



youth
coalition
of the ACT

ACT Budget 2025-2026

**What's in it for young
people?**

The Youth Coalition of the ACT acknowledge the Traditional Owners and continuing Custodians of the lands of the ACT and pay our respects to the Elders, families and ancestors.

We acknowledge that the effect of forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people from their families as well as past racist policies and actions continues today. We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold distinctive rights as the original people of modern-day Australia including the right to a distinct status and culture, self-determination and land. We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the invaluable contribution they make to our community.

About the Youth Coalition of the ACT

The Youth Coalition of the ACT is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory. The Youth Coalition's vision is for an ACT community that values and provides opportunity, participation, justice and equity for all young people. The Youth Coalition undertakes policy development, sector development, research and evaluation, advocacy and representation activities to improve outcomes for young people and their families.

A key role of the Youth Coalition is the development and analysis of ACT social policy and program decisions that affect young people and youth services. The Youth Coalition facilitates the development of strong linkages and promotes collaboration between the community, government and private sectors to achieve better outcomes for young people in the ACT.

Prepared by Erin Barry and Hannah Watts, Youth Coalition of the ACT.

Response to the ACT Budget 2025-26

The Youth Coalition's response to the ACT Budget is structured by the following components. A full summary of relevant Budget initiatives is provided at the end of the document.

1. **ACT Budget Initiatives for young people:** Snapshot and Response
2. **Areas requiring further investment or review:**
 - a. Canberra Health Services:
 - CAMHS services on the Northside and for young people aged 18-25
 - b. Education Directorate:
 - Review of Flexible Education Program and Muliyan infrastructure
 - c. Health and Community Services Directorate:
 - Youth homelessness system mapping and planning
 - Planning for the development of a Youth Strategy
 - Comprehensive review of *the Mental Health Act 2015*
 - d. City and Environment Directorate:
 - Removal of the fee for WWVP volunteer registration

ACT Budget initiatives for young people: Snapshot

1. **Continued support for youth services:** \$9.4 million over four years to continue MindMap, Stepping Stones, Youth Aware of Mental Health, WOKE and the ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance. Separate funding has been delivered to Fearless Women, Scouts ACT and Kulture Break. \$16.2 million over four years to continue frontline homelessness services is intended to include youth homelessness providers.
2. **Education supports:** \$1.3 million to expand school youth health nurses across all ACT public high schools (3 days per week); \$13.4 million to continue the 'free meals in schools' pilot, and \$600,000 to increase support through the Equity Fund.
3. **Apprenticeships and Trades:** \$1.4 million to continue and expand the 'Try a Trade' program for young woman in public schools; and \$1.88 million to continue a cost-of-living support payment of \$250 to apprentices and trainees residing in the ACT. First year apprentices and trainees will receive an additional \$250 to assist with buying tools and equipment.
4. **More support for out-of-home care:** \$13.2 million to continue delivery of Extraordinary Residential Care for children and young people with disability and/or mental health conditions who cannot remain safely with their families, as well as to continue six existing staff members for Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.
5. **Supporting frontline family, domestic, and sexual violence services:** \$24.8 million over four years towards frontline services, including the PCYC Solid Ground program for young people; and a further \$6 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

ACT Budget initiatives for young people: Response

The Youth Coalition **welcomes the continuation of youth mental health program funding**, which fulfills one of ACT Labor's election commitments. Funding over a four-year period provides these programs with greater stability and certainty for staff and clients and enables services to undertake longer-term planning. We are grateful for continued funding to deliver the *ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance* in partnership with the ACT Government and Capital Health Network. The Alliance enables collaborative efforts to address systemic problems that persist across sectors, and which cannot be easily solved with 'more funding'.

We welcome the direct investment in community-based frontline services responding to **family, domestic and sexual violence**, including the PCYC Solid Ground program for young people. We receive positive anecdotal feedback about the **School Youth Health Nurse program** as a place-based resource for young people in relation to a range of health issues, including mental health and sexual health. We are pleased that this initiative will be expanded to all public high schools.

We understand that the frontline funding for specialist homelessness services is intended to include current **youth specialist homelessness service providers**, including those funded through the commissioning process in 2024 and the 'Our Place' youth foyer. Continuation of this funding is welcome; however, we continue to advocate for **system-wide mapping and planning** of the youth homelessness system to better understand current gaps, assets, and opportunities, including how the existing and new youth foyers are intended to function together, within the wider system.

