



SACOSS

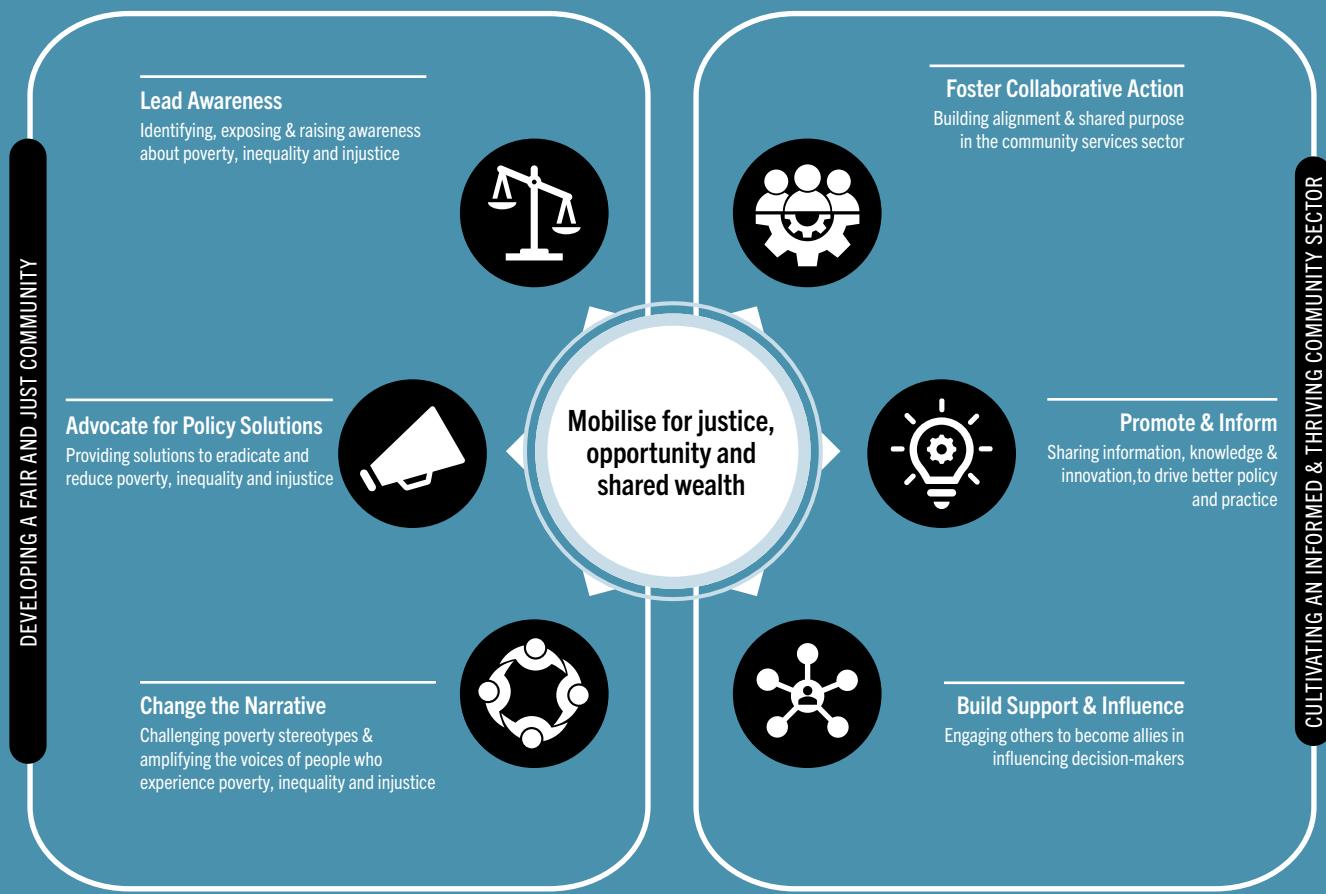
78TH ANNUAL REPORT



Strategic Plan 2022-2027

Our vision is for justice, opportunity and shared wealth for all South Australians

02

78TH ANNUAL REPORT 2024–25 | AT A GLANCE 2024–25

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

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

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

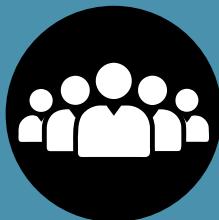
Front cover image: 'Crossroads', by Adelaide cartoonist and social commentator Simon Kneebone. Simon is a SACOSS life member whose works have appeared in the *New Internationalist*, *Pro Bono* and many more publications.

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Our Impact

In 2024-25, SACOSS's work led to:



1. Strengthened sector support

Hosting the sector-focused annual conference, *Securing the Future*, and developing other associated sector advocacy and supports.



2. Human Rights Act progression

With Rights Resource Network of South Australia and Australian Lawyers for Human Rights, advocacy leading to the SA Parliament's Social Development Committee report calling for the enactment of a Human Rights Act for South Australia.



3. Social Workers Registration Scheme clarity

Sustained advocacy on behalf of the sector around the definition and scope of the proposed Social Workers Registration Scheme saw its introduction delayed – providing more time to bed down the scheme's functionality and utility.



