

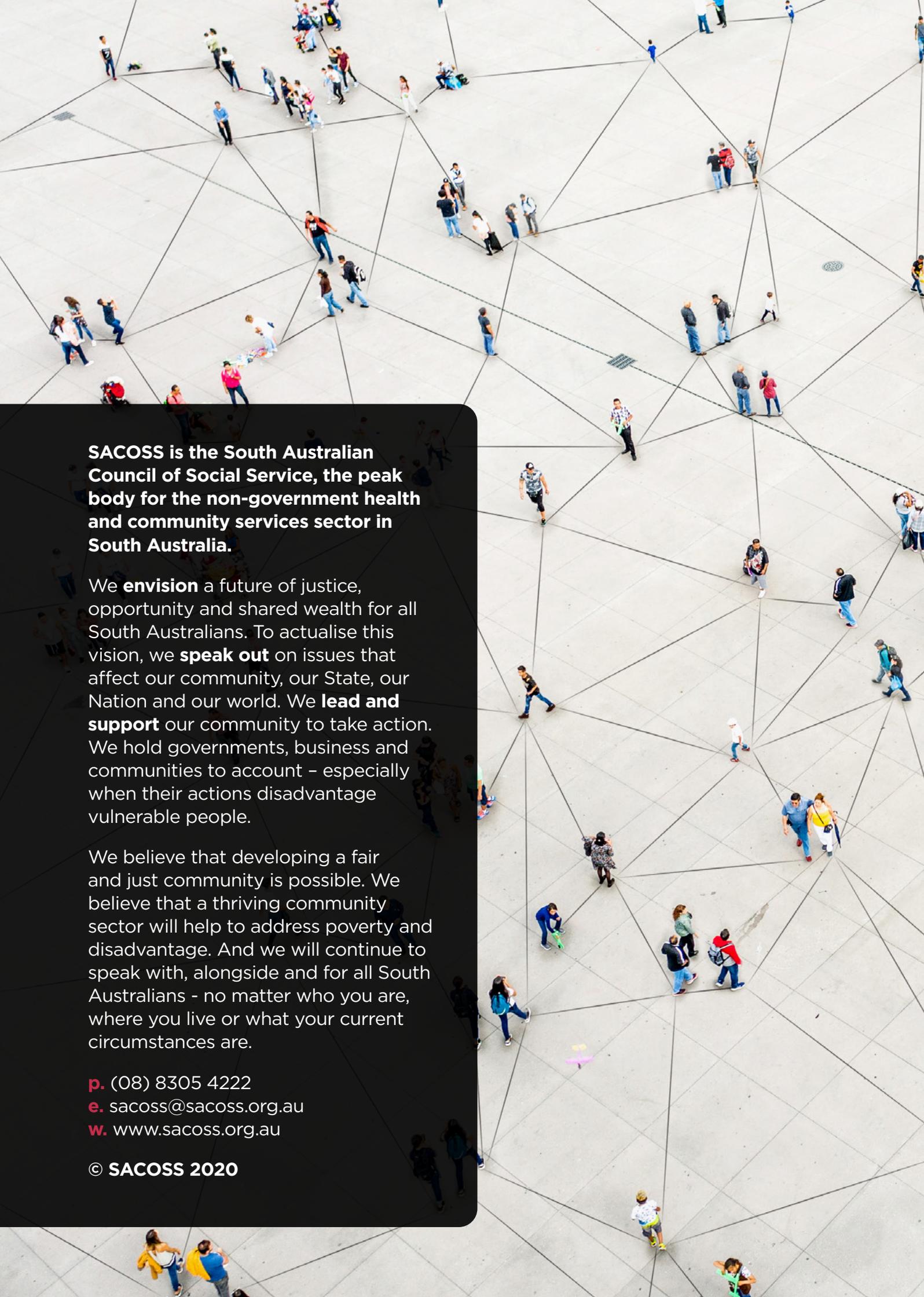


73RD ANNUAL REPORT

South Australian Council of Social Service
Advocating for a Just SA

2019-20





SACOSS is the South Australian Council of Social Service, the peak body for the non-government health and community services sector in South Australia.

We **envision** a future of justice, opportunity and shared wealth for all South Australians. To actualise this vision, we **speak out** on issues that affect our community, our State, our Nation and our world. We **lead and support** our community to take action. We hold governments, business and communities to account – especially when their actions disadvantage vulnerable people.

We believe that developing a fair and just community is possible. We believe that a thriving community sector will help to address poverty and disadvantage. And we will continue to speak with, alongside and for all South Australians - no matter who you are, where you live or what your current circumstances are.

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From the Chair and CEO	03
At a Glance	05
Reports & Submissions	06
A Fair and Just Community	09
A Thriving Sector	23
Our Powerful Voice	25
A Strong SACOSS	29
Partners.....	32
Financial Report	33
In Memoriam	37

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following document contains images of people who have died.

Hello.

Well. What a year it has been. To reflect that it was tumultuous, is significantly underselling the pressure that, especially the start of 2020, put our whole community under. We always knew we'd be asking some hard questions as a sector this year with the early and aggressive bushfires, followed by flooding in Queensland, the increasing grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the huge loss of jobs that resulted with the disproportionate impacts for young people, women, migrants and temporary visa holders, as well as for mature age workers.

Hot on the heels of fighting a pandemic that was stealing people's breath, we were confronted by footage of a Black American man gasping, "I can't breathe", while pinned, needlessly and without just cause, under a police officer's knee until he died. And while lots of us wanted to rage about America's racism, still too few of us really wanted to confront the depth of our own embedded racism. It's this racism that leaves our own First Nations people incarcerated at unacceptably high levels and at far too young an age. Their deaths in custody are still not fully or satisfactorily investigated, even as their leaders point out to us the many reasons that they also might be crying, "we can't breathe".

Similarly, anyone who has been following closely the proceedings of both the Aged Care and Disability Royal Commissions is certain to have been confronted by the repeated evidence of discrimination, neglect and failure that's resulted in appallingly inadequate, rather than enabling support services. And in part, it's this failure to invest that's seen our elders living in Nursing homes across Australia tragically pay a disproportionate price through this COVID crisis.

In contrast, we genuinely welcomed the Morrison government's quick move to stem the biggest economic impacts of the pandemic by announcing both the JobSeeker Coronavirus Supplement and the JobKeeper payment. As the JobSeeker payment effectively doubled – at least for a time – hundreds and thousands of people across Australia who had been struggling to find work were almost instantly offered genuine protection from the worst impacts of poverty. And similarly, the JobKeeper payment successfully kept hundreds of thousands more Australians from immediately joining our unemployment queues!

Amidst all the uncertainty, the crises demanded the best in cooperation as our sector and state government agencies struggled to get timely, effective responses in place and our political leaders sought to guide and reassure increasingly anxious community members. We note the leadership shown by Premier Marshall and the outstanding work of our public sector colleagues in public health and human services, who worked collaboratively to set in place targeted services to assist more vulnerable members of our community, at this challenging time. Decisions to accommodate all people sleeping rough by finding them rooms in local motels, and an early decision to ensure anyone contracting COVID in a nursing home would be transferred to hospital for treatment are excellent examples of important supportive efforts from our Human Services and Health Ministers.

The challenge now is to ensure this leadership continues and to ensure the quickest, strongest response to the economic and social consequences of the pandemic.

The impacts of COVID-19 on our local community cannot be understated. Tens of thousands of people have lost jobs, with many others losing large chunks of their work. These people have now joined far too many others who were already in unemployment queues, and enduring all of the anxieties of the accompanying financial stresses. The mental health impacts of isolation have been felt keenly and the impacts for many of our rural and remote communities have been profound.

Our job now is twofold – to protect those who have been made additionally vulnerable through this year's bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, and to make the investments in community and social infrastructure that make our community stronger and more resilient. We also need to remain highly vigilant so that as the Government inevitably searches for further savings, more advocacy bodies like Shelter SA and the Health Consumers Alliance of SA are not defunded.

Inevitably our governments have a crucial role and we need a short, medium, and long-term recovery plan that puts communities and especially vulnerable citizens at its heart rather than just economies. In the short term this means supporting our government to use inexpensive debt so as to invest in job and socially rich infrastructure to help



drive recovery. In the long term this still means ensuring our governments, in a fairly distributed way, continue to have access to the tax revenues they need to make and pay for these investments.

SA remains highly exposed to fluctuations in GST income and it's been long standing policy for SACOSS to argue for a genuinely fair and stable long-term tax base derived from state taxes. With that in mind we were delighted when the Marshall government moved to reform genuinely unfair land tax legislation. We were enormously disappointed that despite specific aggregation measure gains achieved with support from the Greens, deals with property sector interest groups left state coffers even more depleted than refreshed.

A fairer land tax system could have underpinned some of the investments we require now - investments that are now even more urgent than prior to the pandemic. This includes investments in social housing and the development of local community service infrastructure. We are also in need of investments in childcare and support services that enable elders to remain living in their homes. Most importantly, we required investments that would deliver triple bottom line outcomes - great job creation, good for addressing wicked social problems, and great for our local communities.

As we continued our advocacy for fairness through the year, we worked with others to challenge amendments to the Religious Discrimination Bill and Health Care (Governance) Bill, sought clarity on a proposed ElectraNet Interconnector between SA and NSW, called for fair trading by water and energy providers, raised awareness on health inequities and more. We also joined with ACOSS and the whole COSS network to draw attention to the commonwealth funding cliff facing our sector when supplementary ERO funding ceases in 2021. These issues all have the potential to cause enormous harm to the communities we serve, and thus we will continue to challenge them.

We are pleased to present this Annual Report to you. It shows how much we have achieved - despite the odds and despite our size.

We continue to punch above our weight in advocacy, consultation with government and other key stakeholders, for the benefit of both social and community service sector and all South Australians.

Trying to make room for our sector to breathe,

Ross Womersley
SACOSS CEO

David Panter
SACOSS Chair





SACOSS MEMBERSHIP

170 TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

105 MEMBER ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING 9 PEAK BODIES AND 10 OF SA'S LARGEST CHARITIES.



EVENTS

1 MAJOR EVENT - STATE CONFERENCE

9 SECTOR NETWORKING EVENTS

6 MEMBER EXCLUSIVE EVENTS

1 END OF YEAR PANCAKE BREAKFAST



POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS

22

SUBMISSIONS PRODUCED

24

MEDIA RELEASES

15

REPORTS PRODUCED

1

SMALL CHANGE

1 HOUR PER WEEK ON AIR
 100 CONTRIBUTORS (61 IDENTIFY AS WOMEN; 13 AGED UNDER 26)
 80 PODCASTS
 36 HOURS LIVE PROGRAMMING

28 SACOSS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS PROFILED
 5 EPISODES ON 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN SA
 1 STATE BUDGET BROADCAST

12

CAMPAIGNS

40

eBULLETINS

20

MEMBER ADVISORIES

SACOSS conducts cutting edge and relevant research. From this research we publish reports and fact sheets on issues affecting the community and social services sector, or which impact low income and disadvantaged people.

