members
- 9 Associate Organisation Members
- 11 Associate Individual Members
- 5 Life Members

WACOSS membership is made up of not only metro organisations but a growing number of regionally based organisations. 25% of members are now based in regional and rural areas.

A small number of members did not renew their membership for 2009-10. The reasons for non renewal included organisations that wound up, merged with other organisations or determined that they would maintain their connection with WACOSS through membership of one of the sector Peak organisations.

New Members

WACOSS has been proud to welcome 26 new members. The biggest increase was in the area of Social Service Organisations. The Pilbara Association of Non Government Organisations (PANGO) joined WACOSS and negotiations are underway with other Regional Peak organisations to engage with WACOSS in order to build capacity of the not for profit Community Services sector in WA regional and rural areas.

Commitment around voluntary contribution

This past year, WACOSS has worked hard to bring about new opportunities for our sector to address the needs of clients and to improve the sustainability of service providers to create the future of our sector.

There are many challenges still ahead of us, and our work this past year has created both opportunities and challenges through the Economic Audit Committee (EAC) report implementation. The EAC process is looking to undertake reforms which will improve the funding and contracting relationship between our sector and government, as well as policy collaboration and service delivery for the benefit of the Western Australian community.

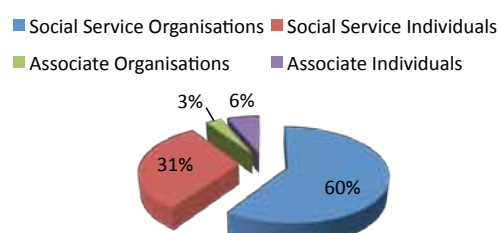
In 2010 WACOSS, for the first time sought an optional voluntary contribution to our work over the next twelve months to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the Economic Audit Committee and address the challenges it poses for our sector.

WACOSS anticipates that the State Government will contribute to the cost of our participation in these processes. We believe that a contribution from our membership will strengthen our independence and capacity to make the most of these opportunities.

Number of Members



New Member Types



CEO'S REPORT

WACOSS has engaged with a number of critical issues during 2009-2010. We entered this year in the midst of a global financial crisis. As a result, we have seen a change in the nature of people needing services – those who are poor and excluded and, as a result of the global financial crisis, a growing number of people who were impacted by under employment or salary levels that don't allow people to meet their housing and utility costs.

Mental health, drug and alcohol issues and lack of stable affordable housing are the three consistent areas of concern for community service providers. With support from Lotterywest, WACOSS was able to participate in the Social Housing Taskforce and support the engagement of the not for profit community service peaks in this process. The Government's response to the report is still being developed. The community service sector is also struggling with housing our own staff in regional areas and Key Worker housing for community service staff has been added to our advocacy agenda this year.

Demand for financial services and food support services increased by more than 20% according to many of our member organisations. Commonwealth government policy changes advocating Compulsory Income Management for an increasing number of metropolitan area recipients of income support payments indicates that demand for food and material support may continue to increase as people have their limited income managed to cover essential services such as housing and utilities, but have limited income left for food and clothing. Influencing National policy agendas including the renegotiation of National Agreements and National Partnership Agreements will require WACOSS to work with our national colleagues in new and different ways in the future.

WACOSS has engaged in significant partnership work with the Peaks through the Peaks Forum – leading to the Community Jobs Fund application. This meant that we were working to develop the sector collaboratively and together, brought an additional \$2.86million into the community services sector, one of the single greatest injection of funds into the sector for many years.

