



ACT Budget Bulletin

2024-25

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About ACTCOSS

ACTCOSS acknowledges Canberra has been built on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We pay respects to their Elders and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures and ongoing contributions to the ACT community.

The ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS) advocates for social justice in the ACT and represents not-for-profit community organisations.

ACTCOSS is a member of the nationwide COSS Network, made up of each of the state and territory Councils and the national body, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

ACTCOSS's vision is for Canberra to be a just, safe and sustainable community in which everyone has the opportunity for self-determination and a fair share of resources and services.

The membership of the Council includes the majority of community-based service providers in the social welfare area, a range of community associations and networks, self-help and consumer groups and interested individuals.

ACTCOSS advises that this document may be publicly distributed, including by placing a copy on our website. All content is authorised by Dr Devin Bowles for the ACT Council of Social Service.

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Overview

This year's ACT Budget is being delivered at a time when Canberra faces several critical challenges. Cost-of-living pressures mean many households cannot afford the fundamentals of a healthy life, with those on the lowest incomes hurting most. Compounding this is a housing affordability crisis, which has been decades in the making and requires a long-term plan as well as urgent support for those hardest hit. At the same time, services on the ground consistently report that they cannot keep up with growing demand, and are all too often struggling with their own scarcity of resources and depleted finances.

While this year's Budget has made some modest, albeit welcome, steps toward addressing these challenges, overall the scale of investment has fallen short of what is needed. It lacks the ambition and coherent vision needed to tackle the ACT's long-term and systemic challenges, particularly in relation to housing.

ACTCOSS welcomes the modest budget measures that provide targeted and temporary cost-of-living relief, ongoing construction of public housing as part of the growth and renewal program, additional funding for affordable housing, and some much-needed funding boosts for domestic and family violence services and services supporting children, families and young people with intensive needs.

Key measures that ACTCOSS has welcomed in this year's Budget include:

- \$50.95m over one year for new public housing, in addition to \$51.16m over four years for public housing repairs and maintenance
- \$2.64m in one-off payments for utilities concessions and vouchers and \$5.78m for expanded concessions and the taxi subsidy scheme
- \$4.2m to support ACT Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)
- \$12.25m over four years for measures to address domestic, family, and sexual violence services
- \$0.91m for emergency relief and food relief services.

Despite this patchwork of modest measures, this year's Budget ultimately falls short on the investment and vision required to deliver sustained improvements to housing affordability, equitable access to services and supports, and a resilient and sustainably funded community sector able to meet growing demand and complexity of need in the community and the future challenges posed by climate change.

In particular, housing costs are by the far the biggest cost-of-living pressure for low-income households, and for struggling Canberrans the modest cost-of-living relief announced in today's budget will be eclipsed by unaffordable rental costs. The level



of investment in social housing does not match the scale of the ACT's housing affordability crisis and, without substantial additional investment, we will continue to see social housing decline as a proportion of overall housing stock in the ACT.

Investment in the community sector also falls well short of what is required, and the people of Canberra will be the ones who ultimately suffer for it. Across a range of areas of service delivery there has been just enough provided to keep critical programs barely ticking over, in some instances for only one or two years. The indexation applied to funding contracts does not cover increased superannuation and long service leave expenses, following a pattern of past years. With just a 3.6% increase, community organisations are again being forced cover expenses that outpace their funding, effectively resulting in a decline in real funding over time.

While the Government has increased investment in hospitals to meet population growth, there is no corresponding investment to meet the demand community sector services face from Canberra's growing population. The sector is serving an ACT population about 30% larger than it was 15 years ago, often without any funding increase to cover that difference.

Finally, while we welcome the investment in the ACT's Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations as an essential step toward self-determination and closing the gap in outcomes, this investment will need to be scaled up over time, with future investments that align with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement and The National Agreement on Closing the Gap. In particular, whilst there has been some investment to implement the recommendations of the *Our Booris, Our Way* Report, there is still a huge amount of work and investment needed to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Overall, this is a Budget that provides a scattering of modest funding announcements in some areas of critical need, but lacks the ambition and vision the ACT community urgently needs. With the looming ACT election, ACTCOSS will continue to work with the community sector to highlight the critical investments and vision needed to drive meaningful change and ensure a more equitable, just, sustainable, and thriving Canberra community.



Key announcements

Note: all page numbers refer to the PDF version of [ACT Budget 2024-25 documents](#) at the time of embargoed release by the ACT Government.

