



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2014-2015

Brendan Smyth MLA (Chair), Mary Porter MLA (Deputy Chair),
Giulia Jones MLA, Yvette Berry MLA

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

**SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE
ACT BUDGET 2014-2015
PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 3 JUNE 2014**

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to committees@parliament.act.gov.au by **10.00am Tuesday 10 June 2014**. If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please append additional comments.

1. Full name of group/organisation:

Belconnen Arts Centre Incorporated – operator Belconnen Arts Centre 118 Emu Bank BELCONNEN ACT 2617

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Daniel Ballantyne
Chief Executive Officer
daniel.ballantyne@belconnenartscentre.com.au
02 6173 3302
0407 289 604

3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

Yes A letter from the Chair, Belconnen Arts Centre is attached and a copy of a presentation to the Select Committee on Estimates, if granted an opportunity, will be submitted on the day.

No

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:

a. Stage 2 Belconnen Arts Centre capital funding 2014-15

b. Completion of Lake Ginninderra Shoreline capital funding 2014-15

c. Because of the positive community, cultural, social inclusion, economic and urban renewal impact it would provide for Belconnen town centre and the region; the value and fit of completing Stage 2 Belconnen Arts Centre and associated Lake Ginninderra Shoreline is a valuable and necessary inclusion for a balanced ACT Government four year \$2.5 billion infrastructure program.

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

Despite a commitment toward a four year \$2.5 billion infrastructure program the ACT Government has not prioritised the completion of a significant and incomplete community and cultural asset, Belconnen Arts Centre.

The incomplete building has been open for 5 years, there is a community demand and there is a real and mounting opportunity cost and loss of value to the original Stage 1 Belconnen Arts Centre investment by leaving the facility incomplete. Community, cultural and inclusion programs are compromised and the drive toward financial sustainability through developing new revenue streams is frustrated.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

The ACT Budget 2014-15 while laying out a significant infrastructure program has not prioritised completion of Belconnen Arts Centre. Broadly the budget has not sought to prioritise new infrastructure spending on community cultural assets despite the multiple positive impacts this would bring. Further there is a growing risk that the significant portfolio of existing community and cultural assets held by the ACT Government will, as a consequence of persistent under provision of maintenance and capital renewal funding, continue to deteriorate impacting on their capacity to deliver program and generate revenues.

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

Yes (go to question 8) No (go to question 9.)

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 13 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes No

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.

6 June 2014

Dr Brian Lloyd
Committee Secretary
Select Committee on Estimates 2014-15
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
brian.lloyd@parliament.act.gov.au



BELCONNEN ARTS CENTRE
INCORPORATED

ABN: 63254459205
118 Emu Bank BELCONNEN ACT
www.belconnenartscentre.com.au
Patron Jon Stanhope

Dear Dr Lloyd,

STAGE 2 BELCONNEN ARTS CENTRE

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission to the Select Committee on Estimates regarding the ACT Budget for 2014-2015.

Stage 1 Belconnen Arts Centre has now been operating for close to five years after being officially opened in August 2009 by then Chief Minister Jon Stanhope. Since then Belconnen Arts Centre Incorporated's board and employees have developed the arts centre on behalf of our community through a licence agreement with the ACT government's Community Services Directorate and artsACT.

Following a \$300,000 allocation in the 2012-13 ACT Budget for planning and preparation for Stage 2, work has advanced to a point where the project could readily commence, if capital funding were to be made available. Conroy & Davis undertook extensive community consultation in 2012 which produced a Stage 2 Development Review. This report formed a design by Cox Architecture and a detailed costing by quantity surveyors Turner and Townsend. We understand this work was then advanced by artsACT through the Community Services Directorate for capital funding consideration in the 2014-15 ACT Budget. It has been an extensive and responsibly managed process with strong community consultation and excellent professional oversight.

Stage 1 Belconnen Arts Centre's program has continuously expanded, producing year on year growth in participation and community engagement. It has received widespread recognition, including two Chief Minister's Awards for Inclusion in the Arts. The Board is concerned that the capability and value of historical and existing investment in the Belconnen Arts Centre is now being compromised and constrained by a failure to invest in its future.

Stage 1 is now five years old and the community has an expectation of the building being completed, as flagged by the ACT government some years ago.

Furthermore, Lake Ginninderra's surrounding shore line remains inaccessible and unsightly despite public space works having been completed either side, but not in front of the arts centre. This situation is incompatible with Belconnen's urban renewal, the region's growth and the demonstrated demand for community and cultural facilities in this region.

From my Board and our community's point of view, it is disappointing that not only was Stage 2 not funded in the ACT Budget 2014-15, we see no evidence for funding the project in the four year forward capital program allocations.

We request the opportunity to address the situation before the select committee. We seek to discuss the demand, and indeed the financial imperatives, for completing Stage 2 of the Belconnen Arts Centre.



We believe the capital funding required sits very well with the planned four year and \$2.5 billion infrastructure commitment announced by Treasurer Barr in the ACT Government's budget.

A complete and fully integrated Belconnen Arts Centre will address the creative needs of our region, providing opportunities for engagement and inclusion in programs designed to enrich the social fabric of our community.

A complete Belconnen Arts Centre will diversify our economic base, attract investment, boost growth and create employment for the region.

We look forward to an appointment before the Select Committee on Estimates.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erol McLeod', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Erol McLeod OAM
Chair Belconnen Arts Centre Inc.



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COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

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If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to committees@parliament.act.gov.au by **10.00am Tuesday 10 June 2014**. If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please append additional comments.

1. Full name of group/organisation:

UnitingCare Kippax

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Gordon Ramsay 0407 218 226 gordon@kippax.org.au

Note: for Tuesday 10 June only: Meg Richens 0422 963 894 eo@kippax.org.au

(Gordon will be interstate and unavailable on Tuesday 10th)

3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

Yes (If yes, please email it to the Committee Secretariat with your completed survey.)

No

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:

a. Support for and protection of vulnerable people in the Canberra Community

b. Government and non-Government question working collaboratively for the creation of an equitable community where people can live a decent life

c. Working to create and enhance employment opportunities for people in Canberra

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

a) UnitingCare Kippax generally welcomes the way that this budget balances competing needs in difficult circumstances and seeks to attend to Canberra's most vulnerable people. We welcome the increases in concessional payments and the review of the concessions system. We remain concerned at the delay in the review of the Emergency Financial and Material Aid program within the ACT in the context of a 41% increase in requests for assistance in the 12 months to December 2013, an increase of several days in the waiting time before an appointment becomes available (this has shifted from a day or two to close to a week) and in increase in the complexity of requests for assistance. The ACT Government funding levels have become clearly inadequate for current demand. The impact of the current and future economic forecast for Canberra will mean increased demand for support which will mean that people will remain in financial difficulty for longer and will therefore take longer to recover.

b) We welcome the co-operative approach to Human Services reform in the ACT, and the post-Budget announcements regarding the reduction in red tape and the streamlined contract relationships between the Community Sector and Government. We anticipate that there will be significant ongoing work in relation to these areas to ensure that the goodwill and the Blueprint framework is implemented in ways which value the wisdom, experience and perspective which each party brings.

c) We welcome the various initiatives designed to create employment and to assist people in training for new employment. Along with the ACT Council for Social Services, we are concerned that the targeted focus of the initiatives in the budget are in traditionally male dominated areas and pay insufficient attention to the creation of employment in service areas such as health, disability, education and social support. We are concerned that those who are long-term unemployed will find employment more difficult in the current environment and will require new and creative initiatives.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

Yes (go to question 8)

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

Yes No Largely

a. Please comment

We welcome the budget's alignment with principles of social inclusion, equity and attention to enabling people to live a decent life. We welcome the Human Services Blueprint and its implementation in West Belconnen, which lays solid groundwork for the "Village" pilot project in our submission. We welcome the initiatives around the enhancement of community transport and increased public transport to new and outlying suburbs.

We are concerned at the fact that our submission in relation to Emergency Financial and Material Aid funding has not been acted on.

We welcome the reduction in the administrative fees for vehicle registration payments which are made quarterly, but we remain concerned that *any* "administrative payments" added on to flexible payments will impact inequitably on those in financial hardship. We suggest that consideration be given to the future full implementation of recommendation 22 of the Targeted Assistance Strategy: *"Flexible payment arrangements for car registration, **that do not incur additional administration costs**, should be made available to those able to demonstrate financial hardship."* (emphasis added)

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 13 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes No

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.



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1. Full name of group/organisation:

ACT Shelter Inc.

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Leigh Watson
Executive Officer
executiveofficer@actshelter.net.au
M: 0433 831 403

3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

Yes (If yes, please email it to the Committee Secretariat with your completed survey.)

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:

- a. Lack of financial commitment to the expansion of public and community housing
- b. No additional commitment towards funding homelessness prevention and support beyond the financial year (especially in context of no commitment by federal govt to continue National Partnership on Homelessness beyond this time)

c. No further funding commitment towards the development of affordable housing

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

We strongly believe that, given the Government's commitment to take the opportunity in this budget to "invest in Canberra and support our community" including through "investment (to) ... deliver the transformative infrastructure needed for the long term", that there was a missed opportunity in this budget to really respond to the needs of vulnerable people and invest in their quality of life, through a financial commitment to increase public, community and affordable housing.

Housing is a fundamental right. It is also the platform for achieving social and economic independence. Rather than a cost, public housing is an investment in Canberra's potential. In this regard, the provision of housing infrastructure would not only contribute to the asset base of the Territory, but also result in financial savings as people who are housed safely, securely, appropriately and affordably are arguably much less likely to require services such as medical/hospital (including mental health), prison, general welfare support, etc (national and international data exists that proves this is the case). And of course, these people, so housed, would be more likely to enjoy a productive happy life that is our human right.

Instead, the Government expects the number of social housing dwellings will reduce by 145 in 2014-15. While this is a temporary reduction due to redevelopments of public housing stock, which the Government has committed to replacing, it is still of concern at a time when we need more, not less, social housing.

The ACT continues to have one of the most unaffordable housing markets in Australia which is having severe repercussions at many levels across the ACT with 1,785 people experiencing homelessness, and a further 9,910 households in housing stress and at risk of homelessness. Median prices for houses and units in the ACT have gone up over the last 12 months: for a family household with a pre-tax annual income of \$50,000, \$60,000, even \$70,000 and beyond, home ownership is out of reach. While the ACT Government has undertaken several measures for improving housing affordability, these have little impact on people on moderate (and certainly not low) incomes with "affordable" house and land sales starting at \$400-450,000 plus, and small apartments at \$291,000. There are currently around 2,300 applications for public housing in the ACT and this will only continue to grow. Even those with highest priority have to wait many months for a place. The homelessness system is already stretched to capacity.

As well as a lack of commitment to develop housing solutions to meet the needs of people on low to moderate incomes, ACT Shelter was also disappointed that while the ACT Government has matched the Federal Government funding commitment for 2014-15, there is no long-term investment in the area of homelessness beyond this time. Apart from the impact this has on the morale of workers and organisations doing the heavy lifting in this area, we are concerned about the future of the already over-burdened homelessness support sector in the ACT – especially at a time when the number of those experiencing homelessness is most certainly increasing.

To support our arguments in regard to this budget, ACT Shelter will provide evidence from: our current research project on older womens' housing and homelessness; consultations undertaken in the student housing space; and from our recent report provided to Government on developing the community housing sector in the ACT.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

No

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

Yes (go to question 8)

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

No

a. If yes, please comment

n/a

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.



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1. Full name of group/organisation:

The Childers Group – an independent arts forum

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Evol McLeod
Co-coordinator
The Childers Group – an independent arts forum
childersgroup@gmail.com or evolgmcleod@bigpond.com
0406 378 889

3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

NO. However, please refer the Childers Group's budget submission, which can be found at <http://www.childersgroup.com.au/act-budget-submission-2014-15/>

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:

- a.** *The lack of growth of the ACT Arts Fund* – the ACT Arts Fund is the ACT Government's key arts development mechanism. It supports approximately 20 key arts organisations and a wide variety of programs, as well as groups and individual practicing artists. The Childers Group understands that the Fund receives additional annual funding of an amount that roughly equates to CPI (2.5%), which is 'passed on in full' to the key arts organisations. While this modest increase is critical, it is not enough to compensate for the increase in the ACT's population in recent times. For example, in 2004 the ACT population was 324,000 and it is

currently anticipated as 383,000 (source: <http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystrategic/actstats/population>). Therefore, in the space of a decade, there are approximately 60,000 additional people residing in the ACT, many of whom are looking to engage with the city's arts and cultural sector. What is needed – and the need is becoming increasingly urgent – is a significant funding boost to the ACT Arts Fund, potentially \$300,000-500,000, to help cater for the additional demand and the demonstrable increase in costs of delivering arts programs. This would ensure the ACT community has access to a diversity of high-quality arts programs, and that the organisations delivering these programs can do so in a sustainable manner.

- b. *The viability and sustainability of the ACT's key arts organisations*** – as noted in our budget submission, the Childers Group is extremely concerned about the ongoing viability and sustainability of the ACT's key arts organisations. These organisations, which are the backbone of the ACT's arts sector and enable a large proportion of Canberrans to engage with arts and cultural activity, have – in the main – limited staffing resources and stretched programming budgets, all the while trying to meet the forever increasing demand. While many of these organisations have had success in diversifying their income from non-government sources, opportunities are limited in a jurisdiction where the public sector dominates. Additionally, with the recent loss of a local branch of the Australian Business Arts Foundation, and the national refocussing of that organisation into Creative Partnerships Australia, there is now no ACT-based business/philanthropic brokering body to support local arts organisations who are seeking private-sector support. Further, the Childers Group is concerned about the recently announced cuts to the Australia Council for the Arts and the impact this could have on the ability of the ACT's arts organisations to access federal arts funding. The funding boost to the ACT Arts Fund mentioned above would go some way to addressing these concerns.
- c. *Arts in education*** – the Childers Group remains concerned about the lack of specific funding of arts-in-education programs, as identified in our budget submission. To break the longstanding disconnect between the Education and Arts arms of the ACT Government, what is needed is a specific arts-in-education program to ensure school-aged children have access to a wide range of high-quality programs. The Childers Group has previously advocated for an ACT Arts-in-Education Officer to broker relationships across the ACT Government and between government, schools, and program providers, such as the ACT's key arts organisations.
- d. *ACT Screen Investment Fund*** – the Childers Group is concerned about the future of the ACT Screen Investment Fund and seeks clarification from the ACT Government about anticipated directions and plans.

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

The Childers Group applauds the ACT Government's ongoing support of the ACT's arts and cultural sector. The 2014-2015 budget papers identify a figure of \$30.1M being the total investment in 2014-2015 – this is a significant amount for Australia's smallest state/territory jurisdiction.

However, what is the breakdown of this funding?

The Childers Group understands that \$12.743m is invested through artsACT (CSD Output Class 3.2: Arts Engagement 2014-15) and \$16.032m through the Cultural Facilities Corporation (CFC Output

Class 1: Cultural Facilities Management). However, the 2014-2015 budget identifies that only \$8,502,000 of this funding as being dedicated to supporting arts activity. While we note that this is an increase from \$8,389,000 in 2013-2014, it is the Group's understanding that only a maximum of \$5M is specifically targeted at arts development – that is, supporting the ACT's key arts organisations, arts programs, and practicing artists. As noted previously in this submission, this amount had been decreasing in real terms due to the costs of delivering programs and projects.

In addition, there are now significant budgetary pressures on key arts organisations in attracting and retaining skilled personnel, and, in many cases, managing the rising overhead costs associated with maintaining and operating key cultural facilities. All key arts organisations must balance the business/commercial aspects of their operations whilst providing creative engagement for the ACT community. The ACT Arts Fund is no longer able to meet these increasing costs and the community's demands on the ACT's key arts organisations.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

YES

- a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:** As mentioned elsewhere in this submission, the Childers Group's key concern is the lack of real growth of the ACT Arts Fund. The current funding level has fallen behind demand, particularly in terms of the ability of the ACT's key arts organisation to deliver high-quality and sustainable services but also the ever-decreasing funding available through the Project funding category.

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

YES

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

NOT ENTIRELY

- a. If yes, please comment**

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

YES

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.



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COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

**SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE
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1. Full name of group/organisation:

Superannuated Commonwealth Officers' Association

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Frank Mines 0409 035 352 frankmines@bigpond.com

3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

Yes (If yes, please email it to the Committee Secretariat with your completed survey.)

x No

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:

a. Seniors concessions

b. Rates increase

c. **Concern about plans for light rail**

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

We are hoping that seniors concessions can be maintained. Some of our members are worried about increases in rates. However, our members are much more worried by the Federal Budget than the ACT Budget.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

Yes x No

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

Yes (go to question 8) x No (go to question 9.)

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes x No

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.



The Secretariat

Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
GPO Box 1020
Canberra, ACT 2601

ACT 2014 Budget

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the 2014 ACT Budget. As you may know, the National Parks Association of the ACT (NPA ACT) is a community-based conservation organisation with more than fifty years of working to protect our natural environment through an active outings and workparty program; participation in Parkcare activities; an extensive publication program; public meetings and conferences and engagement with government policies and programs.

The NPA ACT and its members recognize that the management of environment issues require a long term outlook and it was therefore with interest that we reviewed the 2014 ACT Budget outcomes. The NPA ACT makes the following comments:

1. The NPA ACT was pleased to see strong funding for feral pest and weed control for the coming 2014-15 financial year. However, there is no commitment in the Budget that this strong support will continue in future years. Such uncertainty has the potential to undermine the good effects of recent support in these areas. As stated previously feral pest and weed control requires long term commitment. For example, pig control in Namadgi National Park is now starting show real results but only after 20 years of concerted effort. A lack of follow up in existing feral pest and weed control measure has the potential significantly reduce their long term effectiveness.

Failure to commit to out-year funding limits Parks, Conservation and Lands' ability to efficiently plan its control measures.

2. The NPA ACT was pleased to note the funding for additions to the ACT's grassland reserves. Grassland ecosystems in south-eastern Australia have been significantly reduced as a result of human settlement and any efforts to protect grasslands are welcome.
3. The NPA ACT also notes the funding for the ACT to meet its Matters of National Environmental Significance that arise through the development of the Molonglo Valley. Protection of the environment in the Molonglo Valley will be a challenge for the ACT. The proposed reserves in the Molonglo Valley face significant future urban pressures, particularly the reserves along the Molonglo River Corridor which will

have extensive urban interfaces and are expected to experience high visitation pressures.

While supporting the funding for the environment in the Molonglo Valley the NPA ACT was surprised that no additional funding was identified for the outcomes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process in Gungahlin. The SEA process has identified a range of extensions to conservation reserves in Gungahlin and it would be expected that, as a minimum, additional planning for these extensions would be required prior to them being added to the ACT's conservation estate.

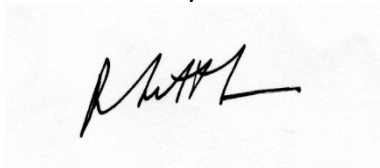
The extensions proposed will enhance the viability of one of the ACT's most important ecosystems, its lowland grassy woodlands. These ecosystems are of such national importance that the NPA ACT has been consistently calling for this to be recognised through the creation of a new national park based on the ACT's examples of lowland grassy woodlands.

4. The NPA ACT noted reference to 5 new conservation rangers in media releases relating to the Budget's environmental impacts. It is assumed that these are the conservation rangers referred to in the ACT Labor Party and ACT Greens agreement following the last election. The NPA ACT understands that 2 of these conservation rangers were funded in last year's budget. The NPA ACT expresses its regret that the 3 other promised positions have not been funded already.

The NPA ACT noted that the ACT Government was, at least, paying some attention to the needs of the environment, when this has been severely lacking in other jurisdictions. The environment plays a significant role in the health and well being of the ACT. Namadgi National Park's protection of the ACT's water supply saves the ACT significant amounts in reduced water treatment costs. The ACT's citizens reap the physical and mental health benefits of the immediacy of their ability to interact with natural environment of the "bush capital". However, to provide these benefits work needs to continue on safeguarding the ACT's wonderful natural environment.

The NPA ACT would be happy to discuss any of the issues raised within its submission with the Assembly Committee and can be contacted, either by writing to our office address or through email (noting that the NPA ACT office is manned by volunteers and a daily presence is not able to be maintained). Alternatively, I can be contacted on 0410 875 731.

Yours sincerely



Rod Griffiths
President
NPA ACT
9 June 2014



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- 1. Full name of group/organisation:** Young Women's Christian Association of Canberra

- 2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:** Joanna Allebone, 02 6175 9909, joanna.allebone@ywca-canberra.org.au

- 3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?**

 Yes (If yes, please email it to the Committee Secretariat with your completed survey.)

 No

- 4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:**
 - a. Housing affordability and homelessness

 - b. Support services for children and young people particularly mental health and therapeutic services

 - c. Eliminating violence against women and children

5. **What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?**

6. **Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?**

Yes No

a. **If yes, please comment/attach further details:**

7. **Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?**

Yes (go to question 8) No (go to question 9.)

8. **Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?**

Yes No

a. **If yes, please comment**

9. **Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.**

Yes No

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.

Dr Brian Lloyd
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety
Select Committee on Estimates 2014-15
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
ph 02 6205 0137
brian.lloyd@parliament.act.gov.au
Cc: Committees@parliament.act.gov.au

Re: YWCA Canberra's Response to the ACT Budget 2014-15

Dear Dr Lloyd

Please find attached the YWCA of Canberra's response to the 2014-15 ACT Budget. This document has been informed by submissions presented to the ACT Government and through our active participation in public consultations and the Chief Minister's round table discussion with community sector leaders.

If you require further information or would like representatives to attend a public hearing please contact Joanna Allebone, Director of Corporate Relations and Communications at Joanna.Allebone@ywca-canberra.org.au or on 02 6175 9909.

Yours Sincerely,



Frances Crimmins
Executive Director
YWCA Canberra



YWCA of Canberra

Response to the ACT Budget 2014-2015

YWCA of Canberra

The YWCA of Canberra is a feminist, not-for-profit community organisation that has been providing community services and representing women's issues in the Canberra community since its establishment in 1929. We employ more than 350 staff across the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), and deliver 30 quality programs in children's services, community development, housing, youth services, women's leadership, advocacy, and training.

The YWCA of Canberra is a member of the World YWCA, one of the world's largest and oldest women's organisations. Represented in 122 countries, the YWCA has a global reach of 25 million women and girls. As part of this international movement, we work for a world where reconciliation, justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment are promoted and sustained through women's leadership.

The YWCA of Canberra's vision is "Women achieving their potential", and our purpose is "Through the leadership of women and girls the YWCA of Canberra is building a better community for all." We believe that everyone has the right to contribute to, and share equally in, the benefits of the Canberra community's social, cultural, and economic development.

We are guided by the following values: Equity and fairness, diversity, self-determination and empowerment, reconciliation with Indigenous Australians, and stewardship. Our strategic goals are: Women influencing, leading and deciding, women achieving security and independence through their economic participation, women and their families gaining access to the conditions and resources they need to lead healthy lives, communities that are safe and connected, children and young people building the skills and attributes to create a better future, and the YWCA of Canberra is a leading, ethical and sustainable organisation.

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Housing affordability and homelessness

Homelessness remains a significant issue in the ACT. In 2011, 1,785 people were homeless in the ACT (Tanton et al 2013, p.15). This number may not include hidden homelessness which particularly affects women and children, such as those staying with friends, relatives or engaging in unwanted sexual relationships (Homelessness Australia 2013; Martin 2010).

In 2011/2012, specialist homelessness services assisted approximately 229,200 people, who were homeless or at risk of homelessness: 59% female, 19% aged under 12 and 13% aged between 12 and 18 years. Interpersonal relationships, especially domestic/family violence, were the most common reason for seeking assistance. Approximately 374 requests per day were not met, with mainly women and children turned away (AIHW 2013, pp.282, 300).

National funding cuts and the expiry of the Transitional National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness on 30 June 2014 have impacted on housing and homelessness service provision in the ACT. While it is difficult to estimate the true cost of homelessness, research shows that long-term use of crisis services is “often more expensive to government and society than providing integrated housing and support” (Gronda 2009a, p.1).

