



Government of South Australia

Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion

Department for Communities and Social Inclusion

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15



Office Address

Riverside Centre
North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000

Postal Address

GPO Box 292
Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone

(08) 8226 8800

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Feedback on the annual report can be provided via email to annualreport@dcsl.sa.gov.au.

The annual report was prepared by Financial and Business Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Letter of Transmittal

Hon Zoe Bettison MP

Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion
Minister for Social Housing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Minister for Youth
Minister for Volunteers

Hon Gail Gago MLC

Minister for the Status of Women

Hon Tony Piccolo MP

Minister for Disabilities

Dear Ministers

I am pleased to present the 2014-15 annual report of the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, which has been prepared in accordance with the *Public Sector Act 2009*, *Public Finance and Audit Act 1987*, and other legislation as required.

The report highlights the many achievements of the department for the financial year ending 30 June 2015, including our performance against the strategic priorities of the South Australian Government and targets of *South Australia's Strategic Plan*.

Yours sincerely



Ms Joslene Mazel
Chief Executive
Department for Communities and Social Inclusion

30 September 2015

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Chief Executive's Report

During the year, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) has continued to implement programs to support vulnerable individuals, families and communities.

In January 2015, the department was responsible for emergency relief during the devastating Sampson Flat bushfire, and led the recovery effort after the event. During the emergency, two emergency relief centres were established and staffed at Golden Grove and Willaston, which provided a place for people to access important information, advice and support.

The State Government provided personal hardship grants up to a maximum of \$700 per family for households whose principal place of residence became inaccessible due to the Sampson Flat bushfire, and where applicants were unable to meet their own immediate needs. The State Emergency Relief Fund was also activated to administer the receipt and distribution of monies donated by the community to assist people who suffered significant loss or damage because of the bushfire.

The recovery effort is focused on both individual health and wellbeing and the community as a whole, and includes restoring and rebuilding the health, social, economic, built form and environmental fabric of the community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff involved in the response to the Sampson Flat bushfire, including those who contribute to the extensive planning which enables us to be well prepared for events of this nature.

During 2014-15, we continued to work in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the disability sector to implement the second year of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) trial in South Australia. While the trial is progressing well, there has been a delay in the assessment of children by the NDIA, due to the higher than expected number of applicants. As a result, the NDIA has focused on finalising plans for younger children before moving on to older children. The department has also continued to prepare for the transition to the NDIS model, including examining options for the future of government as a service provider in a competitive market.

In March 2015, the Premier introduced *Thriving Communities: Achieving community-led renewal in disadvantaged South Australian communities*. The initiative aims to assist communities in key regions which are experiencing strong patterns of intergenerational disadvantage. The department is leading the development and implementation of this initiative, which will use a collective impact, community-led approach to assist regions identify and take action to achieve a positive vision for their future.

The State Government is committed to involving the community in decisions that affect their lives and building public participation in government. As a practical demonstration of this commitment, the Fund My Community initiative was trialled in the past year, giving the public a say in how funds are invested across South Australia. During 2014-15, \$1 million was made available through the program to eligible community groups, with the community invited to select those projects or services they thought would best tackle disadvantage.

During the year, we have led the development of the Ceduna Integrated Service Model to respond to many issues regarding the safety and wellbeing of transient Aboriginal people in and around Ceduna who are affected by drug and alcohol use. This is an excellent example of how government can bring all levels of government, the community and non-government organisations together to respond to a major community concern.

The department has continued to receive increasing numbers of screening applications, with 143 000 received in 2014-15. The DCSI Screening Unit has introduced strategies to simplify processing, reduce the backlog and address 'over screening' by employees and organisations. An online application process was developed to move the application process online from July 2015. This will save manual processing time to enter data and also reduce errors.

In February 2015, the new youth strategy for South Australia *It Starts With YOUth* was launched as a fresh approach to addressing the needs of young people. The strategy focuses on implementing practical change in the three key areas of youth homelessness, youth engagement and supporting vulnerable and disengaged young people to successfully transition into further education, vocational training or secure employment.

The Multi-Agency Protection Service (MAPS) was established to streamline the referral and notification processes of key agencies and enable them to assess, analyse and respond to domestic violence and child protection issues in a more timely and co-ordinated way. MAPS, which commenced a limited operational phase in July 2014, is led by the South Australia Police with support from the Office for Women. The Office for Women has commenced an interim review of the implementation of the service for the consideration of the MAPS Steering Committee.

