

South Australian
Council of Social Service
69th Annual Report
2015-16



SACOSS

*South Australian Council
of Social Service*

OUR VISION

Justice, opportunity and shared wealth for all South Australians.

OUR MISSION

SACOSS does not accept poverty, inequity or injustice.

We will be a powerful and representative voice that leads and supports our community to take actions that achieve our vision.

We will hold to account governments, business and communities for actions that disadvantage vulnerable South Australians.

OUR GOALS

All social and economic policy in SA ensures all South Australians have their basic human needs met.

South Australia has strong, cohesive community services and health sectors driving social change.

SACOSS is a sustainable, independent organisation equipped to support the community services and health sectors to achieve our vision.

South Australian Council of Social Service 69th Annual Report 2015-16
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Contents

Chair's Report	2
CEO's Report	4
2015-16 in Numbers	6
Fulfilling our Role as a Peak Body	8
Representation	9
Membership	10
External Committees	12
Research, Policy Development, Advocacy	13
Research	16
Policy Development and Advocacy	17
Information Dissemination to the Sector	29
SACOSS News	30
eBulletin	31
Member Advisories	31
Post-Budget Breakfast with the Treasurer	31
Information Dissemination to the Community	32
Media	33
SACOSS Radio	34
Social Media	36
Fact Sheets	37
Sector Development	38
Helping To Develop Our Sector	39
Healthy Minds, Healthy Workers	40
Resilience	41
SA Not-For-Profit Funding Rules & Guidelines	42
Red-tape / Australian Charities Not-For-Profit Commission	42
Secretariat	43
Financial Summary	45
Treasurer's Report	46
Income & Expenditure Statement	47
Assets & Liabilities Statement	48



Chair's Report

Helen Connolly

It is a cliché I know but it really does only feel like yesterday that I started my journey as the SACOSS Chair. It is however six years and time for me to pass the baton to another individual as committed as I was to step into the big shoes of so many SACOSS and sector leaders who have had the honour and privilege to be the Chairperson of such a successful and influential organisation.

For almost 70 years SACOSS has been a powerful and strong voice for South Australians doing it tough. From the early days, as a youth welfare organisation, to now the most influential peak body of the health and community services sector in SA and highly valued member of the COSS network, SACOSS has a proud and enduring history.

Always driven by the principles of collective action and building a movement for change SACOSS has been outcome rather than organisationally focussed. Choosing to support the development of allies rather than grow its own resources.

The power of the symphony not the solo continues to have currency, with ongoing sector support, advice and organisational mentoring to a number of smaller, less resourced members. I am proud of this tradition and pleased that during my time we have continued to work collegiately and collaboratively with so many other organisations and groups in the community, including the Aboriginal Social Justice Coalition, and Keep Income Management Accountable. In recent years this sector support has extended to other workers and the Healthy Workers Healthy Futures project has been a valuable sector resource.

SACOSS has also continued to actively support the Stronger Together Agreement with SA State Government to work together to produce outcomes in the health and community services sector. SACOSS has been a strong contributor to the Human Services Partnership Forum and the various working groups, especially the SANFRAG which has required a significant resource contribution by SACOSS and Volunteering SA & NT. I have personally enjoyed co-chairing the Forum with Minister Zoe Bettison

over the past year and have welcomed her candour and respect for the sector.

In particular I am proud of the work done developing a new Stronger Together Agreement based on a population level accountability framework. This provides clearer accountability and reporting frameworks for sector and government and should, once released, help shape future collaboration and co-design efforts.

The pace of change in policy and advocacy work can sometimes feel glacial and at times it is one step forward two steps back, however SACOSS membership, leadership and secretariat should feel both proud and motivated by our collective achievements in the pursuit of social justice:

- Changes to Compulsory Third Party Insurance to protect the rights of vulnerable people injured in motor vehicle accidents
- Increase in Concessions
- Cost of Living – energy, medical, heating and cooling rebate and PAT Scheme
- Increased funding for Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund
- Strategic Plan dialogue with critical Friends and Members
- Small Change radio program showcased dozens of member organisations and survived the Radio Adelaide move
- Legislation to tax online betting
- MOU with a NGO
- Financial support for our Tax Campaign
- Five successful Post Budget Treasurer's Breakfasts
- Constitutional Reform, Development of a Board Charter, and Policy on the relationship of Policy Council to the Board
- Position as the lead Energy Consumer Authority in SA
- Three successful conferences
 - Self Employed Women's Association Forum
 - Child Protection Symposium
 - Energy Hardship and Affordability
- Commented on and advocated for changes in legislation too numerous to mention

2015-16

Our advocacy has at times taken us to the edge and been uncomfortable but at all times we have been completely focussed on justice, opportunity and shared wealth for all South Australians. This year I have been impressed by the Board and Policy Council's brave leadership, uncomfortable decisions, strong resolve and unfaltering confidence in our objectives and our CEO. I thank the SACOSS Board members this year for their robust discussion, solid judgement and collective accountability.

Over the past years I have had the privilege of working with directors who, without exception, have made significant contributions and brought knowledge, skills and wisdom willingly to the table and a generosity to promote and protect SACOSS interests.

This year saw us farewell longstanding Board member Michael Dawson along with Peter Sandeman, Patsy Kellett and Beth Davidson-Park. Michael was our longest-standing member of the Board having been elected in 2005 and his terrific contribution to SACOSS was acknowledged with life membership in 2015.

I also want to acknowledge the work of Policy Council. On the first Monday of the month a group of sector leaders/members generously give their expertise, insights, knowledge and views to the development of key SACOSS products including the budget bid, campaigns, strategies, legislative consultation and submissions. They have also provided a key mechanism for government officials to consult with the sector in an accessible and convenient way and to disseminate critical information to diverse stakeholders.

The level of cooperation and goodwill in Policy Council makes the meetings always informative and productive. I thank each of the members for their contribution and commitment.

We have been lucky to have a stable, engaged and talented core staff team. This year we did however farewell some longer term staff. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Vivian Clark, Marni Round, and Bronwyn Colby who left SACOSS to pursue other opportunities. We wish them well and acknowledge their creativity and dedication.

BOARD MEMBERS 2015-16

Helen Connolly Chair

Emma-Louise Crosby Treasurer

Patsy Kellett

Paul Scully

Matthew Woodward

Michael Dawson
to October 2015

Peter Sandeman
to October 2015

Nicole Chaplin
co-opted from November 2015

Beth Davidson-Park
co-opted from November 2015

Our comprehensive traditional and social media presence and subsequent brand awareness is however clearly down to a CEO who is available at all times of the day and night to represent SACOSS. He has positioned SACOSS as a credible, reliable source of truth and has gained the respect of members, staff, peers, stakeholders, politicians and the Board. I personally want to thank Ross for his leadership, passion for justice and dogged determination.

As I finish my time in the Chair I would like to commend to the membership the significant achievements that have eventuated in the past year, some of them are the result of years of work, others are the beginning of work to come.





CEO's Report Ross Womersley

How the years fly past! Again, we have had an extremely busy, productive and challenging 12 months but probably never as challenging as for the people we most worry about, those who face a daily battle to put food on the table, to stay optimistic and to find a place where they feel they belong and are valued for their contributions.

With rises in unemployment and underemployment it's not been an easy year for the many people across our state who have seen their incomes stall or even fall.

At the same time the cost of essentials like electricity, health care, housing and telecommunications all seem to spiral ever upwards. This is well and good for any of us whose incomes continue to keep pace BUT these increases can be devastating for anyone whose income is going backwards or has been low for an extended period.

Inequality continues to grow and we seem to be in an increasingly individualistic and sometimes mean world. One where we too often put our own interests above others, where we're quick to form judgements, where we blame people for their failure to help themselves and where opinions are built on data that supports our position no matter how valid.

And today we have new tools to spread our views, both informed and ill-informed, faster and more widely than ever before. It's a conundrum for those of us trying to get action on issues of inequity, poverty and injustice because while these new tools can help engage and inform, they can equally be used to fuel hatred and division even when based on lies or misinformation.

Many of us are still trying to keep up with these emergent means of communication and ours is by no means an easy sell. For example, would you be willing to give up a little so others get a little more? Would you be more generous in the way you think about someone from this background or faith tradition? Would you pay a little more tax so we have good quality, vital community services? Would you take a little less profit as an investor if it meant a better social outcome? Will you join us in

demanding that exclusion be remedied? Will you work with us collectively to ensure kids grow up in safe secure homes and their parents get help to be the best parents they can be? And so it goes on!

Individualisation is now also being promoted as the means to improve our response to the needs of many vulnerable people across our community. While over the last few decades governments have enthusiastically promoted more competition amongst services through contestable funding distributions for program delivery, they are now moving to give control directly to individuals (eg. NDIS, individual aged care packages). This is in part a reaction to our failure to create highly personalised services within current funding arrangements and in part an acknowledgement that these individuals are often best-placed to understand what they need.

The shape and purpose of organisations delivering services across the sector is also changing and it is increasingly difficult, especially for members of the public, to distinguish between charitable, not-for-profit, for social profit, and for profit services.

The bulk of our sectors' funding still comes from government but there are an increasing number of business and philanthropic interests seeking to influence organisations in our sector. Regrettably most funding is still based in short-term cycles despite the knowledge that responding to longstanding, difficult community issues demands long-term investments.

Some of the variability in funding arises because of our failure to achieve bi-partisan political agreement about the need for long term investments to address these entrenched issues. Individual funding mechanisms introduce yet another layer of complexity and uncertainty.

And when bad things happen and they are so ugly their public exposure demands an immediate response, we are shamed into inquiry and hopefully restorative action, at least until the next issue pops along. Funding flows to this arena but is removed from another.

Experienced practitioners and social change agents repeatedly call for long-term, deep investments with foundations in good social policy analysis and research, as well as strong personal involvement from those directly affected.

They call for social investments that address cause not symptoms, which so often means getting in early and building safeguards before issues become chronic.

For example, we usually try to teach people to swim before they ever learn to surf. This way they are much less likely to ever need a lifesaver!

Similarly we should teach our children that violence is unacceptable, model this ourselves, and help them to control reactions and behaviours that might result in violence. This way they are much less likely to ever be the perpetrator of domestic violence in adulthood!

Moreover we should ensure someone who experiences an extended period of unemployment has a decent income and access to support and training to keep them engaged and purposeful, and so they can make the best impression the next time an opportunity of work presents itself.

I could go on. In all these scenarios we all have an individual role to play but our failure to be able to swim, our propensity to use violence, and our inability to obtain employment, all also result from our collective failure as a community to put in place structures that ensure people never need to face these circumstances.

These insights are not new but SACOSS still needs to prosecute them.

I am lucky to be working with a terrific small team of dedicated, enthusiastic and strategic staff. The evidence of this is throughout this report. Thanks to Marnie who amongst other things gave us our fabulous little radio show in Small Change, Bronwyn for her work on energy and Vivian for helping our events reach a whole new level. Thanks too, to Libby, Catherine, Greg, Jo, Lisa and Victoria - my talented colleagues who have stayed and continue to produce work of an outstanding calibre - as

well as to Vanessa, Tania and Phil who have come to join us, and all of whom are determined to make the world a little better as they give life to our efforts.

I am also lucky to have the support of a great Board and Policy Council. While Board and Policy Council electoral processes are yet to be completed, I particularly want to acknowledge the contributions of departing members Michael Dawson and Patsy Kellett, both long-standing Board members, along with Peter Sandeman and Beth Davidson-Park. We also extend our enormous thanks to each of the other Board members.

Similarly I would like to thank Gill McFadyen ('08), Helen Lockwood ('10), Michael Cousins ('15), and Italia Mignone ('15), all of who have served on Policy Council. Gill and Helen made very valuable contributions over an extended period while Italia and Michael were more recent additions to our policy think tank. We sincerely thank them all for their contributions.

Last but far from least, I note that this year we farewell a fabulous Chair of both Board and Policy Council in Helen Connolly. I can't tell you how many hours Helen has toiled on our behalf but it is fair to suggest that these were not inconsiderable. I would like to record here both my personal thanks to Helen and indeed the collective thanks of everyone associated with SACOSS. We have thrived over the last six years and we deeply appreciate your leadership and contributions. While we say farewell to you as our Chair Helen, I remain very hopeful you will stay close to us in other capacities.

