



dhcs | ACT

# service delivery platform

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

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# about this document

The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services is an ACT Government agency with a strong emphasis on service delivery. We are responsible for policies and programs which assist some of the most vulnerable, the youngest and the most experienced members of the Canberra community.

The diversity of our services reflects the diversity of the Canberra population, and the lives of the Canberrans we work with are increasingly complex. It is our aim to meet the needs of the people we work for, in whatever circumstances and stages of life they find themselves. We seek to facilitate an outcome that is focussed on their needs and is respectful of their dignity.

Importantly, we work in partnership with community and government agencies to deliver a broad spectrum of human services to the Canberra community.

Our Service Delivery Platform provides our clients and community partners with an understanding of the context in which our agency works. It details the platform from which our services are delivered, including the values which underpin these services, the policies and legislation which focus our efforts and themes which run through every aspect of our work. This platform has been built through discussions with our clients, staff, community partners and Ministers. It is a document of which all of our dedicated staff can be proud.

We are committed to a strong, safe, respectful, inclusive and diverse Canberra. This Service Delivery Platform provides the basis from which we will work to implement the ACT Government's commitment to achieve these outcomes.

I hope that you find this document a useful guide to the foundation from which we provide our services.

**Sandra Lambert**

Chief Executive

# our **statement of purpose**

We deliver high quality, co-ordinated human services to significant sectors of the ACT community through engaging and involving our clients, building community partnerships, contributing to good governance and performing as a best practice organisation.

# our responsibilities

The ACT Government has given us the responsibility to provide, or fund, a wide range of human services to the Canberra community. This responsibility matches the ACT Government's commitment to supporting and encouraging people to participate in all aspects of life in the Territory.

In addition to those responsibilities bestowed on us by government, we have an obligation to implement formal agreements with other Australian governments and comply with laws passed by the ACT Legislative Assembly.

# our values and culture

Our values and culture guide us to strive for the highest standards in our work with the community.

We are committed to building and sustaining an organisational culture that reflects and aims to fulfil the following values:

- **respect** for the people who use our services and for the people who work for, and with, our Department
- **transparency** in our work practices and decision-making processes

- **honesty** and **integrity** in our conduct
- **knowledge** and **expertise** of our workforce
- **accountability** towards our fellow staff members, other ACT Government agencies and the community
- **best practice** and **innovation** by providing high quality and well considered advice and services

We will implement strategies to make sure these values are part of our policies and services, both internal and external.

# our structure

Our structure includes four areas with distinct responsibilities across the spectrum of human services. We seek to provide our services in an integrated and holistic way—we strive for co-ordinated services, with areas supporting the work of each other, in partnership with community organisations and in liaison with other government agencies.

## Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

The Office for Children, Youth and Family Support works in partnership with the community to provide care and protection services to children and young people, and family and community support to meet the needs of people in the ACT.

The Office also supervises young people who have been placed on a court order, and aims to provide a balance between community protection, restitution and rehabilitation.

The Office aims to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and their families and provide advice on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in relation to all areas of responsibility of the Department.

A number of children, young people and families have an involuntary relationship with the Office. That is, they are compelled by court orders and by the statutory framework of the *Children and Young People Act 1999* to engage with us. Many other children, young people and families choose to voluntarily engage with us to access our services which include our Child and Family Centres. At all times the Office is committed to involving children and young people in a meaningful way in decision-making about their lives.

## Child and Family Centres

The Child and Family Centres provide a range of free services for children and their families in the Gungahlin and Tuggeranong communities who may need some assistance with parenting or parenting advice and information. They also offer more specialised support and help through provision of individual and family support, as well as a range of community education opportunities and community development activities and programs. The services available include: maternal and child health clinics; speech pathology; early childhood education; case management; and parenting information.

## Disability ACT

Through a range of awareness raising activities and person centred service delivery and support actions, Disability ACT seeks to increase the social, economic and cultural participation of all people with a disability in the ACT community.