4. Portable Long Service Leave

Significant improvements in the legislation for a Portable Long Services Scheme for the community services sector, including in relation to eligibility, salary packaging, and transition arrangements. SACOSS supported the legislation as the scheme will improve conditions for workers in the sector, while assisting organisations in worker recruitment and retention.

03

78TH ANNUAL REPORT 2024–25 | AT A GLANCE 2024–25

SACOSS acknowledges the traditional lands of the Kaurna people on which we live and work, and pay our respects and acknowledge the Kaurna people as the custodians of the Adelaide region and the Greater Adelaide Plains. We acknowledge and respect the cultural authority and sovereignty of the elders, communities and organisations across all the lands on which our member organisations live and work. We underscore the importance of Aboriginal-led responses to address the interests and rights of Aboriginal families and communities.

FROM THE CEO

04

78TH ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25 | FROM THE CEO

It's been a huge honour to have served in this role over the last 15 plus years and I want to say thanks to everyone who has helped shape, inform and collaborated with SACOSS and me, as we've strived to achieve positive change.

Firstly, huge thanks to all those people who right across my lifetime have taken time out of their lives to help me better understand what it means to live with poverty, injustice, and discrimination. While I may not have always immediately nor completely understood, I do hope those of you who have shared your life experiences with me see I have tried to put those lessons and experience into good use.

So many of us have the good fortune to enjoy lives cocooned by privilege and rarely, if ever, experience the kinds of outcomes that flow directly from not having these opportunities.

We also have to better understand, discuss and respond to the increasingly detrimental outcomes that continue to spring from inviting profit-seeking into the heart of delivering so many of our essential community services – be this energy, water, health, the care of our children, support for our elders and people who live with disability, and the great majority of the other services our sector delivers.

And at the same time, we should be finding ways to celebrate and bring greater awareness to the contribution that our broader community services sector currently makes to holding individuals, families and the communities they live in together at times of crisis and difficulty. Without the people who volunteer or are paid to do this work in organisations right across South Australia today, our communities would fall apart. I want to personally thank all our members for their continuing allegiance and support for SACOSS, and it's time to be giving credit where credit is due.

I also want to acknowledge each of our funders across time – many of whom have formed parts of various governments of the day. It remains crucial to have government, member and philanthropic support available to continue investing in and resourcing the independent advocacy and analysis that peak bodies such as SACOSS contribute – even when they are exposing issues that result in uncomfortable scrutiny and conversations.

I also extend my thanks to colleagues right across the sector, government, academia and broader civil society, so many of whom have collaborated with SACOSS to drive change where it's been needed.

I particularly appreciated the importance of our relationships with those from all sides of political life, and welcomed their engagement where we brought forward concerns and issues we felt needed their action. And while there is an enormous asymmetry of power when you contrast SACOSS's access to political power brokers to that of other well-resourced self-interested groups, I always appreciated having access to and being consulted by repeated Premiers, Treasurers, Ministers and importantly, all other members of our Parliament.

To my five SACOSS Chairs and members of the 16 Boards and Policy Councils who have supported our work, I want to say a special thanks. Especially to my Chairs, all of whom have been great sources of leadership, support and encouragement. Most recently I'm enormously grateful to David Panter and Nicole Chaplin, who as Chair have both played particularly important roles in ensuring a smooth transition in our governance and leadership.

And finally, my huge appreciation and thanks to each of my colleagues who've joined our SACOSS team across the years. While I might often have been the public face for our concerns, it's always been your work preparing the sharp credible analysis that has underpinned and built our advocacy for change. And here I note a very special thanks to Dr Greg Ogle – someone who's shared much of my journey and always been a great advisor, brains trust and confidant.

And for all that, it's my intention now to start finding some other ways to continue contributing toward the struggle for justice and equality. With thanks and my very best wishes to you all.

In solidarity,

Ross Womersley

CEO, SACOSS, 2010-2025



The 2024–25 financial year has been a period of significant transition for SACOSS. At the Board level, I stepped into the role of Chair, following the outstanding leadership of David Panter. SACOSS also began the process of recruiting for, and as we now know, welcoming Dr Catherine Earl as CEO following the remarkable tenure of Ross Womersley. These changes mark a new chapter for SACOSS, built on a strong foundation of advocacy, sector leadership, and community impact.

Ross's leadership over more than 15 years has left an enduring mark on SACOSS and the broader community sector. His unwavering commitment to social justice, deep understanding of poverty and discrimination, and ability to bring together diverse voices have shaped SACOSS into a respected and effective peak body. Ross's legacy is one of credible advocacy, courageous truth-telling, and a relentless pursuit of fairness for all South Australians. On behalf of the Board and the sector, I extend my deepest gratitude for Ross's service and vision.

David Panter's eight years as Chair were characterised by steady leadership, strategic foresight, and a collaborative spirit. David guided SACOSS through complex policy debates, governance reforms, and sector challenges, always with a focus on strengthening our organisation's capacity to serve. His support during this year's leadership transition has been invaluable, and I thank David for his wisdom, encouragement, and enduring commitment to SACOSS.

This year, we also farewelled several valued Board members, whose contributions have helped shape SACOSS's direction and impact. In particular, I want to acknowledge the late Rohan Feegrade, whose insights and dedication were greatly appreciated. To all Board members, thank you for your service and for helping to position SACOSS for future success.