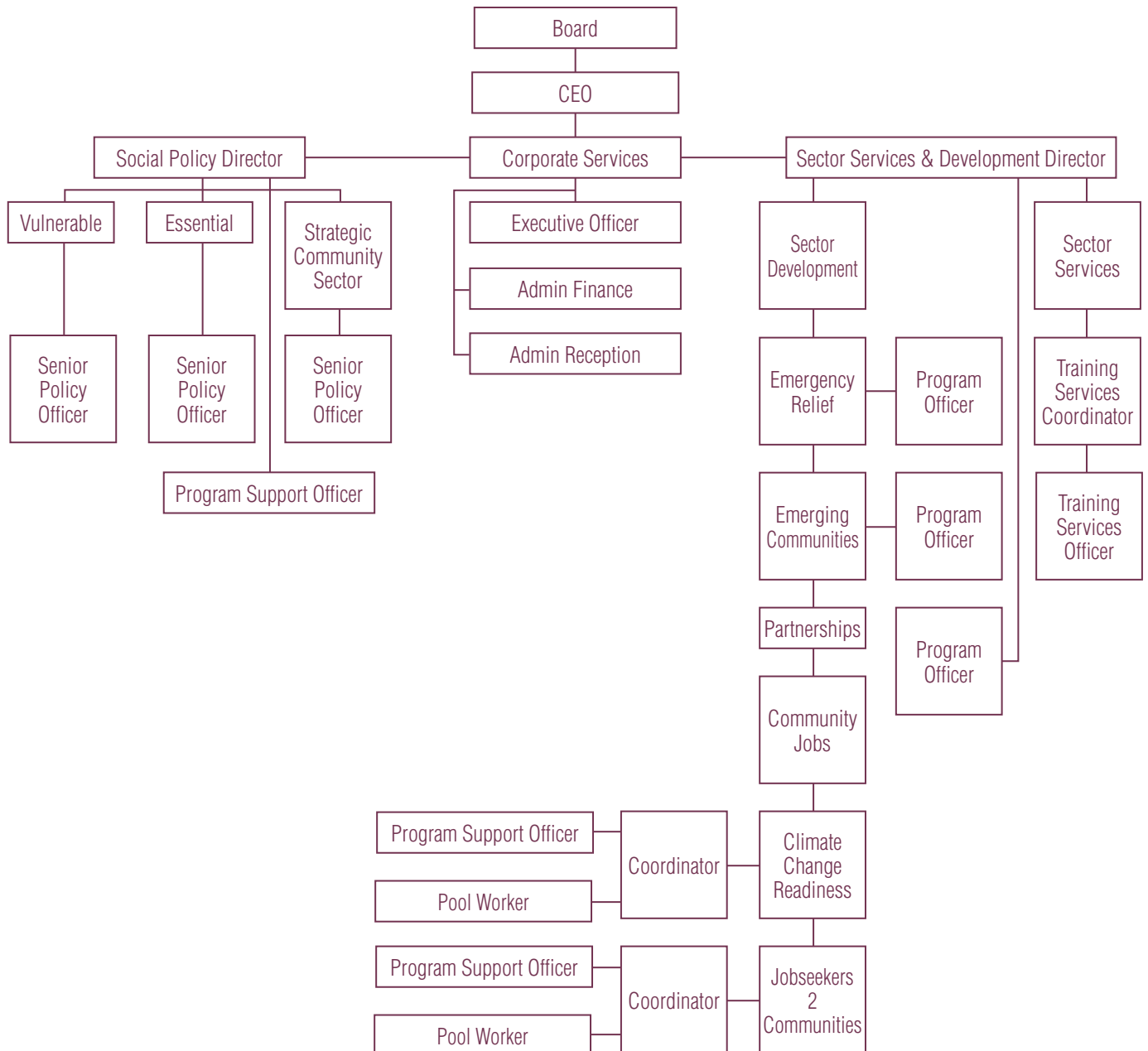
Regional Peak development including membership by PANGO of WACOSS, a presentation to the Regional Development Commissions at Exmouth on a proposal for the development of regional community services Peaks, the first funding of the initiative with Peel Development Commission funding a collaborative proposal between the Peel Community Development Group and WACOSS. As the Minister for Regional Development indicated when he launched the initiative, hopefully this will be a precursor of many other initiatives. Collaboration with Department for Communities and Lotterywest to review and re-establish the Community Services Excellence Awards and to hold them on the evening of the WACOSS Conference. Our whole of community sector work continued through four activities. The Bi Annual WACOSS conference was held in May at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre for the first time. We endeavour to hold whole of sector activities about once every three months. This year, we prepared the WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission and presented this to the WA Government in October, we celebrated the sector with a New Year Breakfast in January and presented the second Emerging Issues presentation in April.

WACOSS has received incredible support from our members this year. Fee income increased by more than 40% and a number of members, both organisational and individual provided additional funding for some of our policy engagement work. We also received unprecedented support from Government. The Economic Regulatory Authority enabled WACOSS to participate in a study tour of the Kimberleys relating to Pre-Payment meters and I appreciated the opportunity to visit many communities that I had worked in years ago. Government and Member agencies provided significant sponsorship for our conference and all political parties have been engaged in a range of forums and presentations WACOSS has run this year.

I wish to thank Irina Cattalini and Lyn Levy for their collaboration and partnership in managing the organisation, David Paris and then Jackie Breasley for their efficient management of the difficult juggling act of managing my diary; and all the staff who have made a contribution at WACOSS. It is a humbling experience working with and leading an organisation where so many people work together to allow us to regularly "punch well above our weight".

Finally, I would like to thank Chris Hall for his professional and personal support, Francis Lynch for his engagement with the financial management of the organisation and the rest of the WACOSS Board for your availability and enthusiasm for the work of WACOSS.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



WHOLE OF SECTOR INITIATIVES 2009/2010

THE WACOSS CONFERENCE

The Biannual WACOSS Conference “Gearing for Change” was held at the Convention Centre on the 12th-14th of May 2010. The Conference featured outstanding international and interstate keynote speakers and was attended by more than 320 delegates of the community services sector from across the State.

The themes of this year's conference were “Claiming our identity”, “Growing our Strengths”, “Sharing our stories” and “Driving our future”. Conference feedback below shows the themes were both relevant and well received by attendees.



Future of the Sector Networking Day Participants vote using Keepad Technology

Conference activities started on 12 May with the Future of the Sector Networking Day which was not only a great opportunity to network but was also where work began on a new blueprint for the future of services for the WA Community with a focus on rural and regional services. The day was opened by Minister Brendan Grylls and was facilitated by respected futurist Anita Kelleher from Designer Futures. A feature of both the Future of the Sector Networking Day and the Conference was the use of remote video conferencing equipment and audience response system technology (Keepads). 89% of Conference attendees agreed that the ability to vote in real time via the Keepads was effective and should be used at future Conferences.



Premier Colin Barnett opens the 2010 WACOSS Conference

The conference proper was opened on 13 May by the WA Premier, The Honourable Colin Barnett. The Leader of the Opposition, The Honourable Eric Ripper provided the opening address on the final conference day. This year WACOSS made a strategic decision to align the conference with the State Budget release, to provide both the Premier and Leader of the Opposition with an opportunity to address the largest gathering of sector workers about key issues for the sector, including funding.