Given how difficult it is to break the cycle of homelessness and the number of attempts it takes (D’Souza et al 2013; Gronda, 2009a; Johnson et al 2013; Scutella et al 2012), the most cost effective way to eliminate homelessness is to invest in prevention (Gronda 2009a, p.24). The Supportive Tenancy Service (STS) is a partnership between the YWCA of Canberra, Woden Community Service and Belconnen Community Service. STS works with people to help them retain their current tenancies (public and private) or manage mortgage payments. STS assisted over 750 people in 2012/2013, a significant increase over 2011/2012. STS prevents homelessness but its funding expires on 30 June 2014.

While this program will be funded for the next 12 months, ongoing funding is uncertain. Without this early intervention and prevention program many more Canberrans will inevitably enter the cycle of homelessness.

The YWCA of Canberra’s Housing Support Service provides crisis and supported transitional accommodation and outreach support, via case management and a variety of support and educational groups, to families that are homeless across the ACT. Case management is successful when it not only meets the client’s needs but develops their capacity to self-manage. Research shows that case management is successful when it is persistent, reliable, respectful and intimate and when it delivers comprehensive practical support. Case management is, however, time and resource intensive (Gronda 2009b).

Research also shows that more than 20 contacts over 12 months may be needed to improve housing and employment related outcomes (Gronda 2009a). As a result of the funding cuts, the YWCA of Canberra went from nine FTE staff (338 hours) to six and a third FTE staff (240 hours). Funding is also based on the award but to attract and retain qualified staff, we pay above the award. The YWCA of Canberra services a disadvantaged group with complex needs and these cuts have hindered our ability to assist this group putting them at further risk.

Research has identified two types of critical assistance to support women affected by domestic/family violence: “safe, secure and affordable housing” and “provision of a continuum of individualised and open-ended support including outreach services, that wraps around women and their children in a range of areas (therapy, health, life skills, housing assistance et cetera) for as long as they need it” (Tually et al 2008, p.vi, see also Dockery et

al 2010; Spinney 2012). Preventing homelessness is more than beds, it includes support services (ACTCOSS 2013, p.13) and both must be funded.

YWCA in partnership with Beryl Women Inc. and Toora House run several groups for women service users including Life Experience Count, My Journey My Choices and Making Safe Connections. These strengths based groups are designed to build self-esteem, confidence and community connection to help participants break the cycle of domestic violence; create pathways into education, training and employment; and support women to identify their strengths and goals for the future.

Domestic/family violence and homelessness have adverse effects on children including “depression and anxiety, personal, social and language developmental difficulties, emotional developmental delays among pre-schoolers, health and hunger problems, and poor academic performance” (Dockery et al 2010, p.41, see also Spinney 2012). Breaking the Cycle is an innovative program designed to support children, young people and their families who have experienced homelessness and aims to mitigate the adverse effects of homelessness on them. These programs are integral to breaking the cycle of homelessness and domestic/family violence and must be funded.

Access to affordable housing is critical in preventing homelessness in Australia and housing affordability remains a significant issue in the ACT. A “lack of affordable housing is both a cause of homelessness and a reason for people being unable to break the cycle of homelessness” (ACTCOSS 2013, p.5). ACT faces the highest cost of living in Australia (Phillips 2013, p.21), mainly due to the highest rents in Australia.¹ Research shows that the private rental market in the ACT is “extremely unaffordable for persons on a low income”, with no “appropriate and affordable housing options” for pensioners, single parents, the unemployed and students. This places pressure on public housing (Anglicare 2013, p.26) which currently has long waiting times² and lists.³

Major Initiatives

- Better Human Services – Human Services Gateway \$322,000
- Common Ground – Providing Services \$156,000
- Continued Support for Homelessness Services \$1,520,000

Areas of concern

The YWCA of Canberra applauds investments made in the critical areas outlined above, however there is no new funding available for affordable and social housing.

The YWCA of Canberra supports Common Ground which will house around 40 people, however, there are 1,875 homeless in the ACT. Common Ground will also not house children. The YWCA of Canberra is increasingly concerned about the reduction of exit points for families accessing our transitional accommodation services.⁴ Motivated by our desire to be part of the solution, we started our own affordable housing program which includes seven housing tenancies for older women.⁵ In respect of housing affordability, women are more affected than men due to their lower incomes, periods out of the

¹ \$463/week for a house and \$403/week for an apartment in September 2013 (APM 2013).

² 154 days for Priority Housing, 598 days for High Needs Housing and 618 days for Standard Housing (ACT Shelter 2013).

³ At 30 June 2013, 2,231 households were waiting for public housing, up from 1,811 on 30 June 2012 (Anderson 2013).

⁴ This is confirmed by research (Faulkner et al 2008).

⁵ Two one bedroom units in Bruce and Lady Heydon House in Spence.

workplace for caring and longer lifespans (Tually et al 2007). Specific groups are more at risk:

- Research shows that single, older women face housing insecurity and are at greater risk of homelessness. There are limited housing and support options for this group and affordable housing options is integral in preventing this growing group from becoming homeless (Batterham et al 2013; Kliger 2010; McFerran 2010; Tually et al 2008; Sharam 2011).
- Women and children fleeing domestic/family violence become homeless due to a lack of appropriate and affordable housing. Women with large families or male children have difficulty accessing accommodation (Tually et al 2008). Affordable housing play a central role in allowing women and their families to re-establish their lives while an absence means remaining in unsafe situations and multiple instances of homelessness (Champion et al 2009).

Recent announcements in the Federal Budget will have a significant impact on income support for young people in our community and will lead to increased numbers of homeless young people.

With the defunding of the Federally funded Youth Connections program there is now little if any support for at-risk young people to access interventions that will assist them to enter training programs and pathways to employment.

The ACT Government should direct investment towards preventing homelessness, breaking the cycle of homelessness and addressing housing affordability in the ACT.

Therapeutic services for children & young people and support for parents

In 2010/2011, the ACT had the highest contact rate of community mental health services in Australia. Nationwide, over 314,000 contacts were made to the community mental health services involving children under the age of 15 years. Most contacts were made by five to nine year olds (27%) and ten to 14 year olds (69%) (AIHW 2011).

Through delivery of YWCA of Canberra's therapeutic counselling service, Circles of Support, and our participation in the Child, Youth and Family Gateway and the Re-engaging Youth Network Boards it has become increasingly clear that a significant gap exists between the availability of therapeutic counselling services, for children and young people and their families in the ACT, and community demand for these services.

Although the ACT provides a sound mental health service system, we have identified a significant gap in providing early intervention therapeutic counselling services to children under the age of 15 and their parents/caregivers. We acknowledge that organisations such as Headspace provides an essential service to children in the ACT, however, their focus is on individual support and is not family or parent inclusive.

The YWCA of Canberra has extensive experience in providing services and support to children, young people and their families including specific services for young mothers:

- Circles of Support provides essential early intervention for children, young people and their families to access therapeutic counselling support as well as support for parenting. The program provides outreach counselling for children and young people aged eight to 15 and their families in Lanyon, Phillip, Watson and Kippax. The program has been operational since late 2012 and is already fully subscribed. Circles of Support can only work with 16 children at a time leading to the current waiting list of over 20 children.
- Breaking the Cycle provides services to children, young people and their families who are either experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. This early intervention program works with families and their children by assessing their needs and providing one on one parenting support and parenting groups.

Both programs draw on the "Circle of Security" model developed in the USA that provides support to families by strengthening the relationship between parents and children. Evidence shows that early intervention through therapeutic counselling has long term positive effects on children and are beneficial to the individual and family. The positive effects have an impact on the child's health, academic achievements and employment (Moore & McDonald 2013).

Major Initiatives

- \$4.2 million to expand Community Mental Health services - including enhanced care for children and young people and their carers.

Areas of concern

The ACT public school system has 50 FTE trained psychologists employed as school counsellors. The YWCA identified this to be one of the critical areas of need as well as an opportunity. Counselling support to children and young people is only available as a free and immediate service through the school counselling service although there are limitations:

- Counselling support is only available during school hours and school terms;

- Counselling services tend to focus on the individual students rather than involving the whole family
- A significant amount of School Counsellor time is devoted to assessment of students with disabilities. All though this is vital for students with disabilities it often leaves little time to work with other students particularly those who require early intervention support.
- Some children and young people will not access the counselling service for reasons of confidentiality or because they have disengaged with school;
- The service has limited capacity to provide longer term counselling support.

While we strongly support the need for the school counselling service we are also of the view that the needs of many children and young people are complex and need to be addressed within the context of the family. The YWCA of Canberra believes there is a significant need for counselling services that provide a holistic approach and that are available outside the school system:

- Flexible hours of service – after school and during school holiday periods;
- Ensure that the existing service investment of \$5.5 million for the school counselling service is expended to implement a more holistic, flexible and diverse counselling service system;
- More resources are needed in order to provide for community base mental and therapeutic services for children, young people and their families.
- Introduce a referral pathway from school counselling services to community organisations to provide a more cohesive service;
- Provide wrap around support to parents of children with mental health issues.

Eliminating violence against women and children

In the context of the ACT Budget, the YWCA of Canberra reiterates the need to appropriately resource *The ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017*. With the economic cost of domestic violence and sexual assault forecast at \$15.6 billion in 2021/2022 (KPMG 2009, p.4), it is imperative that sustainable funding for prevention and early intervention, including respectful relationships education, remains a key focus of the ACT Government.

Respect, Communicate, Choose is the YWCA of Canberra's primary prevention program delivered in schools to children aged nine to 12. The following characteristics make *Respect, Communicate, Choose* an effective primary prevention program:

- Violence prevention programs aimed at children and young people are effective as are school based violence prevention programs (Flood et al 2009, pp.10-13).
- *Respect, Communicate, Choose* aligns with best practice including the National Standards for Sexual Assault Prevention Education (Carmody et al 2009, p.23), and Flood's criteria for best practice (Flood et al 2009, p. 23). It is important that the ACT Government consider these criteria when assessing funding for primary prevention programs.
- *Respect, Communicate, Choose* applies a gender analysis to violence prevention which is confirmed as best practice in the National Standards (Carmody et al 2009, p.24) as well as research undertaken by WHO (WHO et al 2010a, p.13 & WHO et al 2010b, p.32).
- In order to increase the body of evidence supporting school-based primary prevention programs, and despite the cost involved, *Respect, Communicate, Choose* incorporates comprehensive monitoring and evaluation to capture the impact on students, teachers and the broader school community and to inform continuous improvement. Our evaluation data is also disaggregated by sex, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students to ensure all benefit from the program.

Major Initiatives

- Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre - \$153,000

Areas of concern

The Second Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children (the National Plan) is focused on building and implementing national initiatives to achieve a society that is ultimately free of violence.

The YWCA of Canberra firmly believes that an integral part of reducing violence against women and children is primary prevention, and that by targeting primary school-aged children, we can enact a cultural change that will lead to an overall reduction of violence against women and children in the long-term, as well as building important short term outcomes for children in terms of forming respectful, violence-free relationships.

The YWCA of Canberra's primary prevention program aimed at ending violence against women and children is *Respect, Communicate, Choose*, a comprehensive school-based program that aims to give young people the necessary tools to develop, promote and perpetuate safe and respectful relationships.

We submit that funding to support the Second Action Plan incorporate a primary prevention program targeting primary school-aged children, and that *Respect, Communicate, Choose* be considered as a viable and effective model to be implemented in primary schools in the ACT.

Respect, Communicate, Choose complements work undertaken by the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) in ACT secondary schools through the *Sexual Assault Prevention Program in Secondary Schools*. The YWCA of Canberra will continue to work with CRCC to determine ways we can increase the impact of these programs for students and school communities. The funding for these programs ends this year and there is a real risk that innovative and best practice built through these programs may be lost if sustainable ongoing funding sources cannot be sourced and secured.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2014-2015

Brendan Smyth MLA (Chair), Mary Porter MLA (Deputy Chair),
Giulia Jones MLA, Yvette Berry MLA

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

**SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE
ACT BUDGET 2014-2015
PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 3 JUNE 2014**

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to committees@parliament.act.gov.au by **10.00am Tuesday 10 June 2014**. If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please append additional comments.

- 1. Full name of group/organisation: 350.org Canberra**

- 2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address: Mr Josh Creaser. Mobile: 0410 745005. E-mail: josh.creaser@350.org.au**

- 3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?**

 Yes (If yes, please email it to the Committee Secretariat with your completed survey.)

- 4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:**
 - a. Investment of ACT Government assets in fossil fuels
 - b. Climate change strategy
 - c.

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

See the attached submission.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

No

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

No (go to question 9.)

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

Not applicable

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.

SUBMISSION ON ACT BUDGET 2014/15 BY 350.ORG CANBERRA

Introduction

350.org is an international movement uniting people that are committed to combatting climate change. We are a leader in the global campaign for fossil fuel divestment, and we have protested against major new fossil fuel developments. 350.org Canberra is a local community group forming an active part of this global movement.

Before raising any concerns, we wish to convey our strong support for the ACT Government's strategies set out in the 2014/15 budget paper *A Sustainable Territory*, including its 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target, its renewable energy target and its investments in solar and wind energy.

Our concerns relate to investment in fossil fuels. Budget Paper No. 3, Section 8.3 indicates that the ACT Government is currently investing \$3.86 billion, of which the largest proportion is held in shares. The most recent list of directly owned shares issued by the Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate (dated 31 March 2014) shows that these investments include shares in the major fossil fuel companies Aurora Oil & Gas Ltd., Caltex Australia Ltd., Horizon Oil Ltd., Oil Search Ltd. and Santos Ltd, along with several others.

We ask the ACT Government to undertake further research into the risks involved in these investments. Specifically, we seek the following actions:

- Further disclosure of the magnitude of these fossil fuel related investments, either on an individual holding basis or an aggregated basis [1];
- Further research into the financial risks of these investments, in the light of several recent reports (see below); and
- A review of the Government's Responsible Investment Policy, in the light of the Government's policy position on climate change and its concerns for the future wellbeing of the Territory's young people.

Financial risks

We submit that there is growing evidence of significant risks to investments that are biased towards fossil fuels. For example:

- The recent report by the European financial services company Kepler Cheuvreux found that US\$28 trillion of fossil fuel assets are at risk globally, either because policies to limit warming of the planet to less than 2°C will require these fuels to remain unburnt or, in the absence of such policies, because the rapidly falling costs of renewable sources of energy will strand these assets [2]
- In March 2014 the company RWE, Germany's second largest electricity utility, wrote down €5 billion of fossil fuel assets, and the company's CEO informed investors that "RWE had pursued the wrong strategy, focusing too much on its coal and gas assets and not enough on renewables" [3]

- Australia’s future coal exports to China are at serious risk because, according to forecasts by analysts such as Deutsche Bank, Citigroup, HSBC and Morgan Stanley, coal demand in China will peak between 2016 and 2020 [4]
- John Hewson, the former leader of the Liberal Party, has urged pension funds to reduce their climate-related risks by putting a higher percentage of their funds in low carbon-intensive industries [5].

Responsible Investment Policy

The ACT Government, through its Responsible Investment Policy, has established a precedent for taking account of ESG (environmental, social and corporate governance) factors and for selectively screening out sectors within its investment portfolio. Currently the policy applies a negative screen to the tobacco, land mine and cluster bomb sectors.

We are aware of the arguments canvassed in the Inquiry into the Exposure Draft of the Financial Management (Ethical Investment) Legislation Amendment Bill 2010. We agree that there must be an objective to earn a competitive financial return, and (to quote Paragraph 5.6 of the Inquiry Report) “to act in the best interests of the ACT Community”. But these considerations need to take account of two issues:

- There is evidence, in reports such as that by the Australia Institute, that removing fossil fuel investments would not lead to lower financial returns, even in the short or medium term [6] – so we ask the ACT Government to conduct its own analysis of the financial consequences of removing its fossil fuel investments, and to publish the results
- The “best interests of the ACT community” should include the future wellbeing of the community, and not merely short term financial interests.

The Government’s public policy position of strong action on climate change is motivated by its concern for community wellbeing. For example, the 70,000 ACT residents currently under the age of 15 will be in their thirties and forties in the year 2050, and a continuation of the present global warming trend would expose these people to health impacts, degradation in quality of life, increased frequency of hydro-meteorological natural disasters, and increases in the severity of droughts, among other impacts.

It would be a powerful act for the Government to match its climate change policy with its investment policy. Such a step would encourage other stakeholders to shun investment in fossil fuels. It would also match the divestment actions that have already been taken globally by many universities, local government authorities, foundations and by many churches, including the Uniting Church in NSW and the ACT [7]. For these reasons we ask the ACT Government to review its Responsible Investment Policy.

Our submission has referred to financial risks, the goal of competitive financial returns, and the need to address climate risks. We believe that it is possible to balance these issues in the better interests of the ACT community.

References

[1] Such an assessment should encompass companies which have a sole focus on coal, oil and gas projects as well as companies that have fossil fuels as only a proportion of their operations, but where that proportion represents a large volume of coal, oil or gas

- [2] Kepler Cheuvreux. *Stranded assets, fossilised revenues*. 24 April 2014.
<http://www.ravennacapitalmanagement.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Stranded-Assets-Fossilised-Revenues.pdf>
- [3] For the RWE write down, see: Scott, Mike. *Why it makes sense for Norway to sell its fossil fuel shares*. Forbes, 10 March 2014.
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/mikescott/2014/03/10/why-it-makes-sense-for-norway-to-sell-its-fossil-fuel-shares/>
- [4] Fossil fuels, energy transition and risk. Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, June 2014. <http://www.ieefa.org/category/reports/>
- [5] For John Hewson's comments, see: Bursting the carbon bubble. Sydney Morning Herald, 15 February 2013.
<http://www.smh.com.au/business/carbon-economy/bursting-the-carbon-bubble-20130214-2efob.html>
- [6] Australia Institute. Climate proofing your investments: moving funds out of fossil fuels. March 2014.
<http://www.tai.org.au/content/climate-proofing-your-investments-moving-funds-out-fossil-fuels>
- [7] For a list of existing divestments, see:
<http://gofossilfree.org/commitments/>



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2014-2015

Brendan Smyth MLA (Chair), Mary Porter MLA (Deputy Chair),
Giulia Jones MLA, Yvette Berry MLA

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE
ACT BUDGET 2014-2015
PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 3 JUNE 2014

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to committees@parliament.act.gov.au by **10.00am Tuesday 10 June 2014**. If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please append additional comments.

1. Full name of group/organisation:

Property Council of Australia

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Catherine Carter, ACT Executive Director, Property Council of Australia

T: 02 6248 6902 E: ccarter@propertyoz.com.au

3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

Yes Yes, please see attached.

No

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:

a. Tax reform program and equity

b. Infrastructure

c. Fire and Emergency Services Levy

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

The 2-14-15 ACT Budget reflects the current economic environment with a number of positive initiatives which will be of direct benefit to the Territory, although there are also some significant tax increases that may have the perverse outcome of slowing economic growth.

Among the positives is the strong investment in infrastructure which will help to create jobs and stimulate the economy.

The Property Council supports the ACT Government's prudent approach to borrowing funds to invest in major capital works and infrastructure projects, leveraging the Territory's strong credit rating and low levels of debt in order to invest in infrastructure which will serve the community for many years to come.

The Property Council continues to support the Government's tax reform program, with the goal of creating a tax system which is fairer, simpler, and more efficient. We support its efforts to reduce dependence on stamp duty which is a volatile, unfair and inefficient tax, which is unsustainable into the long term.

However, we note the sharp increase in rates which casts doubt on the credibility of the ACT's 20-year tax reform program. Equity needs to be at the centre of genuine tax reform. Excessive taxation on property owners and business operators will limit private investment, particularly in property.

In addition, we are alarmed to see the Fire and Emergency Services Levy (FESL) is being amended to tie it to average unimproved values (AUV) which will, on the Treasurer's estimates, lead to an increase in the FESL for commercial properties by an average of 35 per cent.

While the ACT Budget largely represents a positive response to current economic conditions, we are concerned that the hike in rates and taxes will undo the otherwise good work done through leveraging economic opportunities from infrastructure spending.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

Yes Noted above.

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

Yes (go to question 8) Yes – see attached.

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

No Not all

a. If yes, please comment

Please see above and attached, particularly in relation to property taxes, including the FESL.

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.



ACT DIVISION

2014-15
PRE-BUDGET
SUBMISSION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Property Council of Australia is pleased to respond to the ACT Treasurer's invitation to participate in the development of the 2014-15 Budget.

The 2014-15 Budget will be a benchmark for the next century of Canberra's development.

Sending the right messages about the investment opportunity and potential of our city will be crucial to setting the right tone for the future prosperity of our city. To this end, the Property Council supports a Budget that delivers positive outcomes for the Territory including:

- **facilitating economic growth and prosperity** through judicious tax and regulatory reform across the property sector;
- **Investing in catalyst infrastructure** by prioritising key projects, including Capital Metro and High Speed Rail, and adopting alternative funding and delivery models;
- **boosting the supply of affordable and diverse housing** options for our community through improved land supply and removing penalties for redeveloping underused properties;
- **fostering prosperous town centres** by establishing an authority to oversee urban renewal and improvement projects;
- **promoting integrated transport solutions** through investment in infrastructure across all modes of transport and rationalising car parking regulations.

The Property Council notes and supports the Treasurer's stated commitment to:

- four priority areas to guide policies and spending for the 2014-15 budget - growing the economy; improving liveability and opportunity; better health and education outcomes; and urban renewal.
- continuing tax reform to make our system fairer, simpler and more efficient.
- continuing the planning and delivery of major infrastructure projects to meet the economic, social and environmental challenges of Canberra's second century.

However, the Property Council continues to be concerned that reform action and spending priorities are not being taken and set in a way that best suits these objectives.

Of special concern, disincentives to investment and development are hindering potential growth and undermining the future prosperity of Canberra.

This budget should underpin our collective aspirations for Canberra. We offer our comments in that spirit and as the basis for further consultation and participation.

PROPERTY COUNCIL IN BRIEF

The Property Council of Australia is the peak industry group and the largest and most active advocacy voice representing the broad property sector.

In the ACT our members represent the entire property investment cycle, including building owners and managers, property developers and a growing number of professionals that provide vital consultancy services to the property sector. Our industry spans residential (infill and greenfield estates), commercial, institutional and industrial development as well as refurbishments and many other property and construction project initiatives.

The property sector is critical to the economy of the ACT.

Our industry contributes \$2.6 billion in direct contributions to the economy, nearly 10 per cent of the Territory's total wealth, and a further \$3 billion in flow-on demand for goods and services. The sector also provides over 50 per cent of the total ACT Government's tax revenue each year – the highest of any industry share. We are the largest private sector industry in Canberra that is independent of Government.

The Property Council and its members are committed to building a capital city that will be the pride of future generations. To this end, the Property Council has prepared *A Declaration for Canberra's Centenary Year – A City for the Community, A Capital for the Nation* (see Attachment). This document shares our vision of the city that Canberra can and should be in 2023:

- a city that sets a national standard for liveability and contemporary urbanism;
- a model city that celebrates diversity, embraces smart new industries and offers affordable living options for everyone;
- a prosperous city where confidence encourages investment and the future promises growth; and
- a magnet for talented, educated and creative people.

In a series of 'declarations' we have set out actions that can be realised if government, industry and the community work together.

The Property Council is committed to the development and prosperity of Canberra and we seek the Treasurer's assurance that due consideration will be given to our concerns and recommendations.

A GUIDE TO READING THIS SUBMISSION

This submission contains two sections.

The first section discusses the **Budget Outlook and the challenges impacting on the prosperity of the Australian Capital Territory** from the perspective of the property sector. It provides the context for the policy discussion and recommendations that follow.

The second section contains **policy recommendations**. This section includes an outline of policy areas we believe will require particular government attention, with specific detail about policy issues with implications for the FY2015 budget. Key recommendations are provided for each policy theme.

The policy topics and associated recommendations are grouped into five broad themes:

- Facilitate Economic Growth and Prosperity;
- Invest in Catalyst Infrastructure;
- Boost Housing for our Community;
- Foster Prosperous Town Centres; and
- Promote a City in Motion.

