



Inquiry into the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Fiona Carrick MLA

Addressed to: Chief Minister

Redirected to:

Reference: Infrastructure

Hearing: 16 June 2026

In relation to: Infrastructure and the wellbeing framework

Question received: 7 July 2026

Answer Due: 14 July 2026

My questions are about the decision to invest in infrastructure and the wellbeing

framework assessment:

- (1) prioritisation - how is the Wellbeing Framework used to prioritise investment between community infrastructure and major projects?
- (2) equity and targeting need - how is the Wellbeing Framework used to ensure community infrastructure investment is directed to areas of greatest need to improve equitable access across districts?
- (3) preventative health - to what extent does the current framework support investment in community infrastructure as a form of preventative health spending, and how could this be strengthened?
- (4) measurement - do the current wellbeing indicators adequately capture community-level outcomes (e.g. social connection, access, wellbeing), or do they bias investment toward acute services?
- (5) fiscal discipline - how can the Wellbeing Framework be better integrated with budgeting to ensure community infrastructure investment is both prioritised and delivered within a sustainable fiscal envelope?

(6) transparency and accountability - how does the government demonstrate how the Wellbeing Framework has been applied in selecting and prioritising infrastructure projects?

Andrew Barr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) prioritisation - how is the Wellbeing Framework used to prioritise investment between community infrastructure and major projects?

All proposals considered in the Budget include an assessment of their wellbeing impacts. Budget decisions related to community infrastructure and major projects are informed by a range of factors, including industry's ability to deliver, the ACT fiscal position, Commonwealth or other funding streams, and the wellbeing impact assessment.

(2) equity and targeting need - how is the Wellbeing Framework used to ensure community infrastructure investment is directed to areas of greatest need to improve equitable access across districts?

As part of the 2026-27 Budget, the Government prioritised infrastructure projects aligned with Wellbeing Priority Areas, including those related to health infrastructure - such as delivering the new Northside Hospital, and housing - with a focus on public and social housing.

Other capital works projects will also have an impact on other wellbeing domains, such as active travel (access and connectivity, and health) and upgrading venues (social connection and safety).

These initiatives are considered to bring benefit to all Canberrans by increasing equitable access to physical health and mental health and housing, both wellbeing priorities for ACT Government.

(3) preventative health - to what extent does the current framework support investment in community infrastructure as a form of preventative health spending, and how could this be strengthened?

The 2026-27 Budget continues to focus on six wellbeing priority areas, including physical and mental health. The investments include initiatives aimed at strengthening both our current services and investing in prevention and early intervention to reduce pressure on the health system and improve the community's long term wellbeing outcomes.

(4) measurement - do the current wellbeing indicators adequately capture community-level outcomes (e.g. social connection, access, wellbeing), or do they bias investment toward acute services?

The wellbeing domains and indicators, developed in consultation with the Canberra community, are intentionally unweighted to avoid any perceived bias in the relative importance assigned to individual domains or indicators and to maintain an objective and transparent representation.

The Wellbeing Dashboard tracks progress against the Framework's indicators, with measures used to assess wellbeing outcomes across the ACT, mapped to the wellbeing domains. Where data is available, detailed information outlines how wellbeing is changing, how we compare nationally and in some cases how wellbeing differs for some groups in the community. The dashboard was last updated in April 2026.

(5) fiscal discipline - how can the Wellbeing Framework be better integrated with budgeting to ensure community infrastructure investment is both prioritised and delivered within a sustainable fiscal envelope?

The Wellbeing Framework has been integrated into budget processes since the 2021-22 ACT Budget. A key part of our approach is through the requirement for submissions to include an assessment of their wellbeing impacts.

Budget decision-makers are required consider a range of different factors in making all decisions, including those on infrastructure projects. Wellbeing impacts are one of these factors alongside consideration about the industry's ability to deliver the project, the ACT financial situation, and whether there are any other funding streams involved, including Commonwealth Government funding.

As part of the 2026-27 Budget, the Government prioritised infrastructure projects aligned with the Wellbeing Priority Areas, including those related to health infrastructure - such as delivering the new Northside Hospital, and housing - with a focus on public and social housing. Other capital works projects will also have an impact on other domains of wellbeing, such as active travel (access and connectivity, and health) and upgrading venues (social connection and safety).

(6) transparency and accountability - how does the government demonstrate how the Wellbeing Framework has been applied in selecting and prioritising infrastructure projects?

The Wellbeing Budget Statement 2026-27 highlights ACT Government investment – in both expense and capital initiatives, services, programs, and infrastructure. The Wellbeing Budget Statement outlines the contributions to community wellbeing across the six Wellbeing Priority Areas, including for mental and physical health, and housing – where investments in infrastructure were made. Actual deliberations of Government in selecting and prioritising infrastructure projects as part of the Budget process are Cabinet in Confidence.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Signature: 
By the Chief Minister, Andrew Barr ML

Date: 14.7.26