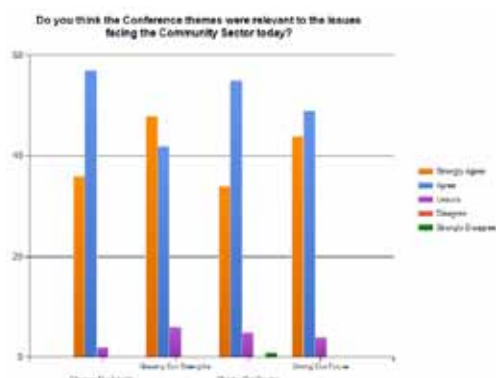
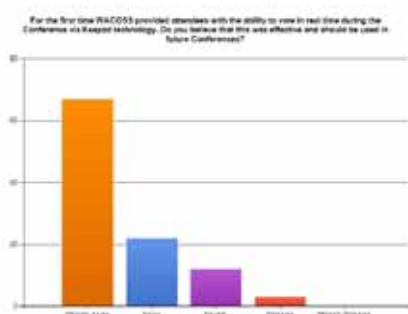
With significant reforms facing the community sector arising from the State Government's Economic Audit Committee agenda, as well as other State and national policy changes, the Conference was an ideal opportunity to report on the most topical issues in the community sector and will help shape the blueprint vision for the sector.



WACOSS CEO Sue Ash addresses the Future of the Sector Networking Day

The debate around the future of the sector was timely and relevant, enhanced by the engagement of a broad cross section of both State and Federal Members of Parliament. The Premiers announcements and support for the sector were also welcomed.

Key note speakers included Hildy Gottlieb, President of the Community Driven Institute, Arizona USA, Mark Bin Baker, 2008 Western Australian of the Year, Jan Owen AM, Social Ventures Australia and Professor Peter Shergold, Macquarie Group Foundation who each addressed a conference theme.



Community Service excellence awards

A support group for young mums, a musical therapy program for at-risk youth and a theatre group for older women are among the organisations that took out top honours at Western Australia's 2010 Community Services Excellence Awards.

The Community Services Excellence Awards were organised by the Department for Communities in partnership with WACOSS and thanks to the generous support of Lotterywest and sponsors Hesta Super Fund, Rio Tinto and Bankwest.

The seven winners of the awards – which pay tribute to the crucial role the not-for-profit community services sector plays in supporting those in need – were announced at a gala dinner at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on Thursday 13 May 2010.

The winners in the seven categories were:

The Older Women's Network WA Inc – The Older Women's Network Theatre Group, Thornlie (Volunteer-based organisation category)

Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre Inc 'Mum's the Word' program, Albany (Small group/organisation)

Holyoake Drumbeat Program, Victoria Park (Medium group/organisation)

Community First International – Personal Helpers and Mentors Program, Mandurah (Large group/organisation)

Stage Left Theatre Troupe Goldfields WA Inc, Kalgoorlie (Regional group/organisation)

Joondalup Youth Support Services Inc – COMET Program, Joondalup (Partnerships category)

Robert Reekie from Busselton – Mates Men's Support Group President (Individuals category).

Uniting Outreach Busselton's The Match Factory Community Shop, a finalist in the regional group or organisation category, was voted by their industry peers as the most outstanding entrant amongst the finalists and awarded the Hesta Sector's Choice Award.

Peaks Forum

The WA Peaks Forum meets bi monthly. The forum developed a strategic plan in February 2009 with four key results areas:

- Build the Capacity of the Sector;
- Prepare a Discussion Paper on the role of Peak Organisations in WA;
- Develop a model to enhance consumer engagement and voice in social service systems specifically housing; and
- Establish a portal for registration of training relevant to the Community Services sector, particularly regional and rural communities.

The Forum undertook specific activities in these four areas.

Eleven Peaks came together, with WACOSS as lead agency, to tender for Community Jobs Funds. A report on this proposal follows.

At the beginning of the year, the President's and CEO's of the Community Service Peaks met to discuss the role and sustainability of Peaks. A Working Group was established to develop a new WA Peaks Paper, and met in April 2010.

It was agreed that an informative paper describing the WA Peak sector will better position the NFP sector with stakeholders, providing information, enhance network opportunities, and facilitate strategic alliances. The paper would go beyond providing an environmental scan of the sector – it would assist the sector to strategise its future. It will provide the broader community and stakeholders such as Government, NFP Boards, and the Peak Forum with a better understanding of the role of the Peaks. It will also outline the social sector peak structure in the context of business and industry peaks.

Members agreed that the position paper will assist the sector to better advocate and develop long term planning for funding, providing a platform to assist organisations and stakeholders to discuss the varied service and funding models that support the infrastructure and service delivery of NFPs in WA.

A Discussion Paper relating to Consumer Engagement was prepared with Shelter WA as lead agency. This paper will be used to inform the sector's contribution to the changes proposed in the Economic Audit Committee and other consumer engagement strategies.

The Training Portal has been established and will be attached to the new WACOSS website to assist with ease of access by organisations and individuals, particularly those in rural and regional areas.

Community Jobs Fund Programs (Sector Services and Development)

Two new and innovative programs were developed in conjunction with the Peaks Forum that led to the successful tendering of the Jobseekers2Communities and the Climate Change Readiness Programs. The programs, funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), have resulted in the need to establish a Fremantle branch office.

Jobseekers2Communities Program



The first group of
Jobseekers2Communities
Program Participants

This Program employs skilled unemployed staff to work in a range of administrative and back-end operations of Not for Profit organisations across metropolitan WA. Since operations commenced in November 2009 a total of 14 project workers have been recruited and oriented to the community sector and set to work on projects identified by sector agencies. This orientation consists of a weeklong induction program which we are looking at developing into a sector resource that will be freely available to all Peaks and their members.

Forty six projects have made successful applications for work. We estimate 11,916 staff hours have been provided to over 32 community service organisations so far.