Stepping into the Chair's role during such a pivotal time has deepened my appreciation for SACOSS's unique role in the sector. Our work is more important than ever, as we confront persistent challenges of inequality, funding pressures, and the need for strong, independent advocacy. I am continually inspired by the commitment of our members, the expertise of our team, and the solidarity of our partners. SACOSS's ability to convene, challenge, and champion the sector is a testament to the collective strength of our community.

SACOSS's work this year has been amplified through our active engagement with ACOSS and the COSS network. Together, we have advocated on national issues, shared strategies, and strengthened the voice of the community sector across Australia. These partnerships are vital as we address complex, cross-jurisdictional challenges and work towards a fairer society.

SACOSS remains financially stable, with prudent management ensuring we can continue our core work and invest in new initiatives. This year, we made a significant investment in the Give Credit campaign, aimed at recognising and amplifying the contribution of the tens of thousands of paid and volunteer workers in our sector. This campaign reflects our commitment to giving credit where it is due and raising the profile of community services across South Australia. We want this campaign to have a deep and ongoing impact for the community of South Australia.

With the appointment of Dr Catherine Earl as CEO, SACOSS is well-positioned to build on its legacy and embrace new opportunities. Catherine brings deep sector knowledge, a passion for advocacy, and a collaborative approach that will serve SACOSS and the sector well. I look forward to working with Catherine, the Board, our members, and partners as we continue to drive positive change for South Australians experiencing poverty and disadvantage.

Nicole Chaplin

Chair, SACOSS



Advocating for Policy Solutions

Housing

Affordable housing for all

Housing and homelessness continues to be a major SACOSS policy priority and will see increased focus as we work towards the next state election in March 2026.

While 2023-24 saw many of concerns about renters' rights addressed, the introduction of minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals was a major focus for 2024-25. We continued to work with Better Renting and Uniting Communities on this important topic, and supported proposed further amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act. We also worked with the national Healthy Homes for Renters collaboration to develop a policy position on energy efficiency retrofits. This has been adopted as a policy priority for the 2026 election, alongside a cap on rental increases to the CPI for existing tenancies to stem the dwindling supply of affordable rentals in South Australia.

In 2024-25 we began campaigning on the need for adequate and secure funding for homelessness services which have experienced 15.4% drop in funding while unmet need has grown to 27%.

We are also continuing to focus on the need for increased housing supply, calling for a new definition of affordable that would better direct development and planning efforts to where they are needed most, and urging the state government to plan for more public and community housing to be built when its current Housing Roadmap expires in 2027.

KEY SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

- » Cost of Living Update No 60 – [Inflation, Housing and the Cost of Living “Crisis”](#)
- » [Roadmap for Efficient and Electric homes](#)

Living Standards

Enabling a dignified and healthy standard of living

After the success of our concessions campaign in the 2024-25 budget, we turned our attention to the key driver of cost of living pressures: housing. Our 60th Cost of Living Report presented new analysis which showed that housing costs have dwarfed non-housing inflation and wages have not kept up. It highlighted that the 30% of the population that don't pay rents or mortgages have not been experiencing the same pressures during the years of increased inflation. This analysis has informed our housing priorities for the 2026 state election.

For Anti-Poverty Week in October 2024 we developed a report on poverty premiums accompanied by a set of infographics which garnered widespread media attention, with ABC economics editor Alan Kohler featuring one on the national ABC TV nightly news.

KEY SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

- » Secure Food Systems for South Australia [Synthesis Report](#), [Community Panel Report](#), [Lived Experience Report](#) and [Community Survey Report](#)
- » Cost of Living Snapshot – [June Quarter 2024](#)
- » Cost of Living Snapshot – [September Quarter 2024](#)
- » Cost of Living Snapshot – [December Quarter 2024](#)
- » Cost of Living Snapshot [March Quarter 2025](#)
- » Cost of Living Update No 60 – [Inflation, Housing and the Cost of Living “Crisis”](#)
- » Anti-Poverty Week Statement: [Poverty Premiums: Why it Costs More to be Poor](#)



Energy

An energy transition underpinned by equity

The 2024-25 financial year has been a very busy period for regulatory consultation processes with a large number of rule changes being proposed and consulted. These include processes led by the Australian Energy Regulator and Australian Energy Market Commission, the federal government reviewing consumer protections in the energy market, state government consulting on the Firm Energy Reliability Mechanism, and the gas regulatory reset process. We are increasingly finding that expectations from regulatory bodies and government around engagement of consumer energy advocates is becoming difficult to meet while at the same time being more important than ever.

In 2024-25 we regularly partnered with the Justice and Equity Centre on joint submissions and advocating alongside the network of Councils of Social Service around the country to help manage the increasing demand. SACOSS briefings to the media about the latest 3.2% increase to the Default Market Offer for 2025-26 resulted in [front page coverage](#) in the Adelaide Advertiser and contributed to the decision of the federal Energy Minister Chris Bowen directing the Australian Energy Regulator to review the DMO mechanism.