So, now we'd better get on with next year's work - there's still a bit to be done if we are to make the world a little better!

In solidarity,



2015-16 in Numbers



24

Total number of SACOSS-branded events

Including:

2

Major SACOSS conferences

7

SACOSS energy and water events

15

Sector development events



4

Cost of Living Updates

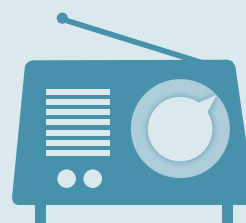
\$50 pa

Average saving for SA energy consumers thanks to SACOSS legal challenge



523

Centrelink beneficiaries surveyed on the affordability of telecommunications services



71

editions of SACOSS' radio shows Small Change and Conversations About Recognition

149

Small Change Podcasts and Conversations About Recognition Podcasts

2015-16



15,698

SACOSS website visitors

56,626

SACOSS website page views

70%

of website traffic are new visitors

30%

of website traffic are returning visitors



41

Reports/Submissions/Fact Sheets produced



103

Community sector workers participated in the SACOSS Healthy Minds Project



1028

TV, radio and newspaper stories mentioning SACOSS



19

Board & Policy Council meetings

FULFILLING OUR ROLE AS A PEAK BODY

SACOSS is the peak body for the non-government health and community services sector in South Australia. As such, SACOSS undertakes the key peak body roles at the highest level and will focus on issues that affect vulnerable and disadvantaged people across the state, or which impact on all health and community services sector organisations.

SACOSS' peak body roles:

- > **Representation** – speaking in all matters as the peak body on behalf of the sector
- > **Research, Policy Development, Advice and Advocacy** – giving voice to the interests of vulnerable and disadvantaged people
- > **Information Dissemination to the Sector** – filtering and prioritising government information and regulation to ensure the sector is informed about changes and policies relevant for them
- > **Information Dissemination to the Community** – public education about poverty and disadvantage and/or the role of the sector in community development and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people
- > **Sector Development** – primarily through improving the regulatory regime to allow the sector to operate with maximum efficiency in addressing the needs of vulnerable and other disadvantaged people, and through supporting the spreading of innovative ideas and best practices across the sector.

Representation	9
Research, Policy Development, Advocacy	13
Information Dissemination to the Sector	29
Information Dissemination to the Community	32
Sector Development	38

Representation

MEMBERSHIP

EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

Membership

SACOSS Organisational Members 2015-16

(organisations financial
between July 2015-June 2016)

Aboriginal Legal Rights
Movement Inc

ac.care

Adelaide City Council -
City Community Program

Aged and Community Services
SA and NT Inc

Aged Rights Advocacy Service Inc

Anglicare SA

Australian Health Promotion
Association SA

Australian Migrant Resource Centre

Australian Refugee Association Inc

Baptist Care (SA) Inc

Barkuma Inc

Better Hearing Australia (Adelaide)

Birthingline Pregnancy Support Inc

Brain Injury SA

Camden Community Centre Inc

CARA Inc

Carers SA Inc

CareWorks SA

CBB the not4profit people

Centacare Catholic Family Services

Centacare Catholic Family
Services CDP

Child and Family Welfare
Association of SA Inc

Chinese Welfare Services of SA Inc

Citizen Advocacy South Australia

City of Onkaparinga

Clubhouse SA Inc

Membership of SACOSS leads to positive social change in South Australia by supporting SACOSS to campaign for social justice.

SACOSS welcomes and encourages member participation in a variety of activities that enhance the voice of the community on behalf of vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians. Membership of SACOSS supports our vital and successful campaigning for social justice.

www.sacoss.org.au/membership

Community Centres SA

Community Housing Council of
SA Inc

Community Living Australia

Community Living Project Inc

Connecting Foster Carers SA Inc

COTA SA

Darwin Health Library

DOVE Association Inc

Drug Arm Australasia

ECH Inc

Endeavour Foundation

Good Shepherd Microfinance

Goodwood Community Services

Grandparents for Grandchildren
SA Inc

Health Consumers Alliance of
SA Inc

Hepatitis SA Inc

Hills Community Options Inc

HomePlace

Hutt Street Centre Ltd

Inclusive Sport SA Inc

Interchange Incorporated

Julia Farr Group

Junction Australia Ltd

JusticeNet SA

Legacy Club of Adelaide Inc

Legal Services Commission of SA

Life Without Barriers SA

Lutheran Community Care

Marion Life Community
Services Inc

Mental Health Coalition of SA Inc

Mental Illness Fellowship of South
Australia Inc

Migrant Resource Centre of SA

Milang & District Community
Association Inc

Mission Australia - SA Region

Multicultural Aged Care Inc

Multicultural Communities Council
of SA Inc

Network SA

Northern Community Legal Service

Northern Suburbs Housing
Community Inc

2015-16

Northern Volunteering SA Inc
OARS Community Transitions
Office of the Guardian for
Children and Young People
Pangula Mannamurna Aboriginal
Corporation
Parkinson's South Australia Inc
Positive Life SA
Quality Innovation Performance
Reconciliation South Australia Inc
Relationships Australia (SA) Inc
Riding for the Disabled
Association SA Inc
SA Country Carers
SA Unions
Save the Children

Seniors Information Service Inc
Service to Youth Council
SHine SA Inc
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
Time for Kids

Uniting Communities
UnitingCare SA
UnitingCare Wesley Country
SA Incorporated
UnitingCare Wesley Port
Adelaide Inc
Unity Housing Company Ltd
Victim Support Service Inc
Vietnamese Women's
Association SA Inc
Welfare Rights Centre SA
West Coast Youth & Community
Support Inc
Working Women's Centre SA Inc
Youth Affairs Council of SA Inc
YWCA of Adelaide

Lifetime Members

Phillip Beddall
Harvey Brown
Brian Butler
Ed Carson
Kym Davey
Michael Dawson
Marj Ellis
Colleen Fitzpatrick
Gael Fraser

Leigh Garrett
Daphne Gum
Peter Hall
Sheila Hall
Christine Halsey
Mark Henley
Simon Kneebone
Wendy Malycha
Margaret McKenzie

Joy Noble
Louise Portway
Lange Powell
Ruth Prescott
Simon Schrapel
Pam Simmons
Brian Ward
Mark Waters
Andrew B Wilson

External Committees

Representatives and nominees of SACOSS sat on the following boards and committees in 2015-16. SACOSS thanks them all for their time and commitment.

ACOSS Board of Governors

Helen Connolly

Anti-Poverty Week State Facilitation Group

Dr Catherine Earl

Australian Gas Networks' SA Reference Group

Jo De Silva

Commissioner for Equal Opportunity's

Anti-Discrimination Round Table

Nicole Chaplin

Courts Community Reference Group

Dr Susan Errington

**Dame Roma Mitchel Trust Fund for Children
and Young People**

Colleen Fitzpatrick

ElectraNet Consumer Advisory Panel

Jo De Silva

Essential Services Commission of SA (ESCOSA)

Consumer Advisory Committee

Mark Henley

Ross Womersley

Justice Reinvestment SA

Anne Bainbridge

Legal Services Commission Board

Michael Dawson

Planning and Reform Reference Group

Ross Womersley

SA Dental Service Consumer Advisory Panel

Phillip Beddall

**SA National Framework for Child Protection
Partnership Group**

Simon Schrapel

SA Water Residential Customer Council

Ross Womersley

**UniSA School of Psychology, Social Work
and Social Policy Advisory Group**

Ross Womersley



Research, Policy Development, Advocacy

RESEARCH

POLICY DEVELOPMENT
AND ADVOCACY

Research, Policy Development, Advocacy

SACOSS undertakes research, policy development and advocacy to give a voice to the interests of vulnerable and disadvantaged people, and for the non-government community services sector that supports those people. Alongside the specific key issues featured in this Annual Report,

SACOSS also undertook policy and advocacy on a number of one-off issues, as well as the set-piece activities that go across a range of issues.

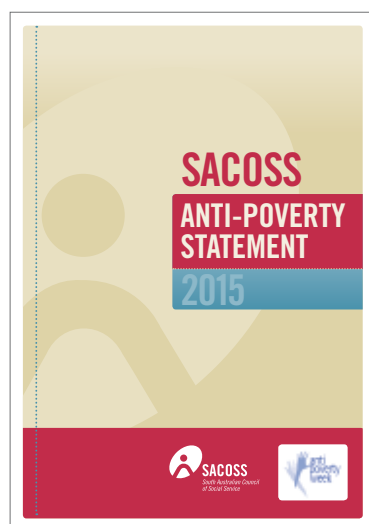
The major set-pieces included the State Budget submission (although with the delay in the budget delivery,

the usual budget analysis happened in July), a mid-term report card assessing the state government's performance after two years in key areas of concern, Anti-Poverty Week awareness-raising, and our ongoing involvement in the Human Services Partnership Forum.

STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2016-17



ANTI-POVERTY WEEK STATEMENT 2015



SA LABOR GOVERNMENT MID-TERM REPORT CARD

The cover of the South Australian Labor Government Mid-Term Report Card features a red header with the title "STATE GOVERNMENT MID-TERM REPORT CARD" in white. Below the title, it asks "How has the South Australian Labor Government performed since the 2014 election?" and provides a brief introduction. The main body of the report card is a table with two columns: "Delivering on election promises" and "Achieving better outcomes". The table lists various issues and the government's performance on each, rated from one to five stars. The SACOSS logo is in the top right corner, and the website "SACOSS.ORG.AU" is at the bottom right.

Delivering on election promises	Achieving better outcomes
A FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE TAX BASE Addressing the revenue problem to ensure there is money to fund vital services	★★★★★ A++
COST OF LIVING RELIEF Reducing low income households to meet cost of living pressures	★★★★★ A++
HOUSING Increasing and improving access to affordable housing and social housing	★★★★★ A++
HEALTH Focusing on preventative health and a plan for mental health services	★★★★★ A++
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION Fighting the child protection system Supporting problem drinkers in our community	★★★★★ A++
LAW AND JUSTICE Helping fewer people to prison and helping people back on the straight and narrow	★★★★★ A++
COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR SUPPORT Reducing red tape so we can get on with delivering services to people	★★★★★ A++



Anti-Poverty Week

Each year SACOSS is involved in Anti-Poverty Week, which is the week surrounding the United Nations' International Anti-Poverty Day (17 October).

Anti-Poverty Week aims to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty in Australia and internationally. Individuals, communities, organisations and governments are encouraged to take part in action to address poverty, and typically a burst of activity and events occur.

In 2015, SACOSS was again part of the SA Anti-Poverty Week State Facilitation Group which meets on a regular basis throughout the year. Made up of individuals from our sector and various levels of government and industry, the group provides a coordinated effort, mirrored in other states, to encourage and support others to engage with the week.



Anti-Poverty Statement

During Anti-Poverty Week SACOSS releases an Anti-Poverty Statement which shines a light on the issue of poverty, outlining potential solutions, and the need for fairness and a decent standard of living for all South Australians. In 2015 we selected three new South Australian communities to profile in our Statement:

- > Charles Sturt Local Government Area
- > Onkaparinga Local Government Area
- > Port Augusta Local Government Area

The report included Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Community Profile Census data relating to education, employment, ethnicity, income and other economic resources for each area as well as for South Australia as a whole. Accompanying the demographic data we asked a SACOSS member organisation in each area to provide a case study of a person's real current day experience of poverty in their community.

The full 2015 ACOSS Anti-Poverty Statement is available at

www.sacoss.org.au/reports/anti-poverty-week

SACOSS acknowledges the support and contribution to this Anti-Poverty Week Statement from: Centacare, CLP Community Living Project, UnitingCare Wesley Bowden.



Research

REPORTS

SACOSS publishes significant research reports on issues affecting the community and social services sector, or which impact on vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

Unlike submissions, which can be a response to formal government processes, research reports usually arise from issues identified as important by the sector. In some cases the research might be specifically funded by government, while in other cases (eg Cost of Living and Anti-Poverty Week reports) we have developed the research from our own resources.

