



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2015-16

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

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SURVEY

**SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY GROUPS ON THE
ACT BUDGET 2015-16
PRESENTED BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT ON 2 JUNE 2015**

If you wish to respond to this survey, please return it to committees@parliament.act.gov.au by **12.00pm Friday 5 June 2015**. If there is insufficient room for any of your comments, below, please append additional comments.

1. Full name of group/organisation:

Young Women's Christian Association of Canberra (YWCA Canberra)

2. Name of contact person for this survey and their telephone number and email address:

Joanna Le
Director of Corporate Relations and Communications
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3. Has your organisation/group developed a written analysis of the ACT Budget that it would like to submit to the Committee?

Yes (If yes, please email it to the Committee Secretariat with your completed survey and analysis.)

No

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

- a. Eliminating violence against women and children
- b. Housing affordability and homelessness
- c. Therapeutic Services for Children & Young People and Support for Parents

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

Eliminating violence against women and children

YWCA Canberra applauds the \$615,000 in funding for primary prevention in the 2015-16 Budget. This is a positive outcome, and will significantly contribute to the long term cultural change of violence against women. Through this vital support and education, the next generation of children will have access to the skills and knowledge they need to recognise and engage in respectful relationships.

This evidence-based approach to primary prevention is a positive step for our community and we are pleased that it has not impacted on funding allocations for secondary and tertiary services. The additional funding for the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, Mens Centre and ACT Legal Aid is encouraging, and further bolsters the ACT Government's commitment to ending violence against women and children.

YWCA Canberra's award-winning, evidence-based program, Respect, Communicate, Choose (RCC) has been delivered to over 900 students in Canberra and Adelaide, with strong positive outcomes. We have met with the ACT Education and Training Directorate and others to develop a range of options and costed models for the deployment of this program in schools. Most recently, at the request of Minister Corbell, we proposed a "train-the-teacher" model that would empower schools to run the program independently within a 24 month period.

YWCA Canberra is keen to ensure that the chosen program for delivery is aligned with best practice for primary prevention, and incorporates information on gender equality, which research indicates is critical for lasting prevention outcomes.

Housing affordability and homelessness

Affordable housing and homelessness needs long term planning and investment by the ACT Government, specifically:

- Focusing on prevention of homelessness
- Increasing housing market responses to housing needs in the ACT
- Improving service responsiveness
- A long term plan to reduce, respond to and prevent recurrence of homelessness

We are pleased to see many of these priorities have been addressed, at least in part by the ACT Budget.

Therapeutic services for children & young people and support for parents

YWCA Canberra has identified this as one of the critical areas of need, as well as a leadership opportunity for the ACT Government.

Counselling support to children and young people is only available as a free and immediate service through the school counselling service, although there are limitations:

- Counselling support is only available during school hours and school terms;
- Counselling services tend to focus on the individual students rather than involving the whole family;

- A significant amount of School Counsellor time is devoted to assessment of students with disabilities. All though this is vital for students with disabilities it often leaves little time to work with other students, particularly those who require early intervention support;
- Some children and young people will not access the counselling service for reasons of confidentiality or because they have disengaged with school; and
- The service has limited capacity to provide longer term counselling support.

The ACT Budget's very modest and short-term investment in services to support people experiencing domestic, family and/or sexual violence and in drug treatment services will only allow services to reduce their waiting lists – there will still be unmet demand.

6. Are there any other particular issues with the ACT Budget that you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment/attach further details:

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

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

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

Yes No

a. If yes, please comment

A long term commitment is required to end violence against women, and address homelessness and affordable housing. These are the two biggest issues facing the ACT, and have huge economic and social implications for the broader community. The ACT Government should continue to allocate adequate resourcing to ensure these issues are resolved.

YWCA Canberra notes that the ACT Budget contained no new funding to support children, young people and their families seeking therapeutic services, and there is significant unmet demand in the ACT that is ever-growing. YWCA Canberra seeks to be part of the solution in better supporting our most vulnerable community members.

9. Does your organisation/group wish to give its views in a Committee public hearing on Friday 12 June 2015, at the Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra.

Yes No

If you indicate yes, and the Committee decides to invite you to appear at the hearing, the Committee Support Office will contact you by close of business Wednesday 10 June 2015 to confirm arrangements. Please note that the Committee may not be able to hear from all groups/organisations.

Thank you for contributing to the inquiry.
