



Youth Coalition of the ACT 2005 / 06 ACT Budget Analysis

ACT Government Budget hot or not?

The Youth Coalition of the ACT 2005 / 06 Budget Submission listed 25 recommendations to address gaps in critical youth services and the sustainability and continuing viability of the youth sector. These recommendations were identified through a consultation process with members and other key stakeholders. We are very disappointed that none of our recommendations were adopted.

The Youth Coalition is pleased with many of the new initiatives in this year's budget and recognises that the Government has taken some positive steps forward, including the implementation of some of the recommendations from the reports on the child protection system known as the Vardon and Murray reports.

We particularly applaud the establishment of the Commissioner for Children and Young people whom we look forward to working closely with.

However, the Youth Coalition is disappointed that many aspirations of the Canberra Plan remain purely aspirational. The Government has missed a valuable opportunity to invest in prevention and early intervention services and continues to play catch up.

The ACT Government has repeatedly said that this is a tight budget and we are facing tight times – despite this more funding has been allocated to feasibility studies than to address drug related harm.

The true test of a community is how it supports its most vulnerable – and on this occasion the Budget has, fallen short of the mark.

New initiatives

The Youth Coalition welcomes the announcement of new initiatives for young people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, children and young people in the care and protection system and the establishment of a Commissioner for Children and Young People.

The Youth Coalition put the need for a Commissioner for Children and Young People on the public agenda and is pleased that the ACT Government has established this important position.

The Youth Coalition is pleased to see the ACT Government has adopted a new community sector method of indexation, but is bitterly disappointed that this initiative will not begin until July 1st 2006.

Service gaps

The lack of indexation this financial year is a blow to youth services funded through the Youth Services Program. They missed out on indexation all together in the 2002 / 03 Budget. Youth services are already behind and the community sector again has not had major issues of viability addressed.

The ACT Government's Budget has also failed to address the needs of young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, homeless young people, and young people with mental health and drug issues.

The ACT Government has neglected to provide support for young people with mental health issues. This is a major concern especially considering the growing numbers of young people contacting services such as Lifeline who have reported increased incidents of young people who self-harm. The Youth Coalition had called for a number of new measures to be funded addressing the mental health needs of young Canberrans including; increased emotional and social health services, accommodation, an adolescent in-patient unit and step-down residential facility, and training and program responses to self harm.

Homelessness and housing affordability remains a huge issue in the ACT and the Budget does not deliver any increases in capital funding to Housing ACT. It appears that Housing ACT stock numbers will in fact decrease during the 2005/06 financial year due to redevelopment and refurbishment. This will exacerbate the already dire circumstances that many young people experiencing homelessness and poverty face daily.

The Youth Coalition is disappointed that no new funding has been allocated to alcohol and other drug initiatives in this year's budget, despite plenty of research (including recent ACT specific research) linking substance misuse to homelessness, poor mental health outcomes and child abuse and neglect. The impact of intergenerational drug use is in desperate need of readdress, especially considering recent findings to demonstrate a link between parental drug use and homelessness in the ACT. Investment in prevention and early intervention is critical to reducing drug related harm and is consistent with the *Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Strategy 2004 – 2008*. Indigenous young people and young people with alcohol and other drug issues incarceration rates continue to be unacceptably high and this year's budget has ignored them.

Although we support the new initiatives for young people with disabilities, many of the most at-risk young people with disabilities have missed out on greatly needed supports. We are concerned about the number of young people with disabilities and mental health issues who are involved in the juvenile justice system and who are homeless.

ACT Government Budget 2005/06: Hot or Not?