The ACT Budget also includes funding for hotel accommodation brokerage and to trial an **alternative approach to crisis accommodation**. This initiative should consider the specific needs and barriers for young people under the age of 18 to access emergency accommodation, particularly those aged 16-17, who experience homelessness due to domestic and family violence.

We are disappointed with the introduction of a fee volunteers applying for a **Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) check**. Young people have expressed their dismay to us regarding the fee, which acts as a disincentive and barrier to volunteering. We support the concerns raised by [Volunteering ACT](#), including that the fee undermines the ACT Government's ACT Volunteering Strategy, which committed to making volunteering more accessible and sustainable. We support the call by Volunteering ACT to reverse this decision and commit to the intention of the Volunteering Strategy.

The announcement of a \$10 million funding boost over two years for eligible community sector organisations is a welcome first step towards improving the **sustainability of the ACT community sector**. This funding is provided in recognition of the increasing demand and cost pressures faced by community organisations. Approximately 140 organisations which on multi-year funding agreements with the ACT Government, and which receive Community Services Indexation, will be eligible to receive a portion. However, distribution of this funding, and the extent to which it will enable community services to better meet community demand, are currently unclear. We note that **indexation** for community organisations continues to be inadequate towards accounting for increased workforce costs, including by excluding costs associated with superannuation and long service leave.

Areas requiring further investment or review

Canberra Health Services

1. CAMHS services on the Northside

Despite the emphasis on improving the public health system in the ACT Budget, including the introduction of a new \$250 Levy on ratepayers (since downgraded to a \$100 Levy), we are disappointed that no additional funding has been allocated to expand CAMHS, particularly to the northside of Canberra. A [report by the ACT Audit Office](#) in 2024 found that:

- Demand for CAMHS has increased and there are long wait times to access support,
- There is increased demand and longer wait times on the northside of Canberra, prompting a recommendation that the North Community Team be expanded into the northern suburbs,
- There is a gap in service provision for young people once they turn 18 years old and are no longer eligible to access CAMHS, and transitions at this point are not well managed.

Funding allocated under 'Early works for a northside hospital' within *Infrastructure Canberra* (page 138, Budget Outlook) includes 'delivery of a new CAMHS facility in the community'. We understand that this investment is intended to relocate the current Cottage Program, from Bruce to Tuggeranong. This suggests that **CAMHS will not have a presence at either hospital on the northside.**

We are concerned that the relocation of this program, led by infrastructure availability rather than a high level of demand from the Tuggeranong area, will result in **no CAMHS programs being available for young people under the age of 18 on the northside of the ACT**, outside of the North Community Team and Adolescent Mobile Outreach Service based at Belconnen Health Centre. This presents an additional accessibility barrier for families living on the northside to access CAMHS programs located in Woden and Tuggeranong, particularly for programs requiring young people to attend on regular weekdays during school hours, such as the Cottage.

Additionally, we continue to advocate for a satellite clinic in the Gungahlin region, using existing health infrastructure, and an expansion to the North Community Team, to meet demand in the Gungahlin region and reduce accessibility barriers. We are aware that CAMHS receives a **high number of referrals and requests for support from families in the Gungahlin region**, and we note that there is currently no physical premises for CAMHS in this region. The requirement that young people and families in Gungahlin travel to Belconnen to access the CAMHS North Community Team is a barrier to access and engagement. Other services continue to identify the high level of unmet child and youth mental health needs as a concern for the Gungahlin region.

2. CAMHS services for young people aged 18-25

We are aware that CAMHS is currently undertaking a project to support improved transitions from CAMHS for young people turning 18. The project team have engaged with and incorporated feedback from the *ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance* as part of this work; a positive step towards improving transitions and developing more collaborative approaches within the system. Alliance members have provided positive feedback regarding CAMHS' ongoing engagement with the sector regarding these processes.

As national conversations continue regarding the **push for age harmonisation across Australia for child and youth mental health**, opportunities remain for Canberra Health Services to consider how it can better support young people aged 18-25. This may include exploring the feasibility of establishing a 'young adult' program delivered collaboratively between CAMHS and CHS Adult Mental Health Services, including within inpatient facilities.

