



## **Joint Statement on ACOSS, ACTU and BCA Cooperation**

***Tuesday 4 December 2012***

Today the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the Business Council of Australia (BCA) released a joint statement, *Opportunity for All*, outlining how the three organisations will cooperate to tackle entrenched disadvantage through collaborative action.

The statement is the first of its kind in Australia and outlines a shared commitment by the three peak bodies to work collaboratively towards:

- providing employment opportunities for Australians who are disadvantaged in the labour market
- giving employers access to workers who meet their skills needs.

“Our organisations share a belief that well-managed economic growth shared amongst all Australians is the key to enduring prosperity and is the best way to tackle entrenched disadvantage,” said Australian Council of Social Service Chief Executive Cassandra Goldie, speaking on behalf of the collaboration.

Our vision for shared prosperity is based on the following key principles:

- a strong economy with competitive businesses and enterprises
- robust public institutions that engender confidence
- healthy, safe, productive and fair workplaces
- greater access to employment for those currently missing out
- access to lifelong education and training opportunities
- a social safety net that provides adequate income support without impeding transition to work
- effective and efficient support services targeted to those in most need.

“Everyone wins if we can bring people currently excluded from the labour market into regular decent work that is productive and delivers a fair income in conditions of freedom, equity and security in line with human dignity. This is one of the best ways to ensure that prosperity is shared by people who are currently missing out,” Ms Goldie said.

“The joint statement represents a commitment from our three organisations to contribute to enduring prosperity for all Australians by focusing on the areas of common ground between us rather than those areas we disagree on.

“By working together collaboratively it has become clear that we actually share many common aspirations and agree on many important principles. To that end this alliance will:

- convene an expert roundtable to discuss best practice policies that support ‘demand-led’ employment assistance for disadvantaged jobseekers

- investigate options for better linking of pre-employment training initiatives with demand-led approaches
- host a forum to explore the importance of reducing inequality and entrenched disadvantage for Australia's future economic growth and prosperity.

"All three organisations believe that by working together we will be able to achieve better social outcomes for Australia. We can reduce poverty and reliance on social security, and at the same time, grow the economy," Ms Goldie said.

"Cooperation is fundamental to achieving lasting reform, which is essential to building enduring prosperity," Business Council President Tony Shepherd said.

"Business wants to see all Australians in a position to contribute to and benefit from economic growth. Growth is fundamental to prosperity but we know that it must be well managed, it must be fair and there must be equality of opportunity."

Ged Kearney, President of the ACTU, said: "There are groups of people in Australia – long-term unemployed, people with fewer skills, women caring for a child alone, people with disabilities, many Indigenous Australians, as well as people new to Australia – who remain excluded from society.

"We must ensure that everyone, irrespective of background or position in society, has the opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from our shared prosperity.

"If we can bring people currently excluded from the labour market into regular decent work, we can reduce poverty, enhance human dignity, and improve the economy," Ms Kearney said.

"This alliance shares the vision that pursuing social and economic objectives at the same time is in our nation's long-term interest," Ms Kearney said.

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