Reports usually arise from issues identified by the sector. In some cases the research might be funded by government, while in other cases (eg Cost of Living Reports) we have developed the research from our own resources. The reports and fact sheets for 2018-19 are listed below.

REPORTS AND FACT SHEETS

July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual SACOSS Briefing to the Minister on Water Issues 2018-19 • Annual SACOSS Briefing to the Minister for Energy 2018-19
August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Consumers Research Project 2: High water needs of people living with disability and their families in South Australia
October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SACOSS Land Tax and Public Housing Proposal Briefing Note
November 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to Make Ends Meet: Low Income Workers and Energy Bill Stress • SACOSS Annual Report 2018-19
January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of Living Update 40 • Disaster Resilience Project Consultation Report • Fact Sheet: Better freedoms or bigger burden?
March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SA: The Heaps Unfair State why have health inequities increased in South Australia and how can these trends be reversed? With the Southgate Institution for Health, Society and Equity, Flinders University
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 and Jobs in South Australia Briefing Note
May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 and Jobs in South Australia Briefing Note
June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectivity Costs II: Telecommunications Affordability and Waged Poor Households • Paying to Work: Employment Issues in SACOSS' Telecommunications Affordability and Waged Poor Households Report • Fact Sheet: Waged Poverty • Fact Sheet: Waged Poverty and Telecommunications • COVID-19 and Digital Inclusion in South Australia Briefing Note • Disaster Resilience Project Report

One of our core roles as an organisation is to provide input to government and other policy makers in an effort to represent our members and South Australians who are often underrepresented. This input will often take the form of submissions in response to public consultations. SACOSS also initiates submissions on issues of deep concern to our members and people experiencing hardship. Our submissions range from broad statements of principle to detailed and technical policy advice, and are often used as platforms for further advocacy. The submissions for 2018-19 are listed below.

SUBMISSIONS

July 2019

- ElectraNet – Main grid system strength contingent project application
- All Australians deserve a healthy, safe, affordable home: Community Joint Statement for Healthy Affordable Homes

August 2019

- Submission on the Housing and Homelessness Strategy for SA: Strategic Intent
- Submission on the Consumer Experts Panel Background Briefing: Review of the Water Retail Code – Major Retailers
- AEMC Wholesale demand response mechanism draft determination
- Submission on the AEMC’s Consultation paper- Reducing customers’ switching times

September 2019

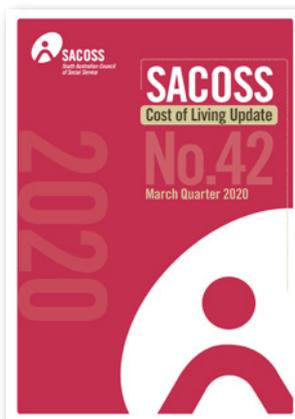
- PIAC Joint Submission
- Submission on the AEMC’s Consultation paper – Regulating Conditional Discounting Rule Change Request
- Submission to Inquiry on the Adequacy of Newstart and other matters

October 2019

- REES Review – Directions Paper
- ESCOSA Small Scale Networks Submission - Framework and Approach
- Proposed amendments to the Land Tax (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2019

November 2019

- SACOSS Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Economics Regional Inequality Inquiry



SUBMISSIONS

- December 2019**
 - SACOSS' Submission to the Essential Services Commission of South Australia on SA Water's 2020-2024 Regulatory Business Proposal: 'Our Plan' 2020
 - 12 Month Feedback re: Children and Young People (Safety) Act 12 2017

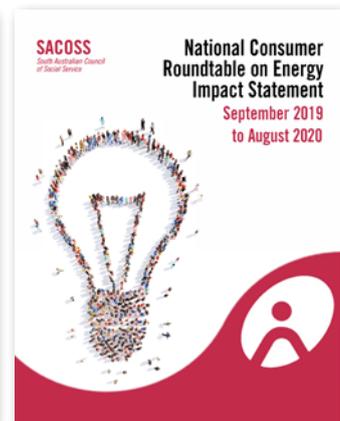
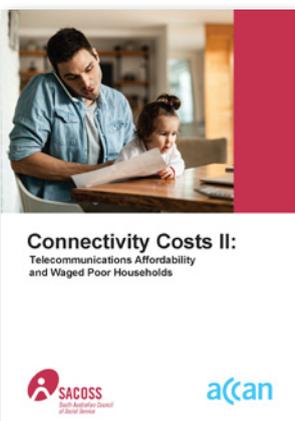
- January 2020**
 - Increasing access to the home battery scheme for rentals
 - SACOSS' Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator on SA Power Networks' 2020-25 Revised Regulatory Proposal

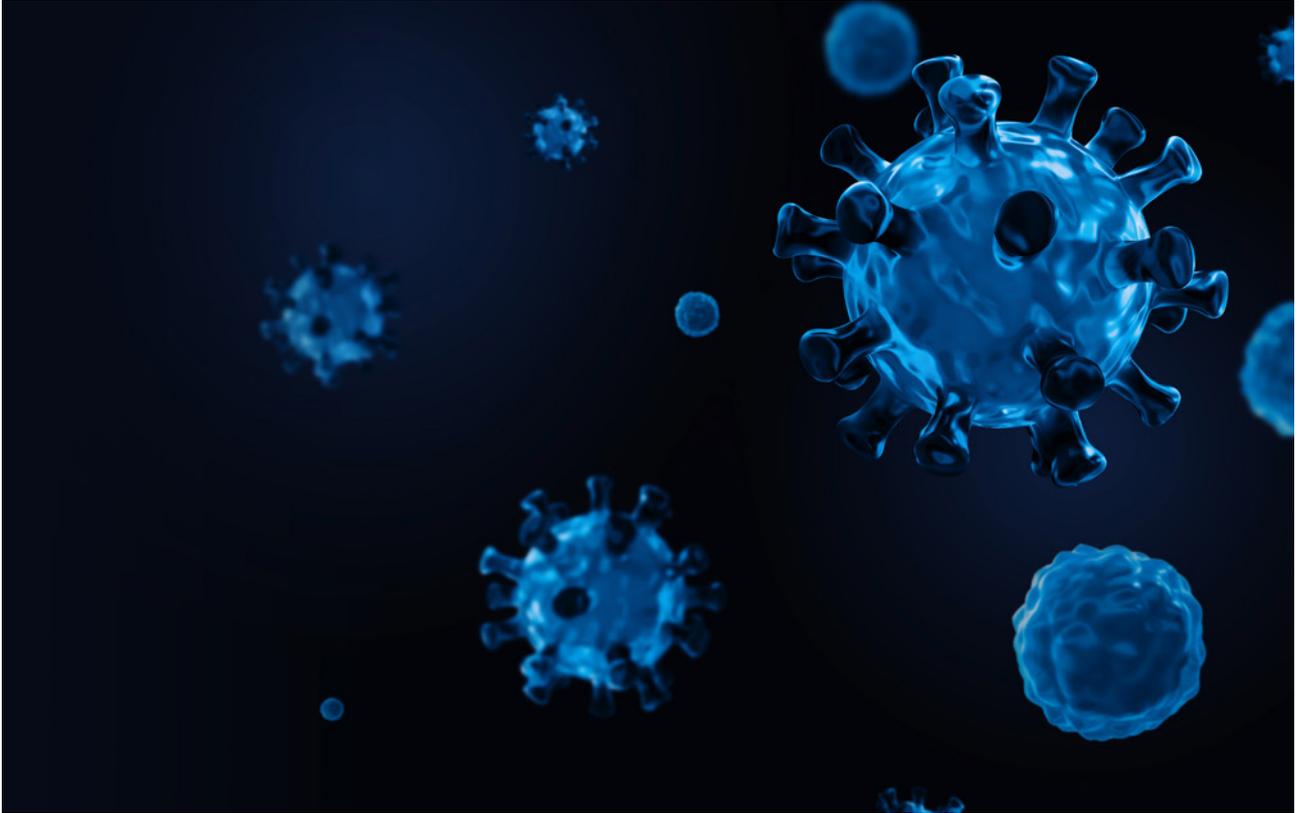
- February 2020**
 - Proposed 24/7 Dry Area in All Adelaide Park Lands

- March 2020**
 - Secure therapeutic residential care submission

- April 2020**
 - SACOSS' Submission to the Essential Services Commission of South Australia on SA Water Regulatory Determination 2020 - Draft Determination
 - Submission on AGN - Our Five Year Draft Plan for the South Australian gas distribution network (July 2021 - June 2026)

- June 2020**
 - Joint statement from SACOSS and endorsing partners seeking amendments to the Health Care (Governance) Amendment Bill 2020





COVID 19

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a shift in both the work that SACOSS undertook and the way we went about it. Some of the changes included:

- SACOSS staff moved to working from home arrangements from March to June. This expedited SACOSS' transition to a cloud-based server. We also scheduled more frequent team meetings, held via Zoom, so that staff could stay connected and continue to work together while apart
- adjusting our regular eBulletin communications during the height of the pandemic from fortnightly to weekly. This was so we could share more timely and relevant information about changes taking place across the health and community services sector and the broader community
- tracking feedback from the sector about the impact of the pandemic on their organisations and client groups, and
- participating in the weekly NGO Intelligence Group hosted by the Department for Human Services (DHS).

We recognised that some of the key impacts for services from within our sector related to access to personal protective equipment, increased cleaning costs, changes to employment of staff, limitations on staff working in multiple locations, significant reductions in fundraising and some services either being cancelled or offered only by telephone or online.

As such, this led to SACOSS taking on additional projects including:

- COVID-19 Vulnerable Populations Project
- Consultation on Wellbeing SAs *Open Your World* website
- SACOSS Workforce Exchange Portal



COVID-19 Vulnerable Populations Project

The COVID-19 pandemic and the public health response measures delivered to curtail the spread of the virus risks an increasing level of vulnerability among the South Australian community. For example, while South Australia has had a longstanding issue of both unemployment and underemployment, this crisis has thrust many more people into these situations, due to the closure of non-essential services and workplaces. SACOSS secured grant funding by Wellbeing SA to support a rapid response research project to identify the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations and inequity in South Australia. Specifically, the project seeks to articulate and explore who have been most affected by the public health response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic and what areas of need have arisen, or been exacerbated, during this time.

The research project commenced in June 2020 and spans until the end of September 2020. The project comprises:

1. a rapid review of scholarly and grey literature,
2. primary data analysis from South Australian respondents of the Australia's Community Sector Survey (responding to COVID-19 iteration), and
3. primary data analysis from workshops held with key stakeholders.

