

WCS Corporate Governance Statement

As at 20 April 2021

Introduction

This statement sets out how Woden Community Service (WCS) is governed and how we achieve our vision and fulfil our purpose.

WCS operates in accordance with our vision, purpose and values, as set out in the WCS Strategic Plan 2021-25:

Vision: A caring community where everyone belongs.

Purpose: Building connected communities and enriching people's lives.

Values:

- **Inclusion** – We believe all people have a right to full inclusion as valued community members and we respect and encourage diversity in communities and our organisation.
- **Compassion** – We offer kindness and understanding to people who need our support and work with others to build caring communities.
- **Hope** – We are optimistic about the possibility of change and seek to inspire confidence for a better future with the people and communities we support.
- **Responsiveness** – We adjust to meet changing community needs and are courageous in how we grow and develop as an organisation.
- **Integrity** – We are committed to being honest, professional and accountable in our relationships and in everything we do.
- **Social justice** – We work to increase access and opportunity for all, particularly those who face disadvantage and discrimination.

WCS also operates in accordance with the purpose and objects set out in the organisation's constitution – see the section on Governance below.

Overview

WCS has been operating since 1969. Originally focused on supporting the Woden community, WCS now provides services throughout the ACT.

WCS provides services across all age groups and throughout the community, from early learning to aged care services, supporting mental health and wellbeing, responding to homelessness, assisting those living with disability, working with families and young people, engaging communities while supporting those who are vulnerable.

Legal and accreditation details:

- Association incorporated in the ACT
- ABN: 80 527 241 761
- Registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- Recognised by ATO as having Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status
- Large business (ACT Government definition – over 250 employees)
- Code Certified Entity under the ACT Secure Local Jobs Code

See also section on Quality and risk management for quality accreditations held.

Governance

The governance arrangements for WCS are set out in the WCS Constitution, under the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 (ACT) (the Act). The WCS Constitution was updated in December 2020.

As an incorporated association, WCS is also subject to the Associations Incorporation Regulations 1991 (ACT) (the Regulations) and the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (Corporations Act). As a charity, WCS is subject to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012 (Cth) (the ACNC Act).

Purpose and objects

As set out in the WCS Constitution, the purpose of WCS is to bring people together for a vibrant, connected and supportive community.

The principal objects of WCS are to:

- i. reduce the distress, trauma and disadvantage arising from poverty and discrimination
- ii. value the lived experience of people in policy and program decision making that affects them
- iii. enable children and young people access to support and care that enables them to realise their potential
- iv. support vulnerable people to access the care, protection and advocacy they need to grow and thrive
- v. acknowledge and respect the contribution of First Nations people
- vi. empower communities to be resilient and inclusive
- vii. build capacity to improve communities and people's lives through systemic advocacy.

Structure



Membership of WCS

Membership of WCS is open to residents of / workers in the ACT over the age of 18 years. The Board determines the right of membership.

WCS Board

The WCS Board has overarching responsibility for the organisation, as set out in the WCS Constitution. The WCS Board guides the strategic direction of WCS.

Membership of the Board is open to all members of WCS, with the exception of those prohibited by the Act. All members of the Board are elected as individuals. They are not elected as representatives of any member or member group and must act for the benefit of WCS as a whole.

The Constitution sets out the role and composition of the Board, including the election process for Board members, terms, renewal and re-election. Board members are governed by the Act, the Constitution and Code of Conduct.

The Constitution also sets out the Board's ability to delegate functions to sub-committees of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other nominated staff. This is important for decision making within WCS. The WCS Financial Delegations and Human Resource Delegations set out the delegated functions.

Further information about the Board is in the Board Manual.

Organisational structure and controls

The Board appoints and works with and through the **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**. The CEO reports to the Board and is accountable for the overall day-to-day operations of WCS.

The key groups and forums for leadership and management within WCS are:

The **Executive Team** (CEO, service line Directors and the Executive Officer) is responsible for implementing the strategic direction for WCS, being accountable for achieving performance results and role modelling the WCS Values (see the *Executive Team Terms of Reference*). The Executive Team meets weekly.

The **Leadership Forum** (service area managers and the Executive Team) is accountable for using resources and delivering services. This includes role modelling the WCS Values, sharing information across WCS, and collaborating with other organisations (see the *Leadership Forum Terms of Reference*). The Leadership Forum meets monthly.

Each Director is responsible for a **service line** (see the *Organisational Chart*). There are two service lines within WCS providing support for the organisational operations:

The **Corporate Services** area provides support to all areas covering people and culture, information technology (IT), policy, facilities and security management, learning and development and quality and risk management.