June 2016

- > Analogue Entitlements in a Digital Age: Data briefing on income support and the digital divide (joint report with the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network or ACCAN)
- > Losing the Jackpot: South Australia's Gambling Taxes

March 2016

- > The Retail and Network Exemption Framework: Emerging Issues for Consumers

Feb 2016

- > Looking Around the Corner: A discussion on Current South Australian Power System Risks
- > Cost of Living Update No. 25: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Jan 2016

- > Better Solutions for Helping Customers with Financial Difficulties: Energy and Water. A cross-sector approach to supporting vulnerable consumers

December 2015

- > Cost of Living Update No. 24: September Quarter 2015

October 2015

- > Demand Tariffs: Report of Consumer Consultations

July 2015

- > Cost of Living Update No.23: June Quarter 2015

Policy Development and Advocacy

POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP 2015-2016 FINANCIAL YEAR

The SACOSS Policy Council, drawn from the SACOSS membership, 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 different categories set out in the SACOSS Constitution.

Category Description	Person Elected /Organisation	
Chair	Helen Connolly	
Board Reps	Patsy Kellet	
Peak Org Reps	Albert Barelds Geoff Harris Gill McFadyen Anne Bainbridge Michael White Carmel Rosier	Child and Family Welfare Association of SA Mental Health Coalition of SA Community Centres SA Youth Affairs Council of SA South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services Community Housing Council (from April 2016)
Reps of Large NGOs	Kathy Binks Helen Lockwood Susan Errington Lee-Anne Gassner Nathanha Davey	Uniting Communities Lutheran Community Care Legal Services Commission of SA Baptist Care (SA) Brain Injury Network SA (to November 2015)
Reps of Small NGOs	Nicole Chaplin Michael Cousins Louise Kelly Mark Waters	St John's Youth Services Health Consumers Alliance of SA OARS Community Transitions Reconciliation SA
Reps of Aboriginal NGOs	Lyn Jones	Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (from March 2016)
Reps of CALD NGOs	Italia Mignone Kristin Johansson	Multicultural Aged Care Multicultural Communities Council of SA (from February 2016)
Reps of non-metro NGOs	Anthea Pavy Rob Foggo	UnitingCare Wesley Country SA ac.care
Individual Members	Phillip Beddall Jane Longbottom Paul Laris Jane Mussared (COTA Peaks Rep to October 2015; Individual Member thereafter) Sageran Naidoo	

Proxies

Andrew Hadert, Liz Malcolm: UCW Country; Helene Schultz: Lutheran Community Care; Shandy Aldridge: Mental Health Coalition of SA; Pablo Renigfo, Jeremy Brown, Tobin Hanna, Deborah Potter: Baptist Care; Sam Raven: SA Network of Drug and Alcohol Services; Leah Marrone: Legal Services Commission; Richard Canon: Youth Affairs Council of SA; Alex Houthuysen: St John's Youth Service; Daniel Moss: Uniting Communities; Ellen Kerrins: Health Consumers Alliance SA; Amanda Gallasch: for Patsy Kellet

KEY POLICY ISSUES

SACOSS has focused on a number of key issues this year including continuing to lobby for a fair and sustainable tax system.

Tax

Tax was a big issue at the national level in 2015-16 with an ongoing federal policy debate – with an election at the end of it!

In association with ACOSS, who leads our sector's advocacy at the national level, SACOSS spent a lot of time understanding and responding to a range of proposals being put forward around the GST, superannuation and negative gearing, the Medicare levy, and state-imposed income taxes – as well as a range of proposals for different federal-state tax sharing arrangements.

Our position was generally guided by the recognition that we are not raising enough revenue to pay for the infrastructure and services our community needs (and that these services are more important than tax cuts), but we argued that it was more efficient and fairer to look at tightening income tax loopholes (including negative gearing and capital gains tax) than increasing the GST. While in the end the tax debate largely fizzled (again), the budget challenges remain so the issue won't go away.

At the state level, we launched a major report, *Losing the Jackpot: South Australia's Gambling Taxes*. The report (and accompanying fact sheets) documented the long term decline in gambling taxes (with gambling taxes in 2015-16 being some \$111m lower in real term than a decade earlier), and argued that gambling taxes – the 5th largest source of state taxes – were unlikely to return to previous levels.

While some of this decline was due to changed gambling behaviour, some has been the result of government policy and the outcomes have been both positive and negative. The report went back to 'first principles' to look at the purposes of gambling taxation, how those principles play out in policy and how taxes can be used to help minimise harm from gambling.



The report also highlighted the growth and implications of the rise of online gambling, and sports betting in particular. We recommended a move to national point-of-consumption taxation so wagering is taxed where bets are placed, not where some corporate bookmaking licence was held (eg. Norfolk Island). We were pleased to see that in the lead up to this year's state budget, the South Australian Government announced it would introduce such point-of-consumption taxes.



New gambling tax to target all SA agencies

DANIEL WILLS
STATE POLITICAL EDITOR

GAMBLING agencies that allow South Australians to bet on sports, elections and horses will be all hit with a new tax expected to deliver \$9.2 million per year to the State Budget.

Treasurer Tom Koutsantonis yesterday announced the move, which he said would be a national first and unlock \$500,000 a year to boost gambling rehabilitation programs. The move will apply a 15 per cent tax to all bets on sports, elections and horses.

It means all bets placed in SA with Australian-based betting companies will be liable. Mr Koutsantonis said the move followed calls from the SA Council of Social Services for gambling tax reform and the implementation of a place of consumption charge on companies. The tax will apply to bets on sports, elections and horses.

It will also apply to other bets, such as elections and the Academy Awards. The Government expects to raise \$9.2 million each year. Of that, \$500,000 will be contributed annually to the state's gamblers rehabilitation fund. The Government says the racing industry will be "no worse off" due to the tax. Mr Koutsantonis said interstate-based agencies needed to be licensed to offer bets in SA. "We believe that we have

Independent Senator Nick Xenophon called for more money to be put into gambling rehabilitation, but said Koutsantonis deserved a "pat on the back". "I've been on for a long time about getting multinationals to pay their fair share of the cost of Australia, and this kind of move that targets activity at source may be a way to do it," Senator Xenophon said. A Thoroughbred Racing Club spokesman said the move was a "positive step".

Raising the GST: We're not even having the correct tax debate, writes Ross Womersley

February 7, 2016 6:57pm
Ross Womersley

TAX reform is the big political story, but are we really having the debate we were promised?

Last year the tax reform process was gutted by then Prime Minister Hockey ruling out almost every change proposed.

When Malcolm Turnbull was appointed Prime Minister we were told on the table.

Premier Weatherill, and NSW Premier Baird subsequently put up pressure to fund vital services, particularly health.

But at the Treasurers meeting last year, the Commonwealth imposed tax levels shouldn't increase.

This in itself is a closure of an important debate around the level of required and therefore taxation we need to fund them.

Prime Minister Turnbull has now explicitly ruled out supporting the "Jay's agenda of raising more tax to spend more".

He did not however rule out increasing the GST to pay for other tax cuts. Weatherill ruled out supporting a GST increase unless "there is a billion in health and education cuts".

The Premier is absolutely right to focus on the need to raise sufficient infrastructure and services — even if this is somewhat undermines advertising that "we are creating the lowest taxing state in Australia".

The Commonwealth's refusal to recognise the revenue problem — the Commonwealth's refusal to recognise the revenue problem — is disappointing.

We need more tax revenue, but not from the GST

OPINION

Australian governments need more long-term tax revenue, but increasing the GST is the wrong choice, argues Ross Womersley.



Australian-first tax to hit all betting companies operating in South Australia

By political reporter Nick Hammen
Updated about 2 hours ago

A new tax for betting companies will be launched in South Australia's state budget to raise an expected \$9.2 million in new revenue a year.

The State Government will introduce a so-called "place of consumption" tax of 15 per cent on the net wagering revenue of all betting companies offering services in SA.

It is the first time an Australian jurisdiction will target



State Govt's new \$9 million gambling tax

LOCAL

The State Government will raise more than \$9 million a year with the imposition of a new gambling tax, Treasurer Tom Koutsantonis has revealed.



Tom Koutsantonis. Photo: Neil Roper

Next month's State Budget will include a new gambling tax, Treasurer Tom Koutsantonis has revealed.

Gambling agencies face new tax on revenue made from bets laid in SA

Nine News Adelaide
@NineNewsAdel
Following

WATCH: Betting companies will be hit with a new state consumption gambling tax. @RoryMcClaren9 details. #9News



ROSS WOMERSLEY
@RossWomersley

High stakes as online gaming bets on Northern Territory

and regulations surrounding online gaming have turned the Northern Territory a haven for sports betting agencies.

Jack Allen

TOP STORIES

• Farmer jailed for murder
• Environmental officer
• Australians kidnapped
• Nigerian ambush
• Line PM denies any
• Comments are scare
• Two men

Employment

South Australia is in the midst of an employment crisis. Up until September 2016, SA had the highest unemployment rate out of all the States and Territories (only just recently beaten to the wooden spoon by Tasmania), and with many more South Australians underemployed, SACOSS focused its 2016/17 Budget Submission on tackling this crisis.

Released in February 2016, the Submission called on the State Government to lift its game and do more to create jobs and ensure that all South Australians, particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged, are equipped with the training, skills and employment support they need to break into the highly competitive labour market. The Submission proposed a range of initiatives to these ends and suggested that any additional revenue available to the South Australian Government in the 2016-17 Budget

should be allocated to initiatives that directly tackle the state's employment crisis, and ameliorate its impacts for vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians.

While SACOSS was pleased that this year's budget was focused on jobs and economic development, SACOSS questioned in our Budget Snapshot whether the significant investment in attracting and supporting business and industry, as well as entrepreneurs and start-ups, will in fact translate into real jobs that we need now and into the future. Further, given growing inequality in our society, SACOSS expressed disappointment that the budget did not contain initiatives that were specifically designed and targeted to address the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged jobs seekers, such as younger or older workers, or those from non-English speaking backgrounds.

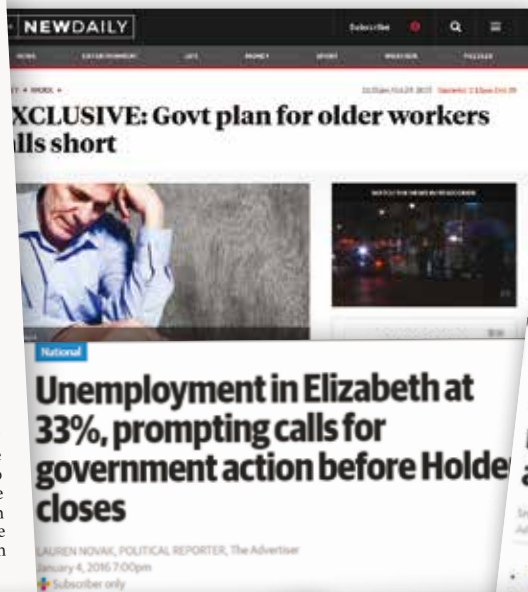
EMPLOYMENT MEDIA

If Whyalla fails it will cost us all

DANIEL WILLS

FAILURE to save Whyalla's steelworks could create a welfare bill far greater than the cost of a bailout and taxpayer support must be part of the solution, Treasurer Tom Koutsantonis has warned.

Politicians have rushed to show their support for workers of the ailing parent company Arrium, with 1100 jobs on the line. Mr Koutsantonis said no one "would ride in from some distant place and save Arrium on their own". "It's going to be us and the Commonwealth Government," he said.



South Australian budget must boost skills training funding, welfare group SACOSS urges

By Sam Farnsworth

Posted 7 Jan 2016, 8:23pm

South Australia's high unemployment rate must be addressed with more funding for skills training in the state budget in June, the SA Council of Social Service (SACOSS) says.

"We really do have a crisis on our hands and our State Government really needs to step up to the plate," the welfare organisation's executive director



As South Australian economy staggers, business labels jobless rate a crisis and warns it's time to act

SHERADYN HOLDENHEAU, The Advertiser
July 10, 2015 11:25pm

Under-employment rising in South Australia, but SACOSS fears community largely unaware of issue

AM, By Natalie Whiting
Updated 11 Jul 2015, 6:14am

As South Australia grapples with an unemployment rate which has hit a 15-year high, the number of people struggling to survive on limited work is also rising.

Bureau of Statistics data shows the number of under-employed people in the state is close to 80,000.