The elements underway by 30 June 2020 included: reviewing of available literature/data, mapping of COVID-19 policies, and collaboration with ACOSS and University of New South Wales researchers (regarding the development and delivery of the Australia's Community Sector Survey responding to COVID-19 iteration).

Open Your World Consultation

SACOSS was invited to identify issues with Wellbeing SA's *Open Your World* website which had been developed with haste during the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic. We agreed to undertake a series of consultations in order to help guide Wellbeing SA in the further evolution and development of this key public interface. SACOSS undertook a range of consultations with 3 identified population groups widely recognized as having higher levels of vulnerability - people from the LGBTIQ+, disability and unemployed communities.

As at 30 June, SACOSS had agreed to consult with these cohorts, as well as sector communications professionals, as soon as possible and report findings to the Wellbeing SA team for their reflection and application as deemed suitable.

SACOSS Workforce Exchange Portal

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on our social and community sector workforces, we recognised that there was a potential gap in current workforce sharing. With a number of our member organisations lamenting that they had too many valued employees for the amount of work they were able to offer during lock down, we began to engage with DHS and KPMG to discuss the possibility of a workforce sharing portal.

As at 30 June, we had identified that a resource such as this may be helpful but were yet to begin engaging with KPMG on how to create such a platform which was supportive of fair work practices, best COVID practices and would be easy and practical for both individual candidates and workforce managers.

Resilience in the face of disaster

This year, SACOSS undertook a Disaster Resilience Project funded by the South Australian Fire and Emergency Commission (SAFECOM). The project became ever more pertinent when the disastrous summer bushfires hit, followed by flooding and then by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The aim of this Disaster Resilience project was to increase clarity regarding the emergency management roles and responsibilities of organisations that support people at risk as well as to develop tools and resources to support their work with people at risk before, during and after emergencies, disasters or extreme weather events.

The project involved research and consultation to complete three objectives. These were, firstly, to identify community need; secondly, what work was in place to support people at increased risk before, during and after emergencies, disasters or extreme weather events, and, finally, to identify what tools or resources would increase the capacity of organisations to do more or do better in these areas of work.

A range of resources were developed for the community services sector including:

- Business Continuity Plan Template
- Emergency, disaster and extreme weather policy and procedure template
- Three Emergency management roles checklists for providers of accommodation and housing support, providers of homecare or outreach services and providers of centre-based services
- Responding to bushfire risk, a disability service provider case study

These resources are hosted in the Disaster Resilience section of the SACOSS website (www.sacoss.org.au/disaster-resilience). As well as the final report and the resources noted above, this section contains additional information and resources for the sector to help inform their approach to disaster resilience and their provision of services to their clients.

In our final report, we made the following recommendations:

1. Partner with key stakeholders in the development of consumer resources and communication strategies for particular populations (including people living with mental illness, the deaf/blind community and Aboriginal communities).
2. Advocate for funders and regulators to recognise and fund service providers addressing the needs of people at risk before, during and after emergencies, disasters or extreme weather events.
3. Advocate for innovative funding options or resources to enable housing providers to make public and social housing more energy efficient to promote comfort and good health.
4. SA Health further investigate/develop the concept of a text message system for communicating health warnings to people at risk and the organisations that support them.
5. Identify, develop or promote a comprehensive risk assessment form that addresses a person's exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity to cope with relevant emergencies, disasters or extreme weather events.
6. Collate resources to create a disaster resilience toolkit for the health and community services sector.
7. Build the awareness, skills and capacity of the primary health sector and consumer representative bodies to share information and strategies with their members and patients to enhance their safety before, during and after emergencies, disasters or extreme weather events.
8. Work with governments to ensure equitable access to power and water subsidies for people who use higher rates of heating, cooling or water to manage their health condition.

These recommendations may be explored by SACOSS and/or other stakeholders as part of future funding rounds. The aim of further exploration will be to address disaster resilience for people who may be more vulnerable or at higher risk in emergencies, disasters and/or extreme weather events and how community service organisations can support them.



Land Tax Changes

The 2019-20 South Australian state budget contained a proposed change to land tax. While land tax is charged on the aggregated value of all property someone owns (except their primary place of residence), some landowners effectively avoided paying tax on the aggregated value of their properties. By putting land titles under different members of the family or by using trusts, instead having each property assessed independently, these land owners were able to have the tax free threshold applied to each property. The proposed change would have closed a loophole which had allowed owners with multiple properties to avoid paying land tax by using these different ownership structures.

The change to the aggregation arrangements to simply apply the tax to the principal beneficiary (regardless of trust or family arrangements) was originally raised in the 2015 State Tax Review. SACOSS had also publicly called for the change both because it would make the system fairer and more transparent, and because it would raise revenue to fund vital services. Further, the avoidance of land tax aggregation provided an incentive for those with funds to invest in low-value housing, thus creating more competition for houses that first home buyers and those on low incomes might be looking to buy – so it was good housing policy to make the changes proposed.

Accordingly, SACOSS welcomed the budget announcement, but then witnessed an extraordinary, well-financed mobilisation of self-interest from those who had organised their affairs to avoid paying the tax. It was a mix of anecdotes

about how “mum and dad” investors had struggled to save for their retirement, and a political attack aimed from large landholders at lowering the top rate of the tax. The top rate of land tax in South Australia was comparably higher than in other states, and while SACOSS supports progressive taxation, the issue of the rates was a legitimate discussion to have – but separate from the changes around aggregation of property values.

SACOSS produced a range of fact sheets, articles and media commentary in support of the aggregation changes, but our voice was largely swamped. The property sector led a vocal campaign which suggested that paying land tax would stop property development in the state. SACOSS proposed using some of the extra revenue for new investment in public housing, thus seeing land taxes used to boost property development. The Greens also worked on progressive changes, but it was to no avail. The Labor Party sided with those who were avoiding paying tax, thus forcing the current Liberal government to make a series of “compromises” to placate the property lobby – but ruling out further investment in public housing.

In the end, a heavily amended bill passed the parliament – ending the aggregation avoidance, but massively reducing the top rate of tax. What began as a revenue-raising measure ended up costing the budget bottom-line. It was good to get the aggregation changes through because, even with lower rates, they make the system fairer and more transparent. However, this debate and ultimate end demonstrated that we are still a long way from an understanding that taxes are necessary to fund vital services and make South Australia fairer for all.



Raise the Rate...for good?

Before the COVID-19 crisis, the rate of Newstart (now renamed JobSeeker) had not been increased in real terms for 25 years, while the cost of living, especially housing, has continued to increase. The goal of the Raise the Rate campaign is to fix our social security safety net and keep people out of poverty – for good.

As part of this, SACOSS welcomed the Senate Inquiry into Newstart hearings held in Adelaide, Sydney and Canberra in late 2019 and took the opportunity to call on the SA State Premier to follow the NSW Deputy Premier in urging his federal colleagues to reconsider their position on Newstart. SACOSS made a short submission to this inquiry (available here: www.sacoss.org.au/senate-inquiry-adequacy-newstart-and-other-matters) which supported the ACOSS submission, highlighted the SA Legislative Council Committee on Poverty which recommended that Newstart be increased, and noted the prior SACOSS Cost of Living Reports which showed that Newstart has not kept pace with cost of living.

Following this inquiry, the Select Committee called on the Federal Government “to increase Newstart (and other base allowances) as a matter of urgency” – the first time such a call had come as a unanimous finding of a committee with representation of all major parties (Liberals, Labor, Greens, SA Best). This added to the broad support for a permanent increase to this allowance, including from community organisations, such as anti-poverty networks, unions, business groups, not-for-profit organisations, local governments, territory governments and several federal parliamentarians.

In 2020, the Raise the Rate campaign continued to make progress. It made a huge step forward due to the impacts of COVID-19 which were felt by the many Australians who became unemployed or underemployed at this time. From 20 March 2020, Newstart became known as JobSeeker, a government initiative which indicated the difference between those who were now unemployed and receiving a living allowance directly from Centrelink, and JobKeeper, those who were able to remain employed if their workplaces were eligible for government support. This extremely difficult time caused many to consider what it was like to live on the previously unliveable Newstart allowance.

A welcome part of the Federal Government’s COVID-19 response, the rate of JobSeeker and related payments was temporarily increased until September 2020. Those on JobSeeker received a payment that was effectively doubled. For many who had been receiving Newstart for a long period of time, this enlarged payment was lifechanging. For personal stories of how, head to the 550 Reasons to Smile facebook page (www.facebook.com/550reasons) and to the stories section of the Raise the Rate website (raisetherate.org.au/stories).

The supplement was received with gratefulness, relief and with a renewed vigour to ensure that the rate was never again dropped to its former unliveable stipend of \$275 per week or the equivalent of \$40 per day.

SACOSS, along with ACOSS and all our COSSes, is advocating for a permanent and adequate increase to JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, Austudy, Abstudy and the Parenting Payment. There should be

supplementary payments paid to people that reflect need, including an increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance of 50%.

At the end of June 2020 the key recommendations for the campaign were (and still are):

- That the new JobSeeker Payment of \$560 per week and the new Youth Allowance Payment (including the 'Coronavirus Supplement') be kept in place until our social security system is fixed for good so that it keeps people out of poverty, with an income of \$500 per week for a single person

- Ongoing indexation of payments in line with wage movements at least twice per year
- Establishment of a Social Security Commission to advise the Parliament on the ongoing adequacy of income support payments

The work is not completed until we have raised the rate of JobSeeker and other living allowances – for good. We continue on in this.

raisetherate.org.au

.....
Ben and Rita Sacchetta at Senate Hearings



Poverty

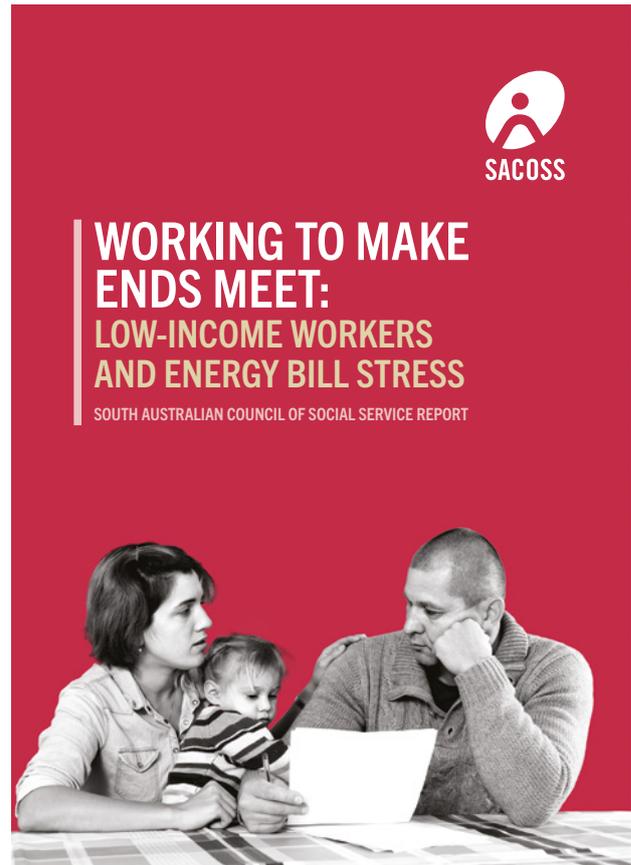
Waged Poverty

In 2019-20 SACOSS completed two major projects in relation to waged poor households, and particularly around struggles with affordability of essential services like energy and telecommunications. Waged poor households are those living below the poverty line, but whose main source of income is wages and salaries. SACOSS' analysis shows that this is around one-quarter of all households in poverty, and those households tend to be larger than other households in poverty (nearly half of all waged poor households include children) and spend more on essential services. Around 65% are renters, more than double the rate of the general population, and waged poor households are much less likely to seek help from the services in our sector.