Our comments relating to the policy issues broadly respond to the questions that the Government has posed for community input – namely:

- What services do you believe are most important for the Territory?
- What infrastructure priorities should the Government consider initiating in the next four years?
- How can the Government deliver current services more efficiently and productively?
- Are there any new ways to generate revenue and/or services you consider that the community should make a direct contribution to (a fee for service)?
- Could the Government stop providing particular services?

We have also included a further question: What measures will encourage sound investment to support the growth and stability of the ACT economy?

To assist in your consideration we have provided a graphic summary of our recommendations in tabular format at Appendix 2 of this submission.

BUDGET OUTLOOK

The latest *Property Council of Australia-ANZ Property Industry Confidence Survey* confirms that the ACT continues to have the lowest investment sentiment of any mainland state or territory.

The Property Council agrees with the Treasurer's statement that the economic outlook for Canberra 'remains uncertain...(and that)...the short term outlook for taxation revenue remains soft'. The Property Council also agrees that 'the softening labour and property markets, relatively slow wage growth and fragile consumer and business confidence are expected to moderate revenue'. However, we submit that the Government's persistence in maintaining ineffective and inequitable taxes and other disincentives to investment are exacerbating rather than ameliorating this condition.

The Government's Budget Plan falls short of being the robust and comprehensive 'economic plan' that is required to turn this tide. Despite strong population growth, low unemployment and a skilled and productive workforce, the ACT economy remains small, constrained and fragile and the business environment is uncertain and restrictive.

The property industry is concerned that the promise to return the budget to surplus of \$29.3 million in 2015-16 cannot be achieved in the current environment. While the Territory has low net debt, a Triple-A credit rating, and the economy is performing comparably well, the outlook is unclear.

The change of government at the federal level combined with fluctuating global economic and financial conditions all remain a concern. Furthermore, softening labour and property markets, relatively slow wage growth and fragile consumer and business confidence are expected to moderate ACT taxation revenue.

Given the (interim) Headline Net Operating Balance for the General Government Sector for the year ending 30 June 2013 was a deficit of \$288.7 million, which is a \$51.1 million improvement from the estimated outcome deficit of \$339.8 million¹, the Property Council believes the anticipated return to a surplus – or even a balanced - budget in 2015-16 is ambitious.

The Budget consultation paper places emphasis on the economic impact on Canberra of the Commonwealth Government's fiscal consolidation and election outcome – including the short-term challenges related to the housing market. Whilst Canberra is always sensitive to changes in the federal sphere, our economy must move towards a more independent base and encourage and diversify investment and revenue.

The Government paper also recognises that our ageing population, and 'increases in demand for services and technological changes all place increased demands on government outlays'. In our view what is needed is a concerted effort to work with industry to address all of these issues in the context of this budget.

To that end we trust that the Treasurer's commitment to look at 'new ways of working to identify more efficient, innovative and productive work practices...(and to look)...at where we can get the best value for money in benefits and returns to the community in the dollars we invest' will include careful consideration of our submission and recognition of the value of the property sector to the ACT economy.

We urge the Government and the bureaucracy to take a positive approach to these challenges and opportunities. In this way we can turn the tide and ensure a prosperous future for all.

¹ ACT Government, June Quarter 2013 Consolidated Financial Report (2012-13 Interim Result).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. FACILITATE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

OUTCOMES:

1.1 REDUCE THE TAX BURDEN

1.2 MAINTAIN GENERAL RATES

1.3 REFORM THE LEASE VARIATION CHARGE

1.5 REMOVE THE FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

1.6 REFORM THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

1.7 ESTABLISH A BALANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SERVICES AND INVESTMENT

1. FACILITATE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

The property sector underpins the health and growth of the ACT economy contributing more than nine per cent of gross state product and employing 24,000 full-time equivalent staff, (over 10 per cent of the entire ACT workforce). Despite this, property related activities are also the most highly taxed of any in the ACT.

The property industry pays 23 cents for every dollar it contributes to economic growth, in comparison to an average of only four cents per dollar across all industries in the ACT. The 2013-14 ACT Budget forecast that property tax revenue would make up 52.4 per cent of total taxation revenue - \$634 million a year. This is an increase from 49.2 per cent in 2008-09.

Despite significant moves to reform the ACT tax system, including recent reform measures to introduce greater equity, the property sector continues to bear a disproportionately large and ever increasing share of the total ACT tax burden. This trend is unsustainable and has the perverse effect of slowing investment, employment and productivity - impacting directly on opportunities for the growth of our city, improved liveability and quality of life for many Canberrans.

The continued increase in property taxation as a share of overall taxes will diminish the effectiveness of Government's admirable objective in the Budget to strive for growth and transformation in Canberra.

Given the current state of the economy, the Government should avoid measures that have an adverse impact – such as increasing property taxes – and simultaneously focusing on the need to reconstruct the local economy and create a more supportive environment to conduct business and attract investment. Easing the tax burden on the property sector can assist in achieving these goals, and our recommendations are made in this context.

1.1 REDUCE THE TAX BURDEN

Reform taxes on the property industry to make the ACT the preferred location to live and conduct business.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Property Council supports the ACT Government taxation reform plan in principle. However, we have continuing and serious concerns about the burden that increasing levels of taxation placed on the property industry and the associated negative flow on effects to the ACT community. We are also concerned about the decisions to single out higher valued properties with what amounts to a surtax.

The Property Council has consistently argued for a taxation regime that is not only on a par with NSW but is which is clearly competitive, making the ACT the preferred location to live and do business. We look forward to working with the Government in striving for long term, sustainable and fair tax reform that strikes the right balance between ensuring appropriate revenue capture for the community and adequate incentive for investment and job creation.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

That the ACT Government commit to reducing the tax burden levied on the property industry.

1.2 MAINTAIN GENERAL RATES

General rates should not be increased to compensate for the reduction in stamp duty.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In the backdrop of a weakening Territory economy it was a positive move for the Government to increase relief for homebuyers and investors (via changes to the First Home Owners Grant and reductions in stamp duty) as part of the 2013-14 Budget. The Property Council welcomed the introduction in June 2013 of a flat rate of 5.5 per cent stamp duty for property purchases over \$1.65 million.

Despite an undertaking by the Government that tax reform would be revenue neutral, General Rates' revenue is predicted to rise by five times more than stamp duty reductions in 2013-14 (\$46.5 million in comparison to a reduction in stamp duty revenue of only \$9.2 million). The excessive increase in General Rates - an average of 10 per cent for residential property and 20 per cent for commercial property - is inequitable and will have on-going implications for redevelopment and investment in the Territory.

The Property Council has prepared comparative tables that demonstrate statutory outgoings on a variety of properties (see Appendix 1). The evidence demonstrates that the cost of government rates and charges have increased on average 23.84 per cent since 2010.

It is hard to view this inequitable increase as anything more than revenue raising that penalises the very industry that already supports the ACT economy. The Property Council urges the Government to reconsider the increases to General Rates.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

That the ACT Government maintain general rates at their current level independent of reducing stamp duty.

1.3 REFORM THE LEASE VARIATION CHARGE

Reform the Lease Variation Charge which currently acts as a significant deterrent to infill development and urban renewal.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Lease Variation Charge (LVC), as currently applied, is a tax on urban renewal and housing diversity. In line with other government policies, the Tax Review recommended supporting urban densification to improve the efficiency of the city, and provide greater choice and opportunity to leverage and enhance existing infrastructure. However, at a time when governments across the nation are working towards finding new ways to encourage development and investment, the LVC has had a significant detrimental impact on development in Canberra and on the Territory economy.

A report prepared for the Property Council in 2012 '*The ACT Lease Variation Charge Implications for housing affordability, development and growth in Canberra*' documented evidence of how the LVC is stifling investment in the capital. It found that in the first year following introduction of the charge the number of development applications processed in the ACT fell by 56 per cent.

This decline in development activity has corresponding adverse impact on the ACT Budget. The 2013-14 Budget papers showed a 30 per cent reduction in expected revenues from LVC in the two years to 2015-16. Industry knowledge suggests that these numbers under-estimate the true decline in LVC revenue as much of the construction activity underway would have been approved under the old Change of Use Charge system.

With State Final Demand also forecast to contract (from 3.6 per cent in 2011-12 to 0.5 per cent in 2013-14 and 0.25% in 2014-15, government cannot avoid considering the true impact of LVC on investor confidence in the ACT market and economic deterioration.

The following table demonstrates the difference between the former Change of Use Charge (CUC) and LVC on the same property, with DA lodged in 2010 for commercial and residential uses and GFA limitation removed. If the same DA had been lodged under the LVC system, an additional \$6.45 million would have been payable - making the proposed development unviable - to the detriment of the urban landscape, Territory revenue (through loss of stamp duty) and the construction industry.

CUC assessment	V1 After Value	Value as agreed	\$39,300,000
	V2 Before Value	Value as agreed	\$38,900,000
	Added Value	Agreed with AVO	\$400,000
	CUC Payable	Assessed @ 75%	\$300,000
How LVC would have applied:	V1 After Value (based on additional 10 – 20,000m ² in schedule) 14,400m ² (existing) +15,000m ² (new)	i.e. total 29,400m ² GFA @ \$600/m ²	\$17,640,000
	V2 Before Value (land only i.e. excluding value of improvements) existing 14,400m ² GFA potential	14,400m ² @ \$600/m ²	\$8,640,000
	Added Value of additional GFA rights and uses	Prior to allowance for demolition	\$9,000,000
	LVC Payable	Assessed @ 75%	\$6,750,000

The application of LVC discriminates against urban redevelopment in favour of building in greenfield areas or on vacant sites in established areas. After two years in operation, urgent reform of the LVC system is required. The current system unnecessarily adds significant costs to new development. It acts as a major disincentive to investment, unparalleled in other states, and can result in the significant costs being passed on to home purchasers - making affordable housing in infill areas almost impossible.

Without reform, infill redevelopment will effectively cease in Canberra, leaving buildings to grow 'dark' and disused as owners wait for their value to deteriorate until redevelopment under LVC finally becomes viable.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

That the ACT Government:

- apply a fixed 75 per cent tax remission (25 per cent LVC) on the value uplift under prescribed chargeable variations that are subject to codified charges; and
- permit offsets for existing improvements, demolition and onsite/offsite works for Section 277 chargeable variations while retaining the 25 per cent tax remission.

1.4 AMEND THE COMMENCE AND COMPLETE FEES

Reconsider the application of the commence and complete charges for commercial, mixed-use and multi-unit developments.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Penalties for failing to commence and complete work on commercial, mixed use and multi-unit sites remain excessive and unreasonable.

All of the evidence points to a property sector under considerable pressure with financing for projects uncertain and vacancy rates remaining high. In this economic climate it is surprising that government would seek to penalise property owners who are 'weathering the storm'.

The Property Council maintains the position that investors do not buy land simply to incur holding costs and pay rates and taxes on an empty site with no revenue. Investors seek a return and in ordinary economic conditions will act quickly to develop land efficiently.

The Property Council once again urges the Government to reconsider the application of commence and complete charges and amend the regulation to waive the charges as they apply to commercial, mixed-use and multi-unit sites.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

That the ACT Government amend the 'commence and complete' regulation to waive the charges as they apply to commercial, mixed-use and multi-unit sites.

1.5 REMOVE THE FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

Remove the Fire and Emergency Services Levy and fund these core functions through general revenue.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Fire and Emergency Services Levy continues to be an ineffective and inequitable tax. The tax penalises property owners, acting as yet another disincentive to investment in the capital. The reliance of the levy on the average unimproved value of commercial properties also makes it uncertain and subject to a volatile revenue source.

Fire and emergency services - like police, ambulance, health services and education - are core functions of the government sector. It is far more appropriate for these services to be financed from consolidated revenue rather than relying on a specific levy. Importantly, this would also ensure these critical services have a stable funding base, and are not subject to avoidance or fluctuation.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

That the ACT Government fund fire and emergency services from general revenue.

1.6 REFORM THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

The regulatory environment requires urgent review to ensure existing regulations are achieving policy goals and new regulations are the most efficient means of addressing a policy issue.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Property Council continues to advocate for urgent regulatory change. We are concerned about both

the adequacy and effectiveness of existing regulatory measures and the excessive volume of regulation and red tape. Our concerns are outlined in a comprehensive submission to government in response to the Regulatory Impact Assessment Issues Paper.

The increasing degree of regulation is creating an escalating burden on the business community in general, and the property sector in particular. We believe this is discouraging business growth and expansion in Canberra and is contrary to the overall intent of regulatory intervention and the National Competition Policy.

We urge the ACT Government to ensure proposed regulation is both the minimum intervention necessary to achieve objectives, and the most efficient method of addressing a policy issue. The aim of regulation should be to achieve demonstrable community benefit, national consistency and harmonisation including the reduction of compliance costs to businesses operating across jurisdictions, or to governments through the sharing of resources and expertise.

We believe there are two components to reforming the regulatory system. The first is removing or improving existing regulations where they are inefficient or no longer address the policy issue adequately. This is the task of the Red Tape Reduction Panel.

Our members continue to be concerned that we do not have representation on the Government's Red Tape Reduction Panel despite our industry being the largest non-government sector in Canberra and a major contributor to our economy. The exclusion of issues under consideration by the Panel relating specifically to the Territory's property and construction sector, such as tax, revenue or planning, is a gross oversight and will limit the potential for quality regulatory reform.

The second component of reform is tightening the quality control process – Regulatory Impact Assessments and Regulatory Impact Statements - for introducing new regulations. To this end, significant decision-making ability should be transferred to a central oversight body to improve consistency and independent decision-making. Of specific relevance to this budget, we recommend that Government provide appropriate resources to this central oversight body.

Furthermore, the RIA process should be applied to all forms of regulation and quasi-regulation including those governing planning. A global application of RIA will reduce the incidence of regulatory failure and non-compliance and will lead to rational exploration of non-regulatory options that may be more efficient and beneficial..

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

That the ACT Government reform the regulatory system by:

- broadening and strengthening the membership and terms of the Red Tape Reduction Panel to encompass the property and construction sector and matters pertaining to related taxes, revenue and planning;
- transfer significant decision-making power in the RIA and RIS processes to a central oversight body and with appropriate funding; and
- subject regulations governing planning to the RIA process.

1.7 ESTABLISH A BALANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SERVICES AND INVESTMENT

The Government must clarify the respective roles of the private sector and government in wealth creation and distribution.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The long-term interests of the community are best served by using greater private sector investment to create and sustain high levels of economic growth.

In the ACT, government expansion, spending and taxing is continuing to crowd out the private sector at a time when business investment and growth should be encouraged to stabilise and diversify our economy. What is needed is an unequivocal policy statement by government on the respective roles of the private sector and government in wealth creation and distribution.

Over the past decade the Government has taken more and more of the ACT's output. Since 2002, the Territory's Gross State Product (GSP) has increased by 37 per cent but government spending has blown out by 86 per cent. [Source: ABS 5220.0, 5512.0].

The Property Council notes with concern that whilst government states that it has a continuing commitment to tax reform, 'with further initiatives to make our system fairer, simpler and more efficient' the 'tax reform measures include continuing to use the General Rates system as the mechanism for revenue replacement' – this is clearly unsustainable. Private sector investment must be encouraged and the public sector share of GSP reduced.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

That the ACT Government recommit to reducing its share of the Territory's Gross State Product and encourage growth in the private sector.

2. INVEST IN CATALYST INFRASTRUCTURE

OUTCOMES:

2.1 ADOPT THE MULTI-CRITERIA APPROACH FOR ALLOCATING RESOURCES

2.2 IMPLEMENT ALTERNATIVE FUNDING AND DELIVERY MODELS

2.2.1 DEBT FINANCING

2.2.2 TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

2.2.3 PUBLIC- PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

2. INVEST IN CATALYST INFRASTRUCTURE

Quality and strategically delivered infrastructure forms the backbone of any city. It sets the foundation for connecting the community, is the artery to services and employment and creates a base for future growth and investment. Without first-quality infrastructure it will be virtually impossible to encourage investment or garner community support for major projects.

The Property Council supports the development of major infrastructure projects including Capital Metro, High Speed Rail, the development of the Australia Forum (convention centre), the City to the Lake opportunity and the redevelopment of Constitution Avenue. Each of these are transformational infrastructure projects that will drive economic, employment and population growth, ultimately improving the sustainability and liveability of the city.

In the 2013-14 Budget, infrastructure expenditure was largely targeted at works in progress with a modest \$177 million of new infrastructure spending and only \$272 million over four years. This represented a 50 per cent reduction in the average new infrastructure spending over the previous five years. Last year the Property Council acknowledged the Government's position that this would be offset by expected capital outlays associated with major projects like Capital Metro. However, based on recent experience we are concerned that these projects are progressing more slowly than might be expected and that confidence in their timely delivery will diminish.

2.1 ADOPT THE MULTI-CRITERIA APPROACH FOR ALLOCATING RESOURCES

The ACT Government should adopt the multi-criteria approach to prioritise investment in catalyst infrastructure projects.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In our Declaration for Canberra's Centenary Year we recommend that the Multi-Criteria Approach (MCA), developed by the Property Council in partnership with the Centre for International Economics, be adopted to optimise the allocation of our scarce resources in the context of competing triple bottom line considerations.

A sound prioritisation of ACT catalyst infrastructure projects utilising an MCA approach, together with long-term funding strategies, delivery milestones and clearly identified budget allocations will ensure ongoing responsible financial commitment and will build confidence in the future. We strongly recommend that the Government adopt this approach in the 2014-15 Budget context.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

That the ACT Government adopt the Multi-Criteria Approach (MCA) to optimise the allocation of scarce resources in the context of competing triple bottom line considerations.

2.2 IMPLEMENT ALTERNATIVE FUNDING AND DELIVERY MODELS

The ACT Government must explore and implement alternative funding mechanisms including debt financing, tax increment financing and public-private partnerships.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Territory urgently requires investment in transformational infrastructure projects that will drive economic, employment and population growth.

2.2.1 DEBT FINANCING

Much of the underinvestment in infrastructure has been the result of political timidity at the notion of public debt, and a general failure of governments to distinguish current consumption spending from investment in productivity-improving assets.

Evidence shows that debt funding is the most efficient way for governments to invest in infrastructure without negative impacts on credit ratings or interest rates. Significantly, research by Allen Consulting Group shows that the way governments fund infrastructure affects the community's overall economic welfare.

The Property Council supports the concept of borrowing by governments to fund infrastructure on the grounds that the life of the asset and the public benefits are long term. Since future generations will receive the benefit of new infrastructure and infrastructure upgrades, it is both fair and efficient to spread the cost over the useful life of the infrastructure.

2.2.2 TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax increment financing (TIF) may be another mode of delivering reasonable capital investment in infrastructure delivery recognising future property tax revenue gains that will derive from the infrastructure - notably through value increases on associated sites and developments.

The TIF approach operates on the assumption that the completion of infrastructure (or other projects) often results in an increase in the value of surrounding real estate, which generates additional tax revenue. These future tax gains (tax increments) are used to subsidise current infrastructure projects and are usually limited to a clearly defined area that is directly impacted by the infrastructure project.

2.2.3 PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The Government has acknowledged that Public Private Partnerships (PPP) have been widely tested in other Australian jurisdictions and are a positive way of delivering major infrastructure projects. We agree. The ACT Government should draw on the capability, expertise and investment power of the private sector to deliver our critical infrastructure projects. A PPP arrangement includes financing, making it more likely for a project to be delivered on time and on budget, is a better risk management and sharing model and provides more focus on whole-of-life costs.

In the 2013-14 Budget Paper No. 3 Government undertook to progress the policy framework PPPs for major projects in the Territory. The Government advised that a 'specialist team' would be set up to 'develop a policy framework and guidance notes for PPP delivery in the Territory' that would draw on the National Public Private Partnership Policy and Guidelines endorsed by the 2008 Council of Australian Governments and best practice from other governments. It was noted that 'as a result, the Government expects to be able to significantly improve value for taxpayer funds, whilst fostering economic and industry growth'.

One of the initiatives specifically targeted included an evaluation of the potential business case for developing the new ACT court facilities under a Public Private Partnership arrangement, amongst other delivery methodologies. The Property Council supported this approach but is disheartened by the apparent lack of progress towards delivery on the PPP framework.

The ACT Government should immediately clarify the application of private sector commitments and development contributions to catalyst infrastructure within the 2014-15 Budget context - including for the delivery of Capital Metro, the Australia Forum and City to the Lake Projects.

Experience elsewhere demonstrates that infrastructure projects can be accelerated and enhanced if sound priorities are agreed, and capital funding is provided through public sector borrowings together with a greater role for private sector capital investment and management.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

That the ACT Government adopt a strategy of alternative funding models including public sector borrowing, public-private partnerships and tax increment financing to fund infrastructure, in order to accelerate and enhance the delivery of projects and spread the investment costs and benefits over time and across the population.

3. BOOST HOUSING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

OUTCOMES:

3.1 REPURPOSE SURPLUS GOVERNMENT LAND

3.2 SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

3.2.1 MORATORIUM ON STAMP DUTIES

3.2.2 INCENTIVES FOR INVESTMENT IN RENTAL HOUSING

3.2.3 LEASE VARIATION CHARGE REMISSIONS

3.3 REVIEW THE LAND RELEASE PROGRAM

3. BOOST HOUSING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Canberra is home to a diverse range of communities and cultures. Strong population growth and low interest rates have provided a sound market for new housing, despite the current short-term challenges due to federal government fiscal consolidation. However, the Territory struggles to provide affordable and varied housing options that meet the demand of existing and new residents. Without a range of housing choices including affordable housing the Territory cannot attract skilled workers, new families or young people. Our ageing population also deserves viable and appropriate housing that supports quality of life and ageing in established neighbourhoods. Housing diversity impacts directly on our city's growth, economic viability and liveability.

The 2013-14 ACT Budget announcements reducing stamp duty, increasing the First Home Owners' Grant to \$12,500 and raising the thresholds for the Home Buyer Concession Scheme were welcomed as a good way to decrease the entry costs for first home buyers and encourage the construction of new homes. The Property Council submits that there is now also a significant opportunity available to government to take advantage of existing underused land and properties that might otherwise be redeveloped to better community benefit.

3.1 REPURPOSE SURPLUS GOVERNMENT LAND

The Government should prioritise the release of surplus government land for redevelopment.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Property Council calls on government to prioritise the release of closed school sites, disused community buildings and unused land previously set aside for developments that are no longer applicable in the land release program so that these sites may be repurposed as affordable housing, art precincts, community spaces, and accommodation for older Canberrans.

To facilitate this, the 2014-15 ACT Budget should include incentives for appropriate redevelopment of these sites to encourage private sector participation. There is also an opportunity for the Budget to include grants for the private development of these sites to empower industry to work with community in the development of these important neighbourhood places.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

That the ACT Government:

- **prioritise the release of closed school sites, disused community buildings and unused land previously set aside for developments that are no longer applicable in the land release program and identify incentives for appropriate redevelopment of these sites to encourage private sector participation.**
- **provide grants for private development of infill sites to empower industry to work with community in the development of these important places.**

3.2 SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The government should adopt the multi-criteria approach to prioritise investment in catalyst infrastructure projects.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Territory must provide a range of affordable and diverse housing options to attract skilled workers, new families or young people. Currently there is a mismatch between supply and demand, and strong population growth has exacerbated this situation. The adoption of the measures outlined below will contribute to addressing this problem.

3.2.1 MORATORIUM ON STAMP DUTIES

The Property Council submits that a three year moratorium on stamp duties and land tax for affordable housing and retirement villages in existing suburbs will encourage an increase in housing diversity.

3.2.2 INCENTIVES FOR INVESTMENT IN RENTAL HOUSING

In a climate of unacceptable vacancy rates, the Property Council strongly recommends that the Budget include incentives for investment in rental housing. Incentives should include waiver or reduction of taxes associated with purchase and maintenance of rental properties, including stamp duty, land tax and rates.