Recommendations for Canberra Health Services investment:

1. Establish a CAMHS clinic in Gungahlin for young people under the age of 18, and increase the capacity of the North Community Team.
2. Design/scoping work for a 'young adult' program delivered collaboratively between CAMHS and AMHS to better support young people aged 18-25.

Education Directorate

1. Review of Flexible Education Program and Muliyan infrastructure

In our [budget submission](#), we asked for investment to locate appropriate temporary accommodation for the Muliyan flexible education program to enable it to return to an on-site capacity of 30 students, with potential expansion to 50 students, and for longer-term planning to invest in fit-for-purpose sites for Muliyan on the north- and south-side of Canberra. We also asked for a review of the Flexible Education Program to consider how it may better provide supported pathways to education for young people impacted by raising the *Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR)*, who are exiting Bimberi, or who are accessing residential care or youth homelessness services.

Minister Berry recently notified the Youth Coalition that the ACT Education Directorate is initiating a review of the existing Flexible Education Program, including all infrastructure needs. Outside of the ACT Budget, through the ACT Bilateral Agreement of the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034*, \$4.3 million will be allocated to expand Murrumbidgee School (within Bimberi) and implement a bridging program for students transitioning from Bimberi back into their local community; expand the Hospital School Service for students accessing CAMHS, and to deliver a multidisciplinary outreach service for those who need extra assistance to transition back to school settings.

We welcome the review of the Flexible Education Program and recommend that this be undertaken in partnership with the wider alternative education sector to enable shared and collaborative planning across the alternative education system. This is particularly important within the MACR context. While we understand that the review will consider the infrastructure needs of programs such as Muliyan, we still note that urgent temporary infrastructure measures are required to enable this program to return to an on-site capacity of 30 students.

Recommendations for Education Directorate investment:

3. Ensure the review of the Flexible Education Program is undertaken in partnership with the wider alternative education sector to enable shared and collaborative planning across the alternative education system.
4. Locate appropriate temporary infrastructure to support the Muliyan program to return to an on-site capacity of 30 students, while the FEP review takes place.

Health and Community Services Directorate

1. Youth homelessness system mapping and planning

During 2023-24, significant changes occurred within the ACT youth housing and homelessness sector due to sub-sector commissioning. New programs were established and other programs and services ceased. Programs that ceased included those providing outreach and emergency accommodation support to young people experiencing homelessness. Anecdotally, youth services report that new gaps are emerging, and there has been an increase in waiting lists of the remaining programs providing street outreach to young people experiencing homelessness.

System mapping was not undertaken as part of the commissioning process, which had led to a knowledge gap regarding the state of the youth homelessness system, inclusive of Commonwealth-funded and philanthropically funded services. System-wide mapping and planning of the youth homelessness system is needed to better understand current gaps, assets, and opportunities. This should also clarify how the existing and new youth foyers are intended to function together within the wider system.

The ACT Budget also includes funding for hotel accommodation brokerage, and to trial an **alternative approach to crisis accommodation**. We note the need for the ACT Government to consider the specific needs and barriers for young people under the age of 18 to access emergency accommodation, especially those aged 16-17, who experience homelessness due to domestic and family violence.

Recommendations for Health and Community Services Directorate investment (homelessness):

5. Undertake system-wide mapping of the ACT youth homelessness system, inclusive of Commonwealth- and philanthropically-funded programs, to identify gaps, assets and opportunities. This should also consider how the existing and new youth foyers are intended to function together within the wider system.
6. As part of the trial for an alternative approach to crisis accommodation, consider the specific needs of young people under the age of 18 trying to access emergency accommodation who are experiencing homelessness due to domestic and family violence.

2. Planning for the development of a Youth Strategy

Co-design of a Youth Strategy was an ACT Labor election commitment. A Youth Strategy would provide a valuable opportunity to consider how the ACT can recognise and respond to the contemporary circumstances and intersectionality of young people's lives, including through whole-of-government and community approaches. While the development of a Youth Strategy was not funded in this Budget, we encourage the ACT Government to use this time to commence early discussions regarding its future development.