Connectivity Costs II

SACOSS was also funded through the year by the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) to do research on telecommunications affordability for waged poor households. This research built on the energy research on waged poverty, and also complemented SACOSS previous Connectivity Costs report on telecommunications affordability for households mainly reliant on Centrelink incomes.

Connectivity Costs II found that waged poor households had all the same affordability struggles as other households in poverty, with over half rating telecommunications as one of the biggest factors in their weekly budget. However, there were also key differences as waged poor households were often using public wifi, and since many were families with kids, there was extra demand for devices and data for schools and entertainment. Our research showed that over 70% of waged poor workers used their telecommunications devices and services for work purposes – everything from checking rosters, navigating while driving, making calls and working remotely. Yet none were reimbursed for this work expenditure, and it often represented a cost-shifting from employers to some of the poorest employees.



'Working to Make Ends Meet' Report

SACOSS released the 'Working to Make Ends Meet' report in November 2019 on low-income workers and energy bill stress. The Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) funded research found that there were nearly 250,000 households in Australia whose main source of income is salaries and wages but were still living below the poverty line. Many of these 'waged poor' households experienced energy affordability challenges similar to other households in poverty, including struggling to pay for bills, living with little to no safety net, and being unable to heat their homes. There were also unique challenges specific to waged poor households. For example, waged poor households were much more likely to be couples with children with associated inflexibilities with changing energy related behaviour. Significantly, waged poor households were also more than ten times less likely to seek assistance from community organisations compared to all households in poverty, with implications on how services are accessible and properly targeted.

You can read both reports, and other related resources here: www.sacoss.org.au/waged-poverty



Energy

2019-20 was a busy year in Energy Policy. We investigated the effects of energy pricing and accessibility for SA consumers and, in particular, waged poor households, held roundtable events to continue to ideate and network on possible policy and practical improvements to the sector, interrogated the positives and challenges of the community battery installation for low income households as well as being heavily engaged in the SA Power Networks Regulatory Determination for 2020-25.

Energy pricing impacts on SA consumers

The Australian Energy Market Commission's (AEMC) residential electricity price trends report for 2019 saw a modest reduction in electricity prices in South Australia largely due to falling wholesale costs by an annual average of 3.4 percent. Other components of residential electricity bills that are seeing cost reductions are environmental scheme costs, which are estimated to reduce annually by 3.7 percent. The AEMC price trends report also estimates that network costs are expected to rise by an annual average of 1.4 percent. The overall result is a projected 2 percent or \$27 annual reduction in electricity bills for residents in South Australia over a three-year period – out to 2022. This is welcome news, but of course it could be improved, particularly as SA remains in the unenviable position of having the highest electricity prices in Australia.

SACOSS recently completed our annual briefing to the SA Minister for Energy on energy pricing issues affecting SA consumers. Our briefing this year focused on the historical impact of wholesale electricity costs on retail electricity prices, specifically between 2017 to 2019, which saw the majority of electricity tariff increases in SA. This differs from the period between 2007 and 2015, of which most increases were related to increasing network costs or the 'gold plating' of networks as it has been referred to. There were multiple factors that led to increasing wholesale electricity costs and increased volatility on the wholesale market, which is discussed in more detail in the briefing available on the SACOSS website. Some of these factors are being mitigated with increasing generation on the electricity market, assisting to decrease wholesale costs. However, it is an area that SACOSS will continue to monitor, particularly with the changes we are seeing as we transition to increasing renewable energy to ensure that consumers are not left behind.

Community Batteries

For one of our major research reports in FY 19-20, SACOSS engaged The Energy Project to understand under what circumstances community scale batteries may assist low income households. The research found that the proposition for community scale batteries is not strong at this time, based on several factors such as the cost and lifetime of batteries as well as the cost of electricity and access to markets, such as the Frequency Control and Ancillary Services market to ensure viability. The report however did recommend that in some instances, community scale batteries may be beneficial. Those examples include: for stand-alone power systems with communities recovering from (or at risk of) bushfires and in areas at the edge of the grid such as Kangaroo Island, Ceduna and Streaky Bay. Other examples where batteries may provide benefits is for medium and high density housing using shared solar and batteries to lower the overall costs to residents.

SA Power Networks Regulatory Determination for 2020-25

In June 2020, the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) delivered its Final Decision on the amount of revenue SA Power Networks can recover from its customers during the 2020-2025 regulatory period. The decision forecasts a welcome \$40 reduction in energy bills for average residential energy consumers in 2020-2021. SACOSS was heavily involved in the intensive engagement process leading up to the decision, attending consultations, presenting at the AER Forum and making four detailed submissions on many aspects of the proposal and draft decision. The drivers of the final reductions were largely related to the current Rate of Return and changes in the assessment of income tax allowance, as opposed to a reduction in allowed network expenditure. SACOSS cautiously welcomed SA Power Network's new 'solar sponge' (time of use) tariff and acknowledged the need for prudent expenditure to manage the increase in solar PV systems on the network.

Energy Events

National Consumer Roundtable on Energy

SACOSS continues to host the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy (the Roundtable), funded by Energy Consumers Australia. These Roundtables have a long history as the primary vehicle for energy consumer collaboration and continue to engage participating organisations through this collaborative approach. The Roundtable aims to enable participating organisations to more effectively achieve policy and regulatory change in the long term interests of small energy consumers at the national, state and territory levels.

Roundtable enables groups to progress action on agreed priority issues. We now have three established enabling groups working on the following issues:

- **Payment Difficulty/Hardship:** to develop a common, co-ordinated understanding on support and assistance for people experiencing payment difficulty;
- **Concessions:** to improve the effectiveness of energy concessions across all jurisdictions via a coordinated campaign; and
- **Distributed Energy Resources:** to identify opportunities and challenges facing consumers created by the uptake of distributed energy resources such as household solar, with a focus on inclusion and equity.

In financial year 2019/2020, SACOSS convened the third meeting of the roundtable in Adelaide from 29-31 January. Due to COVID-19, the fourth meeting of the roundtable was held over a series of online meetings in May and June 2020.



Water

Through the Consumer Advocacy and Research Fund (CARF), SACOSS is funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to participate in regulatory processes and undertake research and advocacy projects addressing the needs of vulnerable South Australian water consumers. CARF was established under the *Water Industry Act 2012* to support research or advocacy that promotes the interests of consumers with a disability, low-income consumers, or consumers who are located within a regional area of South Australia.

This financial year SACOSS also received a small grant from the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) to undertake some scoping work on water issues in remote Aboriginal communities.

CARF Consultation

As part of the CARF Program, SACOSS is responsible for consulting with key consumer groups to identify and recommend projects to be funded by DHS. The consultation has identified a series of issues for further advocacy and research in 2020-21, including:

- Equity of water cost, quality and supply in remote communities
- Community education and capacity building in remote communities
- Consumer protections for priority end-users
- Wastewater reuse and treatment in regional areas, and
- Evaluating consumer engagement processes in SA Water's Revenue Determination 2020-24.

In 2019-20, CARF funded projects focussed on engaging in the SA Water Revenue Determination 2020-24 process, with projects undertaken by Business SA, Uniting Communities, and the Conservation Council SA.



Scoping study on water issues in remote Aboriginal communities

Funded by ESCOSA, SACOSS engaged David Rathman to undertake a scoping study identifying some of the current key water issues affecting Aboriginal residents living in regional and remote communities in South Australia. Key insights were gained from discussions with Aboriginal leaders, stakeholders and members of the Umoona Community (Coober Pedy), Dunjibar Community (Oodnadatta) and the Marree Arabanna Peoples Committee (Marree), including:

- Cost of living concerns in regional and remote communities
- Variation in how water is supplied to communities, billing arrangements, responsibilities and governance, and
- Water debt and restriction.

The purpose of this study was to provide SACOSS with additional information to identify, prioritise and guide SACOSS' future research projects and advocacy work in this important area. Whilst the scope of this study did not extend to presenting potential solutions to these complex issues, suggestions for actions have been made by some of the stakeholders interviewed.

SA Water's Regulatory Determination 2020-24

SACOSS had a high level of engagement in the SA Water regulatory process 2020-24. CEO Ross Womersley was a member of the Consumer Advisory Committee, and SACOSS made four written submissions to the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) on SA Water's proposed revenue and revised consumer protections. ESCOSA's final decision established reductions in SA Water's allowed revenue for 2020-24 which represented significant savings of approximately \$200 per year for the average South Australian household's water bills. It is expected this will deliver much needed relief for households in vulnerable circumstances struggling with the increasing costs of living, particularly in the current economic climate.

The headline reductions in water bills are largely driven by significantly lower interest rates (as reflected in SA Water's regulated 'rate of return'), re-evaluation of SA Water's Regulatory Asset Base, and the removal of the 'Zero Cost Energy Future' project. SA Water's reduced revenue will have impacts on state revenues, and ultimately the ability of our government to pay for vital services for the wider South Australian community.

SACOSS welcomes amendments made to the *Water Retail Code - Major Retailers* which have the potential to improve consumer protections for South Australian consumers in vulnerable circumstances, including those living with a disability and tenants.



Child, Family & Community Wellbeing

Though we believe that all approaches to supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families must emphasise early help and access to support pathways, much of our attention in 2019-20 continued to be drawn to trying to improve parts of the system where there is crisis.