The **Finance** area guides the planning, budgeting and financial reporting processes.

In addition to the support areas, WCS has three service lines for service delivery:

- Child, Youth and Family Services and Community Engagement
- Housing and Homelessness
- Disability, Mental Health and Aged Care.

There are a number of service areas within each service line.

Delegations: Decisions are made in accordance with Board-delegated functions, as set out in the Financial Delegations and Human Resource Delegations. A number of organisational policies also set out responsibilities for different issues and processes.

Examples of delegations *

Role	Financial	Human resources
Leadership Forum/ Manager	Expenditure for small & routine amounts (to delegated limit)	Determine staff duties and approve paid leave
Executive Team / Director	Expenditure for moderate amounts (to delegated limit)	Engage employees
Chief Executive Officer	Expenditure for large amounts (to delegated limit)	Terminate employment of an employee due to a breach of the WCS Code of Conduct [also Director, Corporate Services]
Board	Expenditure for substantial amounts	Appoint the CEO

* See formal delegation instruments for details and full list of delegations.

Policy development: WCS develops statements of policy and procedure to guide organisational and employees' behaviour and practices.

The Executive approves policies with input from the Leadership Forum and relevant internal stakeholders to ensure statements are accurate and guidance is appropriate. The Board regularly reviews work on policy development. The WCS Policy Officer coordinates the process to ensure consistency and quality of policy and procedures. For more information, see the Policy Development Process.

Decision making: Service line directors are responsible for decisions around service model and operational arrangements, including any documentation of any service-specific policies and procedures.

Service area directors are also responsible for overseeing the response to any critical incident, that is, an incident causing a severe impact, such as:

- significant disruption to operations
- serious injury/death or a substantial threat to the safety of WCS employees or service users
- impact on WCS's reputation or integrity (incl. breach of WCS policy or of contractual requirements).

Service area managers are responsible for day-to-day operations, in accordance with the service model and operational arrangements. They must ensure staff report incidents promptly and notify the service line director of any critical incidents.

Integrity and responsibility

WCS has a core value of integrity, ensuring that actions are accountable and professional.

All staff must abide by the WCS Code of conduct, which sets out standards of behaviour. WCS will take action for any breaches of the Code of Conduct.

WCS has set clear requirements for declaring and managing any conflict of interests, where personal interests may conflict with the interests of WCS. This includes any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. These requirements are set out in the Board Manual and Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures.

WCS is committed to ensuring that personal information held remains secure, is only used for the purposes for which it is collected and those who provide information are aware of their rights. The WCS Privacy Policy sets out how WCS meets these obligations.

WCS has robust procedures to identify and respond to actions that are not consistent with the organisational values and standards for integrity. This includes:

- a comprehensive complaints and feedback process for service users, stakeholders, funding bodies and the community to be able to raise concerns
- a comprehensive incident reporting process to record and respond to any issues identified
- processes to prevent, detect and respond to potential fraud
- protections for employees to raise concerns about practices not aligned with WCS standards (whistleblowers).

Employee/workplace representation

WCS is committed to meeting the highest ethical and labour standards, complying with their employee and industrial relations obligations, particularly with regard to the fair treatment of employees and upholding their workplace rights and safety.

WCS complies with the requirements of the ACT *Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Code 2020*, which sets out employees' rights to workplace representation.

Consistent with this, WCS respects employees' rights to join or not to join a union and be represented at work, and includes information about rights to representation in all induction material. WCS will not unlawfully discriminate against elected union workplace delegates or other employee representatives and provides appropriate access to facilities and paid time to enable them to represent employees.

Workforce performance and development

WCS has a performance and development framework to ensure employees:

- understand their job responsibilities
- receive ongoing feedback and support to meet their professional and development goals
- enhance their skills and knowledge at all stages of their employment.

The framework is supported by a range of policies and procedures, as shown here.

Performance and Development Framework



Management and operational processes

Planning and reporting

WCS has a cycle of long-term strategic planning and shorter-term annual planning to identify goals, priorities and activities. WCS reports on outcomes and outputs against these plans in the WCS annual report and service specific reports, meeting regulatory and contractual reporting requirements.

Strategic Plan: WCS reviews its Strategic Plan every five years. The Strategic Plan sets broad priorities and directions, involving consultation across the organisation and with key stakeholders.

Annual Budget: The shorter-term planning for WCS is focussed on the annual budgeting process, where funds are allocated to the organisation's priorities and activities over the next year, in line with the goals set out in the Strategic Plan.

