New ACSA – One National Body, One Voice

Q&A - July 2015

ACSA has made a commitment to move to a national entity so that it is well positioned to meet national challenges and ensure ongoing and increased effectiveness in service delivery to its members.

But what does this mean for your organisation?

We have developed this ‘Questions and Answers’ document to summarise some of the key points.

Q – Why have a national entity?

A – Members have consistently reminded ACSA that community and residential care is substantially controlled by the Federal Government. Policy formulation and funding, with its associated regulatory framework, all comes out of Canberra. ACSA needs to be a strong lobbying body that advocates where those decisions are made. As a national entity, with appropriate mechanisms to capture local member views, there is the best opportunity to be a leader in the development of aged care policy and planning at governmental level. A national entity also creates the best vehicle to maximise the use of members’ fees by streamlining how the single national organisation goes about its business and minimises the extent to which each Division within the entity replicates materials and communiques.

Q – What are some of the key dates?

A – The State Associations have agreed to work under an MOU for a 2 year transition period commencing from July 2015. Subject to the States being reasonably comfortable that the terms of the MOU are being met, the transition period opens up a timeframe for each State Association to seek members’ consent to wind up their organisation and transfer assets to the New ACSA.

In October 2015 resolutions that support the integration into New ACSA will be put to the members at the State AGM’s.

A new national fee model (to be agreed to by members) will be in place for the 2016/17 financial year.
Moving assets and staff into the New ACSA may occur at any time after the respective State Association has resolved to wind up. This is a second and separate step that will occur at a time after the October 2015 AGMs and resolutions taken at that meeting and once the constitution has been through the regulatory processes and each State Association agrees to wind up and transfer over.

**Q – Is this about cost savings?**

**A –** No. The proposed new structure is not about cost savings but improving service delivery for members. However, as would be expected when 5 entities are brought together, a number of overlapping functions and resources will be reviewed to ensure value for money in the context of achieving effective outcomes for the members.

**Q – What will happen to local services?**

**A –** Local service delivery is seen as a core deliverable of the move to a national entity. Unless members are serviced well locally and are asked for their input into matters of policy development, then the exercise is fruitless. To be a proactive leader in the sector nationally, member input and involvement locally is an integral component to this goal.

**Q – What will happen to Industrial/Employee services?**

**A –** Under the New ACSA all members will be able to access a base national IR/ER service that covers WHS Regulations and Frameworks, Award updates, EBA information and FWA Updates. This will include telephone, email advice and written materials via eNewsletters. Individual negotiating and bargaining as well as unfair dismissal support will be available, but this will be at an additional cost.

**Q – What will happen to staff positions?**

**A –** ACSA has a strong commitment to its staff. A process of reviewing services has commenced and it is anticipated that in the future there may be some changes to roles. All staff positions will be assessed over time to determine where they fit into a New ACSA framework. Where variances become clear, discussions will commence with staff to determine staff work preferences and how these might be accommodated in new staffing structures. Where these are not achievable, ACSA will comply with all its legal requirements under the law.

**Q – What will happen with current State CEOs?**

**A –** Current State CEO roles will become Divisional CEOs and will report to the National CEO. All positions will be reviewed over time to ensure a good match between the requirements of the roles and the skills of the occupants. During the transition (up to 2 years) Divisional CEOs will have (legal) responsibilities to New ACSA as well as the original State Association while it remains intact.

**Q – Will all services be operating from one state?**

**A –** No. National work will be undertaken in the most appropriate location/s. Local services will still be provided locally.
Q – What is the role of the national board?

A – The ACSA national board is the governing body and leads the overall strategic direction and national effort. Some of its responsibilities include:

- Defines the vision, mission and purpose, develops and monitors strategic plan.
- Is the national leader and provides support to the state divisional councils.
- Serves as the primary advocate for the industry. The board pioneers the message and purpose of ACSA.
- Defines the brand and standards for ACSA and communicates the necessary guidelines to all states and monitors the organisation’s brand.
- Supports, liaises and engages with the Divisional Councils. As a general rule, during the Transition, the Divisional Council would be made up of the same representatives who sit on the State Association Board. This would make their governance role of the State Association and their advisory role to the New ACSA Board as streamlined as possible.

Q – What will be the role of the State/Divisional Councils?

A – The Divisional Councils will play an essential role as a conduit between state and national, to engage with local members and implement an annual operational plan that addresses the delivery of local services to members with this plan being in line with the organisational strategic plan.

Q – Who will make up the State/Divisional Councils?

A – Representatives from State Divisional members.

Q – Will the States/Divisions still be able to undertake their own advocacy work and undertake work independently?

A – Yes there will still be a need for local advocacy/activities that reflects the Division’s local needs/ issues. However, these would have to align with the national strategic plan and be approved by the New ACSA Board for implementation at a local level.

Q – Will the States/Divisions be able to raise their own funds to use locally?

A – Yes. Divisions will be able to raise their own funds through partnerships, grant applications from any source and apply these funds on local projects that are identified in the Divisional Operating Plan approved by the New ACSA Board.

Q – What will happen in States/Divisions that do not currently have offices?

A – ACSA will look to establish a physical office in Queensland and Victoria and review resourcing requirements. There will be further work to review what might be needed for other areas such as the Northern Territory.
**Q – Why not join with LASA?**

**A –** We are in a position to merge our ACS state offices and create a strong and effective national body for not for profit providers in the community and residential sector. This is not about a merger with any other body.

**Q – How will you be kept updated?**

**A –** Throughout the Transition there will be regular updates to members and staff via letters, emails, website, newsletters and meetings.

**Q – What will happen to fees?**

**A –** A national fee is being developed and will be applied from 1 July 2016. The fee will be based on the income of your organisation. The National Fee Model will be explained and discussed at the October AGMs around the country.

**Q – How will we ensure the decision making process by the Board and CEO is still efficient?**

**A –** The ACSA Board and Divisional Councils will work closely together in developing and reporting on strategic and operational plans. The CEO and Divisional CEOs will work closely together to communicate and manage day to day operational issues. Divisional CEOs will play an important role in providing this conduit as they do now. There will also be formal delegations from the New ACSA Board to allow effective delivery of functions at local and national levels.

**Q – Will we allow for profit organisations to become members?**

**A –** No. For profit organisations may join as associates with access to all services but will have no voting rights.

**Q – Why now, when we have so much other change going on in the sector?**

**A –** The reform of the sector will continue and as such the sector can only benefit from having a strong and unified voice. The current federated model is not the most effective vehicle to deliver member services locally, listen to member concerns and suggestions and take a leadership role in setting the agenda for the sector with sound evidence based research and policy positions. This process will create a stronger, more effective national organisation with mechanisms to ensure local member input and services are guaranteed.

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If you have any further questions about the New ACSA, please contact the ACSA National CEO or your state CEO