Housing and homelessness



- \$50.95m capital investment in 2024-25 for **public housing**, as part of the **Growth and Renewal and of Public Housing Program** (offset by \$5m from the Commonwealth's Social Housing Accelerator Program) (*Budget Outlook, p.153*).
- \$3.85m over three years to establish a **public housing repairs and maintenance insourcing taskforce** to assess the Government's readiness and capability to insource social housing repairs and maintenance in the future, and to support a small-scale trial of one or more subcontracted repair and maintenance services (fully offset) (*Budget Outlook, p.153-154*).
- \$51.16m (capital) over four years (weighted toward outer years) for **public housing repairs, maintenance and upgrades** (partially offset by Commonwealth Housing Support Program) (*Budget Outlook, p.154*).
- \$2.49m net over four years for **homelessness services and programs**; this includes \$856,000 for crisis accommodation coordinated by OneLink and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service for people escaping domestic and family violence, funding of a community cohesion program at Oaks Estate, funding for the delivery of services for the Education First Youth Foyer, and increased funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations providing specialist supported crisis and transitional services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness (total funding of \$6.52m over four years, partially offset by funding from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund and by \$3.7 million in funding provisioned for 2026-27 to expand homelessness services capacity) (*Budget Outlook p.194*).
- \$0.79m in 2024-25 to provide **financial support for affordable home purchase scheme participants** experiencing significant delays in the construction of their house and land packages purchased under the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme, including assistance with temporary additional housing costs and waivers of general rates, the Police, Fire and Emergency Services Levy, and the Safer Families Levy (*Budget Outlook, p.111*).
- \$0.32m over two years (2024-25 to 2025-26) to support **continuation and expansion of justice housing program**, including the Aboriginal and Torres



Strait Islander men's Transitional Accommodation Program, to provide short-term transitional accommodation and wraparound support for those eligible for bail, parole or community based orders, and who otherwise would be incarcerated due to a lack of suitable accommodation or have no alternatives on release from a head sentence (*Budget Outlook p. 159, Budget Statement G p.54*).

- \$10.6m over four years to increase the **Affordable Housing Project Fund** to expand the social and affordable housing stock in the ACT, with an unspecified amount to go toward providing additional resourcing for the Office of the Coordinator-General for Housing (*Budget Outlook p.94*).
- \$0.82m in 2024-25 to extend the operation of the **Rent Relief Fund** to assist low-income Canberrans experiencing rental stress or financial hardship (*Budget Outlook p.88, 160-161*).
- \$0.13m over four years (forgone revenue) associated with **legislative and regulatory changes to improve tenant outcomes**; this includes the removal of licencing requirements for employment agents and reforms to improve renters' rights, including increased protections for victim/survivors of domestic violence through streamlining the process by which they can end their tenancy (*Budget Outlook, p.88*).
- \$1.98m in 2024-25 to improve the **energy efficiency of Canberra's public housing** (*Budget Paper E, p.36*).
- Development of 21,422 new homes supported through the **Indicative Land Release Program** over next five years; in 2024-25, 5107 sites are due for release, with an overall 608 planned for release for community, public or affordable homes (including 40 for public housing) (*Budget Outlook, p. 64*).
- A projected \$11.98m over three years (from 2025-26) in additional revenue from the introduction of **Short-term Rental Accommodation (STRA) Levy** of 5 per cent of gross revenue (*Budget Outlook, p.64*).
- Increasing the **Home Buyer Concession Scheme** income eligibility threshold from \$170,000 to \$250,000, and increasing the additional income allowance per child from \$3,330 to \$4,600.
- Expanding the **Disability Duty Concession Scheme** and **Pensioner Duty Concession Scheme** to provide a concession to the duty on a \$1 million purchase from 1 July 2024.