The Office for Women also developed South Australia's first women's policy. *Achieving Women's Equality: South Australia's Women's Policy* was released in July 2015 to acknowledge the importance of the participation of women and girls in all aspects of life. The policy will also assist government departments to make gender a central consideration in policy development.

On 6 May 2015, the Office for Women officially launched the South Australian Body Image Campaign to inspire girls aged seven to 12 years to build their self-esteem and love their bodies. The campaign encourages girls to realise that their value comes from their character, skills and attributes, not their weight and shape. Each weekday for six weeks a new piece of campaign content, created by young women volunteers aged 13 to 18 years, was released through the Women's Information Service social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.

The department has continued to work to make South Australia an affordable place to live, providing a range of government concessions and implementing other initiatives to assist families. These include collaborating with Good Shepherd Microfinance to establish a Good Money store in Salisbury, supporting Foodbank SA establish new food outlets in Edwardstown, Elizabeth and Port Pirie and increasing the energy concession by \$50 from 1 July 2014.

During 2014-15, an additional \$350 000 was allocated annually to the Multicultural Grants Program, which provides funds to multicultural and ethnic community organisations to support projects, events and activities. This additional funding brings the total funding to multicultural grants to \$1 million per annum.

During the year, the Office for Volunteers worked closely with the Volunteering Strategy Partnership Board to develop a time-exchange program and a volunteering recognition scheme, which resulted in a strategy for a single Volunteering Recognition Scheme. A six-month pilot for the new scheme has been developed, managed by Volunteering SA&NT.

In December 2014, three Acts previously administered by the department on behalf of the Minister for Social Housing were committed to the Minister for Housing and Urban Development, to further focus Renewal SA as the government's primary urban renewal authority. These were the *Community Housing Providers (National Law) (South Australia) Act 2013*, the *Housing Improvement Act 1940* and the *South Australian Housing Trust Act 1995*.

Renewal SA is now responsible for providing services to the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) Board, including capital development programs, the development and delivery of projects to renew the SAHT's housing stock and to increase the supply of affordable housing in South Australia. Through Housing SA, we will continue to provide all social housing customer and tenant services, including maintenance services, on behalf of the SAHT, and other key housing-related programs and responsibilities including private rental assistance and homelessness support.

To support these changes, Housing SA completed a restructure, with a number of business units and staff moving to Renewal SA. It also began transforming its business to better meet the needs of its clients, resulting in a new service delivery model designed to improve the organisation's capacity to appropriately respond to the increasing risk and vulnerability of clients. Implementation of the new service delivery model commenced in July 2014, and will be completed throughout all Housing SA regions by December 2015.

During the coming year, we will implement new expenditure measures announced by the State Government in the 2015-16 budget. These measures include:

- \$148.2 million over four years towards a new Cost of Living Concession, which replaced the current council rates concession from 1 July 2015. Eligible home-owner occupier households who received the council rates concession will now receive up to \$200 per year under the Cost of Living Concession. Eligibility for the concession has also been expanded to include pensioners and low-income earner tenant households, which means that up to 45 000 pensioner and low-income earner households may receive an extra \$100 each year.
- \$36.58 million over two years to extend the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness for the years 2015-16 and 2016-17, which includes \$17.74 million in Commonwealth Government funding. This funding will allow for continuity of vital services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and provide certainty to service providers for the next two years.
- \$8 million over four years for multicultural grants, in addition to the existing \$1 million provided through the Multicultural Grants Program. The additional funding will be provided to multicultural communities to modernise their facilities and support the establishment of the Stronger Families, Stronger Communities program which will fund community development projects.
- \$2.5 million to upgrade four of the six lifts at Highgate Park and replace the standby generator. This important work will improve the functionality of the building and ensure resident safety and comfort.

In June, it was announced that our valued colleague Phil Fagan-Schmidt, Executive Director of Housing SA, had been recognised in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours List for his outstanding public service in the area of social housing policy and practice. The well-deserved Public Service Medal also recognises Phil's strong leadership in the introduction of major reforms, including in the areas of affordable housing, homelessness and housing service delivery.

Finally, I would like to thank all staff members for their hard work and dedication during the year and acknowledge the continued support and strong leadership provided to the department by Minister Bettison, Minister Gago and Minister Piccolo.

Ms Joslene Mazel
Chief Executive
Department for Communities and Social Inclusion