

Submission for the 2008 ACT Budget

from the

West Belconnen Inter Agency Liaison Group

1 Introduction

The West Belconnen Inter-Agency Liaison Group welcomes the opportunity to provide input for consideration regarding the 2008 ACT Budget. This submission arises out of considerable co-operative work amongst service agencies working in West Belconnen, and outlines key needs and issues for the area.

Evidence for the submission is based on a demographic study of the area and a mapping of Community, Health and Educational services contained in a report "Living on the Edge" by the West Belconnen Inter-Agency Liaison Group, Oct 2007. The service mapping is a result of regular community consultations, community forums and a community survey conducted in August 2007.

The West Belconnen Inter-Agency Liaison Group has been facilitated by UnitingCare Kippax for the past 4 years. Its aim is to promote cooperation between service organizations and with Government bodies for the sake of improved service delivery to the people of West Belconnen. There are currently approximately 25 organizations that participate in the group, providing services in the area of health, education and community services, across all ages and backgrounds. The current project has been funded and strongly supported by Belconnen Community Service.

2 Summary of Community Context

West Belconnen is an area that demonstrates localised disadvantage and social exclusion. It is an area comprising the suburbs of Higgins, Holt, Macgregor, Charnwood and Dunlop, and currently houses approximately 20,000 people, or 6.2% of the ACT population. Its population is increasing, with ongoing housing development in Dunlop and Macgregor West.

The area has low levels of income, high levels of housing stress and low levels of post-secondary education. It is an area that is younger than ACT average, and has a high percentage of single parent households. It has a significant population of Indigenous people. Access to services is a particularly important issue, due to gaps in service provision in West Belconnen, and difficulty in connecting people with the services that are provided. Details of demographic studies and of service provision and gaps can be seen in more detail in the report "Living on the Edge".

Community spirit in West Belconnen has been growing over the past few years due to dedicated work by individuals and organizations. There is an increasing feel that "West Belconnen" no longer carries some of the social stigma that it had in previous years. This increasing community spirit provides a solid base for continued investment by Government, business and the community sector.

3 Core priorities and principles

Attention to several core principles in the provision of services and the filling of gaps is particularly important. The community of West Belconnen is a strong example of the principle that one size and style does not fit all. Service provision and service style needs to be targeted and tailored so that it will achieve its desired outcomes and not simply be the provision of a service.

- a. Accessibility of services to people's settings
Attention needs to be given to the location of services as well as broader issues of accessibility. We cannot assume that people will have ready access to motor vehicles; further, we must be aware that the more economically and socially isolated members of our community are, the less likely they are to invest time in travelling to services. This is particularly so for people with health issues, carers, youth and families with children.

c. Housing

We commend the Government's efforts to develop more affordable housing, and note the emphasis on this in the Macgregor West development. We note that communities of low-cost or affordable housing will often contain a higher percentage of people with lower income levels and a higher need for community services and assistance.

Emergency housing and refuge accommodation in the region is extremely limited – particularly for young people.

Relocation of people to new areas at times of high stress can have the result of increasing social dislocation and the dehumanising effect already being experienced at such a time.

We recommend that Government commit additional funds for emergency accommodation and refuge accommodation in West Belconnen.

We recommend that additional funds be provided for SAAP services to meet the specific needs of children and young people.

d. Increased specific services children and youth

West Belconnen has a lower than average median age, and high numbers of households with children under 5 and with school aged children and youth. Many of these households experience additional pressures of low income and social exclusion and isolation. Attention to the location of, and access to, services for young families will provide strong foundations for healthy living.

Services for youth are currently extremely limited. The creation of dedicated safe spaces, services and activities for young people in West Belconnen is a priority. We recommend attention to the planning and design of the new P-10 school so that it may be used as a community facility out of school hours. These services will enable youth to be understood as an asset for the community, and valued for their contribution to society, as well as foster healthy and holistic living.

e. Dunlop

Dunlop stands in a unique position among Canberra suburbs. While it does not share all of the economic disadvantage of other parts of West Belconnen, it has particular levels of social isolation and exclusion. It is planned to be the 5th largest suburb in the ACT, but there appear to be no plans to have a shopping centre, school or other educational facilities, community hall or gathering space, playing fields or medical

services and has minimal outdoor community gathering spaces.

We recommend that specific attention and funding be set aside for community development and social cohesion of the Dunlop community.

5. **Specific recommendations.**

In addition to the more general recommendations above, we recommend the following specific services be provided for in the 2008 ACT Budget.

