

2022

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

SOCIAL RECOVERY PLAN

STATEMENT

**Presented by
Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services
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September 2022**

I present the Assembly with an update on the development and implementation of the ACT Social Recovery Plan.

The ACT Social Recovery Plan will outline the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 in the ACT. The Plan will also highlight ACT Government funded initiatives and programs underway as well as those planned for the 2022-23 financial year to support the ACT with its economic and social recovery.

The last two years have been tough on every member of our community. COVID-19 has impacted everyone at some level and these impacts continue to be felt today. Now is the time to focus on our recovery efforts and how we continue to live with COVID-19 whilst building and maintaining our social and economic life.

Recovery is an important stage of any emergency event and aims to support individuals to rebuild and reconnect with their community. It can also open new opportunities for people to thrive in ways they couldn't before, and for the economy to prosper.

Best practice recovery begins at the same time an emergency event occurs. When COVID-19 was declared a public health emergency in the ACT in March 2020, the ACT Government responded promptly by investing in a range of programs to support the community with their recovery.

Other programs were altered and refined to incorporate the changes COVID-19 brought to the community in response to the impacts of COVID-19 and to adapt to its evolving nature. There are also programs planned for the current financial year which will build on this great work and continue tailored and targeted supports for the community.

In our third year of living with COVID-19, the 2022-23 Budget focuses on delivering services for all Canberrans, now and into the future. This includes initiatives which encourage Canberrans to be active participants in our community while ensuring access to services which can support their needs. It also supports the development of a Social Recovery Framework to better understand priorities for individuals, the community sector and the broader community for social recovery following a disaster.

The Plan will build on the ACT Recovery Plan 2021-22, with a continued focus on ensuring the community is at the centre of everything we do.

Based on available data, we expect further waves of COVID-19 into the future. Recovery efforts will continue to be required to support the community as we adjust to COVID-19s ongoing effects.

The ACT Social Recovery Plan will therefore have an important role and impact to the community, by committing to the continuation of these services and those planned for 2022-23 in supporting social and economic recovery efforts.

I am pleased to advise the Plan is currently being developed, with input gathered on initiatives and programs underway and those planned. These programs are delivered and managed across ACT Government as recovery requires a whole of government effort. It also reflects the wide range of responsive and tailored services available to the community to ensure all aspects of social and economic life are supported. The Plan will be tabled in late 2022.

As there are a significant number of available and planned programs, these have been grouped into themes. These themes are:

- Financial support;
- Physical and mental health services;
- Access to services and targeted supports for people experiencing vulnerability;
- Community cohesion and resilience; and
- Economic Support.

The Plan will be underpinned by the ACT Wellbeing Framework. The programs and initiatives which will be included in the Plan cross over several wellbeing domains, which is a reflection of the significant impacts COVID-19 has had in our community and how well targeted these programs are to provide specific supports.

Recovery can be a short-, medium- or long-term journey and this can vary at a community and individual level. The prolonged nature of COVID-19 in the ACT and on a broader national and global level will likely mean social and economic recovery will be longer term and require joint government and community collaborative efforts.

Through the ACT Social Recovery Plan, these recovery efforts will be acknowledged and committed to, to ensure that we can build back better and rebuild a strong, sustainable and equitable community in the ACT.

On a final note, I would like to acknowledge that behind these recovery efforts are the ACT Government staff working hard to deliver services and opportunities for the community to rebuild their social and economic life. I thank them for their hard work.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the community and our community partners in supporting COVID-19 response and recovery in the ACT.

There is still a long way to go as we continue to live through, and with, the impacts of COVID-19. I am confident that through the great work underway and planned for the next year, we will recover together – better and stronger.

I look forward to presenting to the Members of this Assembly the final ACT Social Recovery Plan later in the year.