Disability ACT plans, co-ordinates, facilitates, funds, and where necessary provides, a wide range of services and supports for people with a disability who live in the ACT and the people who care for them. As the ACT Government service provider, Individual Support Services provides direct support to people with a disability and their families through the provision of supported accommodation, respite, and responding to a range of individual needs. All services aim to minimise the effects of a person's disability and maximise their personal outcomes.

All current and intended activities are clearly articulated in *Disability ACT Future Directions—A Framework for the ACT 2004–2008*.

## Housing and Community Services

Key functions of Housing and Community Services include policy advice on, and provision or funding provision, for public and community housing, supported accommodation, and homelessness services and assistance. Housing and Community Services also provide support for people who are disadvantaged or experiencing a crisis, as well as coordinating strategies to build stronger communities.

Housing and Community Services includes Housing ACT, Strategic Asset Management, Property Services and Business Improvement, Social Housing and Homelessness Services, and Multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs promotes multiculturalism in the ACT. Multiculturalism is the right of all Canberrans to express and share their cultural heritage in the Territory and to contribute to, and participate in, public life without prejudice or discrimination. The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs provides strategic advice to the Chief Minister on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT.

## Policy and Organisational Services

The work of Policy and Organisational Services includes a range of organisational support functions, including strategic human resource management, data analysis, research, strategic policy, governance, audit and review, strategic budget and finance, and the secondary review process for complaints.

Policy and Organisational Services is also responsible for the delivery of a range of community services, including the ACT Concessions Program, which provides expenditure support for low income individuals and families, particularly older people; support for all girls and women in the ACT through the Office for Women and the Women's Information and Referral Centre; support and assistance for seniors through the Office for Ageing; and a suite of community services and engagement programs. Further services include managing community facilities owned by the Department; advocacy for clients, especially children and young people; co-ordinating community recovery and emergency planning for the community and individuals following a significant emergency or disaster; and developing the capacity and capability of the community and volunteering sector. Therapy ACT is also a part of Policy and Organisational Services.

## Therapy ACT

Therapy ACT provides multidisciplinary therapy and support services for children with delays in development and people with a developmental disability from birth to 65 years of age. Therapy ACT provides assistance with physical, intellectual, communication and other functional difficulties. Therapy and support services are available for physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, social work and psychology.

# our organisational commitment

## Working in partnership

We recognise that strong partnerships are based on extensive consultation, engagement and co-ordination with community organisations.

We will continue to develop partnerships between the government and community organisations in the spirit of the Social Compact, with a view to strengthening the development and implementation of effective, accessible and appropriate services, programs, information and policies.

## Human rights

We will maintain a person-centred approach within a human rights framework. This framework provides that everyone is treated equally without discrimination due to difference in race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political affiliation, disability or other status.

Recognition of diversity and respect for dignity in our community are central to community inclusion and richness. We will continue to respect dignity and celebrate diversity, and through this, we seek to assist people with their rights, choices, needs and aspirations throughout all stages of their lives.

## Workforce sustainability

An effective, committed and skilled workforce is essential for our Department to deliver on its responsibilities. We recognise that a positive workforce will maintain high levels of customer service and nurture strong collaboration with the community.

We are committed to a sustainable workforce through training, development, support and safe work settings. In our training, development and advancement, we recognise that our staff have diverse backgrounds and skills that add to the strength of the Department. These skills can include previous work and life experiences, community participation, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and education.

We aim to support the professionalism of staff members in terms of dedication, accountability, skills, compassion, knowledge, and ethical conduct. In this context, professionalism is not necessarily based on academic or other qualifications.

# our policy context

We operate within the context of a range of policies, strategies and laws, as well as Commonwealth— State/Territory Multilateral and Bilateral agreements. This diagram illustrates some of the key policies, strategies, laws, and agreements that we implement and comply with, in order to fulfil our obligations to the ACT Government and community.



