



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Amanda Bresnan MLA (Chair), John Hargreaves (Deputy Chair),
Alistair Coe MLA, Meredith Hunter MLA, Brendan Smyth MLA

**SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE ACT BUDGET 2012-2013,
TO BE PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 5 JUNE 2012**

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it completed to
committees@parliament.act.gov.au, by 9.30AM Tuesday 12 June 2011.

If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please feel free to
append your comments in an extra page. In any appended pages, please give your
comments after you state what question/s you are addressing.

1. **Full name of group/organisation:** Youth Coalition of the ACT

2. **Name and honorific (Ms, Mr, Dr, etc.) of your organisation's/group's contact person
for this survey and their telephone number and email address:**

Emma Robertson
Director

3. **Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the 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 concern regarding the ACT
Budget 2012-2013:**

a. Lack of investment in early intervention and prevention for vulnerable children,
young people, and families, at a systemic level.

b. Funding for the Children, Youth, and Family Services Program, please see
attached letter to Cabinet from the Youth Coalition and Families ACT.

- c. The need for strategic investment to address workforce capacity, recruitment and retention across community services delivery, including the broader youth and family support sector workforce.

[continued over page]

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

- a. The Youth Coalition believes the Budget measures do not invest enough in early intervention and prevention for the most vulnerable young people and families in our community. Until we prioritise funding support for families prior to statutory involvement, we will see continuing pressure on consecutive budgets to allocate money to crisis responses.
- b. Please see attached letter
- c. With ACT Government driving a significant change agenda across key areas of service delivery to young people and their families, we were disappointed that funding to address workforce capacity, recruitment and retention did not include further investment in the broader youth and family support sector workforce.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention? If so, please append a brief outline of the issue/s, in order of priority.

Yes No

If yes, please comment:

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

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

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

Yes No

Comment (if you wish): The budget has addressed our submission in relation to the Youth Justice Blueprint, but not other areas in a significant way.

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on 15 June 2012, 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 Wednesday 13 June 2012 to confirm arrangements for your appearance . Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations who indicate that they wish to appear.

Thank you.



Ms Katy Gallagher
Mr Andrew Barr
Ms Joy Burch
Mr Simon Corbell
Dr Chris Bourke

CC: Ms Amanda Bresnan, Mr Alistair Coe, Mr Steve Dozpot, Mrs Vicki Dunne, Mr Jeremy Hanson, Mr John Hargreaves, Ms Meredith Hunter, Ms Caroline LeCouteur, Ms Mary Porter, Mr Shane Rattenbury, Mr Zed Seselja, Mr Brendan Smyth.

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

24 May 2012

Re: Additional funding to support the Children, Youth, and Family Services Program.

Dear Cabinet,

We are writing this letter to request urgent consideration of the provision of further funding to the new Children, Youth, and Family Services Program (CYFSP).

The matters highlighted in this letter have been raised recently with the Minister for Community Services, and with Community Services Directorate officials since the implementation of the new CYFSP commenced at the beginning of March.

As you are no doubt aware, the Youth Coalition, the peak body for youth affairs in the ACT, and Families ACT, the peak for family support services, have been working together with the Community Services Directorate and community service providers to support the implementation of the CYFSP.

Background

In late 2009 the then Department of Disability, Housing, and Community Services announced the intention of merging two funding streams, the Youth Support Program, and the Family Support Program.

Following a consultation process involving a Discussion Paper, written submissions and a number of sector forums, the *Service Delivery Framework: 2011-2014* was released in January 2011 along with a request for tender for services under the framework to be procured through select source.

Delays to the procurement process meant that the successful providers were notified in late 2011, with the official start date of the new CYFSP being 1 March 2012.

Impact of Changes to Funding

*The most significant measure of any community is the well-being of its members and how it supports those who are most vulnerable.*¹

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT support the intent of the new Service Delivery Framework to:

- *Decrease the complexity of the service system by streamlining the number of intake, referral and information pathways and stand-alone service providers;*
- *Improve the capacity of funded service providers to work in partnership with primary service providers, particularly education and health and specialist/targeted services; and,*
- *Improve the promotion of services and communication across the community and between service providers.*²

However, the significant addition of the *Information, Engagement and Coordination Service*, and regional *Network Coordination* roles in the new Framework came with no increase in amount of funding allocated to support vulnerable children, young people, and their families in the ACT.

As a result, the development of streamlined intake and referral, and network coordination has come at the expense of frontline service supports, leaving a shortfall in capacity of the CYFSP.

Additionally, a key aim of the new Framework was to '*Provide clarity regarding the role of the funding program and outcomes to be achieved,*³ however no funds were allocated to support the complex transition from the previous models of service delivery to the new Framework. Consequently, some months into the operation of the new service system we are still in the process of developing key components such as contracts, a stakeholder communication strategy an evaluation framework and key performance indicators for the CYFSP. This deficiency has been an extra burden for service users and providers.

Youth Support Service Provision

Youth services began the transition to the new Framework from the end of last year, the most significant change being the closure or reduction of youth 'drop in' services.

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT have been receiving reports from a number of sources that there has been a notable increase in inquiries and referrals to other services since the start of 2012. Many of those services have identified that they have not been able to meet the need, or were not the appropriate service response.

One education-support focused service reported receiving referrals for more than twice their annual allocation of places in January/February alone.

^{1, 2, 3} ACT Government, Service Delivery Framework: 2011-2014, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, January 2011

While the new Framework shifts the focus to providing more 'outreach' style support to vulnerable young people, it has become clear that we need to ensure the right balance of 'outreach' and 'anchored', service provision. We believe that ACT Government must review the decision to reduce or close youth drop-in services.

Further to this, the funding allocated to the youth engagement component of the CYFSP does not adequately support the development and implementation of effective models of 'outreach' style intervention.

Because of this and the Framework's identified objective that 'services provided to young adults (18-25 years) are focused on their transition to independence and/or engagement with the adult service system'⁴, youth engagement services are developing models which rely heavily on referral to 'other' services.

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT have continuing concerns about the capacity of 'other' services to meet this need. No mapping has been done to date, and it appears we are developing a system heavily weighted to referral and lacking the capacity to provide direct practical support. This will create a bottleneck for vulnerable children, young people, and families who are seeking support, rather than the streamlined access we are aiming to achieve.

Case Management

Most case management agencies are reporting that their case management services are already at capacity.

Workforce

During the process of establishment it has become clear that there are issues relating to workforce capacity in the CYFSP.

Some agencies have struggled with recruitment, resulting in delays to service start up, while the restructure or closure of other services has resulted in a loss of experienced workers from the sector. Essentially much of the 'on-the-ground' workforce are new to their positions, and many new to the sector.

Given that the CYFSP is establishing new services and approaches to working with vulnerable children, young people, and their families, it is essential that these services are adequately resourced to be able to develop and deliver outcomes for the people with whom they are working.

We are concerned that because of the level of funding to these services, in particular youth engagement, that staffing levels may not support addressing these issues.

Request for Additional Funding

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT believe that the ACT Government needs to urgently consider the allocation of a further \$1,288,213 per year to the Children, Youth, and Family Services Program.

This figure is based on the amount of funding that has been redirected from frontline

⁴ ACT Government, Service Delivery Framework: 2011-2014, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, January 2011

service provision to the *Information, Engagement and Coordination Service*, and regional *Network Coordination* roles in the new Framework (+3.5%, noting that indexation may vary).

While we support streamlined intake and referral, and network coordination, the loss of that funding from frontline service supports is having a significant impact on the capacity of the CYFSP, and therefore the outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and their families in the ACT community.

Additional funding should be allocated to:

- Case Management;
- Youth Engagement - 'drop in' services that are structured and linked; and,
- Outreach Services.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469 or Will Mollison 0402 718 579.

Yours truly,

Emma Robertson
Director
Youth Coalition of the ACT

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The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the ACT and is responsible for representing the interests of people aged between 12 and 25 years of age, and those who work with them.

Families ACT is the peak body for the Family Support Sector in the ACT.

The logo for the Youth Coalition of the ACT. It features a red rectangular banner with the words "youth coalition" in white lowercase letters. Below the banner, the words "of the ACT" are written in a smaller, red, lowercase font. The entire logo is centered on the page.

youth coalition

of the ACT

ACT Budget: Caught in Cycles of Crisis

Analysis of the ACT Budget 2012-2013

Part 1 of 3

Overview and Media Releases

June 2012

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 2012

Prepared by Youth Coalition staff Adelaide Jones, Ashlin Flanagan, Emma Byrne, Emma Robertson, Erin Barry and Katrina Champion.

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Budget Analysis Overview

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs and young people aged 12 – 25, acknowledges additional funding for child protection and youth justice in the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget. However, Budget measures do not invest enough in early intervention and prevention for the most vulnerable young people and families in our community.

Although the objectives of the ACT Budget include targeted investments to reduce future costs and address chronic disadvantage, this has not resulted in a significant investment in community services to support young people and their families.

The Youth Coalition is particularly disappointed that the Children, Youth and Family Services Program has not received additional funding, as was urgently called for by the Youth Coalition and Families ACT in May 2012. The CYFSP funds a range of community-based services to support vulnerable children, young people and families with relationships, housing, finances, parenting, education, employment; and to prevent them from becoming involved with Care and Protection and Youth Justice.

The Youth Coalition's 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget Analysis is divided into three parts:

- Part 1: Overview and Media Releases (this document)
- Part 2: Expenditure Initiatives
- Part 3: Capital Initiatives

Some of the key initiatives and outcomes of the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget are outlined below.

Workforce Development

The central focus of the Youth Coalition's submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget was Workforce Development, a critical issue for the youth and family support sector. We welcomed the commitment by the ACT Government to fund the outcomes of the Equal Remuneration Case, and called for strategies and resources to address workforce capacity and improve recruitment and retention in the youth and family sector.