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

Late in 2019, after the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 had been in place for 12 months, the Minister for Child Protection called for feedback on the Act. SACOSS used the opportunity to revisit some of the key flaws that remain problematic in the legislation and put forward how it could be amended. Key areas for amendment were:

1. The need to incorporate “best interests” as a primary principle considered in reaching life changing decisions about a child’s life.
2. To more deeply integrate principles and practical tools to reduce the unconscionable overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in the child protection system e.g. applying the

Aboriginal Child Placement Principle more broadly than as a hierarchy for placement, ensure the Aboriginal Cultural Assessment Tool is used and empowering Aboriginal communities in decision making.

3. Expand upon the duty of care owed to a child or young person, where there is a concern for their wellbeing or safety, beyond or in addition to prompting a mandatory report.
4. The need to insert measures that would reduce the criminalization of children and young people under the care of the Department for Child Protection.
5. To expand upon the provisions for post-care support to set out a clear set of rights for young adults who have spent time in care, what will be provided to them and how they can access supports.
6. To ensure that children who are placed in residential care are given the same rights and “voice” in regard to placement decisions as children placed with kin or foster carers.
7. To return responsibility of guardianship to the Minister, which was the former arrangement before transferring these to the Department for Child Protection’s Chief Executive Officer.

Placement options for children in care

This year SACOSS participated in a number of consultations. Two notable areas include the proposal to establish a model for secure therapeutic care, and another on expanding permanency options to include adoption for some children.

SACOSS remained firm that any arrangements to force children and young people into treatment and restrict their movement/liberty, must not breach the United Nations instruments, to which Australia is a signatory. Regarding the proposal on secure care, we were particularly concerned about the Covenant on the Rights of the Child. This is the same as our rationale for why we opposed the establishment of a mandatory drug treatment program facility for children and young people in SA (in 2018, 2020) – we know of little evidence that supports the need for a locked environment for children and young people to undergo therapy, therefore leaving these secure models an untenable solution.

The outcome of this feedback has been a commitment from the Minister for Child Protection to not progress the proposed secure model but rather invest in therapeutic care throughout the system, which is commendable.

SACOSS also provided input into the Minister for Child Protection's consultation on expanding permanency options, including adoption. This is a highly complex and contentious issue and SACOSS has sought input from SACOSS Policy Council members and other stakeholders in forming our position on the issue. While we have some concerns regarding the introduction of formal adoption as a placement option for children in care, we have listened to the diverse perspectives on the issue and recognise that there may be some cases where adoption may be a good option. We believe it is important that this is only progressed where adoption is in the interests of, and is desired by, the child. There is also acknowledgement that there are instances where formal adoption is not appropriate, and we are keen to work with the department to ensure there is agreement about criteria and decision-making processes regarding the options available for a child's care.



PLAYFORD10

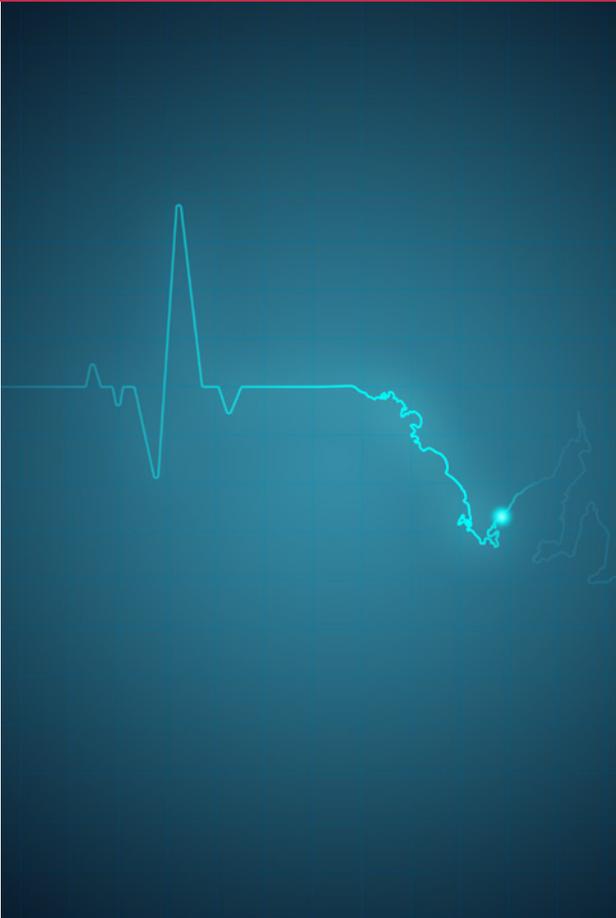
Connecting Children to Ongoing Activities

Playford 10

With funding from the Wyatt Trust, SACOSS is continuing to evaluate The City of Playford's pilot program *Playford 10*. Playford 10 supports 10-year-old children from Elizabeth Grove Primary School to engage in an afterschool activity, of their interest and choosing, and embedding this engagement.

This program originated because of significant evidence that children from low socio-economic families are excluded from extra-curricular activities that help build important pre-employment capabilities. Research by the City of Playford and the Playford Data Observatory (*Playford Youth: A New Story*) found that young adults, who transitioned from school to employment, were often involved in extracurricular activities during childhood and adolescence. Further, the mentors that they connected with through these activities were important in providing guidance and positive role models.

SACOSS has been tracking the outcomes of this interesting early intervention pilot and will continue to engage with the Playford Council on its successes and challenges with it.



The Heaps Unfair State: Why have health inequities increased in South Australia and how can this trend be reversed?

This project was a collaboration between SACOSS and the Southgate Institute for Health, Society and Equity at Flinders University. The report provides evidence of increasing health inequities in South Australia since the 1980s and recommends how to improve the state's health outcomes. The report's raft of almost 40 recommendations stretches across the fiscal, education, energy, health, public service, social security, housing, digital, employment, NGO, rural and regional sectors. The report was launched online on Friday 27 March as part of a Twitter Festival, with video introductions by Professor Fran Baum (Southgate), Ross Womersley (SACOSS) and Professor Ron Labonte (Southgate; University of Ottawa). You can watch the video introductions and read the full and related reports here: www.sacoss.org.au/sa-heaps-unfair-state

Health

In 2019-20, we have continued to collaborate with different bodies on matters of pertinent health issues. These include our leadership on the Health Care (Governance) Amendment Bill with NGO stakeholders, the release of the "SA: The Heaps Unfair State" report with the Southgate Institute for Health, Society and Equity at Flinders University as well as our ongoing engagement with the SA Public Health Consortium.

Health Care (Governance) Amendment Bill

Over the past financial year, we have been leading a collaboration of NGO health system stakeholders to lobby for amendments to the Health Care (Governance) Amendment Bill. We are particularly concerned with the proposed dissolution of the Health Performance Council and believe this may lead to a consequent gap in independent scrutiny, analysis and publication of health system performance data. We continue to pursue this issue.

SA Public Health Consortium

SACOSS has continued our formal collaboration with the Public Health Association of Australia (SA) and the Health Promotion Association (SA) to form the SA Public Health Consortium. The Public Health Consortium has engaged in joint advocacy built out of a shared concern regarding the worsening health and wellbeing of South Australians, particularly those living in disadvantaged circumstances.

The Consortium continues to closely follow the work of Wellbeing SA within the South Australian Government Department of Health and Wellbeing. While hospital avoidance is a significant priority for Wellbeing SA, the Consortium continues to advocate for a strong focus on, and funding for, primary prevention activities to advance the health and wellbeing of all South Australians.

The Consortium continues to work to reverse funding cuts made to health promotion programs over the last decade as there is a good evidence base for the successful outcomes of investment in these programs and a history of successful activities like this within South Australia.



SACOSS Events

2019 AGM and Waged Poor Report Launch

The SACOSS Annual General Meeting 2019 was held on 20 Nov 2019. At this event, held at the SACOSS office, we launched our Annual Report for 2018-19, our “Working to Make Ends Meet” report on Low-income Workers and Energy Bill Stress and elected Board and Policy Council Members for the upcoming year.

End of year Pancake Breakfast

On 12 Dec 2019, the SACOSS Team held an end of year pancake breakfast to thank all our sector colleagues, members and supporters for their invaluable contributions over the past year. It was a great time to celebrate the year that had been with people we had often conversed with and challenged over this time – including journalists and politicians – as well as our members and supporters.

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Luncheon

On 30 January 2020, it was our pleasure to welcome Simon Edwards the State Manager, Service Delivery & Performance at NDIA, South Australia & Northern Territory to speak at our boardroom luncheon for key people working in the Disability sector. They offered us an update on some key work for the NDIA before moving into a

broader conversation exploring the issues arising for providers and possibly even the broader social and community sector.

The luncheon was a great opportunity for some of our members to reflect on their experiences with the NDIA and share this with Simon and other interested parties.

SACOSS State Conference: Building Social Infrastructure

SACOSS has developed a strong reputation for presenting exciting and engaging events that are forward thinking, on-topic, informative and rewarding and our general conference this year was no different. We hosted 140 guests at the 2020 SACOSS State Conference and heard from keynote speakers Yanis Varoufakis on *Social Capital for the 99%* and Mark Croweller on *Disaster and Recovery – from city to country to sea*. It was a time for lively discussions on cutting-edge topics in which we looked ahead at everything from datafication, to disaster resilience, to what our sector will look like in a decade.



(Left to right) Susan Helyar, Ross Womersley and Deb DiNatale



Michelle Lensink MLC



COVID-19 Workshops

As a society we faced an unprecedented health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In early 2020 we held a number of workshops addressing the pressures that the NGO sector were already facing and would continue to face responding to COVID-19. This included “Navigating Thru”, a workshop which gave sector leaders a chance to better understand some of the pain points that COVID was likely to cause. It also gave the opportunity to think through what sort of support might make sense to help providers navigate through the next 3-6 months. It asked: What sector wide mechanism(s) could support (accurate) information sharing on operational responses, sharing of resources (materials and staff), communications and focussed engagement with government and other key stakeholders amongst NGO’s at this time and over the months to come?

Resilience at work workshop

Leading during uncertainty is difficult at the best of times let alone the worst of times. Kathryn McEwen, a highly experienced Psychologist, a friend of SACOSS and leader of the global consortium Working with Resilience generously presented a two-part workshop over Zoom on 16 and 23 April. These fittingly focused on the issue of Leading Through Continuing Turbulence.