The main steps to create the annual budget are (months are indicative only):

- Phase 1: preparation and planning – analysis, set process and timeline (commence in March)
- Phase 2: consultation – meet with Executive Team and Leadership Forum members to establish priorities (April)
- Phase 3: approval – once have a draft, Executive to endorse, to Risk and Audit Committee and then Board for approval (May, approval no later than June)

Each service line sets its own annual plan, in line with the strategic goals and annual budget.

Annual Report: The WCS Annual Report for each financial year is released at the Annual General Meeting, held towards the end of the calendar year. The Annual Report includes a summary of the audited financial statements. The Report also includes information about WCS services and activities during the period.

Financial management

The WCS **Finance area** is headed by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The team has registered accountants in a number of roles, including the CFO and Finance Manager. The Finance area guides WCS's financial strategy, the annual budget development, monitoring, and reporting against the budget. The Finance area is also responsible for associated policy and procedures for the organisation.

Budget Management - The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Executive Managers, Senior Managers, Managers, coordinators and other staff each have responsibility for preparing an annual budget for each service within their area of responsibility. These budgets are subject to a process of review and possible amendment by the Finance area, the Executive Team and the Board. Once approved by the Board, staff must adhere to all budgets.

Regular financial monitoring: The Finance area monitors expenditure against the budget monthly. The area will seek an explanation from the relevant service line director on any variance against the greater than 10% (positive or negative).

Monthly report to Executive and Leadership Forum: The Finance area provides a monthly report on expenditure against the Executive Team and Leadership Forum budget. All directors and managers have direct access to the financial database to continually monitor their areas' financial performance.

Monthly reporting to the Board: The monthly report goes to the Board – either the Risk and Audit Committee or the full Board, whichever is meeting that month (with each meeting every two months, alternating).

Annual financial statements: The Finance areas prepare the WCS annual financial statements in compliance with the Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Regime, which is then reviewed by external auditors. The audited financial statements are completed in September and presented to the Audit and Risk Committee. The Board approves the audited financial statements at the Annual General Meeting. The audited financial statements with the WCS Annual Report are submitted and published in full on the ACNC website (www.acnc.gov.au).

Quality and risk management

WCS ensures high quality service delivery and organisational governance through:

- identifying and managing risks to the organisation, its employees and volunteers, service users and the community it serves
- ensuring the quality of services provided by WCS, including compliance with all regulatory and accreditation requirements.

Risk management: WCS has identified the level of risk WCS is willing to take on at a whole of organisation level, with the key principles set out in the WCS Risk Appetite Statement. The Risk Tolerance statement sets out how specific risks are to be analysed, assessed and managed, while the Risk Management Procedures set out how and when staff should complete risk assessments.

Within this framework, WCS has developed:

- a strategic risk register: how WCS manages risks to its strategic goals
- service risk registers: how teams manage risks in delivering their services
- the WCS Business Continuity Plan: how WCS manages risks around disruptions to business as usual activities.

WCS also maintains a Fraud Control Plan.

Quality management: WCS ensures the services we provide, and the corporate governance activities we undertake, meet the needs of service users, staff, regulatory and certification bodies, government and the broader community.

The WCS commitment to quality is demonstrated through maintaining **certification** to the whole-of-organisation Quality Improvement Performance (QIP) Health and Community Services Standards and the following service-specific standards:

- National Quality Standard for Children's Services
- Aged Care Quality Standards
- National Standards for Mental Health Services
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards.

WCS complies with its obligations under law as they apply to the delivery of services, governance of the organisation, and its actions as a member of the ACT community. A whole of organisation **legislative compliance register** has been compiled to assist in this. The register is subject to regular review and update to ensure it remains current and complete.

The WCS **quality management framework** ensures:

- quality objectives for services or activities are fully understood and defined (through service area Quality Plans)
- mechanisms are in place to assess whether those quality objectives are met (through internal audits and complaints/feedback processes)
- steps are taken to address identified quality issues (incident reporting and continuous improvement).

The WCS Internal Audit program is overseen by the Executive Team and Audit and Risk Committee.

Each service area maintains a Quality Plan setting out how it monitors, reviews, improves and meets:

- the needs of service users
- conditions of funding agreements
- accreditation and legal requirements.

Information and knowledge management

WCS information systems and practices ensure records containing details relating to service users, employees and organisational management are:

- available to all staff who require access to them
- accessed only by staff who have a genuine need
- retained for as long as required by law or as needed to support service delivery and management of WCS
- handled appropriately, including compliance with legislative and privacy requirements.

