



MEDIA RELEASE: ACT Budget 2016-17

7 June 2016

ACT's peak body for youth affairs, the Youth Coalition of the ACT, welcomed the ACT Government commitment to social inclusion announced in today's 2016-17 ACT Budget, however believes more is needed to ensure that younger members of our community have opportunities to participate economically and socially in Canberra life.

The Youth Coalition continues to believe that Canberra is, and should be, the city of choice for young Australians.

'We are looking to our political leaders to stand up for all Canberrans. We believe that the ACT community can leverage the things that make Canberra unique (such as above national average incomes and education attainment) to stand out and also lead the country in how we care for, support, and provide opportunities for all of our citizens', said Director Emma Robertson.

'We are really pleased to see some great initiatives in this ACT Budget, such as investments in addressing domestic and family violence, strengthening the capacity of schools to support students with complex needs, and increased clinical mental health supports for young people.'

'However, with youth unemployment in the ACT at 11.6%, nearly 3 times the general unemployment rate (4.1%), we believe more needs to be done to support those at risk of unemployment or underemployment to achieve full participation in community.'

The Youth Coalition will continue to urge the ACT Government to make a sustainable difference to long term Government expenditure by investing in early intervention and prevention services, and addressing the social determinants of health.

'We believe capacity for education and early intervention with young people around gender equality and healthy relationships is essential to reducing violence against women and children in our community.'

'Strengthening capacity for collaborative partnerships between schools and community based services to provide the right support at the right time is essential to ensuring educational attainment and employment pathways for vulnerable students and their families.'

'And as young Canberrans continue to identify mental health as a top issue of concern, we believe that in addition to clinical supports, investment to increase family and community knowledge about and confidence in supporting mental health and wellbeing is essential.'

These are long term investments across the budgets of all sections of government, and require strategic perspective that looks beyond the silos of government portfolios.

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469