

Strategic Plan 2021–2025



Hope



Inclusion



Compassion



Social Justice



Integrity



Responsiveness

*Building connected communities
and enriching people's lives*

Foreword

We are delighted to launch the Strategic Plan for Woden Community Service for the next five years. This work has been an exciting opportunity for WCS to look at our strengths and where we want to grow. Most importantly we have continued to reflect on how we can best meet the needs of people across our community.

Our Strategic Plan will provide the basis for our decision making around services and our organisational success. It will continue to be revised and refreshed as new situations arise.

As Canberra continues to grow, we want to listen, learn and act, and we value the great staff we have to travel on this journey.

Most of all, we look forward to you joining us in this journey.

Jenny Kitchin, CEO

Jennifer Bennett, Board Chair

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Consultant Lyla Rogan for guiding us through the plan's development.



Jenny Kitchin, CEO



Jennifer Bennett, Board Chair

Introduction

Building on 50 proud years of service in Woden and other suburbs of Canberra, Woden Community Service (WCS) looks to the future with confidence and determination. This Strategic Plan provides the roadmap for our most important work in the years ahead—as a frontline service provider, in community engagement and as a partner to government and other community organisations. The Strategic Plan is supported by our Reconciliation Action Plan, Service User and Community Engagement Frameworks and operational plans for our service and corporate portfolios.



WCS

- who we are

WCS's vision, purpose and values speak to why we exist and guide us in how we focus and behave as a service provider and employer.

Our Vision

A caring community where everyone belongs.

Our Purpose

Building connected communities and enriching people's lives.

Our 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.

SOCIAL JUSTICE We work to increase access and opportunity for all, particularly those who face disadvantage and discrimination.

INTEGRITY We are committed to being honest, professional and accountable in our relationships and in everything we do.

RESPONSIVENESS We adjust to meet changing community needs and are courageous in how we grow and develop as an organisation.



Photos taken by: Viviana Torres (top), George Tsotsos - Region Media (middle), Lydia Downe (bottom)

Our 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.

Strategic context

The context ahead is a challenging one with anticipated trends creating both uncertainty and potential opportunities.

Locally, Canberra's population is growing in size and diversity, in new higher density and established suburbs. Overall, the population is ageing and in newer suburbs there is a high representation of families and youth. Effective planning of community infrastructure and services is crucial, especially in the Woden, Weston Creek and Molonglo communities.

More climate-related crises are predicted with devastating impacts for the people and communities affected. Proactive strategies are needed from community sector organisations and government in this space.

At the national level continued growth in market driven services is resulting in increased competition, new business models and new pressures for service users and staff.

The economic and social impacts of COVID-19 are likely to last for many years leading to increased demand for community services and greater uncertainty about the availability of government funding for social programs.

New ways of delivering support and managing staff and volunteers were necessary in response to COVID-19. The adaptability WCS demonstrated during this period will stand the organisation in good stead to deliver increasingly flexible services in the years ahead.

As we look to the future, WCS will respond to and advocate for key findings and recommendations from the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health and Royal Commission inquiries into aged care quality and safety and violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with a disability.

Our response

In this uncertain and changing context WCS will strive to:

- Hold to our purpose and values.
- Listen to and involve the communities we work with.
- Use evidence to argue for growth in services and funding.
- Invest strongly in staff care and development.
- Maintain positive relationships with government and other community agencies.
- Demonstrate adaptability and innovation in responding to new opportunities.

Our goals to 2025

Goal 1. Strive for excellence in service delivery and use evidence in program planning and design.

Goal 2. Increase service access and impact by expanding what we do well and developing new services to address community needs.

Goal 3. Intensify our community engagement footprint to foster community connection, participation and development.

Goal 4. Grow as a sustainable, well governed and effective organisation that embraces a culture of staff care, continuous improvement and accountability.

Our ambitions and priorities

GOAL 1.

Strive for excellence in service delivery and use evidence in program planning and design.

What our success looks like:

- WCS is a service provider of choice for service users, program participants and government.
- Service users and participants experience our support as respectful, relevant, timely and of high quality.
- Needs assessment, data analysis, evaluation and service user experience are used to improve service planning, design and practice.
- Evidence shows positive outcomes and impact at service user and community levels.
- WCS is highly regarded as an innovator of initiatives and approaches that influence the direction of programs and services more broadly.
- WCS achieves relevant accreditation and complies with regulatory requirements for all service areas.

Priority action areas:

- Implement and evaluate the Service User Framework across all service portfolios.
- Utilise the best available tools for measuring performance and community impact, building on established processes for service user feedback, data collection and evaluation.
- Grow capacity to undertake community needs assessment, research and evaluation that contributes to building an evidence base.
- Capture service user and participant stories to ensure their experience informs practice and decision making.
- Create opportunities for innovation and trialling of new approaches and share the learning from these initiatives—internally and with partners—to shape service development and policy.
- Ensure child safe standards are met across all service portfolios.
- Systematically embed accreditation standards and requirements in management and governance processes.

