

# Media Release

For immediate release  
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## Campaign launched to protect vulnerable South Australians

South Australia faces a collapse in services for its poorest, most disadvantaged and vulnerable citizens unless the state government makes an urgent and substantial investment in the community services sector.

"The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) has led an alliance of organisations including key community sector unions, the Australian Services Union (ASU) and Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous Union (LHMU), and the Association of Major Community Organisations (AMCO) to create positive reform of the community sector in South Australia. The *Strong Community Healthy State* Campaign will be launched at 3pm this Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of March at the Torrens Building, Victoria Square.

Over the past ten years the community services sector has been one of the fastest growing sectors, with charity and welfare-based organisations now providing a range of services to the community and to clients with an increasing array of complex needs. The sector has relied on government funding to run the services it provides. The Rann government has provided funding increases to various areas of the sector however increased reporting requirements and an increased need for services has meant that funding for wages has not kept pace with wages funding in the government sector.

"Workers in the sector are committed to providing services to vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians however are finding it increasingly stressful to work in organisations that, due to funding constraints, cannot provide decent wage increases or job security" said ASU Branch Assistant Secretary Katrine Hildyard.

"Employers in the community sector are finding it increasingly difficult to retain skilled staff, as they simply cannot offer adequate wages for the work employees in this sector undertake; workers in the government sector perform almost the same tasks with far greater remuneration" said Sue Park representing AMCO.

"Unions and employers are extremely worried that the capacity for charitable and community organisations to provide services has diminished to a level where it may soon be difficult for them to accept funding contracts from the government. The ASU, LHMU and AMCO are working closely with SACOSS to positively reform the sector, and are keen to further discussions with the State Government on how this risk to the sector and social cohesion in South Australia can be effectively managed" said LHMU Secretary Mark Butler.



“The social impacts of these budgetary, workforce development and service delivery barriers rest with the most at risk and vulnerable adults, families and children in South Australia. Many community services are now at a crisis point with little or no capacity to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged people when they need assistance”, said Karen Grogan, SACOSS Executive Director.

More information on the campaign is available at [www.sacoss.org.au/strongcommunity](http://www.sacoss.org.au/strongcommunity)

**Media opportunity: Captain Community and the wall of disadvantage**

At 3.30pm the Campaign launch will introduce ***Captain Community***, the Community Services Superhero. ***Captain Community*** represents a strong, healthy and vibrant community where everyone has a place. ***Captain Community*** will be freeing community sector workers from the wall of disadvantage. These trapped community sector workers are the *unseen* and *invisible* superheroes who undertake this vital work for our society. They work with the homeless, people with mental illnesses, people with addictions, people who are isolated and cut off from society.

***Captain Community*** needs the right tools such as better pay, improved conditions and security of employment, professional development and career paths in order to free the trapped workers.

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