The WCS Information and Knowledge Management Policy sets out requirements for:

- administration of records management systems, including manual or hardcopy records
- information privacy
- disclosing or responding to requests for information
- retention and archival of information and records.

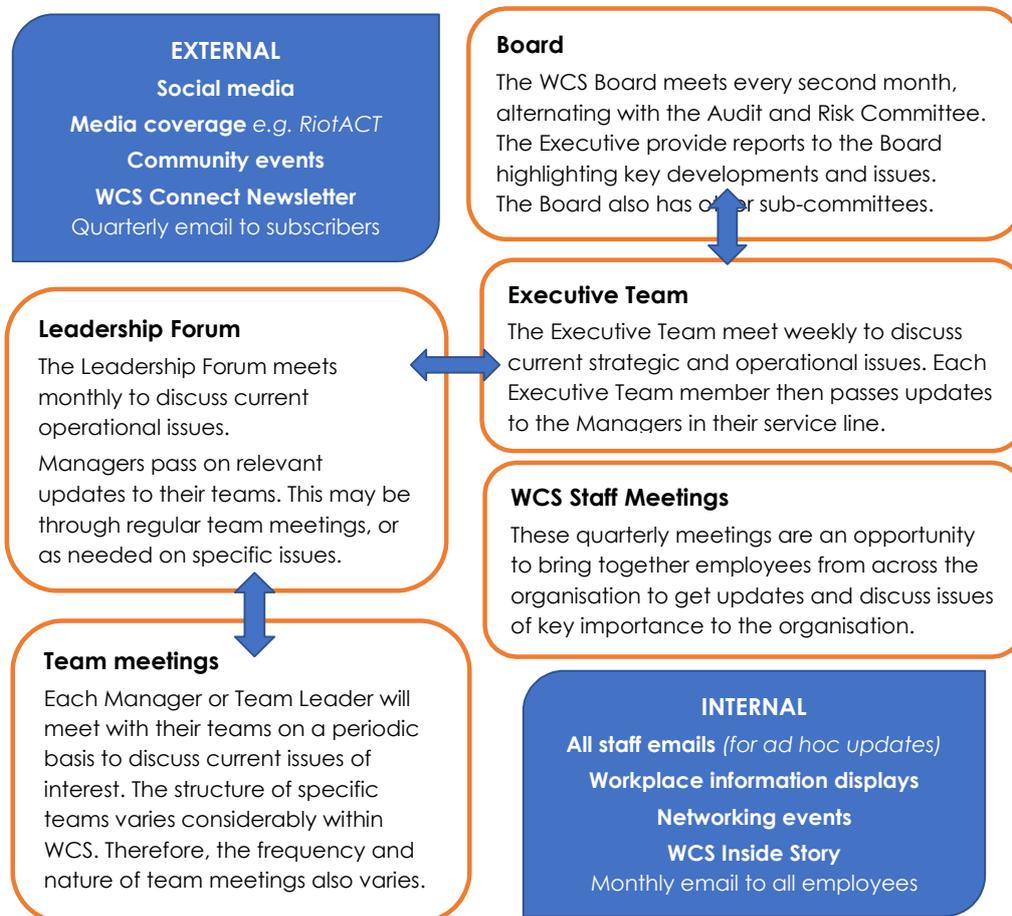
The WCS Organisation Hub is the repository for key corporate documents, including policies, procedures, forms and other supporting materials. This repository has restricted edit access and protocols to manage and maintain contents.

The WCS Intranet is a communications platform with:

- all documents used in our work
- organisational news and upcoming events
- the staff directory with contact information
- regular updates from the CEO
- articles on issues of interest
- quick links to common features/tasks (e.g. raising an IT ticket)
- the Organisation Hub with policies, procedures, guidelines, protocols and forms
- information on different service lines and service areas.

Internal and external communications

WCS uses a wide range of approaches to ensure good communication within the organisation and with the community and stakeholders, as shown in the diagram below.



Approach and priorities

Approach

WCS's effectiveness and reputation is built on how we work with people and communities. We are very much part of the communities we support and we are committed to these guiding principles and practices across our services and programs.

We put **service users and participants at the centre of service delivery**, responding to each person's unique circumstances and recognising the strengths and supports they have to draw on.

We **listen to the people and communities** who need our support, valuing their stories and lived expertise and respecting their decisions.

We offer **trauma informed support** across our services because we understand the profound impacts trauma can have on individuals and families.

We are a **child safe and child friendly** organisation.

We stand with individuals and community groups to **advocate for changes in society and service systems that improve their life chances and circumstances**.