Cost of living and poverty alleviation



- \$2.64m in 2024-25 to provide **temporary relief for utilities to eligible households**, including an additional \$50 through the Electricity, Gas and Water Rebate (bringing the total rebate in 2024-25 to \$800 for an estimated 43,800 households), an increase in the value of vouchers available through the Utilities Hardship Fund to a maximum of \$300 per household, and additional funding to community sector organisations to enable them to administer these vouchers (*Budget Outlook p.111*).
- \$1.60m in 2024-25 to provide a **one-off payment of \$250 to apprentices and trainees**, who tend to earn just above the threshold to qualify for Commonwealth financial assistance but are still lower income earners (*Budget Outlook p.94*).
- \$5.78m over four years to **expand concessions and the taxi subsidy scheme** (*Budget Outlook, p.101*), including:
 - extending concessional public transport fares to Commonwealth Low Income Health Care Card holders;
 - increasing the Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS) lift fee from \$15.20 to \$25 per trip;
 - increasing the maximum TSS subsidy cap per taxi trip by 3.25 per cent in 2024-25, with annual indexation in line with legislated taxi fare increases;
 - increasing the Life Support Rebate from \$128 to \$150; and
 - increasing the Funeral Assistance Scheme asset threshold for eligible recipients from \$2,000 to \$8,000.
- \$0.82m to extend the **Rent Relief Fund** for one year (2024-25), providing assistance to vulnerable, low-income Canberrans experiencing rental stress or financial hardship due to current rental market conditions.
- \$1.00m to increase the **Future of Education Equity Fund** in 2024-25 for families experiencing financial hardship, and to assist with educational expenses such as school uniforms, school excursions and sport equipment (*Budget Outlook p.123*).
- \$0.52m to Roundabout Canberra, Scouts ACT, Fearless Women and Women's Health Matters to ensure the ongoing delivery, and piloting of new **programs to support financially vulnerable members of the community** (*Budget Outlook p.100*).



- \$0.91m in 2024-25 for **emergency material and financial aid programs and for food relief services** to provide additional cost of living support for financially vulnerable Canberrans (*Budget Outlook p.114*).
- \$73.85m over four years to **reduce stamp duty for owner-occupiers**, with the bulk of this going toward an increase in the income eligibility threshold from \$170,000 to \$250,000 for the Home Buyer Concession Scheme (*Budget Outlook p.110*).
- **Increases to a range of household levies and charges**, including an additional 2% increase to the Police, Fire and Emergency Services Levy, and an increase to the Safer Families Levy (from \$50 in 2024-25, to \$60 in 2025-26, and \$70 in 2026-27).¹

¹ Stated increases to certain taxes and fees in this year's Budget will be in addition to the annual indexation that the ACT Government applies to most taxes and fees, which is in line with the forecast wage price index (WPI). Because taxes and fees are indexed by the WPI rather than the consumer price index (which is lower than the WPI), the indexed taxes and fees will be increased during 2024-25 in real terms (i.e. they will increase at a rate higher than overall inflation). The household scenarios provided in the Budget Papers, which estimate the effect of ACT taxes and fees in 2024-25 compared to 2023-24, should be read with caution, as the comparison is conducted in nominal terms, rather than real terms. In other words, the comparison does not take into account inflation, so households will not be as better off as the comparison suggests.



The community sector



- **Indexation for the community sector of 3.6%.** This is calculated as Community Sector Indexation rate = (Wage Price Index or SCHADS Award increase × 0.8) + (Consumer Price Index × 0.2) (*Budget Outlook p.200*).
- \$4.2m over the next three years to support ACT **Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)** (*Budget Outlook p.69*).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination



- \$37m over four years for **public education and early years, including funding to support the equitable enrolment for all students**, with support targeted at students with disability, students with lower socio-economic status, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (*Budget Outlook, p.58*).
- \$4.2m over the next three years to support **ACT Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)**, which will include the establishment of an ACCO Establishment and Expansion Fund (AEEF), and a contribution toward the establishment and operation of the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Assembly to deliver an Indigenous-led Review in support of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (partially offset by \$3.86 redirected from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund (*Budget Outlook, p.69*).
- \$3.62m over four years to support new initiatives and expand existing programs run by community legal sector organisations, including funding for programs to **reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT criminal justice system** (*Budget Outlook, p.70, 89, 150 & 161*).
- \$520,000 towards Better Care for Our Community Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **Mental Health Initiatives** (*Budget Outlook, p.87 & 140*).
- \$1.46m towards establishing an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation disability service provider** is an offset from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund (*Budget Outlook, p.115*).