Department / Initiative and page # Budget Overview No3	Description in budget	First year funding (2005-06)	Comments and Concerns
<p>Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services <i>Office of Children, Youth and Family Support</i></p> <p>Quamby Security (page 199)</p>	<p>This provides additional staffing to improve security at the Quamby Youth Detention Centre by enhancing the observation and surveillance functions and strengthening the capacity to respond by providing a sufficiently secure environment</p>	<p>342 000</p>	<p>NOT: The Youth Coalition believes that this money would be better spent on preventative and restorative supports. We look forward to further information on this initiative.</p>

<p>Individual Support Packages (page 199)</p>	<p>This will meet the significant ongoing need for accommodation support provided to high-needs children and young people, who are determined to be in need of care and protection and for whom there are limited alternative accommodation options.</p>	<p>3 161 000</p>	<p>HOT: The Youth Coalition supports this initiative. It is important that it is well coordinated with other government and non-government supports.</p> <p>NOT: We are concerned at the lack of preventative measures funded.</p>
<p>ATSI Unit (Child and Youth Services) (page 199)</p>	<p>This initiative establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit to service child protection and youth justice clients. The Unit will be responsible for providing culturally appropriate support and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families</p>	<p>700 000</p>	<p>HOT: This is initiative is welcomed and is long overdue.</p> <p>NOT: We are interested to see how this initiative will be rolled out and how the unit will be supported.</p>
<p>Reform of Community Sector Funding (page 199)</p>	<p>This initiative reflects the Government's commitment to support the community sector by providing an appropriate level of funding to meet increasing wage-related and administrative costs. Across the</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>HOT: The 80:20 method of indexation is welcomed.</p> <p>NOT: It is disappointing that indexation will not be rolled out until 2006/07 as this places further strain on the community sector.</p>

	<p>Government additional funding of \$3.3m, over three years, is being provided to multiple agencies to allocate the higher level of indexation. The current CPI based method of community sector funding indexation will be replaced with an 80:20 Wage-Cost / CPI indexation method which more accurately reflects real costs. It is anticipated that this reform will result in a 3.5% increase in funding to the community sector upon its introduction in 2006-07, compared to an expected 2.5% increase under the current CPI based indexation model.</p>		
<p>Accommodation Consolidation (page 200)</p>	<p>This initiative will allow the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support to consolidate its operation from 12 different locations to 11 Moore Street during 2005, as recommended by <i>The Territory as Parent Report</i>.</p>	<p>356 000* 514 000 * 2nd Appropriation Bill</p>	<p>HOT: We support the implementation of the recommendations from <i>The Territory as Parent Report</i>.</p> <p>NOT: We question the amount to consolidate</p>

	<p>The consolidation will enhance the development of a collegiate culture and assist in developing consistent and efficient work practices.</p>		<p>As along with money allocated in the 2nd Appropriation Bill it appears that the cost over 4 years will be approximately \$5 million.</p>
<p>ATSI Youth Supported Accommodation (2nd Appropriation) (page 200)</p>	<p>This initiative will improve support for young 'at risk' ATSI males aged between 12 and 18 years by offering supported accommodation and, through increasing cultural awareness, improved and coordinated service delivery and access to culturally appropriate educational and vocational training.</p>	<p>514 000</p>	<p>HOT: We welcome the replacement funds for the closed down Macquarie House.</p> <p>NOT: We are keen to hear further details of this initiative and how it will be implemented.</p>
<p>Revised Child Protection Manual (2nd Appropriation) (page 200)</p>	<p>This initiative provides for the redevelopment of the procedures manual to incorporate the policy recommendations contained in both 'The Territory's Children' Report by Gwen Murray (July 2004) and 'The Territory As Parent' Report by Commissioner Vardon (May 2004).</p>	<p>150 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support the implementation of the recommendations from <i>The Territory as Parent</i> Report.</p> <p>NOT: A significant amount of money has gone into the manual over several years. We hope it is finally completed and training provided to all relevant staff.</p>