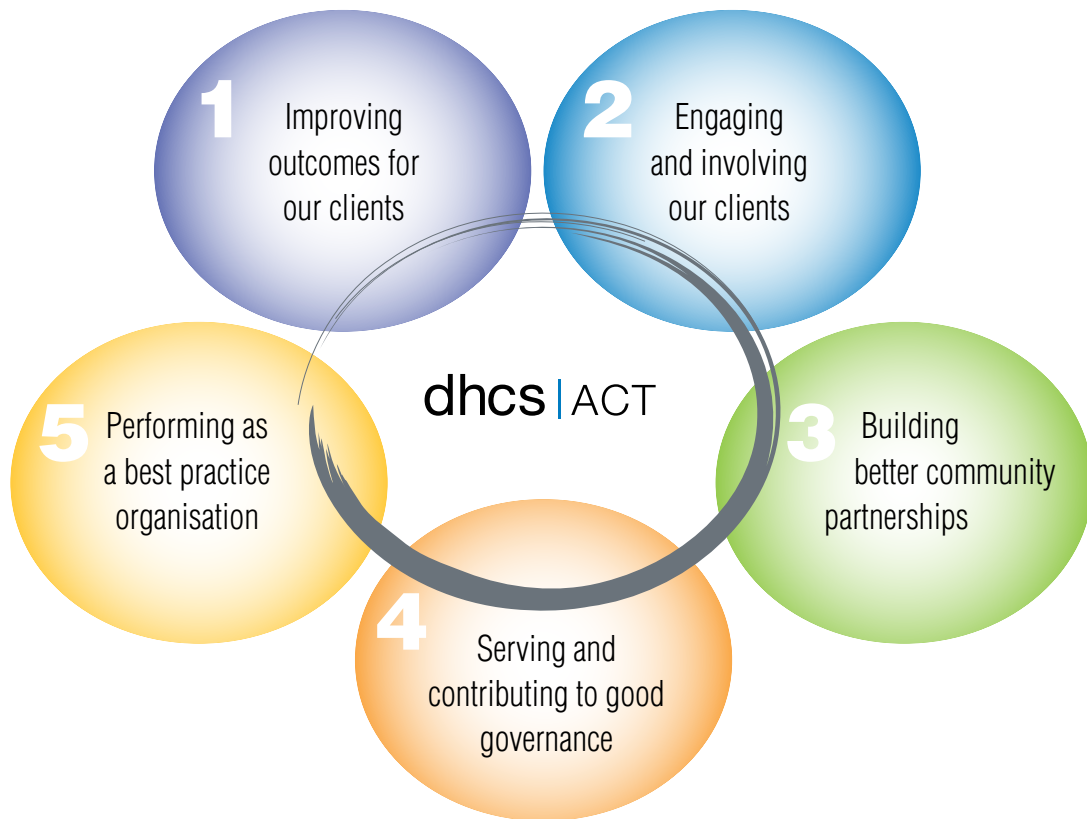
# our **planning framework**

The framework illustrates how the policy context informs the Department's future direction and planning. It gives expression to the Department's structure and responsibilities and provides a framework for our individual and area operations and planning.



# our strategic themes

The themes below both weave their way through our work, and bind it together. These themes cover the breadth of our work, obligations and commitments. They provide the Platform for the development of Business Plans for each area of the Department, reflecting and informing our key policy and service delivery directions.



## **Strategic theme 1** Improving outcomes for our clients

We will strive to meet the needs of the people we work for in whatever circumstances and stages of life. We will aim to facilitate an outcome that is focused on their needs and respects their dignity.

We will work on this theme in the following ways:

- We will use research and evaluation to inform the development and delivery of our policies and practices, and to support ongoing innovation and improvement in programs, policies and service delivery.
- We will develop and implement policies and/or programs that respond to a range of needs, in relation to the Department's target groups.
- We will recognise and respond to the particular needs of people that are compelled to engage with our services due to court orders or legislative frameworks.
- We will deliver services that are appropriate to the culture, age and gender of our clients, including services that address the needs of children, young people, families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## **Strategic theme 2** Engaging and involving our clients

We will work with the people we provide services for, to identify and help to address their ongoing, emerging and new needs. Where appropriate, we will provide the same support and assistance to the families, carers and guardians of these people.