Projects completed have included website development, records management, database development, event management and planning, marketing and communications, policies and procedures, and annual report development.

The benefits this program brings to community service organisations include the completion of projects that required additional internal resources, cost savings, support to operational staff, improved systems and processes, and enhancement of management and governance processes. A third of the Jobseekers are now employed in the not for profit human services sector full time.

Climate Change Readiness Program

The Climate Change Readiness program was developed to recruit, train and employ 48 job seekers, over an 18 month period, from the south-west coastal corridor of Perth, to become Energy and Greenhouse Auditors. Training is provided by Greenskills, a non-for-profit organisation providing specialist training in energy and environment courses.

Once the job seekers have completed their training, they provide free energy and greenhouse audits to community services in the Perth metropolitan area. These audits cover areas including electricity, gas and water use. The auditors provide the community services with a detailed report with recommendations on how to reduce their energy and water use.

The program provides funding for the audited community services for retrofitting; the implementation of the recommendations from their reports. The funding is available for minor retrofitting, of approximately \$1,000 and major retrofitting of \$25,000.

To date, 22 job seekers have been trained as Energy and Greenhouse auditors. By the end of the funding period, the auditors will have completed 700 energy and greenhouse audits on a diverse range of community services across the Perth metropolitan area. Approximately 100 community services have received some level of retrofitting, including energy efficient lighting, insulation, heat pumps and photovoltaics. Auditors will also be equipped to undertake a range of other audits for individual and community services entities.

Economic Audit Report Implementation (Social Policy)

The Economic Audit Committee (EAC) was established by the current Liberal-National Government to provide advice to Government regarding reform of the public sector and publicly-funded services. The report prepared by the EAC 'Putting the Public First,' makes a wide ranging number of recommendations that present significant opportunities and challenges for our sector.

Putting the Public First Report

WACOSS welcomed the release of the EAC report as the principles embodied in the report reflected much of what the sector has called for in the WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission, Putting People First. The principles in the EAC report have the potential to benefit the community services sector and the people of Western Australia, but they present real challenges as well. The report recognises that not-for-profit organisations are efficient, cost effective providers of services to the public and recommends the sector playing a greater role in service delivery.

The Government has indicated that it is critical for WACOSS to play a lead role in this process as the key sector representative and has given a verbal assurance that it will provide funding to cover the cost of involvement. Further work is in progress to confirm the Government's contribution.

WACOSS EAC Submissions

WACOSS has already played a pivotal role to progress the review and implementation process, having made two submissions to the EAC, following consultation with the WA Peaks Forum and WACOSS members.

The first submission primarily argued that EAC recommendations are extremely wide-ranging, and have the potential to reshape the relationship between the WA Government and the community services sector and those people accessing services.

WACOSS's second submission to the EAC had a significant focus on the potential benefits and pitfalls of a move towards client-directed services.

Engaging the Community Sector in the EAC Agenda

WACOSS is committed to ensuring that the community services sector is well represented and engaged in the EAC agenda.

WACOSS is closely involved in the EAC implementation process to progress the agenda of the EAC work is proceeding at a fast pace guided by the establishment of an EAC Implementation Working Group, steered through the Department of Premier (DPC) and Cabinet and the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) with WACOSS representation.

WACOSS conducted a Social Policy Forum with the community sector in March 2010 to inform the not-for-profit sector of the likely impact of the EAC recommendations. The policy forum identified opportunities for how the sector might engage and partner in delivering better publicly-funded services.

The EAC reform opportunities were also a key theme in our Emerging Issues Forum in April and throughout the WACOSS Conference in May 2010. At the Conference, the Premier announced the establishment of a new Partnership Forum between government and the community sector, one of the key EAC recommendations.

WACOSS President Chris Hall and CEO Sue Ash represent the community sector on the Partnership Forum, a key component of the Governance structure that has been developed to oversee the implementation of EAC recommendations. The Partnership Forum, chaired by Professor Peter Shergold from the Centre for Social Impact held its first meeting on 16 July 2010.

EAC Steering and Working Groups

The Partnership Forum is supported by a number of Steering Groups and Working Groups to progress a range of agendas of significance to our sector. Key groups include the Policy Capacity and Collaboration Steering Group, Community Building Steering Group, Budget Process Steering Group, Community Sector Funding Working Group and the Procurement in Partnership Working Group.

WACOSS has played a proactive role in shaping the Steering and Working Group structures, supporting community sector membership and developing draft terms of reference for respective groups. WACOSS is also proposing to mirror (for key groups) the EAC Governance structure for the community sector as a mechanism to engage the sector and provide better considered and consensus positions to Government.

Working Groups

WACOSS will engage the sector in the agenda of various working groups on issues including:

- Developing a new policy framework for funding and purchasing of services, including addressing the 30% funding gap between the public and community sector;
- Reducing the administrative burden and red tape in government contracting;
- The establishment of a \$10million Community Development Investment Fund through which low-interest loans will be offered to eligible community sector organisations;
- \$14 million over four years for a Social Innovation Grants Program to promote new and improved ways of delivering social and community services;
- Streamlining of payments and concessions to create a single point in government and reduce complexity for those eligible for concessions; and
- Piloting new approaches to consumer directed service delivery models, and community hubs, in different parts of our sector.

Future Sector Engagement

WACOSS has undertaken a comprehensive range of engagement strategies with the sector to ensure that the views we put forward are truly representative of all parts of the community sector.

This includes discussions with sector representatives (comprising community sector members that sit on various EAC Steering and working groups), briefing the WA Peaks Forum, the engagement of sector people on working parties; and the identification of issues and strategies for working with key stakeholders such as NDS, CEWA etc.