Development of a Youth Strategy needs to be appropriately resourced and co-designed with both young people and key youth organisations. As part of this process, it would be valuable to review the purpose and functions of existing ACT Government youth engagement mechanisms. Processes and mechanisms should be genuinely youth-designed and youth-led, and enable a wide range of young

people to participate in democratic opportunities. We note that the ACT Government's response to the *Inquiry into the Electoral Amendment Bill 2021* expressed an openness to exploring broader opportunities to engage young people in democratic and participatory processes to help shape our shared future, and to enhance the effectiveness of the Youth Advisory Council as a representative voice (p. 8).

A 'wellbeing' perspective provides a unifying lens through which to consider the development of the Youth Strategy. A Youth Strategy may also consider how data collected through the ACT Wellbeing Framework could better serve the interests of young people.

Recommendations for Health and Community Services Directorate investment (Youth):

7. Appropriate funding to co-design a Youth Strategy with both young people and youth organisations, which supports a whole-of-government and community approach to supporting youth wellbeing. This should include a review of existing ACT Government youth engagement mechanisms.

3. Comprehensive review of the *Mental Health Act 2015*

We are aware that a review of the *Mental Health Act 2015* is underway, though it is not yet known whether this will be a public consultation and full review of the Act. We continue to be contacted by organisations, young people with lived experience, and parents/carers seeking information about the review of the Act and expressing their interest in contributing.

Over the last four years, significant policy work was undertaken by the Community Services Directorate to review and amend key components of the *Children and Young People Act 2008*. This was achieved through a staged process over several years, including substantial engagement and transparent dialogue with the ACT community.

Given the level of interest in the review of the *Mental Health Act 2015*, a similar process would be valuable to provide a comprehensive review of this important legislation along with the opportunity to engage in robust stakeholder discussions regarding key elements. We urge the ACT Government to invest in an open review process that could be staged similarly to the review of the *Children and Young People Act 2008*.

Recommendations for Health and Community Services Directorate investment:

8. Invest in a comprehensive and open review of the *Mental Health Act 2015* to provide opportunities for robust stakeholder discussions regarding key elements of the Act.

City and Environment Directorate

1. Remove the fee for *Working with Vulnerable People* volunteer registration

We are disappointed with the introduction of a fee volunteers applying for a **Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) check**. Young people have expressed their dismay to us regarding the fee, which acts as a disincentive and barrier to volunteering. We support the concerns raised by [Volunteering](#)

[ACT](#), including that the fee undermines the ACT Government's ACT Volunteering Strategy which committed to making volunteering more accessible and sustainable. We support the call by Volunteering ACT to reverse this decision and commit to the intention of the Volunteering Strategy.

Recommendations for City and Environment Directorate:

9. Reverse the decision to introduce an application fee for volunteers to access WWVP checks, in line with the intent and goals of the ACT Volunteering Strategy.

Where to from here?

This Budget Briefing will be provided to the ACT Legislative Assembly and ACT Government Directorates to inform the Budget Estimates process over coming weeks. It will also inform our ongoing advocacy work. We will continue to work closely with the community sector and the ACT Government to progress the core priorities outlined in this briefing. For more information, contact:

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Summary of ACT Budget new funding announcements affecting young people and their families

For a comprehensive overview and analysis of spending across the broader ACT community, please refer to the ACTCOSS Budget Response.

Initiative	Funding	Details
Health and Community Services Directorate		
Supporting vulnerable first-time parents	\$1 million over four years	The Government will provide additional and ongoing funding for Roundabout Canberra, a non-Government organisation that supplies baby and children's items to families in need. This initiative will also establish a program to deliver a Baby Bundle package to vulnerable families, which includes safe sleeping equipment, first aid kits and health resources to support health promotion and early intervention.
More services at Belconnen Safe Haven	\$1.9 million over three years, with costs offset	The Government will continue services at the Belconnen Safe Haven and expand the operating hours of the service. The Belconnen Safe Haven provides a safe space for people over 16 to access peer-led mental health support in a calm and caring environment, and helps reduce the need for people to present to emergency departments or other crisis services.
Community Sector Indexation	\$18.6 million over four years, with some costs offset	The Government will apply Community Sector Indexation (CSI) to relevant Community Sector funding for not-for-profit community sector organisations that deliver services through multi-year funding agreements. CSI is calculated using a ratio of 80:20 of wage increases and Consumer Price Index respectively. Reflecting the recent Fair Work Commission Annual Wage Review determination to increase the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award by 3.5 per cent, CSI will be 3.35 per cent in 2025-26.
Continuation of the Children and Young People Equipment Loan Scheme (CAYPELS)	\$335,000 over one year, with costs offset	The Government will fund the continuation of the Children and Young People Equipment Loan Scheme (CAYPELS) as a three day per week service providing free short-term loans of specialist paediatric equipment and assistive technology for children and young people with disability or mobility needs.
Supporting community organisations	\$2.6 million over four years	The Government will fund a variety of programs to enable community organisations to provide support to vulnerable members of the ACT community. This includes funding for Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program case management and wrap-around services for vulnerable women, and additional funding for Fearless Women, Scouts ACT and Kulture Break.
Funding boost for community sector organisations	\$10 million over two years	The Government will provide a funding boost to community sector organisations with funding agreements subject to Community Sector Indexation to assist organisations to meet needs identified through the Sector Sustainability project while the Government continues to progress community sector policy and funding reform commitments.

