



ACT Budget: Caught in Cycles of Crisis

Analysis of the ACT Budget 2012-2013

Part 3 of 3

Capital Initiatives

June 2012

www.youthcoalition.net

The Youth Coalition of the ACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and continuing custodians of the lands of the ACT and we pay our respects to the Elders, families and ancestors.

We acknowledge that the effect of forced removal of Indigenous children from their families as well as past racist policies and actions continues today.

We acknowledge that the Indigenous people hold distinctive rights as the original people of modern day Australia including the right to a distinct status and culture, self-determination and land. The Youth Coalition of the ACT celebrates Ngunnawal culture and the invaluable contribution it makes to our community.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT (Youth Coalition) is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory and is responsible for representing the interests of people aged between 12 and 25 years of age and those who work with them. The Youth Coalition works to actively promote the well being and aspirations of young people in the ACT with particular respect to their political, cultural, economic and social development. The Youth Coalition is represented on many ACT advisory structures and provides advice to the ACT Government on a range of issues related to young people and youth services. For more information phone the Youth Coalition on (02) 6247 3540 or email info@youthcoalition.net

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Capital Initiatives Overview

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs and young people aged 12 – 25, acknowledges additional funding for child protection and youth justice in the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget. However, Budget measures do not invest enough in early intervention and prevention for the most vulnerable young people and families in our community.

Although the objectives of the ACT Budget include targeted investments to reduce future costs and address chronic disadvantage, this has not resulted in a significant investment in community services to support young people and their families.

The Youth Coalition is particularly disappointed that the Children, Youth and Family Services Program has not received additional funding, as was urgently called for by the Youth Coalition and Families ACT in May 2012. The CYFSP funds a range of community-based services to support vulnerable children, young people and families with relationships, housing, finances, parenting, education, employment; and to prevent them from becoming involved with Care and Protection and Youth Justice.

The Youth Coalition's 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget Analysis is divided into three parts:

- Part 1: Overview and Media
- Part 2: Expenditure Initiatives Releases
- Part 3: Capital Initiatives (this document)

Some of the key capital initiatives and outcomes of the 2012 – 2013 ACT Budget are outlined below.

Community Services Directorate

- Upgrade of Community Facilities and Childcare Centre Improvements
- Tuggeranong Arts Centre Improvements

Education and Training Directorate

- Carbon Neutral Schools – Stage 1

Health Directorate

- Adult Secure Mental Health Unit (Finalising Design)

Housing ACT

- Expansion of Public Housing Energy Efficiency
- Disability Dual Occupancy Housing
- Expansion of Social Housing – Stage 2

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

- AMC Crisis Support Unit Upgrade

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

- Transport for Canberra – Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Stage 3

Below is an analysis of the ACT Budget 2012-2013 Capital Initiatives relating to young people and their families, as outlined in Budget Paper No. 3 for the following Directorates:

- Community Services Directorate
- Education and Training Directorate
- Health Directorate
- Housing ACT
- Justice and Community Safety Directorate
- Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

Community Services Directorate

Capital Initiatives under the Community Services Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

General Comments:

While the Youth Coalition acknowledges the significant funding that has been allocated towards child protection and youth justice services, we are concerned that funding for vulnerable young people and their families has not been invested in early intervention and prevention. We note that the objectives of the ACT Budget included targeted investments to reduce future costs and address chronic disadvantage; which has not been reflected in the direction of funding mainly towards crisis services.

There is significant evidence that points towards the value of investing in early intervention and prevention initiatives (at a primary and secondary intervention level), to reduce the long-term burden on tertiary services (such as Care and Protection Services and Youth Justice). The ACT Government Children, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP) funds a range of community-based services to support vulnerable children, young people and families to prevent them from becoming involved with Care and Protection Services and Youth Justice.

The Youth Coalition is concerned that if the ACT Government does not prioritise providing adequate funding to early intervention and prevention services, including the CYFSP, the ACT will experience continuing pressures on future budgets to allocate money to tertiary level responses.

Upgrade of Community Facilities and Childcare Centre Improvements

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
188	This project will provide upgrades and refurbishments to community facilities, including youth centres, childcare centres, neighbourhood halls and community rooms.	2012-2013	\$1,000,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes funding for updates to community facilities, and looks forward to receiving further information on which facilities will be upgraded; in particular, which youth centres will receive funding.
		2013-2014	\$1,500,000	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Tuggeranong Arts Centre Improvements

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
188	This project will increase floor space, address occupational health and safety issues and improve the circulation and functionality of the centre.	2012-2013	\$800,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes funding to improve the Tuggeranong Arts Centre, which provides a number of valuable programs for young people, including the Messengers Program.
2013-2014		\$1,200,000		
2014-2015		\$0		
2015-2016		\$0		

Education and Training Directorate

Capital Initiatives under the Education and Training Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Carbon Neutral Schools – Stage 1

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
192	This project supports ACT public schools to move towards carbon neutrality. Stage 1 involves the installation of high efficiency internal lighting, high rating roof insulation, upgrades to improve heating efficiency, replacement of windows in high use rooms with thermal resistant glass, provision of window furnishings and the construction of covered and secure bike shelters.	2012-2013	\$500,000	Young people are increasingly concerned about the impact of climate change, and for this reason we applaud the ACT Government's injection of funds into the carbon neutrality of schools. This will ensure more efficient and sustainable operation of appliances including heating and lights.
		2013-2014	\$1,000,000	
		2014-2015	\$1,000,000	
		2015-2016	\$1,000,000	

Capital Initiatives under the Education and Training Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

General Comments:

The Youth Coalition is disappointed that there are no new initiatives in the ACT Budget to further implement the outcomes of the *ACT Healthy Young People Feasibility Study*. The report of the Study was released by the ACT Health Directorate in early 2012; and identified a range of recommendations over the short (1 year), medium (2 years) and long term (3+ years).

