



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2015-16

MR BRENDAN SMYTH MLA (CHAIR), MS MEEGAN FITZHARRIS MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), DR CHRIS BOURKE MLA, MS NICOLE LAWDER MLA

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

**SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE
ACT BUDGET 2015-16**

PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 2 JUNE 2015

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to committees@parliament.act.gov.au by **12.00pm Friday 5 June 2015**. 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, (02) 6247 3540, 0422 665 469, director@youthcoalition.net
Alternative contact: Sonia Karouzos, Office Manager, (02) 6247 3540,
office@youthcoalition.net

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 and analysis.)

No

4. Please list, in order of priority, your three key priority areas regarding the ACT Budget 2015-2016 (you can expand on these in Question 5):

a. Education

b. Jobs creation / employment

c. Housing / homelessness

5. Please detail your views on the ACT Budget in relation to your three priority areas?

Education

The Youth Coalition continues to be concerned about the gap in services supporting highly vulnerable young people to engage in education and employment pathways. This is a key group that need support as research has shown that young people who leave school early are significantly more likely to experience homelessness, have involvement with juvenile detention or adult corrections, be unemployed or underemployed, experience a long term health issue and/or develop a mental health issue.

While we have seen some positive movement in the Federal Budget to address the gap left behind by the end of the Youth Connection program, we are disappointed in the lack of investment in the ACT Budget to address the significant gap in educational support for vulnerable young people. The Youth Coalition believes that it is essential for the ACT Government to continue to build the capacity of the ACT education system to be flexible and responsive to the needs of all students. Students who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging require specific, targeted support to remain in education, with a particular focus on overcoming barriers to participation and engagement.

Jobs creation / employment

Youth unemployment is a growing concern both locally and nationally. The Youth Coalition believes that ACT Government agencies, youth and community support services, and the wider community have a shared responsibility to ensure that young people are supported to maximise their engagement in education, training and employment. The availability of entry-level opportunities is a key issue for young people in the ACT, as it is real work experience, in combination with qualifications, skills, and a good network, that provide opportunities for young people to engage meaningfully and sustainably in the labour market.

The Youth Coalition acknowledges that investment in capital infrastructure is a key way that the ACT Government can create jobs. In light of this, the Youth Coalition highlights the need ensure that capital infrastructure projects do the following things:

- deliver on immediate community needs
- represent the most value for money
- generate sustainable employment
- stimulate the ACT economy, and
- invest in affordable and/or public housing.

Further to this, with youth unemployment at a significantly higher rate than that of general unemployment, the Youth Coalition calls on the ACT Government to use its purchasing power to prioritise investment in projects that create sustainable employment for members of the community who are the most vulnerable to unemployment, underemployment and poverty.

Housing and homelessness

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

The Youth Coalition supports the renewal of public housing as a measure that will improve the quality of the Territory's public housing stock. However, we note that this investment is about replacing existing stock and will not increase the overall number of public housing properties. We are disappointed in the lack of strategy to clearly address housing affordability and reduce homelessness in the ACT. The private rental market in the ACT is amongst the highest in Australia and many young people report difficulty in gaining entry to private rental properties, due to cost, availability and discrimination.

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. We acknowledge the difficulties facing the ACT Government during the Federation White Paper process and the lack of clarity regarding where the Australian Government is heading with homelessness policy or funding in the current context. However we highlight that this funding is only for the next two years and continue to urge the ACT Government to proactively take measures that will ensure the level of current service delivery is maintained.

The Youth Coalition will continue to 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.

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 Youth Coalition was very disappointed with the unexpected continuation of the 0.34% levy on the community sector associated with the Community Sector Reform Program. The ACT Government did not consult with the community sector about the continuation of the levy and we believe that the surprise announcement of two more years was disrespectful and not in the spirit of community-government partnership. We will continue to work with our members, ACTCOSS and the ACT Peaks Network to develop a collective community sector position regarding the levy.

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 12 June 2015, 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 Support Office will contact you by close of business Wednesday 10 June 2015 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.