KEY SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

- » Joint JEC / ACOSS / SACOSS [Submission on the DMO Issues Paper](#)
- » SACOSS Submission on the [DMO 7 Issues Paper](#)
- » Submission to the Department for Energy and Mining on the [Firm Energy Reliability Mechanism: Consultation Paper](#)
- » SACOSS Submission on the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council's [Better Energy Customer Experiences \(BECE\) consultation](#)
- » SACOSS Submission to the [AEMC's Consultation Paper on the Pricing Review for a consumer driven future](#)
- » Joint SACOSS / COSS Submission to the Australian Energy Market Commission on [customer safeguards for the smart meter roll-out](#)
- » Joint submission with ACOSS, QCOSS, ACTCOSS network to [AEMC on customer safeguards](#)
- » Submission to [AEMC Consultation on Consumer Rule Changes](#)
- » Submission to the AER on [SAPN's Revised Regulatory Proposal](#)
- » Joint Submission (with JEC, formerly PIAC) to the Australian Energy Regulator on the [review of payment difficulty protections under the NECF](#)
- » [SACOSS Submission to the AER on Review of Payment Difficulty Protections under the NECF](#)
- » Annual [Ministerial Briefing on Energy](#)

For a full list of SACOSS energy submissions see
sacoss.org.au/energy

Water

Clean, affordable and reliable water

In 2024-25 we developed a new strategic framework to guide our water advocacy and policy development. The framework is grounded in a rights-based approach to water with the goal of ensuring that all South Australians having access to clean, safe, secure and reliable and affordable water.

We focused our efforts on key advocacy and policy objectives including:

- development of a basic level of service guarantee for water provision, especially for people in regional and remote South Australia;
- implementation of a statewide pricing policy that applies to all water retailers including small and intermediate retailers outside the SA Water network, and introduction of a scheme to support equitable provision of water in regional and remote communities; and
- ensuring that costs of new water infrastructure (whether for new residential housing developments or for major industrial users) are shared equitably and decisions are made after open and inclusive review and meaningful consultation.

KEY SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

- » Submission to the [Essential Services Commission of South Australia on the Support for Customers Affected by Family Violence – Reporting Metrics](#)
- » Submission to DCCEEW – [Draft Principles of a New National Water Agreement](#)
- » Submission to the [Environmental Protection Authority's Water Quality Review](#)
- » [Annual Briefing to the Minister: Issues affecting SA Water Consumers](#)

Human Rights and Justice

Protecting the interests of all South Australians

A Human Rights Act for SA

Our ambition for a Human Rights Act for SA remained a focus in 2024-25 with ongoing collaboration with the Rights Resources Network, the Human Rights Law Centre, and Australian Lawyers for Human Rights. A series of events and meetings aimed to keep the issue in focus while the SA Parliament's Social Development Committee completed its inquiry. While the SDC recommended a Human Rights Act for SA and a series of steps for implementation, the government appears to be reluctant to progress the matter prior to the March 2026 election. The campaign is now focusing on building public awareness and the case for a HR Act in anticipation of a more receptive political environment in 2026.

Youth Justice

In response to increased media coverage about a so-called 'youth crime wave' in South Australia in 2024-25 we campaigned intensively to present a counter-narrative based on the facts about offending by young people. We authored a comprehensive analysis of youth offending data, published opinion pieces and highlighted the issue in the media, and worked with a coalition of other advocates to promote alternatives to carceral responses to young people's offending, such as diversionary programs and family group conferencing. Disappointingly, to date we have not seen amendments to proposed legislative changes and the campaign will continue in 2025-26. Similarly, we have not seen any movement in our campaign to have the age of criminal responsibility raised to 14 without exception.

KEY SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

- » Briefing paper: [Offending by young people in South Australia](#)
- » Law Society Bulletin [What does the evidence really tell us about youth offending?](#)
- » Submission to the AG Office on the [Criminal Law Consolidation \(Street Gangs\) Amendment Bill 2025](#)
- » Submission to the Inquiry by the Australian Senate's Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee into [Australia's youth justice and incarceration system](#).

Children, Young People and Families

The best interests of children, young people and families

Domestic and Family Sexual Violence

In 2024-25 we worked closely with allies on framing a response to the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence in anticipation of the findings being handed down in July 2025. Much of our effort has focused on working with a coalition of advocates to support changes to the Liquor Licensing Act made in response to a request from the Federal Attorney-General to address the impact of alcohol on domestic and family violence. We lobbied intensively to have the proposed changes to the bill maintained in the face of industry pressure to water down the protections introduced.

Child Protection

In 2024-25 the government decided to revise the Children and Young People (Safety and Support) Bill and we were strongly engaged, alongside others in the sector, in attempting to introduce amendments which would strengthen the Bill. We made submissions, and met with members of the parliament and government. The Bill was ultimately passed largely unchanged, and our advocacy will now focus on implementation and working to improve aspects of the bill through policy and practice.

KEY SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

- » [Briefing Paper: South Australia's Child Protection System](#)
- » Submission to the AG Office on the [Criminal Law Consolidation \(Street Gangs\) Amendment Bill 2025](#)
- » Response to the [Issues Paper of the Royal Commission on Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence](#)
- » Submission on the [Draft Children and Young People \(Safety and Support\) Bill 2024](#)

Health

A collective voice for people's health and a focus on prevention

In 2024-25 the People's Health Voice (PHV) established its formal governance framework and a newly constituted Community Steering Group began convening regularly to guide the work, with a new Advisory Group providing strategic insights. The group made its first submission to a government inquiry, sharing experiences of people on the Yorke Peninsula with the Economics and Finance Committee's examination of health services there. The PHV is increasingly being invited to contribute to system-wide reform conversations including a meeting hosted by the Australian Medical Association on barriers to out-of-hospital and in-hospital care, contributing to the SA Health's review of informed consent and engaging with reviews of the state's public transport strategy and disability inclusion plan.