Funding initiatives announced in the ACT Budget included:

- \$5.3 million over four years for retention and employment of additional frontline Care and Protection Services staff; and,
- \$0.6 million over three years to strengthen Care and Protection Services through professional and system development and practice improvements.

The Youth Coalition strongly supports the implementation of professional development and practice improvement for the Care and Protection Service workforce. However it is essential that this initiative relates to other existing workforce projects such as the Practice Framework which is being developed for the Children, Youth, and Family Services Program, and other workforce cultural competence development initiatives.

With ACT Government driving a significant change agenda across key areas of service delivery to young people and their families, we were disappointed that funding to address workforce capacity, recruitment and retention did not include further

investment in the broader youth and family support sector workforce. It is imperative that workforce development initiatives are also implemented for early intervention and prevention services, and secondary-level intervention services.

Community Sector Indexation

The Community Sector Indexation figure for ACT Government Service Funding Agreements in 2012-13 will be 3.25%.

However, organisations receiving over \$150,000 through the Community Services Directorate, Housing ACT, and the Health Directorate will be subject to an adjustment of 0.34% as a contribution to the 'Implementation of Equal Remuneration Case Outcomes and Related Community Service Reforms Initiative' (Community Sector Transition and Investment Fund). This will bring the Community Sector Indexation figure down to 2.91%.

Community Sector Viability

The Youth Coalition supported the submission to the ACT Budget from the ACT Community Sector Leaders Forum, which sought for the ACT Government to provide 'a one-off investment to community sector organisations in the order of 15% of the base of contracted services, separate to the recent commitment by the ACT Government to fully fund the Equal Wage Case for community sector workers, untied and in recognition of the significant and growing requirements placed on the sector.'¹

Initiatives announced in the ACT Budget included:

- \$1.4 million over three years for the implementation of the Equal Remuneration Case outcomes and related community sector reforms (amount represents the contribution of 0.34% adjustment from community sector indexation); and,
- \$4,478,000 over four years for Social and Community Services (SACS) Pay Equity Award.

The Youth Coalition again acknowledges the ACT Government's commitment to funding the outcomes of the Equal Remuneration Case, including the commitment to provide \$27 million towards funding its implementation. While we understand that this is to occur over eight years, it appears that only approximately \$4.5 million over four years, has been allocated in this ACT Budget.

The Youth Coalition continues to be concerned that demand for community services support is greater than capacity. This is particularly concerning for youth and family services when considering the continuing trend of increase in Child Protection and Child Concern Reports, and number of Community Youth Justice clients.

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT, the peak for family support services, called on the ACT Government in May 2012 to allocate further funding to the newly established Children, Youth, and Family Services Program (CYFSP). The CYFSP funds a range of community-based services to support vulnerable children, young people and families with relationships, housing, finances, parenting, education, employment; and to prevent them from becoming involved with Care and Protection and Youth Justice.

¹ ACT Community Sector Leaders Forum (February 2012) Submission to inform the development of the 2012/13 ACT Government Budget, Canberra.

Housing and Homelessness

With the private rental market in the ACT amongst the most expensive and inaccessible in Australia, many young people report difficulty in gaining entry to private rental properties, due to cost, availability and discrimination. The Youth Coalition's submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget called for more work to be done to address housing affordability, particularly for young people in the ACT.

The ACT Budget's key initiatives include:

- \$2 million for additional dwellings to address social housing needs; and,
- \$600,000 over two years for Implementation of Phase III of the Affordable Housing Action Plan.

The expansion of social housing and allocation of funds towards building additional dwellings is welcomed, however the Youth Coalition is concerned that young people will still be priced out of housing in the ACT. While recognising that income support and rental assistance is delivered by the Australian Government, we believe that the ACT Government needs to invest more in addressing affordable housing for young people, and supporting young people in accessing the private rental market.

We applaud the ACT Government for the reforms announced in regards to Land Tax, which will improve rental affordability in the market for dwellings with land values up to \$390,000.

The Youth Coalition notes that there is no funding listed for new expenditure under ACT Housing projects.

Education

The Youth Coalition submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget expressed support for the Education and Training Directorate's Student Engagement Framework, in particular the view to include both vulnerable and less vulnerable young people in a holistic strategy. Tiers 2 and 3 of the Student Engagement Framework focus on responding to disengaged students using both internal and external programs and resources.

Key initiatives announced in the ACT Budget include:

- \$3.2 million over four years for the CIT Year 12 program and the Disabilities Support Area for students with complex needs.

Educational engagement plays a major part in keeping young people connected to their community, engaged in learning and social and emotional development. The ACT Youth Commitment clearly articulates that no young person will be lost from education, training or employment. The Youth Coalition is disappointed at the lack of funding allocated to initiatives to support vulnerable young Canberrans to effectively engage with education, in particular within schools.

The Youth Coalition is also concerned that the ACT Budget lacks further commitment of funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to remain engaged in education and/or training.

Justice

The Youth Coalition submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget supported a significant investment in the actions to be identified in the ACT Blueprint for Youth Justice. The submission also called for programs to reduce recidivism and provide meaningful alternatives to detention, and exploration, piloting, and evaluation of Justice Reinvestment models.

We welcome the Budget announcement of \$5.5 million for initiatives in Youth Justice that will cover:

- Additional staff at Bimberi Youth Detention Centre (4-5 EFT);
- Specialist therapeutic services for young people already in the justice system;
- A community based mobile intensive support service; and,
- Targeted support with a brokerage component.

The Youth Coalition looks forward to working with the ACT Government around the development and implementation of these activities. We note there is significant work to be done in the area of youth justice, and anticipate the need for further investment in future actions to be identified under the Blueprint.

Early Intervention and Prevention

One of the financial objectives and key measures of the ACT Government's fiscal strategy is:

- To make targeted investments to achieve strategic objectives of economic growth, reducing future costs and addressing chronic disadvantage.²

In the submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget the Youth Coalition called on the ACT Government to resource the development of an early intervention and prevention framework that encompasses a whole of government approach to strategies and funding, and engages the broader community, including the child, youth, family support; health and education sectors.

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 greater recognition and 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, 2010³. However, many ACT services report that they often do not have the capacity and resources to work with young people and their families intensively at an early stage. This includes working specifically with children and young people at risk of coming to the attention of the youth justice system, experiencing homelessness, or disengaging from education, to 'turn off the tap'. It can also be seen as support offered early in the life of problem, for example, at first point of contact with police.

The Youth Coalition believes the Budget measures do not invest enough in early intervention and prevention for the most vulnerable young people and families in our

² 2012-13 Budget Paper No.3

³ Office for Youth (2010) National Youth Strategy, Australian Government, Canberra.

community. We are disappointed that no additional funding has been allocated to these vital community-based services.

Until we prioritise funding support for families prior to statutory involvement, we will see continuing pressure on consecutive budgets to allocate money to crisis responses.

Other Initiatives

The 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget contains a number of initiatives that will have a positive impact for young Canberrans. In addition to funding identified for Care and Protection Services and initiatives under the Youth Justice Blueprint, the Youth Coalition, the peak body for youth affairs in the Territory, welcomes:

- \$2 million for additional dwellings to address social housing needs;
- \$3.2 million over four years for the CIT Year 12 program and the Disabilities Support Area for students with complex needs;
- \$150,000 over three years for low-cost counseling and coordination of existing volunteer services provided by A Gender Agenda;
- \$485,000 over three years to build upon the Heart Foundation's Active Living Program;
- \$300,000 over three years for an annual Nightrider service for five weeks during the Christmas and New Year period;
- \$900,000 over three years to Street Law Outreach Legal Service for the Homeless; and,
- \$1.1 million over two years to extend the AMC Throughcare model beyond the end of an offender's custodial sentence with the aim of reducing their risk of re-offending.

MEDIA RELEASE

5 June 2012

Initial Response to 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs and young people aged 12 – 25, acknowledges additional funding for child protection and youth justice in today's 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget. However, Budget measures do not invest enough in early intervention and prevention for the most vulnerable young people and families in our community.

'The objectives of the ACT Budget include targeted investments to reduce future costs and address chronic disadvantage,' said Director Emma Robertson. 'We were looking for investment in community services to support young people and their families, which has not occurred.'

Last week the Youth Coalition and Families ACT, the peak for family support services, urgently called on the ACT Government to allocate further funding to the newly established Children, Youth, and Family Services Program (CYFSP). The CYFSP funds a range of community-based services to support vulnerable children, young people and families to prevent them from becoming involved with Care and Protection and Youth Justice.

'We are disappointed that no additional funding has been allocated to these vital community-based services. The youth and family sector is already stretched. Until we prioritise funding support for families prior to statutory involvement, we will see continuing pressure on consecutive budgets to allocate money to crisis responses.'

Funding in the ACT Budget to support vulnerable children and young people includes:

- \$15.4 million over four years towards Care and Protection;
- \$5.3 million over four years for recruitment and retention of frontline Care and Protection staff;
- \$0.6 million over three years towards strengthening Care and Protection Services;
- \$5.5 million for initiatives in Youth Justice including:
 - Additional staff at Bimberi Youth Detention Centre;
 - Specialist therapeutic services for young people already in the justice system;
 - A community based mobile intensive support service; and,
 - Targeted support with a brokerage component.

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469

MEDIA RELEASE

6 June 2012

Some Good News for Young People, More Needed

The ACT Budget 2012-13 contains a number of initiatives that will have a positive impact for young Canberrans. In addition to funding identified for Care and Protection Services and initiatives under the Youth Justice Blueprint, the Youth Coalition, the peak body for youth affairs in the Territory, welcomes:

- \$2 million for additional dwellings to address social housing needs;
- \$3.2 million over four years for the CIT Year 12 program and the Disabilities Support Area for students with complex needs;
- \$150,000 over three years for low-cost counseling and coordination of existing volunteer services provided by A Gender Agenda;
- \$485,000 over three years to build upon the Heart Foundation's Active Living Program;
- \$300,000 over three years for an annual Nightrider service for five weeks during the Christmas and New Year period;
- \$900,000 over three years to Street Law Outreach Legal Service for the Homeless; and,
- \$1.1 million over two years to extend the AMC Throughcare model beyond the end of an offender's custodial sentence with the aim of reducing their risk of re-offending.