<p>Additional Support for Children Health and Young Person's System (CHYPS) (2nd Appropriation) (page 200)</p>	<p>This initiative will provide additional support to CHYPS and fund the scoping of a review of the current system to determine how best to redevelop CHYPS in response to 'The Territory as Parent' Report.</p>	<p>535 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support the implementation of the recommendations from <i>The Territory as Parent Report</i>.</p> <p>NOT: This system has been highly expensive and we are curious as to the systems capacity to be upgraded to meet record keeping needs. We are also interested to find out about information sharing practices between Government and non-government agencies.</p>
<p>Care and Protection Staff (2nd Appropriation) (page 200)</p>	<p>This initiative will provide additional resources to address an ongoing increase in workload.</p>	<p>2 667 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support this initiative.</p> <p>NOT: We hope that as a result of increased staffing they will be able to take a more holistic approach to working with children and young people. We hope that staff will be able to do more preventative work. We are interested to see the details of this initiative.</p>
<p>Business Support Costs (2nd Appropriation) (page 201)</p>	<p>This initiative will provide organisational services to the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support and</p>	<p>2 532 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support the implementation of the recommendations from <i>The Territory as Parent Report</i>.</p>

	assist the implementation of the Government response to 'The Territory as Parent' Report.		<p>NOT: It must be acknowledged that a similar allocation of funds was not allocated to the community sector to also implement and match the roll out of the 'The Territory as Parent' Report. We would like further information about what this initiative means.</p>
Homelessness Drop-in Centre (page 223)	Feasibility study	100 000	<p>HOT: The Youth Coalition maintains that it is important to provide support for homeless young people in the ACT.</p> <p>NOT: We would like further information how this initiative fits within the Breaking the Cycle Homelessness Strategy and how it will be rolled out and the consultation processes used. It is imperative that young people are consulted on this initiative.</p>

Department / initiative and page # Budget Overview No3	Description in budget	First year funding (2005-06)	Comments and Concerns
<p>Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services Housing ACT</p> <p>None</p>	<p>NIL</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>NOT: Apart from the new indexation initiative that begins on July 2006 (see below) there were <i>no new initiatives funded in Housing ACT</i>. This seriously undermines the ACT Governments' purported commitment to reducing homelessness and to the provision of affordable housing. In particular, the Youth Coalition is disappointed that the ACT Government has failed to respond to the recommendations of 2 key pieces of research focusing on youth homelessness.</p>

<p>Reform of Community Sector Funding Indexation (page 205)</p>	<p>This initiative reflects the Government's commitment to support the community sector by providing an appropriate level of funding to meet increasing wage-related and administrative costs. Across the Government, additional funding of \$3.3m, over three years, is being provided to multiple agencies to allocate the higher level of indexation. The current CPI based method of community sector funding indexation will be replaced with an 80:20 Wage-Cost / CPI indexation method which more accurately reflects real costs. It is anticipated that this reform will result in a 3.5% increase in funding to the community sector upon its introduction in 2006-07, compared to an expected 2.5% increase under the current CPI based indexation model</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>HOT: The 80:20 method of indexation is welcomed.</p> <p>NOT: It is disappointing that indexation will not be rolled out until 2006/07 as this places further strain on the community sector.</p>
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Department of Urban Services ACTION Bus Replacement Program (page 169)	This initiative provides for the purchase of eleven replacement buses that comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1997 (DDA). These fleet additions are required to assist ACTION to reach the fleet target as outlined within the DDA.	4 840 000	HOT: We support this initiative.