3.2.3 LEASE VARIATION CHARGE REMISSIONS

Phase 3 of the *Affordable Housing Action Plan*, announced in June 2012 called for 'lease variation charge remissions to facilitate redevelopment or adaptive reuse of commercial accommodation that delivers affordable housing' (Action 7). To date, these remissions have not been implemented, although incentives exist to provide public art in redevelopments. The Property Council submits that incentives to provide affordable housing should take priority and that the Government's 2012 Action Plan should be implemented and funded through the 2014-15 Budget.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

That the ACT Government:

- **introduce a three-year moratorium on stamp duties and land tax for affordable housing and retirement villages in existing suburbs;**
- **provide incentives for investment in rental housing including waiver or reduction of stamp duty, land tax and rates; and**
- **implement lease variation charge remissions to facilitate redevelopment or adaptive reuse of commercial accommodation for affordable housing (Action 7 of the Affordable Housing Action Plan, Phase 3).**

3.3 REVIEW THE LAND RELEASE PROGRAM

Reconsider the options for land release and development to facilitate greater private sector participation.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The 2013-14 Budget Paper No. 3 noted that the supply and release of land is a central part of the Government's economic and social strategy and supports the needs of a growing population, changing households and an expanding economy. Housing affordability is a major issue for cities around the world and the ACT is one of the few jurisdictions where solutions are available.

The previous policy of equally delivering development via the Land Development Agency (LDA), englob

land release and joint venture no longer seems to have currency with Government. The LDA no longer engages in joint ventures and opportunities for Englobo development appear to be no longer available. This has the potential to impact significantly on the efficient release of land in the Territory and have a marked impact on serviced land prices to the consumer as evidenced by current development of the Molonglo Valley.

The private sector is well positioned to deliver broad acre subdivisions and has skilled and efficient land servicing enterprises that bring the latest market driven innovation to the Territory. The property industry is already one of the primary contributors to the ACT economy and is well placed to reinvest profits from developments back into the community.

Unfortunately, the LDA method of land sales has made it difficult for medium and larger builders in Canberra to develop land in a way that allows economies of scale and programing certainty. If the LDA becomes the monopoly developer in Canberra then local developers will continue to scale down their businesses, put off staff and relocate their activities elsewhere. If there are ever diminishing opportunities in Canberra, our local industry will have to move interstate.

Canberra developers have been at the forefront of innovation in development of residential and land subdivision for decades and have demonstrated experience and capacity to ensure that projects are delivered in a cost competitive manner, benefitting home buyers in the region. They are attuned to market issues and can deliver ideal outcomes for the ACT Government and the community.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

That the ACT Government strengthen private sector participation in the development and release of land.

4. FOSTER PROSPEROUS TOWN CENTRES

OUTCOMES:

4.1 ESTABLISH A CIVIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

4.2 REVERSE HIGH VACANCY RATES

4.3 SUPPORT URBAN AND COMMERCIAL RENEWAL

4. FOSTER PROSPEROUS TOWN CENTRES

The Property Council welcomed the inclusion in the 2012-13 Federal Budget of \$500,000 to the ACT Government to assist in the development of a master plan for Civic. The Property Council has advocated for many years for a comprehensive plan to provide an agreed vision, quality public amenity, integrated infrastructure and certainty about sequencing of development. We were encouraged that this federal funding would augment the ACT Government's own 2010 Greater Canberra City Action Plan and facilitate both governments to work together on urban, social and environmental planning values and strategies.

In our *Declaration for Canberra's Centenary Year* we reiterated the urgent need for an ambitious and strategic master plan for Civic to provide the narrative and urban strategy for the development and enhancement of the city centre. The plan is essential to future commercial investment decisions and commitments, density tests, employment and accommodation options and best fit social infrastructure delivery.

Importantly, the City Plan should draw together the excellent work and innovative plans and proposals for City Hill, Lonsdale and Bunda Streets, City West and other discrete places as well as plans for the City to the Lake and Capital Metro projects. Without a comprehensive master plan these initiatives will remain fragmented and east Civic, Northbourne Avenue and existing public places within the city including Garema Place and Petrie Plaza may be overlooked and made desolate.

We welcome the release of the draft City Plan and look forward to providing detailed comments in a separate submission.

4.1 ESTABLISH A CIVIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

A Civic Development Authority responsible for the City Plan should be established.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Property Council urges the ACT Government to establish a Civic Development Authority (CDA) charged with preparing, monitoring and routinely reviewing the City Plan, with establishing precinct plans and with development approvals and community consultation. This should ensure that the plan materialises, that consultation is meaningful and implementation rational and timely. Development, refurbishment and adaptive re-use targets should also be set against the City Plan, with achievable targets and milestones.

The CDA would attract qualified professionals committed to delivery of the Civic that Canberra deserves. The authority would be charged with working with the Canberra CBD Ltd and the Environment and Sustainability Development Directorate in the delivery of core municipal services. It would develop strategic relationships with the National Capital Authority, federal Department of Finance, the Australian National University and the Canberra Institute of Technology, as well as other key public stakeholders.

Plans for the other town centres also need to be implemented. So too local and group centres deserve and need to be revitalised with innovative development. Leading with public infrastructure and encouraging investment - with property development and redevelopment incentives and options for PPPs - would be a good start.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

That the ACT Government:

- appoint and resource a professional Civic Development Authority with broad roles and responsibilities; and
- support the implementation of its Town and Local/Group Centre master plans by prioritising public infrastructure (new and upgrades) and encouraging investment with a package of property development and redevelopment incentives and PPP opportunities.

4.2 REVERSE HIGH VACANCY RATES

Reverse high vacancy rates by encouraging adaptive re-use of vacant or underused buildings in the city centre.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The effect of high vacancy rates in the city centre (12 per cent at July 2013) cannot be ignored. Planning restrictions, the lease variation charge and increases in rates can make it unviable to demolish and rebuild despite remissions for public art and environmental benefits.

Without assertive action by the Government to encourage adaptive re-use of vacant or underused commercial properties, empty office buildings will leave black holes in our city centre, impacting on the viability of other businesses in the precinct.

The Property Council calls for a reduction in Territory charges to encourage innovation and excellence in development, including a three-year moratorium on LVC and land tax for adaptive reuse of commercial buildings in established residential areas and town centres. These measures will contribute to revitalising the local economy and create a more supportive environment for investment.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

That the ACT Government implement a three-year moratorium on LVC and land tax for adaptive re-use of commercial buildings in established residential areas and town centres.

4.3 SUPPORT URBAN AND COMMERCIAL RENEWAL

Urban and commercial renewal should be encouraged and programs to promote this should be adopted.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Property Council advocates urban and commercial renewal to reinvigorate our city and to keep pace with changing social and community needs and aspirations. The Government should take a holistic approach to urban renewal and encourage and prioritise projects with positive impacts across a range of key areas including social, economic, cultural or environmental. To this end, the Government should adopt existing programs that prioritise projects with clear cultural or environmental outcomes, which are outlined below.

The Renew Australia initiative, developed in Newcastle, provides adaptive re-use incentives and encourages short-term occupancy of empty shop-front spaces waiting for new tenants or pending redevelopment, with start-up creative businesses. This initiative has a track record of innovative measures and best practice processes for such space activation.

Canberra and its region have a rich community of artisans and craftspeople who could temporarily occupy such spaces in our town/local centres for their creative enterprises promoting talent and activity over vacancy. Government should resource a Renew Australia task team to pilot the program in Canberra.

Government should also actively position Canberra as a green city showcase by fast-tracking green-door assessment for developments that meet high environmental standards. The government should promote complementary measures that provide real incentives for green buildings and to retro-green office buildings such as stamp duty relief, rate reductions, accelerated depreciation and amortisation.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

That the ACT Government:

- **resource a Renew Australia task team to pilot the program in Canberra;**
- **advocate the development of Canberra as a green city showcase by fast-tracking green-door assessment for developments that meet high environmental standards; and**
- **provide real incentives for green buildings and to retro-green office buildings including stamp duty relief, rate reductions, accelerated depreciation and amortisation.**

5. PROMOTE A CITY IN MOTION

OUTCOMES:

5.1 INVEST IN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

5.2 RESOLVE CAR PARKING POLICY ISSUES

5. PROMOTE A CITY IN MOTION

As noted previously, investment in transport infrastructure is vital to the economic development of the ACT. It is the foundation for connecting the community, services and employment and creates a base for future growth and investment. Good quality transport infrastructure is critical to attracting investment and generating community support for major projects.

5.1 INVEST IN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Investment in integrated transport infrastructure is urgently required and funding must be identified in the budget.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Property Council supports integrated transport and submits that there is a real and urgent need to prioritise investment in infrastructure to support cycling, pedestrians and bus services as well as for major infrastructure projects such as Capital Metro. Delivery of integrated transport infrastructure and operations needs to be demonstrably financially viable with transparent funding in the Budget context.

The Property Council calls on the Government to provide a detailed timeframe, KPIs and status report against the action commitments made in the 2012 Transport for Canberra Plan to facilitate this. This would constitute a holistic upgrade of the Transport for Canberra implementation tracking document.

We note and agree with the findings of the performance report by the ACT Auditor General in May 2013 (Report No. 3/2013) that the lack of formal communication and consultation processes between agencies impedes beginning-to-end integration and a One Government approach to (parking) planning, management, pricing and operational delivery. Delays in advancing smart technology have also been affected by a lack of a beginning-to-end approach.

The Property Council also seeks advice on the status of achievements by the Capital Metro Agency established with \$12 million over four years through the 2013-14 Budget. A clear statement of deliverables and milestones for the next three years should be transparent in the 2014-15 Budget.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

That the ACT Government:

- fund the development of an integrated transport infrastructure and operations business case as part of the Budget commitments;
- establish a detailed timeframe, KPIs and status report against the action commitments made in the 2012 Transport for Canberra Plan and resource a holistic upgrade of the Transport for Canberra implementation tracking document; and
- provide a clear statement of Capital Metro deliverables and milestones for the next three years as part of the continuing funding commitment to the Capital Metro Agency.

5.2 RESOLVE CAR PARKING POLICY ISSUES

The range of policies impacting on the provision and pricing of car parking must be reviewed and rationalised.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Car parking continues to be a major issue for the development of the city. Replacement of surface carparks for development needs to be supported by the commercialisation of parking facilities. Planning policy continues to blindly link residential and commercial density increases with carparking requirements, regardless of location. Such a blanket approach works against affordable development and infill objectives and desirable modal shifts from cars to public transport, cycling etc.

There is an urgent need to release the ACT Government transport pricing policy to provide a rigorous analysis of objectives and outcomes and a rational base for parking fee determinations. Structured car parks are more land efficient and amenity effective than surface parking. The continuing low fees for parking are demonstrably counter-productive to transport modal behavior change, and to investment and management by the private sector of structured car parks.

A competitive market for car parking provision is needed to ensure parking is provided at the required rate. This approach provides a market incentive to achieve the optimum balance between the supply and pricing of car parking spaces. When new car parks are required, it would be reflected in the market price.

The Property Council also believes that more flexible use should be encouraged for existing commercial car parking spaces such as the ability to commercially utilise space within existing buildings, many of which are currently underutilised. We also support a change in the pricing regime of open-air parking to encourage more commercial users would as a further measure to improve the problem.

The Property Council is pleased that the introduction of pay parking in the Parliamentary Zone, Parkes and Barton appears to be progressing with implementation pending. The ACT Government should continue to work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure that parking charges introduced on national land are non-discriminatory and comparable to Barton, Civic and in the other town centres.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

That the ACT Government:

- review, consult and update the ACT Parking Guidelines, in particular for higher density developments along major transport corridors;
- release its transport pricing policy and nominate the public and private sector funding and investment implications;
- provide planning incentives to encourage the use of underutilised existing commercial car parking spaces for commercial public parking; and
- continue to work with the Commonwealth to ensure that parking charges introduced on national land in the Parliamentary areas are non-discriminatory and comparable to Barton, Civic and the other town centres.

ATTACHMENTS

APPENDIX 1

Statutory Outgoings Comparison

The Property Council has prepared a comparative table that demonstrate statutory outgoings on a variety of properties.

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Property Council Recommendations.

ATTACHMENT

A Declaration for Canberra's Centenary Year

APPENDIX 1

BUILDING 1 - UNDER 10,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$75,473.48	\$74,395.39	\$77,628.91	\$103,063.16
CCM & IL	\$6,075.29	\$5,874.32	\$5,580.42	\$5,300.93
TOTAL	\$81,548.77	\$80,269.71	\$83,209.33	\$108,364.09
Percentage change from previous year		-1.57%	3.66%	30.23%

BUILDING 2 - UNDER 10,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$76,302.44	\$75,219.93	\$78,503.64	\$98,893.71
CCM & IL				
TOTAL	\$76,302.44	\$75,219.93	\$78,503.64	\$98,893.71
Percentage change from previous year		-1.41%	4.37%	25.97%

BUILDING 3 - UNDER 10,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$53,316.48	\$52,600.14	\$54,956.38	\$68,922.95
CCM & IL				
TOTAL	\$53,316.48	\$52,600.14	\$54,956.38	\$68,922.95
Percentage change from previous year		-1.34%	4.48%	25.41%

BUILDING 4 - UNDER 10,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$41,927.12	\$41,372.79	\$43,243.09	\$54,011.66
CCM & IL	\$3,393.49	\$3,281.12	\$3,116.88	\$2,962.29
TOTAL	\$45,320.61	\$44,653.91	\$46,359.97	\$56,973.95
Percentage change from previous year		-1.47%	3.82%	22.89%

BUILDING 5 - UNDER 15,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$55,433.99	\$55,608.75	\$60,104.21	\$78,122.97
CCM & IL				
TOTAL	\$55,433.99	\$55,608.75	\$60,104.21	\$78,122.97
Percentage change from previous year		0.32%	8.08%	29.98%

CCM & IL – Canberra City Marketing and Improvements Levy.

BUILDING 6 - CITY, OVER 40,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$388,880.00	\$385,272.00	\$401,258.00	\$509,661.00
CCM & IL	\$43,384.00	\$41,938.00	\$39,829.00	\$37,837.00
TOTAL	\$432,264.00	\$427,210.00	\$441,086.00	\$547,498.00
Percentage change from previous year		-1.17%	3.25%	24.13%

BUILDING 7 - CITY, UNDER 4,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$42,711.00	\$42,336.00	\$44,238.00	\$55,264.00
CCM & IL	\$3,472.00	\$3,357.00	\$3,188.00	\$3,028.00
TOTAL	\$46,183.00	\$45,693.00	\$47,427.00	\$58,292.00
Percentage change from previous year		-1.06%	3.79%	22.91%

BUILDING 8 - BARTON 6,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$35,822.00	\$35,382.00	\$36,898.00	\$45,930.00
CCM & IL				
TOTAL	\$35,822.00	\$35,382.00	\$36,898.00	\$45,930.00
Percentage change from previous year		-1.23%	4.28%	24.48%

BUILDING 9 - SUBURBAN RETAIL 3,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$96,373.00	\$94,587.00	\$98,663.00	NYA
CCM & IL				
TOTAL	\$96,373.00	\$94,587.00	\$98,663.00	\$-
Percentage change from previous year		-1.85%	4.31%	

BUILDING 10 - PHILLIP 9,000M2

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
General Rates & Land Tax	\$52,577.00	\$52,774.00	\$55,107.00	NYA
CCM & IL				
TOTAL	\$52,577.00	\$52,774.00	\$55,107.00	\$-
Percentage change from previous year		0.37%	4.42%	

CCM & IL – Canberra City Marketing and Improvements Levy.

APPENDIX 2

TREASURY QUESTIONS SUMMARY

- Most important services for the Territory
- New ways to generate revenue and/or services including fee for services
- Infrastructure priorities
- Services that could be stopped
- Efficient and productive delivery of services
- Measures to encourage sound investment to support the growth and stability of the ACT economy

PROPERTY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

Maintain general rates at their current level independent of reducing stamp duty.	●
Apply a fixed 75 per cent tax remission (25 per cent LVC) on the value uplift under prescribed chargeable variations that are subject to codified charges	● ●
Permit offsets for existing improvements, demolition and onsite/offsite works for Section 277 chargeable variations while retaining the 25% tax remission.	● ●
Amend the 'commence and complete' regulation to waive the charges as they apply to commercial, mixed-use and multi-unit sites.	●
Fund fire and emergency services from general revenue.	● ● ●
Broaden and strengthen the membership and terms of the Red Tape Reduction Panel to encompass the property and construction sector and matters pertaining to related taxes, revenue and planning.	●
Transfer significant decision-making power in the RIA and RIS processes to a central oversight body with appropriate funding.	●
Subject regulations governing planning to the RIA process.	●
ACT Government recommit to reducing its share of the Territory's Gross State Product and encourage growth in the private sector.	● ●

CATALYST INFRASTRUCTURE

Adopt the Multi-Criteria Approach (MCA) to optimise the allocation of scarce resources in the context of competing triple bottom line considerations.	● ●
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Adopt a strategy of alternative funding models including public sector borrowing, public-private partnerships and tax increment financing to fund infrastructure, in order to accelerate and enhance the delivery of projects and spread the investment costs and benefits over time and across the population.



HOUSING OUR COMMUNITY

Prioritise the release of closed school sites, disused community buildings and unused land previously set aside for developments that are no longer applicable in the land release program and identify incentives for appropriate redevelopment of these sites to encourage private sector participation.



Provides grants for private development of infill sites to empower industry to work with community in the development of these important places.



Introduces a three-year moratorium on stamp duties and land tax for affordable housing and retirement villages in existing suburbs.



Provides incentives for investment in rental housing including waiver or reduction of stamp duty, land tax and rates.



Implement lease variation charge remissions to facilitate redevelopment or adaptive reuse of commercial accommodation for affordable housing (Action 7 of the Affordable Housing Action Plan, Phase 3).



Strengthen private sector participation in the development and release of land.



PROSPEROUS TOWN CENTRES

Appoint and resource a professional Civic Development Authority with broad roles and responsibilities.



Support the implementation of the Government's Town and Local/Group Centre master plans by prioritising public infrastructure (new and upgrades) and encouraging investment with a package of property development and redevelopment incentives and PPP opportunities.



Implement a three-year moratorium on LVC and land tax for adaptive reuse of commercial buildings in established residential areas and town centres.



Resource a Renew Australia task team to pilot the program in Canberra.



Advocate the development of Canberra as a showcase 'Green City' by fast tracking 'green-door' assessment for developments that meet high environmental standards.



Provide real incentives for green buildings and to retro-green office buildings including stamp duty relief, rate reductions, accelerated depreciation and amortization.



A CITY IN MOTION

Fund development of an integrated transport infrastructure and operations business case as part of the Budget commitments.	● ●
Establish a detailed timeframe, KPIs and status report against the action commitments made in the 2012 Transport for Canberra Plan and resource a holistic upgrade of the Transport for Canberra Implementation Tracking document.	● ●
Provide a clear statement of Capital Metro deliverables and milestones for the next three years as part of the continuing funding commitment to the Capital Metro Agency.	●
Review, consult and update the ACT Parking Guidelines, in particular for higher density developments along major transport corridors.	●
Release its transport pricing policy and nominate the public and private sector funding and investment implications.	● ●
Provide planning incentives to encourage the use of underutilised existing commercial car parking spaces for commercial public parking.	● ●
Continue to work with the Commonwealth to ensure that parking charges introduced on national land in the Parliamentary areas are non-discriminatory and comparable to Barton, Civic and the other town centres.	●



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PROPERTY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA 2014-15 ACT BUDGET SUMMARY

Economic forecasts, year average percentage change

	2013-14 (Estimate)	2014-15 (Forecast)
	%	%
Gross State Product	2.25	1.75
State Final Demand	1.75	1.25
Employment Growth	0.75	0.50
Consumer Price Index	2.25	2.25
Population growth	1.50	1.50
Net Operating Balance	-\$265.3m	-\$332.8m

Economic stimulus package a welcome boost for infrastructure

The 2014-15 ACT Budget has been framed in the context of uncertainty arising from the contraction of spending and rationalisation measures announced by the Federal Government in its May (Budget Repair) Budget.

The knock on effects of a tough Federal Budget are expected to have a negative effect on the local economy, with the ACT Government forecasting subdued economic growth in the Territory, with State Final Demand expected to grow at only 1.25% in 2014-2015 and year on year employment growth expected to be 0.5%, well below its long-term trend of around 1.75%.

In response, the ACT Government has devised a budget which leaves a forecast deficit of \$332.8 million for 2014-15, an increase of \$223.3 million from the deficit forecast in the 2013-14 Budget Review. The Budget Papers state the movement primarily reflects a forecast increase in expenses of \$139.2 million and an expected decrease in revenue of \$85.5 million. The 2014-15 deficit is expected to progressively fall over the forward estimates until a (modest) surplus is achieved in 2017-18.

Part of the ACT Government's response has been to reduce the overall size of its Indicative Residential Land Release Program by 3,000 dwelling sites across the next three years.

The centrepiece of the Budget though is the provision that has been made for \$2.5 billion of capital works over four years, which is intended to stimulate economic activity, generate employment and build 21st century infrastructure.

The projects earmarked for support include the City to Lake Project, Capital Metro, University of Canberra Public Hospital, the Australian Forum, the new Supreme Court, and school facilities.

The Commonwealth Government's Asset Recycling Initiative aims to encourage investment in productivity enhancing new infrastructure by providing financial incentives for the States and Territories to sell assets and re-invest the proceeds. The ACT Government has announced it will enter into negotiations with the Commonwealth Government in 2014-15 to pursue opportunities to participate. The Commonwealth Government has initially allocated \$5 billion to this initiative.

Potential sales options include ageing public housing stock and government office buildings, including the Callum Offices at Woden and Macarthur House at Lyneham.

The ACT Government's continued taxation reform agenda and recently announced (6 March 2014) economic stimulus package for the ACT building and construction industry (including reforms to LVC and commence and complete development fees) are other policy levers that are designed to support investment activity in 2014-15.



From a taxation perspective, the Government's stated ambition is to abolish inefficient taxes and reduce the administrative and compliance burden, particularly for small businesses.

The Budget continues the Government's recent commendable record in this regard, by:

- Increasing the **payroll tax** threshold from \$1.75 million to \$1.85 million in 2014-15 (the rate of 6.85% for payroll tax remains);
- Applying, from 4 June 2014, **conveyance duty** at a flat rate of 5.25% for sales of properties above \$1.455 million. In the period prior to 4 June 2014, a flat rate of 5.5% has been applied to the sale of properties at or above \$1.65 million. Previously announced conveyance duty rate reductions for 2014-15 are proceeding (i.e. for the progressive rates that apply to the sale of properties under \$1.455 million), effective from 4 June 2014. A further year of rate cuts in 2017-18 has also been announced.

**Table 6.1.6
Conveyance Duty Thresholds and Rates**

2012-13 %	Threshold	2013-14 %	2014-15 %	2015-16 %	2016-17 %	2017-18 %
2.4	Up to \$200,000	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.48	1.47
3.75	\$200,001 to \$300,000	3.7	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.49
4.75	\$300,001 to \$500,000	4.5	4.15	4.0	4.0	3.99
5.5	\$500,001 to \$750,000	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.8
6.5	\$750,001 to \$1,000,000	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.0
7.25	\$1,000,001 to \$1,454,999	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.75
	\$1,455,000 and above*		5.25*	5.25*	5.25*	5.25*

* Note: this is a flat rate.

- Providing in 2014-15 (and 2015-16) a concession to anyone over 60 in respect of conveyance duty associated with the purchase of a house or land (the current concession is limited to pensioners). Those eligible for the concession will pay stamp duty of only \$20 (where the dutiable value of the property does not exceed \$595,000 (property with dwelling) or \$316,100 (vacant land)). A phased level of concession applies for properties with dwelling (up to \$765,000) and for vacant land up to \$371,200.
- Reducing to 4% (from 6%) the rate of **duty on general insurance premiums**, from 1 July 2014, as previously announced as part of the ACT's taxation reform measures. The Government has affirmed that it remains committed to fully abolishing all insurance taxes by 1 July 2016.

Unfortunately, the willingness to embrace taxation reforms of the like above are tempered by the desire to ensure revenue neutrality overall (thus maintaining the property tax burden) by:

- Increasing **General Rates** in 2014-15 for both commercial properties and residential properties. Increases to both the fixed and variable components will involve an average annual general rates increase of around 10% for both residential and commercial properties.
- Introducing a **new land tax rating structure** for residential properties held for investment purposes from 1 July 2014. A fixed charge component of \$900 is being introduced, together with lower marginal rates. Lower value properties will experience an increased land tax burden under the new structure.