- \$2.19m in **Family Group Conferencing** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, which is an offset from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund, and support for parents and families with disability (*Budget Outlook, p.119*).
- \$2.59m over the next three years **to support frontline responses to sexual violence**, with a component of that allocated to develop a First Nations complex trauma recovery model in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, in line with priority reform 3 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap; this includes additional funding of \$155,000 per annum indexation for three years for Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (*Budget Outlook, p.119, 342-343*).
- \$2.49m over four years additional funding to continue specialist programs to **respond to increased demand for homelessness services in the ACT**, and to support the Aboriginal and Community Controlled Organisations providing specialist support crisis and transitional services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness (*Budget Outlook, p.155*).
- \$274,000 over two years to continue with the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men’s Transitional Accommodation Program** (*Budget Outlook, p.160*).
- Investment through the 2024-25 Infrastructure Investment Program (IIP) in:
 - Developing a **new residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation facility** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons being delivered in partnership with Winnunga Nimmityjah (*Budget Outlook, p.243*)
 - Continuing work with Gugan Gulwan to construct new, purpose-built facility to **deliver expanded services for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community** on its site in Wanniasa (*Budget Outlook, p.245*).
- \$666,000 additional funding strengthening **domestic and family violence response** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (*Budget Outlook, p.343*).
- \$500,000 additional funding for **sexual assault prevention and response** Steering Committee’s Final Report (Phase 1) - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultation (*Budget Outlook, p.344*).



Children, young people, and families



- \$1.68m (fully offset) over one year for the going delivery of **youth mental health support programs** – the MindMap Online Youth Navigation Portal, Stepping Stones, Youth Aware of Mental Health, and the dialectical behaviour therapy program WOKE (*Budget Outlook p.141*).
- \$1m over one year for additional funding for the **Future of Education Equity Fund** to meet the increasing demand for financial assistance (*Budget Outlook p.57*).
- \$0.79m over four years for the **continuation of the Children and Young People Equipment Loan Scheme (CAYPELS)** to provide free short-term loans of specialist paediatric equipment and assistive technology for children and young people with disability or mobility needs (*Budget Outlook p.84 & 113*).
- \$1.76m over four years for the implementation of an External Merits Review of Child Protection Decisions within the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal to allow for **external reviews of child protection decisions** (*Budget Outlook p.84 & 116*).
- \$10m over four years to implementation of the **Children and Young People Amendment Bill (No.2)** which will make extended support available for all young adults transitioning from out of home care until they turn 21 (*Budget Outlook p. 117*).
- \$7.99m over 4 years for the **Next Steps for Our Kids Strategy** to support the delivery of therapeutic supports in the ACT for vulnerable young people and their families. It includes new investment of \$2.19m in Family Group Conferencing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, which is offset from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund, and support for parents and families with disability (*Budget Outlook p.84 & 118*).
- \$1.70m over one year for the **Out of Home Care – Establishment and Transition of New System** to support transition to the new Children, Young People and Families Panel. This will include ensuring continuity of service arrangements for children and young people and supporting a phased approach for new panel providers to deliver a range of statutory and non-statutory services for children, young people and families (*Budget Outlook p84 & 118*).
- \$0.682m (offset \$0.682m) over one year to continue to support the operation of the **Care and Protective Intensive List (CPIL)**, within the ACT Children’s Court (*Budget Outlook p 156*).



Education

Investing in public education and early years



- \$22m over four years for **school infrastructure upgrades**, refurbishing and modernising, redeveloping and replacing ageing infrastructure as well as a **new early childhood school**. (*Budget Outlook p.59*).
- Initiatives worth \$37m over four years for **public education** including (*Budget Outlook p.57*)
 - \$1.87m over one year for the **Meals in School Pilot Program** across five ACT public schools to provide breakfast and lunch for students three days a week
 - \$1.16m over two years to **waiver the registration fee for Early Childhood Teachers** (*Budget Outlook p 85 &126*)
 - \$1.69m over three years to **continue the Head Start Program including an expansion** to support an additional 50 students to commence their Australian School Based Apprenticeship at the start of the 2025 school year
 - \$1m over one year for **additional funding for the Future of Education Equity Fund** for the 2024 school year to meet the increasing demand for financial assistance
 - \$2.82m over four years to support the **equitable enrolment for all students**, with support targeted at students with disability, students with lower socio-economic status, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (*Budget Outlook p.58 & p.85*).
- Net funding of \$1.74m (there is \$24.89m for this program, which has been offset by \$23.15m) over four years to commence the **implementation of eight recommendations from the independent inquiry into literacy and numeracy in ACT public schools** – Final Report of the ACT Government’s Literacy and Numeracy Education Expert Panel (*Budget Outlook p.123*).

Supporting skills development

- New initiatives worth \$41 million over four years to support skills development, including:
 - \$1.66m to fund an upgrade of CIT’s information and communication technology systems (*Budget Outlook p.82*)



- Expenses of \$5.94m (fully offset by capital) to fund **upgrading the Canberra Institute of Technology's ICT Infrastructure** (*Budget Outlook p.92*)
- \$1.60m over one year to fund a **one-off cost of living support payment of \$250 to currently enrolled apprentices and trainees in the ACT**, to help meet the cost of tools, equipment and fuel (*Budget Outlook p.82 & p.94*).
- Net cost of services \$15.39m over four years for the **establishment of a TAFE Centre of Excellence for Electric Vehicles** located at CIT's Fyshwick campus. The cost of the initiative will be fully offset through existing budget funding. (*Budget Outlook p.96*).