Implementing recommendations from the Long Yarn report	\$6 million over three years, with costs offset	The Government is investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations, in response to recommendations from The Long Yarn Report, which seek to address domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. Funding will support Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation, Yerrabi Yurwang, Yhurwun Bullan, and WhISPer's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Softball Corporation to continue delivering culturally appropriate DFSV services and programs. It also invests in the development and implementation of a 'violence is not our way' community and professional education program, to be designed and led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
Implementing the Disability Inclusion Act 2024	\$990,000 over two years, with some costs offset	The Government will implement key legislative requirements under the Disability Inclusion Act 2024, including development of disability inclusion plans and strategies by government directorates and agencies in consultation with people with disability. This initiative includes the establishment of a consultative panel to facilitate government engagement with diverse groups of people with disability, and provide grant funding for the ACT Disability Directed Advocacy Caucus and National Disability Services to support disability services system reform consultation.
Continuing support for youth mental health services	\$9.4 million over four years with most costs offset	The Government will deliver on its commitment to continue to support a range of community-led youth mental health programs, including the MindMap Online Youth Navigation Portal, Stepping Stones, Youth Aware of Mental Health, and the dialectical behaviour therapy program WOKE. As part of this initiative, the Government will also provide funding for the ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Alliance to support collaboration between the mental health sector and young people with lived experience.
More support for out of home care	\$13.2 million over one year, with some costs offset	This investment will continue delivery of Extraordinary Residential Care for children and young people with disability and/or mental health conditions who cannot remain safely with their families. This investment will also continue to fund six existing staff members for the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre to ensure it can remain a rehabilitative environment that is trauma informed and culturally inclusive.
Supporting frontline family, domestic and sexual violence services	\$24.8 million over four years, with most costs offset	The Government will increase investment in frontline domestic, family and sexual violence services in the ACT. The Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) will receive additional funding. There will also be funding for Victim Support ACT and DVCS to continue delivery of the Family Violence Safety Action Program. Funding for Canberra Police Community Youth Club will allow the continued delivery of the Solid Ground Program, providing early intervention support to young people and the YWCA Canberra will be funded to expand its Domestic Violence Support Service through the addition of two children's specialist workers. Funding will also be provided for the continuation and expansion of the Women's Health Matters Victim Survivor Voices Pilot. The Safer Families Assistance Program is also funded to continue in 2025-26.
Supporting trans and gender diverse peer support services	\$166,000 over one year, with costs offset	The Government will continue support for A Gender Agenda to continue operating the Gender Pathways Peer Navigation Service, which provides trans and gender diverse individuals in

