

**Opening Statement to the  
Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024**

**by Rebecca Vassarotti MLA,  
Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services**

**2023**

- As the Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services, I am pleased to be leading the ACT Government's commitment to reducing homelessness in the ACT.
- We continue to work to a vision of a future where homelessness is rare, brief and non reoccurring. However, we know there is a need for ongoing and sustained action to achieve this vision.
- We are all very conscious that over the past year, we have seen how cost-of-living pressures, ongoing impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ACT's growing population, have continued to place pressure on homelessness services as they work tirelessly to support Canberrans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- With more people in need than ever before, and with increasing complexity, it is critical we ensure services have the funding and support they need to respond effectively.
- In recognition of the ACT Government's commitment, the 2023/24 Budget will deliver an additional \$20 million in funding for the homelessness sector.
- This funding builds on the \$18 million already committed under the *Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly (PAGA)* to expand the capacity of the specialist homelessness sector in the ACT.
- The \$20 million in further funding, includes:
  - \$14.3 million over four years, to increase the capacity of existing homelessness services providers.
  - \$2.3 million over two years in continued funding for Ainslie Lodge, MacKillop House, Axial Housing, and the Early Morning Centre to meet continued increase in demand.
  - \$1.7 million in 2023-24 to continue funding the Rough Sleeper Program, Complex Client program and Client Support Fund.
  - \$1.2 million in 2023-24 for hotel brokerage coordinated by OneLink and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service.
- In 2023-24, the Government will also provide:
  - \$389,000 to increase capacity of food services.
  - \$256,000 for sector development and training.
- This additional investment draws on the findings of the commissioning engagement process held with the homelessness sector last year to ensure we deliver a service system that is strong, sustainable and offers responsive accommodation pathways for Canberrans who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

- Commissioning is an ongoing cycle that involves continuous collaboration and working together.
- In recognition of this, further co-design activities are scheduled in the second half of 2023, including in relation to:
  - the provision of support for clients with high and complex needs,
  - a new central intake model to better meet the needs of clients and the sector, and
  - delivery of food and engagement services responding to vulnerable Canberrans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- This collaborative engagement will ensure these service elements are appropriately designed before subsequent investment approaches are considered.