However many young people will continue to do it tough in the ACT, with issues such as housing affordability and homelessness, educational disengagement, and access to support services affecting their participation in the ACT community.

'More needs to be done in the area of affordable housing and access to private rental accommodation,' said Director Emma Robertson. 'Young people continue to be priced out of housing in the ACT. We need programs and initiatives that recognise the further disadvantage added by youth wages and income support levels.'

The Youth Coalition was disappointed at the lack of funding allocated to initiatives to support vulnerable young Canberrans to effectively engage with education, in particular within schools. Educational engagement plays a major part in keeping young people connected to their community, engaged in learning and social and emotional development.

The Youth Coalition continues to be concerned that demand for community services support is greater than capacity. This is particularly concerning for youth and family services when considering the continuing trend of increase in Child Protection and Child Concern Reports, and number of Community Youth Justice clients.

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469



ACT Budget: Caught in Cycles of Crisis

Analysis of the ACT Budget 2012-2013

Part 2 of 3

Expenditure Initiatives

June 2012

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.

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© Youth Coalition of the ACT
June 2012

Prepared by Youth Coalition staff Adelaide Jones, Ashlin Flanagan, Emma Byrne, Emma Robertson, Erin Barry and Katrina Campion.

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Expenditure Initiatives Overview

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs and young people aged 12 – 25, acknowledges additional funding for child protection and youth justice in the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget. However, Budget measures do not invest enough in early intervention and prevention for the most vulnerable young people and families in our community.

Although the objectives of the ACT Budget include targeted investments to reduce future costs and address chronic disadvantage, this has not resulted in a significant investment in community services to support young people and their families.

The Youth Coalition is particularly disappointed that the Children, Youth and Family Services Program has not received additional funding, as was urgently called for by the Youth Coalition and Families ACT in May 2012. The CYFSP funds a range of community-based services to support vulnerable children, young people and families with relationships, housing, finances, parenting, education, employment; and to prevent them from becoming involved with Care and Protection and Youth Justice.

The Youth Coalition's 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget Analysis is divided into three parts:

- Part 1: Overview and Media
- Part 2: Expenditure Initiatives Releases (this document)
- Part 3: Capital Initiatives

Some of the key expenditure initiatives and outcomes of the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget are outlined below.

Canberra Institute of Technology

- Support for the CIT Year 12 Program and students with disabilities

Community Services Directorate

- Out of Home Care Costs
- Additional Positions for Care and Protection Services
- Strengthening Care and Protection Services

- Blueprint for Youth Justice
- Assisting People on Low Incomes
- Community Helping Aboriginal Australians to Negotiate Choices Leading to Employment and Success
- Attraction and Retention Initiative (for Care and Protection Services)
- Implementation of Equal Remuneration Case Outcomes and Related ACT Community Sector Reforms

Economic Development Directorate

- Affordable Housing Action Plan – Phase III
- Supporting Inclusive Sport and the Active 2020 Strategy in the ACT
- Participation in Sport and Recreation Campaign
- Increasing Volunteers in Sport and Recreation

Education and Training Directorate

- Excellence and Enterprise – Advancing Public Schools of Distinction
- Special Needs Transport
- Non-Government Schools – Students with Disabilities

Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate

- Grant for the Heart Foundation – Active Living in the ACT

Health Directorate

- Mental Health Growth
- Gungahlin Health Centre
- Enhanced Counselling and Volunteer Services
- Healthy Weight Action Plan

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

- Street Law Outreach Legal Service for the Homeless
- Relocation of the Women's Legal Centre
- Extending Throughcare for Offenders to the Community

Legal Aid Commission (ACT)

- Improving Access to Justice – Addressing Supreme Court Backlog

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

- ACTION Operations
- Transport for Canberra – Nightrider Services
- Transport for Canberra – Communication Service for Real Time Passenger Information System

Below is an analysis of the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget Expenditure Initiatives related to young people and their families, as outlined in Budget Paper No. 3 for the following Directorates and corporations:

- Canberra Institute of Technology
- Community Services Directorate
- Economic Development Directorate
- Education and Training Directorate
- Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate
- Health Directorate
- Justice and Community Safety Directorate
- Legal Aid Commission (ACT)
- Territory and Municipal Services

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

Support for CIT Year 12 Program and Students with Disabilities

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
132	This initiative will support the CIT Year 12 program and the Disabilities Support Area to respond to the increasing demand for enrolment of students with complex needs.	2012-2013	\$772,000	The Youth Coalition is pleased to see funding towards this initiative, particularly in light of the ACT Government's strategic indicator to achieve 95% of young people aged 20 – 24 who have attained a Year 12 Certificate or equivalent; or Certificate II or above, by 2013.
		2013-2014	\$791,000	
		2014-2015	\$811,000	
		2015-2016	\$831,000	

Community Services Directorate

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

General Comments:

While the Youth Coalition acknowledges the significant funding that has been allocated towards child protection and youth justice services, we are concerned that funding for vulnerable young people and their families has not been invested in early intervention and prevention. We note that the objectives of the ACT Budget included targeted investments to reduce future costs and address chronic disadvantage; which has not been reflected in the direction of funding mainly towards crisis services.

There is significant evidence that points towards the value of investing in early intervention and prevention initiatives (at a primary and secondary intervention level), to reduce the long-term burden on tertiary services (such as Care and Protection Services and Youth Justice). The ACT Government Children, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP) funds a range of community-based services to support vulnerable children, young people and families to prevent them from becoming involved with Care and Protection Services and Youth Justice.

The Youth Coalition is concerned that if the ACT Government does not prioritise providing adequate funding to early intervention and prevention services, including the CYFSP, the ACT will experience continuing pressures on future budgets to allocate money to tertiary level responses.

Out of Home Care Costs

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
127	This initiative will address the increasing number of children and young people in out of home care arrangements including residential care, kinship care and foster care.	2012-2013	\$4,936,000	<p>The Youth Coalition supports additional funding towards young people in out-of-home care arrangements, to work towards improved outcomes for young people in care.</p> <p>Additionally, we note that increased support to families is one of the most significant ways in which the care and protection of young people is best secured. Research indicates the effectiveness of early intervention and prevention in reducing both the costs of young people becoming involved in the child protection system and, more importantly, the health, wellbeing and happiness of young people.</p> <p>We look forward to receiving more information about the details of this initiative, including how it will align with the Youth Support and Transitions Team, which supports young people aged 18 – 25 transitioning out of long-term care.</p>
		2013-2014	\$5,118,000	
		2014-2015	\$5,306,000	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Additional Positions for Care and Protection Services

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
127	This initiative provides for additional care and protection staff in the complex and challenging area of statutory child protection to support the delivery of quality services to the ACT's most vulnerable children.	2012-2013	\$1,196,000	See comment above. The Youth Coalition supports the funding of additional positions for Care and Protection Services. However, we also reiterate the importance of investing in early intervention and prevention services; and secondary level intervention services, for vulnerable children, young people and their families; to reduce the long-term burden on statutory services.
		2013-2014	\$1,210,000	
		2014-2015	\$1,462,000	
		2015-2016	\$1,478,000	

Strengthening Care and Protection Services

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
128	This initiative will support further improvements to Care and Protection Services including systems development, professional development and practice improvement with a particular focus on enhancing decision making and cultural competence. The investment will enable development of a comprehensive, caseworker's toolkit which will support improved outcomes for families, children and young people.	2012-2013	\$250,000	<p>The Youth Coalition strongly supports the implementation of professional development and practice improvement for the Care and Protection Service workforce.</p> <p>The Youth Coalition has been advocating for a Workforce Development Strategy for the youth sector for a number of years. It is important that workforce development initiatives are also implemented for early intervention and prevention services, and secondary-level intervention services.</p> <p>The Youth Coalition looks forward to seeing how this initiative will relate to other existing workforce projects such as the Practice Framework which is being developed for the Children, Youth, and Family Services Program, and other cultural competence development initiatives.</p>
		2013-2014	\$150,000	
		2014-2015	\$150,000	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Blueprint for Youth Justice

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
128	The initiative provides specialised therapeutic services to support young people already in the youth justice system to overcome specific offending behaviours, and a community-based mobile intensive support service to engage directly with children, young people and families in their homes and communities. Targeted support will assist in keeping young people away from crime and/or further involvement in the youth justice system, and will include a brokerage component to purchase specialised services. Additional staff for the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre will be dedicated to improving the quality of operational practices.	2012-2013	\$1,320,000	<p>The Youth Coalition is pleased to see that the ACT Government has invested in the actions to be identified in the ACT Blueprint for Youth Justice. The Youth Coalition participates in the Youth Justice Implementation Taskforce which oversees the Blueprint, and we also called for funding to be allocated towards this in our 2012-13 ACT Budget Submission.</p> <p>We understand that this funding will allow the employment of approximately 4 – 5 positions at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre; with the remainder of the funds allocated towards the specialised therapeutic services, community-based mobile intensive support service and targeted support.</p> <p>We look forward to working with ACT Government around the development of these activities and clarification on the specific breakdown of funds.</p>
		2013-2014	\$1,355,000	
		2014-2015	\$1,390,000	
		2015-2016	\$1,427,000	

Assisting People on Low Incomes

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
128	This initiative expands the No Interest Loan Scheme to provide assistance to low income members of the community experiencing financial hardship.	2012-2013	\$185,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes the expansion of this Scheme, and we look forward to receiving more details.
		2013-2014	\$240,000	
		2014-2015	\$185,000	
		2015-2016	\$130,000	

Community Helping Aboriginal Australians to Negotiate Choices Leading to Employment and Success (CHANCES)

