

NCOSS Regional Engagement Framework 2021

Background

- The NCOSS strategic plan 2019 – 2022 directs us to engage with and collaborate across diverse groups and places. Currently nearly a third of our membership are organisations and people based in regional NSW.*
- We are funded under the state peaks program with a responsibility to engage services and organisations from regional and remote communities across NSW.
- From 2003 we have done this through the NCOSS Regional Forum which brought together member based representative regional peaks and service delivery organisations (where a regional peak body did not exist) with a vision to provide: *A strong, sustainable, regionally representative and organised membership – with empowered local leaders who can drive activity in their region – which shapes NCOSS priorities, policy, advocacy and campaign work to reduce disadvantage and inequality in NSW.*
- To ensure alignment with this vision and focus our work we produced a discussion paper and held consultations with our Regional Forum members last year. From this we held a recent discussion on the future of Regional Forum. This highlighted a number of issues for regional representation:
 - Pressures on regional peaks, local organisations with a regional peak function, and service delivery organisations have increased significantly over Covid.
 - Regional representation across NSW is patchy with regional peaks covering only a few significant areas – namely the Illawarra, Wingecaribee, the Blue Mountains, and the Central Coast (as well as the Sydney metropolitan areas).
 - Regional peaks and service delivery organisations want different types of engagement with NCOSS.
- We want to ensure that our work meets the needs of both types of organisation. Our focus is to continue to partner with regional peaks where appropriate, and to support organisations and individual members in rural, regional and remote parts of NSW to connect with NCOSS and each other through regular Regional Members Meetings.

Regional Members Meetings

- Regional Members Meetings will be held 3 to 4 times a year to provide a dynamic platform for conversation and connection, highlighting the experience of disadvantage and the unique challenges faced by people living outside metropolitan Sydney.
- Regional Members Meetings will provide opportunities:
 - to connect with politicians, decision makers and others to leverage and influence their impact on regional issues
 - to inform the NCOSS policy and advocacy agenda from a regional perspective

- for networking, skill-building, information-sharing and partnerships
- to put a spotlight on growing inequalities and issues for diverse regional communities
- to participate in consultations and important sector briefings.
- All NCOSS members based in regional NSW* will be invited. Larger organisations with a regional footprint will also be invited to send key regional staff.
- Meetings will be co-chaired by NCOSS and a nominated regional NCOSS member.
- Agendas will be circulated a week out from meetings, and minutes emailed within 2 weeks.
- All enquiries should be directed to Francesca Cathie, Policy Lead, NCOSS at francesca@ncoss.org.au or 0444 501 221.

* We have included all DCJ districts outside of metropolitan Sydney, including Illawarra Shoalhaven, Central Coast, and parts of those extending beyond the urban fringe – including Wingecaribee LGA, Blue Mountains LGA, and Lithgow LGA.