

## NSW Social Sector Transformation Fund Tranche 3 (SSTF T3)

### Advisory & Information Services

#### Complex, strategic and happening

#### Client story: The ACCO

*This story was contributed by AbSec and is an excerpt from the [NCOSS SSTF Coordination Highlights and Outcomes Report, Dec 2022](#).*

The ACCO originally contacted AbSec for some support facilitating a governance refresher with their existing Board and to assist in on-boarding new board members. From this initial connection, an open and supportive relationship developed; and throughout the course of further discussions, additional areas where the SSTF project might offer support were identified, culminating in a highly complex piece of work.

As an established ACCO (Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation), the organisation had assumed responsibility for service delivery on behalf of an organisation providing similar services in another rural location. This arrangement was only ever meant to be temporary but had been in place for a number of years after the other organisation wound up. The ACCO's new Management and Board identified the transition of funding and operations back to the local community as a priority moving forward, through an auspicing or similar arrangement.

AbSec provided strategic advice to the ACCO around critical next steps; as well as coordinated and participated in an approach involving Sefa, ACWA, and Justice Connect working in concert with the ACCO, to facilitate an effective multi-disciplined approach to achieve the desired results.

This project represents a substantial piece of work for all parties ranging from strategic planning, project management, contract management and legal services, upskilling and succession planning. Underpinning all of this work is the support and advice provided by AbSec, enabling and connecting all moving parts to provide a seamless and culturally safe service to the ACCO and, by extension, to its community.

#### What worked and didn't work?

Sefa developed the impact strategy for the auspiced organisation and developed a roadmap to guide its independent establishment. Justice Connect provided separate and confidential services to the ACCO and auspiced organisation. ACWA engaged with the ACCO to support development of a succession plan for key management personnel and, further to this, explore options to improve the way they attract and retain quality staff. AbSec supported the ACCO through referrals to other T3 providers but was also able to support the other T3 providers with culturally appropriate advice and resources.

In past attempts, simple referrals to separate support services, without a pragmatic coordinated approach or consideration of how to best to engage with ACCO's key stakeholders in a culturally appropriate way, would have negatively impacted the organisation. However, with the coordinated approach (between T3 suppliers) it worked well; really tightly aligned with availability of experts in place and fresh organisational leadership in the organisation's location.

#### What were the outcomes?

The ability to tap into expert knowledge as and when needed, with all other providers kept up to date on progress, enabled this ACCO to meet more project milestones within 6-months than had been reached over a number of years prior to their engagement with the SSTF project.

The Chief Executive Officer felt supported in their undertaking to carry out the Board's vision to transition the auspiced service back to its rightful community in a more effective and efficient state. This, in turn, would enable the ACCO to return focus back to their operation and community. Management from the auspiced service also felt empowered and supported through the transition process by being included in and built into the roadmap journey. The wide array of service and expertise provided to the ACCO would normally not have been accessible within the

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given timeframes without vast expense to the organisations themselves, or without significantly delaying progress by seeking pro-bono support.

*“[We] are most appreciative of the leading role that AbSec undertook throughout this piece of work; at times the end goal wasn’t clear and it took time to process and bring in a multitude of consultations with industry experts to find the best course of action. AbSec, throughout the process, maintained accountability to [the ACCO] and acted proactively in ensuring the continuing support.” - Chief Executive Officer*

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## What did we learn?

This support opportunity provided a clear picture of how the creation of a team of complementary support services, coordinated in a loose project management structure, was far more powerful than the involvement of disparate “siloed” services providing their own distinct support. This not only ~~lead~~ led to the organisation feeling supported throughout the project, but enabled service providers to share knowledge and expertise and identify new areas of support to provide better outcomes for the organisation. This coordinated approach also enabled providers to sequence their assistance appropriately, ensuring that the ACCO received the right assistance at the right time in a way that advanced their overall strategy.

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