

MEDIA RELEASE

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Some Good News for Young People, More Needed

The ACT Budget 2012-13 contains a number of initiatives that will have a positive impact for young Canberrans. In addition to funding identified for Care and Protection Services and initiatives under the Youth Justice Blueprint, the Youth Coalition, the peak body for youth affairs in the Territory, welcomes:

- \$2 million for additional dwellings to address social housing needs;
- \$3.2 million over four years for the CIT Year 12 program and the Disabilities Support Area for students with complex needs;
- \$150,000 over three years for low-cost counseling and coordination of existing volunteer services provided by A Gender Agenda;
- \$485,000 over three years to build upon the Heart Foundation's Active Living Program;
- \$300,000 over three years for an annual Nightrider service for five weeks during the Christmas and New Year period;
- \$900,000 over three years to Street Law Outreach Legal Service for the Homeless; and,
- \$1.1 million over two years to extend the AMC Throughcare model beyond the end of an offender's custodial sentence with the aim of reducing their risk of re-offending.

However many young people will continue to do it tough in the ACT, with issues such as housing affordability and homelessness, educational disengagement, and access to support services affecting their participation in the ACT community.

'More needs to be done in the area of affordable housing and access to private rental accommodation,' said Director Emma Robertson. 'Young people continue to be priced out of housing in the ACT. We need programs and initiatives that recognise the further disadvantage added by youth wages and income support levels.'

The Youth Coalition was disappointed at the lack of funding allocated to initiatives to support vulnerable young Canberrans to effectively engage with education, in particular within schools. Educational engagement plays a major part in keeping young people connected to their community, engaged in learning and social and emotional development.

The Youth Coalition continues to be concerned that demand for community services support is greater than capacity. This is particularly concerning for youth and family services when considering the continuing trend of increase in Child Protection and Child Concern Reports, and number of Community Youth Justice clients.

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469