

VISION

A community where Alternative Dispute Resolution processes and skills are accepted and utilised to develop mutual understanding and appreciation of differences, which will improve people's wellbeing and relationships.

Professional

- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Best Practice
- ✓ Impartial

Effective

- ✓ Empowering
- ✓ Relevant
- ✓ Influential



Accessible

- ✓ User-friendly
- ✓ Available
- ✓ Flexible

Enabling

- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Profile
- ✓ Resources

MISSION

To provide professional, accessible and effective dispute resolution and training services to the ACT community that will help and empower people to prevent, manage and resolve disputes peacefully.

1. About CRS

The Conflict Resolution Service (CRS) was formally incorporated in 1988 to provide a peaceful alternative for the resolution of disputes to the wider ACT community. The strong emphasis on providing a framework for people to resolve their own conflict was at the heart of CRS from its beginning and continues to influence the vision and mission of CRS today.

The philosophy of empowering individuals to communicate with each other in a safe and neutral environment allows people to become self-determining in being able to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes to their issues.

The service is confidential, impartial, and generally free for most disputes and does not have waiting lists. Our Dispute Assessment Office is open during normal business hours; however, we offer mediation, facilitation, training and education six days a week, including nights, to suit the needs of our clients.

The Centre provides services that helps and empowers people to prevent, manage and resolve disputes. These services include:

- Mediation
- Facilitation
- Information and referral
- Education for self-advocacy (dispute counselling)
- Training
- Community Education

CRS operates within a continual quality improvement framework, including maintaining the high quality of outcomes, staff and reputation. Maintaining this quality is at the core of CRS's plan to grow the organisation.

Some of the assumptions guiding CRS's philosophy and practice are:

- Not all conflicts can be resolved but they can be managed; they are a normal part of family and community life and can be used as an opportunity for personal and relationship growth
- The best decision-makers in a dispute are the parties themselves.
- Disputes are most effectively resolved on the basis of interests and needs, rather than on the strict application of law or through the exercise of superior power.
- To resolve a dispute, parties need to hear and understand each other through direct and constructive communication.
- A negotiated agreement is more likely to reflect the needs, and to gain the commitment, of the parties than a decision imposed from outside.
- Mediators can assist by providing an environment and a process for negotiation, enabling the parties to focus on the content of their dispute.
- People in dispute may need mediation and other services, not mediation or other services; mediation complements other approaches to deal with conflicts, such as law enforcement, advocacy, the courts, counselling or therapy.

2. Values

Professional

- ✓ Integrity: CRS will work within an ethical framework based on values we share with our stakeholders, including respect, honesty, confidentiality and transparency
- ✓ Best practice: Relevant industry standards will serve as a minimum benchmark for service delivery in ADR, training and governance, in order to ensure competency of staff and confidence in CRS's service
- ✓ Impartiality: CRS will treat stakeholders equally, demonstrating objectivity, neutrality, freedom from prejudice, and judgement

Effective

- ✓ Empowering: CRS will empower clients to become self determining to achieve positive outcomes
- ✓ Relevant: CRS will ensure its programs and services are current and appropriate for client needs
- ✓ Influential: CRS will advise and make recommendations to government, industry and our clients on the benefits of alternative dispute resolution

Accessible

- ✓ User-friendly: CRS will provide clear, understandable, appropriate and practical processes and information in a welcoming and inclusive environment
- ✓ Available: CRS will provide equitable access to a reliable, timely, affordable and efficient dispute resolution service
- ✓ Flexible: CRS will ensure service delivery is responsive to the needs of individual client circumstances

Enabling

- ✓ Governance: Good governance practices will ensure CRS's ongoing viability, accountability, stability and security
- ✓ Profile: CRS will increase community awareness of and confidence in its services
- ✓ Resources: CRS resources will be developed, maintained and engaged efficiently in order to achieve optimum outputs, especially in the areas of human resources, infrastructure and financial sustainability

3. Goals 2008 - 2011

1. DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES

Taking account of legislative developments and changing community needs and expectations, CRS will increase its capacity to offer and provide, a greater number of mediations covering a wider range of disputes without compromising the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of its services.

This will be measured by:

1. Enhance Dispute Resolution Service

- 1.1 Improve capacity for mediation services*
- 1.2 Develop a wider range of dispute services*

2. TRAINING AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

CRS will increase its provision of high quality training and community education through

- Raising awareness of the benefits for individuals to develop alternative dispute resolution skills as a relevant, useful and desirable discipline to achieve and practice.
- Flexible CRS training programs to meet the requirements of various industries and workplaces.

This will be measured by:

2. Develop Skills and Educate

- 2.1 Promote awareness of ADR benefits*
- 2.2 Create flexible training programs to meet client needs*

3. ENABLING

CRS will

- improve its governance processes, particularly in the areas of succession, board education and financial management;
- expand and diversify sources of funding to ensure its financial sustainability;
- attract and retain skilled and competent staff, trainers and mediators; and
- ensure its infrastructure is adequate to achieve its mission.

This will be measured by:

3. Enable CRS efficiency

- 3.1 Expand and diversify funding sources*
- 3.2 Build infrastructure to achieve mission*
- 3.3 Attract and retain appropriately skilled CRS personnel*
- 3.4 Improve CRS governance*

4. Future Challenges

- Resources to adapt to the changes within the ADR industry in order to remain current and provide best practice.
- Sustainability of government funding
- Attracting, recruiting and effectively remunerating staff and mediators
- Attracting motivated and skilled Board Members
- Increasing acceptance and usage of alternative dispute resolution