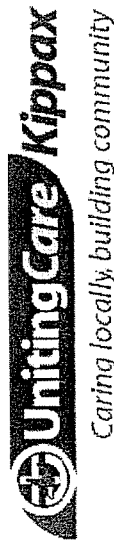
a. West Belconnen (Inter-Agency) Development Officer
The co-operative work fostered by the West Belconnen Inter-Agency Liaison Group has enabled higher levels of co-operation and greater efficiencies in service delivery. At this stage the financial burden and work loads have fallen on organizations that are already operating on shoe string budgets and are extremely time poor. This work has been carried out because of a dedication to eliminating any duplication of service delivery, and a desire to provide the best possible services for the people of West Belconnen.
We recommend that Government fund a position, to be employed by an organization in West Belconnen, to foster continued co-operative work, and to continue to develop the area study commenced in the "Living on the Edge" report.

b. Community Outreach Worker dedicated to developing the new school community, prior to the opening of the new school site in West Belconnen

We note the prime opportunity to address issues of social exclusion with the opening of the new P-10 School in Holt in 2009. We highly value the work of the Community Outreach Workers attached to the Holt and Higgins primary schools and the Charmwood-Dunlop and Macgregor primary schools as well as the former Ginninderra District School under the Schools as Communities program. We note the importance of the development of a sense of community for the sound operation of a school, and recognise the significant transition difficulties to be faced by the local community.

We note the inherent difficulty in a potential school community applying for project funding to enable the

UnitingCare Kippax



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1. INTRODUCTION

UnitingCare Kippax welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the ACT Governments consideration of the 2008 budget. This submission provides Government with a brief overview of our organization, the successful models and mechanisms used to meet the needs of the West Belconnen community in particular and the factors that we have found to be critical to our success. We conclude by outlining a number of ways we believe Government can further improve their support of the community through community organizations such as ourselves.

2. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND

UnitingCare Kippax

UnitingCare Kippax is a respected local community organisation with a history of over 15 years of high quality community service provision. The community arm of its activities is currently funded largely through grants from the ACT and Commonwealth governments.

It has a highly skilled and professional staff team with a long history in ACT service delivery, as well as national and international experience.

In addition, there is a large dedicated team of over 100 skilled, trained and supervised volunteers that provide community care under the oversight of our Community Care Worker.

Currently there are over 1400 people accessing one or more services per week. A description of the current suite of activities that we provide are outlined at Attachment 1.

UnitingCare Kippax has a unique place regarding service delivery and co-ordination in West Belconnen and has taken the lead role in establishing networks of agency and Government co-operation.

It has a proven track record in an integrated capacity-building approach to care, and was the winner of a number of relevant community service awards, including the 2006 Early Intervention Award for Excellence in Service Provision, the 2005 Early Intervention Peer Award for Service provision, and the 2005 ACT Health Award for Community Development and Capacity Building.

It is part of the UnitingCare network, the largest non-government provider of community services in Australia.

Needs Of West Belconnen Area

West Belconnen is an area of geographic disadvantage and high need, as demonstrated by statistical evidence of social exclusion. It has the lowest average income level in the ACT (source: 2006 Australian Taxation Office). In addition, on average it has:

- more poverty and financial disadvantage (up to \$500 per week less than the Canberra average weekly income)

5. WAYS GOVERNMENT CAN BETTER SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

Longer Term, Sustainable Funding

Long-term, sustainable funding for award-winning programs would allow community agencies such as ours, to plan further into the future and provide a more stable employment environment for our skilled employees. As articulated in the recent “Dropping off the Edge” study by Tony Vinson, in order to be effective, organisations require longer term funding to establish effective programs to meet community needs.

Recurrent, ongoing, financial investment by Government in these type of programs would provide a crucial component to building, retaining and sustaining the critical volunteer and informal carer component to the provision of care, support and service delivery for members of the ACT community.

The challenge for government of all political persuasions is to develop mechanisms which enable longer-term commitments of both funding and policy development to flourish. These longer-term relationships have trust at their heart. Community-based organisations are keen to explore these areas for development but await the initiative of government.

Mechanisms To Align Policy And Funding To Meet Community Needs

UnitingCare Kippax recognises that specifically targeted services – while both valuable and essential – are often unable to adequately respond to the breadth of people’s needs in a holistic way, and run the risk of losing sight of the individual as a whole.

The fact that these targeted services are often funded from different Departments within ACT Government makes it even more difficult to match the needs of clients who present for assistance, to the services that are required.

UnitingCare Kippax urges the ACT Government to examine ways in which funding may be aggregated across agencies and allocated to individual community organisations in order to better meet the holistic needs of individuals. Community groups would still be accountable to both Government and the community for the use of these funds using a streamlined approach.

Investment in Carers and Volunteers

Carers and volunteers are critical to meeting emerging and increasing demand for support services.

UnitingCare Kippax has used short term Government funding to support carers and provide volunteer training and development opportunities.

We urge the ACT Government to consider a longer-term investment-based approach to supporting carers and volunteers.

6. ORGANISATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

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- **Financial and material aid**, including crisis meals, food hampers including Christmas hampers.
- **Budgeting support and financial management counselling** (including a referral arrangement with Lifeline and Care Financial services).
- A Christmas presents service for children in need in conjunction with Target stores.
- A bereavement support group
- **Mentoring programs for teenagers**, aimed at assisting transitions from primary to secondary schooling, from secondary to college and from schooling to other pathways. Young people are also encouraged to be involved in the decision making of Kippax Uniting Church, through encouragement at meetings and inclusion on decision-making bodies.
- **Education and leisure classes** (craft group, spinning group, Singing for Pleasure, U3A etc)

UnitingCare Kippax has a capacity building approach to service delivery that is based on the 40 Developmental Assets model used successfully locally by the YMCA, nationally and internationally.

Past clients of our services often choose to contribute to the community through their own volunteering – both at UnitingCare Kippax and through other service agencies. This means that the investment in the services has a double flow on effect – reducing future results of social disadvantage for the client themselves, and also increasing the volunteer service hours contributed to the community.

Our facility is also hired out to other organisations to use as a venue for their programs (eg AAX) which affords a useful link in the event that referral to such services and support is required.

Living on the Edge

An overview of the community of West Belconnen

and the services and service gaps of the area

A project by **UnitingCare Kippax** on behalf of the **West Belconnen Inter Agency Liaison Group** funded and supported by **Belconnen Community Services Inc.**

October 2007



Executive Summary

West Belconnen is an area on the north-western suburban fringe of the ACT that houses approximately 20,000, or 6% of the ACT population. It is an area that combines low levels of income, high levels of housing stress with geographic isolation and relatively poor access to transport to create a community of localised disadvantage with particular needs.

The area has several additional stress points – a younger than average population, larger percentage of pre-school aged children, high levels of unpaid child care and unpaid assistance to people with disabilities as well as a particularly high percentage of single parent households. Indigenous peoples are disproportionately represented in the area's population.

There is a range of Community, Health and Educational services provided in West Belconnen or available for the people of West Belconnen. The services are provided in an efficient and effective manner largely by community organizations that are stretched to their limit and operate on "shoe string" budgets. They seek to work even more co-operatively with each other and with Government agencies to increase the impact of the services for the sake of the people of the West Belconnen community. However the stretched nature of the organizations in terms of finances and staffing time works against the desire to work more co-operatively.

Organizations and clients regularly and repeatedly name several key areas as gaps that must be addressed. These include consideration of the location of services, transport so that services can be accessed more easily, more adequate and affordable medical services, an increased dedication to a holistic approach to service delivery, a stronger emphasis on primary care and early intervention, and attention to community development and enhancement to reduce the effects of social isolation.

The approach proposed by the Rowntree Foundation (*The Groundwork movement: its role in neighbourhood renewal, 2002*) is endorsed:

- Rebuilding neighbourhoods is a long term process;
- Lengthy lead in times are needed to equip communities to engage in strategy development;
- Even where there has been community development and capacity building, vulnerable communities need support in the long term;
- These processes impose limits on the speed with which impacts on programme outcomes can be achieved

1. Introduction

1.1. West Belconnen Definition

Although there is no formal definition of West Belconnen in demographic studies, it has become an area defined by common usage by residents, service organizations and Government agencies. For the purposes of the current research and service mapping, it is defined to include the 5 suburbs on the western edge of the region of Belconnen: namely, Higgins, Holt, Macgregor (including the new subdivision of Macgregor West), Charnwood and Dunlop, bounded by Drake Brockman Drive, Kingsford Smith Drive, Southern Cross Drive, Florey Drive, Tillyard Avenue and the NSW Border.

The area largely coincides with the primary enrolment areas for the four relevant public primary schools – Higgins, Holt, Macgregor and Charnwood-Dunlop. The Group Centre and surrounding precinct of Kippax is included as part of the suburb of Holt. In total, West Belconnen comprises approximately half of the area covered by the postcode 2615. Higgins was first developed in 1968. Dunlop was the last suburb to be developed, commencing in 1994. Development is still occurring in Dunlop and will soon commence in Macgregor West.

West Belconnen is approximately 9 kilometres from the Belconnen Town Centre, and approximately 19 kilometres from Civic.

The area outlined in red on the following map illustrates it.

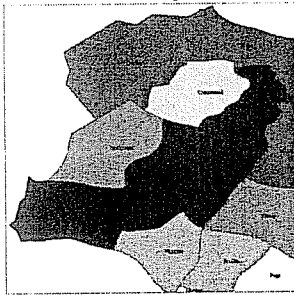


2.2. Age

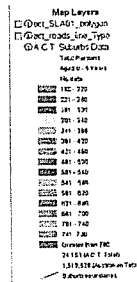
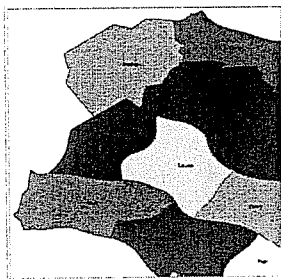
The population West Belconnen is younger than either the Australian median or the ACT median. The youngest median is 29 – for Dunlop – followed by Charnwood at 31.