The South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS) said glossing over the under-employment rate masked the true extent of the jobs



Private foundation, Youth Inc, assists long-term unemployed youth through 'unorthodox methods'

By Simon Royal

Posted 23 Jan 2016, 10:59pm

It is well publicised that South Australia has the nation's highest unemployment rate, but its youth unemployment rate is much worse, reaching up to 40 per cent in some areas, a social services head says.

SA Council of Social Services executive director Ross Womersley said this category involved the long-term unemployed youth, a group that consistently fell through the cracks of traditional job networks.

"They remain some of the most vulnerable members of our community because they are on a trajectory," he said.

...longer they are without work, the more likely it



PHOTO: Youth Inc chief executive officer Richard Miller specialises in changing the lives of long-term unemployed youth. (ABC News)

RELATED STORY: SA retains highest unemployment rate in country

Utilities

SACOSS has a program of work related to utilities including energy, water and telecommunications. The focus is on preventing financial hardship, achieving affordability, facilitating social and financial health and wellbeing, and supporting government and businesses in dealing with their customers and communities.

ENERGY AND WATER



Better Practice for Energy Retailers Dealing with Vulnerable Customers

SACOSS has been engaged in intensive conversations with energy retailers around their dealings with vulnerable customers. SACOSS has proposed a series of initiatives for adoption and is working with retailers to identify barriers to adoption and action plans to take onboard the initiatives. The energy retailers are AGL, Origin, Energy Australia, Simply Energy, Alinta Energy, Red and Lumo.



Embedded Networks

SACOSS has commenced a two year project which seeks to improve consumer protections for residents of caravan and residential parks. The overall impression of SACOSS' research focussed on these residents is that many of them feel both frustrated and disempowered. There are strong claims that these consumers do not get adequate information from the park operators, that their concerns are not being addressed and more generally, that they are not being offered a fair deal in terms of their electricity supply. SACOSS will be continuing this work for improved protections in 2016-17.



Energy and Water Pricing

SACOSS has participated in regulatory processes for SA Power Networks, ElectraNet, Australian Gas Networks and SA Water during the reporting period. SACOSS has helped secure significant price decreases for customers in decisions related to SA Power Networks, Australian Gas Networks and SA Water.



Electricity Wholesale Market

SACOSS has commenced focussed work on the electricity wholesale market, given recent price increases related to the increased penetration of intermittent renewable generation. SACOSS reported on the increased risk of state wide blackouts, as well as proposed measures to address the reliability, security and safety issues associated with the current generation mix in South Australia.



SA Power Networks Tariffs

In early October 2015, SACOSS held a series of face to face consultations with consumers and consumer representatives to consider SA Power Networks' (SAPN) proposed demand tariffs. The aim of these consultations was to inform consumers of the proposed changes and to document their response. These consultations were supplemented by telephone interviews with business consumer representatives.

Overall, the research found that there is limited support for the mandatory introduction of demand tariffs. There was strong support for a voluntary opt-in approach to new and revised demand tariffs.

Participants universally expressed strong concern about the impact of the proposed tariffs on organisations and businesses. The serious economic situation within South Australia was recognised by all participants, and participants were generally opposed to any tariff changes which would exacerbate negative economic outcomes.

There was consensus that increased bills during summer would present issues for low income and vulnerable households, including those on Centrelink payments and families with children due to the Christmas period.

A high degree of support was for a voluntary opt-in for new and revised tariffs. Consumer participants strongly indicated a high degree of fear and apprehension about the residential demand tariff and were very sceptical about behaviour modification to reduce demand being easy or possible. There was a strong feeling that residential consumers would like to remain on an inclining block tariff.

However, consumers could see some of the positive outcomes of a demand tariff and were much more willing to consider it under a voluntary opt-in approach. Participants considered that under an opt-in approach, trial periods and ghost billing had appeal as then consumers could make informed decisions about whether a demand tariff was right for them.

Business consumer representatives were favourable towards a voluntary opt-in approach coupled with ghost billing. Information during an opt-in period was seen as vital in ensuring that businesses could make informed decisions about which tariff was most suitable for them.

There was strong support for the residential demand tariff not to apply during public holidays.



Tariff Masterclass

SACOSS hosted a national tariffs masterclass in July 2015. The objectives of this master class were to:

1. Expand consumer knowledge of electricity pricing structures with a specific focus on cost-reflective network pricing;
2. Attempt to advance the knowledge and understanding of senior consumer advocates on distribution network tariff structures and the implications of these for consumers and,
3. Inform consumer advocates about current and future distribution network tariff structures and provide the opportunity for advocates to test any concerns that may arise during the master class sessions.

All objectives were achieved and this is supported by the analysis of the feedback provided by participants.



SA Power Networks – SACOSS Legal Appeal

SACOSS' initial proposal was to use the merits review process under the National Electricity Law to voice the interests of consumers in the Australian Competition Tribunal as it considered the AER's determination on the SA Power Network proposal. In October 2015, SACOSS sought advice from the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) and counsel (Robert Dick SC and Vicky Priskich) on its prospects of applying for a review of the AER's decision and/or to intervene in any application made by SAPN.

With assistance from PIAC and counsel, SACOSS was able to prepare and submit an application for review by the statutory deadline of 19 November 2015. SAPN also submitted an application for review of the AER's decision on that date.

In respect of its grounds on the return on equity, the NSW/ACT Tribunal decisions upheld the AER's decision and did not accept arguments from either the distributors or PIAC for a different value for equity beta. In light of those decisions, SACOSS decided it should no longer pursue its equity beta arguments, but that it should maintain the possibility of intervening if SAPN did pursue arguments in relation to equity. After SACOSS made its position clear on this issue, SAPN also withdrew its return on equity grounds, resulting in a reduction in the value of its grounds of review by approximately \$250 million. This was a major win for consumers in this process.

Building on SACOSS' understanding of the issues under review through its involvement in the proceedings, SACOSS made targeted submissions to the Tribunal in the community consultation process, in particular to:

- (a) make observations to the Tribunal regarding the construction of the National Electricity Objective (NEO), the consideration of 'materially preferable NEO decision', and the appropriate balance between price and other aspects of the long term interests of consumers; and
- (b) warn the Tribunal against drawing any conclusions from SAPN's consumer engagement program regarding the long-term interest of consumers, in response to that suggestion by SAPN in its application.

SACOSS believes its involvement in the proceedings has achieved significant gains for consumer interests, particularly in terms of:

1. Ensuring gains from the NSW Tribunal decision in respect of the return on equity were followed through into the SA determination. SACOSS was pleased to see SAPN drop its largest ground - return on equity - worth \$250 million in additional revenue, insulating consumers from potentially large price rises;
2. Building SACOSS' understanding of the merits review process and its capacity for making submissions in future determination processes, and building the knowledge and experience base of consumer advocates generally in relation to these processes; and
3. Ensuring the community consultation process operated effectively in terms of providing an opportunity for consumers to put their perspectives to the Tribunal and encouraging consumers to take up that opportunity.

National Consumer Roundtable on Energy

SACOSS hosted three meetings of the National Consumer Roundtable on Energy, bringing together consumer advocates from around Australia for strategic discussion on energy consumer issues.

Consumer Advocacy and Research Fund for Water (CARF)

SACOSS conducted three CARF projects in 2015-16. SACOSS worked with other consumer advocacy organisations, to assist them with technical support for their submissions to the SA Water revenue determination. SACOSS also made its own submissions to the determination. SACOSS secured a three and a half year omnibus grant for water advocacy and research. One of SACOSS' roles in this grant is to advise the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion on activities for additional CARF funding. SACOSS has commenced its own consumer research, to map water consumer issues across South Australia.

ENERGY AND WATER MEDIA



SA Council of Social Service warns of blackouts as state moves to wind, solar energy

OWNED BY THE STATE POLITICAL EDITOR, The Advertiser
February 16, 2016 9:10am
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THE state is at serious risk of forced blackouts as soon as next summer as the rise in wind and solar energy forces baseload fossil-fuel power plants out of business, social service groups warn.

The SA Council of Social Service has joined a growing list of concerned charity and business groups that fear energy will soon become more expensive and unreliable – and raising the danger that suburbs could be blacked out “for days, if not weeks, at a time”.

A SACOSS-commissioned report, obtained by *The Advertiser*, warns that so-called load-shedding could occur more frequently and on a wide scale, costing millions of dollars.

However, Energy Minister Tom Koutsantonis says supplies are safe and a recent network failure is unlikely to recur.

Widespread load-shedding

SACOSS court battle to save customers \$150 over five years

BUSINESS

South Australia's peak welfare group is to launch legal action against the energy regulator to save consumers about \$150 over five years.

Heat on prices as \$144 gas cut flows



LETTERS

Unreliable power

THE concerns of SACOSS and others about the reliability of electricity supplies in South Australia are real and worth noting for future reference when the lights go out (“Dim view on green electricity”, *The Advertiser*, 26/2/16).

An objective look at the effectiveness of wind shows time and again does not provide an answer, either in value, either in reliability. At 9am on a wind producing of a total load 25,000 the South-eastern grid which SA is connected from which we our back-up power in Augusta and Torrens are closed. This is 2% of the load.

This is a regular occurrence and studies have shown the idea of “dispersed farms, where the

A power of good

ANY South Australian is familiar with the feeling of that accompanies the end of their quarterly electricity bill.

In many years now, electricity prices have been following a seemingly unending upward curve, alongside

million in the five years to 2020. That would save households a welcome \$140 a year.

But SAPN has appealed against that decision, hoping to reverse it and extract more dollars from South Australians.

Ouch! Zapped by price rises

AGL and Origin electricity charges to increase in July

EXCLUSIVE
DAVID HANKERVIS

ENERGY retailer Origin will increase electricity bills by 6.5 per cent or \$17 a year.

The decision comes on top of AGL's announcement yesterday of a 12 per cent – or \$228 a year – increase for electricity as welfare agencies warned more retailers were likely to hike their prices. Energy Australia refused to rule out price rises when contacted by *The Advertiser* yesterday.

But AGL gas customers will not see price rises today when

with households having just seen savings in network charges of around \$140 a year,” Mr Womersley said.

Treasurer Tom Koutsantonis himself an AGL customer, also urged customers to shop around and potentially save hundreds of dollars on their electricity bills.

He said the unaffordable price rise “is a dramatic increase for South Australian families”.

AGL said the price rise was “mainly driven by the cost and availability of coal and gas supply for electricity generation as well as the changing mix of

Mr Koutsantonis said the state Liberals “do not intend to explore greater interconnection with eastern states when they privatised our power assets in 1999 and we are seeing the fruits of that decision today”.

Mr Henderby called for a stakeholder energy summit to discuss how to reach the Government's renewable energy targets at the cheapest cost.

AGL, which forecasts a \$720 million profit this financial year, said it supported “a summit to discuss challenges facing the SA energy market”, while Mr Koutsantonis said he would like to see a “good



ENERGY AND WATER EVENTS ORGANISED BY SACOSS

- Energy Round Table, Canberra | 16 – 17 June 2016
- Energy Round Table, Sydney | 17 – 18 March 2016
- Policy Challenges for the Energy Industry: Views from Key Stakeholders Forum | 16 March 2016
- Energy Round Table, Brisbane | 26 – 27 October 2015
- SACOSS Consumer Engagement in Energy and Water Regulation Conference | 18 August 2015
- Tariffs Masterclass | 10 July 2015



TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In April 2016, the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) commissioned SACOSS to conduct a joint research project on the affordability of telecommunications for low income consumers. The objectives of the research were to:

- examine the adequacy of the Centrelink Telephone Allowance (CTA) – the major Commonwealth telecommunications concession payment for Australians on low incomes (see below for more detail on the CTA), and
- determine the suitability and impacts of the telecommunication products available on the market to low-income consumers.

As part of the project, SACOSS commissioned Mint Research to conduct a survey of low income Centrelink beneficiaries to explore their experiences of telecommunications, and the adequacy of the CTA to enable affordable access to telecommunications. The preliminary findings from this research were released in a briefing prior to the 2016 Federal Election to contribute to the political debate about the telecommunications experiences of low income consumers and the adequacy of current Centrelink payments.

