



youth
coalition
of the ACT

ACT Budget 2023-2024

**What's in it for young
people and their
families?**

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 Dr Justin Barker, Youth Coalition of the ACT.

ACT Budget Highlights

This briefing provides an overview of the key initiatives announced in the ACT Budget 2023-2024 that affect young Canberrans and their families.

The Youth Coalition welcomes the ACT Government's investment in early support for children, young people and families, through its investment in child and youth mental health initiatives, service system reforms to support raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility, and youth supports in the Gungahlin region. We welcome the service system improvements for children, young people and families engaged in the child protection and youth justice systems.

A full summary of new Budget announcements that affect young people and their families is provided at the end of this briefing, along with areas for future consideration. Key highlights include:

- 1. Interim funding for child and youth mental health programs and initiatives:** \$2.1 million over one year to support the MindMap Youth Navigation portal, Youth Aware Mental Health (YAM), Stepping Stones, the WOKE program, and the new Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance.
- 2. Service system reforms to support raising the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility:** \$10 million over four years to re-establish the Functional Family Therapy – Youth Justice program, establish a Therapeutic Support Panel and intensive case management and support services, including accommodation.
- 3. Out-of-home care, child protection and youth justice system improvements:** To establish an External Merits Review process for child protection decisions, a First Nations Family Support team within CYPS, deliver a therapeutic residential care service and establish a Chief Practitioner. A throughcare program for youth justice will also be developed.
- 4. Investment in frontline domestic, family and sexual violence services:** \$9.4 million over four years to frontline services and to review domestic and family violence initiatives to inform service gaps.
- 5. Youth and community support in the Gungahlin region:** \$26.8 million over three years to progress a permanent Youth and Community Centre in Gungahlin, with funding to support rental costs for an interim youth centre in Gungahlin.
- 6. Constructing a Youth Foyer at CIT Woden:** \$10 million in capital works over two years to progress establishing a Youth Foyer as part of the CIT Woden Campus Project.

Our Response to the ACT Budget 2023-24

The Youth Coalition's key areas of advocacy to the government, industry and community over recent years have focused on raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility, child/youth mental health, gambling, and early support for children, young people and families.

Our response to the ACT Budget is structured by the following components:

Funded initiatives:

1. Responding to children and young people with mental health concerns
2. Raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility
3. Out-of-home care, child protection and youth justice system improvements
4. Youth and community supports in Gungahlin

Areas for further / future consideration:

1. Supporting the housing needs of young people with complex needs
2. Addressing racism in ACT schools and services

A full summary of relevant Budget initiatives is provided at the end of the document.

Funded Initiatives

1. Responding to children and young people with mental health concerns

The Youth Coalition's submission to the 2023-24 ACT Budget called for urgent funding for the WOKE Program, an ACT youth self-harm and suicide prevention program that is free, evidence-based, evaluated and cost-efficient. We welcome the interim one-year funding provided to prevent the immediate closure of this program, providing continuity of support to the young people and families on its waitlist. The WOKE Program responds to a specific service system gaps for young people in the ACT, while also directly building the capability of the mental health workforce.

We also welcome the one-year of funding to continue support the 'MindMap' Youth Navigation program, 'Youth Aware Mental Health' (YAM), and 'Stepping Stones'. MindMap is a recently established program that is beginning to demonstrate effectiveness in supporting navigation of child and youth mental health services, and in providing interim 'active holding' support to children and young people who are waiting to access mental health services or need additional support. Stepping Stones responds to a specific service gap by providing therapeutic support to children under 12 who are impacted by trauma, and their families.

While we welcome the interim funding provided to these programs, we urge the ACT Government and Commonwealth to undertake urgent planning regarding longer-term funding options for these services. The recent risk of programs closing due to non-ongoing Commonwealth funding are examples of the fragmentation of the ACT mental health system. These service examples highlight the need for the ACT and Commonwealth to work closely together to support evidence-informed, place-based service system responses that meet the needs of the Canberra community.

We welcome initial funding to support the establishment of the ACT Child and Youth Mental Health Sector Alliance. The Alliance, delivered by the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Capital Health Network and Youth Coalition of the ACT aims to provide a structured, ongoing formal mechanism for community, government, private services and people with lived experience to identify and progress key sector priorities, improve communication, collaboration and connection, and shared decision-making to create an integrated service system.

2. Raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility

The Youth Coalition's submission to the 2023-24 ACT Budget called for funding for service system reforms to support raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR), initially from 10 to 12, and then to 14. We are pleased to see that funding has been allocated to implement key elements of the service system, including re-establishing the *Functional Family Therapy - Youth Justice* program, establishing a Therapeutic Support Panel, and intensive case management and support services, including accommodation.

The allocation of \$10 million over four years provides a starting point to create and begin implementing key service system reforms. Additional future funding may be necessary to ensure that key services are appropriately funded to meet the needs of children, young people and families, as the MACR is eventually raised to 14. Developmental evaluation of the reforms will also be necessary to monitor the scope and scale of the reforms, and to inform and refine implementation.

3. Out-of-home care, child protection and youth justice system improvements

The ACT Budget delivers funding for a range of initiatives across the out-of-home care, child protection and youth justice systems. This includes establishing an 'External Merits Review process' for child protection decisions, a 'First Nations Family Support team' within CYPs, a 'therapeutic residential care service' to be delivered by MacKillop Family Services, and establishment of a Chief Practitioner. The Care and Protection Intensive List program within the ACT Children's Court will be continued, providing intensive management and therapeutic support to parents involved in care and protection matters. In relation to youth justice, funding will be provided to design a throughcare program for youth justice, and the Office of the Inspector of Correctional Services will receive increased funding to oversee Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

Funding for the External Merits Review process for child protection decisions, and the delivery of therapeutic residential care services, are welcome announcements that have been in development over recent years. It is hoped that the External Merits Review process will support improved transparency, accountability and decision-making within the child protection system. We look forward to hearing further information regarding the establishment of a Chief Practitioner, and a throughcare program for youth justice.

4. Youth and community supports in Gungahlin

The Youth Coalition submission to the ACT Budget called for funding to be allocated to begin progressing the establishment of a permanent Gungahlin Community and Youth Centre, and for financial support to be provided to programs seeking to establish an interim youth centre in the Gungahlin region. This is in recognition that population growth, and the geographical expansion of

the Gungahlin region, has outrun the development of community infrastructure within both the Gungahlin town centre and across the region.

We welcome the allocation of \$26.8 million over three years to progress both the permanent community centre, and to support the rental costs for an interim youth centre. The interim premises for 'Gunners Place' is a positive example of collaboration across government and community services, including Barnardos, Northside Community Service, Multicultural Hub and Relationships Australia Canberra and Goulburn; to respond to the diverse and expanding Gungahlin population.

Areas for further / future consideration

1. Supporting the housing needs of young people with complex needs

The Youth Coalition welcomes funding to progress the development of the Youth Foyer model at CIT, along with funding to increase public housing dwellings and expand the capacity of specialist homelessness services.

We note that the increase in public housing dwellings should allocate a proportion of housing to young people, that represents the size of the issue. There are often limited exit points for young people within the homelessness system, who also experience additional barriers and discrimination accessing housing in the private rental market. This can create bottlenecks within the youth homelessness system, thereby limiting youth homelessness accommodation vacancies, and leading to prolonged experiences of homelessness.

In our budget submission we highlighted the needs of young people with complex needs, including those who are not engaged with education, employment or training (NEET). These young people are highly vulnerable and may have experiences of family conflict or violence, trauma, mental health issues, and involvement with statutory systems. There are no medium-long term specialist community accommodation options within the ACT youth housing and homelessness service system, for young people with complex needs who fall into the 'NEET' category. Evidence-based frameworks such as **Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)** provide potential approaches to developing youth-focused, 'housing-led' models. HF4Y, developed in Canada, is a youth-focused adaptation of the adult Housing First model. It includes a set of core principles, a program and system approach that recognise the unique developmental needs of young people.¹ It recognises that the causes and conditions of youth homelessness are distinct from adult homelessness, and that an early intervention approach with young people can prevent entrenched adult homelessness.