Department / initiative and page # Budget Overview No3	Description in budget	First year funding (2005-06)	Comments and Concerns
<p>Chief Minister's Department</p> <p>Family Violence Intervention Program (page 174)</p>	<p>The Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP) is an integrated and coordinated criminal justice and community response to family violence. The effectiveness and success of the FVIP is recognised at ACT, national and international levels. This initiative provides for two full-time equivalent positions to work with people affected by domestic violence.</p>	<p>114 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support this initiative and its focus on cross government and non-government collaborations.</p>

Department / Initiative and page # Budget Overview No3	Description in budget	First year funding (2005-06)	Comments and Concerns
Department of Justice and Community Services Human Rights Commission (page 180)	<p>This initiative provides for the creation of a combined statutory oversight agency that will incorporate several existing statutory oversight functions and provide a framework for inclusion of similar new functions in the future. The new Commission will incorporate functions of the Community and Health Services Complaints Commissioner, the Discrimination and Human Rights Commissioner, and the new Disability Services Commissioner and the Children and Young People Commissioner. A new position of President of the Commission will be created to control the administration of the Commission and oversee the conciliation of complaints.</p>	100 000	<p>HOT: We support this initiative.</p> <p>NOT: We will be interested in the detail of how the Human Rights Commission will work. Particularly that allocation of resources to Commissioners is not just based on numbers of complaints as this may undermine proactive work.</p>

<p>Children and Young People Commissioner (page 180)</p>	<p>This establishes a new office for the Children and Young People Commissioner. The Commissioner will be responsible for promoting and protecting the interests of children and young people in the ACT. The Commissioner for Children and Young People will be incorporated into the Human Rights Commission.</p>	<p>313</p>	<p>HOT: We welcome this position. The Youth Coalition has been lobbying for this position for the past 4 years. We look forward to working with the Commissioner.</p>
<p>Circle Sentencing (page 180)</p>	<p>This initiative provides for the employment of an Indigenous Liaison Officer to coordinate the Ngambra Circle Sentencing Court as well as the operational costs of conducting the Court. Circle sentencing is an initiative of the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee, which more closely reflects traditional ways of dealing with conflict and doing justice.</p>	<p>100 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support circle sentencing in the ACT and are pleased that the ACT Government will be recurrently funding this successful pilot.</p> <p>NOT: It is important that funding matches demand.</p>

<p>Reducing Property Crime (page 180)</p>	<p>This provides for the implementation of a program to tackle high volume, recidivist property offenders by addressing the causes of offending and accordingly, to reduce the overall rates of property crime in the ACT.</p>	<p>550 000</p>	<p>NOT: We would like more information about this program and would be interested in learning how this initiative will link with the implementation of restorative justice principles in the ACT justice system.</p> <p>We would be like to see the involvement of young people in the implementation of these programs.</p>
<p>AFP – Child Protection Register (page 181)</p>	<p>This initiative provides for the establishment and maintenance of a child protection registration scheme in the ACT. This is in line with the national model endorsed by the Australasian Police Ministers' Council in July 2002 which has sought to introduce a register in every state that adheres to nationally agreed information management, offender monitoring and reporting systems.</p>	<p>100 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support the establishment and maintenance of this register.</p>

<p>AFP – Increased Patrol Strength (page 181)</p>	<p>This initiative provides for the establishment and maintenance of two additional 24 hour patrols. The first patrol would be allocated to the northern district from 1 July 2007, to address front line response across Canberra City, Belconnen and Gungahlin. The second patrol would be allocated to the southern district from 1 July 2008 to address issues in south Canberra, Woden and Tuggeranong.</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>NOT: It will be interesting to see what mechanisms are in place to better support relations between police and young people.</p>
<p>Office of Community Advocate (2nd Appropriation) (page 181)</p>	<p>To provide for additional staff to meet the increased demand relating to statutory obligations due to a substantial increase in processing reports under section 162(2) of the Children and Young People Act 1999.</p>	<p>153 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support this initiative and believe that it will facilitate proper screening and monitoring in processing reports under section 162(2) of the Children and Young Peoples Act 1999.</p>

