

Chatillon, Christine

From: Chatillon, Christine
Sent: Saturday, 29 September 2007 10:27 AM
To: 'pwdact@shout.org.au'
Subject: FW: 2008-09 Budget proposals

Dear Ms Mahar

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter to Mr Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister submitting your budget submission.

Kind Regards

Christine Chatillon
Manager
Chief Minister's Support & Protocol
Chief Minister's Department
Level 2, ACT Legislative Assembly Bldg
(02) 620 50192
Fax: (02) 620 50289
Mob: 042 127 5678
<mailto:christine.chatillon@act.gov.au>



**People With
Disabilities**
ACT Inc

PWD ACT
PO Box 717
Mawson ACT 2607
e. pwdact@shout.org.au
p. 02 6290 1984
f. 02 6286 4475
w. www.pwdact.org.au

Mr Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister
Treasurer
Legislative Assembly
Civic Square
London Circuit
ACT



Dear Mr Stanhope,

It was estimated in the 1998 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, that 17.2% of the ACT population (53,100 people) identified as having a disability. The results from the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census showed that in the ACT over 10,000 people, of all ages, have a profound or severe disability. Of those, 151 are Indigenous. People with a disability in the ACT receive unpaid care from 25,937 other Canberrans.

All of these people care deeply about the services and facilities that your government provides for people with disabilities. This budget is your opportunity to meet the needs of this significant section of the community; in doing so you will also benefit the rapidly increasing ageing population, parents with prams and many other members of the ACT community.

We have targeted areas that you consider priority service areas such as public transport, health care and urban infrastructure. Improvements to urban infrastructure will benefit the entire community, as will improvements to the hospital system. Many more people would gain from a more accessible public transport system. The ABS Survey on Disability, Ageing and Carers shows a significant percentage of respondents who have difficulty using public transport in the ACT or simply don't leave home because of it. We believe it is vitally important that this is improved.

People With Disabilities ACT hope that you will consider our 2008-09 Budget proposals and the benefits they will have for the ACT Community and the ACT Government.

Yours Sincerely,

Kylie Mahar
Executive Officer

For
Margo Hodge OAM
President

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: All government departments

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT proposes that all members of government committees be paid sitting fees.

Target Group

All members of the community that participate in government committees

Benefits to the ACT Community

A great deal of consultative and committee work is done in the ACT by unpaid volunteers who have much experience, knowledge and qualifications to bring to the process. Many sacrifice their own time, often under very difficult personal circumstances, especially if they have a disability, to contribute to their community. The benefits of making such a payment would be to those in the ACT community who are giving their time and to the entire community who benefit from their expertise.

Benefits to the ACT Government

By paying participants a nominal fee to recoup their own costs, the government is more likely to attract quality people with proper qualifications to make a contribution to important government work. This will reduce the amount of time government employees will need to sacrifice to these committees.

Costs and/or Savings

For example the committee members of the Disability Advisory Council are paid \$270 for each meeting they attend.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Disability & Community Services

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT propose that a Companion Card be introduced for people with disabilities in the ACT

Target Group

People with disabilities

Benefits to the ACT Community

In Victoria, 75% of companion card holders said that they often go out to new places because of the card. Cardholders doubled the amount of times they went out. It improved their social networks and increased their feelings of social inclusion. Similar benefits to the ACT community would surely follow the introduction of a companion card here.

Benefits to the ACT Government

It is our understanding that Disability ACT have already investigated the benefits of this scheme.

Costs and/or Savings

Disability ACT may have already costed such a scheme.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Disability & Community Services

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT proposes that Individual Support Packages funding increases to meet unmet need in the community.

Target Group

People with disabilities

Benefits to the ACT Community

Currently, over 25,000 Canberrans provide unpaid care to people with disabilities in the ACT community because funding is not adequate to provide for all of their care and support.

Benefits to the ACT Government

Unpaid carers cannot fully participate in the labour market. At this time of skills shortages, unpaid carers should have their time freed up to participate in the economic life of the community. Adequate care for the people they have been caring for would allow many to do this.

Costs and/or Savings

Disability ACT would have a better idea of the scope of unmet need and the costs involved.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Disability & Community Services

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT propose that the Equipment Scheme subsidies be increased to keep up with the increased cost of equipment

Target Group

People with disabilities, the ageing population

Benefits to the ACT Community

Currently people who need to purchase specialized equipment to complete daily tasks are left with huge bills to meet the shortfall that the ACTES subsidy does not cover. By increasing the subsidy some of the most vulnerable people in the community will not be further impoverished by the need to purchase vital equipment.

Benefits to the ACT Government

The ACT Government has a moral responsibility to provide assistance to the most vulnerable people in society. People with severe disabilities who need equipment are currently struggling and the ACT government would be failing in its duty of care if they do not raise the subsidies to reflect current prices.

Costs and/or Savings

The ACT government has neglected this scheme for too long. By not spending on the subsidies other long term problems are being caused for people with disabilities. This will end up costing the community in the long run.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Tourism, Sport & Recreation

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT proposes that all public pools in the ACT be made accessible for people with physical disabilities.

Target Group

People with physical disabilities and restrictions. This includes people in wheelchairs, stroke patients and the elderly.

Benefits to the ACT Community

Access to hydrotherapy and the opportunity for physical exercise that access to a pool provides will benefit the section of the community that currently cannot access one.

Benefits to the ACT Government

The ACT Government needs to ensure that all community facilities are accessible to all of the community. Failure to do so may be deemed discriminatory.