		Canberra with access to information and referrals for social, legal and medical gender affirmation processes.
Education Directorate		
Continuing free meals in schools	\$13.4 million over four years with some costs offset	The Government will continue the Free Meals in Schools program following the successful pilot to provide breakfast and lunch for three days a week at five ACT public schools.
Cost of living - Expanding the Future of Education Equity Fund	\$600,000 over one year	The Government will deliver on its commitment to expand the Future of Education Equity Fund by supporting an additional 1,000 eligible students in the 2025 school year through the Fund. A total of approximately 6,000 students will be supported with one-off payments to ensure all students in the ACT have access to the education they need to succeed.
Better and Fairer Schools Agreement	\$62.1 million over three years	The Government will build on a range of initiatives and reforms underway across ACT public schools, including full implementation of the literacy and numeracy reforms announced in the 2024-25 Budget initiative Literacy and Numeracy - Strong Foundations. The Government will also use additional funding under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement to deliver key reforms aimed at ensuring every student has access to an excellent education. This includes work to strengthen equity and excellence, support wellbeing for learning and engagement, and build a strong and sustainable workforce.
Digital Access and Equity	\$23.1 million over four years, with most costs offsets	The Government will enhance the delivery of the Digital Access and Equity program by providing funding for a Chromebook device for every student studying at ACT public schools between years 7 to 12. Chromebook devices will be supported by enhanced warranty arrangements to better support uninterrupted student learning.
Try-a-Trade Program Expansion	\$1.4 million over four years	The Government will continue the Try-a-Trade program in five ACT public schools in 2025-26 and will expand the program to ten ACT public schools from 2026-27 onwards. The program encourages young women to consider careers in trades, by giving students early exposure to these workplaces.
Canberra Health Services		
Expanding the School Youth Nurse Program in ACT Public Schools	\$1.3 million over four years	The Government will expand the School Youth Nurse Program from January 2026, ensuring that a School Youth Health Nurse is available in every high school, three days per week. The program will provide one-on-one student consultations, educational health activities and support teachers to deliver the health curriculum.
Eating Disorders Residential Treatment Centre Operation	\$23 million over four years, with most costs offset	The Government will provide funding for the continued operations at the Eating Disorders Residential Treatment Centre. This includes funding a multidisciplinary team of nurses, allied health professionals, specialists and support staff, to provide intensive nutritional and therapeutic support for people with eating disorders.

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)		
Supporting the new CIT campus	\$25.7 million over four years, with some costs offset	The Government will provide funding to support the new CIT Woden campus as it opens to students and commences classes later this year. This Government investment will support campus management, the upkeep of the six-star Greenstar-rated building at the CIT Woden campus, smart campus technology and management of the dedicated co-located Youth Foyer. The additional funding will also provide for employee expenses and building maintenance costs to support the establishment of CIT Yurauna as a dedicated separate campus.
Housing ACT		
Housing ACT frontline support and social housing accelerator program	All costs offset	The Government will progress the commitment to deliver at least 55 new social housing dwellings under the Commonwealth Government's Social Housing Accelerator program. In addition, the Government will ensure the ongoing delivery of Housing ACT frontline services and prioritise allocation of any additional operating revenues to five additional frontline staff, operational expenses and the Growing and Renewing Public Housing Program.
Housing Australia Future Fund Round 2	All costs offset	The Government will construct 85 new public housing dwellings, to be leased to Community Housing Providers over a period of 25 years, contributing towards the Government's commitment to expand the Housing ACT property portfolio to 13,200 homes by the end of 2030.
Expanding the Tenant Participation Grant Program	\$140,000 over two years, offset	The Government will double annual funding available under the Tenant Participation Grants program, from \$70,000 currently to \$140,000, to support the participation of public and community housing tenants in social, educational and work-related activities.
Investing in frontline homelessness services	\$16.2 million over four years	The Government will extend funding for existing specialist homelessness service providers to maintain current capacity levels and extend the existing funding boost for specialist homelessness service providers.
Supporting homelessness emergency supports	\$3.3 million over four years	The Government will continue funding for hotel accommodation brokerage, and trial an alternative approach to crisis accommodation, by establishing a program that utilises existing Housing ACT properties to provide short term accommodation to those who cannot be supported through other crisis options.
Infrastructure Canberra		
Planning for more public housing	\$4.8 million over one year	The Government will develop a plan to deliver over 1,000 additional public housing dwellings, contributing towards the Government's commitment to build 5,000 public, community and affordable homes by 2030 and expand the Housing ACT property portfolio to 13,200 homes by the end of 2030.
Supporting the new Gugan Gulwan Community Centre	\$1 million over four years	The Government will support operations and maintenance of the new Gugan Gulwan Community Centre. This initiative will help sustain high-quality facilities and services, supporting the

