



## **MEDIA RELEASE: ACT Budget 2015-16**

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### **Modest Investment in Early Intervention & Prevention Welcome But Young Canberrans Need Jobs & Housing**

Canberra's peak body for youth affairs, the Youth Coalition of the ACT, has welcomed the announcement of a modest investment in early intervention programs in ACT schools to address key community concerns such as mental health and domestic violence.

'Noting that the detail is still to come, the Youth Coalition was pleased to see a whole of government response to domestic violence, but we will continue to highlight the need for long term commitment to this issue. There is a significant need for preventative programs that focus efforts to educating children and young people about healthy relationships, and challenging negative gender stereotyping,' said Emma Robertson, Youth Coalition Director.

The Youth Coalition's submission to this budget called on the ACT Government to address social determinants of health, and invest in early intervention and prevention. This is a key shift needed to save money in future years and reduce the growing demand for acute / crisis services.

'We were disappointed in the lack of strategy to clearly address housing affordability. Investment in infrastructure presents an opportunity for jobs creation, and will be following up with the ACT Government to discuss how significant infrastructure projects that have been announced will leverage opportunities to invest in local jobs creation, particularly for groups experiencing higher rates of unemployment, such as young people,' Ms Robertson said.

'The ACT Government is to be congratulated for maintaining their commitment to further invest in the actions under the strategy for improvements to the Out of Home Care system, and for the work that has occurred in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre - reducing the numbers of young people in detention and providing the opportunity to look at reinvesting the savings in programs that are delivering promising results.'

'The ACT Government has emphasised that it is making modest investments in services to those who are vulnerable. However, we really need to see more than modest investments in preventing social and health harms, and intervening early. This is what will provide people with the support needed to address issues that end up costing the community much more down the track,' Ms Robertson said.

'We believe Canberra could be the city that young Australians aspire to live in. At the end of the day though, it is housing affordability, and job opportunities that will determine how liveable Canberra is for young people.'

**For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469**