



MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition ACT Budget 2011-2012 Analysis

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ACT Budget and Young People

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, acknowledges the challenges faced by the ACT Government in developing the 2011-2012 ACT Budget, and welcomes many of the new initiatives.

Further investment in the areas of support for young people transitioning from out of home care, as well as new monies to support diverting young people from detention and engagement with the criminal justice system, are timely and responsive to calls from the community.

However, the Youth Coalition is disappointed that overall the Budget has not addressed some of the biggest issues facing young people in the ACT community, such as affordable housing, mental health services, and engagement with education, training, and employment.

'With the ACT Government announcing a budget focus on meeting commitments, increasing frontline services, and supporting those in the community who need it most, it is essential that investment in young people continues to be seen as a priority,' said Director Emma Robertson.

'Young people continue to face discrimination and be priced out of not only the private rental market, but also affordable housing initiatives.'

'Mental health issues continue to be significant in many young people's lives with the ABS identifying 25% experiencing a mental health issue in any given year.'

'The realignment of focus for youth support services means that there is limited capacity for youth services to offer any more to schools, a missed opportunity for early intervention and improved supports to young people at risk of disengaging from education.'

Overall the Youth Coalition commends the following ACT Government Budget initiatives:

- Funding of \$400,000 over 2 years to maximise the effectiveness of community engagement;
- Funding of \$646,000 over 4 years for the Forensic Mental Health Court Liaison team;
- \$1.2 million over 4 years for mental health training for DET, JACS, AFP and ACT Ambulance Service workers;

- Funding of \$607,000 over 4 years to improve access to law and justice services and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- \$10.3 million over 4 years towards addressing the demand for disability services, including support for after school care and school holiday program access;
- \$2 million over 4 years towards supporting Youth Transitioning from Out of Home Care;
- \$3.9 million to enhance youth justice services;
- \$1.6 million for a care and protection Community Kinship Care program;
- \$2.2 million over 4 years towards Out of Home Care costs; and,
- 10 additional placements in the Street to Home program.

‘While the Youth Coalition welcomes these initiatives, further information will need to be provided on how they will be implemented.’

‘It is vital that these initiatives are further progressed in consultation with key stakeholders, including young people, their families, and youth support services.’

‘We look forward to working with the ACT Government on the further development of these initiatives.’

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469

The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory and is responsible for representing the interests, rights, and wellbeing of people aged 12 to 25 years, and those who work with them.

www.youthcoalition.net