As outlined in the briefing, the survey found that many low income consumers are struggling to pay their telecommunications costs, and the CTA is not adequate to alleviate this financial difficulty because it:

- is not available for low income earners experiencing the most financial difficulty, such as all Newstart and Youth Allowance recipients,
- fails to provide all recipients with assistance for the costs of an internet connection, which is an essential telecommunications service for social and economic participation in Australia today, and
- provides inadequate assistance for families with dependent children.

Based on these findings SACOSS and ACCAN called on all candidates and parties in the federal election to:

- recognise that in the digital age the CTA is not fit to ensure access to essential telecommunications is affordable for all Australians, and
- commit to reviewing and updating the CTA to ensure affordable telecommunications for all Australians in the digital age.

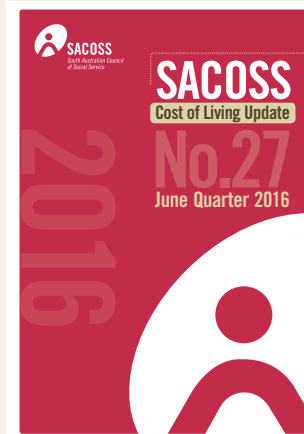
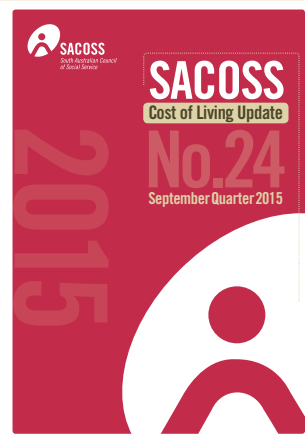
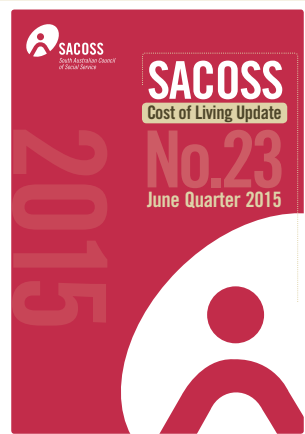
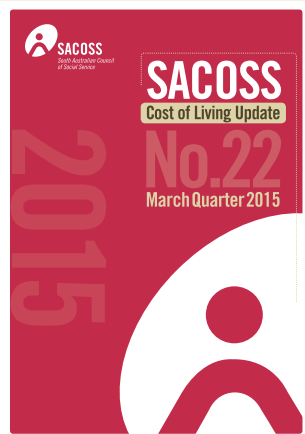
SACOSS was disappointed that neither major parties committed to a review of the CTA during the election campaign; however SACOSS and ACCAN will continue to campaign on this important issue to ensure that low income Australians are supported to access modern telecommunications in the digital age.

Cost of Living

Cost of living pressures impact on all households, but when costs for basic necessities like housing, utilities, food, health and transport increase, it is a particular problem for low income households.

These basic necessities make up a greater proportion of the expenditure of low income households than for other households, so price rises have a disproportionate impact on those who already have less room to move in their household budget. This is especially the case when incomes and income support payments fail to keep pace with price rises.

SACOSS' cost of living advocacy focuses on the plight of poorer households, and demands policies that will provide relief to vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians. Our advocacy includes regular media commentary, lobbying of governments, and the production of quarterly Cost of Living Updates. These research reports utilise three different ABS data sets to provide an indication of cost of living pressures for low income households.



COST OF LIVING UPDATES

While inflation was generally low throughout the year, cost of living pressures on vulnerable and disadvantaged households remained a major focus of SACOSS' work throughout 2015-16. We produced Cost of Living Updates for each quarter – two with features on particular issues.

The September Quarter Update focused on the impact of taxes on household budgets, noting that taxes were both an imposition on the household but also the source of revenue that provided social security income support and public goods which supported those households.

The report presented data showing that Australia is not a high-taxing jurisdiction by international standards, South Australia is not a high-taxing jurisdiction by national standards, and the tax take had not risen substantially in real terms over the last decade. The conclusion: while taxes are significant in the household budget, they are not a key driver of increasing cost of living pressures.

The December Quarter Update was a snapshot of “the good, the bad and the ugly” – that is, those commodities whose prices have fallen or only increased modestly over the last decade, those that have risen significantly above the generic inflation rate, and those whose prices have increased at more than double the general inflation rate. Unsurprisingly, tobacco and utilities topped the uglies – but education and medical costs were also ugly.

Audio-visual and computing equipment was the best, followed by garments and household textiles – all driven by a good combination of technological change and a high Australian dollar. But the real conclusion, based on this snapshot and on more robust ABS Living Cost Indexes was that there remains real cost of living pressures on households and that those on base-level Centrelink payments like Newstart were actually worse-off than a decade ago.

PRICE INCREASES IN 2015-16

Cost of Living Area	Adelaide CPI June Qtr change %	National CPI June Qtr change %	Adelaide CPI June 2015- June 2016 %	National CPI June 2015- June 2016 %
Food	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.1
Housing	-0.4	0.4	0.4	1.3
Rent	0.2	0.2	1.0	0.7
Utilities	-2.4	-0.2	-2.9	-0.4
• Electricity	-4.7	-0.4	-7.7	-2.0
• Water	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.6
• Gas	0.0	0.3	3.8	0.8
Health	3.6	2.6	4.5	4.5
Transport	0.7	1.0	-3.2	-2.8
CPI All Groups	0.5	0.4	0.7	1.0

Child Protection

During the 2015/16 financial year the Royal Commission into Child Protection Systems in SA was ongoing. Delays in the final report meant that much of the year was spent waiting despite the desperate need for system reform.

On the 8th of December 2015, SACOSS with other partners, the Department for Education and Child Development, the Child and Family Welfare Association - SA, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care and with support from the Australian Centre for Child Protection, collaborated to present *Keeping Children Safe, Together: A Child Protection Symposium*.

As well as NGOs working directly in the field of child protection, the Symposium aimed to engage stakeholders from the broader social services sector who may not have considered children as a primary focus. Our thinking was that these stakeholders play an important part in early intervention and through the Symposium we were seeking broader solutions to systemic issues in the field of child protection in SA, specifically with a mind to intervening early.



The international keynote speaker **Dr Helen Buckley, Associate Professor at Trinity College, Dublin** (left), provided advice on how the SA social services sector should work together to ensure the implementation of intelligent (rather than perverse) recommendations

following the conclusion of the Royal Commission.

Drawing on learnings from reforms in the US, UK and Australia, Dr Buckley highlighted the increasing bureaucratisation of Child Protection Systems which has curtailed the capacity of practitioners to exercise professional discretion, to remain child centred and to react constructively to systems failures.

Dr Buckley stressed the importance of child mindedness even in services oriented to adults and argued that more cohesion is needed when parents access services for mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse.



Keeping Children Safe, Together: A Child Protection Symposium

Climate Change

SACOSS has maintained a presence on climate change issues throughout 2015-16.

Strengthening Disaster Resilience for People with Vulnerabilities

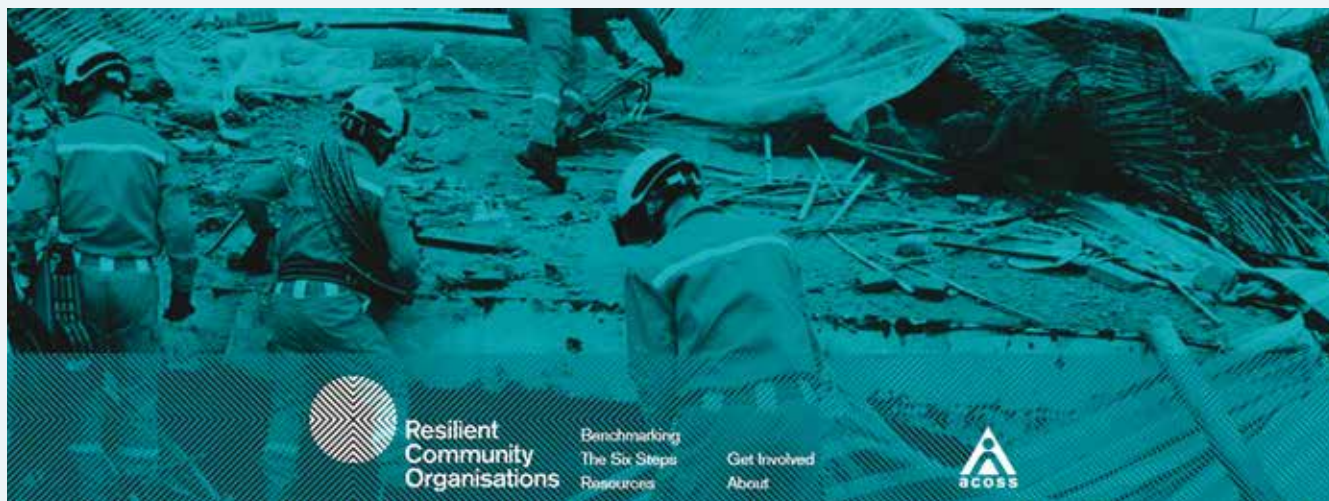
SACOSS has been on the Project Control Group for this Department for Communities and Social Inclusion Project. The Project is developing a framework to strengthen resilience of people at greater risk in the event of an emergency.

The “South Australian framework to strengthen resilience of people at greater risk in the event of an emergency” will form part of the State Emergency Management Plan. It will provide guidance for state and local government, business, non-government organisations, volunteers, communities and individuals across South Australia on strategies to assist people with vulnerabilities and those supporting them, to prepare for and manage their safety and wellbeing in emergencies.

The framework will support consideration of ways to enhance the capacities of people at greater risk in the event of an emergency. When completed, it will represent a commitment by state agencies to integrate the needs of persons at greater risk into relevant state government policy development, service planning and delivery.

Zero Carbon Economy

SACOSS presented at the ACOSS and Brotherhood of St Laurence Forum Towards a Zero Carbon Economy in May 2016. SACOSS talked about the challenges arising in South Australia in the energy market from increased penetration of renewables. SACOSS proposed that any transition to a zero carbon economy needs to carefully balance the environmental objectives with the economic and social objectives.



Resilient Community Organisations

SACOSS was an Advisory Group member for the ACOSS project Resilient Community Organisations, which is an online toolkit to support community organisations to assess their preparedness and build resilience to disasters and emergencies.

Many people are affected by extreme weather, from violent storms and flooding to bushfires. And community services are often the first port of call for those affected by a disaster. But how ready are we? How prepared is the community sector to support and protect the people most at risk if a disaster hits?

In 2013, ACOSS conducted a survey – the world’s first – to find out how vulnerable our sector is to extreme

weather events. The findings were alarming – 50% of organisations would not be able to operate for a week, and a further 25% would close permanently if their buildings and critical infrastructure were damaged.

The Disaster Resilience Benchmarking Tool has six steps, each with its own specific resources, to help you assess and build your capacity for weathering a disaster. You can work through the tools at your own pace.

By planning ahead, and ensuring that our workplaces are prepared, we can be assured that, when disasters and emergencies strike, we will be able to support those affected the most. For more information, go to: <http://resilience.acoss.org.au/>

SUBMISSIONS

One of SACOSS' core roles is to provide input to government and other policy makers on issues that affect our sector or impact on vulnerable and disadvantaged people. This advice is often provided by making submissions in response to public consultations run by government or statutory authorities, but SACOSS also initiates submissions on issues of deep concern to our members and people experiencing hardship. SACOSS submissions range from broad statements of principle to detailed and technical policy advice, and are often used as platforms for further advocacy.