The percentage of people under 19 is higher than both the Australian and the ACT average, with the over representation most significant in those aged under 5. The largest population of school-aged children is in Dunlop. The largest population of children younger than school age is in Dunlop, followed by Holt.

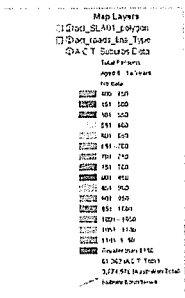
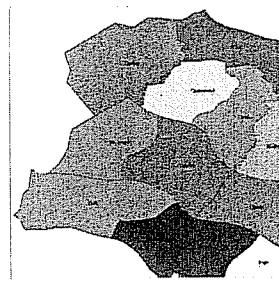
2.2.1. Median Age



2.2.2. People aged 5 and under



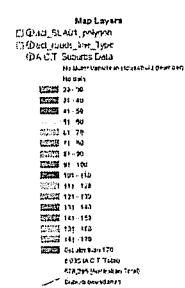
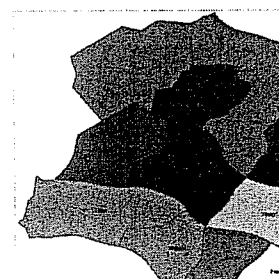
2.2.3. People aged 6-19



2.3. Transport

Notwithstanding its geographic isolation and the commonly reported difficulties in accessing adequate public transport, over 400 households in West Belconnen do not have a motor vehicle. The suburbs recording the largest number of vehicle-less households are Holt and Charnwood. Both suburbs record levels at or above the national average of 9% of households (ACT average is 7%). This average is generally only matched in other areas of the ACT in or around Town Centres, where reliance on cars is significantly lessened.

2.3.1. No car in household



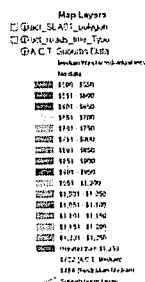
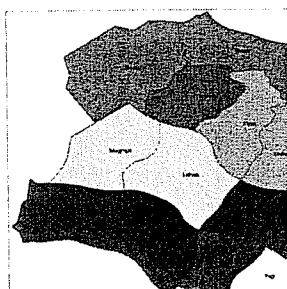
2.4. Income

Levels of income in West Belconnen have been consistently under ACT average for many years. Median household income in Charnwood is at 2/3 of the ACT figure. Median household income in Holt is at 72% of the ACT median. While the median income figures in West Belconnen are generally around the Australian median figure, the higher cost of living in the ACT compared with other parts of Australia can mask the difficulty of the situation of many households.

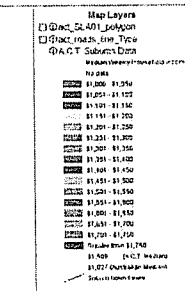
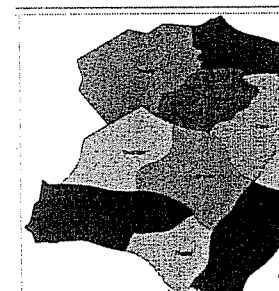
OECD figures set the relative poverty line in developed countries at 50% of the median disposable (net) income for all Australians for a single adult. Statistics relating to people living under this poverty line and close to the poverty line demonstrate the difficulty under which many households currently exist.

Over 130 single parent households in West Belconnen are living under the poverty line. An additional 50 West Belconnen households of 2 adults with children are living under poverty line. An additional 30 couples without children are living under the poverty line. Suburbs most affected by poverty are Charnwood, Holt and Dunlop.

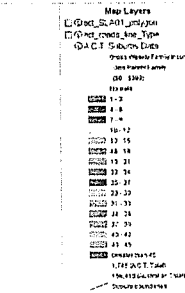
2.4.1. Median Individual income



2.4.2. Median household income



2.4.3. "Poverty": Single Parent family



2.7. Household pressures

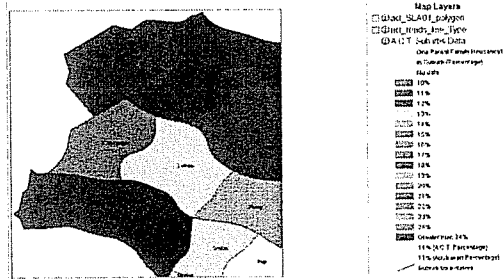
Cumulative effects of disadvantage and household pressure result in social exclusion, isolation and increase the risk of a lack of health, contribution to society and enjoyment of a decent life. Concentrated pockets of such pressures result in a deleterious effect on the community at large.

West Belconnen possesses many such factors which when combined result in significant localised disadvantage, and require attention that is peculiar to the area. The factors are often not of themselves a "disadvantage", but create pressures on individuals and households.