2. Addressing racism in ACT schools and services

We welcome the allocation of funding by the Education Directorate to embed and strengthen a safety culture within ACT schools, to support safe and productive learning and working environments. Safe and supportive environments within schools is critical for both staff and students. As such, we urge the ACT Government to work collaboratively with community to progress initiatives to reduce racism and support safe and inclusive environments for all students.

¹ Gaetz, S., Walter, H. and Story, C. (2021). THIS is Housing First for Youth. Part 1 – Program Model Guide. Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

In 2022, the ACT Children and Young People's Commissioner, Multicultural Hub and Curijo released the ['It Really Stabs Me – Children and Young People's Experiences of Racism in the ACT'](#) report. This report highlights the perspectives of children and young people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including First Nations children and young people regarding their experiences of racism within schools and other settings. Services engaged with the ACT Multicultural Youth Affairs Network also continue to raise concerns about young people's experiences of racism within school settings, including from peers and staff, and limited supportive processes to respond to these incidents. Work is currently underway with key stakeholders to progress the findings of the report, and to identify opportunities to reduce young people's experiences of racism and promote safe and inclusive school and service environments.

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 and 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. This will include the development of key priorities for our upcoming submission to the 2024-25 ACT Budget.

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
Community Services Directorate		
Expanding the Child Development Services	\$2.6 million over two years	The Government will redesign the Child Development Service (CDS) and the Children and Young Person Equipment Loan Scheme (CAYPELS) to create an integrated and collaborative service model within the Early Childhood Early Intervention system of care. This includes funding to expand the Autism Spectrum Disorder assessment service.
Implementing the external merits review process for child protection decisions	\$670,000 over two years with costs offset	The Government will establish an External Merits Review (EMR) process for child protection decisions, enabling external reviews of decisions relating to care plans and the release of information about a child's placement. This initiative builds on recent Government action to modernise the Children and Young People Act 2008.
Developing a Throughcare program for youth justice	\$200,000 over one year	The Government will undertake the co-design and development of a Throughcare program to fill existing gaps in youth justice support and identify the most effective approaches to achieving positive outcomes for young people in the justice system.
Establishing the First Nations Family Support team	\$1.9 million over four years	The Government will establish a dedicated First Nations Family Support team within Child and Youth Protection Services to improve culturally safe practice and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families engaged with child protection services.
Introducing an indemnity scheme for Out of Home Care providers	\$1.6 million over four years	The Government will introduce a new indemnity scheme from 30 June 2023 to ensure continued support for children, young people and their carers by covering Out of Home Care service providers for physical and sexual abuse liability claims. The scheme will be delivered through the ACT Insurance Authority, and the cost of the initiative will be partially offset through an indemnity fee paid by Out of Home Care service providers. The scheme forms part of an interjurisdictional response to the insurance needs of the sector.
New works to maintain the Therapeutic Residential Care Services	\$2.4 million in capital over one year, and \$604,000 in expenses over four years	The Government will invest in property works to enable the delivery of contemporary best practice therapeutic residential care for children and young people who cannot remain safely with their family and who are not able to be placed in foster or kinship care.
Next Steps for Our Kids Strategy 2022-2030 – Establishing a new	\$110.8 million over four years, with \$45 million offset	The Government will improve therapeutic residential care under a new provider for the ACT's most vulnerable young people who cannot remain safely with their families and are