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
129	The CHANCES Program will provide nationally accredited job-ready training to members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly those who are deemed to be at risk of homelessness, re-offending or facing long-term unemployment.	2012-2013	\$180,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative to provide job-ready training to members of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Employment, be it part-time, casual or full-time, is a major issue for young people and affects many aspects of their lives. We support the provision of training as a collaboration between various stakeholders, including the ACT Indigenous Elected Body.
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Agency Funded Initiatives:

Attraction and Retention Initiative

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
129	This initiative is part of a five year recruitment and retention plan to attract and retain frontline staff to Care and Protection Services.	2012-2013	\$200,000	<p>See previous comments regarding Care and Protection Services above. The Youth Coalition supports the funding of a recruitment and retention plan for frontline staff at Care and Protection Services. Child protection work is highly intensive and requires skilled workers to support the most vulnerable children, young people and their families in the ACT.</p> <p>However, it is important that workforce development initiatives are also implemented for the broader youth and family support sector. Recruitment and retention is a significant issue across the community sector; and these services would also significantly benefit from having funds specifically allocated towards attraction and retention.</p>
		2013-2014	\$205,000	
		2014-2015	\$210,000	
		2015-2016	\$215,000	

Implementation of Equal Remuneration Case Outcomes and Related ACT Community Sector Reforms

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
129	This initiative will provide support to the ACT community sector in response to the ACT Government's commitment to fully fund the outcomes of the equal remuneration case, and will manage a series of community sector reform projects.	2012-2013	\$448,000	<p>The Youth Coalition understands that this funding is specifically to support the community sector to transition to the outcomes of the Equal Remuneration Case through the establishment of the Community Sector Transition and Investment Fund.</p> <p>We note that the funding amount represents the contribution of 0.34% adjustment from community sector indexation.</p>
		2013-2014	\$464,000	
		2014-2015	\$479,000	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Economic Development Directorate

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

Affordable Housing Action Plan – Phase III

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
119	This initiative aims to address the shortage of affordable rental properties and to ensure the continuation of existing affordable housing initiatives.	2012-2013	\$300,000	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes this continued recognition that the private rental market in the ACT is amongst the most expensive and inaccessible in Australia, however we firmly believe that more work needs to be done by the ACT Government in the area of housing affordability, and supporting young people to rent privately.</p> <p>40% of renters who receive Commonwealth Rental Assistance (CRA) are in housing stress¹ (defined as spending 30% of their income on rent).</p> <p>The Youth Coalition looks forward to the release of further details of Phase III of the Affordable Housing Action Plan, and has concerns that the funding allocation devoted to this initiative will be insufficient in addressing the shortage of affordable rental properties.</p>
		2013-2014	\$300,000	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

¹ Productivity Commission (2012), Report on Government Services 2012, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, Table 16A.16.

Supporting Inclusive Sport and the Active 2020 Strategy in the ACT

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
119	This initiative supports the development and implementation of a program aimed at addressing discrimination including homophobia, harassment and bullying in the sport and recreation industry and administrative support for the Active 2020 Strategy in the ACT.	2012-2013	\$134,000	The Youth Coalition supports this initiative. Sport can play a prominent role in the lives of young people, so it is imperative that barriers such as discrimination are overcome to ensure all young people are able to access the sport and recreation industry in the ACT. We believe it is essential that young people are consulted with, and involved in the development and implementation of this program.
		2013-2014	\$138,000	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Participation in Sport and Recreation Campaign

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
120	This initiative provides for the promotion, including through social media channels, of the benefits of participation in sport and recreation.	2012-2013	\$20,000	The Youth Coalition supports this initiative as one of the ways that young people can contribute to their community is through participation in sport and recreation activities. In addition to community engagement, physical recreation carries a number of health benefits including reducing obesity, high blood pressure and Type 2 Diabetes and improving mental wellbeing. ² Any promotion strategy should be inclusive, and take into account the cohort of young people who do not access social media channels.
		2013-2014	\$20,000	
		2014-2015	\$20,000	
		2015-2016	\$20,000	

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2006) Australia's Health 2006, Australian Government, Canberra

Increasing Volunteers in Sport and Recreation

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
120	This initiative will support the promotion, including through social media channels, of the importance and rewards of volunteering in the sport and recreation industry.	2012-2013	\$20,000	The Youth Coalition supports this initiative, and the promotion of the range of opportunities in the ACT for young people to volunteer in the sport and recreation industry including coaching, umpiring and coordinating events. These opportunities carry a wide array of personal development benefits such as confidence, community engagement and mentoring. Any promotion strategy should be inclusive, and take into account the cohort of young people who do not access social media channels.
		2013-2014	\$20,000	
		2014-2015	\$20,000	
		2015-2016	\$20,000	

Education and Training Directorate

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

Excellence and Enterprise – Advancing Public Schools of Distinction

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
130	This initiative will support the implementation of the Excellence and Enterprise framework including the continued development of the Virtual Learning Academy.	2012-2013	\$30,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes the continued funding of this initiative as it fosters a culture of excellence, and encourages schools to implement innovative programs for the benefit of all students.
		2013-2014	\$31,000	
		2014-2015	\$32,000	
		2015-2016	\$32,000	

Special Needs Transport

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
130	This initiative supports the transport of students with a disability ensuring access to the nearest most appropriate setting.	2012-2013	\$1,540,000	The Youth Coalition supports this initiative, as young people with disabilities are likely to experience significant barriers to accessing services, programs and opportunities that are available to the broader population. However, continued funding of this initiative is needed to maintain an adequate level of support and care for this vulnerable group of young people. The Youth Coalition commends this substantial financial investment in young people with disability in the ACT.
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Agency Funded Initiatives:

Non-Government Schools – Students with Disabilities

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
131	This is a one-off grant to support existing students with disabilities in non-government schools. Funding will be provided on a needs basis utilising the Student Centred Appraisal of Needs approach. This is an internally funded initiative utilising unallocated funds from the Interest Subsidy Scheme.	2012-2013	\$2,000,000	The Youth Coalition supports this initiative, which increases the capacity of young people with disabilities to participate more fully in school life.
2013-2014		\$0		
2014-2015		\$0		
2015-2016		\$0		

Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate

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

Grant for the Heart Foundation – Active Living in the ACT

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
126	The Heart Foundation will build upon and promote the Active Living principles across the ACT. The Active Living program encourages initiatives in the built environment that support an active Canberra population and promotes the uptake of active living.	2012-2013	\$143,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative to promote Active Living Principles across the ACT.
		2013-2014	\$166,000	
		2014-2015	\$176,000	This program supports the recommendation in the ACT Healthy Young People Feasibility Study to provide young people with opportunities for active (non-motorised) transport. We hope that the ACT Living Program will continue to involve young people in the design and implementation of active living initiatives in the ACT.
		2015-2016	\$0	

Health Directorate

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

General Comments:

The Youth Coalition is disappointed that there are no new initiatives in the 2012-13 ACT Budget to further implement the outcomes of the *ACT Healthy Young People Feasibility Study*. The report of the Study was released by the ACT Health Directorate in early 2012; and identified a range of recommendations over the short (1 year), medium (2 years) and long term (3+ years).

Recommendations identified in the report that should be implemented in the short term (1 year) included:

- To appoint a skilled person to provide subsidised, good-quality training in detection, assessment and brief opportunistic interventions for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and mental health first aid for youth workers, general practitioners, nurses, community health workers, school health workers, sporting clubs and other relevant workers who come into contact with young people;
- To develop a quality-assurance framework for young-people-friendly service delivery, including guidelines and checklists and support with appropriate training, and including specific issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural young people;
- To deliver a Youth Assembly on young people's health that is free of charge or low cost;
- To engage a suitable external evaluator to undertake a methodologically sound evaluation of the School Youth Health Nurse program and review the program where necessary;
- To include young people in the planning and design of the built environment; and,
- To develop an Active Travel program in ACT schools to encourage students to walk or ride to school.

Mental Health Growth

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
112	This initiative will increase the capacity to treat and develop post-traumatic stress prevention programs for newly arrived migrants and refugees, as well as expand on the current community mental health services.	2012-2013	\$1,000,000	<p>The Youth Coalition welcomes the injection of funds into developing programs focused on post-traumatic stress prevention for newly arrived migrants and refugees.</p> <p>It is important that these initiatives seek to develop strategies to support young people who are newly arrived or from a refugee background. Newly arrived young people, particularly those who enter through the humanitarian program, are at high risk of experiencing mental health issues. Many of these young people have suffered displacement and trauma before coming to Australia. Cultural difference and language barriers expose newly arrived young people to social isolation, discrimination and exclusion from economic participation.³</p> <p>We look forward to receiving more information on these initiatives and how they will be implemented; including which organisation(s) will undertake this work, how young people will be involved, and how these supports will overcome barriers to accessing mental health services for multicultural communities.</p>
		2013-2014	\$1,035,000	
		2014-2015	\$1,071,000	
		2015-2016	\$1,109,000	

³ Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (December 2010) ACT Multicultural Youth Affairs Network Issues Paper, Youth Coalition of the ACT

Gungahlin Health Centre

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
112	Additional centre resources will be provided to support a range of health services for all ages, including counselling, screening, treatment, therapy, community support, education and group programs.	2012-2013	\$1,000,000	<p>The Youth Coalition supports the establishment of a Health Centre in Gungahlin; which has experienced a significant shortage of GPs and health professionals who are unable to meet the needs of the increasing population in the Gungahlin region.</p> <p>Young people experience additional barriers to accessing health services, including limited bulk-billing services, cost, discrimination, confidentiality concerns, stigma and a limited number of 'youth-friendly' GPs and other health professionals.</p> <p>Reduced access to drop-in support services for vulnerable young people in Gungahlin (and the ACT) means that this target group will have reduced access to health services. It is vital that Health Centre resources are targeted towards ensuring that young people, including vulnerable young people, receive access to appropriate and affordable health services to meet their unique needs.</p>
		2013-2014	\$1,600,000	
		2014-2015	\$1,900,000	
		2015-2016	\$2,106,000	

