



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

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Chiaka Barry

Addressed to: YWCA – Frances Crimmins (CEO)

Redirected to:

Reference: 2026-27 Budget Estimates - Community Day

Hearing: 3 July 2026

In relation to: Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Question received: 20/07/2026

Answer Due: 28/07/2026

Your budget submission raised concerns about the ACT Government's decision to
abandon its standalone Minister for Homelessness portfolio.

(1) In your view, what has been the ripple effect of the government's decision to
dissolve its standalone Minister for Homelessness portfolio?

(2) You have recommended that a standalone Ministerial portfolio be
reinstated. In your view, how essential is this for government accountability in
relation to the homelessness sector?

(3) In your view, what will be the practical impacts on frontline service
providers if this recommendation is not implemented?

[Ms Crimmins]: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

A distinct homelessness portfolio was established in the 10th Assembly with ministerial oversight.

Without an explicit focus on homelessness there is a risk that the distinct needs of homeless people
and the services they rely on will be subsumed into the housing agenda more broadly.

In particular, YWCA Canberra is concerned that with the Government's commitment towards
delivering 30,000 new homes by 2030 that the needs of those who are facing imminent
homelessness due to violence, poverty, or overcrowding will be lost. As a provider of a homelessness

OFFICIAL

program for older women, our Next Door service assists older women navigate housing uncertainty and complex wellbeing challenges. This service provided 103 support periods over 2024-2025. In lieu of a distinct homelessness portfolio, services like Next Door have faced ongoing funding uncertainty.

We first raised concerns regarding the abolition of the Homelessness portfolio at the commencement of the 11th Assembly. We were reassured that homelessness as a policy and program area remained a central consideration of the newly renamed portfolio.

There has been repeatedly and publicly canvassed concerns regarding the operations of Housing ACT as explored by the ACT Audit Office and the ACT Ombudsman. Homelessness services on the other hand tend to be delivered by community service organisations which meet the needs of the most complex client profiles. Given the service footprint of the homelessness sector and the challenges within the Housing ACT portfolio, there is a concern that homelessness as a distinct policy area will not be given priority status that reflects its emerging need.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Brown', written on a white rectangular background.

Signature:

Date: 28 July 2026

By the [Commissioner for/Officer.....], [name of Commissioner/Official]