		delivery of vital programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their families.
Early works for a northside hospital	\$81 million over three years, offset	The Government will undertake early and enabling works for the design and construction of the new northside hospital, including progressing early contractor involvement in design, planning approvals, site investigations and the decant and demolition of existing buildings on the North Canberra Hospital campus. This investment also includes the delivery of a new Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) facility in the community. [See page 5 of this response for more information]
Justice and Community Safety Directorate		
Continuing the Care and Protection Intensive List	\$1.7 million over four years, offset	The Government will support vulnerable Canberrans in relation to their legal needs by providing ongoing funding for Legal Aid duty lawyers to attend cases before the Children's Court Care and Protection Intensive List. Additionally, the Government will continue to fund grants to low-income applicants who are seeking Legal Aid for a further two years.
Implementing the Sexual Assault (Police) Review Report	Costs offset	The Government will implement a sexual assault advocate pilot program as per Recommendation 2 of the Sexual Assault (Police) Review Report (SAPR Report). Advocates will provide support and advocacy for victim-survivors of sexual violence and engage with ACT Policing, including with critical information about their rights and referrals to other support services. This will support ACT Policing to conduct investigations of sexual violence in a more victim-centric and trauma-informed way. Sexual assault advocates are intended to be co-located within ACT Policing as the central point of contact for victim survivors. This initiative also includes funding for Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for a Witness Assistance Scheme officer and an internal redirection of ACT Policing staff to support victim survivors at the reporting, investigation and prosecution stages.
Supporting ACT Victims of Crime	\$7.6 million over one year	The Government will provide additional funding for the Victims Services Scheme and Financial Assistance Scheme program administered by Victims Support ACT to respond to an increasing demand for services and applications for financial assistance.
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate		
ACT Apprentice and Trainee Concession	\$1.88 million over four years	The Government will continue to provide currently enrolled ACT apprentices and trainees residing in the ACT with a cost-of-living support payment of \$250 in 2025-26. First-year apprentices and trainees will receive an additional \$250 (\$500 in total), to assist them with costs associated with buying tools and equipment at the beginning of their career. Apprentices and trainees are typically amongst the lowest earners in the ACT and this payment will help meet some of the associated costs such as tools, equipment and fuel.
Affordable Housing Project Fund	\$24.4 million over four years	The Government will provide funding to Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and the Health and Community Services Directorate to help deliver the commitment of an additional 5,000 social and affordable homes by the end of 2030. This includes increasing the Affordable Housing Project

		Fund from \$80 million to \$100 million and affordable rental conversions.
Targeted Electricity, Gas and Water Rebate	\$9.1 million over four years	The Government will permanently increase the Electricity, Gas and Water Rebate by \$50 to \$800. This will continue to provide cost-of-living support for low income and vulnerable households who are disproportionately affected by cost-of-living pressures.
Energy Bill Relief Extension	\$32.2 million over one year, with costs offset	The Government will support the delivery of energy bill assistance to eligible households and small businesses in the ACT, through the Commonwealth Government's extension of the Energy Bill Relief Fund. The initiative will continue to provide rebates to households and eligible small businesses with electricity bills up to \$150, from 1 July to 31 December 2025.
Supporting more local construction apprentices	\$75.7 million over four years, with costs offset	The Government will increase course subsidies to 90 per cent of the efficient price for six critical construction related trades through the User Choice (Australian Apprenticeships) program. This funding for apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational education activities will support a future workforce that will support the Government's commitments in housing and infrastructure.
City and Environment Directorate		
Improving safety on public transport	\$3 million over two years	The Government will invest in measures aimed at addressing occupational violence on the Transport Canberra bus network. A new team of Bus Network Officers and Transit Enforcement Officers will be established to undertake fare compliance activities and provide a visible presence across the bus network to deter violence and anti-social behaviour. Expanded de-escalation training will be offered to drivers and upgraded cabin protection screens installed across Transport Canberra's bus fleet.
More weekend bus services	\$2 million over one year	The Government will increase the frequency of local bus services on Sundays during the day, commencing during Term 3 this year. Incentives for permanent drivers working weekend shifts will be continued to support the reliability of weekend services.
Strengthening Access Canberra's service delivery	\$13.2 million over four years	This funding will support Access Canberra in meeting significantly increased community demand for the Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Scheme and maintain regulatory compliance with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards. This initiative is partially offset through the introduction of a new \$11 fee for individuals applying for WWVP registration for volunteer work.
Skate park upgrades	\$1.2 million over two years, with some costs offset	The Government will undertake renewal works at Tuggeranong and Charnwood skate parks and planning for further upgrades of Tuggeranong skate park. The Government will also develop an ACT Skate Park Strategy in consultation with skate park users and representatives.