MEDIA RELEASE

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Vulnerable Children, Young People, and Their Families Need More Support

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, and Families ACT, the peak for family support services, have called on the ACT Government to urgently consider the allocation of a further funding to the newly established Children, Youth, and Family Services Program.

In a letter to Cabinet today the peaks highlighted the impact of changes to the funding of services supporting vulnerable children, young people, and families in the ACT, raising concerns about the capacity of the new program, which has seen funding for the development of streamlined intake and referral, and network coordination come at the expense of frontline service supports.

"While we support streamlined intake and referral, and network coordination, it appears we are developing a system heavily weighted to referral and lacking the capacity needed to provide direct practical support," said Emma Robertson, Director of the Youth Coalition.

"This will create a bottleneck for vulnerable children, young people, and families who are seeking support, rather than the streamlined access we are aiming to achieve."

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT are calling on additional funding to be allocated to:

- Case Management;
- Youth Engagement - ‘drop in’ services that are structured and linked; and,
- Outreach Services.

With most case management agencies reporting that their case management services are already at capacity, and the closure or reduction of youth ‘drop in’ services, the Youth Coalition and Families ACT have been receiving reports from a number of sources that there has been a notable increase in inquiries and referrals to other services since the start of 2012.

"Many of those services have identified that they have not been able to meet the need, or were not the appropriate service response," Ms Robertson said.

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469

The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the ACT and is responsible for representing the interests of people aged between 12 and 25 years of age, and those who work with them.

Families ACT is the peak body for the Family Support Sector in the ACT.