WACOSS is also briefing regional organisations on the implementation of the EAC recommendations. The sessions will provide an opportunity to discuss new initiatives to improve outcomes for people who rely on community services and reform the relationship between the community sector and government. Sessions will be conducted in Albany, Kununurra, Broome, Mandurah and Geraldton.

WACOSS has also convened the EAC Strategic Reference Group and the EAC representatives to provide leadership and direction on key EAC implementation issues from a community sector perspective.

WACOSS and the Department of Treasury and Finance will be conducting a joint EAC Forum information session to provide an update on implementation of the EAC agenda. The morning session will cover what progress has been made in the EAC implementation process while in the afternoon, the Department of Treasury and Finance will outline the work that is being done by the Procurement in Partnership Working Group (including a discussion of contracting arrangements with the community sector).

Looking forward, key strategic issues with the EAC implementation process include ensuring that the funding issue continues to be the priority item in the EAC agenda that needs resolution and that WACOSS continues to provide opportunity for the community sector to be engaged and consulted in the implementation process including conducting forums and workshops on important reform areas for the sector.

WACOSS is continuing to work with the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through their secretariat role, to develop a public website so that the work being undertaken on the EAC agenda is transparent and accessible. Similarly, an extranet function that will facilitate improved communication amongst those directly involved in EAC implementation is also being developed. This will assist the more efficient distribution of meeting agendas, minutes and papers.

New Year Breakfast

WACOSS hosted our annual New Year Sector Breakfast for the Community Services Sector on Friday 22 January 2010. Held at the Vietnam Pavilion in the Synergy Parkland, Kings Park, and attended by approximately 100 guests, the event gave representatives from the community services sector, government, and mainstream business an opportunity to enjoy a light breakfast, network, and to share stories and ideas in a relaxed and informal setting.

The morning also allowed WACOSS an opportunity to update the sector on our priorities for 2010, and to host the launch of the 2010 Community Service Excellence Awards by Minister for Communities, the Honourable Robyn McSweeney.



Launch of the Community Service Excellence Awards at the WACOSS New Year Breakfast 2010

SOCIAL POLICY

WACOSS PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION FOR 2010-11

The WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission for 2010-11 set out a strategy for Investing in the Social Advantage of WA, by funding critical areas of social infrastructure and services that will support the community now and into the future. WACOSS conducted an extensive consultation process with community sector organisations and Peaks, including regional forums, to develop the Pre-Budget Submission for 2010.

WACOSS argued that the second State budget delivered by the Liberal-National Coalition on 20 May 2010, needed to recognise the true value of the community sector in supporting and helping those Western Australians most in need. It was also argued that the State Budget needed to invest in social services and infrastructure, such as social housing, mental health services and support for Indigenous services and reconciliation strategies.

Although the WA economy is recovering from the GFC, there are still many West Australians facing prolonged financial and other hardship, and agencies are still facing an average 20% increase in the demand for their services, particularly in the context of ongoing rises in household costs.

A critical issue highlighted by WACOSS is ensuring the community sector is fairly paid so it can attract and retain skilled staff to deliver the quality of services the community deserve. The WACOSS Budget Submission draws attention to a \$198million funding shortfall, which is contributing to a salary gap averaging 30% compared to the public sector.

The State Government through its Economic Audit Committee (EAC) report also recognises that not-for-profit organisations are efficient, cost effective providers of services to the public. However, while the Premier has indicated his intention to invest more in services for the community, this budget did not deliver on that intention.

The new investment in the community services sector foreshadowed by the Premier was delayed. This will impede our capacity to keep up with the demand for services that will result from increased financial hardship in the community. WACOSS has been advised that the community services sector will receive a 3.1% indexation on its current funding contracts.

On a more positive note, WACOSS welcomed the \$60 million investment in the new mental health commission, and increased allocations to cover the cost of more children coming in to the care of the state. Furthermore, we welcomed the greater investment in regional services, the \$2 million Social Innovation Grants Scheme, and the \$10 million Community Development Investment Fund.

WACOSS indicated to Government that its intention to deliver a social dividend over the next three years was jeopardised through the soaring cost of living for households. The Budget factored in Household cost increases of more than \$400 more each year in fees and charges, with more utility price shocks on the way. Those increased costs are expected to have secondary impacts that will flow onto households from other parts of the economy.

WACOSS also expressed concern that the government is not adequately addressing housing affordability in WA. We're seeing a trend of diminishing investment in social housing across the forward estimates, and a reduced level of expenditure on housing capital works, at a time when community needs it most. We questioned the government's sense of priority in spending \$380 million in housing for government workers over the next four years, and only \$230 million for social housing for the most vulnerable over the same period. The budget initiatives for housing cast the very welcome homelessness initiatives in a new light, as WA is likely to see greater pressures towards homelessness services until the housing supply issue is addressed.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

A significant portion of WACOSS' work in this area is focused on children, youth and families. Specifically this includes various reforms around compulsory income management at a Federal level, and at a State level, secondary family support services, child health and wellbeing in the early years, and child protection. WACOSS has also worked in partnership with the Department of Child Protection in the roll-out of secondary family support services to individuals and families at risk or in crisis. These reforms are in response to the expansion of mandatory reporting to include all forms of abuse by 2012.

WACOSS has campaigned extensively around the proposed expansion of income management, which is to apply across 5 different social security categories, not just as a child protection measure as it currently exists in WA. This has included producing written material, appearing before Committee hearings, and advocating directly to community and service providers.