2016

June 2016

- Submission to AEMC: Five Minute Settlement rule change proposal

May 2016

- Submission to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in the context of Youth Justice Detention Centres
- Submission to ESCOSA: Electricity retailer feed-in tariff: Review of regulatory arrangements

April 2016

- Submission to AER: SA Power Networks Tariff Structure Statement

March 2016

- Joint COSSES Submission on Federal Financial Relations Affordable Housing Working Group
- Submission to ESCOSA: SA Water Regulatory Determination 2016 -Draft Determination
- Submission to Transforming Criminal Justice - Sentencing (First Principles) Bill 2015
- Submission to National Electricity Law and National Gas Law Amendment Package

February 2016

- Submission to AEMC: East Coast Wholesale Gas Market Review
- Submission to the AER: Response to Australian Gas Network's Revised Regulatory Proposal for the 2016 - 2021 Access Arrangements

January 2016

- Submission to Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement for on-supply customer access to energy rebates and the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

2015

December 2015

- Submission to the AEMC: Reliability Panel Issues Paper - System Restart Standard
- Submission to the AEMC: Draft Determination on Multiple Trading Relationships
- Submission to the AEMC: Ancillary Services During an Administered Price Cap Event

November 2015

- Submission to the AEMC: Options Paper on the Retailer-Distributor Credit Support Requirements Rule Change Proposal

October 2015

- Join COSSES Submission on Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations and Taxation to improve Essential Community Services
- Submission to Electricity Tariff Reform in South Australia Consultation Paper
- Submission to the AEMC: Draft Determination on the Embedded Networks Rule Change Proposal
- Submission to the ESCOSA: SA Water's Regulatory Business Proposal 2016-20
- Submission to the AEMC: Second Draft Determination on the Bidding in Good Faith Rule Change Proposal
- Submission to the AEMC: Draft Determination on the Embedded Networks Rule Change Proposal
- Submission to the AEMC: Additional Consultation on the Expanding Competition in Metering and Related Services Rule Change Proposal

September 2015

- Submission to the ESCOSA: Proposed Variation to Clause 2.4.1 of the Electricity Transmission Code

August 2015

- Joint COSSES Submission to the Australian Infrastructure Audit
- Joint COSSES Submission to Inquiry into Chronic Disease Prevention and Management in Primary Health Care
- Submission to Review of Governance Arrangements for Australian Energy Markets Draft Report
- Submission to AER: AGN's regulatory proposal for the 2016-2021 Access Arrangement period
- Submission to AER: Development of the Service Target Performance Incentive Scheme (STPIS) Version 5

July 2015

- Submission to AER: SA Power Networks' Revised Regulatory Proposal 2015-2016

Information Dissemination to the Sector

SACOSS NEWS

eBULLETIN

MEMBER ADVISORIES

POST-BUDGET BREAKFAST
WITH THE TREASURER

SACOSS News

Each edition of SACOSS' quarterly magazine SACOSS News focuses on a social justice theme which allows us to share perspectives, ideas and analyses from a broad range of contributors.

SACOSS News is published regularly and is direct mailed to all SACOSS members.



Summer 2015
Justice Edition



Autumn 2016
Child Protection Edition



Spring 2016
Health Edition

eBulletin

SACOSS issues a fortnightly eBulletin listing upcoming events, job vacancies, and other items relevant to the community services sector. The SACOSS eBulletin is emailed directly to subscribers every fortnight and is currently distributed to 890 email addresses. All SACOSS Members receive a copy of the eBulletin.

SACOSS eBulletin



Member Advisories

SACOSS sends out regular 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.

Member Advisory



Post-Budget Breakfast with the Treasurer



Our annual Post-Budget Breakfast with the Treasurer is a SACOSS Member-only event which provides an exclusive opportunity to hear the Treasurer of South Australia talk about areas of the State Budget crucial for the community and social services sector and for vulnerable and disadvantaged South Australians.



Ross Womersley, Tom Koutsantonis MP & Helen Connolly

Information Dissemination to the Community

MEDIA

SACOSS RADIO

SOCIAL MEDIA

FACT SHEETS

Media

SACOSS is recognised as a leading voice in the South Australian media landscape. CEO Ross Womersley is frequently heard on radio and TV, and is quoted in newspapers and in online media on a range of issues relevant to the sector and to low-income and vulnerable South Australians. These include cost of living and utilities prices, as well as tax, child protection, and employment, among many others.

SACOSS' media presence grew in 2015-16 and we continue to build a profile and reputation as a trustworthy and authoritative voice on social justice.



1028 media stories

SACOSS does exceptionally well in terms of media coverage. In 2015-16 SACOSS was quoted and referenced in 1028 media stories on TV, radio and in print (this figure comes from iSentia Media Monitoring and only includes major radio, TV and print sources. It doesn't include references in smaller, community and trade publications, and doesn't include most online references)

MEDIA

\$45 a year drop in bills causes ripples

MILES KEMP

WATER bills will drop by about \$45 a year after a ruling by the independent umpire but the cut is still only half what it should be, welfare groups say.

However, consumers have until March 24 to challenge the ruling by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia, which yesterday shaved \$60 million from SA Water's allowable revenue for the next four years.

The monopoly government

decided to cut 1 per cent in drinking water revenue and 9 per cent in sewerage service revenue in real annual average terms, resulting in a total revenue reduction of 3 per cent.

"SA Water's customers will pay \$360 million less over the coming four years compared to now, which equates to around 3 per cent per annum average reduction in revenue," he said.

The cut is similar to the revenue decrease forced on SA Water for the previous four years and ESCOSA estimates

Treasurer Tom Koutsantonis said the draft decision showed the involvement of ESCOSA in setting revenue every four years was working.

But Dr Walsh diverted during his media conference yesterday to highlight a State Government decision locking in higher prices for consumers.

SA Water is allowed to recoup revenue in line with the value put on its assets by the State Government, which welfare groups have argued is too high.



Levy rise to hit hip pockets

DANIEL WILLIAMS

"We are currently aware of more than 50 people who are sleeping rough in the central business district and the Adelaide parklands," he said. "That is almost double the number compared to last month."

Social Housing Minister Z Bettison said the government was working with a number of non-government organisations

"However, it continues to be a challenge and in the winter months we unfortunately often see increases in the number of people requiring specialist services," she said.

She said the government spent about \$58 million on funding more than 74 homeless programs.

Mark Lock, 53, first visited the Hutt St Centre for the homeless last month.



YOUR NEWS

SACOSS hands down Weatherill report card

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: The South Australian Council of Social Service has delivered a mid-term report card on Premier Jay Weatherill's Labor administration. It has given the government five stars for promising help to of-living pressures, but sed an opportunity to it significant tax he government also better fund the ily services sector and e action on law and chiding sure- tary courts for young nd more rehabilitation s. SACOSS said it was rating the government ed to delay reforms to t protection system while on findings of a royal sion. "Overall, the m the community from any government is y keep their election es, and this record is not that score," SACOSS oss Womersley said.



month, 35-40 new clients visit the centre for a meal. In April, the centre - which also provides accommodation when needed - served a monthly record of 100 new clients.

Number of people in need

South Australian Council of Social Service chief executive Womersley agreed that homelessness had spiked. This is probably the result of several different factors - an increase in unemployment, domestic violence, poverty and lack of relative to housing affordability," he said.

He said it was imperative a national plan address the issue. Mark Henley of Uniting Communities said their services "at capacity".

Part of the issue is the government needs to commit to funding essential services and bricks and mortar. Not negative gearing or building incentives, but real housing," he said. AnglicareSA chief executive

SACOSS Radio



Tuesdays 6pm on

Radio Adelaide DIGITAL

SMALL CHANGE

Justice, opportunity and shared wealth for all South Australians

Small Change is SACOSS' weekly radio program broadcast on Radio Adelaide. In August 2016 we celebrated three years on air.

Small Change provides us with a widely accessible platform to discuss issues, ideas and questions around social justice and community development.

Each week we share voices that may otherwise remain unheard, as well as promote the inspiring work of our members and wider community. In the last year we have featured academics, policy makers, community workers and local communities, and heard from passionate advocates on disability, young people, tax, homelessness, human rights, social justice and hardship.

For someone to share their own experiences of hardship, poverty and disadvantage can understandably be confronting, but for others to hear such experiences reminds us of the real human impact of current political, economic and cultural issues.

But in all the challenging things we talk about, we continue to love the fact we can share fantastic stories of community achievement, innovation and inspiration. The community and social services sector in South Australia does so much that goes unnoticed, and we think the wider community should hear about it.

Small Change is broadcast on Radio Adelaide, 6pm Tuesdays

radio.adelaide.edu.au/program/small-change/

12 MONTHS OF SMALL CHANGE



1 hour per week on air

52 hours worth of programming



126 interviews

25 SACOSS member organisations profiled

Including 12 SACCOS member organisations on Small Change for the first time

1 Coober Pedy interview &
2 from Tennant Creek



104 podcasts



At least 1 person

who donated to an organisation after hearing about them on Small Change

Interview Topics

23 unemployment and poverty

18 Indigenous

10 mental health

10 ageing

10 refugees

12 youth

10 housing and homelessness

9 social enterprise profiles

6 domestic violence

6 tax

4 gambling

3 disability



CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RECOGNITION

In December 2015, SACOSS, Radio Adelaide and the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement celebrated the final show of our collaborative radio program Conversations About Recognition.

The idea behind this program was to help non-Aboriginal people understand the views, feelings and experiences of Aboriginal people.

Conversations About Recognition took a step back from discussions on federal constitutional change to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It asked the important question - what kind of recognition would be most meaningful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? In doing so it made us think about recognition in our own lives - what do each of us take for granted; what makes many of us feel acknowledged, accepted and valued?

Conversations About Recognition allowed us to add different voices (high profile and non-high profile) and very different perspectives to a complicated and broad national discussion.

Conversations About Recognition was broadcast on Radio Adelaide every Thursday 2-2.30pm.



6 MONTHS OF CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RECOGNITION



1 hour per week on air

(until December 2015)



45

podcasts

Social Media

SACOSS' social media presence has continued to grow in 2015-16.

Using social media enhances our position in public debate, and provides us with platforms to engage and interact with the general public.

FACEBOOK

SACOSS engages with the wider community through our Facebook page. The page has over 1300 likes, and while we do connect with other organisations in the sector, the majority of our Facebook interaction is with personal Facebook users. This platform gives us the ability to share information in more detail, to publicly express our standpoint on particular issues, and to help advertise SACOSS and member events including seminars, forums, courses and conferences.



facebook.com/SACOSS

TWITTER

SACOSS' Twitter account has over 2500 followers. It provides us with direct and public communication with politicians, organisations and journalists, as well as with the general public. All Councils of Social Service across Australia are on Twitter, and this gives us a public platform to stand together on issues and share our voices more widely through each of our vast social media networks.



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



Fact Sheets

Throughout the year SACOSS compiles and distributes Fact Sheets designed to give a concise overview on a specific issue. You can read SACOSS' Fact Sheets at www.sacoss.org.au/publications/fact-sheets

GAMBLING TAX WINNERS AND LOSERS

Last year gambling taxes in SA raised \$388m - which constituted 9% of state revenue and helped fund vital services like hospitals, schools, roads and police.

Who pays the price?

Gambling tax is regressive. It falls most heavily on the lowest income earners - who pay more as a proportion of household income. For example, did you know that the average person in the lowest income quintile pays twice as much, proportionally, as someone earning an average income?

For the lowest 40% income earners, gambling tax is a greater cost than car rego, insurance duties or the emergency services levy.

*1st quintile is 20% of the population.

Who Pays Gambling Taxes

Pokies and taxes

Breakdown of gambling taxes in SA

"Playing the pokies" is the largest gambling activity in SA. South Australia has a heavier reliance on pokies tax than all other states.

1992 Gambling tax revenue for pokies was **\$289m** in SA in 1992.

71% Last year the SA government collected 71% of all gambling tax collected in SA and almost 5/4 of all gambling tax collected.

The pokies play you!

It is important to know that pokies addiction is not simply individual failure. It is driven by sophisticated psychological and marketing techniques by large corporations aimed precisely at encouraging addictive over-expenditure.

The Alliance for Gambling Reform have made a video about this called "Pokies Addict", which can be viewed at www.pokiesplayyou.org.au

POKIES: THE TRUTH

SPORTS BETTING AND ONLINE GAMBLING

It is illegal to provide online gaming (pokies and casino-type games) in Australia, but online lotteries and betting on races, sports and events are legal.

Sports betting is the fastest growing form of gambling

Online gambling is harder to regulate and presents new dangers for problem gamblers. Sports betting is Australia's fastest growing form of gambling and about half of sports bets are placed online. Since 2000-01, while total real gambling expenditure has remained steady, expenditure on sports betting increased 10-fold.

Online gambling is harder to regulate and presents new dangers for problem gamblers. Sports betting is Australia's fastest growing form of gambling and about half of sports bets are placed online. Since 2000-01, while total real gambling expenditure has remained steady, expenditure on sports betting increased 10-fold.