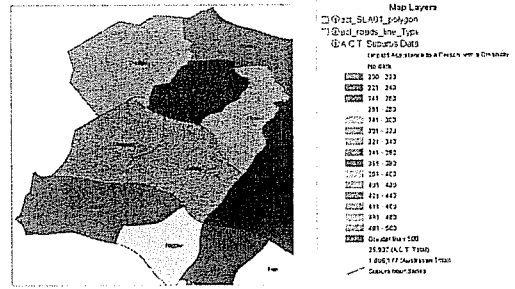
West Belconnen has a particularly high percentage of households that have one parent, with children. Against the national average of 11%, Charnwood has 18% of its households comprising single parent with children, and Macgregor 15%.

Additionally a large number of households are providing unpaid care for children or for people with a disability. Over 5100 households in West Belconnen are providing unpaid childcare, while over 1600 households provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability. Suburbs providing greatest number of these households are Dunlop – the most geographically isolated – and Holt – a suburb with high levels of economic disadvantage.

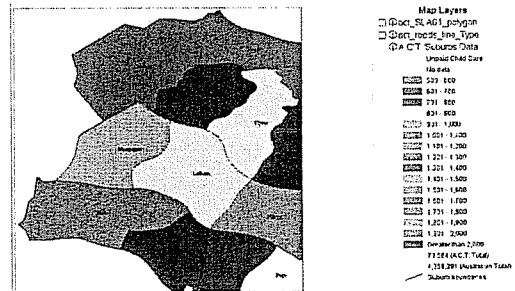
2.7.1. Single parent households



2.7.2. Unpaid assistance to person with disability



2.7.3. Unpaid child care



3. Services Information

The following is a collation of the Community Survey (see Appendix 2) and other community liaison. It outlines the services currently provided as Community Services, Health Services and Educational Services. In each of these three categories, the services are grouped in terms of those provided in West Belconnen by organizations based in West Belconnen, those brought into West Belconnen by organizations based outside West Belconnen and those provided outside West Belconnen but accessed by people living in West Belconnen. In relation to this last category, clearly an exhaustive list is not possible. However those listed are intended to be those which pay specific attention in some way to the needs and issues of West Belconnen residents.

The services are listed by organization providing the service, the name or summary of the service and its key purpose or informational note.

3.1. Community Services

3.1.1. In West Belconnen by West Belconnen organizations

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Charnwood Primary School (Charnwood) | Music programs for children up to 5 years old and Gymnastics | These programs are run out of this school. |
| Charnwood Scouts Hall | Girl Guides and Scouts | Guiding and Scout groups are run from this Hall. |
| Police Citizens Youth Club (Charnwood) | Reclink | Activities for at risk youth |
| Charity Computers (Charnwood) | Charity Computers (Charnwood) | Provides reconditioned computers to low income earners cheaply. |
| Christian Life Centre (Charnwood) | Hand Up | Provide low cost clothing and second hand goods for purchase |
| | Low cost food program | Low cost food available for people in need to purchase |

| | Marriage Counselling/ Relationship Counselling | Assistance with relationship matters |
|--|--|---|
| | Kids with Courage Youth programs | Youth groups held several times a week. |
| | Various community support services | Provides a variety of community activities including an occasional care service for babies through to preschoolers. |
| St. Barnabas (Charnwood) | Barney's Second Hand Shop | Provides second hand goods and clothes for purchase. |
| St James Anglican Church (Holt) | Holt School Breakfast Club | Provide breakfast for children 2 mornings per week. |
| | Kids Club | Afternoon tea, games, craft & stories for Primary school children in years 2 to 4 on Wednesday afternoons. |
| | The Drop | Place for children to get together and hang out in a safe environment for years 5 to 7. One afternoon per week. |
| | Caritas | Social night held 4 times per year. Women caring for women. |
| | Wednesday Fellowship | A group for elderly people providing support. Plus a meal and worship. |
| St. Thomas Aquinas School (Charnwood) | PHYSIE | Modern dance classes that are aimed at children aged 3 and upward. Classes are relatively low cost. |
| St John the Apostle Parish (Kippax/Holt) | Refugee Resettlement | Help humanitarian entrants to settle here. |
| | Social Justice Committee | |

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|---|
| St Vincent de Paul's | | Emergency Relief – food, clothing? |
| Sharing Places Inc. (Pearce) | Sharing Places | Community access/Social participation Day service for Adults who have intellectual/multiple disabilities associated with high and complex needs |