residential care provider and Chief Practitioner		not able to be placed in foster or kinship care. The model delivers a therapeutic approach to respond to the complex impacts of abuse, neglect and separation. The Government will also establish the role of Chief Practitioner to oversee practice development, training and quality improvement for the child protection and family support sector in the ACT.
New service responses to raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility	\$10.4 million over four years	The Government will continue reforms required to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility and for broader service responses to young people who engage in, or are at risk of engaging in, harmful behaviours. This will include funding for an ongoing Functional Family Therapy Youth Justice program, establishment of a Therapeutic Support Panel and intensive case management and support services including accommodation.
Continuing the delivery of the Room4Change program	\$6 million over four years	The Government will continue to support the Room4Change program, a men's behaviour change program that supports men to reduce their use of violence and improves victim-survivor safety.
Expanding the Health Justice Partnerships	\$3.5 million over four years	The Government will expand delivery of Health Justice Partnerships to further support early intervention for pregnant women and new families at risk of domestic and family violence, to receive free legal support in health and family service settings.
Further investment into frontline domestic, family and sexual violence services	\$9.4 million over four years, with \$2.7 million offset	The Government will continue to invest in frontline domestic, family and sexual violence services in the ACT that provide critical supports in responding to cases of domestic and family violence. This funding will also provide additional support for the Safer Families Assistance Program and a review of domestic and family violence initiatives to inform service gaps and the ongoing response to victim-survivor needs.
Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee's final report	\$1 million over two years	The Government will provide additional funding to respond to recommendations of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee final report. These include funding for research to inform approaches to hold perpetrators of sexual violence to account and support victim-survivors' access to justice, including restorative and civil justice programs.
Education Directorate		
Expanding work health and safety supports	\$2.9 million over four years, with \$1 million offset	The Government will continue to embed a safety culture within ACT public schools through an uplift in specialised work health and safety supports, further training for school staff and improved systems of safety to support safe and productive learning and working environments.
Phased Implementation of Inclusive Education Coaches	\$9.2 million over four years, with \$1.7 million offset	The Government will strengthen inclusive education for students with disability in ACT public schools through the phased implementation of Inclusion Coaches, starting in the Tuggeranong school network. The Government will also support transitions for students with disability and to develop workforce capability.

Delivering a second college for Gungahlin	\$98 million in capital over four years	The Government will construct a second college in Gungahlin to meet an increase in enrolments in the region. The college, which will be built before the end of the decade, will 2023-24 Budget Outlook 138 Investing in the Wellbeing of Canberrans have an initial capacity for up to 800 students with capacity for future expansion to up to 1,100 students.
Enhancing community use of public school facilities	\$2.4 million in capital, and \$885,000 in expenses over four years	The Government will introduce an online booking platform and electronic access systems to improve community access to facilities at 12 public schools.
Feasibility, planning and design for future public schools	\$3 million over two years, with \$1 million offset	The Government will undertake feasibility, planning and design work for a new college in the Molonglo Valley, the modernisation of Fraser Primary School and the expansion of Forrest Primary School.
ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services		
Establishing the Eating Disorders Residential Treatment Centre	\$17.2 million over four years, with costs offset	The Government will provide funding for the operational costs of a residential treatment service for eating disorders in the ACT, which is scheduled to be operational by mid-2024. The build costs for the residential treatment centre were provided by the Commonwealth Government under the Project Agreement for the Community Health and Hospitals Program.
Measures to reduce harm across the community	\$50,000 in capital; and \$2.9 million in expenses over four years, with some costs offset	The Government will provide funding for a range of measures to reduce harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in line with the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026. The initiatives will support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. implementation of the ACT Government's nation-leading drug law reform; • 2. continuation of the Australian-first ACT drug checking pilot until December 2024; • 3. support for peer workers in the alcohol, tobacco and other drugs sector; and • 4. a communications campaign targeting young people to raise awareness of the health risks of vaping and provide additional smoking cessation support.
Second Police, Ambulance and Clinician Early Response team	\$601,000 over one year	The Government will provide funding for the second Police, Ambulance and Clinician Early Response (PACER) team. This mental health emergency response program provides an integrated model of care bringing together police, paramedics, and mental health clinicians.
Community based mental health accommodation and early intervention services	\$6.3 million over four years, with costs offset	The Government will provide funding for community-based residential accommodation for people with mental health needs, and to enhance and build capacity in community-based services in the mental health, and alcohol and other drugs sectors.
Enhancing specialist health services for LGBTIQ+ Canberrans	\$9.7 million over four years, with costs offset	The Government will provide funding to continue implementing the recommendations of the LGBTIQ+ Health Scoping Study (2021), including a dedicated implementation team, establishing a Canberra Health Services Adult Gender Service staffed by specialist clinicians, and for Meridian to provide LGBTIQ+ community health services.