(Left to right) Ross Womersley, Penny Gale, Nick Reade, Catherine Earl, Mark Waters, Samantha Mead & Nicole Chaplin



Yanis Varoufakis & Kasey Chambers



Mark Crosweller

Events planned but not executed during FY 19-20

SACOSS AGM and Board/Policy Council Elections 2020, combined with Treasurer’s Breakfast

The State Budget was delayed this year and will be handed down on 10 November 2020. Continuing the tradition SACOSS will host its 10th Post-Budget Breakfast with the Treasurer. SACOSS’s Annual General Meeting 2020 and launch of our **Annual Report for 2019-20** will be held as part of this year’s breakfast. This is an exclusive member-only event, with the breakfast sponsored by Hesta

Postponed due to COVID: The Working To Make Ends Meet: Energy, Water & Telco Conference

After being scheduled for June, we moved the Working To Make Ends Meet: Energy, Water & Telco Conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Though initially planned as an in-person event, it will now be held on 24 November 2020 as a **virtually delivered conference**. The topic remains the same, drawing on [foundational research](#) conducted by SACOSS on ‘Waged Poor Households’. The COVID-19 pandemic has only magnified the challenges faced by this cohort and, with increased underemployment likely to push a new cohort of households into waged poverty, it is ever more important that governments, the community services sector, and businesses working in the essential services understand and respond to challenges faced by waged poor households.

As such we look forward to delivering a program designed to investigate the **key drivers of waged poverty**, open discussions on how to address these and share in planning a more equitable future for all.

(left to right) Bonnie Parker,
Ross Womersley and Lisa Burns
(Small Change Radio)



Communications & Media

SACOSS is a trusted voice, speaking up and speaking out for the health and community services sector – and all of the people these bodies represent. Ensuring that policy and advocacy go hand in hand, we apply industry understanding to practical outworkings that make a difference in the lives of struggling South Australians. In this endeavour, we utilise our voice in both traditional and social media to make the most of all avenues of communication. By engaging proactively and reactively across platforms we:

- Inform the public about issues and realities for South Australians
- Liaise with members about the issues that matter most to them and capitalise on our shared voice as a key tool to advocate for a fair and just community in SA
- Educate politicians and policy makers about best practice in the sector, for the benefit of all South Australians
- Garner media interest and dissemination around our advocacy work, the work of our sector and people with lived experiences of poverty and inequality
- Speak up for, with and alongside marginalised and disadvantaged South Australians
- Frame language use and debate around the challenges to the social service sector in SA and those who need it most

Campaigns, traditional and online media

SACOSS is recognised by media in South Australia for our expertise on issues around cost of living, energy, child wellbeing, digital inclusion, tax and unemployment, among other issues. Throughout 2019-20, we continued to build-on our already-strong media performance and profile. With approximately 700 mentions across radio, TV, print and online media, we spoke to a combined audience numbering in the millions.

We had a number of media foci and efforts for 2019-20 as we worked with our policy team to promote and educate our key audiences on our important and original research. These included: waged poor households, costs of living, energy and water bills, amendments to land tax aggregation, effects of COVID-19 on all South Australians but particularly the waged poor cohort, health inequities as well as other issues related to fairness and inclusion.





Social media

Our social media presence provides important platforms from which SACOSS can engage with the broader public, sector employees, politicians, journalists, community leaders as well as grassroots organisations and people experiencing poverty and disadvantage. We have continued to grow our presence on social media platforms – expanding our reach on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Our Twitter account was opened in 2009, Facebook in 2013 and LinkedIn in June 2019. It is evident that building a strong presence takes time, but is worth the effort.

Each social media platform gives us a unique position to engage with different audiences and utilise a different tone.

- On **Twitter**, we put our focus towards politicians and journalists. This platform requires punchy communication in which we can engage directly with politicians. The @sacoss account figure is slightly down from last year as we created a separate Twitter handle for Ross. This was a strategic move to create more engagement with a broader and differing audience, as well as being able to track with our campaigns more cleanly while engaging with other campaigns and voices. The figures below show that we have had a combined twitter impact of nearly 4,500 followers, nearly 40,000 tweets (including unique tweets, mentions, re-tweets), over 18.5k likes and use of just under 1100 photos and/or media in our tweets.
- On **Facebook**, we aim to speak to and with the public – those who we engage with who have lived experiences of injustice and disadvantage, South Australians who want to advocate for social change with us as well as those who provoke in-depth conversations on current issues. Facebook gives us a good platform to engage in longer form discussions and hold private conversations with people, while utilising the capacity to promote our events and advocacy visually, through the events calendar, and formal advertising.

- On **LinkedIn**, we are seeking to engage with employees and connections within our member organisations. We view LinkedIn as an opportunity to engage with a broader cross-section of our membership to inform them of our collective voice on their behalf and to help them engage with us in our shared advocacy. It is also a way for people to connect with our staff team in a professional online networking platform, without this invading personal social media accounts on Facebook. On LinkedIn we are present as both an “administrator”, as staff and as a company page. As with Twitter, Ross developed his own profile and utilises this to lead and share information from the SACOSS profile.

Social media continues to provide us with a constant engagement in public discourse and engages us with a broad audience in ways which will continue to fulfil our strategic signpost of having a Powerful Voice. By sharing these platforms with our members and with all of the other Council of Social Services, we amplify our voice, and speak loudly with those who need to be heard the most. So please connect with us and join the social conversation!

SACOSS Social Media Presence in 2019-20



Twitter

@sacoss
 Followers: 3996
 Tweets: 34.7K
 Likes: 13.7K
 Photos & Media: 1,023
 Impressions: 449.8K

@RossWomersley
 Followers: 441
 Tweets: 4,659
 Photos & Media: 71
 Likes: 4991



Facebook

facebook.com/SACOSS
 Page Followers: 2591
 Page Likes: 2570



LinkedIn

linkedin.com/company/sacoss
 248 Followers (was 23)
 387 Visitors (up from 27)
 105 Impressions
 517 SACOSS Administrator
 Connections (up from 332)
 436 Ross Womersley Connections



Website

In the past financial year we have hosted over 16,771 web users who have viewed pages on our website 52, 374 times in 23, 528 sessions; 16,455 were new users. People spent an average of 2:19 minutes and read 2.23 pages during their sessions.

We have continued to utilise this platform as a resource to inform our members and the public about current media releases, events, reports and key social justice policies.

SACOSS Snapshot and eBulletin

The SACOSS eBulletin informs members and subscribers about SACOSS news and views as well as latest events and topics of interest for the social and community services sector. It is sent to 453 members and 1315 subscribers for a combined reach of 1768 readers.

In 2019-20, we published 40 eBulletins. From April-June these became a weekly endeavour in an effort to keep our sector updated and connected throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, sector changes and lockdown. These have since returned to their fortnightly regularity and continue to include COVID-19 updates. We also decided to simply the titling of this from a monthly combined “Snapshot and eBulletin” plus the opposite fortnight as simply “eBulletin” to a consistent “eBulletin” title for each Electronic Direct Mail. For the latest news from SACOSS around the sector, sign up or submit an item for eBulletin, go:

www.sacoss.org.au/ebulletin

Member Advisories & Fact Sheets

SACOSS sends out Member Advisories as a way to keep Members up-to-date with current policy and sector issues, or to provide information about upcoming events and opportunities for involvement in SACOSS’ work. SACOSS sent out 20 Member Advisories in 2019-20. Further to Member Advisories, SACOSS Fact Sheets are distributed to offer a concise overview that informs members and the wider community on specific issues. In 2019-20, we published 3 Fact Sheets. You can read SACOSS’ Fact Sheets and Briefing Notes at www.sacoss.org.au/publications/fact-sheets

Goodnight, SACOSS Radio

On Tuesday 4 March, after nearly 7 years, with 344 shows and more than 1000 interviews, we hung up the Small Change headphones for the last time.

Small Change, the SACOSS Radio show broadcast by Radio Adelaide, was girded by a diverse group of presenters and contributors including Marnie Round, Lisa Burns, Bonnie Parker, Dwayne Coulthard, Ross Womersley, Helen Connolly, Deb Welch, Greg Ogle and Phillip Beddall (RIP). In recent years, as lead producer, Lisa and Ross had put special thought towards continuing to include and increase the value of different voices on the show.

Over the years, *Small Change* has opened up discussions on issues such as cost of living, living rough, elder abuse, child protection, mental wellbeing, welfare, disability, Indigenous rights, substance use, tax and digital inclusion. The past financial year opened up a number of these issues with the following interviews:



Abbey Kendall, Director of the Worker Women's Centre SA, and Lisa Burns (Small Change Radio)

Interview topics

23	unemployment and poverty
14	community sector and social advocacy
13	child protection
13	mental health
10	housing and homelessness
10	youth issues
9	Indigenous issues
7	disability
6	discrimination
6	loneliness, friendship and social connection
6	women's rights
4	access to justice
4	digital inclusion
3	disaster resilience and climate change
3	land tax
2	advocacy and support for carers
2	elder's rights
2	food insecurity
2	incarceration and prisoners
2	substance use and gambling harm

In the latter half of 2019, we created *The Suffrage Project* to commemorate the 125th anniversary of women's suffrage, as a special five episode series, thanks to support from the Office for Women,. The series, produced by Milly Schultz-Boylen and Lisa Burns, profiled five South Australian suffragists': Augusta Zadow, Catherine Helen Spence, Mary Lee, Mary Colton and Rosetta Birks. While celebrating the original work of these women in housing, fair work and income, mental wellbeing, domestic violence and immigration, *The Suffrage Project* further explored how these issues continue to impact on individuals and communities today. Many of those interviewed in this series were from our member organisations and we were grateful for their time and contribution. You can catch up on *The Suffrage Project* here: www.sacoss.org.au/125th-anniversary-womens-suffrage

We give a heartfelt thanks to those of you who have contributed your voices to and supported our weekly radio program since it started in August 2013 – those with lived experience, our sector comrades and passionate community members, our listeners who have enjoyed tuning in each week, and to Radio Adelaide for giving us the opportunity to put these important stories to air.

Thank you, and good night.

SACOSS Board Members 2019-20

The SACOSS Board is responsible for the governance of the organisation.