In late 2024 we obtained funding from Preventive Health SA enabling SACOSS to focus more on preventive health and produced a series of policy briefs on priority populations including culturally and linguistically diverse communities and regional communities. We also continued to advocate on the harms of alcohol misuse through our place on the Commissioner for Consumer and Business Affairs Alcohol Harms Reference Group. We also worked with a coalition of advocates to promote harm reduction measures and ways to address the regulation and legislation relating to the commercial interests in promoting and advertising alcohol.

KEY SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

- » Submission to Inquiry of House of Representative's Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport, into the [health impacts of alcohol and other drugs in Australia](#)
- » PHV Submission to the [SA Parliament's EFC on delivery of health services on Yorke Peninsula](#)
- » PHV submission on [South Australia's Public Transport Strategy](#)
- » PHV submission to the Consultation on [the draft State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025 - 2029](#)
- » [Preventive Health SA re draft SA Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy 2024-30](#)
- » Submission to the [Social Development Committee's Inquiry in Child Food Insecurity](#)
- » Report to the Minister [People's Health Voice Report 3](#)



Climate Change

Preparing for climate disasters

In 2024-25 we received funding to deliver a revised People at Risk in Emergencies Framework for SA after widespread consultation. The People at Increased Risk in Emergencies (PaIRE) Framework 2025-29 was presented to the department in late 2024 but, disappointingly, due to a change in Minister remained unendorsed by June 2025. Related governance changes led to a decision by the government to disband their dedicated disaster risk reduction and resilience committee leaving South Australia as the only jurisdiction without a resilience focused group bringing together relevant cross-sector stakeholders. We expressed our concerns and await further developments.

SACOSS again successfully partnered with Red Cross to obtain a national Disaster Ready Fund grant that will enable our PaIRE work to continue until April 2027. The newly funded project delivered a highly successful and well received sector development forum on information sharing and legal considerations when planning for, responding to, and recovering from disasters, and hosted a sector update on social capital and infrastructure from visiting expert Professor Daniel Aldrich.

Our Regions

Listening and acting across SA

In 2024-25 we held regional engagements with the communities of the Upper Spencer Gulf and the Lower North (Barossa and surrounds). Our Ensuring a Just Transition for the Upper Spencer Gulf forum in Whyalla aimed to shine a light on the social impacts of the proposed Hydrogen Jobs Plan and State Prosperity Plan that was subsequently dropped when the Whyalla steelworks went into administration. Our Barossa roundtable heard about the pressures on the community being caused by development, especially pressure on affordable housing and transport. Workforce pressures for sector organisations in the regions continued to be acute.

KEY SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

- » [‘Ensuring a Just Transition for the Upper Spencer Gulf’ report](#), sent to forum participants.
- » [Report of the Barossa Regional Roundtable](#)

Sector Support

Electoral reform and banning political donations

SACOSS has long been working to see a fairer outcome of these important reforms to electoral funding in South Australia. We held a webinar on these issues and our partner organisations (Stretton Institute, Australian Democracy Network, The Australia Institute and the Centre for Public Integrity) published an open letter in *The Advertiser* calling for a delay. SACOSS staff and members of the coalition met with Minister Dan Cregan and Premier Malinauskas and later with Robert Simms MLC and Connie Bonaras MLC, to seek a way forward for the proposed legislation which was ultimately passed in November 2024.

Indexation

In 2024-25 following ongoing feedback from the sector about the inadequacy of indexation in the current inflation environment, we developed a package of sector funding-related policy proposals including a custom designed indexation formula, which now form the basis of funding asks for the 2026 state election. These were used as the basis of our 2024-25 budget submission and the Department for Treasury and Finance agreed to fund a series of research activities to understand the challenges of indexation, the administrative cost base of the sector and accreditation and compliance burdens. That work will be delivered in late 2025.

Portable Long Service Leave Scheme

In 2024-25 SACOSS staff member Dr Greg Ogle was invited to join the Portable Long Service Leave Board and has been working with it and with the sector more broadly to support the implementation of the new scheme which is due to come into effect in October 2025. We held sector briefings and began work (as part of the DTF-funded project) to understand the cost implications of the introduction of the scheme to inform a request to government for transition funding. We made a submission on the Regulations accompanying the PSL Act identifying a number of concerns. While many concerns were addressed, those remaining will be a continuing focus of our advocacy into 2025-26.

Social worker registration

The new Social Worker Registration Scheme was due to commence on July 1 2025. We engaged extensively with the sector and the Board to highlight significant concerns about what was proposed. Our advocacy alongside others in the sector resulted in the delay of the commencement of the scheme to an undefined date in the future and a significant revision of the proposed workings of the scheme and further sector consultation.