Establishing a second Safe Haven Café	\$700,000 in 2024-25 in capital, and \$82,000 in expenses, with additional costs offset	The Government will provide funding to establish and operate a second Safe Haven at the Canberra Hospital. The Safe Havens provide space for people over 16 to access mental health support in a calm and caring environment and reduce the need for people to present to emergency departments or other crisis services.
Improvements at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm	\$48,000 over four years, with additional costs offset	The Government will provide funding to construct a machinery shed at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm.
Improving support for mental health emergency department presentations	\$250,000 over one year	The Government will provide funding for a feasibility study and early design of a safe assessment area in the North Canberra Hospital Emergency Department for mental health patients presenting with high-risk behaviours.
Redeveloping and expanding the services at the Watson Health Precinct	\$48.9 million in capital over three years	The Government will provide funding for the redevelopment of the Watson Health Precinct. The investment will include the replacement of existing Ted Noffs and Catholic Care facilities with purpose-built facilities, and a capital grant to Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services to construct a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation facility.
Extend youth mental health programs	\$2.1 million over one year	The Government will support the continuation and establishment of the following child and youth mental health support programs: MindMap Online Youth Navigation Portal, Stepping Stones, Youth Aware of Mental Health Program and WOKE. The Government will also establish the Child/Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Services Network which was recommended in the ACT Government's Missing Middle report (August 2022).
Continued support for the Indigenous Allied Health Australia ACT Health Academy	\$1.2 million over three years, with some costs offset	The Government will provide funding for the continued delivery of the Indigenous Allied Health Australia - ACT Health Academy, which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to enter the health sector workforce by offering education in a culturally-supported environment.
Housing ACT		
Continued expansion of specialist homelessness service capacity	\$15.8 million over four years, with additional costs offset	The Government will further expand the capacity of frontline homelessness services from 2023-24 to 2025-26 and continue specialist homelessness programs that commenced operation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government will also increase the capacity of food service providers in 2023-24 to meet increased demand for food services.
Continuing to maintain high quality public housing	\$177 million over four years	The Government will provide additional funding to Housing ACT to grow, renew and maintain high quality public housing. The funding includes an increased allocation in 2023-24 for repairs and maintenance. It also supports the Growing and Renewing Public Housing program that is delivering renewal of 1,000 properties and growth in the portfolio by at least 400 additional homes by 2026-27.

Increasing the number of public housing dwellings	\$85 million over four years, with \$30 million offset	The Government will provide additional funding to the Growing and Renewing Public Housing program to deliver 140 public housing dwellings, supporting the target of a net increase of 400 additional homes by 2026-27.
Justice and Community Safety Directorate		
Continuing development of Electronic Gaming Machine harm reduction measures	\$8.8 million over two years	The Government will continue measures aimed at reducing gambling harm caused by ACT electronic gaming machines (EGMs). The Government will also target a reduction of EGMs to 3,500 by 1 July 2025 through a continuation of its EGM buyback initiatives, including forgoing fees and charges associated with surrenders. This initiative builds on recent Government actions to reduce harm from gaming while supporting sustainable clubs, including the establishment of the Community Clubs Ministerial Advisory Council and previous EGM buyback initiatives.
Establishing the Child Safe Standards Scheme	\$3.3 million over four years	The Government will establish a Child Safe Standards Scheme as part of its commitment to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Scheme will be implemented through a staged approach by the ACT Human Rights Commission, with an initial focus on building knowledge and awareness of the Child Safety Standards within organisations.
Disability Liaison Officers to support victims	\$553,000 over two years, with \$287,000 offset	The Government will support implementation of the Disability Justice Strategy by ensuring Disability Liaison Officers are available to assist people with disability who are victims of crime, including family violence.
Resources to support the implementation of the Project Assisting Victims Recovery and Experience (PAVER) System Review	\$10.2 million over four years, with additional costs offset	The Government will begin reforming victims of crime payments to better meet the needs of victims and support recovery from the impacts of crime. The costs of this initiative will be partially offset by a planned restructure of the Victims of Crime levies. As part of this, the Government will provide additional resourcing to Victims Support ACT (VSACT) to ensure victims receive timely support. An ICT solution will also provide near real-time exchanges of information, enhancing efficiency and improving VSACT clients' experience.
Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List	\$11.5 million over four years	The Government will expand the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List (DASL) from 35 participants to 42 in 2023-24. The DASL targets high-risk, high-need offenders whose criminal activity is related to drug and/or alcohol dependence and diverts eligible offenders from full-time imprisonment into a community-based drug and/or alcohol treatment program.
More support for independent preventive oversight of youth detention	\$706,000 over four years	The Government will provide additional funding to the Office of the Inspector of Correctional Services to oversee the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and reinforce the ACT's National Preventive Mechanism, a state obligation under the international Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture.
More support for the ACT Intermediary Program	\$5.7 million over two years, with \$3.9 million offset	The Government will provide increased funding to the ACT Intermediary Program within the ACT Human Rights Commission to expand its capacity to support vulnerable