3.1.3. Services offered outside West Belconnen and accessed by people from West Belconnen

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Belconnen Community Services (Belconnen) | English Conversation Group | |
| | Mum's Walking Group (Gungahlin) | |
| | HACC Case management | Support for Aged people living at home |
| Companion House (O'Connor) | | Sensitising the broader community to the needs of people affected by torture & trauma |
| | Refugee Group: Early Intervention Medical & Counselling for refugees. Long term counselling, Children's Counsellor, Community Development | Recovery from torture and trauma through holistic, safe & culturally sensitive service provision. Empowerment of clients. |
| Gungahlin Early Child and family Centre | Community support for Indigenous families from Holt | Specifically targeted support for indigenous families relating to parenting, transitions in the schooling system and increasing access to services |

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| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Mission Australia (Belconnen) | Job matching | Help people get training, work experience and jobs |
| Volunteering ACT (Belconnen) | SPICE | Helping people to get work experience as volunteers. Work experience programs for teenagers in the later years of high school. |

3.2. Health

3.2.1. In West Belconnen by West Belconnen organizations

3.2.1.1. General Practitioners

Access to health services has been an increasing source of difficulty for many years. At the time of preparing this report, there were 11 General Practitioners operating in West Belconnen, the majority of whom are in part-time practice. One of the doctors in full-time practice is retiring in November 2007, and there are no current arrangements for a replacement.

The practices are located in Kippax, Holt (two), Charnwood (at the Fraser end of Charnwood and Higgins). There are no medical facilities in either Macgregor or Dunlop.

Only two practices – both part-time – have their books open for new patients. The majority have lengthy waiting lists, and one large practice is not currently taking new people on to the waiting list at all.

The national average of bulk billing for non-referred GP attendances is 75.1%. The electorate of Fraser (of which West Belconnen forms part) is at 49.0% - the second lowest in Australia. However in West Belconnen, the access to bulk billing is severely limited.

No practice offers regular access to bulk billing. 4 General practitioners offer it "at the doctor's discretion". 1 practice of 4 General Practitioners offer it for people who were patients prior to 2000 and who are on Health Care cards. Even in those circumstances the hours of bulk billed consultations is severely limited. One GP offers bulk billing for children under 16 and for Aged pensioners only.

Planned Services:

The Charnwood Community Health Committee is a non-partisan community-based group dedicated to improving the access to affordable doctors and health services for people in Charnwood and

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surrounding suburbs. It is currently in the stages of planning and developing an innovative medical co-operative service to be based at Charnwood providing bulk-billing doctors and allied health services. There is no currently set date by which this venture will be operating.

3.2.1.2. Dental Services

There are four dentists operating in West Belconnen: one in Charnwood, and three (two part-time) in the Kippax Health Centre Holt. There are no dental services available in Higgins, Macgregor or Dunlop. All dental services have lengthy waiting periods.

3.2.1.3. Pharmacy Services

There are three pharmacies operating in West Belconnen – one each in Charnwood, Higgins and Kippax (Holt). There are no pharmaceutical services available in Macgregor or Dunlop. The pharmacy at Charnwood operates with slightly extended hours. A pharmacy in Florey opens until 9pm. The closest late night pharmacy is in O'Connor.

3.2.1.4. Other medical services

There are only four other forms of medical services currently operating in West Belconnen by West Belconnen-based organizations:

- A Maternal and Child Health (MACH) nursing services operates out of the Kippax Health Centre (Holt) and out of the Charnwood-Dunlop School buildings.
- A private physiotherapist practices operates at Kippax (Holt).
- An aged care hostel and nursing home (Kalparrin) operates at Kippax (Holt).

Planned services:

"Flexible for Life" (at Charnwood Christian Life Centre): Age appropriate and specific exercise for all ages, including those with limiting physical conditions

There are no specialist medical services operating in West Belconnen.

3.2.2. Brought into West Belconnen by organizations based outside West Belconnen

- ACT Health – Mental Health (Civic/Belconnen)
 - Crisis team & centre based services, social workers, Psychologists. Peri- natal Mental Health
- ACT Health Cervical Screen Program
 - Free Community Talks and information sessions
- Alcoholics Anonymous
 - Support. Based at Kippax Uniting Community Centre

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- On Purpose Counselling and Coaching
 - Coaching Counselling Supporting individuals and couples
- YMCA /Kippax UnitingCare (YMCA is Macquarie based)
 - Exercise classes 6 classes run weekly at Kippax Uniting Community Centre. These classes are aimed at older people including classes for the physically less mobile.

3.2.3. Offered outside West Belconnen and accessed by people from West Belconnen

3.2.3.1. General practitioners

There is a range of medical practitioners operating throughout Belconnen. It is beyond the scope of the current study to list these practices, nor is it possible to determine whether people in West Belconnen access the practices. However experience of clients and community organizations indicates that issues of closed books, waiting periods and bulk billing remain a significant hurdle.

3.2.3.2. Dental services

The Belconnen Child and Youth Dental Clinic operates out of the Belconnen Health Centre.

There is a range of dental services operating throughout Belconnen. It is beyond the scope of the current study to list these practices, nor is it possible to determine whether people in West Belconnen access the practices.