Thresholds (AUV)	Old Marginal Rates	New Marginal Rates
0 to \$75,000	0.60%	0.41%
\$75,001 to \$150,000	0.70%	0.48%
\$150,001 to \$275,000	0.89%	0.61%
\$275,001+	1.80%	1.23%
Fixed Charge	\$0	\$900

- Increasing the **Fire and Emergency Services Levy (FESL)** for commercial properties in 2014-15 by 35% (an average increase of \$1,030). The Government will alter the way FESL is calculated for commercial properties by introducing progressive marginal rating, with a top marginal rate of 0.8209% applying to commercial properties with an average unimproved value exceeding \$2 million. Currently a rating factor of 0.5041 applies to all commercial properties. The FESL fixed charge for residential and rural properties will increase to \$130 in 2014-15 (currently \$120).

Contact:

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2014-2015

Brendan Smyth MLA (Chair), Mary Porter MLA (Deputy Chair),
Giulia Jones MLA, Yvette Berry MLA

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

**SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE
ACT BUDGET 2014-2015
PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 3 JUNE 2014**

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to committees@parliament.act.gov.au by **10.00am Tuesday 10 June 2014**. If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please append additional comments.

1. Full name of group/organisation:

ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Maclaren Wall, Policy Officer, 02 6241 5759, mwall@actparents.org.au

3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

Yes (If yes, please email it to the Committee Secretariat with your completed survey.)

No

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:

a. Education

b.

c.

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

When viewed in the broader context, education fared well, however there is always room for improvement.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

Attached.

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

Yes (go to question 8) No (go to question 9.)

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment

In some ways yes- ie: improved ICT infrastructure funding. In some ways no- ie: no mention of funding for tablets/computers or specialist teachers.

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes No

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.



ACT Budget Reply 2013-14

The ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations is the peak body of ACT public school parents and citizens associations. We promote the interests of parents and other school community members. We believe that the provision of equitable, high-quality education is essential to the long term prosperity of the ACT.

Council views this year's Budget in a generally positive light, however there are some areas which appear concerning.

ICT Funding

Council commends the Government for allocating funding of over \$82 million towards improving physical and ICT infrastructure in public schools. In Council's budget submission, an emphasis was placed on increasing and enhancing ICT infrastructure in schools. Council is pleased that the Government has recognised the need to keep schools up to date in the fast-paced world of today.

It should be noted that the Budget makes no mention of computers or tablets. Whilst Council agrees that there should be an expansion of wireless access points in the ACT, it is no good to do this if the devices used to access the internet are not of a good standard. Increasingly parents are being asked to fund tablets and other devices which are being utilised as a core learning tool. If such devices are required for contemporary education programs then there needs to be adequate funding in the budget to allow for their provision.

Infrastructure Improvements

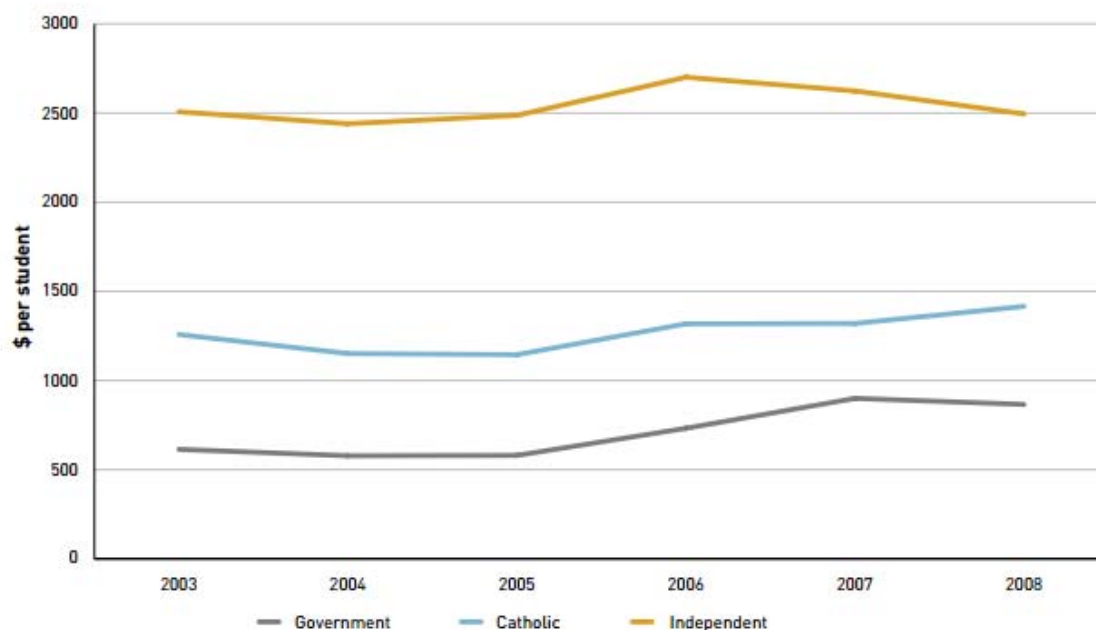
Council commends the Government for their continued funding towards the modernisation of schools in the Belconnen region. Council would like to see similar modernisation programs take place in other regions around the ACT and reoccurring funding allocated to ensure that this takes place.

Infrastructure Funding for Non-Government Schools

The Budget includes funding of over \$59 million towards improving physical and ICT infrastructure in non-government schools. The total infrastructure spending in this

Budget is split 40-60% between non-government and government schools respectively. Evidently this funding model is based entirely upon enrolment numbers in the ACT, with non-government schools accounting for nearly 40% of enrolments and public schools 60%.¹ Council believes this is an ineffective and inequitable model of funding. As shown in the graph below, on average independent schools spend nearly three times as much on capital investment than government schools.

Figure 33: Average capital investment per student (in 2008 dollars)



Source: MCEETYA, *National report on schooling in Australia, 2003 to 2008*.

Research has shown that non-government schools are able to tap into a wide range of funding sources which are not readily available to public schools.² These include churches, school fees, private benefactors and loans. Infrastructure funding should not be based upon enrolment numbers but rather on need.

Recognising that every private and public school has different funding and financial arrangements, Council questions the amount of money provided to non-government schools for infrastructure improvements. Council implores the Government to assess infrastructure funding on a case by case basis, targeting schools that need improvements the most.

¹ ACT Education and Training Directorate, 2014, *ACT School Census – February 2014*.

² Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2011, *Review of Funding for Schooling*, 95.

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the representative body
for Parent & Citizen Associations in the ACT.

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations | ABN: 53 870 517 949 | 100 Maitland St Hackett ACT
Tel: 02 62415759 | **Email:** contact@actparents.org.au | **Web:** www.actparents.org.au

Specialist Teachers

In its submission, Council suggested that targeted funding should be allocated to specialist teachers. Noting that funding has been directly provided to fund an early childhood scholarship program, Council is disappointed that a similar program has not been set up for specialist teachers, in particular at the primary level.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2014-2015

Brendan Smyth MLA (Chair), Mary Porter MLA (Deputy Chair),
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COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

**SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE
ACT BUDGET 2014-2015
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If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to committees@parliament.act.gov.au by **10.00am Tuesday 10 June 2014**. If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please append additional comments.

1. Full name of group/organisation:

Youth Coalition of the ACT

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Emma Robertson, Director Youth Coalition of the ACT

director@youthcoalition.net

(02) 6247 3540 or 0422 665 469

3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

Yes (If yes, please email it to the Committee Secretariat with your completed survey.)

No

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:

a. Education

b. Youth unemployment and jobs creation

c. Community services

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

Education

The Youth Coalition was disappointed to see that there were few new initiatives in the area of education for the ACT Budget. The Youth Coalition believes it is essential for ACT Government to continue build the capacity of the ACT education system to be flexible and responsive to the needs of all students. The Youth Coalition is particularly concerned at the gap in services that will be created by the cessation of the federally-funded Youth Connections program, which ends in December 2014, and is a key way that vulnerable young people are supported to engage in education and employment pathways.

Youth Unemployment and Jobs Creation

The challenges ahead for young people in Australia will be significant, and whether all young people will have access to the quality of life we have come to expect in the ACT will likely depend on the ACT community's ability to create jobs. The Youth Coalition believes that the ACT Government has taken the first steps and shown leadership in this area, and that it will be important in the coming months for government, community and business sectors to work together to identify broader and longer term strategies to ensure that young Canberrans can look to a future where they will have opportunity for full economic participation.

In the shorter term, we encourage the ACT Government to consider implementing targets and strategies in all projects that anticipate creating jobs (such as the infrastructure program) to ensure that these jobs employ people from specific demographics who might be more vulnerable to unemployment.

Community Services

The Youth Coalition supports the new investment in developing systems and structures in human services with the potential to transform the way people access, and then determine and direct, the supports they need. This includes funding to implement the Human Services Blueprint, investment in transition to NDIS, and very importantly the Out of Home Care Strategy. Additionally we commend the further investment in projects that shown great outcomes such as the Strengthening Families Project.

Note: Please see our budget response for further detail and analysis.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

Yes (go to question 8) No (go to question 9.)

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes No

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.



ACT Budget: Education Support & Job Creation Key for Young People

Analysis of the ACT Budget 2014 / 15

Part 1 of 2

Overview, Priorities, and Media Releases

June 2014

www.youthcoalition.net

The Youth Coalition of the ACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and continuing custodians of the lands of the ACT and we pay our respects to the Elders, families and ancestors.

We acknowledge that the effect of forced removal of Indigenous children from their families as well as past racist policies and actions continues today.

We acknowledge that the Indigenous people hold distinctive rights as the original people of modern day Australia including the right to a distinct status and culture, self-determination and land. The Youth Coalition of the ACT celebrates Ngunnawal culture and the invaluable contribution it makes to our community.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT (Youth Coalition) is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory and is responsible for representing the interests of people aged between 12 and 25 years of age and those who work with them. The Youth Coalition works to actively promote the well being and aspirations of young people in the ACT with particular respect to their political, cultural, economic and social development. The Youth Coalition is represented on many ACT advisory structures and provides advice to the ACT Government on a range of issues related to young people and youth services.

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June 2014

Prepared by Youth Coalition staff: Rebecca Cuzzillo, Sarah Jewell, Emma Robertson, Hannah Watts, and Jacob Wray.

Thank you to the Youth Coalition staff team for their support. The Youth Coalition would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support and input of the ACT Peaks network, in particular our partnership work with Families ACT, Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT, and the ACT Council of Social Services.

Director: Emma Robertson
Deputy Director: Sarah Jewell

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2014 / 15 ACT Budget Analysis

Overview, Priorities, and Media Release

The Youth Coalition's 2014 / 15 ACT Budget Analysis is divided into two parts:

- Part 1: Overview, Priorities, and Media Release (this document)
- Part 2: Expenditure Initiatives and Capital Works

Each part can be downloaded from www.youthcoalition.net or accessed in hard copy by calling (02) 6247 3540.

Introduction and Context

The foundations of belonging include government investment in services; education and employment opportunities; secure and sustainable housing; good health and wellbeing across the life course; and a collaborative and concerted effort to address disadvantage.¹

Themes of connection, belonging and collaboration are articulated clearly in the Canberra Social Plan. These themes are particularly important to young people in the ACT as they develop their communities and connectedness, pass through key life transitions (such as completing education or starting employment), and look to the people, services, and agencies around them to be working together efficiently to provide much needed support.

Young people are a distinct, and often discrete, population group aged between 12 and 25 years. Young people frequently experience systemic disadvantage, discrimination and unequal access to resources.

Canberra has one of the youngest populations of any Australian State or Territory, with approximately 78,000 people aged between 10-24 years residing in the ACT, representing more than 20% of Canberra's population.² With over one fifth of Canberra's population comprised of young people, it is important that the wellbeing of young people be regarded as an indicator of the ACT's future population health and development.

The ACT Government provides or facilitates many of the services that support young people in the ACT. In addition, other services to the community in Canberra have been supported by Australian Government funding, including in recent years through National Partnership Agreements. Community based youth and other services often triangulate local and national funding with resources raised through charitable, philanthropic, or other fundraising efforts, in order to provide a holistic, integrated response to the needs of the ACT community.

The Youth Coalition submission to the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget (October 2013) acknowledged that the change of Australian Government meant that there was uncertainty regarding the direction of Australian Government funding in key areas, and called upon the ACT Government to be prepared and planned in terms of responding to any shortfall or significant change in funding levels in these key areas of service to the community, such as education, housing, legal services, and health.

¹ ACT Government, 2011, *Canberra Social Plan*, <http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystategic/socialplan>

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013, *Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia*.

Even with the writing on the wall regarding the new Australian Government's desire to reduce spending, the announcement of the degree to which the investment in those key areas is to be scaled back was devastating for many in the youth sector. The Australian Government's budget heralded unprecedented shifts in social policy affecting young people, such as the policy that young job seekers will be ineligible for income support for 6 months.

In one budget the Australian Government re-framed young people as deficit, problematic, not of equal value as other members of the community, and likely to 'sit on the couch at home and pick up a welfare cheque' unless motivated by punitive measures to seek employment. In addition, *Work for the Dole* has been renewed, despite evidence that previous iterations of this program fell short of successfully developing employability skills or helping participants gain experience or training that is transferable to future employment.³

The Youth Coalition has increasingly called for the ACT Government to respond to the gaps created by the shortfall and changes in funding at the Australian Government level. The Youth Coalition recognises that this challenge is compounded by the Australian Government's declaration that 'the age of entitlement is over', and the conspicuous absence of any national vision or investment in critical support to address access to education and training for disadvantaged and vulnerable young Australians.

The task for the ACT Government to tailor their budget in response to the changing federal context in a relatively short space of time was not an easy one. As such, the Youth Coalition applauded the ACT Chief Minister in calling a number of community round tables to discuss the likely impact of the proposed Australian Government Budget on the Territory's economy and services before finalising the ACT Budget.

Of particular note to the Youth Coalition was the inclusion of a youth focused round table, which was predominately attended by young people, including representatives from the Universities, social support services for young people, young people involved in volunteering, and ACT peak bodies. The Youth Coalition attended this meeting, as well as another round table convened specifically for the community sector.

Participants at the youth round table were united regarding the top priority for ACT Government investment and leadership for young people in the ACT: jobs creation. The importance of ensuring the availability of jobs for young people, and the support to assist them to develop, engage with, and achieve clear employment pathways was identified across a range of demographic sub groups also.

Students spoke to the loss of skills and qualifications from the ACT, as young people complete study but have to leave Canberra to find work. Social support service providers and peak bodies raised particular concern about the impact that the end of the Youth Connections program (funded by the Australian Government) in December 2014 will have, specifically in creating a huge gap in service for the most vulnerable.

All participants in the round table also agreed that creating employment for young people was key to addressing other significant challenges facing Canberra's young people, such as access to affordable housing and health care.

³ Borland, J, and Tseng, 2003, *Does 'Work for the Dole' work? An Australian perspective on work experience programs*, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Reducing youth unemployment is undeniably a complex issue, with no single solution. A range of different approaches is required, as is effective coordination and concentration of the efforts of governments, business and community. Strong employment growth is critical to the future prospects of our young people.⁴

Overview and General Comments

Overall, the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget delivered on 3 June was welcomed by the Youth Coalition.

The ACT Government announced a budget that they believe provides measures to counter the reduction of Australian Government contribution to the ACT economy (as the Australian Government cuts employment, funding and other local investment) and to provide some relief for lower income earners whose household budgets will be significantly affected by federal policies.

While this budget will see the ACT remain in deficit at the end of the financial year, the Youth Coalition supports the ACT Government decision to not make dramatic cuts to spending and we believe that the strategy of continuing to invest in projects (such as those in the infrastructure program, in order to stimulate the economy and promote jobs creation) will provide more opportunity for young people.

However, the challenges ahead for young people in Australia will be significant, and whether all young people will have access to the quality of life we have come to expect in the ACT will likely depend on the ACT community's ability to create jobs. The Youth Coalition believes that the ACT Government has taken the first steps and shown leadership in this area, and that it will be important in the coming months for government, community and business sectors to work together to identify broader and longer term strategies to ensure that young Canberrans can look to a future where they will have opportunity for full economic participation.

In the shorter term, we encourage the ACT Government to consider implementing targets and strategies in all projects that anticipate creating jobs (such as the infrastructure program) to ensure that these jobs employ people from specific demographics who might be more vulnerable to unemployment.

The Youth Coalition believes there is also great opportunity in our sector, community services, to look at how we support employment pathways for young people into our workforces.

Key initiatives announced in the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget included investment of funding to:

- Build a digital platform to provide access to core government services
- Operationalise the Human Services Blueprint through a trial in West Belconnen
- Expand the Strengthening Families Project
- Prepare for the Out of Home Care Strategy
- Assist low-income households to meet the costs of essential services
- Help young people develop ideas for establishing local businesses

⁴ Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2014, *Investing in our Future: Opportunities for the Australian Government to boost youth employment* http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Investing_in_our_future_2014.pdf

- Expand community mental health services
- Provide more staff to Health and Walk-In Centres
- Establish a single Human Services Gateway
- Support homelessness services for the next 12 months
- Research Justice Reinvestment measures
- Continue the Throughcare Project

The Youth Coalition supports the new investment in developing systems and structures in human services with the potential to transform the way people access, and then determine and direct, the supports they need. This includes funding to implement the Human Services Blueprint, investment in transition to NDIS, and very importantly the Out of Home Care Strategy. Additionally we commend the further investment in projects that shown great outcomes such as the Strengthening Families Project.

The Youth Coalition notes, however, that many of the initiatives funded under the Community Services Directorate only include funding for one year. We understand that there is an intent to roll out the Human Services Blueprint in other regions next, building on the learning from the evaluation of the West Belconnen implementation. We also acknowledge that the Out of Home Care Strategy is still being finalised, and highlight the feedback from our members that the strategy looks promising. However, the implementation of the Out of Home Care Strategy will be costly, and if all the elements of the strategy are not adequately funded we may struggle to effect the changes needed.

The money invested in matching the Australian Government's extension of funding to homelessness services is applauded, but again only covers these essential services for one year. While the Youth Coalition understands the range of factors that have created these short term arrangements, we are concerned about the ongoing uncertainty regarding these services and programs. Short term funding arrangements can limit the ability of services to support members of the community who are in significant distress and/or vulnerability. When agencies operate without funding certainty, they are reluctant to start support and then withdraw early, fearing this break of trust can cause further harm to the people seeking support. The continued state of uncertainty can also have a negative impact on the workforce, and be a contributing factor to staff burnout, turnover, disengagement or ill health.

The Youth Coalition is pleased to see some investment in exploring justice reinvestment research and strategy, which we have been calling for over a number of years. This sits alongside significant investment in capital works and staffing to expand the capacity of Alexander Maconochie Centre, highlighting the need to better understand the balance of investment in immediate needs with investment in preventative and early intervention measures that will reduce cost over time.

The Youth Coalition is disappointed that the issues and recommendations raised in our budget submission in relation to education have not been addressed. We believe that educational engagement is not only a key part of supporting young people's employment pathways, but is a significant factor in addressing health, reducing engagement in crime and entry into the youth justice system, and preventing youth homelessness.

The 2012 Youth Coalition survey of young people aged 12-25, Rate Canberra, found that 'school work or study' topped the list of personal concerns that were most frequently rated

as 'affecting my life and it is worrying me' with 33% of the approximately 1400 respondents nominating this answer.⁵

While the ACT has continued to achieve the highest rates of attainment for Year 12 or equivalent school or non-school qualification, this has risen by only a small amount from 88% in 2001 to 91% in 2011. In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) signed the National Education Agreement, in which the ACT committed to reaching a target of 95% by 2015.⁶

The Youth Coalition also remains concerned about the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous educational achievement and attainment rates. In comparison to the data above, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the ACT had an attainment level of 71% in 2011.⁷

For vulnerable young people in the ACT, whether they engage with education and have positive experiences is one of the most significant determinants of their longer term capacity to fully participate, economically and socially, in our community.

Key Priorities for Young People & Youth Sector

Key priorities that the Youth Coalition identified in its submission to the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget were:

- Education
- Housing and Homelessness
- Transport and Planning
- Early Intervention and Prevention

A summary of key commitments of the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget in these priority areas is noted below. A more comprehensive list of initiatives and analysis is provided under each ACT Government Directorate in *Part 2: Expenditure and Capital Works*.

Education

Initiatives and commitments in 2014 / 15 ACT Budget relating to education include:

Expense Initiative & Capital Works

- CIT Campus Modernisation – Tuggeranong Campus

Capital Works

- Belconnen Region Schools – Modernisation
- Sustaining Smart Schools – Digital Infrastructure for our schools

⁵ Youth Coalition of the ACT, 2012, *Rate Canberra: Findings from the Survey of Young People Aged 12-25 in the ACT*

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013, *Year 12 Achievement and Continuing Education*, Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013

⁷ COAG Reform Council, 2013, *Indigenous Reform 2011–12: Comparing performance across Australia*

The Youth Coalition submission to the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget called on the ACT Government to:

- *Investigate ways to continue successful programs such as the community based Youth Connections Program and the Alternative Programs delivered by the Education and Training Directorate (Transitions and Careers);*
- *Ensure that specialist youth services and practitioners are funded to deliver supports for students who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education;*

These recommendations were not reflected within the ACT Budget 2014-15.

The Youth Coalition is very concerned about the gap in services to support vulnerable young people to engage in education and employment pathways. This gap is created by the cessation of federal government initiatives, in particular the loss of the Youth Connections program which ends in December 2014. While we acknowledge the challenge for the ACT Government in compensating for this change in national policy direction, the Youth Coalition is concerned about the loss of skilled specialist services and workers that currently assist vulnerable young people to transition to further education, training, or employment. Experience indicates that the expectation that generalist services will fill this gap is rarely realised, and relies on proper investment in staff to up-skill workers and program development to target support for young people.

The known trajectories for young people who disengage from formal education mean that the Youth Coalition will continue to seek a commitment from ACT Government to resource specialist youth services, workers, and programs to ensure that vulnerable young people do not fall through the gaps. The evidence is clear that supporting all young people to maintain pathways to education, training or employment is critical to addressing significant social concerns in our community, such as poverty, homelessness, and unemployment.

The Youth Coalition believes that it is essential for the ACT Government to continue build the capacity of the ACT education system to be flexible and responsive to the needs of all students. We acknowledge that initiatives such as ACT Flexible Learning Options (FLO) Program (which supersedes the Alternative Programs) intend to do this, however, we continue to note that funding for individual FLO projects is capped at \$15,000, and that this model relies on a level of existing resource capacity (such as staffing) within community-based organisational partners that may limit what is able to be delivered under this initiative.

- *Provide resources for existing and new successful programs targeting support and improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.*

The Youth Coalition remains concerned that the gap in retention rates and educational attainment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the rest of the population is still significant, and continues to advocate for increased investment in programs targeting support and educational outcomes for this cohort.

- *Increase support for preventative and front-line health, mental health and social support programs in schools such as the work undertaken by:*
 - *School nurses;*
 - *School based youth workers; and,*
 - *Pastoral care teams.*
- *Ensure that community based specialist youth services are properly resourced to be able to engage with and provide service within schools.*
- *Invest in the resources, tools, and support necessary to facilitate schools' implementation of the Engaging Schools Framework.*

These recommendations were not reflected within the ACT Budget 2014 / 15.

The Youth Coalition welcomes the modest increase in health and mental health investment within the ACT Budget. However, we are concerned that preventative and front-line health is not clearly integrated in schools. Schools are recognised as 'first-to-know' agencies regarding many aspects of young people's lives. The embedding of supports such as health professionals, youth workers, social workers, and psychologists within schools can deliver more integrated, efficient and effective services. Further, the successful deployment of these disciplines assists schools to be the dynamic, successful communities that improve the life opportunities for all Canberrans, as the *ACT Youth Commitment* aspires.

Unprecedented changes in federal policy direction and investment in young Australians means that ensuring the mobilisation and integration of effective, targeted, and resourced preventative health and social supports in schools has increased in urgency. The ACT has a number of key elements in place working towards ensuring schools are accessible and responsive to young people and families in local networks and communities, however the Youth Coalition continues to highlight the need for greater engagement and coordination between the community services and education sectors. We believe that there is strong support for this across both sectors, reflected in the *ACT Engaging Schools Framework*; however, the expectation that we will arrive at effective integrated service provision without increased and targeted resourcing is unrealistic.

