



Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Elizabeth Kikkert: To ask the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs

Ref: Youth Affairs, Budget Outlook, p. 74, output class CSD 1.1 Inclusion and Participation (Youth); output 1, output 2 (Education)

In relation to: youth homelessness

1. The 2011 and 2016 censuses both estimated that about 250 people age 19 to 24 were homeless in the ACT. According to government modelling, what is the impact of Canberra's nation-topping rents on this specific demographic?
2. What percentage of youth aged 19 to 24 are eligible for the Housing for Young People Program, and how many does the program successfully provide with accommodation each year?
3. How many young people will the planned Youth Foyer at the new Woden CIT be able to accommodate?
4. Considering that they are at elevated risk of homelessness, does the ACT Government have a specific strategy for increasing housing affordability for young people age 19 to 24?

YVETTE BERRY MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) has not undertaken modelling on the impact of rent on people aged 19 to 24.

The ACT does well on many measures of housing affordability and continues to experience comparatively low levels of housing stress (generally defined as paying more than 30 percent of household income on rent or mortgage costs).

The ACT is now the fourth most affordable jurisdiction to rent in Australia, as measured by the proportion of family income needed to meet rent payments.

According to the Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA), 21.5 percent of family income was needed to meet median rent payments in the ACT in the June quarter 2021, the fourth lowest jurisdiction in Australia.

2. The Housing for Young People Program is open to young people aged from 16 to 25 who are transitioning from Community and Youth Justice, Care and Protection and Homelessness Services in the ACT, have active support in place and meet the eligibility criteria for social housing assistance under the *Housing Assistance Act 2007*.

0.2 percent of youths aged 19-24 in the ACT have met the abovementioned criteria and are current applicants for the Housing for Young People Program.

CSD, Housing ACT has successfully provided accommodation in Housing for Young People tenancies to the following numbers of applicants in each recent financial year:

- 26 during 2018-19;
- 38 during 2019-20;
- 15 during 2020-21, and
- 6 during 2021-22 until 9 November 2021.

3. 20 young people will be able to be accommodated at the Youth Foyer in Woden.
4. The ACT Housing Strategy (the Strategy) was launched in October 2018 and establishes an overarching policy framework to guide decisions about policy, planning, and delivery, of housing across the ACT over its ten-year lifespan.

The Strategy is structured around five goals with linked objectives and 74 priority actions. It is supported by a complementary Implementation Plan, which identifies timeframes for the delivery of actions and allocates delivery responsibility within government.

While the Strategy aims to improve access to safe, secure, and affordable, housing for all Canberrans, it includes a particular focus on low to moderate income households and those most vulnerable to homelessness.

Through the Strategy, the ACT Government has introduced a range of reforms, programs, and funding initiatives, which span the full housing assistance continuum. This comprises initiatives that provide affordable home purchase and affordable rental opportunities, strengthen social housing assistance, respond to homelessness, and increase equity in the housing market.

Goal two of the Strategy is reducing homelessness. One of the actions under this goal is to intervene early and reduce the intergenerational impacts of homelessness. Part of this action is to prioritise young people, including young mothers, and women and children escaping domestic and family violence to provide assistance early to minimise the intergenerational impact of experiencing homelessness.

The progress update against this action in the Year 3 Report Card is:

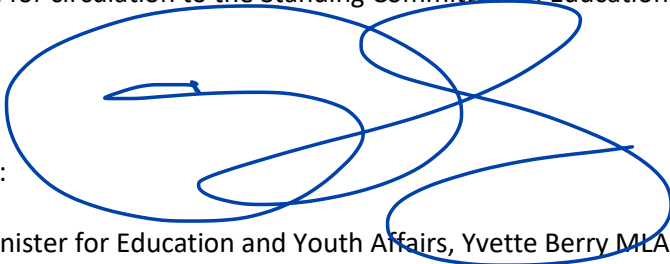
- Doris, Beryl and Toora continue to deliver services to women and children impacted by domestic and family violence.
- Common Ground: Work has continued to deliver Common Ground in Dickson to provide stable and supportive housing for people who need it. The identified cohort for Common Ground Dickson includes single older women, women with children and single younger women, providing access to a Common Ground initiative in the ACT for women and families. Construction is progressing well with 50% of the site servicing works complete, structure complete up to the second floor and works continuing for the third and fourth floor suspended slabs. A market sounding paper for the service provider/s of Common Ground Dickson closed in May 2021. The comments have been used to inform the services tender, which was released in July 2021.

Goal four of the Strategy is increasing affordable rental housing. One of the actions under this goal is the Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption Scheme. Under this scheme, properties are rented at 75 per cent or less of market rent through a community housing provider, and the property owner receives a land tax exemption. There are

currently two community providers participating in this scheme: Rentwell by YWCA Canberra and Homeground by CHC. Rentwell has a focus on older women, and also houses younger women and women with one or more children. Homeground tenants are aged 18 years or over.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and curves.

Date: 18/11/21

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Yvette Berry MLA