3.2.3.3. Pharmaceutical services

There is a range of pharmaceutical services operating throughout Belconnen, though no late night pharmacies. Pharmacies operate in Evatt, Florey, Hawker, Kaleen and Macquarie. It is not possible to determine to what extent people from West Belconnen access the services.

3.2.3.4. Other services

The closest Hospital is Calvary Hospital, located at Bruce. It offers a wide range of services – both public and private. This includes an emergency department, an after hours medical services (CALMS), palliative care and a private Mental Health Unit. However, not all

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| Universities | Australian National University Acton | Tertiary education |
| | Australian Catholic University Watson | Tertiary education |
| | University of Canberra Bruce | Tertiary education |
| Anglicare (Civic) | Cyclops | Education support in schools for young carers |
| | Youth education program | Alternative education (15 – 19 year olds) |
| KIDZONE (Mitchell) | Bobbi Cook (behavioural gives presentations on child related issues) | Educate families |
| Northside High school support service (Belconnen) | Run out of Uturn Building | Youth education support |
| Therapy ACT | Speech Therapy and Physiotherapy | Children through to Adults including programs for children who have Autism and ASD |
| YMCA (Macquarie) | Belconnen Long Day Care | To provide a caring, enjoyable, safe and healthy environment for the children and staff. To provide a program that meets the individual needs and interests of each child, to develop their full potential in all areas of development. |
| | Children's Birthday Parties | The YMCA offers specialty Children's parties |

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| | Before and After school care program | Runs from 7.30 to 9.30 am and 3.00pm to 6pm during the school week. Breakfast included in before care. |
| | ED GYM | Educational Gymnastics is a fun, non-competitive movement education classes for children aged 12 months to 8 years of age. This program provides children with the opportunity to experience and develop their confidence and motor skills with a wide range of physical activities, as well as interaction with other children. |
| YMCA (Macquarie) | Playschool Programs | YMCA Playschool Program is designed to provide children with opportunities for social, cognitive, physical and emotional development as well promoting independence. It is designed for children aged 3 to 5 years old. |
| YMCA (Macquarie) | Healthy Kids | The program is a fun, interactive, educative physical activity based program for children. The aim is to give children knowledge regarding healthy lifestyle choices. |

4. Identified Gaps

The following areas of gaps and needs were identified across a range of Community forums, liaison with clients, and the community survey. Those listed in this section are the needs regularly expressed and given a weighting of significance by the respondents. The full list of perceived gaps and comments for each area is included as Appendix 3.

4.1. General gaps

Social isolation caused by location "on the edges" of urban development, and inadequate transport services is without exception listed as a fundamental issue. Transportation to services around the Belconnen Town Centre or beyond is difficult, and poorly serviced in non-peak times. Despite the fact that the primary local 'hubs' are at the northern and southern end of West Belconnen (i.e. Charnwood and Kippax), transportation north-south within West Belconnen is poor, with most services being provided to take people eastwards towards the Belconnen Town Centre.

Both service organizations and clients mention the high sense of locality identity – people in West Belconnen live by and large in West Belconnen. This 'village' mentality fosters a stronger possibility of community development than in many areas of the ACT, where communities are more fluid in their community identity. At the same time, it suggests the necessity of an approach to service delivery and community development that is different from other areas, and more site based.

Dunlop is particularly isolated, and stands unique among ACT suburbs. Demographic predictions are that it will become the 5th largest suburb in the ACT (being Kambah, Ngunnawal, Gordon and Kaleen). However, Dunlop has no shopping centre, no school or other educational facilities, no community hall or gathering space, no playing fields, no medical services and minimal outdoor community gathering spaces. No additional facilities are currently planned to redress this isolation.

Specific attention to the issue of social exclusion and isolation is regularly requested.

4.2. Gaps in Community Services

Clients and service organizations regularly spoke of the necessity for an integrated approach to working with people's needs. The de-humanising aspect of moving from one service organization to another for different aspects of a person's life is expressed as a significant factor in people not accessing services. This is increased with inadequate transportation in the area.

Emergency housing and refuge accommodation is expressed as an issue of particularly high concern.

4.3. Gaps in Health Services

The lack of adequate access to General practitioners – especially those who bulk bill – is the highest expressed need by clients and service organizations.

Access to services relating to mental health, including support, primary care and respite care are also of high concern. Access to free or low cost counselling services in West Belconnen is spoken of as an urgent need.

Clients and organizations speak regularly of the need for an integrated or holistic care approach, and a significant expansion in early intervention and primary care services, rather than concentrating on acute or reactive care.

4.4. Gaps in Educational Services

Educational levels in West Belconnen are low by ACT standards as is retention rate to Year 12. Efforts by individuals to redress this matter for themselves are hampered by the lack of adult educational facilities within the area and the failure of them being offered at times that can be co-ordinated with family commitments. Trades-based training (eg at CIT) is particularly difficult because of locational isolation.