The Youth Coalition highlights that ACT community-based children, youth, and family support services are well positioned to integrate and provide responses with and across the education, youth justice, care and protection, adult corrections, and health systems. However, while acknowledging that there is funding provided to the community sector to do some of this work, many of these programs and services are small, and the level of service needed to meet the vision of the *Engaging Schools Framework* (and *Youth Justice Blueprint*, *Out of Home Care Strategy*, *Throughcare* project, among others) of an integrated community service component exceeds current capacity.

While the Youth Coalition applauds the adoption of the *Engaging Schools Framework* in the ACT, we continue to be concerned that the opportunity presented by the Framework will be missed if there is no clear cross-sector resourcing associated with its implementation.

Housing and Homelessness

Initiatives and commitments in 2014 / 15 ACT Budget in relating to Housing and Homelessness include:

Expense Initiatives

- Better Human Services – Human Services Gateway
- Common Ground – Providing services
- Continued Support for Homelessness Services
- Homelessness Sector Reform – Evaluation

The Youth Coalition submission to the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget called on the ACT Government to:

- *Address housing affordability, particularly for young people in the ACT.*

This recommendation was not reflected within the ACT Budget 2014 / 15.

The Youth Coalition welcomes the announcement of budget initiatives such as cuts to stamp duty and the expansion of concessions to assist low income households. However, there is little in the ACT Budget 2014 / 15 that specifically addresses housing affordability for young people. Despite recent falls, the private rental market in the ACT is among the highest in Australia. Many young people report difficulty in gaining entry to private rent properties due to cost, availability, and discrimination.

- *Offset any funding cuts to Homelessness Services and commit to ensuring that services funded under the NPAH are maintained.*

This recommendation was partially reflected within the ACT Budget 2014 / 15.

The Youth Coalition welcomes the ACT Government's continued support to homelessness services in providing additional funding consistent with the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. However, we note that this funding is only for the next financial year, and while acknowledging that there is no clarity regarding where the Australian Government is heading with regard to homelessness policy or funding, we urge the ACT Government to proactively take measures that will ensure the level of current service delivery is maintained.

- *Create youth-specific referral/intake capacity within the youth homelessness service system.*

This recommendation was not reflected within the ACT Budget 2014 / 15.

This recommendation was included in the Youth Coalition's budget submission in response to our members and stakeholders continuing to raise concern about young people's experience in being able to access support services. The Youth Coalition welcomes the effort to simplify access to the human services system by establishing a single *Human Services Gateway*. The Youth Coalition recommends that as the three existing intake services are consolidated, the skills and knowledge of the youth sector, and help seeking patterns of young people, are reflected in the design and implementation of intake, assessment, and referral services. A clear understanding of and commitment to addressing

young people's experiences and needs is essential for making it easier for young people to find the support they need, at the time they need it.

Transport and Planning

Key initiatives and commitments in 2014 / 15 ACT Budget in relating to Transport and Planning include:

Expense Initiatives

- Capital Metro – Scoping and facilitation \$21 million 2014/15
- Taxi Subsidy Scheme, \$112,000 in 2014/15
- ACTION – Improved public transport, \$2 million over 4 years
- Parks and Open Spaces – Maintaining amenity, \$15.2 million over 4 years
- Transport for Canberra – Improved community transport coordination, \$500,000 in 2014/15

Capital Works

- iConnect
- Woden Bus Interchange Redevelopment Stage 1 \$3.25 million over 2 years
- City Plan Implementation
- Local Shopping Centre Upgrades Program, \$2 million over 2 years
- Transport for Canberra – Upgrading Erindale bus station, \$900,000 in 2014/15
- Transport for Canberra – Walking and cycling infrastructure – Stage 4, \$2.5 million over 2 years

The Youth Coalition submission to the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget called on the ACT Government to:

- *Develop public transport to address the needs of young people, be accessible and affordable, and include adequate evening, late night and weekend services.*

This recommendation was partially reflected within the ACT Budget 2014 / 15.

The Youth Coalition welcomes additional public transport funding for weekend services to new suburbs in Canberra, but we continue to call for further investment to improve and increase public transport services to the whole of Canberra.

In responding to 2012 Rate Canberra Survey, young people from the ACT frequently identify limited transport accessibility as a barrier to their participation in employment, education, and recreational activities.⁸

Additionally, the Youth Coalition advocates for the immediate investment in affordable, safe and reliable public transport to allow young people maximum access to employment and education.

⁸ Youth Coalition of the ACT, 2012, *Rate Canberra 2012: Findings from the survey of Young People aged 12-25 in the ACT*

- *Resource the ACT Government's commitment to becoming a 'Child and Youth Friendly City', including the provision of public space and transport options that meet the needs of young people in all Canberra planning.*

This recommendation is potentially met within the ACT Budget 2014 / 15.

A number of Expense and Capital Works Initiatives have been identified in the ACT Budget, related to public space and transport options. While specific resource towards implementing the '*Child and Youth Friendly City*' approach (a commitment of both the ACT Children's Plan 2009-2014, and ACT Young People's Plan 2009-2014) have not been identified, the Youth Coalition believes that a number of these initiative will be of benefit to young people. To fully implement a '*Child and Youth Friendly City*' approach would involve children and young people having input to the design and implementation of these projects. The Youth Coalition believes there is a number of opportunities in this program that will benefit from keeping the well being of children and young people at the centre of planning, and could easily involve children and young people in design and implementation.

Early Intervention and Prevention

The Youth Coalition submission to the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget called on the ACT Government to:

- *provide leadership and resources to a whole of government and community Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, including commitment and shared funding from all agencies*

This recommendation was not reflected within the ACT Budget 2014 / 15.

Addressing the root causes of social disadvantage and vulnerability is a clear policy goal, both locally and nationally, and a common desire in the community service sector. The need for intervention with young people early in the life of any problem, as well as the life of the young person, is clearly articulated in the National Youth Strategy.

While this recommendation was not actioned, there are a number of promising projects outlined in the 2014 / 15 Budget using a whole-of-government approach. The Youth Coalition recommends that whole-of-government initiatives include genuine investment and engagement in early intervention and prevention, and that all ACT Directorates participate in and contribute to projects such the *Human Services Blueprint*, and the *Strengthening Families Project*. The Youth Coalition remains committed to asking the ACT Government to work in an integrated manner and providing leadership with regard to early intervention and prevention.



MEDIA RELEASE

3 June 2014

ACT Budget Intends to Soften Federal Budget Blows for Young People

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, Canberra's peak body for youth affairs, has welcomed the ACT Government's acknowledgement of the significant challenges facing young people as federal budget measures look set to withdraw key supports and programs.

'It was a strong message that the Chief Minister took time out to talk specifically with young people and the youth sector following the federal budget announcements', said Emma Robertson, Youth Coalition Director.

'The message from young Canberrans is that they are really concerned about jobs and employment pathways.'

'With predictions of rising unemployment, and the proposed withdrawal of income support for young job seekers for 6 months of each year, we are concerned that young people, particularly those whose families don't have capacity to fully support them financially to the age of 30, will be left unable to meet basic costs of living.'

'ACT Budget initiatives such as the start up of **Young Business Connect**, which will see \$300,000 provided to assist young entrepreneurs to develop ideas for establishing new local businesses, show that the ACT Government listened to those concerns, and has taken the first step in inviting the ACT Community to, "work together to build a positive story about our young people in this town".'

'While the Youth Coalition welcomes investment in infrastructure, and projects that will see direct employment of young people in traineeships and apprenticeships, there is still more work to be done to ensure that all young Canberrans have access to and are supported to engage in education, skills development, and career pathways.'

'We have raised major concern about the gap that will exist in support for vulnerable young people to engage in positive educational outcomes as the highly successful federally funded Youth Connections Program winds up in December.'

'This will be a significant loss for the ACT, and in this tight fiscal environment the Youth Coalition will be looking to ACT Government to ensure that existing resources are mobilised to ensure that no young person falls through the cracks'.

"Education and training is key to creating a dynamic, successful community and improving life opportunities for all Canberrans". (ACT Youth Commitment)

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469



ACT Budget: Education Support & Job Creation Key for Young People

Analysis of the ACT Budget 2014 / 15

Part 2 of 2

Expenditure Initiatives and Capital Works

June 2014

www.youthcoalition.net

The Youth Coalition of the ACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and continuing custodians of the lands of the ACT and we pay our respects to the Elders, families and ancestors.

We acknowledge that the effect of forced removal of Indigenous children from their families as well as past racist policies and actions continues today.

We acknowledge that the Indigenous people hold distinctive rights as the original people of modern day Australia including the right to a distinct status and culture, self-determination and land. The Youth Coalition of the ACT celebrates Ngunnawal culture and the invaluable contribution it makes to our community.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT (Youth Coalition) is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory and is responsible for representing the interests of people aged between 12 and 25 years of age and those who work with them. The Youth Coalition works to actively promote the well being and aspirations of young people in the ACT with particular respect to their political, cultural, economic and social development. The Youth Coalition is represented on many ACT advisory structures and provides advice to the ACT Government on a range of issues related to young people and youth services.

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June 2014

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Budget Analysis Overview

Overall, the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget delivered on 3 June was welcomed by the Youth Coalition.

The ACT Government announced a budget that they believe provides measures to counter the reduction of Australian Government contribution to the ACT economy (as the Australian Government cuts employment, funding and other local investment) and to provide some relief for lower income earners whose household budgets will be significantly affected by federal policies.

While this budget will see the ACT remain in deficit at the end of the financial year, the Youth Coalition supports the ACT Government decision to not make dramatic cuts to spending and we believe that the strategy of continuing to invest in projects (such as those in the infrastructure program, in order to stimulate the economy and promote jobs creation) will provide more opportunity for young people.

However, the challenges ahead for young people in Australia will be significant, and whether all young people will have access to the quality of life we have come to expect in the ACT will likely depend on the ACT community's ability to create jobs. The Youth Coalition believes that the ACT Government has taken the first steps and shown leadership in this area, and that it will be important in the coming months for government, community and business sectors to work together to identify broader and longer term strategies to ensure that young Canberrans can look to a future where they will have opportunity for full economic participation.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT's ACT Budget 2014 / 15 Analysis is divided into two parts:

- Part 1: Overview, Priorities, and Media Release
- Part 2: Expenditure Initiatives and Capital Works (this document)

Each part can be downloaded from www.youthcoalition.net or accessed in hard copy by calling (02) 6247 3540.

Below is an analysis of the ACT Budget 2014 / 15 Expenditure Initiatives and Capital Works, as outlined in Budget Paper No. 3 for the following:

- Canberra Institute of Technology
- Capital Metro Agency
- Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate
- Community Services Directorate
- Commerce and Works Directorate
- Economic Development Directorate
- Education and Training Directorate
- Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate
- Health Directorate
- Housing ACT
- Justice and Community Safety Directorate
- Territory and Municipal Services Directorate
- Whole of Government initiatives

Each section outlines key aspects of the relevant Directorate's purpose and priorities, provides an introduction and context to the initiatives contained within the ACT Budget 2014 / 15, and provides commentary on Expenditure Initiatives and Capital Works that are relevant to Canberra's young people.

Canberra Institute of Technology

→ A leader of vocational education and training

Introduction

It is essential that the ACT Government continue to build the capacity of the ACT education system to be flexible and responsive to the needs of all students. This extends to learning beyond the legislated requirement for young people to study until 17 years old or having completed Year 12 or equivalent (AQF Certificate Level II). Attainment of a Certificate II or lower has been attributed to social exclusion in the forms of social interactions, personal safety, community and health.¹ With Year 12 now being regarded by many as the base level qualification for employment, TAFE settings provide an important service in providing young people with the opportunity to pursue industry or employment-oriented learning and skills development.

The Youth Coalition believes that all educational institutions in the ACT can also contribute to:

- The development and implementation of mechanisms that seek to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to remain engaged in education and employment opportunities;
- Inclusive and more flexible educational delivery and resources to support young people with disabilities to engage meaningfully in education and employment opportunities; and,
- Alternative/flexible educational provision for young people who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging, especially young people involved in the youth justice system, low socio-economic status, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and young people who have had involvement in the Care and Protection system.

Capital Works under Canberra Institute of Technology are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

¹ Buddelmeyer, H., Leung, F. and Scutella, R. (2012) *Educating oneself out of Social Exclusion*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide

Capital Works

CIT Campus Modernisation – Tuggeranong Campus

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
122	The Government will develop a campus modernisation strategy for the Canberra Institute of Technology. The Government has included an Infrastructure Investment Provision in the Budget for developing a new CIT Campus in Tuggeranong.	2014 / 15 \$0 2015 / 16 NFP 2016 / 17 NFP 2017 / 18 NFP	The Youth Coalition believes it is important that education is available and accessible across regions. We welcome the development of a new CIT Campus in Tuggeranong and encourage the ACT Government to ensure there is affordable, safe and accessible transport and accommodation available for students coming to study in Canberra.

Note: NFP indicates not for publication.

Capital Metro Agency

- Planning, design, delivery of first stage of light rail network
- Getting the light rail project procurement ready

- Engaging with the community

Introduction

In responding to 2012 Rate Canberra Survey, young people from the ACT frequently identify limited transport accessibility as a barrier to their participation in employment, education, and recreational activities.²

The heavy reliance that many young people have on the ACT public transport system should be reflected by: developing public transport to address the needs of young people; ensuring accessibility and affordability; and including adequate evening, late night and weekend services. The Youth Coalition also advocates for public transport options that improve access for young people with disabilities.

While the Capital Metro is still some years from completion, and there is much discussion in the ACT community about the project, the Youth Coalition generally supports investment in projects that will stimulate the ACT economy.

Expense Initiatives under Capital Metro Agency are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

² Youth Coalition of the ACT, 2012, *Rate Canberra: Findings from the Survey of Young People Aged 12-25 in the ACT*

Expense Initiatives

Capital Metro – Scoping and facilitation

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
82	<p>The Government will invest in the development of Capital Metro. This includes preparing Capital Metro to an investment ready stage and, subject to the full business case, commencing the procurement and delivery of the light rail service and its operation, specialised economic and financial advisory services and stakeholder engagement activities.</p> <p>Additional funding of \$0.907 million in 2014-15 will be provided to the Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate for increased staffing for work associated with operational, finance and advisory services to improve the financial and commercial impacts associated with the Capital Metro project. This amount is included in the total above.</p>	<p>2014 / 15 \$21,000,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0</p>	<p>The Youth Coalition supports initiatives that improve and increase public transport in the ACT. Public transport is often a young person's primary means of transportation. ACT public transport services need to be affordable, safe and timely in order to facilitate young people's participation in our community. We urge the ACT Government to ensure that young people are involved in the design and planning for the Capital Metro project.</p> <p>The Youth Coalition were pleased to hear the Chief Minister and Treasurer identify the intent for jobs creation initiatives to specifically address concerns about rising youth unemployment. One of the justifications for the \$21 million investment in the Capital Metro project is jobs creation and we urge the ACT Government to ensure that new jobs are targeted to groups in the community most vulnerable to unemployment, particularly young people.</p>

Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate

- Oversight of the implementation of ACT Government priorities
- Financial/economic management strategic planning across government
- Workplace health and safety

- Improve access to government services
- Leading implementation of Digital Canberra Action Plan
- Coordinating red tape reduction

Introduction

Young Canberrans' priorities for government generally echo what young people around Australia identify as key social, political, and economic issues. Prior to the 2013 federal election, the National Union of Students surveyed some 12,000 full time students and found that their top five issues for the election were:

- Quality education & funding
- Secure jobs, fair workplaces
- Humane treatment of asylum seekers
- Affordable housing
- Marriage equality

The 2014 ACT Youth Interact Forum, held during National Youth Week, saw approximately 100 young people from around the ACT come together and identify issues of priority to them, as a part of an exercise around having their voice heard. Again, education, employment, and housing featured as key issues, as well as the treatment of asylum seekers and marriage equality.

The Youth Coalition believes that it is essential that young people's voices are heard across government, and that policy direction and investment should reflect their stake in the community.

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under the Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Expense Initiatives

Healthy Weight Initiative

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
83	The Healthy Weight Action Plan funding of \$3.645 million over four years will provide for community programs and education development activities, student physical activity education programs, web based resources for general practitioners and developing nutritional information for supermarkets and shopping centres. The Government will focus on partnering with industry to improve the quality of the Territory's food environment and equip the community to make informed diet choices. These initiatives will complement other Government priorities including the Transport for Canberra walking and cycling infrastructure and the 'Ride or Walk to School' program.	2014 / 15 \$1,538,000 2015 / 16 \$1,315,000 2016 / 17 \$344,000 2017 / 18 \$448,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes initiatives aimed at addressing obesity and overweight in the Canberra population. We seek further clarification on the target age group for the Healthy Weight Action Plan, and how young people (12-25 years) have been specifically targeted as part of this plan.

Capital Works

iConnect

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
123	The Government will build a digital platform to transform the delivery of ACT Government services to citizens, businesses and the Government. iConnect will establish a secure online portal to provide access to core government services and payment transactions through a single sign-on for all customers. This initiative is expected to generate net savings of \$9.735 million across agencies during the forward estimates.	2014 / 15 \$1,651,000 (Capital) \$2,047,000 (Associated Expenses) 2015 / 16 \$6,061,000 (Capital) \$201,000 (Associated Expenses) 2016 / 17 \$5,196,000 (Capital) \$580,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$-2,1947,000 (Associated Expenses) 2017 / 18 \$2,967,000 (Capital) \$1,224,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$-9,036,000 (Associated Expenses)	The Youth Coalition applauds the ACT Government's investment in creating digital platforms for access to government services. We believe that the digital strategy will facilitate greater community participation for young people, and reflects the role that young people often play as early adopters of new technologies. In particular, we welcome moves for greater digital and online service delivery, as this is how many young people seek out services and information.

Community Services Directorate

- Participation/well-being of Canberra community
- Services
- Building cultural/social capital
- Supporting marginalised/vulnerable Canberrans

- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Out of Home Care
- Human Services Blueprint
- Red tape reduction
- Family/sexual violence
- Respite centre for children

Introduction

The Community Services Directorate provides a range of services to young people and their families in the ACT, either through direct service delivery or the provision of funding to community service providers. The Community Services Directorate is also responsible for key statutory agencies such as Care and Protection Services and Youth Justice.

The Youth Coalition works closely with the Community Services Directorate in a range of areas, including the recent work undertaken to develop a Blueprint for Human Services across the ACT. For a number of years now the Youth Coalition has also called on the ACT Government to provide leadership and resources to a whole of government and community Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy, including commitment and shared funding from all agencies.

While this is not exactly the same as the Human Services Blueprint, the Youth Coalition believes that this work will go some of the way towards addressing early intervention and prevention. Particularly we see opportunities through planned, joined up work to:

- Ensure that community-based specialist youth services are properly resourced to be able to engage with and provide service within schools
- Support the development of additional programs, services and supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the

ACT, particularly those with an early intervention and prevention focus

- Develop and implement mechanisms that seek to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to remain engaged in education and employment opportunities.
- Provide of high quality respite programs and services for young people and their families across the ACT
- Ensure there are cultural care plans in place for all multicultural young people in care
- Recognise that families are the first point of support for young people, and therefore provide practical support for families to ensure their child's engagement in education, training or employment
- Actively involve young people in designing, planning, implementing and evaluating youth policy and service delivery frameworks particularly for care and protection

ACT National Disability Insurance Scheme

The Youth Coalition welcomes the ACT Government's commitment to the NDIS in the ACT. We also acknowledge that the transition to the NDIS is not reflected in the budget because the Commonwealth and Territory Governments have not yet reached an agreement on this. The Youth Coalition welcomes the investment in the Therapy Assistants Program and the Emergency Responses for Disability Services for people with disabilities as they transition to the NDIS. We acknowledge that the NDIS is a significant undertaking for the Commonwealth and Territory Governments, however, we are concerned about the continued uncertainty around the roll out of the NDIS in the ACT and encourage the ACT Government to clarify the details and communicate with providers, families, and people with disabilities.

Investments relating to the National Disability Insurance Scheme includes:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ● ACT National Disability Insurance Scheme | \$555,000 over one year (2015-16) |
| ● Disability Services Indexation | \$2.25 million over one year |
| ● Emergency Responses for Disability Services | \$2.84 million over two years |
| ● Therapy Assistants Program – Additional services | \$1.64 million over three years |

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under the Community Services Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Expense Initiatives

Better Human Services – Blueprint Local Service Network

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
85	<p>The Government will provide funding for a Human Services Blueprint Local Service Network. The initiative will trial new ways of providing services to better integrate local service delivery to individuals and vulnerable groups. The Local Service Network will operationalise key elements of the Human Services Blueprint, including local governance, flexible funding arrangements, enhanced service coordination, and data sharing. It will ensure individuals' outcomes are tracked and evaluated. The Network trial will be located in West Belconnen.</p>	<p>2014 / 15 \$670,000 2015 / 16 \$665,000 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0</p>	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative and supports the ACT Government's investment in operationalising the <i>Human Services Blueprint</i>, better connecting existing services, placing people at the centre of service delivery to ensure that they are supported with the right service, at the right time and for the right duration.</p> <p>We also support the initial implementation of the Blueprint elements occurring in West Belconnen, utilising the opportunity to engage and support services such as the Child & Family Centre and those provided by community agencies in the region.</p> <p>The evaluation and learning from this project will be used to inform the implementation of Local Service Networks in the other regions of the ACT in the future.</p>

Better Human Services – Strengthening Families

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
85	<p>The successful Strengthening Families approach will be expanded for up to 50 families with complex needs. Each family will be supported by a trained Lead Worker who will work with the family to implement an agreed family plan, supported by tailored support packages that will aim to prevent interaction with high cost and intrusive service systems.</p>	<p>2014 / 15 \$445,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2015 / 16 \$0 2015 / 16 \$0</p>	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes the expansion of the <i>Strengthening Families</i> project following the success of the pilot project. We strongly support the family- and person-centered approach and the co-design nature of <i>Strengthening Families</i> in resourcing and supporting families to help themselves.</p> <p>However, we note there are a number of initiatives that provide investment to implement tailored support packages or plans, such as the expansion of the <i>Throughcare</i> project, the <i>Youth Justice Blueprint</i>, the <i>Engaging Schools Framework</i> and the <i>Strengthening Families</i> project, and we are concerned about the capacity of existing community services who do the practical support to meet all of these without additional resourcing.</p> <p>The Youth Coalition is also concerned <i>Strengthening Families</i> has no funding commitment from the ACT Government beyond the upcoming financial year. We know that relationship building is key to the success of initiatives such as <i>Strengthening Families</i> and we strongly encourage the ACT Government to clarify their ongoing commitment to this promising project.</p> <p>Given that this initiative will provide a trained Lead Worker to support families, we seek clarification that this investment is providing workers who will provide practical support to families.</p>

Family and Sexual Violence Support – Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
86	The Government will provide additional funding to support sexual assault counselling and crisis and court support for victims of family violence.	2014 / 15 \$153,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition welcomes the additional funding for family and sexual violence support. We believe this is important as family violence is one of the primary causes of homelessness including youth homelessness. The Youth Coalition also acknowledges the increased demand for support provision to families in which a young person has been violent towards other family members.

Out of Home Care Strategy – Additional funding

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
86	The Government will increase funding to meet growth in demand for out of home care places, and undertake preparatory work associated with implementing a new Out of Home Care Strategy in 2015-16.	2014 / 15 \$4,100,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition welcomes the further investment in the Out of Home Care Strategy. We acknowledge the Strategy is not yet finalised and therefore, the funding for implementation has not been reflected in this budget. Feedback from our stakeholders has been positive and we applaud the ACT Government for reflecting feedback from community in the draft of the Strategy. Stakeholders have raised concern, however, that the Strategy will be expensive to implement, and without adequate investment for its full implementation (without compromising any of the elements) it may not be achievable.

Philanthropic/Institutional Investor Model

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
86	The Government will fund up to \$80,000 in 2014-15 to explore options for facilitating enhanced philanthropic links between the government, private sector and not for profit and charitable organisations that are mutually beneficial and support improved social outcomes in the Canberra community. The cost of this initiative will be met from within existing resources.	2014 / 15 \$0 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition supports exploring a range of options to diversify the sources for funding and other resources to support improved social outcomes in the Canberra Community. We seek clarification regarding how this project will enhance the philanthropic work already going on between these sectors, and look forward to hearing more detail in general about the project.