Department / initiative and page # Budget Overview No3	Description in budget	First year funding (2005-06)	Comments and Concerns
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SCAN (Funding to Support Access and Participation Needs of Students with a Disability) (page 183)	This initiative provides essential funding to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students with a disability, including the growing numbers of students with very complex needs in Government schools.	1 000 000	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative.</p> <p>NOT: In a recent Youth Coalition consultations, young people reported that they had experienced anti-disability, mental illness, alcohol and other drug sentiment in schools. It will be interesting to see how this is addressed through this initiative.</p>
VET Growth to Meet Skills Shortages (page 183)	This initiative provides additional resourcing to meet a sharp increase in demand for traineeship and apprenticeship places in the ACT.	1 500 000	<p>HOT: We support new VET funding being made available to increase traineeship and apprenticeship places in the ACT.</p>

<p>Student Support Funds (2nd appropriation) (page 183)</p>	<p>This initiative will provide funding to Government schools to enable children and young people to have the opportunity to access and participate in school activities regardless of economic circumstances.</p>	<p>500 000</p>	<p>HOT: The Youth Coalition has been calling for this initiative for several years, and we welcome these funds.</p> <p>NOT: We would like further information about how this initiative will reach its target group, whether it will be made available through community organisations, and how students will be identified.</p> <p>It is important to ensure that similar opportunities are also made available to young people in alternative education settings.</p>
<p>College Review (2nd Appropriation) (page 183)</p>	<p>This initiative will support a review of the Government college system to ensure that Canberra's flagship colleges remain relevant and targeted to meet the educational needs of all students.</p>	<p>100 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support this initiative.</p>

<p>School Building Renewal Fund (page 184)</p>	<p>This initiative provides additional capital funding to improve the quality of Government school infrastructure. The funding will provide a more functional, pleasant learning environment with associated increases in amenity and learning outcomes.</p>	<p>2 000 000</p>	<p>HOT: This is a welcome injection of capital funds to approve the amenities for students in Government schools.</p>
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<p>Department Of Disability, Housing And Community Services</p> <p>Community Support Services – Youth and Young Adults (page 186)</p>	<p>This initiative will provide for the establishment of a north-side community based person-centred service. The service will support youth and young adults to minimise the impact of their disability through the provision of learning and development of life skills, focusing on improving outcomes during the key transitional times, in particular the transition from school to post school options.</p>	<p>415 000</p>	<p>HOT: A welcome initiative as there has been a lack of services for young people and young adults with a disability in North Canberra.</p>

<p>Children with High and Complex Needs (including autism) (page 186)</p>	<p>This will assist families with children who have intensive support needs, including those children with challenging behaviours, in particular autism. The range of services provided will include the assessment of the needs of the young person with a disability and his/her family, development of intervention strategies, and additional funding for supports and services.</p>	<p>410 000</p>	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative.</p>
<p>Additional Therapy Support for Children with High and Complex Needs (including Autism) (page 186)</p>	<p>This initiative will provide a specialised equipment assessment, trial and short-term loan service for children and young people with disabilities and complex needs, including autism. The assessment service will identify and address their needs in the areas of mobility, seating and posture, transport, bathing equipment, assistive technology and communication devices.</p>	<p>200 000</p>	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative.</p>

<p>Child and Family Centre – Tuggeranong (page 186)</p>	<p>A range of early intervention programs and services, to supplement existing Government and community services, will be delivered at the Child and Family Centre at Tuggeranong. The services will include universal and targeted parenting information and support services, specialist clinical services and community development and community education programs.</p>	<p>338 000</p>	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative.</p> <p>NOT: It is important that this centre is accessible for young parents and their families.</p>
<p>Community Support and Crisis Intervention (page 186)</p>	<p>This initiative will provide critical support to a number of people with a disability or their carers who have been assessed as having high or very high support needs.</p>	<p>792 000</p>	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative and it is positive that the whole of family needs are being assessed.</p>
<p>ACT Concessions Program (page 187)</p>	<p>This initiative will more accurately reflect the increase in cost and growth in the target population in the Concessions Program.</p>	<p>1 154 000</p>	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative for low-income families and pensioners to subsidise health, travel and energy costs.</p> <p>NOT: We would like more information about how this initiative will be rolled out.</p>