In our advocacy for vulnerable people more broadly, especially low-income individuals and families, WACOSS produces an annual cost of living report. Since 2006, the paper has tracked increases in typical living expenses against increases in income. Over the life of the paper, our calculations have shown that many families continue to fall further behind as their living expenses increase by considerably more than their income. The paper is released each year in August.

WACOSS also provided a submission to Fair Work Australia on the Federal Minimum Wage that supported many of the arguments that led to a decision to increase the minimum wage to Australia's lowest paid workers from \$544 to \$570 per week.

The decision marked an important watershed in Australia's industrial relations history. WACOSS argued that modest increases to the federal minimum wage:

- Are vital, so that Western Australians in mortgage stress are somewhat protected from falling further into debt and severe hardship;
- Play an important part in preventing consumer confidence in an increasingly uncertain market; and
- Most importantly provide incentive for people to move into employment, and for those underemployed to increase their hours of employment.

WACOSS asked Fair Work Australia to recognise the financial hardships that Australia's lowest paid workers continue to face and follow our nation's long tradition of setting minimum wages with reference to community standards. The decision impacts on 1.3 million Australians and follows last year's decision to freeze their wages. WACOSS has long argued that appropriate minimum wages provide a fair and relevant safety net to protect the living standards of award-reliant employees and assist the low paid to meet their needs. Living standards of low income households rest on the foundations of employment, minimum wages levels and income support payments. All three play a vital role in preventing poverty.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

The essential services portfolio covers utilities – electricity, gas and water- as well as housing and transport issues. The 2009/10 year saw a continuing trend of utility price rises, which has contributed to an increase in instances of payment difficulty and financial hardship for consumers.

Over the past 12 months WACOSS has advocated for smoother pricing glide paths and tariff and concession reviews to assist customers manage increasing utility costs. In 2009, Energy Minister Peter Collier announced a review of electricity tariffs and invited WACOSS to take part in this review. WACOSS looks forward to continuing this work through 2010/11.

WACOSS has continued to provide input into the Electricity Code of Conduct review, preparing an extensive submission on the use pre-payment meters in WA. WACOSS continues to build strong working relationships with utility retailers, often providing comment and input into their internal policy documents such as financial hardship policies.

Our essential services policy staff continued to lead our work on the Hardship Utility Grant Scheme and Hardship Efficiency Program, providing ongoing input into the operation of these schemes through a position on each of the steering committees.

WACOSS continues to play an ongoing role on the Housing Advisory Roundtable (HART) together with a number of other housing peaks in the sector. The HART has been considering the strategic response to the Social Housing Taskforce, and the preparation of the yet to be released Affordable Housing Strategy. We have also contributed to the Equal Opportunity Commission's work monitoring implementation of policy reforms in the equitable provision of public housing.

STRATEGIC SECTOR POLICY

WACOSS Strategic Sector Policy contributes the research and analysis of the Social Policy Team to the work undertaken across the organisation on the development of the social services sector.

In 2009-2010 we saw a great deal of activity in this space focused on the Strategic Plan of the WA Peaks Forum, contributing to the work of the Economic Audit Committee (EAC) including responding to its final report recommendations, and advocating for fair and just wages for workers in the sector.

The collaborative work of the WA Peaks Forum has strengthened the capacity of the sector to work together to on important development strategies, such as the Jobseekers2Communities and Climate Change Readiness for Community Services initiatives. The Social Policy Team is undertaking a research project with the peaks to publish next year, which highlights the importance of peak organisations in the sector, and the role they play to support and advocate for community services.

The Economic Audit Committee has provided a valuable opportunity to highlight the issues that WACOSS has advocated on for many years on behalf of the sector. WACOSS has been able to use EAC processes to improve the relationship between the sector and Government, and this will be an ongoing priority for our strategic sector policy work.

Finally, addressing the ongoing issues concerning the sustainability of the community services workforce continues to be a major priority for WACOSS. This work is undertaken in collaboration with other key stakeholders, such as Community Employers WA (CEWA) and the Australian Services Union, as well as our colleagues at ACOSS and the State and Territory Councils of Social Service, who are working together to contribute to the Pay Equity Case at Fair Work Australia. WACOSS remains committed to policy advocacy in this space to achieve fair and just wages for workers in our sector.

SECTOR SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT

Sector Services

A full range of training activities were undertaken throughout 2009/10 year. In total 89 workshops were delivered to 1142 people. Attendees included paid and unpaid staff in not for profit organisations, community service groups and government employees.

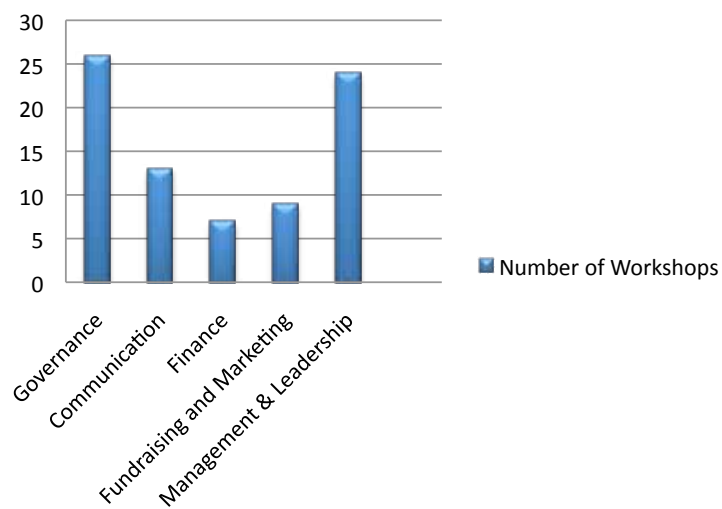
WACOSS delivers its training via a public calendar of workshops, fee for service and through grants obtained to target specific areas of need or region. All WACOSS trainers have extensive experience in the not for profit field as well as holding current training and industry qualifications.