Enhanced Counselling and Volunteer Services

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
113	This initiative provides for a low cost counselling service and for support and coordination of existing volunteer services provided by the A Gender Agenda organisation.	2012-2013	\$50,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes funding for A Gender Agenda, a community group which aims to provide a strong and supportive community for sex and gender diverse people.
		2013-2014	\$50,000	
		2014-2015	\$50,000	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Healthy Weight Action Plan

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
113	This initiative supports a program of activities across the ACT to reduce rates of obesity. The trend towards high rates of unhealthy weight has been longstanding and has significant implications for the future health of ACT residents and demand for health services.	2012-2013	\$100,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes programs that seek to reduce rates of obesity in the ACT. Participation in sports and physical activity and health eating has been identified as a Priority Area in the report on the findings of the <i>ACT Healthy Young People Feasibility Study</i> ⁴ , released by the ACT Health Directorate in early 2012, which includes a range of strategies for increasing activity and healthy eating among young people. The Youth Coalition looks forward to receiving more information about how these strategies will be included in this ACT Budget initiative.
		2013-2014	\$100,000	
		2014-2015	\$100,000	
		2015-2016	\$0	

⁴ LeeJenn Health Consultants (November 2011) ACT Healthy Young People Feasibility Study, ACT Government Health Directorate

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

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

Street Law Outreach Legal Service for the Homeless

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
122	Building on the pilot program, this funding will allow Street Law to refine its current model and further establish outreach clinics and referral networks for homeless people.	2012-2013	\$300,000	The Youth Coalition is pleased that the Street Law program has received recurrent funding for the next three years, as a collaborative initiative that provides free legal services to those who are homeless. Street Law, in working collaboratively with other agencies, plays a vital role in assisting young people to obtain information on and understand their rights.
		2013-2014	\$300,000	
		2014-2015	\$300,000	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Relocation of the Women's Legal Centre

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
122	Currently located at Havelock House, the Women's Legal Centre (WLC) provides free legal services to disadvantaged women within the ACT community. The future relocation will enable the WLC to improve and expand its services and will allow the expansion of other Community Legal Centres remaining at Havelock House.	2012-2013	\$0	The Youth Coalition supports the funding to the Women's Legal Centre to relocate, in order to improve and expand its service, although we note that this is not scheduled to occur for over 12 months.
		2013-2014	\$579,000	
		2014-2015	\$43,000	
		2015-2016	\$44,000	

Extending Throughcare for Offenders to the Community

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
123	This initiative extends the Throughcare model beyond the end of an offender's custodial sentence to support their transition into the community with the aim of reducing their risk of re-offending.	2012-2013	\$520,000	The Youth Coalition supports the extension of the Throughcare model to support an offender's transition into the community, as we have been advocating for a review of Throughcare policies for a number of years. In undertaking this initiative, there will need to be a coordinated approach to Throughcare for young people; that recognises the unique issues experienced by those aged 18 – 25.
2013-2014		\$617,000		
2014-2015		\$0		
2015-2016		\$0		

Legal Aid Commission (ACT)

Expenditure Initiatives under the Legal Aid Commission (ACT) are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Improving Access to Justice – Addressing Supreme Court Backlog

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
134	The initiative provides for additional legal aid resources for the 'blitz' being implemented by the ACT Supreme Court, involving changes to its case management and listing practices. These changes are aimed at reducing waiting times for civil and criminal matters.	2012-2013	\$33,000	<p>The Youth Coalition supports any initiative that seeks to reduce waiting times for civil and criminal matters. The current extensive waiting times experienced in court matters can in themselves contribute detrimentally to individuals involved in cases.</p> <p>Young people who are involved with the criminal justice system are often amongst the most vulnerable in the ACT. Research has identified significant associations between offending and risk factors such as involvement with Care and Protection, substance use, disengagement from education, abuse, unemployment and parental criminal behaviour. Uncertainty and confusion experienced by young people in relation to extensive waiting periods for court cases may further exacerbate these other risk factors.</p>
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

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

ACTION Operations

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
114	This initiative will assist ACTION in meeting the increased costs of delivering public transport services to the community.	2012-2013	\$7,744,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes this increase in funding for public transport.
		2013-2014	\$5,649,000	
		2014-2015	\$4,601,000	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.
		2015-2016	\$3,512,000	

Transport for Canberra – Nightrider Services

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
115	This initiative provides for an annual Nightrider service for five weeks during the Christmas and New Year period. It includes the promotion and evaluation of services and aims to increase patronage and reduce drink driving incidents and anti-social behaviour in popular locations including Canberra City, Manuka and Kingston.	2012-2013	\$100,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes the continuation of the Nightrider bus service.
		2013-2014	\$100,000	
		2014-2015	\$100,000	The Nightrider is a positive initiative for taking people to their homes during the late evening. However young people have identified a need for additional evening and late night bus services. Services at these times are particularly important for young people who are more likely to be engaged in part-time employment or recreational activities during the evenings and weekends.
		2015-2016		

Transport for Canberra – Communication Service for Real Time Passenger Information System

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
115	This initiative will implement a mobile communication system for ACTION buses as part of the Real Time Passenger Information System commencing in 2013. The service will provide live information about arrival times of ACTION services.	2012-2013	\$423,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative to provide bus users with live information about arrival times.
		2013-2014	\$429,000	
		2014-2015	\$434,000	The provision of timely information on bus arrival times, delays and cancellations will allow young people who rely on public transport to make informed transport decisions. However the Youth Coalition is concerned by reports that some full buses are skipping stops when at full capacity.
		2015-2016	\$440,000	



ACT Budget: Caught in Cycles of Crisis

Analysis of the ACT Budget 2012-2013

Part 3 of 3

Capital Initiatives

June 2012

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. For more information phone the Youth Coalition on (02) 6247 3540 or email info@youthcoalition.net

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June 2012

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Capital Initiatives Overview

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs and young people aged 12 – 25, acknowledges additional funding for child protection and youth justice in the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget. However, Budget measures do not invest enough in early intervention and prevention for the most vulnerable young people and families in our community.

Although the objectives of the ACT Budget include targeted investments to reduce future costs and address chronic disadvantage, this has not resulted in a significant investment in community services to support young people and their families.

The Youth Coalition is particularly disappointed that the Children, Youth and Family Services Program has not received additional funding, as was urgently called for by the Youth Coalition and Families ACT in May 2012. The CYFSP funds a range of community-based services to support vulnerable children, young people and families with relationships, housing, finances, parenting, education, employment; and to prevent them from becoming involved with Care and Protection and Youth Justice.

The Youth Coalition's 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget Analysis is divided into three parts:

- Part 1: Overview and Media
- Part 2: Expenditure Initiatives Releases
- Part 3: Capital Initiatives (this document)

Some of the key capital initiatives and outcomes of the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget are outlined below.

Community Services Directorate

- Upgrade of Community Facilities and Childcare Centre Improvements
- Tuggeranong Arts Centre Improvements

Education and Training Directorate

- Carbon Neutral Schools – Stage 1

Health Directorate

- Adult Secure Mental Health Unit (Finalising Design)

Housing ACT

- Expansion of Public Housing Energy Efficiency
- Disability Dual Occupancy Housing
- Expansion of Social Housing – Stage 2

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

- AMC Crisis Support Unit Upgrade

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

- Transport for Canberra – Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Stage 3

Below is an analysis of the ACT Budget 2012-2013 Capital Initiatives relating to young people and their families, as outlined in Budget Paper No. 3 for the following Directorates:

- Community Services Directorate
- Education and Training Directorate
- Health Directorate
- Housing ACT
- Justice and Community Safety Directorate
- Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

Community Services Directorate

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

General Comments:

While the Youth Coalition acknowledges the significant funding that has been allocated towards child protection and youth justice services, we are concerned that funding for vulnerable young people and their families has not been invested in early intervention and prevention. We note that the objectives of the ACT Budget included targeted investments to reduce future costs and address chronic disadvantage; which has not been reflected in the direction of funding mainly towards crisis services.

There is significant evidence that points towards the value of investing in early intervention and prevention initiatives (at a primary and secondary intervention level), to reduce the long-term burden on tertiary services (such as Care and Protection Services and Youth Justice). The ACT Government Children, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP) funds a range of community-based services to support vulnerable children, young people and families to prevent them from becoming involved with Care and Protection Services and Youth Justice.

The Youth Coalition is concerned that if the ACT Government does not prioritise providing adequate funding to early intervention and prevention services, including the CYFSP, the ACT will experience continuing pressures on future budgets to allocate money to tertiary level responses.

Upgrade of Community Facilities and Childcare Centre Improvements

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
188	This project will provide upgrades and refurbishments to community facilities, including youth centres, childcare centres, neighbourhood halls and community rooms.	2012-2013	\$1,000,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes funding for updates to community facilities, and looks forward to receiving further information on which facilities will be upgraded; in particular, which youth centres will receive funding.
		2013-2014	\$1,500,000	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Tuggeranong Arts Centre Improvements

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
188	This project will increase floor space, address occupational health and safety issues and improve the circulation and functionality of the centre.	2012-2013	\$800,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes funding to improve the Tuggeranong Arts Centre, which provides a number of valuable programs for young people, including the Messengers Program.
		2013-2014	\$1,200,000	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Education and Training Directorate

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

Carbon Neutral Schools – Stage 1

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
		2012-2013	2013-2014	
192	This project supports ACT public schools to move towards carbon neutrality. Stage 1 involves the installation of high efficiency internal lighting, high rating roof insulation, upgrades to improve heating efficiency, replacement of windows in high use rooms with thermal resistant glass, provision of window furnishings and the construction of covered and secure bike shelters.	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	Young people are increasingly concerned about the impact of climate change, and for this reason we applaud the ACT Government's injection of funds into the carbon neutrality of schools. This will ensure more efficient and sustainable operation of appliances including heating and lights.
		\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	
		\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	
		\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	

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

General Comments:

The Youth Coalition is disappointed that there are no new initiatives in the ACT Budget to further implement the outcomes of the *ACT Healthy Young People Feasibility Study*. The report of the Study was released by the ACT Health Directorate in early 2012; and identified a range of recommendations over the short (1 year), medium (2 years) and long term (3+ years).

