



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Fiona Carrick MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Housing and Homelessness

Reference: Housing

Hearing: 30 July 2026

In relation to: Homelessness policy and services

Question received: 6 August 2026

Answer Due: 15 August 2026

Minister

1. What steps is the ACT Government taking to address the growing demand for homelessness services?
2. What is the ACT Government's process for identifying gaps in homelessness services?
3. What is the average length of stay in crisis and transitional accommodation in the ACT, how has this changed over the past three years?
4. Given that providers have identified a shortfall of appropriately sized Housing ACT properties (particularly for large families) as a cause of extended stays in transitional housing, what action is the Government taking to expand the availability of larger public and social housing dwellings?
5. How many additional crisis and transitional accommodation dwellings are funded in the 2026-27 ACT Budget?
6. Will these dwellings be recent new builds or purchases, or are existing Housing ACT dwellings to be repurposed for this use?
7. If the additional crisis and transitional accommodation are drawn from Housing ACT's existing stock, what was this housing previously being used for?
8. What is the shortfall in crisis accommodation spaces compared with demand?
9. How does the government plan to address this shortfall?
10. What plans are there for homelessness services on the southside of Canberra? Thank you.

Ms Suzanne Orr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The ACT Government is addressing the growing demand for homelessness services by increasing investment in specialist homelessness services. The 2026-27 Budget included \$16.92m in new funding initiatives. This includes:
 - \$9.3 million in expanded and new funding to support more homelessness services, including:
 - \$7.3 million for food relief services, youth services and tenancy and property management supports.
 - \$1.08 million for ACT Shelter to continue its peak advocacy role for Housing and Homelessness.
 - \$0.96 million to index the homelessness baseline funding envelop by the Community Sector Indexation rate
 - \$5.2 million for tailored support for those experiencing chronic homelessness, including:
 - More flexible funding to support providers to better tailor solutions to meet the individual needs of vulnerable Canberrans.
 - 65 additional properties being provided into the Housing Asset Assistance Program.
 - Expansion of the Housing First approach, with 10 additional properties.
 - \$2.4 million over four years for the continuation of the Community Inclusion Program at Oaks Estate to assist residents to sustain their tenancies and foster community cohesion.
2. Gaps in homelessness services are identified through an ongoing process of working with sector partners including through 6 monthly performance reporting. This continues to build on consultation from the homelessness commissioning processes which included engagement with sector CEOs, Joint Pathway members, peak bodies, the Official Visitor for Homelessness, and people with lived experience, to discuss the needs, gaps, essential services and system priorities for the sector.
3. There are limitations with the data as not all providers report length of stay and there are a range of different programs that sit within crisis and transitional accommodation services. From the available data, the average length of stay across programs providing crisis accommodation for the 2024-25 period was 68 days, and the average length of stay across programs providing transitional accommodation services for the 2024-25 period was 177 days.
4. Housing ACT undertakes targeted property acquisitions informed by portfolio demand and actively engages with developers and local real estate providers to identify suitable properties and emerging acquisition opportunities.
5. 75 additional crisis and transitional dwellings are being provided through the 2026-27 Budget.
6. These dwelling will be a mix of new and existing properties.
7. This stock may previously have been used for a range of purposes, including Housing ACT stock that may have just gone through the vacant process or undergone significant repairs and maintenance for example.

8. There are limitations with the data as demand for services from individual programs delivered by service partners is not collected. There is an increase in demand for support through FIRST Canberra as shown by the number of people on the waitlist for services growing from 340 in January 2025 to 395 in June 2026.
9. The ACT Government is addressing this by working closely with the sector. There are tight contractual arrangements, including performance reporting with sector partners each six months. As part of this, contractual deliverables are monitored including the number of beds being occupied or the number of properties ascribed to the contract. Housing Assistance works with service partners to make sure they are limiting vacancies as much as possible recognising that sometimes it is appropriate to swap out those properties to reflect tenant need.
10. The ACT Government currently funds 10 specialist homelessness service providers across 14 programs to provide crisis and transitional accommodation and support on the southside to support vulnerable Canberrans. Housing Assistance works with specialist homelessness services providers on an ongoing basis to ensure that allocations best meet the needs of clients noting that we are in a constant flux of allocating and re-allocating properties across the ACT.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2026–2027

Signature:

Minister for Housing and Homelessness, Ms Suzanne Orr MLA

Date: 14/08/26