		witnesses in criminal matters as they engage with the police and the courts.
Supporting the continuation of the Care and Protection Intensive List	\$665,000 over one year, offset	The Government will support the continuation of the Care and Protection Intensive List program, within the ACT Children's Court, to provide intensive management and therapeutic support to parents involved in care and protection matters and deliver better outcomes for children and young people.
Therapeutic resourcing for the Coroner's Court	\$634,000 over two years	The Government will improve the experience of families engaging with the Coroner's Court by making a forensic counselling service available to families involved in coronial processes and by funding a second family liaison officer to support engagement between families and the Coroner's Court.
More support for human rights	\$2.8 million over four years	The Government will provide additional resourcing to the Human Rights Commission (HRC) to meet a growing demand for its services. This includes additional funding for the Public Advocate to improve outcomes for vulnerable Canberrans, including children and young people. It will also strengthen the capacity of the Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services Commissioner to better support Canberrans accessing the HRC's complaints process.
Supporting the legal needs of vulnerable Canberrans	\$2.3 million over four years	The Government will further support the legal needs of vulnerable Canberrans by providing additional resources to Canberra's community legal centres and the Legal Aid Commission. This includes funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse client liaison officers, as well as delivering the Government's commitment to establish an Independent Planning Advisory Service to provide advice to residents impacted by planning decisions or development applications. The Government will also expand access to Legal Aid by increasing the income threshold for eligibility to reflect income growth over recent years.
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate		
Community Sector Indexation	\$14.9 million over four years	The Government is increasing funding to community sector organisations to reflect the recent Fair Work Commission Annual Wage Review by adjusting the Community Sector Indexation rate to reflect the impact of the Award wage increase. For this year the Government revised the formula for Community Sector Indexation in response to the 5.75 per cent increase in the Social, Community, Housing and Disability Services Award outlined in the Fair Work Commission determination. This has resulted in a Community Sector Indexation rate of 5.25 per cent.
Cost of living support for Canberrans on low incomes	\$37.7 million over four years	From 1 July 2023, eligibility for the Utilities Concession will be expanded to include Commonwealth Health Care Card holders, providing an additional 12,000 households access to this assistance. In 2023-24, the Government will also provide a one-off \$50 increase in the Utilities Concession, to provide additional relief from broad cost of living pressures facing low-income households. Households currently on the priority

		Housing ACT waiting list will also be eligible for a one-off \$250 payment.
Increasing housing access, choice and affordability - Build-to-Rent and Affordable Housing Project Fund	NFP	The Government will establish a \$60 million Affordable Housing Project Fund to expand the social and affordable housing stock in the ACT. The Fund will support delivery of the Government's housing agenda, including Build-to-Rent initiatives and boosting the community housing sector,
Supporting nursing, midwifery and allied health students	\$3 million over three years	The Government will provide study support payments for a capped number of students enrolling in ACT universities in a range of nursing, midwifery or allied health qualifications.
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate		
Gungahlin Community Centre - design and construction	\$26.8 million in capital over three years	The Government will deliver a new community centre in Gungahlin which will provide facilities for a range of integrated community services, including a youth drop-in centre, and a dedicated community activity space. Funding includes rental costs to re-establish a youth drop-in centre at an interim location in Gungahlin until the new community centre is completed.
Major Projects Canberra		
CIT Woden - Youth Foyer	\$10 million in capital over two years	The Government will construct a Youth Foyer as part of the CIT Woden Campus Project. The Youth Foyer will be an important learning and accommodation facility, providing safe and secure housing, support, and training for vulnerable people within the Canberra community.