Sector workforce

In October 2024 we held a very successful conference: *Securing the Future: A Community Sector Workforce Conference*. In that same month, the Fair Work Commission announced its review of the Social, Community, Health and Disability Service Award, with SACOSS initiating the engagement of the wider COSS network to better understand the implications of the proposed changes.

KEY SUBMISSIONS AND REPORTS

- » Briefing note: [Problems with “Political Expenditure” in the SA Electoral Act](#)
- » Joint submission with Australian Democracy Network on [Electoral Reform and Banning Political Donations](#)
- » Submission on [Portable Long Service Leave Regulations](#)
- » Submission to the [Social Work Registration Board of SA regarding draft definitions of social work services and scope of practice](#)
- » Report from the [Securing the Future: A Community Workforce Summit](#)

Our Member Organisations 2024–25

Aboriginal Community Care (SA)
Aboriginal Health Council of SA
Anglican Community Care
Anglicare SA
Australian Association of Social Workers
Australian Health Promotion Association SA
Australian Migrant Resource Centre
Australian Red Cross (SA Division)
Australian Refugee Association Inc.
Australian Services Union
Baptist Care SA
Barkuma Inc.
Carer Support and Respite Centre Inc.
Carers SA Inc.
CareWorks
CCI Services Limited
Centacare Catholic Community Services
Centacare Catholic Country SA Ltd.
Child and Family Focus SA
City of Onkaparinga
Community Housing Industry Association SA
Community Justice Services SA Ltd.
Community Living Australia
Community Living Project Inc.
Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA
Council On The Ageing SA
CREATE Foundation
Embolden SA Inc.
Family Drug Support
Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand
Hepatitis SA Inc.
Hutt Street Centre Ltd.
Infinity Community Solutions
Julia Farr Association
Junction Australia Ltd.
Justice for Refugees SA
Justice Reform Initiative*
JusticeNet SA
KWy Aboriginal Corporation
LELAN - Lived Experience Leadership & Advocacy Network
Life Without Barriers
Lutheran Community Care
MarionLIFE Community Services
Mental Health Coalition of SA
MINDA Incorporated
Mission Australia - SA Region
MoneyMob Talkabout
Neami National
OARS Community Transitions
Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People
Playgroup Association of SA Inc.
Reconciliation SA Pty Ltd.
Reeds Safe Haven
Relationships Australia South Australia Ltd.
Save the Children Australia
SIN
Skylight Mental Health
Sonder
South Australian Financial Counsellors Association Inc.
South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services
South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance Inc.
St John's Youth Services Inc.
St Vincent de Paul Society (SA) Inc.
STTARS - Survivors of Torture & Trauma
SYC Ltd.
Terandi Pty Ltd.*
The Australian Centre for Social Innovation
The Reily Foundation
The Salvation Army
The Smith Family
The Wyatt Trust
Uniting Communities
Uniting Country SA Ltd.
UnitingCare SA
UnitingCare Wesley Bowden
UnitingSA
Unity Housing Company Ltd..
Volunteering SA&NT
Welcoming Australia
Women's Safety Services
Working Women's Centre SA Inc.
YourPlace Housing Ltd.
Zahra Foundation Australia

*Associate Members

SACOSS Board Members 2024–25

The SACOSS Board is responsible for the governance of the organisation. SACOSS sincerely thanks all Board members for their commitment and service to the organisation in 2024-25.

BOARD MEMBERS 2024-25		
POSITION	NAME	YEAR TERM EXPIRES (NOVEMBER)
Chair	Nicole Chaplin	2026
Ex-Officio Member	David Panter	2026
Treasurer	Emma Crosby	2025
Member	Dave Adamson	2025
Member	Rohan Feegrade*	2026
Member	Jane Mussared	2026
Member	Nancy Penna	2026
Member (co-opted)	Khatija Thomas	2026
Member (co-opted)	Michele Wachla	2026

*Passed away 22 June 2025

Life Members

Many people have made significant contributions to SACOSS over our 78-year history. Those who have made particularly outstanding contributions have been awarded life membership:

Phillip Beddall	Gael Fraser	Wendy Malycha	Pam Simmons
Grethe Brown	Barbara Garrett MBE OAM	Margaret Hunter (McKenzie)	Mary Smith
Harvey Brown	Leigh Garrett	Mark Mitchell	Anne Stanton OAM
Brian Butler	Daphne Gum MBE OAM	Kenneth F Newman	Brian Ward
Ed Carson	Peter Hall	Joy Noble AM	Mark Waters
Edith Casely OBE	Sheila Hall AM	Anthea Pavy AM	Amy Wheaton
Kym Davey	Christine Halsey	Louise Portway	Andrew B C Wilson AM
Michael Dawson	Mark Henley	Lange Powell	Michael Wooley
Marion Disney MBE	Elizabeth Hutchison	Ruth Prescott	Ian Yates AM
Marj Ellis	Simon Kneebone	Judith Roberts AO	
Colleen Fitzpatrick	F Joy MacLennan	Simon Schrapel AM	

Secretariat 2024-25

Ross Womersley *Chief Executive Officer*

Policy and Research

Dr Rebecca Tooher *Director of Policy and Advocacy*

Dr Greg Ogle *Senior Policy and Research Analyst*

Malwina Wyra *Senior Policy Officer - Energy, Water and Climate Change*

Georgina Morris *Senior Policy Officer - Energy, Water and Climate Change*

Sue Tilley *Senior Policy Officer - Health, Aboriginal Social Justice, Child and Family Wellbeing*