Sports betting spend since 2000-01

SA sports betting spend (doesn't include live streaming, in-house and proprietary)

The community pays the price

Sports betting is heavily tightly taxed by comparison with pokies, lotteries and casino. The government is collecting more from sports betting than from pokies, lotteries and casino combined. The government is using the money to pay for the damages caused by problem gambling.

DECLINING GAMBLING TAX REVENUE

The past decade has seen a big drop in gambling tax revenue. This has created a \$11m p.a. hole in the SA state budget.

Gambling Tax Revenue since 2006-07

Why the decrease?

Tax from lotteries, the casino and the TAB all fell due to changes in government policy. Pokies taxes fell as a result of declining household incomes as well as the introduction of smoking bans in gaming areas.

Will this trend continue?

Some gambling taxes will bounce back if the economy picks up, but overall gambling taxes are unlikely to be maintained at previous levels. Why?

- Non-smoking bans are a good public health measure and are likely to remain in place in gaming areas.
- The areas of gambling with the highest projected growth, casino gaming and sports betting, have low levels of taxes.
- New competition from online gambling cuts the amount of tax that can be collected.

A fair system would tax gambling but not make the government reliant on gambling taxes

A fair gambling tax regime must:

- cover the costs of gambling and problem gambling in particular;
- have differential tax rates and concessions to provide incentives to harm minimisation;
- put the remaining money into a sovereign wealth fund where only the earnings of that fund (and not the tax itself) go to current expenditure.

RECOMMENDATION

With the traditional gambling tax base in decline, with sports betting rising, and online gambling changing the landscape, the time has come to set up the gambling tax regime for the future is now!

SACOSS South Australian Council of Social Service

All figures from the SACOSS report, *Losing the Jackpot: South Australia's Gambling Taxes*

You can read the report at sacoss.org.au/reports

A conflict of interest

We know that gambling can be addictive and lead to debt. We also know that a large portion of gambling tax revenue comes from the losses of addicted and problem gamblers. This creates a conflict of interest for governments. On the one hand they rely on gambling tax revenue but at the same time governments perform a regulatory role to prevent harm from gambling.

According to the Productivity Commission, 40% of pokies tax comes from problem gamblers.

How are gambling taxes calculated?

Pokies taxes are levied on pokies providers as a **percent of gamblers' expenditure** (losses) with the scale increasing in six brackets from a tax-free threshold of \$75,000.

Non-profit clubs pay a different rate - between 6.5% and 10% less than hotels pay. This discount comes at an \$8m cost to the SA Budget.

The casino pays an average tax rate for ordinary pokies machines and a **heavily discounted rate** for premium gaming machines.

Casino table games
The Adelaide Casino pays 34% of net gambling expenditure (gamblers' losses).

Sports betting
SA bookmakers pay 6% of net gambling expenditure.

Horse racing and greyhounds
There is no gambling tax but levies are paid to support industry.

RECOMMENDATION

The amount going to gambling-related community support funds should be indexed to maintain their real value over time.

SACOSS South Australian Council of Social Service

All figures from the SACOSS report, *Losing the Jackpot: South Australia's Gambling Taxes*

You can read the report at sacoss.org.au/reports

Fact Sheet

Charities Reporting and Fundraising Red Tape Reductions

On 24 May 2016 the South Australian parliament passed the Statutes Amendment (Commonwealth Registered Entities) Act. It aims to remove duplication of reporting and licence requirements for charities registered with the national charity regulator, the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC).

The bill was first introduced in 2013 when SA was seen to be the first jurisdiction to align its requirements with the ACNC, but the bill was put on hold when the (then) new Federal government announced it would abolish the ACNC through the Senate, and the ACNC is now set to continue into the future. Accordingly, SACOSS wrote to the SA government in 2015 asking for the Commonwealth Registered Entities bill to be reintroduced to the SA parliament and called for its swift passage once it was introduced.

The bill was passed in both houses of parliament without amendment or opposition.

The new law is fairly simple in structure and purpose. It inserts a few clauses into the state Associations Incorporation Act to exempt entities registered with the ACNC from the reporting requirements under the Act. The bill also inserts similar clauses into the Charities for Charitable Purposes Act to exempt ACNC-registered organisations from fundraising licensing and reporting requirements.

The removing of duplicated reporting requirements under the state Associations Act and the Commonwealth ACNC Act minimises the impact of ACNC regulation on the charity sector, while the use of ACNC registration to remove the need for an SA fundraising licence is exactly the sort of red tape reduction that our sector hoped for with the introduction of the ACNC.

SA charities can still be incorporated under the state Associations Act, but once registered with the ACNC the charities simply report to the Commonwealth. Charities that previously required a fundraising licence will still be required to notify the SA Minister if they intend to fundraise in South Australia, but will not require a separate fundraising licence (with all the application and reporting requirements associated with that).

Fact Sheet

Why a GST Increase is a Bad Deal for Low Income Households and for South Australia

There has been a range of economic modelling of the impact on households and revenue of both broadening the GST base and increasing the rate. The only South Australian-specific modelling has been done by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling at the University of Canberra (NASEM). They estimate that the average South Australian household currently pays \$1,819 p.a. (GST + excise) in GST, equivalent to 2.2% of disposable household income.

A Regressive Tax
The NASEM modelling confirmed the regressive nature of the GST. That is, it impacts more on lower income households because poorer households spend a greater proportion of their income than other households. For example, in South Australia, the current GST accounts for 9.2% of disposable household income for the lowest income households, but only 6.8% of income for the highest income households.

Breaking the base of the GST to include health, education, health, financial services and other non-essential goods and services would make the tax even more regressive. Based on the NASEM modelling, SACOSS has calculated the impact of broadening the GST. Table 1 shows the impact with lowest income households paying 40.8% more GST than currently, while the highest income households would only pay 16.7% more.

SA charities can still be incorporated under the state Associations Act, but once registered with the ACNC the charities simply report to the Commonwealth. Charities that previously required a fundraising licence will still be required to notify the SA Minister if they intend to fundraise in South Australia, but will not require a separate fundraising licence (with all the application and reporting requirements associated with that).

Table 1: Impact of broader base GST on South Australian households

Household Type	Current GST + Excise	Broad-based GST Base	Current GST + Excise	Increased GST + Excise	Increase %
Lowest Income Quintile	\$30	\$73	\$25	\$45.8%	40.8%
Average All Households	\$87	\$103	\$75	\$103	38.7%
Highest Income Quintile	\$168	\$194	\$167	\$194	16.7%

Increasing the rate of GST to 15% would add \$40 per week to GST for the average South Australian household.

A Tax that impacts more on South Australia
The GST currently accounts for 6.2% of household expenditure nationally, but 6.4% in South Australia (although in a percent of household income the SA figure is lower). If the revenue changes proposed to broaden the GST base, NASEM concluded that:

- Applying GST to health, financial services and other non-essential goods and services would impact more on South Australian households than these commodities of firms a larger share of household expenditure than the national average.
- Applying GST to health would have proportionately less impact on South Australian households.
- The overall impact of a broader GST would be larger in SA than in other parts of Australia: the proportion of household expenditure going to GST would increase by 2.5 percentage points in SA compared to 2.2 nationally.
- For households in the lowest income quintile, the proportion of household expenditure accounted for by a broader based GST would increase by 3.9 percentage points, by comparison with 3.6 percentage points nationally.

Sector Development

HELPING TO DEVELOP
OUR SECTOR

HEALTHY MINDS,
HEALTHY WORKERS

RESILIENCE

SA NFP FUNDING RULES AND
GUIDELINES (SANFRAG)

RED TAPE / AUSTRALIAN
CHARITIES NOT-FOR-PROFIT
COMMISSION

Helping To Develop Our Sector

- > Negotiation with government on recommendations for a whole-of-government funding indexation policy
- > Participation in development of SA NFP Funding Rules and Guidelines (SANFRAG)
- > Working with the SA Aboriginal Coalition of Social Justice to seek endorsement for sector organisations of the NGO Cultural Protocols and Principles
- > Providing support for the Aboriginal Social Justice Coalition
- > Promotion of mentally healthy and resilient workplaces through the Healthy Minds, Healthy Workers Pilot Project
- > A New Age For Older Workers roadshow, in partnership with COTA and funded through the Office for the Ageing
- > Providing governance training to various boards and committees
- > Working with government on red-tape reduction for charitable organisations
- > Advocating for the alignment of South Australian reporting requirements to those of the Australian Charities Not-for-Profit Commission
- > Working within the Human Services Partnership Forum to build collaborative relationships with the state government

Sector Development Events

SACOSS presented and supported events in 2015-16 to help develop the skills and knowledge within our sector, with themes ranging from workplace health and resilience, to industrial relations and applying for government grants.

Industrial Relations Essentials Workshop

30 July 2015 (Supporting Jobs Australia)

SACOSS Resilience Program: Sustaining Performance in Challenging Times

A Program in Leading Resilient Team Cultures held over 3 sessions 17 July, 26 August & 27 November 2015

Fair Tax Forum with Richard Denniss (Presented in conjunction with SA Unions and SEARCH Foundation)

13 August 2015

Managers of Micro and Small Community Service Organisations Networking Series:

Surviving in a time of tightening budgets
23 September 2015

Building Community from the Ground Up - Lessons on Empowerment with Mirai Chaterjee

23 October 2015

Masterclass with Helen Buckley

9 December 2015

Healthy Minds, Healthy Workers Forum

16 March 2016

What Keeps People Poor? Lessons from Family 100 Project with Dame Diane Robertson

9 May 2016

Why Data Matters when it comes to Human Services with Dame Diane Robertson

10 May 2016

SACOSS-HESTA Boardroom Networking Lunch

3 June 2016

Community Sector Pre-Election Forum: Homelessness & Housing Affordability

6 June 2016

Grants SA Information Session

27 June 2016 (Supporting Grants SA through DCSI)



HEALTHY MINDS, HEALTHY WORKERS

SACOSS is committed to supporting the health and community services sector in being cohesive, resilient and mentally and physically healthy.

The Healthy Minds, Healthy Workers Project followed on from SACOSS' work as part of the Commonwealth-funded Healthy Workers – Healthy Futures initiative. This was a change management project to help organisations create policies and practices to support healthy lifestyles and prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

The Healthy Workers, Healthy Futures Project highlighted the need for increased attention to be paid to stress and mental health in this sector.

As a result, in 2015-16 SACOSS worked with six community service organisations to develop a Healthy Minds, Healthy Workers training package.

The package included two days of training for managers and ten workplace wellbeing champions, and a train-the-trainer program designed to be delivered to the entire organisation over a period of time. Additional resources were developed and provided to the wellbeing champions to embed wellbeing practices and policies into their workplaces.

Throughout the project ongoing advice and support was given to setup committees, develop plans and deliver the training. Organisations completed pre- and post-training questionnaires, management surveys and evaluations.

Findings

It was identified that effective leadership, governance and commitment were necessary to ensure that the pilot intervention was successful. Organisations that made these investments in time and resources saw a greater benefit from the intervention and had more successes embedding wellbeing practices.

The project made use of several available resources including resources from the Heads Up Campaign, www.headsup.org.au. It is important to note that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work, and each organisation needs an approach tailored to the individual needs of their employees.

A comparison on the pre- and post-training questionnaire data demonstrated an increased awareness amongst participants of the prevalence of mental health issues, and how and where to seek help for staff experiencing poor mental health. Other results indicated that participants felt valued by their employers and were able to better identify areas of work that either supported or could potentially contribute to mental health issues.

Recommendations included training for the new Educator positions at Safework SA, increased training for management, and culturally specific resources for Aboriginal and multicultural organisations. These recommendations, the training material and the resources are outlined in detail in the full report available on the SACOSS website.



Resilience

In July, August and November 2015, SACOSS hosted a three session event “*Sustaining Performance in Challenging Times: A Program in Leading Resilient Team Cultures*” with Organisational Psychologist Kathryn McEwen.

The first workshop, “Strategies for personal resilience as a senior leader”, examined the importance of leaders developing resilience and highlighted some important factors that contribute to building resilience. Leaders have a significant impact on the overall culture of the workplace and have an ability to influence and change other workers.

In workshop two, “Strategies to build team resilience”, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to assess the resilience of the team that they led. These were then discussed and action plans developed.

The teams were also invited to identify an area for development and to present their approach to this at the final workshop.