Family and domestic violence

The 2024-25 Budget will provide an additional \$12.25m over four years to address domestic, family, and sexual violence. This new funding, in addition to existing commitments, brings the total investment in domestic, family, and sexual violence to \$94.77m from 2024-25 over four years (*Budget Outlook p.335*).

- \$2.49m over four years for **homelessness services and programs**; this includes \$856,000 for crisis accommodation coordinated by OneLink and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service for people escaping domestic and family violence, funding of a community cohesion program at Oaks Estate, funding for the delivery of services for the Education First Youth Foyer, and increased funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations providing specialist supported crisis and transitional services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness (*Budget Outlook p.194*) \$2.59m over three years to increase frontline sexual violence services in the ACT. This **includes funding to increase the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre's capacity to deliver crisis support and therapeutic counselling**. Additionally, funding is allocated to develop a First Nations complex trauma recovery model in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community (*Budget Outlook p.118*).
- \$0.27m (\$0.1m offset from a rollover of unused expense funding from a prior year) to continue **the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review** including funds to maintain the data base, necessary licencing arrangements and the statutory review in accordance with legislative requirements. This initiative is partially offset from existing resources of the Community Services Directorate and will be partially funded through the Safer Families Levy (*Budget Outlook p.119*).



- \$0.35m over one year to support the **development and delivery of a centralised training package for information sharing** entities to build capability to understand and implement the domestic and family violence information sharing scheme. This initiative is fully offset from existing resources of the Community Services Directorate (*Budget Outlook p.119*).
- \$ 7.42m over three years for **investment in frontline domestic and family violence services in the ACT**. This includes critical support for victim survivors and funding to increase the capacity to work directly with perpetrators comprising funding for YWCA Canberra, Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Beryl Women Inc, EveryMan, Legal Aid and Victim Support ACT. This initiative is partially offset from existing resources of the Community Services Directorate and will be partially funded through the Safer Families Levy (*Budget Outlook p.120*).
- \$0.38m over one year to fund a **Coercive Control Response Package** (partially funded through the Safer Families Levy) to increase understanding and improve responses to coercive control. The Government will:
 - provide training for ACT Policing and Courts to better detect, assess and respond to coercive control;
 - deliver a community education campaign to increase understanding of coercive control, with a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse communities; and
 - in partnership with the domestic and family violence sector, better integrate coercive control into the ACT Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment Framework (*Budget Outlook p 120*).
- \$0.23m over one year to continue the delivery of the **Strengthening Health Responses to Family Violence program** to train frontline staff in early intervention of domestic and family violence and to support victim survivors (*Budget Outlook p 121*).
- \$0.13m over four years to introduce legislative reforms to improve outcomes for tenants and consumers and reduce regulatory burden on charities and businesses. Changes include a range of deregulatory measures, including reforms to improve renters' rights, including **increased protections for victim/survivors of domestic violence through streamlining the process by which they can end their tenancy** (*Budget Outlook p.160*).
- The **Safer Families Levy** will increase to \$50 per household in 2024-25 and by \$10 in 2025-26 and a further \$10 in 2026-27. From 2024-25, the Levy will not fund non-frontline ACT Government employees. The Levy is expected to raise around \$49.401 million over the four years to 2027-28 (*Budget Outlook Appendix H, p. 340*).