Costs and/or Savings

This access has been available in the past so it is simply a reinstatement of previous facilities.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Housing

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT proposes that the amount of adaptable, modified housing available to people with disabilities is increased and that delays in modifications are reduced.

Target Group

People with disabilities, including the rapidly increasing aged population.

Benefits to the ACT Community

Everyone should be able to live in their own home if that is what they wish.

Benefits to the ACT Government

The government has an obligation to provide assistance in this area and is currently not fully living up to its obligations.

Costs and/or Savings

If people need housing modifications to complete daily tasks safely, then those modifications will stop accidents and injury that cause pain and suffering to individuals and burden the health sector.

When people are forced to move into institutionalized housing because their own homes don't meet their needs, the cost to the government and the community is much greater than the cost of providing housing modifications.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Housing

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT propose that a Territory subsidy be introduced to make up for the small amount of the Centrelink Rent Assistance payment.

Target Group

People with disabilities and other welfare recipients

Benefits to the ACT Community

ACT private rental prices are the highest in the country and an extra subsidy to help meet the high cost of rents in the ACT would alleviate much stress from the lives of a significant section of the ACT community.

Benefits to the ACT Government

This form of assistance would encourage people to stay in Canberra. Many people with disabilities have the skills to help meet the skills shortage in the employment market.

Costs and/or Savings

There is no set amount the subsidy would have to be. It would be up to the discretion of the ACT government.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Health

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT propose that an Access Audit of the entire ACT hospital system be conducted.

Target Group

All users of the ACT community who need to access the territory's hospital system. This includes everyone who may have an issue with access in any hospital; people with disabilities, the aged population, parents with prams etc.

Benefits to the ACT Community

Every citizen in the ACT Community should be able to access any service or building in the ACT hospital system. If they experience difficulties they may require additional assistance from hospital staff, taking them away from their normal duties.

Benefits to the ACT Government

A hospital system that is accessible to everyone is something not every state and territory possesses and can boast about.

Costs and/or Savings

If people can't access medical care when they first need to, their health problems may become more acute in the long term, requiring greater and more expensive medical intervention at a later date.

We estimate that conducting an Access Audit of the ACT hospital system would cost approximately \$10,000.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Territory & Municipal Services

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT proposes that an advertising campaign be conducted to publicize the availability of accessible Public Transport in the ACT.

Target Group

People with disabilities, the aged population, parents with prams

Benefits to the ACT Community

Currently many members of the ACT community who are unable to use private means of transportation are unaware that services to make the use of public transport more accessible even exist. If these citizens have a way to get around the city more easily they will be able to participate more in the life of their community. This means an untapped percentage of the community will be able to begin participating in the cultural and economic sectors of the ACT.

Benefits to the ACT Government

In the same way that the campaign to advertise the availability of bike racks on buses increased the patronage of this service, a campaign to publicize accessible public transport in general will increase usage. There has been much criticism of the Territory's public transport system, which could be alleviated by proactive campaigns such as this.

Costs and/or Savings

When more members of the community know about the availability of accessible forms of public transport, the amount of people who will utilize these services will grow. Patronage will increase, increasing income for the service.

It would conceivably cost the same amount of money to mount an accessible public transport campaign, as it did to advertise 'Bike and Ride'.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Territory and Municipal Services

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT proposes that all footpaths and bike paths in the ACT be concreted to an accessible standard.

Target Group

People with disabilities, the aged population, parents with prams, bike riders, walkers, skateboarders, roller bladers etc.

Benefits to the ACT Community

Greater accessibility of the territory's paths means a greater percentage of the ACT population can get out in the fresh air and utilize these paths. Currently, mis-aligned, cracked, missing and non-existent concrete on many paths means that a huge percentage of people in the ACT are unable to use them. Greater outdoor activity by greater numbers of people means a healthier and happier community in general.

Benefits to the ACT Government

By meeting their responsibility to maintain all the paths that link the community the ACT government would live up to the expectations of the community.

Costs and/or Savings

Currently the territory is at risk of litigation if a vulnerable person trips or falls on un-maintained paths and hurts them-selves. Surely the cost of maintaining footpaths and bike-paths would be less than costly legal actions.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Territory & Municipal Services

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT proposes that ACTION bus fleet's number of accessible buses be increased at a quicker rate than is currently being undertaken.

Target Group

People with disabilities, the aged population, parents with prams

Benefits to the ACT Community

Currently only a limited amount of bus routes are accessible to all bus travelers. By expanding the amount of accessible buses and bus routes a greater percentage of the community will have the opportunity to access their community. This will bring economic benefit to the entire community from the greater mobility of more consumers.

Benefits to the ACT Government

Increasing the number of accessible buses means that more bus routes will be accessible to a greater number of people in the community, meaning an increase in patronage and income to the service.

Costs and/or Savings

The Accessible Transport Standards ensure that our proposal will have to be done in the future anyway. By increasing patronage sooner, the government will make more money from the service earlier.

ACT BUDGET PROPOSAL

YEAR: 2008-09

PORTFOLIO: Territory & Municipal Services

Initiative

People With Disabilities ACT proposes that all bus stops in the ACT, that haven't already, be updated to be accessible to all members of the community

Target Group

People with disabilities, the ageing population, parents with prams

Benefits to the ACT Community

By ensuring that all bus stops in the ACT are accessible to all members of the community, more people will be able to access public transport and participate in cultural, social, sporting events.

Benefits to the ACT Government

A fully accessible public transport system would be proof that the ACT government is capable of providing a model service.

Costs and/or Savings

The department of Territory and Municipal Services would know the cost of such work.