Recommendations identified in the report that should be implemented in the short term (1 year) included:

- To appoint a skilled person to provide subsidised, good-quality training in detection, assessment and brief opportunistic interventions for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and mental health first aid for youth workers, general practitioners, nurses, community health workers, school health workers, sporting clubs and other relevant workers who come into contact with young people;
- To develop a quality-assurance framework for young-people-friendly service delivery, including guidelines and checklists and support with appropriate training, and including specific issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural young people;
- To deliver a Youth Assembly on young people's health that is free of charge or low cost;
- To engage a suitable external evaluator to undertake a methodologically sound evaluation of the School Youth Health Nurse program and review the program where necessary;
- To include young people in the planning and design of the built environment; and,
- To develop an Active Travel program in ACT schools to encourage students to walk or ride to school.

Adult Secure Mental Health Unit (Finalising Design)

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
166	To undertake further forward design for the new Adult Secure Mental Health Unit, to incorporate functional requirements for a standalone site and comply with the <i>Human Rights Act 2004</i> .	2012-2013	\$2,000,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes funding towards progressing the Adult Secure Mental Health Unit, and particularly towards ensuring it is compliant with the <i>Human Rights Act 2004</i> .
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Housing ACT

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

Expansion of Public Housing Energy Efficiency

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
190	This is an extension of the program to improve the energy efficiency of public housing stock. This program of upgrades will assist the ACT Government in becoming carbon neutral in its operations and services by 2020.	2012-2013	\$0	The Youth Coalition welcomes the continuation of the program of upgrades in energy efficiency of public housing stock. Many young people living in public housing struggle to meet costs of living and this is a step forward in lowering essential expenses such as heating and electricity. We believe that alternate strategies need to be developed to better meet our carbon neutral agenda and further reduce living expenses for young people residing in public housing.
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$2,000,000	

Disability Dual Occupancy Housing

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
		2012-2013	2013-2014	
191	Three dual occupancy properties will be constructed for clients who, because of the complexity of their disability, need to live alone (single tenancy). These purpose-built properties will provide for greater service efficiency in meeting the needs of these individuals by enabling them to continue to live alone, but be managed via a shared care model of accommodation support.	2012-2013	\$0	The Youth Coalition supports the construction of occupancy properties for clients with complex disabilities. We recognise that many young people with disabilities desire to the option to live independently, and believe that the ACT Government should continue to increase the availability of purpose-built properties to meet the needs of these individuals.
		2013-2014	\$567,000	
		2014-2015	\$1,162,000	
		2015-2016	\$1,219,000	

Expansion of Social Housing – Stage 2

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
		2012-2013	2013-2014	
191	This project provides for construction of additional dwellings to address social housing needs, with a particular focus on supported accommodation.	2012-2013	\$2,000,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes the additional construction of social housing dwellings. However, with the existing pressures such as cost of living, this funding does not go far enough in ensuring that vulnerable young people and their families are able to avoid becoming homeless.
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

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

AMC Crisis Support Unit Upgrade

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
184	This project improves the design and functionality of the Crisis Support Unit at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) to provide a safer environment for detainees and staff.	2012-2013	\$250,000	While the Youth Coalition supports providing a safer environment for detainees and staff at the AMC, we are concerned that these safety issues were not addressed earlier. In addition, we note that no funding has been invested in the ACT Budget towards implementing programs within AMC.
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

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

Transport for Canberra – Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Stage 3

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
173	This program of works will improve cycling and walking infrastructure across the Territory through the construction of new on and off road cycle and community paths and related signage.	2012-2013	\$750,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative to improve cycling and walking infrastructure across the Territory.
		2013-2014	\$1,250,000	
		2014-2015	\$1,750,000	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.
		2015-2016	\$1,750,000	

The Youth Coalition also welcomes other capital works initiatives announced in the Budget including:

- The upgrade to bus stops, termini, stations and depots in West Belconnen, Gungahlin, Erindale and Barton; and,
- The update of bus stops and buses to ensure compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and to ensure that public transport is accessible.



youth coalition

of the ACT

Submission to the *ACT Government*
2012 - 2013 Budget

February 2012

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 Indigenous cultures and the invaluable contribution they make to our community.

Submission to the *ACT Government 2012 - 2013 Budget*
© Youth Coalition of the ACT
February 2012

Prepared by Youth Coalition staff members Erin Barry, Adelaide Jones and Emma Robertson.

Thank you to the Youth Coalition staff team for their support.

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1. Introduction

Section 1 provides contextual information about the Youth Coalition of the ACT, young people in the ACT, and the process for developing and format of this submission.

1.1 About the Youth Coalition of the ACT

The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the ACT. Comprised of 100 organisational and individual members, the Youth Coalition is responsible for representing and promoting the interests and wellbeing of young people aged 12 to 25 years and those who work with them.

The Youth Coalition is represented on many ACT Government advisory structures and provides advice to the ACT Government on youth issues, along with providing information to youth services about policy and program matters.

A key role of the Youth Coalition is the development and analysis of ACT social policy and program decisions for young people and youth services. The Youth Coalition facilitates the development of strong linkages and promotes collaboration between the community, government and private sectors to achieve better outcomes for young people in the ACT.

1.2 Young People in the ACT

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

Canberra has one of the youngest populations of any Australian State or Territory, with approximately 70,000 young people residing in the ACT, representing almost 22% of Canberra's population.¹ 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.

1.3 Process for Developing and Format of this Submission

The Youth Coalition welcomes the opportunity to input into the development of the 2012 – 2013 ACT Government Budget. This submission is one of many made over a 15 year period by the Youth Coalition and is based on the following:

- The priority areas highlighted in the *Youth Coalition Strategic Plan 2011-14*;
- The policy positions outlined in the *Youth Coalition Policy Platform*;
- The issues raised at consultations on the 2011/12 ACT Government Budget and 2012/13 ACT Government Budget;
- The issues raised at consultations on the ACT Young People's Plan 2009 - 2014;
- Issues raised by members in the transition to the new Child, Youth and Family Services Program;
- Previous Youth Coalition submissions to the ACT Government;

- One-on-one consultations with member services and organisations; and,
- Current and topical research on youth affairs.

The public consultation for the 2012 – 2013 ACT Government Budget, led by Treasurer Andrew Barr MLA, includes inviting comments through social media websites, such as Facebook and Twitter. As such, in addition to this written submission, the Youth Coalition has communicated key recommendations through these social media platforms. Follow the Youth Coalition on Twitter at @youthco_act or search for and 'like' the Youth Coalition's Facebook page to receive updates.

The central focus of the Youth Coalition's submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Government Budget is workforce development for the youth and family sector. This is outlined in Section 3 of this document. Workforce development is foundational to many of the recurring systemic issues in the community sector.

The Youth Coalition has also identified key issues for consideration in the areas of housing and homelessness, education and justice. These areas are discussed in Section 4 of this submission.

Section 5 focuses on early intervention and prevention, a key whole of government and community approach to the provision of services in the ACT community.

2. Summary of Recommendations and Comments

Section 2 provides a summary of the recommendations and comments for the 2012 - 2013 ACT Government Budget. It is vital that these recommendations be referred to in the context of the broader submission.

The public consultation for the 2012 – 2013 ACT Government Budget, led by Treasurer Andrew Barr MLA, includes inviting comments through social media websites, such as Facebook and Twitter. As such, in addition to this written submission, the Youth Coalition has communicated key recommendations through these social media platforms. Follow the Youth Coalition on Twitter at @youthco_act or search for and 'like' our Facebook page to receive updates.

Workforce Development – Whole of Government Approach

1. The central focus of the Youth Coalition's submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Government Budget is Workforce Development for the youth and family support sector.

2. The Youth Coalition welcomes the commitment by the ACT Government to funding the outcomes of the Equal Pay Case over the next eight years.

3. Strategies that address workforce capacity and resources to effectively implement change are required.

4. The Youth Coalition participated in and supports the Budget Submission developed by the ACT Community Sector Leaders Forum.

5. A whole-of-government approach is integral to workforce development for the youth and family support sector, which includes a range of cross-sectoral services and programs.

6. Defined career paths and improved conditions will assist in improving recruitment and retention in the youth and family support sector.

7. The ACT Government should explore alternative methods of procuring community services to competitive tendering, which does not support the development of a collaborative and sustainable service sector.

8. The ACT Government should allocate funding to develop an updated Profile of the ACT youth and family sector, building on the 2010 work undertaken by the Youth Coalition.

9. The CYFSP Bus Tour Induction Project should be expanded into the 2012 / 2013 financial year, for workers in CYFSP services and related sectors.

10. Adult support services will require training to work with young people aged 18 – 25 years, who will lose services in the Child, Youth and Family Services Program.

11. Funding for development and evaluation of best-practice resources for youth and family support services and people accessing services, must be identified.

Housing and Homelessness

12. More work must be done to address housing affordability, particularly for young people in the ACT.

13. The ACT Government must rigorously evaluate the new youth housing and homelessness sector reforms, with a commitment to increasing funding where need matches the evidence.

Education

14. The Youth Coalition supports the ACT Student Engagement Framework and its further implementation in schools; in particular the view to include both vulnerable and less vulnerable young people in a holistic strategy.

Youth Justice

15. The Youth Coalition supports a significant investment in the actions to be identified in the ACT Blueprint for Youth Justice, and consultations with young people regarding the make-up of the youth justice system in the future.

16. The Youth Coalition supports the adoption of evidence-based and evaluated programs that seek to reduce recidivism, work towards resolution for both young offenders and young victims, and provide meaningful alternatives to detention if appropriate.