Community facilities and infrastructure

- \$110m in capital funding over four years to deliver projects for community infrastructure and venues as part of a **five-year capital investment of more than \$880 million in entertainment, arts, sporting and community facilities** (*Budget Outlook p.77*).
- **New initiatives totalling \$47m over four years for community infrastructure and venues**, including (*Budget Outlook p.77*):
 - additional funding for the upgrade of the Phillip District Enclosed Oval (*Budget Outlook p.82*)
 - funding for the planning and detailed design of the expansion of the Belconnen Basketball Stadium;
 - funding to support Canberra venues including GIO Stadium, Jamison Oval, Gordon district playing fields, Manuka Oval and the National Arboretum Canberra;
 - commencing the first stage of construction of the Stromlo Forest Park District Playing Fields in Molonglo.
- \$1.59m over four years to build a **new community centre in Woden** on Callam Street in the Woden Town Centre. The new community centre will accommodate Woden Community Services and provide community space for other community groups to host programs, meetings and other activities.
- \$0.71m capital (offset Capital Asset Renewal Program) is being spent on ACT Government-owned **community facility improvements including removal and remediation of hazardous materials and other maintenance** activities (*Budget Outlook p.165*).
- \$52.81m over 4 years to **construct two new health centres** in North Gungahlin and the Inner South and undertake design work for the health centre in West Belconnen to provide integrated multi-disciplinary health care with a focus on preventive care and advice, early intervention, and the management of acute and chronic illness (*Budget Outlook p.144*).
- \$10m capital and \$1.73m net cost of services for the **planning, feasibility and preliminary design works on a range of entertainment, events, and sporting and tourism infrastructure projects**. These include: a new Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct; the Bruce Sports, Health & Education Precinct; EPIC Stage 2 Redevelopment; Canberra Aquatic Centre; a reopened Telstra Tower; and a new Manuka Oval Eastern Grandstand (*Budget Outlook p.108*).



- \$21.12m capital investment on the planning for the second phase of the **Canberra Hospital Expansion** (*Budget Outlook p144*).

Planning and transport



- \$2.49m over four years for the **active travel infrastructure and maintenance program** (as part of the Active Travel Plan 2024-2030), to facilitate active travel opportunities through improvements in foot and bicycle path infrastructure and street signage. This initiative will be partly funded through the Asset Renewal Program and existing Transport Canberra and City Services funding (*Budget Outlook p.168*).
- \$25.62m capital funding to **extend the light rail from the City to Woden** (*Budget Outlook p166*).
- \$2.9m capital works in 2024-2025 and \$2.86m in 2025-2026 to support the **ongoing transition to a zero-emissions bus fleet** (*Budget Outlook p.313*).
- \$300,000 in the first year and \$100,000 in the second year for a **feasibility study** on improvements to the **public transport corridor between Belconnen and the City** (*Budget Outlook p.168*).
- **Expansion of public transport concession fares** to include Canberrans with a Commonwealth Low-Income Health Care Card (*Budget Outlook p.101*).
- \$1.44m in 2024-25 to continue **weekday flexible public transport services to support accessible transport needs** for eligible Canberrans, ensuring services are maintained while the Government completes a trial for a new online booking and management system to deliver an improved, on-demand service model (*Budget Outlook p.174*).



Disability



- To support the Disability Justice Strategy (Second Action Plan), the Government will provide limited funding (\$0.6m over two years) for **Disability Liaison Officers** within the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Aboriginal Legal Services and Victim Support ACT, to support improved access and inclusion across the justice system. Resourcing for the Aboriginal Legal Service will be partially offset through the Healing and Reconciliation Fund (*Budget Outlook p.157*).
- \$2.13m over two years to create a **Disability Reform Taskforce** to address the National Disability Insurance Scheme Review and recommendations from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability. This initiative will be funded by reallocating resources from various directorates, including Community Services, Justice and Community Safety, Health, and Education (*Budget Outlook p.116*).
- **Increased funding for the Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS)** aims to reduce out-of-pocket costs for vulnerable Canberrans by raising the lift fee from \$15.20 to \$25 per trip and increasing the maximum subsidy per trip by 3.25% in 2024-25 (*Budget Outlook p.101*).
- \$1.46m towards establishing an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation disability service**. The cost of this measure is offset from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund (*Budget Outlook p.115*).
- Increase the **Lifetime Care and Support Levy** for motor vehicles up to \$105 for 2024-25. The increase in the Lifetime Care and Support Levy reflects the higher-than-expected number of participants entering the scheme and the associated cost of providing lifetime care (*Budget Outlook p185*).