All participating organisations presented at the final workshop, “Progress review and show-casing of outcomes”. Participants recognised the difficulties community services workers have in maintaining boundaries between work and home, especially for

those who work with vulnerable clients. Some important ‘wicked problems’ were identified and solutions were discussed. Participants were also invited to ask other members of their workplaces to attend this final session.

Feedback from participants was very positive and many reported that this identified some areas that needed addressing. There was also an opportunity to learn about and contribute to solutions to issues.

Given the nature of the community sector with its challenges of maintaining on-going funding, working with disadvantaged and vulnerable people and often doing shift work, building resilience within the individual and within organisation teams, and developing healthy and supportive cultures is important. SACOSS encourages the sector to seek support if they need help building resilience.

SANFRAG

SACOSS continued to engage in discussion around the proposed South Australian Not-for-Profit Funding Rules and Guidelines (SANFRAG). While the sector had hoped the SANFRAG project would provide greater consistency across government, and create better partnerships by providing some clear parameters for funding to balance the current one-sided nature of contract negotiations, in practice the SANFRAG process has never been properly resourced and has morphed into a much bigger revision of all government contracting frameworks and processes.

After two years there has been a lot of discussion, but no actual rules have been agreed. In the meantime, government departments continue to impose a variety of terms in contracts which impose excess regulatory burden and take resources from service delivery.

A(nother) new process has now been put in place which appears more efficient and will take us into 2017.

One potentially productive spin-off from the SANFRAG process was a separate attempt to have a whole-of-government policy so that our sector would receive properly indexed payments that covered increased costs over multi-year contracts – regardless of the program or department that was funding it. While this process was more efficient than the SANFRAG process and a recommendation went forward from the joint government-sector working group, unfortunately there have been complications and there is still no indexation policy in place.

Red-tape / Australian Charities Not-for-Profit Commission

There were two substantial red-tape reduction wins during the year, both in relation to fundraising and red tape reduction. In October 2015, Consumer and Business Services SA sent out new application forms for organisations requiring renewals of their licences for charitable collections (ie. fundraising). The new forms were confusing and onerous, and a number of member groups raised concerns with SACOSS. We wrote to the Department and to the Minister, and after a series of productive meetings and exchanges, the Department amended the forms so that they were clearer and required far less work and information from our sector – a net reduction in red tape.

This was a good outcome, although there were still some issues – in part because of the way the act was structured.

However, these too were overcome by the introduction and passing through the parliament of the obscurely titled Statutes Amendment (Commonwealth Registered Entities) Bill. This was national-first legislation to align South Australian reporting requirements to those of the Australian Charities Not-for-Profit Commission. Essentially this Act removed the requirement for charities to report at both state and federal levels, and as a bonus used registration with the ACNC as a passport so that registered charities would no longer need a separate fundraising licence in South Australia.

Together, these are significant red tape reductions and SACOSS congratulates the state government on implementing them and is proud of our part in promoting them.

SACOSS Secretariat

CEO

Ross Womersley

Senior Research & Policy Officers

Dr Catherine Earl (part time)

Jo De Silva (full time)

Dr Greg Ogle (part time)

Senior Policy Officers

Vanessa Musolino

(full time, 1 year contract, started September 2015)

Phil Saunders

(full time, 1 year contract, started May 2016)

Policy Officer

Bronwyn Colby (part time, left in June 2016)

Senior Project Officer

Victoria Morton (part time, 6 mth contract)

Communications Officer

Tania Baxter (part time, started February 2016)

Marnie Round (full time, left in February 2016)

Radio Producer – Small Change

Lisa Burns (part time, 6 mth contract)

Office & Finance Coordinator

Libby Connell (part time)

Events Coordinator

Vivian Clark (full time, left in August 2016)



SACOSS acknowledges funding and support from



Government of South Australia

Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion



Government of South Australia

Department of State Development



Government of South Australia

Department of Treasury
and Finance



Government of South Australia

SafeWork SA



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Treasurer's Report

Income & Expenditure
Statement

Assets & Liabilities
Statement

Treasurer's Report

SACOSS has had another good year which finished with us receiving \$1,581,814 in income. Compared to last year this constituted a healthy rise of \$338,594 in income across the year which was matched – not surprisingly – by a similar increase in our expenses which totalled \$1,507,695. This left us with a very modest surplus of \$74,119.

While the pattern of income and expenses matches previous years, we did receive key additional income this year in grants to undertake work on tax reform, and expand our work on essential services, in particular electricity, water and telecommunications. There were modest increases in income from *Other Grants* as well as *Research and Development* activities, while income from *Conferences and Sponsorships* and *Member Subscriptions* were down slightly on the previous year. A timing issue accounts for the slight drop in *Member Subscriptions*.

The most substantial increases in expenses related specifically to *Consultancy Fees* (principally payments for technical advice in relation to our research and advocacy on energy and water issues), *Employment* (principally costs for additional staff to work on tax reform and energy issues), *Professional Services* (principally for legal representation expenses in a case challenging the SAPN electricity network regulatory decision) and *Travel and Accommodation* (principally as a result of the role SACOSS plays in convening the National Consumer Energy Roundtable, held in a range of venues around Australia which results in large travel and accommodation costs).

You will see that there are some changes to the financial statements provided in the Annual Report this year. Firstly, the reports published here are summary reports. The full financial statements are available either on request or can be obtained via the SACOSS website. Secondly, the financial statements are prepared as *General Purpose Reports* under the Reduced Disclosure Requirements, rather than *Special Purpose Reports* as a result of contractual obligations from our funding bodies. Last but not least, the Board determined that after almost a decade of excellent service from Sotherton's Chartered Accountants it was appropriate to appoint a new firm after a limited competitive tender process. The Board subsequently appointed Nexia Edwards Marshal to undertake our audit function for the next three years

and we look forward to working with them in this role. I do note that the audit transition was seamless and that they have issued an unqualified report for this financial year which is also available on request or via the SACOSS website. I also want to acknowledge Libby Connell, our Office and Finance Coordinator, and thank her for her continued hard work, diligence and support to SACOSS.

SACOSS is extremely grateful for the funds we currently receive from a range of Departments and other funders. We would like to thank all of our member organisations, supporters and sponsors along with the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, Energy Consumers Australia (formerly the Consumer Advocacy Panel), the Department of State Development, the Department of Treasury and Finance, and SA Health for their continued support in 2015-16. It would not be possible to deliver the outstanding work outlined in other parts of this report without these resources.

This has been a successful year for SACOSS and the Board has worked hard to ensure good oversight of our finances and to ensure our resources are utilised in an efficient manner. There can be no doubt that new resources have enhanced our capacity to achieve even stronger outcomes for South Australians who experience poverty, injustice and disadvantage. There can also be no doubt that there are still innumerable issues which merit our attention – but this of course would demand further resources!

In closing, I would like to extend my thanks to my fellow Board members, the SACOSS staff who continue to do outstanding work within quite limited resources, and particularly to our retiring Chair in Helen Connolly for her terrific leadership of the Board over the last six years.



Emma-Louise Crosby
Treasurer

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC.

Income & Expenditure Statement for the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Income		
DCSI Grant	393,265	376,907
SA Energy Consumer Advocacy	200,000	320,283
Consumer Advocacy & Research	139,006	
Tax Reform	115,610	
Energy Consumer Australia	377,088	227,766
Other Grants	117,631	79,431
Member subscriptions	61,554	64,636
Research & Development	86,209	51,677
Conference & Sponsorship	59,184	87,493
Other Income	32,268	35,027
Total Income	1,581,814	1,243,220
Expenses		
Conference Costs	102,519	55,120
Consultancy Fees	226,478	178,367
Depreciation	9,410	27,712
Employment	819,117	658,055
Office Accommodation	31,756	38,036
Computers & IT	10,846	21,645
Printing, postage and stationery	25,794	17,538
Insurance	9,073	13,273
Professional services	119,631	38,087
Reference materials	11,232	10,140
Travel and accommodation	125,209	89,929
Equipment	5,789	6,536
Other	10,841	10,015
Total Expenses	1,507,695	1,164,453
Net Current Year Surplus	74,119	78,676
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	74,119	78,467

SACOSS 2016 Audited Financial Report with accompanying notes is available on our website

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC.

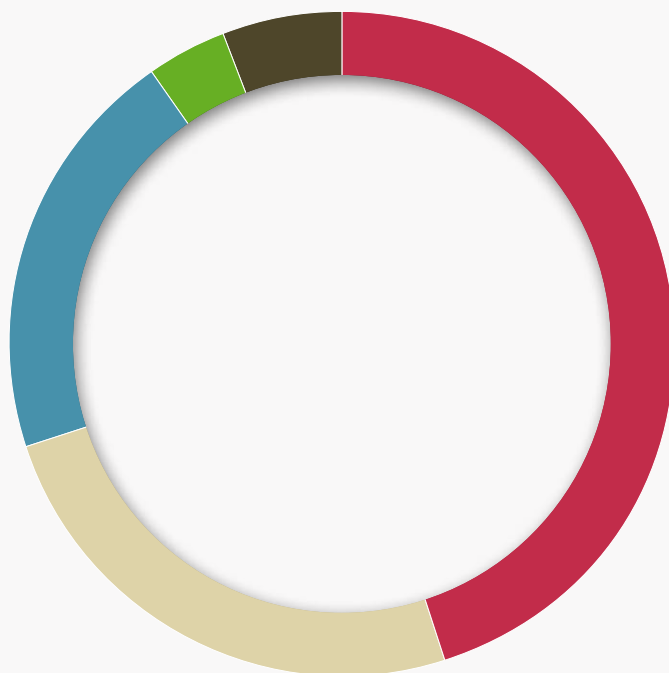
Assets & Liabilities Statement for the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016 \$	2015 \$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,222,565	1,040,929
Accounts receivable and other debtors	79,521	31,346
Other current assets	1,339	9,997
Total Current Assets	1,303,425	1,082,272
Non-Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	834,702	838,355
Total Non-Current Assets	834,702	838,355
Total Assets	2,138,127	1,920,627
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and other payables	38,474	74,388
Employee provisions	77,257	69,950
Grants in Advance	404,838	255,082
Total Current Liabilities	520,569	329,420
Total Non-Current Liabilities	45,938	23,706
Total Liabilities	566,507	423,126
NET ASSETS	1,571,620	1,497,501
EQUITY		
Reserves	1,058,712	1,058,712
Retained surplus	512,908	438,789
TOTAL EQUITY	1,571,620	1,497,501

SACOSS 2016 Audited Financial Report with accompanying notes is available on our website

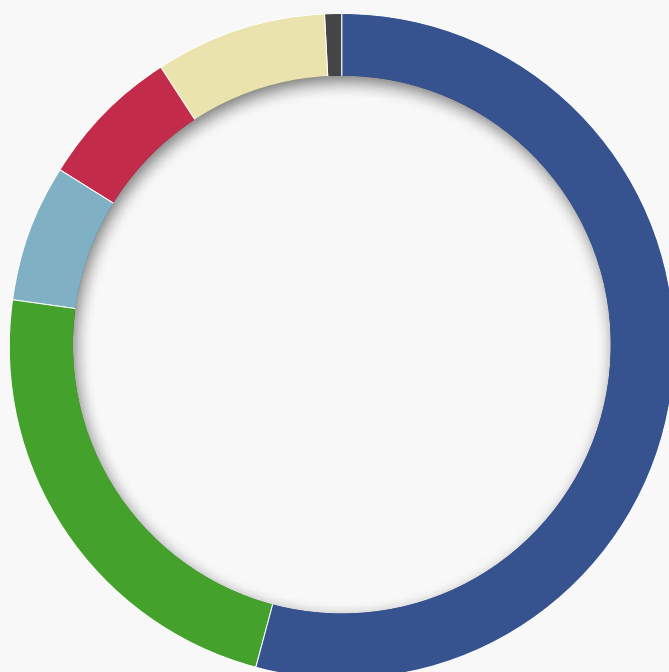
Income

Energy & Water	716,094
Peak Body Role	393,265
Other Grants	319,450
Memberships	61,554
Other	91,452
TOTAL	1,581,814



Expenses

Employment	819,117
Professional Advice	346,109
Conferences	102,519
Building & Administration	103,900
Travel & Accommodation	125,209
Other	10,841
TOTAL	1,507,695





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