17. Justice Reinvestment models must be explored, piloted and evaluated in the ACT.

Early Intervention and Prevention

18. The Youth Coalition calls on the ACT Government to resource the development of an early intervention and prevention framework that encompasses a whole of government approach to strategies and funding, and engages the broader community, including the children, youth, family support, health and education sectors.

3. Workforce Development

The central focus of the Youth Coalition's submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Government Budget is Workforce Development; a critical issue for the youth and family support sector.

3.1 About Workforce Development

Workforce development aims to ensure that responses stem from, and are implemented and sustained by, a well-informed and highly skilled workforce that operates within supportive environments and systems designed to sustain and optimise efforts. Changes and development should concentrate and be addressed on three separate levels:

1. Systems (legislation, policy, funding, recruitment and retention, resources, support mechanisms and incentives);
2. Current workers (formal education, training, workplace training, mentoring, on-the-job learning, on-line learning and best practice guidelines); and,
3. Future workforce (recruitment strategies, offers of education and training, affordable and accessible education and training, ensuring adequate service funding to employ staff and supporting and facilitating policies).²

@youthco_act

The central focus of our submission to the 2012/13

Budget is Workforce

Development for the youth and family sector.

#actbudget

@youthco_act
The Youth Coalition welcomes the commitment by the ACT Government to fund the outcomes of the Equal Pay Case.
#actbudget

The Youth Coalition commends the ACT Government's commitment to funding the outcomes of the Equal Pay Case over the next eight years. The outcome of the case, and the ACT Government's commitment to funding it in the ACT, will greatly support the long-term viability of the community sector and its workforce.

It is important that other initiatives are implemented to complement the wage rises for the community sector, that seek to address workforce development issues.

The ACT Government is currently driving a significant change agenda across key areas of service to young people and their families, particularly in the areas of youth justice; child, youth and family support; youth housing and homelessness; and care and protection.

It is essential that strategies to support this agenda include those that address the workforce capacity and resources to effectively implement change.

@youthco_act

Strategies that address workforce capacity and resources to effectively implement change are required. #actbudget

3.2 Endorsement for the ACT Community Sector Leaders Forum Budget Submission

*@youthco_act
The Youth Coalition
supports the Budget
Submission by the ACT
Community Sector Leaders
Forum. #actbudget*

The Youth Coalition participates in the ACT Community Sector Leaders Forum, which is an alliance of community sector service provider leaders who have come together in response to the key challenges and opportunities that face the community sector.

The ACT Community Sector Leaders Forum has developed a submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Government Budget, and the Youth Coalition supports its key recommendations, namely:

That the ACT Government provide a one off investment to community sector organisations in the order of 15% of the base of contracted services, separate to the recent commitment by the ACT Government to fully fund the Equal Wage Case for community sector workers, untied and in recognition of the significant and growing requirements placed on the sector.³

3.3 Workforce Development in the Youth and Family Support Sector

The Youth Coalition has consistently highlighted and promoted the importance of a workforce development strategy for the youth sector for a number of years.

The youth sector in the ACT is both diverse and unique in its composition and delivery of services to young people aged 12 – 25 years and their families. It has strong linkages with a range of other sectors in the ACT, including (but not limited to): housing / homelessness, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, education, employment, justice, family support, disability, health, arts and recreation, out-of-home care, and the broader community sector.

The youth sector also works with a range of population groups, such as young people who identify as: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; multicultural and newly arrived; gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex; carers; homeless or those at risk of homelessness; young women; young men and young parents.

3.3.1 Changes to the Youth Sector in the ACT

In 2012, two significant initiatives will change the landscape of the youth and family support sector. These include the implementation of the new Child, Youth and Family Services Program; and the significant reform of youth housing and homelessness services.

In March 2012, the Community Services Directorate will conclude the existing Youth Services Program and Family Support Program; and formally begin implementing the new Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP). The transition period will see many workers leave the sector or take on new roles within the CYFSP. Youth workers will be required to have a stronger family focus; and family support workers will be required to expand their skills in working with young people.

In addition, reform to the youth housing and homelessness sector will see the possible closure of some existing services, additional new services, and a change in scope for existing services.

It is vital that the workforce of the youth sector be supported to acquire the skill-sets required to work effectively with young people and their families to ensure that clients are not further disadvantaged in the transition to the new framework.

The Youth Coalition commends the ACT Government for its existing work on workforce development, such as the allocation of professional development funding in the CYFSP; the work of the Children and Young People Sharing Responsibility Committee Workforce Development Sub-Group; and the current Practice Framework Project being implemented by Families ACT, with funding from the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support.

Each of these activities needs to be integrated into a broader workforce development strategy for the youth and family support sector; including those services not funded by the CYFSP; that support children, young people and their families.

There are a number of key components of workforce development that would further assist the youth and family sector to work towards providing cohesive and effective services to children, young people and their families. These include concentrating on workforce development at a systems level, for current workers, and for the future workforce. Each of these components are discussed in further detail below.

3.4 Workforce Development at a Systems Level

In addition to initiatives for the current and future workforce (see Section 3.5), workforce development should focus on identifying and initiating changes at a systems level, in relation to legislation, policy, funding, recruitment and retention, resources, support mechanisms and incentives.

A whole-of-government approach is integral to workforce development for workers in the youth, family and community sectors. The current work being undertaken by the Children and Young People Sharing Responsibility Committee, Workforce Development Sub-group should inform a comprehensive workforce strategy for the youth and family support sectors.

*@youthco_act
A whole-of-government
approach is integral to
workforce development for
the youth and family sector.
#actbudget*

There are a number of components of workforce development for the youth and family sector at a systems level. These include the linkages between the CYFSP and broader youth and community sector, recruitment and retention, and competitive tendering processes.

3.4.1 Linkages with the Broader Youth and Community Sectors

The youth sector in the ACT is broader than those services funded by the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support; and overlaps with a number of other sectors. These include: alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; housing and homelessness; justice; education; health; mental health; disability, arts, out of home care, and the broader community sector.

The Youth Coalition advocates that a comprehensive, good practice workforce development strategy should be targeted at the broader youth and family sector; and not the CYFSP in isolation. This would require a whole-of-government approach.

3.4.2 Recruitment and Retention

Although 'equal pay' will go a long way towards improving recruitment and retention in the youth and family support sector, a workforce development strategy should also consider conditions and career pathways for workers.

Historically, community services have endeavoured to provide additional conditions as an incentive to counteract lower wages (such as salary sacrificing and time in lieu). However, the Youth Coalition's 2010 Youth Sector Workforce Profile (the Profile) found that employees of the ACT Government enjoy similar conditions.⁴

*@youthco_act
Defined career paths and improved conditions will improve recruitment and retention in the youth and family sector. #actbudget*

The Profile also found that only non-government youth sector workers indicated that they intended to stay in the youth sector for one year or less. Conversely, all government respondents indicated that they intended to continue working in the government-based youth sector for 2 years or more.

Community-based youth sector workers indicated that enticements to staying in the youth sector included, among other factors: improved wages and conditions, improved professional recognition of their work, and better defined career paths.

There can be limited career pathways in the youth sector with few opportunities to advance in positions of direct service provision, resulting in many frontline workers moving into management positions or out of the sector, considerably undermining the corporate knowledge of the sector. As such, the youth sector in particular continues to experience pressure in recruiting and retaining fully qualified and / or trained workers.

3.4.3 Competitive Tendering

*@youthco_act
The ACT Government should explore alternative methods of procuring community services, to competitive tendering. #actbudget*

Whilst a competitive tendering environment provides a range of opportunities to services to apply for funding, it does not support the development of a collaborative and sustainable service sector.

It can also disadvantage smaller services that may not have the time or resources to develop high-level tender applications.

The introduction in the recent CYFSP Procurement process of 'best and final offers' was new to the youth sector, and not effectively supported by the ACT Government. It created an environment where

services felt under pressure to do more for less; which is counter-productive to developing a sustainable, effective workforce and sector. Many services already

tender at their base-line level; and this was further undermined in the 'best and final offer' process.

In developing a workforce development strategy, the ACT Government should explore alternative methods of procurement; that supports the establishment of collaborative practice and realistic, sustainable funding contracts.

3.5 Workforce Development for Current Workers and the Future Workforce

*@youthco_act
Funding should be allocated to develop an updated Profile of the ACT Youth and Family Sector, building on 2010 work. #actbudget*

In addition to identifying strategies at a systems level, effective workforce development also initiates changes for the current and future workforce. These can relate to: formal education, workplace training, mentoring, best practice guidelines, ensuring adequate service funding to employ staff, and supporting and facilitating policies.

The 2010 Profile of the ACT Youth Sector Workforce recommended that resourcing be provided to update the Profile biennially; in order to maintain an up-to-date and relevant picture of the youth sector workforce. The Youth Coalition recommends that the

ACT Government provide the relatively small amount of funding required to update the Profile, which could extend to the youth and family support sector, in the 2012 – 2013 financial year.

3.5.1 Training and Professional Development

The youth sector sees some highly skilled and experienced workers, who engage in extremely complex, innovative work with young people, and the Youth Coalition notes the importance of supporting these workers to remain in the sector. The Youth Coalition's 2010 Profile of the youth sector workforce identified that over 50% of workers hold tertiary qualifications⁵. This supports the argument that the youth sector is a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

*@youthco_act
The CYFSP Bus Tour Induction Program should be expanded. #actbudget*

During and following the transition to the CYFSP and reform of youth housing and homelessness services; the youth and family support sector, and broader community sector, will require a targeted training and professional development strategy, to develop a new set of skills and adapt to the changed environment.

*@youthco_act
Adult services will require training to work with young people aged 18 – 25 who will not receive CYFSP supports. #actbudget*

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT will receive a small amount of funding to implement the CYFSP Bus Tours Induction Project between March and April 2012. This Project will support CYFSP workers to become familiar with the new service system and ways of working within it.