We will work on this theme in the following ways:

- We will listen to and value the people we work for and, as appropriate, their families, carers and guardians.
- We will value the input of the people we work for in the design, delivery and review of policies, programs and services. We will involve community organisations, service users, businesses and tenants, among many others, in policy development and planning.
- Where possible, we will ensure that our processes for engagement are tailored to the preferences of specific community groups. We will promote participation in community life by all Canberrans.

### **Strategic theme 3** Building better community partnerships

Through a focus on community engagement and consultation, we will build closer partnerships with community organisations and the wider Canberra community to ensure the delivery of services to a high standard.

We will work on this theme in the following ways:

- We will further develop, with external partners, a shared understanding of the partnership approach to the delivery of services, informed by the Social Compact.
- We will maximise the effectiveness of our relationships with community, business and government agencies to deliver the best possible services.
- We will actively seek and respond to community feedback on the impact of government policies and the delivery of services, information and programs. This feedback will assist us to monitor progress and enhance our work.
- We will work in partnership with the community sector to enhance its capacity to develop and deliver a range of innovative and sustainable services.
- We will recognise the autonomy of our community partners and respect their contribution to the community.
- We will be accountable and transparent in our community relationships and will endeavour to resolve grievances in a timely manner.
- In the planning of future services, we will work to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all government agencies to assist the participation of community and business partners.

## **Strategic theme 4** Serving and contributing to good governance

Governance is the process by which organisations make strategic decisions, manage public resources, and maintain equitable service provision. It involves accountability, transparency, and efficient and effective administration and program delivery.

We will work on this theme in the following ways:

- We will design policies, programs and services that reflect the Government's priorities and are planned and implemented in conjunction with other appropriate agencies.
- We will provide structures and processes that facilitate the delivery of a high standard of accountability and good governance, including best practice in compliance, monitoring, reviewing, evaluating and reporting. We will manage financial, physical and human resources responsibly and in accordance with whole of government policies.
- We will seek and effectively manage resources in order to address the Government's priorities. We provide business systems and processes that support transparency and integrity of decision making.
- We will consolidate an effective mechanism for inter-governmental communication in our areas of responsibility.

## **Strategic theme 5** Performing as a best practice organisation

We will establish organisational systems to assist the development of staff members and to integrate business, service delivery and policy systems across the Department. Our aim is to develop a responsive and well-respected organisation comprised of effective teams.

We will work on this theme in the following ways:

- We will maximise and maintain the Department's human resource capacity. We will support and provide opportunities to our staff and other personnel to provide a responsive and responsible workforce.
- We will value and acknowledge the diversity of our staff, and the significant contribution they make to our workplace.
- We will provide staff with opportunities for professional development and support learning environments.
- We will provide organisational systems, practices, procedures and policies which encourage staff to perform at their highest level in an effective team environment.
- By working with our community, government and business partners, we will contribute to the quality and benefits of living in the ACT for all people.
- In all of our work we will continuously strive to identify and successfully mitigate current and emerging risks.
- In everything we do, we will seek and promote innovative practice, policy and service delivery.

# our commitment to clients

The Department focuses on the needs of the client in order to continually promote client ownership of all phases of the work and support the client's ability to sustain change after the engagement ends. Drawing on our values, context and strategic themes, we make the following commitments to the people we work with.

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- We are accountable to our clients and provide opportunities for regular feedback on any aspect of their contact with our service.
  - We respect the unique needs of our clients and acknowledge their individual support networks and legal arrangements.
  - We respect the client's right to make informed choices and determine their future.
  - We observe our duty of care and statutory obligations that relate to our work and consider the best interests of the client in all decision-making processes.
  - We ensure our policy and practice reflects our commitment to the client being at the centre of all decisions and processes.
  - We strive to engage early with our clients and work to develop sustainable support networks.

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- We endeavour to provide connected services to our clients with clear information on our role, responsibilities and limitations.
  - We actively seek our clients' consent to share information and explain how information will be used.
  - We build closer partnerships with community organisations and the wider community to maximise client outcomes.
  - We respect the diversity and independence of community organisations and groups in the planning and coordination of services.
  - We draw on the best available evidence concerning practice approaches and service models that achieve positive outcomes for our clients.



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