Capital Works

A New Respite Property

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
124	The Government will provide up to \$1.075 million for the construction of a purpose built respite property for children, to replace an existing respite property currently operated by Disability ACT. It is expected that the Government funding will be supplemented by a contribution from a private entity.	2014 / 15 \$1,075,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition supports initiatives that help to relieve the pressures that families face in supporting their family members with disabilities. We encourage the ACT Government to consult with young people with disabilities and carers, and to promote the active involvement in designing, planning and evaluation of initiatives such as this new respite property.

Commerce and Works Directorate

- Centralised administrative/business activities (ICT, procurement, publishing, records, HR, finance)
- Revenue office (tax collection)

- Cost saving/red tape reduction for the business of government
- Online services
- Updating procurement processes
- Selling ACTTAB

Introduction

The Youth Coalition supports the reduction of red tape, and ensuring that ACT Government processes are not inefficient and outmoded.

The additional investment in the ACT Concessions Program is particularly welcome, given the challenges ahead as those with lower incomes face higher medical, educational, and general cost of living expenses.

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under the Commerce and Works Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Expense Initiatives

ACT Concessions Program – Increasing funding

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
88	The Government will provide additional funding to assist households meet the costs of essential services. The Government will evaluate the program in 2014-15 to consider options to improve its effectiveness, targeting and sustainability.	2014 / 15 \$6,615,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition welcomes the additional funding to assist low-income households to meet the costs of essential services and recognise the ACT Government is progressing a range of initiatives to bolster the concessions program. In particular, we believe the reduction of the administration fee for motor vehicle registration from \$25 to \$15 for motorists who choose to pay their motor vehicle registration quarterly or half yearly will provide relief to those who most need it. We acknowledge this is a positive initiative for young people whose financial situation may necessitate the use of quarterly or half yearly payment options. We invite the ACT Government to consider eliminating this fee altogether in the future.

Data.ACT – Open Access Platform

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
88	The Government is maintaining its open data service following a trial in 2013-14. This service will provide a range of data including educational (the census of all ACT schools), geographic (ACT population projections) and transportation data (ACTION timetables) for use by business and the community. The cost of \$85,000 per year for this initiative will be met from within existing resources.	2014 / 15 \$0 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition welcomes initiatives that enable community sector access to timely and relevant data. Access to data is important to ensure the efficient and effective planning and implementation of services.

Taxi Subsidy Scheme

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
88	The Government will provide funding for the management and maintenance of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS) smartcard program.	2014 / 15 \$112,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition welcomes the continued support for the Taxi Subsidy Scheme.

Capital Works

Electronic Tendering

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
126	The Government will implement an electronic tendering (eTendering) system to replace the ACT's existing manual and paper based processes. This initiative will reduce the cost of administering procurements for both the ACT Government and organisations tendering for supply of goods and services with the ACT Government.	2014 / 15 \$110,000 (Capital) \$-42,000 (Associated Expenses) 2015 / 16 \$22,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$-165,000 (Associated Expenses) 2016 / 17 \$22,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$-165,000 (Associated Expenses) 2017 / 18 \$22,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$-165,000 (Associated Expenses)	The Youth Coalition supports the implementation of an electronic tendering system for the supply of goods and services with the ACT Government. We also encourage the ACT Government to consider the application of an electronic tendering system for all tendering processes, such as those for community service provision.

Economic Development Directorate

- Economic/social development of the ACT (growth, jobs, infrastructure)
- Attracting investment
- ACT as a travel destination

- Response to Australian Government budget
- International flights
- Brand Canberra
- Northbourne Ave redevelopment
- City to the Lake, Australia Forum, Moncrieff
- Major events (sport, Floriade etc)
- Addressing housing affordability

Introduction

The Youth Coalition submission to the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget (October 2013) acknowledged that the change of Australian Government meant that there was uncertainty regarding the direction of Australian Government funding in key areas, and called upon the ACT Government to be prepared and planned in terms of responding to any shortfall or significant change in funding levels in these key areas of service to the community, such as education, housing, legal services, and health.

The ACT Government announced a budget that they believe provides measures to counter the reduction of Australian Government contribution to the ACT economy (as the Australian Government cuts employment, funding and other local investment) and to provide some relief for lower income earners whose household budgets will be significantly affected by federal policies.

The 2014 / 15 ACT Budget makes significant investment in economic development, through infrastructure and other projects. The Youth Coalition encourages the ACT Government to consider implementing targets and strategies in all projects that anticipate creating jobs (such as the infrastructure program) to ensure that these jobs employ people from specific demographics who might be more vulnerable to unemployment.

The Youth Coalition will continue to advocate for:

- Equitable access for young people to participate in their communities, particularly in arts, sport and recreational activities.
- Provision of high quality arts, sport and recreation facilities and programs for young people.
- Provision of public space and transport services that are accessible and affordable for young people.
- Improvements in buildings and other infrastructure to support young people with disabilities to access disability-friendly community and recreational facilities, including youth services
- Workplace related supports to be developed and promoted to young people.
- Provision of facilities, including public space and transport, that are accessible and affordable for young people.

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under the Economic Development Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Expense Initiatives

Active Kids Challenge

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
90	The Government will support the Physical Activity Foundation to deliver the Active Kids Challenge. The program aims to reduce the impact of childhood inactivity and promote healthy lifestyle habits to primary school children. The Government is investing \$0.330 million in this initiative over three years until 2016-17; that cost will be met from within existing resources.	2014 / 15 \$0 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition recognises this initiative as an early intervention strategy, however, we are concerned that this initiative, or an equivalent investment, does not include young people in later school years.

Young Business Connect

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
93	The Government will provide funding to help young people develop ideas for establishing local businesses. This initiative will include business planning and market development advice, connection to specialist advisors and business mentors and assistance in attracting capital investment. Young Business Connect will link closely with existing entrepreneurship programs in the higher education sector and the CBR Innovation Network.	2014 / 15 \$300,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	<p>The Youth Coalition strongly supports this initiative. With predictions of rising unemployment, and the proposed withdrawal of income support for young job seekers for 6 months of each year, young people are really concerned about jobs and employment pathways. We acknowledge that initiatives such as Young Business Connect shows that the ACT Government has listened to the concerns of young people following the federal budget.</p> <p>The Youth Coalition commends the ACT Government for demonstrating leadership in this first step in addressing the employment concerns of young people in the current fiscal environment, but there is still more work to be done to ensure that all young Canberrans have access to and are supported to engage in education, skills development, and career pathways. We seek clarification on how this program will be evaluated and urge the ACT Government to commit to identifying additional funding for programs of this nature with proven outcomes.</p>

Capital Works

Tuggeranong Lakeside Leisure Centre – Water play park

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
131	The Government will provide \$500,000 in 2015-16 for the construction of a Water Play Park at the Lakeside Leisure Centre to improve public amenity and encourage community participation in aquatic activities. Design works of \$100,000 in 2014-15 will be met from within existing resources.	2014 / 15 \$0 2015 / 16 \$500,000 (Capital) 2016 / 17 \$20,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2017 / 18 \$20,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$5,000 (Associated Expenses)	The Youth Coalition supports this initiative. One of the top five personal concerns for young people is finding things to do in Canberra. ³ We encourage the ACT Government to ensure the Water Play Park is affordable and accessible for young people.

Woden Bus Interchange Redevelopment Stage 1

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
132	The Government will invest \$3.250 million over two years for works to deliver public safety and public realm improvements to the Woden Bus Interchange. The works include the construction of stairs, ramps and lighting, as well as the demolition of redundant structures.	2014 / 15 \$1,250,000 (Capital) 2015 / 16 \$2,000,000 (Capital) 2016 / 17 \$110,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2017 / 18 \$110,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation)	The Youth Coalition supports this initiative. Access to affordable, safe and reliable public transport is essential to participate economically and a key socio-economic determinant of health and well-being for young people. Ensuring safety and access in public spaces is particularly crucial given the important role public space plays in the lives of young people.

³ Youth Coalition of the ACT (2012) *Rate Canberra 2012: Findings from the survey of Young People aged 12-25 in the ACT*, Youth Coalition of the ACT, Canberra, p. 24.

Education and Training Directorate

- Every child has access to excellent education
- Deliver public education
- Regulation
- Registration of schools
- Vocational education
- Early intervention

- Curriculum
- Learning outcomes
- Quality
- Workforce
- Leadership
- Teaching and learning
- Student-centered work
- Close the attainment gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Introduction

For most young people, their engagement with education and positive or negative experience doing so will be one of the most significant determinants of their longer term capability to fully participate, economically, politically, culturally, and socially, in our community.

The Youth Coalition believes that educational engagement is not only a key part of supporting young people to develop employment pathways, but is an important factor in addressing health, reducing engagement in crime and entry into the youth justice system, and preventing youth homelessness.

While the ACT has continued to achieve the highest rates of attainment for Year 12 or equivalent school or non-school qualification in the country, the Youth Coalition also remains concerned that the gap for those students not achieving this level of attainment is significant.

Programs such as the federally-funded Youth Connections have demonstrated that specialist youth services and practitioners can achieve good outcomes in delivering supports for students who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. However there will be a enormous gap in service supporting vulnerable young people to engage in education and employment pathways at the end of this year due to the cessation of this program. Experience indicates that expectation that generalist services will fill this gap, without investment in staff to up-skill workers and program development to target support, is rarely realised.

The Youth Coalition believes it is essential for ACT Government to continue build the capacity of the ACT education system to be flexible and responsive to the needs of all students. Additionally we remain concerned that the gap in retention rates and educational attainment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the rest of the population is still significant, and continues to advocate for increased investment in programs targeting support and educational outcomes for this cohort.

The Youth Coalition welcomes the modest increase in health and mental health investment within the ACT Budget. However, we are concerned that preventative and front-line health is not clearly integrated in schools. The Youth Coalition highlights that ACT community based children, youth, and family support services are also well positioned to integrate and provide response with and across the education, youth justice, care and protection, adult corrections and health systems. However, many of these programs and services are small, and demand exceeds current capacity.

Unprecedented changes in federal policy direction and investment in young Australians means that ensuring the mobilisation and integration of effective, targeted, and resourced preventative health and social supports in schools has increased in urgency. The ACT has a number of key elements in place working towards ensuring schools are accessible and responsive to young people and families in local networks and communities, however the Youth Coalition continues to highlight the need for greater engagement and coordination between the community services and education sectors. We believe that there is strong support for this across both sectors, reflected in the *ACT Engaging Schools Framework*; however, the expectation that we will arrive at effective integrated service provision without increased and targeted resourcing is unrealistic.

The Youth Coalition will continue to advocate for:

- Evidence-based curriculum that reflects the current educational and cultural needs of the diversity of young people
- More flexible programs for all students within mainstream schools. Alternative education programs should not be seen as a 'dumping ground' for all students who have support needs or behavioural issues
- Increased alternative educational provision for young people who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging, especially young people involved in the youth justice system, low socio-economic status, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and young people involved in the

Care and Protection system

- Initiatives that aim to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous education attainment
- Recognition of the role of families in their child's educational engagement, and for supports to be provided to families if required to achieve this objective
- support of the ACT Youth Commitment to ensure that no young person is lost to education, training or employment
- Evidence-based approach to school suspension, and increasing the support to those young people who are suspended to maintain positive engagement with educational providers
- Active involvement of young people in designing, planning and evaluating youth education policy and service delivery frameworks
- Increased capacity of schools, youth services, and other health services, to be able to:
 - Identify mental health issues,
 - Respond in an effective and efficient manner,
 - Make appropriate referrals to specialist services where needed, and
 - Provide mental health promotion and prevention activities
- Development and implementation of mechanisms that support young people with mental health issues to meaningfully engage in education, employment and the community
- Inclusive and more flexible educational delivery and resources to support young people with disabilities to engage meaningfully in education and employment opportunities
- Improved transitional supports and educational pathways for all multicultural, newly arrived, or refugee young people in the ACT
- Recognition that families are the first point of support for young people, advocating for the provision of practical support for families to ensure their child's engagement in education, training or employment

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under the Education and Training Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Capital Works

Belconnen Region Schools – Modernisation

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
133	The Government will invest in improvements to Belconnen High School and will build on the master planning work initiated in the 2013-14 Budget. Stage 1 works (funded in 2013-14 and 2014-15) include building demolition, facilities upgrades and completion of the master planning in consultation with south Belconnen public school communities.	2014 / 15 \$250,000 (Capital) 2015 / 16 \$5,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2016 / 17 \$5,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2017 / 18 \$5,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation)	The Youth Coalition supports investment in improvements in school infrastructure. Infrastructure investment in schools is another opportunity for the ACT Government to progress its commitment to a Child and Youth Friendly City as outlined in both the <i>ACT Children's Plan</i> ⁴ and the <i>ACT Young People's Plan</i> . ⁵

Sustaining Smart Schools – Digital Infrastructure for our schools

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
134	The Government is investing in the upgrade and ongoing maintenance of school Information and Communication Technology infrastructure. It includes the expansion of wireless access points in ACT public schools as part of the 'Digital Canberra' initiative.	2014 / 15 \$9,201,000 (Capital) 2015 / 16 \$2,300,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2016 / 17 \$2,300,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2017 / 18 \$2,300,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation)	The Youth Coalition supports investment in the upgrade and ongoing maintenance of school ICT infrastructure.

⁴ ACT Children's Plan <http://www.children.act.gov.au/> Accessed 17 May 2013.

⁵ ACT Young People's Plan <http://www.youth.act.gov.au/index.php/publications> Accessed 17 May 2013.

Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate

- Sustainable development
- Address climate change
- Environmental protection

- Waterways
- Planning strategy

Introduction

Young people generally rate environmental protection very highly in issues of importance to them. As such the Youth Coalition believes that while specific resource towards implementing the *'Child and Youth Friendly City'* approach, a commitment of both the ACT Children's Plan 2009-2014, and ACT Young People's Plan 2009-2014, was not invested in this period, there have been a number of opportunities to involve children and young people in the planning, design, and implementation of development in the ACT.

A number of Expense and Capital Works Initiatives, related to public space and transport, have been identified in this ACT Budget, and could easily involve children and young people in design and implementation.

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Capital Works

City Plan Implementation

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
136	The Government will commission studies to deliver change and growth in the city through the City Plan. These studies will include the development of transport and movement plans.	2014 / 15 \$150,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative. Access to affordable, safe and reliable public transport is essential to participate economically and a key socio-economic determinant of health and wellbeing for young people. Ensuring safety and access in public spaces is particularly crucial given the important role public space plays in the lives of young people.</p> <p>Young people need to be involved in the full range of planning and decisions in the development of transport and movement plans. We urge the ACT Government to take the opportunity to fulfill their commitment to a Child and Youth Friendly City as outlined in both the <i>ACT Children's Plan</i>⁶ and the <i>ACT Young People's Plan</i>.⁷</p>

⁶ ACT Children's Plan <http://www.children.act.gov.au/> Accessed 17 May 2013.

⁷ ACT Young People's Plan <http://www.youth.act.gov.au/index.php/publications> Accessed 17 May 2013.

Health Directorate

- Better health outcomes for community and consumers
- Research & innovation

- Meeting demand
- Infrastructure
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- Cancer centre
- Walk ins
- Accreditation

Introduction

Access to health services is of vital importance to young people. In the 2012 Rate Canberra survey conducted by the Youth Coalition, access to health services was rated by young people (aged 12-25) as one of the top five issues of most importance⁸.

Mental health continues to be the primary health concern for young people, and the Youth Coalition has been calling for: an increase support for preventative and frontline health, mental health and social support programs in schools such as the work undertaken by:

- School nurses
- School based youth workers, and,
- Pastoral care teams.

The Youth Coalition welcomes the modest increase in health and mental health investment within the ACT Budget. However, we are concerned that preventative and front-line health is not clearly integrated in schools. Schools are recognised as ‘first-to-know’ agencies regarding many aspects of young people’s lives. The embedding of supports such as health professionals, youth workers, social workers, and psychologists within schools can deliver more integrated, efficient and effective services. Further, the successful deployment of these disciplines assists schools to be the dynamic, successful communities that improve the life opportunities for all Canberrans, as the *ACT Youth Commitment* aspires.

⁸ Youth Coalition of the ACT, 2012, *Rate Canberra 2012: Findings from the survey of Young People aged 12-25 in the ACT*

The ACT Budget includes welcome investment in improving services for suicide prevention, however this is only a small investment for early intervention strategies and so the Youth Coalition will also continue to advocate for:

- Equitable distribution of resources and services to support groups of young people who are at greater risk of poor health outcomes, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, young people in rural and remote areas, and young people experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage
- Sexual health and relationship education in schools that is inclusive of diverse cultural backgrounds, genders and sexual orientations
- Removal of barriers experienced by young people in accessing health services, such as cost, discrimination, lack of transport options, unawareness of services, confidentiality concerns, stigma, and a limited number of 'youth-friendly' general practitioners and other health professionals
- Development and implementation of mechanisms that support young people with mental health issues to meaningfully engage in education, employment and the community

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under the Health Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Expense Initiatives

Community Mental Health - Expanding services

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
98	The Government will increase staffing for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services with an emphasis on perinatal and infant consultation services and an expansion of the Eating Disorders Program. In addition, funding will be provided to support psychosocial step-up step-down outreach services.	2014 / 15 \$1,000,000 2015 / 16 \$1,038,000 2016 / 17 \$1,076,000 2017 / 18 \$1,116,000	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes additional investment in mental health services.</p> <p>The Youth Coalition notes the difficulties that young people can face in accessing treatment and support for eating disorders and, therefore, advocate that the expanded Eating Disorders Program specifically address the access and treatment needs for young people.</p> <p>The Youth Coalition requests clarification on how the funding allocation will be distributed across these mental health initiatives, and whether young people (12-25 years) will have access to the psychosocial step-up step-down outreach services.</p>

Belconnen Community Health Centre and Walk-in Centre - More services, more staff

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
97	The Government will provide staffing to support an increased range of services, including breast screening, aged care and rehabilitation, pathology collection, community mental health and medical outpatient services. Staff will also be provided for a Walk-in Centre at the Belconnen Community Health Centre.	2014 / 15 \$2 280 000 2015 / 16 \$2 328 000 2016 / 17 \$2 377 000 2017 / 18 \$2 427 000	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes the additional funding for services and staff at the Belconnen Community Health Centre. We are particularly pleased to see extra investment in the Belconnen district, which has the highest total number of children and young people aged 0-24.</p> <p>The Youth Coalition asserts that walk-in centres need to remain free of charge, and youth friendly, in order to improve access for vulnerable young people.</p>

Suicide Prevention - Improving Services

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
100	The Government will provide a range of services to assist in suicide prevention, including promotion of community awareness of suicide and means of prevention.	2014 / 15 \$500 000 2015 / 16 \$519 000 2016 / 17 \$538 000 2017 / 18 \$558 000	The Youth Coalition strongly supports an increase in the funding for suicide prevention services. We seek clarification as to whether any youth-specific programs or services will be funded as part of this initiative.

Tuggeranong Health Centre - More services, more staff

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
100	The Government will increase staffing to improve access to the services available from the newly refurbished and expanded Health Centre.	2014 / 15 \$560 000 2015 / 16 \$572 000 2016 / 17 \$584 000 2017 / 18 \$596 000	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes the additional funding for staff at the Tuggeranong Health Centre. We are particularly pleased to see extra investment in the Tuggeranong district, which has the second highest total number of children and young people aged 0-24.</p> <p>As outlined in our comments regarding increased funding to the Belconnen Community Health Centre, the Youth Coalition asserts that walk-in centres need to remain free of charge, and youth friendly, in order to improve access for vulnerable young people.</p>

Capital Works

The Youth Coalition welcomes initiatives to increase the capacity of ACT hospitals and the provision of additional beds, and associated health infrastructure projects. We acknowledge that improved and increased access to essential health services is beneficial for the whole community.

Investment in infrastructure and capital works to improve health services includes:

- Construction of a 700 space car park at Calvary Hospital \$19,692,000 over four years
- Refurbishment of Calvary hospital, providing 15 additional beds \$1,605,000 over one year
- Project management support for the Health Infrastructure Plan \$30,012,000 over four years
- Construction of 25 bed Secure Mental Health Unit \$46,089,000 over four years
- Upgrade of infrastructure to The Canberra Hospital \$6,005,000 over four years
- Redevelopment of The Canberra Hospital to relocate & provide additional beds \$24,939,000 over four years
- Development of University of Canberra Public Hospital Not available for publication

Housing ACT

- Safe/affordable/appropriate housing that meets needs of low income and disadvantaged families
- Community participation

- Improving services
- Human Services Gateway
- Updating housing stock
- Energy efficiency

Introduction

Many young people in the ACT experience severe financial hardship associated with the high cost of living.⁹ As young people are often working casually or still completing training, they struggle to compete in the private rental market.

The Youth Coalition submission to the 2014 / 15 ACT Budget called on the ACT Government to:

- Address housing affordability, particularly for young people in the ACT
- Offset any funding cuts to Homelessness Services and commit to ensuring that services funded under the NPAH are maintained
- Create youth-specific referral/intake capacity within the youth homelessness service system

This last recommendation was included in the Youth Coalition's budget submission in response to our members and stakeholders continuing to raise concern about young people's experience in being able to access support services.

The Youth Coalition welcomes the effort to simplify access to the human services system by establishing a single *Human Services Gateway*. The Youth Coalition recommends that as the three existing intake services are consolidated, the skills and knowledge of the youth sector, and help seeking patterns of young people, are reflected in the design and implementation of intake, assessment and referral services.

The Youth Coalition also welcomes the ACT Government's continued support to homelessness services in providing additional funding consistent with the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. However we note that this funding is only for the next financial year, and

⁹ The Salvation Army, 2010, *Perceptions of Poverty: An Insight into the Nature and Impact of Poverty in Australia*

while acknowledging that there is no clarity regarding where the Australian Government is heading with regard to homelessness policy or funding, we urge the ACT Government to proactively take measures that will ensure the level of current service delivery is maintained.

We advocate for the provision of a range of flexible, independent housing options, including short term housing for young people to support them to remain connected to their families.

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under Housing ACT are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Expense Initiatives

Better Human Services – Human Services Gateway

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
101	The Government will establish a single Human Services Gateway by consolidating three existing services – Disability Information Service Hub, Children, Youth and Family Services Gateway and Housing Central Access Point. The Gateway will bring together a range of government and community services and will include a common assessment and referral system to reduce duplication and ensure government services are provided in a timely and responsive manner.	2014 / 15 \$322,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	<p>The Youth Coalition understands that the single Human Services Gateway is funded by pooling the existing funds for the three services together, and this initiative is additional funding in 2014/15 to cover a manager and data collection.</p> <p>In the implementation of the Human Services Gateway, the Youth Coalition would like to see a clear strategy for ensuring that the service is youth friendly. In particular, it is necessary that all staff have the relevant skills and knowledge (including an understanding of the barriers faced by young people when accessing services, and relationships with the youth services) to make it easier for young people to find the support they need.</p>

Common Ground – Providing services

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
101	The Government will provide additional support to people experiencing chronic homelessness, people with high, multiple and complex needs, through support of the Common Ground facility. This facility offers affordable housing combined with on-site support for people experiencing homelessness.	2014 / 15 \$156,000 2015 / 16 \$321,000 2016 / 17 \$331,000 2017 / 18 \$341,000	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes recurrent funding for initiatives that support those experiencing chronic homelessness, and people with high, multiple, and complex needs.</p> <p>While young people are not excluded from Common Ground, the Youth Coalition acknowledges that this is not a specifically youth-focused initiative. There is not clear evidence from other jurisdictions where Common Ground is in place that is is the most effective model for young people experiencing homelessness.</p>

Continued Support for Homelessness Services

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
101	The Government will provide additional funding for homelessness services consistent with the Commonwealth commitment to extend the National Partnership Agreement for one year.	2014 / 15 \$1,520,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	<p>The Youth Coalition acknowledges the ACT Government matched federal funding as per the terms of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). The NPAH funds services such as Our Place, which provides supported accommodation for young people who are either studying or employed.</p> <p>We urge the ACT Government to plan for the cessation of the NPAH, and to ensure that the current level of service can be maintained without Commonwealth funds.</p>

Homelessness Sector Reform – Evaluation

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
101	The Government is providing \$150,000 in 2014-15 to commission an independent evaluation of the homelessness sector reform process to review the work undertaken by the community sector and the Government during recent reform processes. The cost of this initiative will be met from within existing resources.	2014 / 15 \$0 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition welcomes the allocation of funds for the evaluation of the homelessness sector reform process. The Youth Coalition supports strong monitoring and evaluation processes, and opportunity for reflection on the reform process.