SACOSS BOARD MEMBERS 2019-20		
BOARD POSITION	NAME	YEAR TERM EXPIRES NOVEMBER
Chairperson	David Panter	2020
Treasurer	Emma Crosby	2021
Member	Nicole Chaplin	2021
Member	Nancy Penna	2020
Member (Co-opted)	Tamara MacKean	2020
Member (Co-opted)	Sabina Schaare	2020
Member	Pam Simmons	2021
Member	Rosemary Warmington	2020

POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS 2019-20		
<p>The SACOSS Policy Council is nominated from SACOSS member organisations, by SACOSS members. This important leadership body helps to plan and develop key areas of social policy development work. Policy Council members hold office for two-year terms and are elected in the different categories set out in the SACOSS Constitution, noted below under 'Category Description'.</p>		
CATEGORY DESCRIPTION	PERSON ELECTED	ORGANISATION
Chairperson	David Panter	SACOSS Board/ECH Inc.
Peak Body	Gareth Norman	Community Housing Council of SA
	Geoff Harris	Mental Health Coalition of SA
	Kylie Fergusen	Community Centres SA
	Michael White	SA Network of Drug and Alcohol Services
	Rob Martin	Child and Family Focus SA
	Kristin Johansson	Multicultural Communities Council of SA
Non-metro	Anthea Pavy	UnitingCare Wesley Country
	Shane Maddocks	ac.care
Large NGO	Libby Craft	UnitingSA
	Robyn Sutherland	Uniting Communities
	Susan Errington	Legal Services Commission of SA
	Susan Thomas	Life Without Barriers
Small NGO	Abbey Kendall	Working Women's Centre SA
	Michelle Adams	Australian Association of Social Workers
	Nicole Chaplin	St John's Youth Service
	Shona Reid	Reconciliation SA
Individual Member	Jen Cleary	
	Phil Saunders	



Our Member Organisations 2019-20

Australian Association of Social Workers
 Aboriginal Community Care (SA)
 Aboriginal Health Council of SA
 Anglican Community Care
 Anglicare SA
 Anti-Poverty Network SA
 Australian Health Promotion Association SA
 Australian Migrant Resource Centre
 Australian Red Cross (SA Division)
 Australian Refugee Association Inc
 Australian Services Union
 Baptist Care (SA) Inc
 Barkuma Inc
 Brain Injury SA
 CARA Inc
 Carers SA Inc
 CareWorks SA
 Centacare Catholic Country SA Ltd
 Centacare Catholic Family Services
 Child and Family Focus SA
 City of Onkaparinga
 Community Centres SA Inc
 Community Housing Council of SA Inc
 Community Living Australia
 Community Living Project Inc
 Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers - SA Inc
 Disability Living Incorporated
 DOME Association Inc
 ECH Inc
 Enhanced Lifestyles
 Family Drug Support
 Guide Dogs SA/NT
 Health Consumers Alliance of SA Inc
 Hepatitis SA Inc
 HomePlace
 Hutt Street Centre Ltd
 Julia Farr Association
 Junction Australia Ltd
 Justice for Refugees SA
 Kornar Winmil Yunti
 Legal Services Commission of SA
 Life Without Barriers SA
 Lutheran Community Care
 MarionLIFE Community Services
 ME/CFS Australia (SA)
 Mental Health Coalition of SA Inc
 Mind Australia
 Mission Australia - SA Region
 Multicultural Communities Council of SA
 Neami National
 OARS Community Transitions

Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People
 Relationships Australia South Australia Ltd
 SA Country Carers
 Save the Children
 Second Chances SA Inc
 SIN Inc
 Skylight Mental Health
 Sonder
 South Australian Financial Counsellors Association Inc
 South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services
 St John's Youth Services Inc
 St Vincent de Paul Society (SA) Inc
 STTARS - Survivors of Torture & Trauma
 The Broughton Art Society Inc
 The Salvation Army
 The Smith Family
 The Wyatt Benevolent Institution Inc
 Uniting Country Ltd
 UnitingCare SA
 UnitingCare Wesley Bowden Inc
 UnitingSA
 Victim Support Service Inc
 West Coast Youth & Community Support Inc
 Women's Safety Services SA
 Working Women's Centre SA Inc

SACOSS Lifetime members

Brown, Harvey
 Butler, Brian
 Carson, Ed
 Davey, Kym
 Dawson, Michael
 Ellis, Marj
 Fitzpatrick, Colleen
 Fraser, Gael
 Hall AM, Sheila
 Hall, Peter
 Halsey, Christine
 Henley, Mark
 Kneebone, Simon
 Malycha, Wendy
 McKenzie, Margaret
 Portway, Louise
 Powell, Lange
 Schrapel, Simon
 Simmons, Pam
 Ward, Brian
 Waters, Mark
 Wilson, Andrew
 Yates AM, Ian

Secretariat 2019-20

Ross Womersley
Chief Executive Officer

Policy & Research

Dr Catherine Earl

Policy Director

Dr Greg Ogle

Senior Policy Officer (Economics and Taxation)

Maureen Boyle

Senior Policy Officer (Energy)

Rebecca Law

Policy Officer (Energy & Water)

Georgina Morris

Policy Officer (Energy & Water)

Sue Tilley

Policy Officer (Health, Aboriginal Social Justice, and Child & Family Wellbeing) (from June 2020)

Aimee Brownbill

Policy Officer (COVID-19 Vulnerable Populations Project) (from June 2020)

Kerry Colbung

Policy Officer (Health, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander) (until May 2020)

Kathy Mickan

Project Officer (Disaster Resilience)

Communications

Caryn Rogers

Communications Coordinator (until April 2020)/Communications Officer (Projects) (from April 2020)

Tania Baxter

Communications Coordinator (returned to role April 2020)

Lisa Burns

Radio and Communications Officer (until March 2020)

Isobel Montgomery

Digital Communications Officer (from April 2020)

Events & Membership

Angela Gardner

Events & Membership Coordinator

Finance & Administration

Lucy Goodall

Finance and Administration Assistant

Jane Zadow

Manager, Corporate Services

External Committees

Representatives and nominees of SACOSS sat on the following boards and committees in 2019-20. SACOSS thanks them all for their time and commitment.

David Panter - **ACOSS Board**

Rebecca Law - **AGL Customer Council**

Rebecca Law - **Australian Gas Infrastructure Group SA Reference Group**

Greg Ogle - **Australian Media and Communications Authority Consumer Consultative Forum**

Dr Susan Errington - **Courts Community Reference Committee**

Colleen Fitzpatrick - **Dame Roma Mitchell Trust Funds (DRMTF) Board**

Maureen Boyle - **ElectraNet Consumer Advisory Panel**

Ross Womersley - **Energy Charter End User Consultative Group**

Ross Womersley - **Energy Consumers Australia (ECA) Reference Committee**

Maureen Boyle - **Energy Security Board Post 2025 Customer Group**

Ross Womersley - **Essential Services Commission of SA (ESCOSA) Consumer Advisory Committee**

Ross Womersley - **Essential Services Commission of SA (ESCOSA) Consumer Experts Panel SA Water RD20**

Ross Womersley - **NDIS Key Influencers & Peak Industry Groups Stakeholder Forum**

Kathy Mickan - **People at Risk in Emergencies Action Group**

Catherine Earl - **Playford Data Observatory**

Phillip Beddall (RIP) - **SA Dental Service Consumer Advisory Panel**

Georgina Morris - **SA Power Networks Customer Council**

Maureen Boyle / Georgina Morris - **SA Power Networks Tariff Working Group**

Ross Womersley - **SA Water Residential Customer Council**

Georgina Morris - **Thriving Communities Partnership: SA Chapter**

Ross Womersley - **School of psychology, social work and social policy Advisory group**

Catherine Earl - **Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity PhD Advisory Group**

COSS Network

The Councils of Social Service across Australia have unity of purpose and a compelling case to end inequality and poverty. That's what motivates us and where our power to influence is.

Our combined national network has almost 4000 organisational and individual members working with them: that's the foundation of who we are, that is our power to influence.

One purpose, one message, one goal, thousands of voices.

That's why our network is engaged with government in negotiating policies that will meet our goals – and theirs. Only by staying engaged can we achieve change.

That's why both community organisations and the business sector want to form alliances with us. Those alliances make our network even more formidable.

From these strategic alliances a bipartisan approach is blossoming that Australians want to see but which politics has failed to deliver. This time of crisis in politics is rich with possibility for the new way of working that the COSS network has embraced.

Australians are recognising that the COSS network can be a voice not just for people surviving on the lowest of incomes and experiencing inequality and disadvantage, but for everyone who has a stake in a creating a more equal, prosperous and inclusive nation.

To achieve the goal of ending inequality and poverty we, and our allies, build resilience within communities by enabling and amplifying their voice to challenge policies, systems, behaviours and attitudes.

We equip them, and our strategic partners, with the compelling evidence – the big picture on the social, economic and political need for change, and the dramatic, moving human experiences that are the motivator for what we do.

We listen to people in communities through consultation and grassroots engagement, we mobilise the skills and experience in communities, so their voice grows in power, endurance and eloquence now and through the generations.

We speak not only of the challenges faced by communities and individuals but, most critically, the successes. They are a critical part of the evidence for change.

Yes, the number of organisations, alliances and individuals is one measure of the COSS network's influence.

But the supreme indicator of our powerful influence and success is in the number of lives we change and the number of communities we enrich through an end to poverty, inequality and disadvantage and the creation of a more equal and inclusive Australia.

Each state and territory has an independent, non-partisan and well-respected Council of Social Service that advocates for their broader community's needs. Working together, alongside the national COSS, we speak to all levels of government to support the community sector and facilitate justice and equal opportunity for all Australians.

As nine independent organisations – one for each state and territory in Australia and a national body – we work passionately and tirelessly together with each other and our communities to reduce poverty and promote social justice. It is our combined strength that amplifies our voices to improve the lives of all Australians.



Treasurer's Report

SACOSS Treasurer
Emma Crosby



This has been another successful year for SACOSS, notwithstanding the challenges we face in the current climate. Although SACOSS had operating income of \$1,452,130 and operating expenses of \$1,461,137, the slight deficit of \$9,007 was offset by the receipt of the federal government Covid-19 economic support income packages of JobKeeper subsidies and the cash flow boost. This resulted in SACOSS recording a total income of \$1,642,130 and an overall surplus of \$180,993.

An overall increase in grants revenue was achieved this year. Income from major, long-term grants generally matched previous years with some modest increases – most grants were successfully completed despite Covid-19 restrictions and associated challenges. Two additional grants were also awarded and successfully completed within the year; one relating to disaster resilience (see p. 11 for more on this) and another the telecommunication hardships of the waged poor (see p. 15). Research activities increased and included the first of the three year Playford-10 project (see p. 21). Membership revenue was strong following the full transition to the new fee structure introduced last financial year.

SACOSS was pleased to present a conference in March 2020 for the (general) community services sector, resulting in a modest surplus. While we narrowly avoided the Covid-19 shutdown with this conference, unfortunately, our annual Energy, Water and Telecommunication (essential services) Conference scheduled for June 2020 was postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions which resulted in a material loss of both sponsorship and registration income.

Expenses were also impacted by Covid-19 restrictions resulting in a decrease of *Travel and Accommodation and Conference Costs*. We again note that while travel costs are a substantial expense, albeit reduced this year, these almost all result from the role SACOSS plays in convening and coordinating the work of the *National Consumer Energy Roundtable* – a regular strategic leadership gathering of consumer advocates engaged in energy advocacy from across the country (see p. 17). SACOSS receives a specific grant from Energy Consumers Australia to coordinate and fund this work; ECA also makes a substantial in-kind contribution to assist coordinating Roundtable events.

The most significant difference in expenses was an increase in Employee Benefits Expense. This reflects an additional senior policy staff member, an increase in activity to carry out the grant work and recruitment delays in the previous year being resolved.