<p>Reform of Community Sector Funding (page 187)</p>	<p>This initiative reflects the Government's commitment to support the community sector by providing an appropriate level of funding to meet increasing wage-related and administrative costs. Across the Government additional funding of \$3.3m, over three years, is being provided to multiple agencies to allocate the higher level of indexation. The current CPI based method of community sector funding indexation will be replaced with an 80:20 Wage-Cost / CPI indexation method which more accurately reflects real costs. It is anticipated that this reform will result in a 3.5% increase in funding to the community sector upon its introduction in 2006-07, compared to an expected 2.5% increase under the current CPI based indexation model. Through this expenditure, the Government will help create a more viable and sustainable community sector and provide greater capacity for the delivery of services to the community.</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>HOT: The 80:20 method of indexation is welcomed.</p> <p>NOT: It is disappointing that indexation will not be rolled out until 2006/07 as this places further strain on the community sector.</p>
<p>Youth Coalition of the ACT: 2005 /</p>			<p>page 23</p>

<p>Refugee Settlement Services Program (2nd Appropriation) (page 187)</p>	<p>This initiative is to provide housing and support services to Temporary Protection Visa Holders to assist in the initial part of their settlement in the ACT.</p>	<p>104 000</p>	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative.</p> <p>NOT: This brings into question the need for this group to continue to be listed as a research priority under the ACT Homelessness Strategy <i>Breaking the Cycle</i>.</p>
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ACT Health Dental Services (page 189)	<p>This initiative will reduce the denture and general anaesthetic waiting list in the Dental Health Program and maintain the restorative waiting list. This program will provide funding to refer additional clients on the Centralised Waiting and Recall List to private providers under the Restorative and Denture Referral Schemes, increase dental teams in the Dental Health Program and reduce the waiting times for general anaesthetic by providing treatment at Lidia Perin to provide more frequent access to dental services for higher risk and special needs groups.</p>	278 000	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative.</p> <p>NOT: It will be interesting to get more information about the types of services provided to young people and drug users.</p>