Climate, energy and environment



- \$455,000 has been allocated towards implementation of the **Canberra Region Local Food Strategy**. Funding for the first year of the strategy's implementation will support a Local Food Chain Infrastructure Study, examine opportunities to utilize ACT government land for food production, educate the community on food growing, and review Land Management Agreements with rural landholders to provide greater flexibility and support for local food production. This initiative will be partially offset through EPSDD's existing budget funding (*Budget Outlook, p.127*).
- \$4.28m over four years to encourage Canberrans to **switch to electric vehicles with an emissions-based registration scheme** costing. This includes revenue forgone by the government to subsidise low emission vehicle registration (*Budget Outlook, p.83*).
- An additional \$28.1m (capital) over three years (to 2026-27) to **electrify and insulate public and community housing**, as part of the ACT Government's commitment to insulate all *feasible* public and community housing by 2030, with funding provided until 2028 (offset through Commonwealth funding, existing provisioned funding under the 2023-24 Budget initiative *Climate action – Continuing the Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme* and existing funding under the 2021-22 Budget initiative *Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme*) (*Budget Outlook, p.99*).
- **More electricians for climate action funded through a 90% subsidy** for the Certificate III in Electrotechnology course under the User Choice program. Additional support for skill development may come through changes to subsidy arrangements for other priority qualifications. This initiative is funded by the National Skills Agreement, existing budget allocations, and the cessation of User Choice and Skilled Capital completion payments (*Budget Outlook, p.103*).
- The 2024-25 Budget will **increase the Electricity, Gas, and Water Rebate** by \$50, bringing the total rebate to \$800 for nearly 44,000 eligible households. The **Utilities Hardship Fund voucher will also increase** from \$100 to \$300 per household, with additional funding for community partners to administer the vouchers (*Budget Outlook, p.111*).
- **Integrated Energy Plan** investments include:
 - \$974,000 over two years to **promote the benefits of electrification and energy efficiency**. This includes continuing the partnership with CHOICE and providing a digital tool for transition support and online information (*Budget Outlook, p.132*)



- \$2.59m to support the electrification of complex buildings by launching a pilot **Retrofit Readiness Program** aimed at advising and assessing the feasibility of electrifying multi-unit buildings. It will also establish regulatory frameworks to facilitate the transition from gas to electric technologies. This will be funded by EPSDD's existing budget and contributions from the Commonwealth. (*Budget Outlook, p.132*)
- \$5.2m over two years to implement a **new pilot Community Partnership Electrification Program**, to upgrade energy efficiency and electrification for up to 350 eligible households in partnership with Care Financial. Funded through existing budget provisions of EPSDD. (*Budget Outlook, p.133*).
- As part of the **Zero Emissions Vehicles strategy**, funding has been provided to establish a scheme through which owners' corporations can finance EV charging infrastructure (*Budget Outlook, p.137*).
- \$115,000 in 2024-25 to conduct a regulatory impact assessment to inform the proposed **phase-out of wood heaters** in urban areas by 2045 (*Budget Outlook, p.134*).
- \$1.67m over four years to **conserve the Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon and support urban and rural park care groups**, prioritising weed management in the first year. It will also address recommendations from the ACT Legislative Assembly's Inquiry into Environmental Volunteerism, providing direct support to Landcare ACT and wildlife veterinarian services through ACT Wildlife (*Budget Outlook, p.135*).
- \$78.03m capital investment over 3 years to continue the **electrification of gas infrastructure in government buildings**, with \$63.7m offset by capital works and expenses (*Budget Outlook, p.166 311*).
- \$25.99m capital investment to improve waste management through the construction of a **new materials recovery facility at Hume** (*Budget Outlook, p176*).
- \$5.63m over four years to **expand the Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) pilot** by 20% to serve an additional 1,150 households in multi-unit developments (*Budget Outlook, p171*).
- **Increase in the Life Support Rebate** from \$128 to \$150 a year, to support more Canberrans using electric life support equipment to treat a life-threatening condition (*Budget Outlook, p182*).



Health

- \$350,000 to **continue pill testing** in 2024-25, in addition to \$1.46 million in funding overset from the Health Funding Enveloped between 2025-26 and 2026-27 (*Budget Outlook, p. 139*).
- \$341,000 for mental health and psychosocial support needs for people exiting detention (*Budget paper C, p.3 and 15*).
- \$0.96m over 3 years for **smoking and vaping cessation activities** (fully funded by the Commonwealth under its *Smoking and Vaping Cessation Activities* agreement) (*Budget paper C, p. 16*).
- \$19.21m over 4 years for **Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation and Delivery** (partially offset) (*Budget Outlook, p.143*).
- \$18.3m net capital investment over four years for **enabling works for North Canberra Hospital** (*Budget Outlook, p.143*).
- \$52.81m **capital investment over four years in new Health Centres**, covering construction of new health centres in North Gungahlin and the Inner South and design of a health centre in West Belconnen. These facilities will provide integrated multi-disciplinary health care with a focus on preventive care and advice, early intervention, and the management of acute and chronic illness (*Budget Outlook, p.144*).
- \$21.12m capital investment for planning the next stages of the **Canberra Hospital expansion** (*Budget Outlook p.144*).
- Net capital investment of \$35.03m over four years for **upgrading and enhancing health infrastructure at Canberra Hospital**. This includes works to expand procedure and outpatient facilities following the transfer of services to the new Critical Services Building (*Budget Outlook p.145*).
- \$52.71m over four years (partially offset by Health Funding Envelope to net cost of \$29.01m) for **boosting emergency and elective surgery** (*Budget Outlook, p.145*).
- \$140.16m over four years to **boost health service funding for a growing population**. Key areas of growth include medical and surgical supplies, support services for patient care and personal protective equipment expenses. (*Budget Outlook, p.146*).
- \$18.61m over four years for **improving care for older Canberrans**. This includes upgrades at North Canberra Hospital to make it more dementia friendly, supporting the safety of cognitively impaired patients and staff. It will also fund the