Our auditors, Nexia Edwards Marshall, have again issued an unqualified report and while these are summary reports, the detailed audited financial statements are available on request or via the SACOSS website. It is pleasing to note that the annual financial statement audit has not revealed any issues with the accounting practices and financial management at SACOSS.

Though a trying year in many ways, we continue to focus on our strategic plan to develop a fair and just community for South Australians, cultivating a thriving community sector and building a healthy, resilient and sustainable organisation.

It is simply not possible to deliver on our goals without the fantastic team at SACOSS whose drive and resilience is inspiring, along with my fellow Board members. I would also like to thank all of our member organisations, supporters and sponsors along with the Department for Human Services, Energy Consumers Australia and the Department of Energy and Mining Resources for their continued support in 2019/20.

Yours in finance

Emma Crosby
Treasurer, SACOSS Board

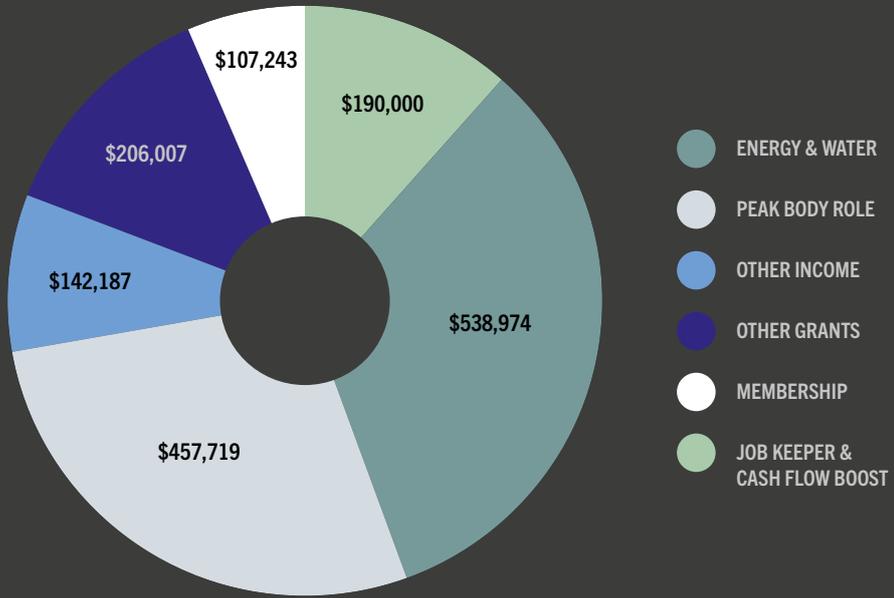
Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2020

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC.

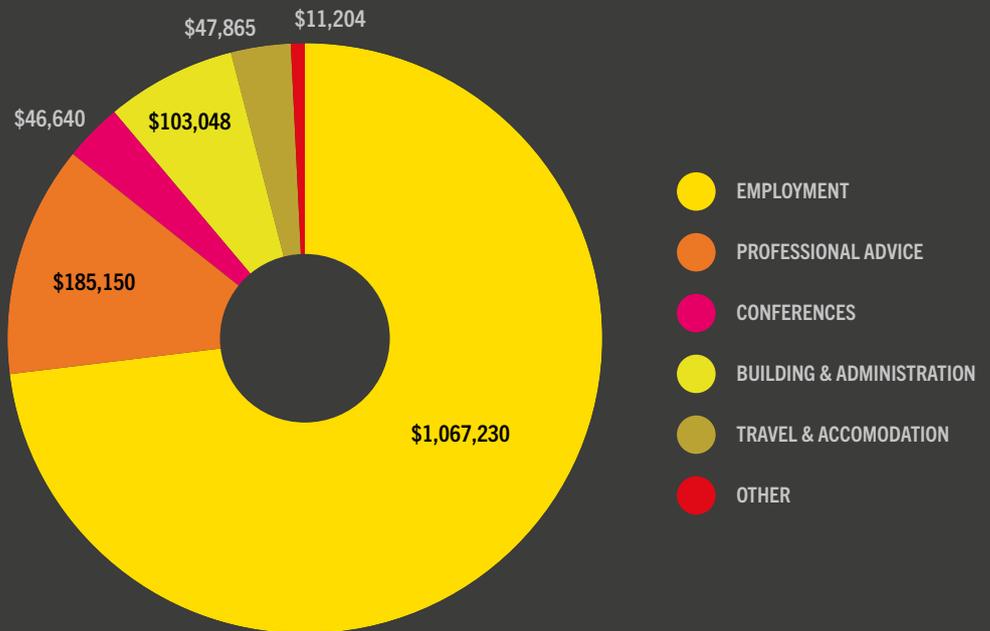
	2020 \$	2019 \$
INCOME		
Revenue from Contracts with Customers		
Conference & Sponsorship	47,981	128,403
Memberships	107,243	87,611
Grant (Energy Consumer Australia)	115,425	172,876
Other Revenue		
Grant (DHS)	457,719	439,017
Grant (SA Energy Consumer Advocacy)	215,000	210,000
Grant (Consumer Advocacy & Research)	208,549	219,214
Grants (JobKeeper and Cash Flow Boost)	190,000	-
Grants (Other)	206,007	24,950
Research & Development	77,325	23,275
Other Income	16,881	66,516
Total Income	1,642,130	1,371,862
EXPENSES		
Conference Costs	46,640	75,897
Consultancy Fees	147,211	103,900
Depreciation	31,389	31,387
Employment	1,061,874	865,374
Office Accommodation	35,626	68,743
Computers & IT	19,454	11,900
Printing, Postage and Stationery	4,681	9,041
Insurance	10,543	10,001
Professional Services	43,294	40,779
Reference Materials	662	560
Travel and Accommodation	47,865	85,234
Equipment	3,043	5,068
Other	8,855	10,562
Total Expenses	1,461,137	1,318,446
Net Current Year Surplus (Deficit)	180,993	53,416
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-
Total Comprehensive Income (Loss) for the Year	180,993	53,416

SACOSS 2020 Audited Financial Report with accompanying notes is available on our website.

INCOME TOTAL
for 2019-20
\$1,642,130



EXPENSE TOTAL
for 2019-20
\$1,461,138



Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2020

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC.

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,259,879	847,308
Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors	122,607	58,962
Other Current Assets	3,027	8,803
Total Current Assets	1,385,513	915,073
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment	1,681,295	1,696,477
Total Non-Current Assets	1,681,295	1,696,477
Total Assets	3,066,808	2,611,550
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Other Payables	150,233	80,568
Employee Provisions	165,504	136,494
Other Liabilities	396,970	222,006
Total Current Liabilities	712,707	439,068
Non-Current Liabilities		
Employee Provisions	4,359	3,734
Total Current Liabilities	4,359	3,734
Total Liabilities	717,066	442,802
NET ASSETS	2,349,742	2,168,749
EQUITY		
Reserves	1,626,211	1,626,211
Retained Surplus	723,531	542,538
TOTAL EQUITY	2,349,742	2,168,749

SACOSS 2020 Audited Financial Report with accompanying notes is available on our website.

Our Partners

SACOSS gratefully acknowledges the support of the following organisations through grant and activity funding:

PEAK FUNDING



Government of South Australia
Department of Human Services

CONNECTIVITY COSTS II: TELECOMMUNICATIONS AFFORDABILITY AND WAGED POOR HOUSEHOLDS.



37

73RD ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20 | FINANCIAL REPORT

RESPONDING TO COVID-19



Wellbeing SA



Government of South Australia
Department of Human Services

ENERGY & WATER ADVOCACY



Government of South Australia
Department for Energy and Mining



DISASTER RESILIENCE PROJECT



Government of South Australia
South Australian Fire and
Emergency Services Commission

PLAYFORD 10 PROJECT (PROGRAM EVALUATION)



SACOSS RADIO



GENERAL SPONSORSHIP

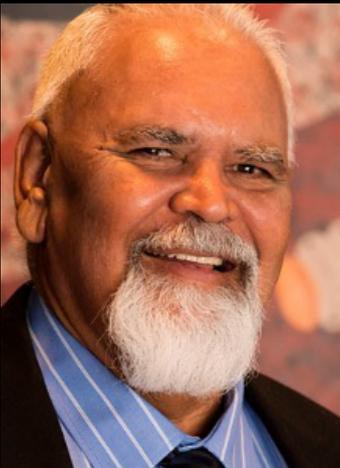


In Memoriam



Phillip Beddall

Phillip Beddall was a dear friend and colleague of SACOSS, and a fierce, untiring advocate within the disability community. He first joined our SACOSS Policy Council in 2002, and was awarded a life membership in 2007 as recognition for his outstanding service to SACOSS and the broader community. He represented SACOSS on many external committees including with the SA Dental Service, where he assumed the role of Chair of its Advisory Committee, as well as on internal Policy Advocacy Groups concerned with Disability, Health, and Essential Services. He continued to sit on our Policy Council as an individual member and in more recent years was its Deputy Chair. We remain extremely proud to have had him as a member, an ambassador, and an ally.



Tauto Sansbury

Tauto Sansbury was a leader, advocate, activist and a beloved friend of SACOSS. As a true voice for the voiceless, Tauto was keenly involved with the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, National and State Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees as well as holding many other important titles and positions. Over his lifetime he was the recipient of numerous awards, including The Australian Centenary Medal in 2003 from the Commonwealth, Male Elder of the Year (SA NAIDOC) in 2014, the Aboriginal Lifetime Achievement Award (National NAIDOC) in 2015, the Dr Yunupingu Award in the National Indigenous Human Rights Awards 2015, Male Elder of the Year City of Port Adelaide and Enfield 2018. We are thankful for the wisdom and guidance Tauto provided us over the years, and will continue his legacy by ensuring Aboriginal and all First Nations people remain at the heart of what we are doing.



Joy Noble AM

Joy Noble AM was the co-founder of Volunteering SA&NT, former Chair of Carers SA, and a much-loved lifetime member of SACOSS. Joy's career was in social work and community development, and she was the first person in Australia to author books on volunteer management. South Australia's highest distinction for an individual volunteer, 'The Joy Noble Medal' was named in her honour. In her retirement, Joy started the SA Volunteer Centre (now known as Volunteering SA&NT) alongside Mavis Reynolds AOM. She was also Chair of Carers SA during their inaugural years in the early nineties. In later years, Joy was very generous towards carers and took steps to ensure they received the rest and recovery they needed. She has left behind an exceptional legacy and made outstanding contributions to the South Australia community services sector.



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 [@sacoss](https://twitter.com/sacoss)

 linkedin.com/company/SACOSS



SACOSS acknowledges traditional owners of country throughout South Australia, and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to elders past, present and future.