<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dental Health Program (2nd Appropriation Bill) (page 190)</p>	<p>To provide for the operation of the Dental Health Program at the Narrabundah Health Centre, to be operated by the Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service. The Indigenous Community have significant oral health needs and poor access to dental services. This program will provide indigenous people living in the ACT access to dental services and provide the opportunity to develop and implement an appropriate and culturally sensitive service, as previous programs delivered as part of the mainstream service have been unsuccessful. The proposal is supported under a priority action area identified in the ACT Health Action Plan 'Access to dental health services and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be improved.'</p>	<p>222 000</p>	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative.</p>
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<p>Children at Risk Assessment Unit (2nd Appropriation Bill) (page 190)</p>	<p>To provide additional staffing and support for the Child at Risk Assessment Unit within Community Health. The aim of the Child at Risk Assessment Unit is to provide specialist health services to the ACT and region for abused children, young people and their families/carers. It provides these services through provision of medical assessments, brief emotional health needs assessments of children who have been abused and crisis of disclosure counselling for children and their families where abuse is suspected. It also contributes to various committees on child abuse, and undertakes training and research where possible.</p>	<p>638</p>	<p>HOT: This is a welcome initiative.</p>
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<p>Home and Community Care Growth (Agency Growth Funds) (page 192)</p>	<p>This initiative provides recurrent funding to match the anticipated Commonwealth growth for the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program. This program will provide services in the community to assist frail aged and younger people with a disability and their carers to remain at home and prevent their early or inappropriate admission to residential care. Services include home nursing, allied health, podiatry, home cleaning, personal care (assistance with showering and dressing), social support, community transport to doctors visits and shopping, meals on wheels, personal alarms, respite care, home modifications, home maintenance, counselling, linen service and centre based day care.</p>	<p>800 000</p>	<p>HOT: We welcome these additional funds. We would like to see the recommendations of the Youth Coalition's Young Carers Report provide some guidance the implementation of this funding.</p>
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<p>After Hours GP Service (Agency Funded) (page 194)</p>	<p>This service will build on the current after hours primary medical care service provided by the Canberra After Hours Locum Medical Service (CALMS) and will extend the eligibility to all ACT residents to access the service.</p>	<p>350 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support this initiative.</p> <p>NOT: The Youth Coalition is concerned about the continuing low levels of bulk-billing in Canberra.</p> <p>We would like further information about how young people will be afforded access to this service.</p>
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<p>High Needs Children (Agency Funded) (page 194)</p>	<p>This initiative provides support for high needs children with a disability to allow them to live at home and not remain in hospital. Currently high needs children remain in an acute hospital for many months or sometimes years and the existing service gap is the provision of intensive hours or personal care support for children to return to living at home. This program will provide funding to the 'Caring for Kids at Home' program established within Community Health and also to an existing funded non Government organisation to support these children.</p>	<p>465 000</p>	<p>HOT: We welcome this initiative in keeping children at home rather than in the hospital.</p>
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<p>Care Package - returning mental health clients (Agency Funded) (page 195)</p>	<p>This provides a care and treatment package for forensic mental health offenders returning to the ACT from NSW Correctional Centres.</p>	<p>613 000</p>	<p>HOT: We support this initiative as providing support to those leaving a correctional facility.</p> <p>NOT: We have not been able to identify other mental health initiatives in this budget – we would like further information regarding this.</p>
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CAPITAL WORKS 2005-06 Forward Design			
Karralika Development Options (page 221)		400 000	HOT: We welcome this development.
CAPITAL WORKS 2005-06 Construction Projections			
Replacement of Quamby Youth Detention Centre (page 220)		3 500 000	HOT: We welcome the replacement of Quamby. NOT: We look forward to learning where the new centre will be located, what the timeframes are and what changes will be made.

Best new name for an initiative:

Priority Industry **Sector** Support Program, Department of Economic Development



MEDIA ALERT

ACT Government put on notice: community sector wage issues aren't going away

The Youth Coalition is pleased to see the ACT Government has adopted a new community sector method of indexation, but is bitterly disappointed that this initiative will not begin until July 1st 2006.

“The increased costs and pressures on community organizations has been continuously raised by the Youth Coalition and other community peaks over several years,” said Meredith Hunter, Executive Officer, Youth Coalition of the ACT.

“Another 12 months will make a significant difference to the community sector being able to provide support to some of the most vulnerable members of our community,” continued Ms. Hunter.

“This is also a blow to youth services funded through the Youth Services Program. They missed out on indexation all together in the 2002 / 03 Budget - youth services are already behind.”

“The Youth Coalition will be lobbying strongly that the introduction of the new indexation measure be implemented along with an increase in community sector wages in 2006. Another major community sector viability issue.”

“As the Government has responded positively to the wage demands of the public sector, nurses and teachers it is only reasonable that the wage inequities of the community sector are addressed in the 2006 – 07 Budget,” stated Ms. Hunter.

May 3, 2005

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MEDIA ALERT

MISSING IN ACTION

The ACT Government has failed to address the needs of young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, homeless young people, and young people with mental health and drug issues in its 2005/06 Budget.

“The Youth Coalition is disappointed that the ACT Government has again overlooked and failed to fund services for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds,” said Meredith Hunter, Executive Officer of the Youth Coalition of the ACT.