The new district P-10 school in Holt will hopefully redress some of the issues caused at present by the lack of a High School in the area. However, the current plan for populating the school year by year will

- maybe very upsetting for some clients particularly for those who have mental health issues. Poor availability of low cost counselling for people with a wide variety of problems.
- More counselling needs to be available for people dealing with mental health issues.
 - Poor availability of low cost counselling for people with a wide variety of problems. More counselling needs to be available for people dealing with mental health issues.
 - There needs to be more services out in West Belconnen that can deal with issues such as sexual health and drug and alcohol issues that are facing the areas young people/adults.
 - YWCA would also like to see a Child and Family centre in the West Belconnen area that does preventative, early intervention work with young children (0-5 years group)
 - Lifeline stated that there are insufficient emergency housing services and there needs to be more responsible gambling education in the community.
 - Belconnen Family Daycare stated that there needs to be more assistance with transport for children who attend preschool or Early Intervention Unit while the parents work.
 - A lack of support services for men in the West Belconnen area.
 - Information on available services can be difficult to access by those that need them.
 - People who most need to access services often don't use these services because they may not know that they are available to them. Services may need to be better advertised to the general public in the West Belconnen area.
 - From the end of term 4 2007 Belconnen Community Services will not longer be managing the After School Care program at Higgins Primary School.
 - Lack of activities for children and young people during the school holidays. Some of the activities that are available are costly and may be financially out of reach for some parents on low to middle incomes or families with more than one child.
 - Lack of playing fields in good condition for use by people who wish to undertake exercise in the outdoors.
 - Lack of drop in services for people – particularly young people to use.
 - Lack of cohesion between services that do operate in the area. Needs to be more/better communication between different service providers working in the West Belconnen/Belconnen area.
 - Poor levels of maintenance and safety in ACT housing houses/flats
 - The rental squeeze in the Canberra area is making it very difficult for low to middle earners to access private rental properties in good states of repair.
 - Problems faced by the elderly poor when trying to rent a flat due to shortage of suitable housing stock and high prices being

- asked by private landlords make it very difficult for the elderly on low fixed incomes to break into the rental market.
- Lack of emergency accommodation available on the North side of Canberra, particularly short to medium term accommodation.
 - Delays with Centrelink acting on problems may have people needing to material aid/ financial assistance from Community services
 - Carers are having a harder time in accessing carer payments from Centrelink
 - Lack of refuges in the West Belconnen area for Women and Children trying to escape from situations involving domestic violence.
 - No Police Station in the West Belconnen area, which can mean there are time delays in crimes being dealt with.

Health Services

- Basically there are just not enough workers in the health programs m listed in the survey. The programs on offer are good but there is a need for more of these types of services.
- There is a gap in the area of youth health services in the Belconnen/West Belconnen area. Particularly sexual health.
- There is a lack of Medical and Dental services in the West Belconnen area. Not all of the available services will bulk bill for all clients and some of the practices have closed their books to new patients.
- Most Doctors in the West Belconnen area have closed their books to new patients.
- One of the local Doctors will be retiring within the next few months thereby decreasing available Doctor numbers
- Not all of the Clinics bulk bill patients.
- Primary health not covered in Mental Health package.
- Lack of support services to help people in domestic violence situations.
- Lack of in house respite care
- Long waiting lists for siblings of children with disabilities to get into activities focusing on their emotional and developmental needs.
- Only clients that are in urgent/very high need of care get the level of care that they require.
- Need to be more support services located in West Belconnen for children with behavioural and developmental problems.
- Needs to be more Emergency services such as Ambulance, Police services in the area.
- More in house respite services are needed for carers in the West Belconnen area due to the lack of transport for clients and their carers.

- Very few preventative health care services particularly in the mental health care area.
- If additional aged care self care units are built in the Belconnen region, this will put additional pressure on existing services. Belconnen already has a high number of ageing residents, and we would need to be able to expand our services to meet the demand.

Educational Services

- There is a lack or alternative educational options available in the West Belconnen area.
- Lack of educational support for young people in the West Belconnen area. Need to more "Homework Clubs" for students to access.
- There is a need for more educational services such as the University of the 3rd Age for older adults in the West Belconnen area.
- The lack of a High School in the West Belconnen area at present means that teenagers are having to travel out of their suburbs by either public or private transport to get to school. These additional transport costs add to financial pressures for some families. Also some teenagers have lost their support networks of friends with some having to go to different schools to one another.
- Lack of educational options such as a CIT for people to use if they wish to undertake trades based training.
- Little if any Before School care available for children at the local schools.
- There needs to be help available for the school communities (children, teachers etc.) that have to deal with feelings of loss and grief surrounding the closing of their schools (Holt and Higgins at the end of 2008). Help will be needed to build a spirit of community at the new Regional School