Recommendations identified in the report that should be implemented in the short term (1 year) included:

- To appoint a skilled person to provide subsidised, good-quality training in detection, assessment and brief opportunistic interventions for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and mental health first aid for youth workers, general practitioners, nurses, community health workers, school health workers, sporting clubs and other relevant workers who come into contact with young people;
- To develop a quality-assurance framework for young-people-friendly service delivery, including guidelines and checklists and support with appropriate training, and including specific issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural young people;
- To deliver a Youth Assembly on young people's health that is free of charge or low cost;
- To engage a suitable external evaluator to undertake a methodologically sound evaluation of the School Youth Health Nurse program and review the program where necessary;
- To include young people in the planning and design of the built environment; and,
- To develop an Active Travel program in ACT schools to encourage students to walk or ride to school.

Adult Secure Mental Health Unit (Finalising Design)

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
166	To undertake further forward design for the new Adult Secure Mental Health Unit, to incorporate functional requirements for a standalone site and comply with the <i>Human Rights Act 2004</i> .	2012-2013	\$2,000,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes funding towards progressing the Adult Secure Mental Health Unit, and particularly towards ensuring it is compliant with the <i>Human Rights Act 2004</i> .
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Housing ACT

Capital Initiatives under the Housing ACT are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Expansion of Public Housing Energy Efficiency

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
190	This is an extension of the program to improve the energy efficiency of public housing stock. This program of upgrades will assist the ACT Government in becoming carbon neutral in its operations and services by 2020.	2012-2013	\$0	The Youth Coalition welcomes the continuation of the program of upgrades in energy efficiency of public housing stock. Many young people living in public housing struggle to meet costs of living and this is a step forward in lowering essential expenses such as heating and electricity. We believe that alternate strategies need to be developed to better meet our carbon neutral agenda and further reduce living expenses for young people residing in public housing.
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$2,000,000	

Disability Dual Occupancy Housing

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
		2012-2013	2013-2014	
191	Three dual occupancy properties will be constructed for clients who, because of the complexity of their disability, need to live alone (single tenancy). These purpose-built properties will provide for greater service efficiency in meeting the needs of these individuals by enabling them to continue to live alone, but be managed via a shared care model of accommodation support.	2012-2013	\$0	The Youth Coalition supports the construction of occupancy properties for clients with complex disabilities. We recognise that many young people with disabilities desire to the option to live independently, and believe that the ACT Government should continue to increase the availability of purpose-built properties to meet the needs of these individuals.
		2013-2014	\$567,000	
		2014-2015	\$1,162,000	
		2015-2016	\$1,219,000	

Expansion of Social Housing – Stage 2

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
		2012-2013	2013-2014	
191	This project provides for construction of additional dwellings to address social housing needs, with a particular focus on supported accommodation.	2012-2013	\$2,000,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes the additional construction of social housing dwellings. However, with the existing pressures such as cost of living, this funding does not go far enough in ensuring that vulnerable young people and their families are able to avoid becoming homeless.
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Capital Initiatives under the Justice and Community Safety Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

AMC Crisis Support Unit Upgrade

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
184	This project improves the design and functionality of the Crisis Support Unit at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) to provide a safer environment for detainees and staff.	2012-2013	\$250,000	While the Youth Coalition supports providing a safer environment for detainees and staff at the AMC, we are concerned that these safety issues were not addressed earlier. In addition, we note that no funding has been invested in the ACT Budget towards implementing programs within AMC.
		2013-2014	\$0	
		2014-2015	\$0	
		2015-2016	\$0	

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

Capital Initiatives under the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate are outlined below. Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification are raised.

Transport for Canberra – Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Stage 3

Page	Description in Budget	Funding Allocation		Comments, concerns, questions and calls for clarification
173	This program of works will improve cycling and walking infrastructure across the Territory through the construction of new on and off road cycle and community paths and related signage.	2012-2013	\$750,000	The Youth Coalition welcomes this initiative to improve cycling and walking infrastructure across the Territory.
		2013-2014	\$1,250,000	
		2014-2015	\$1,750,000	Young people often have less access to more expensive forms of transportation. Improving cycling and walking infrastructure will make these modes of transportation easier and safer for young people.
		2015-2016	\$1,750,000	

The Youth Coalition also welcomes other capital works initiatives announced in the Budget including:

- The upgrade to bus stops, termini, stations and depots in West Belconnen, Gungahlin, Erindale and Barton; and,
- The update of bus stops and buses to ensure compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and to ensure that public transport is accessible.