GOAL 2.

Increase service access and impact by expanding what we do well and developing new services to address community needs.

What our success looks like:

- Services are growing in response to community needs and available funding.
- WCS is known for offering flexible and comprehensive support to people with complex needs.
- WCS attracts additional funding to expand community-based services across its primary target groups.
- Services within and across portfolios are integrated to provide a seamless and comprehensive service experience for individuals and families.
- Partnering with other service providers adds value to the range of support offered and service outcomes.
- WCS has a recognised role in service initiatives targeting highly vulnerable people, where gaps exist and innovation is essential to addressing their needs.

Priority action areas:

- Offer a wide portfolio of services with a mix of universal support and targeted services to people with complex or more intensive needs.
- Expand the offer of community based mental health support, building on WCS's strengths in psychosocial and peer-based services.
- Provide a comprehensive suite of services to older people ranging from community-based support to more intensive care in the home.
- Expand the suite of services to people with disabilities with a recognised niche in psychosocial support and a focus on support for children and adults.
- Partner with existing and new schools to provide outside school hours care, holiday programs, early learning services and parenting support to consolidate and expand our delivery capacity.
- Further develop case management and intensive support services for families and young people with complex needs.
- Position WCS to increase capacity to provide homelessness and social housing support.

GOAL 3.

Intensify our community engagement footprint to foster community connection, participation and development.

What our success looks like:

- WCS is a major player in community development in Woden, Weston Creek and Molonglo, working in partnership with government, other community organisations and local businesses.
- There is evidence of growing connectedness, more services and better outcomes for residents in these communities.
- WCS services and programs are shaped through community consultation and participation.
- Community awareness and referrals to WCS continue to grow.
- Volunteering opportunities are expanded to facilitate community involvement and participation.

Priority action areas:

- Work closely with government in community needs assessment, social planning and design of services and infrastructure targeting growing and high need communities.
- Consolidate WCS's footprint in Woden and Weston Creek and continue to plan for the new community centre as a vibrant hub for information, services, community groups and local partnerships.
- Seek opportunities to expand WCS's role in community development and service delivery in Molonglo, including operation of community facilities.
- Embed community consultation and engagement practices across all service portfolios.
- Facilitate a stronger voice for residents in planning community services and infrastructure in new and growing Canberra suburbs where we operate.
- Take forward our Reconciliation Action Plan which details our intentions to engage with local First Nations communities and grow our First Nations workforce.
- Use knowledge of community needs and service experience to advocate for change in policy, programs and funding.
- Grow capacity for community development work by increasing our volunteer base and pursuing tender opportunities.

GOAL 4.

Grow as a sustainable, well-governed and effective organisation that embraces a culture of staff care, continuous improvement and accountability.

What our success looks like:

- WCS attracts and retains high performing staff with relevant qualifications and experience.
- Staff and volunteers feel valued and report a high level of job satisfaction, loyalty and commitment.
- Emerging and existing leaders excel in their respective roles and are instrumental in building WCS's success.
- Income continues to grow steadily and sustainably to allow WCS to deliver on its goals and priorities.
- WCS grows its reserves to meet all liabilities and provide working capital to support innovation and community initiatives not funded from other sources.
- WCS has a highly effective and professional governance structure providing strategic leadership and stewardship of resources.
- WCS maintains high visibility and a strong reputation with government, communities and partners.

Priority action areas:

- Position WCS as an employer of choice through valuing workforce diversity and excellence in staff recruitment, supervision, support and development in line with the WCS Workforce Plan.
- Provide remuneration and conditions of employment that appropriately value and recognise staff.
- Actively support career progression of staff and leadership development across the organisation.
- Grow a solid and stable income base that matches strategic and operational intentions and contributes to future sustainability.
- Ensure business and funding models for services are viable and sustainable.
- Strengthen internal communication and sharing of knowledge across and within corporate service areas and program portfolios.
- Further develop and utilise external marketing and communication platforms to raise awareness of services and community activities, attract staff and volunteers and build WCS's reputation.
- Become a more environmentally friendly and responsible organisation through systematically changing practices across the organisation.
- Invest in contemporary, efficient ICT systems in line with the WCS IT Strategy.
- Further develop strong systems and practices for management, governance and accountability that align with good practice in the sector.



Acknowledgement of Country

Woden Community Service acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and custodians of this land and their continuing connection to land and community. We also acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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.

Artist: Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri artist Megan Daley

Painting: "Ngunnawal Mindjagari"

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