Kathy Mickan *Senior Project Officer - Disaster Resilience*

Dr Katherine Hodgetts *Senior Project Officer - People's Health Voice*

Pas Forgione *Senior Project Officer - Housing and Homelessness*

Dr Bill Skinner *Policy Officer - Energy, Water and Climate Change (to December 2024)*

Cassandra Alvey *Policy Officer - Energy, Water and Climate Change (from January 2025)*

Dr Stefania Velardo *Senior Policy Officer - Preventative Health (from October 2024)*

Communications

Ben Osborne *Communications Manager*

Trevor Byrne *Digital Communications and Engagement Officer*

Events and Membership

Amy Swinburne *Membership and Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator*

Elizabeth Zeuner *Events and Administration Assistant*

Finance and Administration

Samantha Siziba *Corporate Services Manager*

Lucy Goodall *Finance and Administration Assistant*

Thank you to the members of the SACOSS secretariat team for your hard work, passion and commitment towards advancing social policy and advocacy across 2024-25.

SACOSS Policy Council Members 2024–25

The SACOSS Policy Council helps to plan and develop key areas of social policy development. SACOSS thanks the members of Policy Council for a successful 12 months across the 2024-25 financial year - we always value your collective insights, wisdom and hard work towards enhancing social policy in South Australia.

POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS 2024-25			
CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	PERSON ELECTED	ORGANISATION
Chairperson		Nicole Chaplin	SACOSS Board/St John's Youth Services
Peak Body		Sam Raven	SA Network of Drug & Alcohol Services
		Melissa Gibson	Child and Family Focus SA
		Varo Lee	South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance
		Geoff Harris	Mental Health Coalition of SA
		Geoff Slack	Community Housing Industry Association
		Craig Bradbrook	Playgroup SA
		Mary Leaker	Embolden
		Hamilton Calder	Volunteering SA/NT
Non-metro		Harry Randhawa	Uniting Country SA
		Jason Wallace	AC.Care
Large NGO		Sarah Fraser	Sonder
		Kirsty Wallman	UnitingSA
		Simon Rowberry	Barkuma
		Janet Robson	OARS Community Transitions
Small NGO		Anne Purdy	Working Women's Centre
		Oliver Carlton	The Australian Centre for Social Innovation
		Fiona Endacott	Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers
CALD		Kate Leaney	Welcoming Australia
		Mirsia Bunjaku	Australian Migrant Resource Centre
Aboriginal		Casual vacancy	
Individual member		Lou Potter	
		Karen Smith	
		Rebecca Tuohy	
		Alison Ridge	
		Ellie Hodges	

Policy Council Meetings and Regional Roundtables

Eleven Policy Council meetings were held across 2024-25, with three joint meetings with the SACOSS Board. Policy Council meetings provide an opportunity to hear from our member organisations and individuals, and are necessary to inform and shape the policy work undertaken by SACOSS.

Across the 12 months, Policy Council heard from a large range of organisations on work and projects being done in the sector. The council also heard from speakers including the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the ACOSS CEO. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of speakers and highlight specific issues their organisations had identified.

Two regional policy council roundtable meetings were also held. In August 2024 a meeting was held

in Whyalla, focusing on "Ensuring a just transition for the Upper Spencer Gulf". It was held across two days and included site visits, meeting with representatives of local organisations and a forum.

In March 2025 another regional roundtable was held in Tanunda to hear about issues in the Barossa region. This meeting highlighted that while there are issues that are consistent across regions, each area continues to face their own specific challenges. This session highlighted the wrap-around services and infrastructure necessary for the region, especially in the face of proposed large scale housing developments. Following each of these regional roundtables a report was written to summarise discussions and outline findings and recommendations.

Treasurer's Report

The 2024–25 financial year marked a period of consolidation and strategic investment for SACOSS, following several years of strong growth and increasing activity across our advocacy and sector-building work. Total revenue for the year was just over \$2 million, a decrease from \$2.32 million in 2023–24, yet SACOSS remains in a strong financial position, underpinned by healthy reserves and stable cash flow.

SACOSS recorded an operating deficit of \$57,524, compared with a modest deficit of \$6,241 in the previous year. After accounting for a fair value gain of \$21,795 on SACOSS' investment portfolio, the final result for the year was a total deficit of \$35,729. This outcome reflects both the completion of several funded projects and a deliberate decision to invest in our internal capability, systems, and infrastructure; critical work that strengthens our capacity to deliver for our members and the communities we represent.

Grant and contract income continued to be SACOSS's primary source of revenue, supported by membership contributions and income from the hire of the Marjorie Black Community Room. While a number of project funding streams concluded during the year, new and continuing support from the Department of Human Services, SA Health and Energy Consumers Australia sustained our advocacy and research across key policy areas including poverty, energy, health, and community wellbeing.