We care about the **safety, wellbeing and development of our staff and volunteers**, knowing this is fundamental to our effectiveness in the community.

As set out in the WCS Strategic Plan 2021-25.

Service users

WCS is committed to listening to service users and engaging with them in designing, delivering and improving our services.

WCS recognises everyone has a right to participate in decision making processes that directly impact upon them. WCS sees people who access our services as active partners in our work, providing opportunities to have a voice and make informed decisions. WCS also values the important role family members, kin, friends, carers and significant others play in supporting service users and engages with them whenever possible.

WCS recognises the experiences people have when they contact us are the most important source of information about the quality and safety of our services. Their participation leads to services that are tailored to individual needs, preference and values, resulting in better outcomes and preventing avoidable harm.

Principles for service user engagement (the how)

1. We embed service user engagement across the organisation
2. We develop safe and shared spaces to engage with those who access our services
3. We act on the learnings from engagement to improve our services
4. We seek to improve our engagement activities through evaluation and research

Elements to create a safe and shared space for engagement



Diversity and inclusion

WCS values diversity within our workforce and community, seeking to provide services that are culturally appropriate. WCS also recognises the history of dispossession of First Nations people in this country and the consequences of this in our community.

First Nations peoples: In 2011, WCS launched our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and will release our fourth in 2021.

Our formal acknowledgment is: "Woden Community Service acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Owners of this land and their continuing connection to land and community. We also acknowledge First Nations peoples who have come from other nations to live on Ngunnawal land. We pay our respects to their cultures, ancestors and Elders past, present and future."

In our RAP, we seek to progress reconciliation in a practical way through the work we do in the local community. It sets out our commitments and looks at how we can provide programs relevant to First Nations peoples. We offer opportunities for First Nations people to work at WCS and share in the life of the community.

Diversity: In 2020, WCS established a Diversity Working Group to review the WCS commitment and actions to support diversity. This builds on a range of initiatives within different teams. The statement below reflects the WCS commitment to diversity. It is supported by a work program to ensure WCS acts in accordance with this commitment.

WCS embraces, supports and strengthens diversity within our community, our services and our organisation. We treat staff, service users and all members of the community equitably, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, cultural background, abilities, religious beliefs or any other experience of diversity.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the original custodians of the lands and waters of Australia. We recognise the diversity of experiences, cultures, histories, languages and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise human diversity as an asset and a strength: we value each person's uniqueness, using these differences to create opportunities for continuing growth and connection.

We actively challenge and respond to the systemic disadvantage many groups in our society face: we advocate for equality and stand with those voicing opposition to all forms of discrimination. We partner with and reinforce the voices of all diverse communities and align with organisations who do the same.

We create a culture of respect and inclusivity within our organisation where everyone feels valued and can contribute: we actively encourage applicants of all life experiences and ensure appropriately qualified and experienced people are engaged for each role. We support our diverse workforce of employees and volunteers, providing an environment where all staff can contribute in the way that is most meaningful to them. We act decisively against any inappropriate behaviour including discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Our services are safe and accessible: we listen with openness. We are flexible and responsive. We seek feedback and reflect on our work. We continuously improve our service delivery by adjusting and expanding our services to meet the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

Environmental and social responsibility

WCS is committed to being an environmentally friendly and responsible organisation. WCS is aware of the pressures our community places on our environment and of predicted climate related crises, leading to devastating impacts for the people and communities affected.

In our advocacy, WCS will highlight the need for proactive strategies from community sector organisations and government to address these issues.

In our operations, WCS will become a more environmentally friendly and responsible organisation through systematically changing practices across the organisation.

In our services, WCS will support the needs of individuals and communities impacted by climate related disasters and other emergencies.

References

The following WCS documents referred to in this statement are all available on the WCS Organisation Hub for WCS staff.

WCS Constitution

WCS Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Financial Delegations

Human Resource Delegations

Code of Conduct

Board Manual

Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference

Executive Team Terms of Reference

Leadership Forum Terms of Reference

Organisation Chart

Policy Development Process

Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures

Privacy Policy

Complaints Policy and Procedures and associated documents

Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures and associated documents

Fraud Control Policy and Procedures

Whistleblower Policy and Procedures

Performance and Development Framework and associated documents

Quality and Risk Policy and associated documents, including Legislative Compliance Register

Information and Knowledge Management Policy and Procedures

Service Expectations

Reconciliation Action Plan

Statement of Commitment to Service User Engagement (and associated work plan)

Statement of Commitment to Diversity (and associated work plan)