These tours will be based upon the existing 'Comorbidity Bus Tours', which the Youth Coalition coordinates in partnership with the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug

Association ACT and the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT. These bus tours, which take workers to visit youth, mental health, and alcohol and other drug services are popular and achieve a range of positive outcomes for workers in those sectors.

It will be important for initiatives such as the CYFSP Bus Tours Induction Project to continue in the 2012 / 2013 financial year; to support the induction of both CYFSP workers; but also workers from related sectors that will be required to engage with CYFSP services.

As the development of the CYFSP will result in a loss of services to young people aged 18 – 25 years, it is likely that this will also become a key area for training and professional development, particularly for adult support services that will be required to pick up the gap.

3.5.2 Information and Resources

The development of quality resources, for workers, services and service users is critical to supporting the transition to the CYFSP and youth housing and homelessness reforms.

In previous years, the Youth Coalition has produced the Big Red Book, a directory and handbook for workers, of services that work with young people in the ACT. The Big Red Book has been incredibly successful and useful in assisting workers to 'map' the youth sector, make effective referrals, and improve their practice with young people.

*@youthco_act
Funding for best-
practice resource
development for CYFSP
services and people
accessing services must
be identified.
#actbudget*

There is currently limited funding in the CYFSP to support the development of new information resources for workers, services or clients. In light of the significant changes to the sector, it is essential that good-practice resources are developed to support each of these stakeholder groups to transition to the new framework. The Youth Coalition has a demonstrated expertise in developing resources for the youth sector.

4. Housing and Homelessness, Education and Justice

Section 4 of this submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Government Budget focuses on key issues relating to housing and homelessness, education and justice.

4.1 Housing and Homelessness

The private rental market in the ACT is amongst the most expensive and inaccessible in Australia. Many young people report difficulty in gaining entry to private rental properties, due to cost, availability and discrimination. The Youth Coalition argues that more work needs to be done by the ACT Government in the area of housing affordability, and supporting young people to rent privately. In particular the Youth Coalition recommends a 30% increase in rent assistance for young people on Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance.

*@youthco_act
More work must be
done to address
housing affordability,
particularly for young
people in the ACT.
#actbudget*

40% of renters who receive Commonwealth Rental Assistance (CRA) are in housing stress⁶ (defined as spending 30% of their income on rent). Housing stress for a young person means having to forego living close to shops, schools and public transport. It could also mean forgoing other items such as food. The CRA is capped at the rate of inflation, but due to extremely low vacancy rates (especially in the ACT), rents have risen much quicker than this rate. As young people are often working casually or still completing training, they struggle to compete in the private rental market.

The Youth Coalition commends the government for its measures to better the housing and homelessness service system in the ACT. However, the ability of the Government to provide “unprecedented” and “more effective” support for young people with a four million dollar budget will only be adequately tested by adopting a rigorous evaluation of the new framework, with a commitment to increase funding where need matches the evidence.

*@youthco_act
The ACT Government
must rigorously evaluate
the new youth housing
and homelessness
sector reforms.
#actbudget*

4.2 Education

The Youth Coalition supports the ACT Student Engagement Framework, being developed by the Education and Training Directorate, and its further implementation in schools, in particular the view to include both vulnerable and less vulnerable young people in a holistic strategy. It is important to target young people at risk of disengaging from education early, but also to encourage them to participate in an inclusive school community. Tiers 2 and 3 of the Student Engagement Framework focus on responding

*@youthco_act
The Youth Coalition
supports the ACT
Student Engagement
Framework and its
further implementation
in schools. #actbudget*

to disengaged students using both internal and external programs and resources.

With 1 in 5 young people experiencing a mental health issue in any given year, schools have a large role to play in building resilience in children and young people through providing safe environments that consider the differing needs of students. Issues such as school bullying continue to be a concern for many young people, particularly for young people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex; young people with a disability; multicultural or newly arrived young people; and young people from a low socio-economic background. Strategies in schools need to address this, and relationships education must be a staple in everyday learning.

The Youth Coalition is also concerned about the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous educational achievement and attainment rates. In the general ACT population, the level of Year 12 or equivalent attainment was 95.2% in 2009; an increase from 90.4% in 2005. This places the ACT above the national average of 84.5% in 2009⁷. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the ACT had an attainment level of only 38.9%⁸ in 2008. The Youth Coalition recognises the positive efforts made the ACT Government to address this important issue, through the release of policies such as the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Matters – Strategic Plan 2010-2013'.

Young people need to have a real and genuine engagement in their own educational outcomes, and be offered meaningful involvement in the school environment. This includes the active and supported participation of young people in their pathways planning, and is especially important following the introduction of the *Earn or Learn* legislation and raised school leaving age. Young people must be given the best opportunity to pursue further tertiary or vocational education through flexible and tailored guidance.

4.3 Justice

Most young people do not have contact with the criminal justice system. However, many of the young people who do have contact with this system are amongst the most vulnerable in the ACT. It is impossible to address issues of young people's involvement with the criminal justice system without also considering the social and economic factors that contribute to offending or involvement. Research has identified significant associations between offending and risk factors including: being the subject of Care and Protection orders, substance use, early school leaving age, and/or disengaging with education providers, abuse, unemployment, and parental criminal behaviour.⁹

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The Youth Coalition
supports a significant
investment in the
actions to be identified
in the ACT Blueprint for
Youth Justice.
#actbudget

Addressing these factors, and developing strong social policy to better respond to the needs of vulnerable young people, is the best approach the justice system in the ACT can adopt.

The Youth Coalition supports engaging with young people, wherever possible, to participate in research and consultation regarding these programs and policies, and strongly believes young people have much to offer in positively shaping these. We support a significant investment in the actions to be identified

in the 10 Year Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT and the consultations with young people regarding the make-up of the youth justice system in the future.

Much has been written about the impact on young people of exposure to police, courts, bail and detention. The Youth Coalition strongly supports the adoption of evidence-based and evaluated programs that seek to reduce recidivism, work towards resolution for both young offenders and young victims, and provide meaningful alternatives to detention if appropriate, such as alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) treatment services or community re-engagement programs, which may assist in addressing underlying issues of criminal behaviour.

The Youth Coalition argues that the community can continue to aim for lower detention numbers, particularly in light of the growing number of research papers that indicate detention is not a useful deterrent, and that in fact, custodial sentences can increase recidivism. Victoria, for example, after many evaluations and reforms, now has a detention rate of 0.1 per 100,000¹⁰.

Of particular contemporary concern is the issue of bail for young people charged with a crime. The Youth Coalition strongly believes that remand and detention should be considered the last resort of options for the Police and the courts¹¹.

*@youthco_act
Programs should seek
to reduce recidivism and
provide meaningful
alternatives to
detention. #actbudget*

In our submission to the *Discussion Paper: Towards a Diversionary Framework for the ACT* in April 2011, the Youth Coalition identified:

- That a properly co-ordinated response to youth justice is required, that clearly identifies the role of mainstream agencies (such as the police, schools etc) as well as specialist services (i.e. homelessness, youth support, mental health, alcohol and other drug services) in providing a spectrum of support to young people;
- That there are current examples of good practice, skills and knowledge within the government and community youth sector in the ACT which can be utilised to inform future direction;
- That we need to not only design services using an evidence base, but also contribute to the ongoing development and understanding of service system effectiveness through good evaluation of both individual programs and overall response; and,
- Young people need to be key partners and informants in design, implementation, and evaluation of the service system.¹²

This submission contained 19 recommendations, including that Justice Reinvestment models be explored, piloted and evaluated in ACT, working in conjunction with existing approaches, such as the Department of Education and Training's Re-Engaging Youth Leadership Group.

Justice reinvestment is a criminal justice policy approach that diverts a portion of the funds spent on imprisonment to the local communities where there is a high concentration of offenders.

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Justice Reinvestment
models must be
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The money that would have been spent on imprisonment is reinvested in programs and services that address the underlying causes of crime in these communities. It is not just about tinkering around the edges of the justice system – it is about trying to prevent people from getting there in the first place.

Justice reinvestment retains detention as a measure of last resort for dangerous and serious offenders, but actively shifts the culture away from imprisonment.¹³

5. Early Intervention and Prevention

Section 5 of this submission to the 2012 – 2013 ACT Government Budget focuses on early intervention and prevention, a key whole of government and community approach to the provision of services to the ACT community.

5.1 Prevention

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.

Preventing young people from facing issues such as experiencing homelessness, disengaging from education, or becoming involved in the youth justice system, are tasks that require whole of government, non-government and community approaches, that seek to address issues such as social inequality, poverty, mental health, alcohol and other drug use, family support, and care and protection concerns.

5.2 Early Intervention

The need for greater recognition and 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, 2010¹⁴. However, many ACT services report that they often do not have the capacity and resources to work with young people and their families intensively at an early stage. This includes working specifically with children and young people at risk of coming to the attention of the youth justice system, experiencing homelessness, or disengaging from education, to 'turn off the tap'. It can also be seen as support offered early in the life of problem, for example, at first point of contact with police.

Young people are not always offered support based purely on identified risk factors. Programs and services are often working with young people and their families in response to issues that could be deemed to fall into the tertiary definition.

5.3 A Whole of Government Approach to Prevention and Early Intervention

Currently the limited early intervention and prevention work and programs in the ACT are silo-ed and attached to issues such as homelessness, educational disengagement, criminal justice involvement, mental health, and substance use.

It is well recognised that child and adolescent development, and the presence of risk or protective factors are key indicators of vulnerability and potential pathways to social isolation or disadvantage.

Most of the risk factors operating in the social environment are able to be modified and therefore offer a rich field of opportunity for prevention and early intervention.¹⁵

The Youth Coalition calls on the ACT Government to resource the development of an early intervention and prevention framework that encompasses a whole of government approach to strategies and funding, and engages the broader community, including the child, youth, family support, health and education sectors.

*@youthco_act
Effective early
intervention and
prevention requires a
whole of government
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and funding.
#actbudget*

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