“The ACT Government has also neglected to provide support for young people with mental health issues. This is a major concern especially considering the growing numbers of young people contacting services such as Lifeline who have reported increased incidents of young people who self-harm. The Youth Coalition had called for a number new measures to be funded addressing the mental health needs of young Canberrans including; increased emotional and social health services, accommodation, an adolescent in-patient unit and step-down residential facility, ”

“Homelessness and housing affordability remains a huge issue in the ACT and the Budget does not deliver any increases in capital funding to Housing ACT. It appears that Housing ACT stock numbers will in fact decrease during the 2005/06 financial year due to redevelopment and refurbishment. This will exacerbate the already dire circumstances that many young people experiencing homelessness and poverty face daily,”

“No new money was allocated to drug and alcohol initiatives despite plenty of research linking substance misuse to homelessness, poor mental health outcomes and child abuse and neglect.” Ms Hunter said.

May 3, 2005

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MEDIA ALERT

Care and protection of our children and young people: ACT Government takes another step forward

The ACT Government Budget has demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the safety of children and young people.

“The Youth Coalition supports the individual support packages for children and young people and the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit in the Office of Children Youth and Family Support,” said Meredith Hunter, Executive Officer of the Youth Coalition of the ACT.

“The Vardon Report stated that Indigenous children and young people have been systematically neglected in the ACT therefore the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit is long overdue and an important step towards redressing this issue.”

“The Youth Coalition is pleased by the allocation of additional resources for the on-going implementation of *The Territory as Parent* and *The Territory’s Children* reports. The new care and protection staff are an example of the ACT Government taking another step forward.”

“We look forward to hearing further details about how the Government intends to roll out these initiatives.”

The Youth Coalition also supports the child protection register. “The Youth Coalition has been calling for a child protection register and is happy that the Government has finally brought the ACT into line with other states and territories,” said Ms. Hunter.

3 May 2005

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MEDIA ALERT

ACT Commissioner for Children and Young People – a welcome initiative

The allocation of funding for the ACT Commissioner for Children and Young People in today's budget is a welcome move towards ensuring the rights and interests of children and young people are upheld in Canberra.

"The Youth Coalition of the ACT put the need for a Commissioner for Children and Young People on the public agenda and is therefore pleased that the ACT Government has established this important position," Ms Meredith Hunter, Executive Officer, Youth Coalition of the ACT, commented.

"In ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) in 1991, the Australian Government recognised and made a commitment to the protection and promotion of Children's rights in Australia."

"Clearly the ACT Government has a critical role to play in ensuring that the rights of children and young people in regards to the UNCROC are upheld and implemented at a territory level," said Ms Hunter.

"The creation of this position is a result of the Government's increasing recognition of the need to actively improve the status of children and young people in our community."

"The ACT Commissioner for Children and Young People will ensure that the interests, rights and well-being of young people in the ACT are protected and promoted and the Youth Coalition looks forward to working with them," Ms Hunter said.

3 May 2005

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MEDIA ALERT

Young people with disabilities: finally some much needed support

The Youth Coalition of the ACT is pleased to see that children and young people with disabilities will be supported by a range of new initiatives announced in the 2005-6 Budget.

“Many children and young people with disabilities have struggled to receive appropriate levels of support in the past – having a significant impact on their lives and those of their families.” Ms Hunter, Executive Officer, Youth Coalition of the ACT, said. “We believe that these initiatives will go some way in addressing their needs.”

The new initiatives announced included an intensive support service and additional therapy support for adolescents with challenging behaviours, and a day program for young people with disabilities to develop life skills.

In addition, increased supports were announced to help young people with disabilities to achieve better outcomes in their education.

“We are pleased to see that the Stanhope government is supporting young people with disabilities within education. We are concerned, however, that anti-disability cultures in our schools keep many young people from achieving their potential – something needs to be done”.

Though supportive of the initiatives, the Youth Coalition argues that many of the most at-risk young people with disabilities have missed out on greatly needed supports:

“Though we applaud these initiatives, the Youth Coalition is concerned about the number of young people with disabilities and mental health issues who are involved in the juvenile justice system and who are homeless. We are disappointed to see that no additional supports are available for these vulnerable and poorly supported young people”.

3 May 2005

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