Capital Works

Common Ground Supporting Housing

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
139	The Government has invested a total of \$2.5 million as additional funding to complete the construction of the Common Ground supportive housing complex, providing a model of housing targeting singles and couples, without children, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This initiative was included by the Government in the Appropriation Act 2013-14 (No 2).	2014 / 15 * 2015 / 16 * 2016 / 17 * 2017 / 18 *	See comments about funding for the Common Ground initiative above (p. 37).

Note: * indicates included in the *Appropriation Act 2013-14 (No 2)*.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

- Fair/safe/peaceful community
- Rights/interests respected and projected

- Justice reform strategy (sentencing, reduce recidivism)
- Public private partnerships (court facilities)
- Expansion of the Alexander Maconochie Centre
- Emergency station upgrade
- Throughcare project
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to justice
- Working with vulnerable people checks

Introduction

The Youth Coalition believes that a systematic, evidence based and whole of government approach to the issues of throughcare for young people detained in the ACT, both in the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and Alexander Maconochie Centre, is more likely to have an impact on recidivism, and restoration of people who have committed crimes to family and community.

Increased funding and resources needs to be allocated to crime prevention strategies, particularly programs that address the underlying causes of behaviors deemed criminal by society.

The Youth Coalition noted a modest investment in Aboriginal Legal Services in this Budget, particularly important in light of the well-documented over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young offenders in detention and community-based supervision.

Of particular interest, the Youth Coalition is pleased to see some investment in exploring justice reinvestment research and strategy, which we have been calling for over a number of years. This sits alongside significant investment in capital works and staffing to expand the capacity of Alexander Maconochie Centre, highlighting the need to better understand the balance of investment in immediate needs with investment in preventative and early intervention measures that will reduce cost over time.

Alexander Maconochie Centre

The Youth Coalition acknowledges the difficulty ACT Government faces in addressing the overcrowding at the Alexander Maconochie Centre and ensuring the safety of all people incarcerated and human rights continue to be a priority. We recognise that it is challenging for any government to balance investment in immediate needs with investment in preventative and early intervention measures that will reduce investment over time. The Youth Coalition continues to encourage the ACT Government to also provide further investment in preventative and early intervention measures.

Investments relating to the Alexander Maconochie Centre include:

- Alexander Maconochie Centre – Additional staffing \$13,600,000 over four years
- Alexander Maconochie Centre – Additional facilities \$84,266,000 over two years
- Alexander Maconochie Centre – Additional facilities design * Included in the *Appropriation Act 2013-14 (No 2)*

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under the Justice and Community Safety Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Expense Initiatives

Aboriginal Legal Service Assistance – Additional services

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
102	The Government is providing additional funding to the Commonwealth funded Canberra office of the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) to undertake a duty lawyer role in the ACT Courts. This will help ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have adequate legal representation if they are summoned before the Court.	2014 / 15 \$100,000 2015 / 16 \$103,000 2016 / 17 \$105,000 2017 / 18 \$108,000	The Youth Coalition strongly supports the additional funding to the Canberra office of the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) to undertake a duty lawyer role in the ACT Courts. The Parliamentary Agreement included a promise of \$100,000 for Aboriginal Legal Services, and we welcome this investment. Further investment into Aboriginal Legal Services is particularly important in light of the well-documented over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young offenders in detention and community-based supervision.

Alexander Maconochie Centre – Additional staffing

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
102	The Government is providing additional funding to meet the increase in costs associated with an increase in average detainee numbers at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. As part of this Budget, the Government is also funding the construction of additional facilities at the Alexander Maconochie Centre to address the increasing detainee population.	2014 / 15 \$3,280,000 2015 / 16 \$3,360,000 2016 / 17 \$3,440,000 2017 / 18 \$3,520,000	See comments above (Alexander Maconochie Centre, p. 40).

Improving Access to Justice – Addressing Supreme Court backlog

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
103	The Government will provide additional funding to reduce the backlog of matters in the ACT Supreme Court.	2014 / 15 \$255,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	We welcome the additional funding to address the backlog in the ACT Supreme Court.

Justice Reform Strategy

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
104	The Government is providing funding to develop and consult on evidence-based reforms to sentencing and restorative justice arrangements. This includes sentencing alternatives for ACT Courts as a result of the Government's decision to repeal periodic detention as a sentencing option from 2016-17.	2014 / 15 \$367,000 2015 / 16 \$367,000 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition believes it is important for the development and consultation of reforms to sentencing and restorative justice to consult a broad range of community, including young people and their families.

Justice Reinvestment – Australian Research Council linkage grant

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
104	The Government is contributing to research to examine measures to reduce serious crime that results in imprisonment primarily relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This initiative is being supported by a proposed Australian Research Council Linkage Grant between the National Centre for Indigenous Studies, the Australian National University and the ACT Government.	2014 / 15 \$0 2015 / 16 \$50,000 2016 / 17 \$50,000 2017 / 18 \$50,000	The Youth Coalition strongly supports the principles of justice reinvestment as a preventative and early intervention measure. We encourage the research project to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who are involved or have a history of involvement with the youth justice system, in recognition of the well-documented link between the youth justice system and the adult justice system.

Justice Reinvestment Strategy

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
104	The Government is funding development of a whole of government justice reinvestment strategy aimed at reducing recidivism and diverting offenders, and those at risk of becoming offenders from the justice system. The cost of \$689,000 over four years will be met from within existing resources.	2014 / 15 \$0 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	As mentioned in the previous box comments on the <i>Justice Reinvestment – Australian Research Council linkage grant</i> initiative also under the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (p.42), the Youth Coalition strongly supports the principles of justice reinvestment as a preventative and early intervention measure. We recognise the importance of developing a robust strategy for justice reinvestment and encourage the ACT Government to ensure the strategy complements the <i>Youth Justice Blueprint</i> and the <i>Out of Home Care Strategy</i> . We recognise the well-documented link between the youth justice system, the out of home care system and the adult justice system.

Throughcare

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
105	The Government is continuing the Throughcare program, which provides support beyond the end of an offender's custodial sentence to assist their transition to the community and help to reduce rates of recidivism.	2014 / 15 \$1,074,000 2015 / 16 \$1,102,000 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes the continued investment in the Throughcare program for a further two years, which includes funding for increased staffing capacity, brokerage and program evaluation to engage more people in the program. We acknowledge the success of the program in reducing rates of recidivism among those people exiting the Alexander Maconochie Centre.</p> <p>As mentioned in our comments on the <i>Better Human Services – Strengthening Families</i> initiative funded under the Community Services Directorate (p.14), the Youth Coalition recognises there are a number of initiatives that provide investment to implement tailored support packages or plans, such as the expansion of the Throughcare project, the Youth Justice Blueprint, the Engaging Schools Framework and the Strengthening Families project, and we are concerned about the capacity of existing community support services to meet all of these without additional resourcing.</p>

Working with Vulnerable People Checks – Supplementation

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
105	The Government is providing additional funding to ensure the timely processing of the higher than expected demand for Working with Vulnerable People registrations. The Government is also undertaking a review to develop policy options to decrease the number and processing time of these applications to reduce the cost of this scheme.	2014 / 15 \$634,000 (Expenses) \$74,000 (Associated Revenue) 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition is reluctant to support the review to develop policy options to decrease the number and processing time of the Working with Vulnerable People applications as we believe this inherently undermines the premise of the Working with Vulnerable People Checks. We implore the ACT Government to maintain their commitment to those most vulnerable in our community, particularly children and young people. The Youth Coalition believe the Working with Vulnerable People registration system is an essential part of a range of measures essential for the protection of vulnerable groups.

Capital Works

Alexander Maconochie Centre – Additional facilities

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
140	The Government is funding the construction of a new 30 cell Special Care Centre and a new 56 cell flexible accommodation block inside the existing Alexander Maconochie Centre in response to increasing detainee numbers. Funding is also being provided for the operating costs of the new facilities including staffing and detainee related costs.	2014 / 15 \$24,304,000 (Capital) 2015 / 16 \$29,786,000 (Capital) \$7,557,000 (Associated Expenses) 2016 / 17 \$2,352,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$8,061,000 (Associated Expenses) 2017 / 18 \$2,352,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$9,854,000 (Associated Expenses)	See comments above (Alexander Maconochie Centre, p. 40)

Alexander Maconochie Centre – Additional facilities – Design

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
140	The Government has invested a total of \$2.777 million as funding for tender ready documentation for additional facilities at the Alexander Maconochie Centre in preparation for construction. This initiative was included by the Government in the <i>Appropriation Act 2013-14 (No 2)</i> .	2014 / 15 * 2015 / 16 * 2016 / 17 * 2017 / 18 *	See comments above (Alexander Maconochie Centre, p.40)

Note: * indicates included in the *Appropriation Act 2013-14 (No 2)*.

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

- Building/maintaining environment/social/cultural/economic capital
- Transport
- Libraries
- Waste
- Canberra Connect
- Online services
- Roads

- Urban upgrades
- Walking/cycling/bus upgrades
- Roads
- Shopfront
- Recreational infrastructure
- Nature parks

Introduction

Public Transport

In responding to the 2012 Rate Canberra Survey, young people from the ACT frequently identify limited transport accessibility as a barrier to their participation in employment, education, and recreational activities.¹⁰

Public transport is often a young person's primary means of transportation. ACT public transport services need to be affordable, safe and timely in order to facilitate young people's participation in their community through employment, education, recreation and social activities. Access to affordable, safe and reliable public transport is essential to participate economically and a key socio-economic determinant of health and wellbeing for young people.

The Youth Coalition welcomes initiatives that improve and increase public transport services in the ACT. We applaud the ACT Government for

¹⁰ Youth Coalition of the ACT, 2012, *Rate Canberra: Findings from the Survey of Young People Aged 12-25 in the ACT*

the delivery of additional weekend bus services in new suburbs, but continue to call for further investment to improve and increase public transport services to the whole of Canberra. We also welcome the construction of a new bus station at Erindale and encourage the ACT Government to ensure the needs of young people are considered in the design of the station.

Investments relating to public transport also included:

- ACTION – Improved public transport \$2,000,000 over one year
- Transport for Canberra – Upgrading the Erindale bus station \$981,000 over one year

Public Space

Public space has a particularly important significance to the lives of young people. Young people use public space for a variety of reasons, such as: to sustain friendships, to socialise, to entertain themselves, to act as an alternative to paid events and places, to make new friends and social contacts, and to act as an escape.¹¹

Young people do not always possess their own private spaces, therefore they seek to use public spaces for a majority of their activities. A 2007 report on public space issues for young people in shopping centres highlighted initial responses to young people gathering in shopping centres were predominantly coercive approaches in the form of tighter security, increased policing powers, loitering / trespass provisions and the introduction of banning notices. It identified the need to move towards problem-solving approaches that include young people in the consultation and planning process of their local public spaces.¹²

The Youth Coalition supports initiatives and strategies that aim to make public spaces more accessible and safe for young people in the ACT. A number of Expense and Capital Works Initiatives have been identified in the ACT Budget, related to public space and transport options. While specific resource towards implementing the ‘Child and Youth Friendly City’ approach (a commitment of both the ACT Children’s Plan 2009-2014, and ACT Young People’s Plan 2009-2014).

Expense Initiatives and Capital Works under the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

¹¹ Hatzopoulos and Clancey, 2007, *Where People and Places Meet Approaches to Public Space Management*, Youth Action and Policy Association, NSW

¹² Clancey, G; Usien, O, 2007, *Considering Youth Issues in Shopping Centre Development Applications*, Youth Action and Policy Association and the Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme of the Department of Community Services, NSW

Expense Initiatives

ACTION – Improved public transport

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
109	The Government will deliver additional weekend bus services in new suburbs including Wright, Casey, Harrison and West Macgregor.	2014 / 15 \$500,000 2015 / 16 \$500,000 2016 / 17 \$500,000 2017 / 18 \$500,000	See comments above (Public Transport, p. 45).

Canberra Connect – New services in Gungahlin

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
109	The Government is establishing a new Canberra Connect Shopfront in the Gungahlin Office Building, which is scheduled to open in 2015. Services available at the shopfront will include payment of Government bills, drivers' licences and MyWay card services.	2014 / 15 \$331,000 (Expenses) \$230,000 (Associated Capital) 2015 / 16 \$1,169,000 (Expenses) \$32,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2016 / 17 \$1,172,000 (Expenses) \$32,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2017 / 18 \$1,197,000 (Expenses) \$32,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation)	The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative. The establishment of a new Canberra Connect Shopfront in Gungahlin improves the physical accessibility to services.

Parks and Open Spaces – Maintaining amenity

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
110	The Government is committed to protecting our natural environment and providing a high quality of urban amenity that is within our means. An additional \$15.2 million will be provided over four years to manage our national parks and reserves, and maintain urban parks, trees, shopping centres and other community open space areas.	2014 / 15 \$4,500,000 2015 / 16 \$3,600,000 2016 / 17 \$3,600,000 2017 / 18 \$3,500,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes investment in providing a high quality of urban amenity. Public space plays an important role in the lives of young people and we urge the ACT Government to ensure young people are involved in the full range of planning and decisions in the management and maintenance of urban amenity. This is an opportunity for the ACT Government to fulfill their commitment to a Child and Youth Friendly City as outlined in both the <i>ACT Children's Plan</i> ¹³ and the <i>ACT Young People's Plan</i> . ¹⁴

Transport for Canberra – Improved community transport coordination

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
111	The Government will improve the coordination of community transport services, including the development of an enhanced booking system. The booking system will allow for a demand responsive model to maximise use of existing ACTION special needs transport buses for community transport. This will improve community transport in Belconnen, the Inner North and Inner South to better meet the needs of the aged and transport disadvantaged.	2014 / 15 \$500,000 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$0 2017 / 18 \$0	The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative. We support improvements to the coordination of community transport services to better meet the needs of the transport disadvantaged in our community. Access to public transport is a key socio-economic determinant of health and wellbeing for many groups in our society, particularly young people, and is often essential for economic participation.

¹³ ACT Children's Plan <http://www.children.act.gov.au/> Accessed 17 May 2013.

¹⁴ ACT Young People's Plan <http://www.youth.act.gov.au/index.php/publications> Accessed 17 May 2013.

Capital Works

Local Shopping Centre Upgrades Program

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
146	The Government will continue to support local shopping centres by providing \$2 million over two years for upgrades at various locations in the Territory. These upgrades will improve safety and amenity and help ensure the commercial viability of the centres.	2014 / 15 \$350,000 (Capital) 2015 / 16 \$1,650,000 (Capital) 2016 / 17 \$35,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2017 / 18 \$35,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation)	The Youth Coalition welcomes the investment in upgrades of local shopping centres. Shopping centres are important public spaces for young people and we encourage the ACT Government to ensure the needs of young people are taken into account in every upgrade process.

Transport for Canberra – Upgrading Erindale bus station

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
148	The Government will construct a new bus station at Erindale, which will improve passenger amenity and safety. The proposed works are in keeping with the targets set in <i>Transport for Canberra</i> to increase public transport mode share.	2014 / 15 \$900,000 (Capital) 2015 / 16 \$18,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2016 / 17 \$18,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$9,000 (Associated Expenses) 2017 / 18 \$18,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$18,000 (Associated Expenses)	See comments above (Public Transport, p. 45).

Transport for Canberra – Walking and cycling infrastructure – Stage 4

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
148	The Government will deliver a number of walking and cycling projects across the ACT. This builds on existing walking and cycling infrastructure programs funded in previous budgets. The works undertaken will include implementing the Strategic Cycle Network, improving path links to public transport, improving the age friendliness of suburbs and increasing cycle lanes through the reseal program and road pavement line marking changes.	2014 / 15 \$1,250,000 (Capital) 2015 / 16 \$1,250,000 (Capital) \$25,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) 2016 / 17 \$50,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$13,000 (Associated Expenses) 2017 / 18 \$50,000 (Associated Expenses - Depreciation) \$38,000 (Associated Expenses)	The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative to improve cycling and walking infrastructure across the Territory. Young people often have less access to more expensive forms of transportation. Improving cycling and walking infrastructure will make these modes of transportation easier and safer for young people.

Whole of Government

Expense Initiatives under Whole of Government are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Expense Initiatives

Digital Dividend Investment Strategy and Transformational Service Delivery

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation	Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
113	The Government will provide funding to improve the efficiency of service delivery across government through greater application of electronic or online technologies. Through the use of seed funding, Government entities will develop projects which will promote greater digital/online service delivery, facilitate better management of digital information, rationalise ICT assets, and construct strategic ICT investment programs.	2014 / 15 \$0 2015 / 16 \$0 2016 / 17 \$-10,000 2017 / 18 \$-15,000	The Youth Coalition applauds the ACT Government's vision within the Digital Canberra Action Plan. We believe that the digital strategy will facilitate greater community participation for young people, and reflects the role that young people often play as early adopters of new technologies. In particular, we welcome moves for greater digital and online service delivery, as this is how many young people seek out services and information.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2014-2015

Brendan Smyth MLA (Chair), Mary Porter MLA (Deputy Chair),
Giulia Jones MLA, Yvette Berry MLA

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE ACT BUDGET 2014-2015 PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 3 JUNE 2014

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to committees@parliament.act.gov.au by **10.00am Tuesday 10 June 2014**. If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please append additional comments.

1. Full name of group/organisation:

National Trust (ACT)

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Contacts	Phone	Mobile
Scott McAlister President	61610485	O422413469
Graham Carter OAM Council Member	62472095	0400153093

3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

No

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three main areas of interest or concern regarding the ACT Budget 2014-2015:

With respect to history and heritage, we believe the Budget should have provided funding for strategic approach that should be framed on the basis of:

- A History and Heritage Industry plan
- Data and Information, and
- Commitment and resources for implementation.

5. What are your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your priority areas?

If it is to grow and develop, Canberra needs to have a broader economic base and play to its strengths.

History, heritage and conservation, with their associated institutions (War Memorial, National Museum, Old Parliament House, CSIRO Discovery Centre etc) are important drivers of tourism in the ACT.

At the local level the Centenary of Canberra is demonstrating the ACT's capacity to extend the range of activities and events that multiply the social and economic benefits to our community and the ACT economy. The Centenary has also demonstrated the need for a strategic approach and the social and economic benefits that are produced.

In order to achieve the ongoing benefits that can be derived from history, heritage and conservation activities budget funding should be provided for:

- d. An industry plan
- e. Data and Information, and
- f. Commitment and resources for implementation.

Industry Plan

We are aware that the Sport and Recreation sector has worked with the ACT Government to develop and implement a long term industry plan (ACTIVE 2020). It provides a blueprint upon which sport and recreation will be nurtured and promoted over the period 2011-2020. It promotes partnerships between industry and government and investment in long term sustainable outcomes. Importantly ACTIVE 2020 allows for long term planning by sport and recreation associations in the ACT and Region.

A legacy of the Centenary of Canberra should be the development of a similar plan for the history, heritage and conservation sector. From our perspective we need to look forward as well as back. So far as history is concerned, the next "big thing" will be the Centenary of the opening of Old Parliament House in 2027 along the way there are many other historic activities and events that should also be celebrated. These opportunities need to be explored and exploited.

An industry plan should be developed based on a stock take of the industry's current structure, products (assets, institutions, events etc) markets, workforce (volunteer and professional), infrastructure, technology, performance and its national competitiveness.

The current and emerging challenges facing the industry should be examined and prospects for growth over five to ten years explored. Trends in products (planning, management, operation etc) infrastructure technologies, innovation, best practice, knowledge, linkages and industry structures must also be evaluated.

The plan should identify strategies to realise opportunities and overcome impediments to growth, with a particular emphasis on identifying the actions to realise the industry's full potential. It should provide a road map to address issues such as participation, innovation, infrastructure, investment, market access, regional development, education and training, environment and red tape reforms.

The process of developing the plan would provide an opportunity for industry leaders to clarify the vision for the industry, communicate and consider best practice, set priorities and plan for the future. Better shared understanding of industry priorities and the government's policy framework would

enable development of cost effective solutions to the challenges faced by the community and the industry.

Those industry leaders responsible for developing the industry plan must have the standing and influence to carry the industry with them and the authority to implement it. Government's role in this process is that of a catalyst, providing the framework for process and actions, with some direct involvement where necessary. With leadership comes responsibility. Industry leaders must have a vision for the industry, not simply represent company interests, and must address the broad national interests of the sector. At the same time there must be a long term commitment by the industry and the government to the pursuit of agreed strategies and the achievement of outputs and outcomes.

The estimated cost of developing a plan is \$60,000.

Data and Information

An effective industry plan needs to be developed, implemented, measured and reviewed on the basis of good data and information.

Currently the ACT Government only makes a modest investment in the History and Heritage.

We are aware that regular economic impact studies are made of the sport and recreation. A similar holistic study of the value of history, heritage and conservation activity to the community in terms of social, community, and economic inputs and outcomes is needed to provide the data necessary for the development of cogent industry plan and business cases to support planning decisions and claims for investment. It will also enable the development of Key Performance Indicators and generate an industry database that can be used for further related research and industry development activity.

The estimated cost of an economic impact study is \$80,000.

Implementation Commitment and Resources

An industry cannot grow and develop without resources and investment. We understand that approximately \$6m was invested in the planning and implementation of the Centenary of Canberra.

There are a small number of key non-government bodies working to promote the importance of history, heritage and conservation to the community and its role in bringing people together, creating community identity and a sense of pride:

- Conservation Council of the ACT
- Canberra and District Historical Society
- National Trust of Australia (ACT)
- Australian Garden History Association
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- Various suburban and community residents associations

All of these community bodies operate on a voluntary, not-for profit basis and have previously received occasional project funding from the ACT Heritage Grants Program. Their main sources of income are membership fees and proceeds from fundraising activities. All of these organisations are currently experiencing organisational financial stress and need increased support and funding by the Government.

Adequate resourcing of key bodies is vital to ensure their capacity to best fulfil the many roles they provide. If key bodies are well resourced they can play important roles in delivering policy work, education, advocacy and maintaining robust bodies of evidence.

Currently, unlike their peers in the Arts, Sport and Recreation, History, Heritage and Conservation bodies do not receive financial assistance to subsidise their operational costs.

It is recommended the Heritage Grants Program be revised to include financial assistance to eligible key history, heritage and conservation organisations to subsidise their operational costs.

The estimated cost is \$160,000pa.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

Severe cuts in funding for Heritage, Output 1.4, Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate: over 17%.

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

7. Did you provide a budget submission to the ACT Government?

Yes. Copy attached.

8. Do you think that the ACT Budget has addressed the issues raised in your submission?

No

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 14 June 2013, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Office will contact you by close of business Tuesday 10 June 2014 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.



1ST FLOOR, NORTH BUILDING
CORNER of LONDON CIRCUIT
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PATRON: The Hon Margaret Reid AO

15 November 2013

Mr A Barr MLA
Treasurer
Minister for Economic Development
GPO Box 1020
Canberra, ACT 2601

For Information

Mr S Corbell MLA
Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development
GPO Box 1020
Canberra, ACT 2601

For Information

- Canberra Business Council
- ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce
- Community Councils

BUDGET SUBMISSION

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In order to achieve the ongoing benefits that can be derived from history, heritage and conservation activities we need:

- a. An industry plan
- b. Data and Information, and
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It is recommended the Heritage Grants Program be revised to include financial assistance to eligible key history, heritage and conservation organisations to subsidise their operational costs.

The estimated cost is \$160,000pa.

Key members of the NTACTION Council would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss the contents of this letter.

Yours faithfully

Scott McAlister
President/Treasurer