Training Program	Total No. of Workshops	Total No. of attendees	Regional	Metro
Calendar	26	458		26
Customised (fee for service)	36	558	7	29
Project	17	136	17	
TOTALS	79	1142	24	55

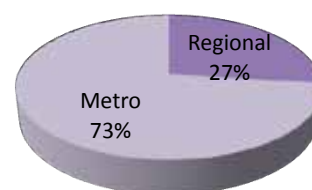
The WACOSS partnership with MODAL means we have continued to deliver a Diploma in Front Line Management specifically tailored for those currently working in management positions in the Not for Profit sector. In November 2009, 14 people graduated from a class of 18 students who commenced the 12 month training course.

WACOSS workshops focus on developing sustainable well managed not for profit organisations. Our governance and management workshops have continued receive high interest from the sector.

Number of Workshops



WACOSS workshops Regional /Metropolitan Delivery



Sector Development

Emergency Relief

Demand for emergency relief within Western Australia continues to be high, largely influenced by the lack of affordable housing, high cost of rentals and substantial increases in utility charges.

As part of its general support for the ER sector WACOSS holds monthly Emergency Relief Forums, which are always well attended by agency representatives from across the metropolitan area. Information provided at the ER Forums and the issues raised, are distributed via the minutes to over 200 agencies across the State. In addition, the ER Forum provides an opportunity for the WACOSS CEO to meet with agencies on a regular basis to discuss current trends in emergency relief. A highlight for the forum was a visit by the then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd who was visiting WACOSS and stayed to listen to the issues confronting services providers in the community sector.



Kevin Rudd with WACOSS President Chris Hall and CEO Sue Ash at the Emergency Relief Forum September 2009

WACOSS also has responsibility for coordinating the State Emergency Relief Committee (SERC) and following up on initiatives developed through this group.

With the support of an inter-agency planning group WACOSS held its third Biannual Emergency Relief Conference in November 2009 at the Perth Town Hall. Over 135 people from across the State (up from 100 in 2007) attended the two days. Support from State and Federal Governments', Lotterywest and the utility companies (Alinta, Synergy, Horizon and Water Corporation) allowed for speakers and facilitators from inter-State, along with subsidised registration and travel.

WACOSS continues to coordinate the Power Assist Scheme as part of the ER program support. In 2009/10 the Scheme assisted over 900 individuals and families, including 1374 children.

Emerging Communities

The program worked to build the capacity of 40 new and emerging communities through a partnership with ASeTTS, Muslim Women's Centre Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre. This was achieved by providing community leaders with management and leadership skills to improve organisation governance and management to better position them to deliver services for their own communities.

Funded through the Settlements Grants Programme (SGP) of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, the program provided one to one support to 21 community organisations around incorporation and constitutional issues, project planning and funding applications and general organisational capacity building.

The program also worked with a small group of women's community groups interested in developing social enterprise organisations as a way of improving skills and providing opportunities for self employment within their community.

Regional

WACOSS continues to work with regional peaks established in the Pilbara, Geraldton, Broome and Peel regions. These bodies are all in various stages of development. WACOSS is committed to work with local service providers to develop and deliver appropriate training and establish support systems, strengthen local service provision and ensure regional issues are represented in the range of policy forums and submissions WACOSS is involved in at a state and national level.

This year we trialled video conferencing, with WACOSS underwriting the equipment costs for our regional peaks and coordinating phone link ups. WACOSS submitted several grant applications to Royalites for Regions funds to work in partnership with the regional peak groups on these issues and was successful with the application for the Peel Region. WACOSS also facilitated applications to Lotterywest to provide subsidies to regional people to attend the WACOSS conference.

CORPORATE SERVICES

CORPORATE SERVICES DEVELOPMENT

WACOSS aims to be a best-practice model for the not-for-profit sector in the adoption of new technologies, and the establishment of systems that will remain viable for years to come.

The WACOSS strategic plan July 2008- June 2011, under Key Result Area “Implement a knowledge management business model” with the Performance Indicators “Degree to which our staff feel capable and supported to complete their work”, “Effectiveness of the knowledge management business model” and “Number and consistency of members” led to the following programs being implemented:

PEAKS FEASIBILITY STUDY

As a result of an increase in the number of activities carried out by a number of peak organisations it was found that the office space has become insufficient. WACOSS itself has seen a significant increase in activity, therefore currently has relocated staff in the Fremantle office for the Jobseekers2Communities project and for the Climate Change Readiness project. The Sector Services and Development team carries out numerous training programs for which venues are hired at various locations.

As part of the 2010 Peaks Forum Strategic Plan, it was agreed to undertake a feasibility study for a Peaks Building. Five peaks, WACOSS, WAAMH, WANADA, NDS and COTA agreed to participate and WACOSS provided support for the Project Officer. The study aims to test the model and business case to obtain the funding of such a building

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

WACOSS received funding for a significant upgrade of our ICT capacity through a Lotterywest Grant. The upgrade will significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our staff and our engagement with members and other stakeholders.

The upgrade will also allow for the redesign and amalgamation of a number of websites WACOSS currently hosts and introduce an integrated information management system incorporating a relationship based contact management system (Raiser's Edge) and an integrated document management system (Redmap). This upgrade will ensure that we will have made significant progress on achieving our objectives of refocussing the organisation as a knowledge management organisation.

SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Financial Contributors

Access Housing Australia Ltd	Dr Maria Harries
Alinta	HESTA
Anglicare WA	Holyoake
ARAFMI Mental Health Carers Association (WA) INC	Horizon Power
Bankwest	Great Southern Development Commission
Centrecare	Lotterywest
Community First International	MODAL
Zane D'Mello	Office of Energy (OOE)
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Relationships Australia WA Inc
Department for Child Protection	Rio Tinto
Department for Communities	Salvation Army
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	South Coastal Women's Health Service
Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	St Vincent de Paul
Department of Housing, WA	Synergy
Department of Immigration and Citizenship	UnitingCare West
Department of Premier and Cabinet	WANSLEA
Department of Treasury and Finance	Water Corporation
Disability Services Commission	YMCA
Economic Regulation Authority	Youth Futures
EECW Pty Ltd	

Collaborations or In-Kind Support or Contribution to WACOSS

Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors
Community Housing Coalition of WA
ConnectGroups
Learning Centre Link
John McSharer
Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre
Muslim Women's Support Centre
One World Centre
People with Disabilities Western Australia
Shelter WA
Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH)

2009 – 2010 LIST OF SUBMISSIONS, DISCUSSION PAPERS, MEDIA RELEASES, SPEECHES

Submissions

- WACOSS Submission to Treasury - Consumer Voices July 2009
- WACOSS Submission to ECCC - Pre Payment Meters August 2009
- Second Submission to the Economic Audit Committee August 2009
- WACOSS Response to the ERA Proposed Amendments November 2009
- WACOSS Submission to the Department of Housing Regarding the Social Housing Taskforce Final Report December 2009
- Submission to SEDO Feed-in Tariff Discussion Paper December 2009
- Submission to ERA re Clean Energy December 2009
- WACOSS Response to the Office of Energy's Strategic Energy Initiative, February 2010
- WACOSS Submission to Fair Work Australia Annual Wage Review 2010 March 2010
- WACOSS Submission to the Inquiry into Social Security and Welfare Reform February 2010
- WACOSS Submission to the Department for Child Protection's draft policies on: Permanency Planning Reunification Contact for Children and Young People in the CEO's Care. May 2010
- WACOSS Discussion Paper Income Management and Social Welfare: the Role of NGOs June 2010
- 'Putting the Public First' Implications of the Economic Audit Committee's Report for the Not-for-profit March 2010
- Sector Discussion Paper
- WACOSS Submission to the AIRC in Response to the Exposure Draft of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 October 2009
- Putting People First: WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission 2010-11 October 2009
- WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission 2010-11 Consultation Report October 2009
- FACTSHEET Industrial Relations System and WA Not for Profit Organisations February 2010

Papers

- WACOSS Discussion Paper: Income management and social welfare: the role of NGOs June 2010
- Income Management and National Welfare Reform April 2010
- WACOSS Cost of Living Paper: The Rising Cost of Living in WA 2009 August 2009

Sector Services and Development Events

- Emergency Relief Conference November 2009

Social Policy Events

Policy Reform – Implications for the sector of the EAC, PC and Henry Tax Review	March 2010
Emerging Issues Seminar	April 2010
2010 State Budget Briefing	May 2010
Income Management and Social Welfare: The Role of NGOs	June 2010
Putting the Public First: Implications of the Economic Audit Committee's Report for the Not for Profit Sector	March 2010
WA Regional Consultations Bunbury	May 2010
Climate Change: Real Risks for Community Organisations	March 2010

WACOSS Media Releases 2009 - 2010

Mortgage Repossessions	July 2009
Bankruptcy	July 2009
Federal Minimum Wage	July 2009
Unemployment	July 2009
Redress WA and Funeral Assistance	July 2009
Redress WA	July 2009
Unemployment	August 2009
WACOSS Cost of Living Paper 2009	August 2009
Workforce Development	September 2009
WACOSS Jobs Fund	September 2009
Water Tariff Increases	September 2009
Bereavement Assistance	September 2009
Property Repossessions	October 2009
Income Management Expansion	October 2009
Social Housing Taskforce	October 2009
Interest Rate Rise	October 2009
Unemployment	October 2009
Anti Poverty Week 2009	October 2009
Productivity Commission Report	October 2009
WACOSS Pre-Budget Submission	October 2009
Income Management Expansion	November 2009

Rate Rise	December 2009
Childcare Licensing Fees	December 2009
EAC Final Report	December 2009
Fridge Replacement Scheme	December 2009
Electricity Tariffs	December 2009
Christmas Message	December 2009
Productivity Commission Report	February 2010
ERA Electricity Performance Report	February 2010
Electricity and Gas Tariffs Set To Rise	March 2010
Early Years Action a Matter of Urgency	March 2010
WACOSS Welcomes New Australian Consumer Law	March 2010
Independent Performance Report: Increased Hardship and Disconnection for Gas Customers	March 2010
Interest Rate Pain Continues	April 2010
ERA Approves Pre-Payments Meters for WA	April 2010
State Budget Must Pay a Social Dividend	April 2010
Water Corporation Takes Steps to Reduce Restrictions	April 2010
Interest Rate Rise - More Pain for Low Income Earners	May 2010
Country Fuel Card Scheme Expanded	May 2010
Budget Leaves 56,000 Unemployed West Australians Behind In the Recovery	May 2010
How Will Families Cope With This Budget?	May 2010
Clear Energy	May 2010
Australia's New Workplace Tribunal Lifts the Federal Minimum Wage by \$26 a Week	June 2010
WACOSS Expects Backlash over Income Quarantining Laws	June 2010



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