On the expenditure side, total operating costs decreased by around 11% from the previous year, reflecting savings in consultancy, professional services, travel, and event expenses. Employee benefit expenses remained steady at approximately \$1.66 million, reflecting our ongoing investment in staff expertise and delivery capacity across our major projects and policy priorities. Modest increases in depreciation and insurance were offset by lower outlays for conferences and external consultancy services.

SACOSS' balance sheet remains robust, with net assets of \$4.05 million and cash holdings of \$915,000 at year end. The value of SACOSS's property and investment portfolios remained stable, providing long-term financial stability and flexibility to support future initiatives.

SACOSS received an unqualified audit opinion from Nexia Edwards Marshall. The audited financial statements and the independent auditor's report are available on our website for members seeking a detailed overview of SACOSS' financial performance and position.

On behalf of the Finance, Audit, Investment & Risk Committee, we recognise a significant leadership transition during the year. After more than 15 years at the helm, Ross Womersley concluded his tenure as Chief Executive Officer on 30 June 2025. Under Ross's leadership, SACOSS strengthened its role as a respected and influential advocate for social justice, building a strong and sustainable organisation dedicated to tackling poverty, inequality, and injustice across South Australia. SACOSS warmly welcomed Dr Catherine Earl as Chief Executive Officer in July 2025. Dr Earl brings deep experience in policy, research, and advocacy, and is well placed to guide SACOSS into its next chapter, continuing to champion a fair and inclusive South Australia.

Overall, SACOSS remains financially resilient and well positioned to continue our work as the peak body for the community, social and health sectors in South Australia. Our financial strategy remains focused on maintaining sustainability, managing costs prudently, and diversifying income streams to support our mission; to challenge poverty, inequality, and injustice, and to advocate for a fair and inclusive South Australia.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Finance, Audit and Investment & Risk Committee, the Corporate Services team, and all staff, Board members, and members whose continued support ensures the ongoing financial health and impact of SACOSS.



Yours in finance
Emma Crosby

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2025

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
REVENUE		
Core Grant	495,210	538,565
Grants - Other	1,135,881	1,302,790
Contributions - Members	145,784	140,554
Conference and Sponsorship	74,209	28,000
Research and Development	18,378	180,853
Other Operating Revenue	143,586	130,825
Total Revenue	2,013,408	2,321,587
EXPENSES		
Conference Cost	76,226	91,650
Consultancy Fees	61,825	176,328
Depreciation	61,965	59,334
Employee Benefits Expenses	1,659,075	1,668,157
Office Accommodation	35,140	48,835
Computers and IT	17,151	16,256
Printing, Postage and Stationery	14,248	10,402
Insurance	19,255	19,616
Professional Services	50,945	64,060
Reference Materials	747	600
Travel and Accommodation	27,295	64,605
Equipment	5,476	8,032
Sponsorship	11,000	
Other Expenses	30,584	99,953
Total Expenses	2,070,932	2,327,828
Net Current Year Surplus/(Deficit) before fair value movement	(57,524)	(6,241)
OTHER INCOME		
Gain/(Loss) on Revaluation of Financial Assets	21,795	41,466
Total Comprehensive Income (Loss) for the year	(35,729)	35,225

The SACOSS 2025 Audited Financial Report with accompanying notes is available on our website.

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2025

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE INC.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash Assets	915,219	964,060
Trade and Other Receivables	124,565	113,310
Prepayments	6,977	4,850
Total Current Assets	1,046,761	1,082,220
Non-Current Assets		
Financial Assets	533,674	511,879
Property, Plant and Equipment	3,143,523	3,205,488
Total Non-Current Assets	3,677,197	3,717,367
Total Assets	4,723,958	4,799,587
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and Other Payables	181,997	278,622
Contract Liabilities	206,531	197,736
Provisions	251,893	216,283
Total Current Liabilities	640,421	692,641
Non-Current Liabilities		
Employee Provisions	31,620	19,300
Total Non-Current Liabilities	31,620	19,300
Total Liabilities	672,041	711,941
Net Assets	4,051,917	4,087,646
Equity		
Reserves	3,228,211	3,228,211
Retained Surplus	823,706	859,435
Total Equity	4,051,917	4,087,646

The SACOSS 2025 Audited Financial Report with accompanying notes is available on our website.

Our Funding Partners

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

PEAK FUNDING



18

ADVOCACY AND PROJECTS



OTHER SUPPORT

We thank our member organisations for their continued support, including those who provided additional financial support to help us further advance our advocacy. We thank the organisations that sponsored our conferences and other events throughout 2024-25: Anglican Community Care, Arts Industry Council of SA, Community Justice Services SA, Conservation SA, Maxima, MedicAlert, HESTA, SAACCON, SA Unions, St John's Youth Services and Uniting Country SA. We also thank those organisations who contributed to the Give Credit campaign: CentreCare Catholic Country SA, Minda Inc, Relationships Australia SA, South Australian Financial Counsellors Association, St John's Youth Service, The Wyatt Trust, Uniting Country SA and YourPlace Housing.



**"AND YET OUR SECTOR IS AT
A CROSSROADS. THERE IS A
RISING DEMAND FOR SERVICES
FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIANS
WHILE THE SECTOR ITSELF IS
STRUGGLING TO CONTINUE
DELIVERING THESE SERVICES."**

SACOSS 2025-26 STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION, FEBRUARY 2025





SACOSS

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