Care, Optimisation, Transition Unit at Canberra Hospital, to support patients in a specialised ward when they no longer require acute care but face other barriers to discharge from a hospital setting (*Budget Outlook, p147*).

- Other investments in public health care in 2024-25 (*Budget Outlook, p.145 to p.150*) through:
 - \$3.75m for **expanding endoscopy services** at North Canberra Hospital.
 - \$4.31m for **expanding neonatology services** at Canberra Hospital.
 - \$13.28m for **expanding paediatric services** at Canberra Hospital and in the community, including establishing a community-based service in Molonglo for children at risk of delayed development and chronic health conditions.
 - \$7.60m for **improving patient flow across public hospital services**. The Government will provide ongoing resourcing to permanently expand the Canberra Hospital Acute Medical Unit to 24 beds and support patient flow across public hospital services through the Operations Command Centre.
 - \$13m for supporting **inpatient rehabilitation** at University of Canberra Hospital
 - \$6.3m for supporting **safe care in maternity services**
 - \$12m for **transition public health care to Canberra Health Services**. The Government will continue to support the transition of North Canberra Hospital (formerly Calvary Public Hospital Bruce) to Canberra Health Services.
 - \$378,000 for **upgrading equipment and ICT infrastructure** at North Canberra Hospital (fully offset by asset renewal program).
- \$53.11m in 2024-25 for **ongoing delivery of the Digital Health Strategy**. The Government will provide ongoing support for digital health services through additional investment in specialist workforce resources, infrastructure and cybersecurity (*Budget Outlook, p150*).

Mental health

- \$897,000 over two years for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health initiatives**, offset by \$377,000 from the Health Funding Envelope (*Budget paper C, p.3 and 15*).





- \$1.91m over four years (fully offset, including funding previously allocated for the *Step-Up-Step-Down at home* program provisioned for in the 2023-24 Budget) for **community-based crisis response**. Work includes redeveloping the existing *Step Up and Step Down at Home* program to align its delivery with the *Distress Brief Intervention model* (*Budget Outlook*, p. 139).
- \$4.2m net over four years for ongoing support for **the second PACER team** (*Budget paper C*, p.59 and 62).
- \$2.7m for **housing for vulnerable people with high intensity mental health support needs**, fully offset by expenses (including redirecting funding from community-based mental health accommodation and early intervention services for people with high intensity support needs, which had been allocated in the 2023-24 Budget) and Health Funding Envelope (*Budget Outlook* p.140).
- \$1.68m for **ongoing delivery of youth mental health services for one year** (the MindMap Online Youth Navigation Portal, Stepping Stones, Youth Aware of Mental Health, and the dialectical behaviour therapy program WOKE), which is fully offset by redirecting funding previously allocated in the 2023-24 Budget to *Better care in the community – More support for the community delivered mental health* and the *Healthy Canberra Grants program* (*Budget Outlook* p.141).
- \$341,000 to **continue the expanded Detention Exit Community Outreach** to provide mental health and psychosocial supports for people with mental illness exiting detention. Funding for 2024-25 only (*Budget Outlook* p.142).

Justice and Human rights



- \$616,000 over two years (2023-25 to 2025-26) for the **Disability Justice Strategy**, including resourcing for the Aboriginal Legal Service, and partially offset by funding from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund (*Budget Outlook* p. 88, 157).
- \$200,000 for 2024-25 for the **Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List**, to support the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework (*Budget Outlook*, p.88).
- \$2.71m over two years (2024-25 to 2025-26) to increase **legal assistance sector capability**, through funding for programs and services delivered by the ACT's Community Legal Assistance Sector (*Budget Outlook* p. 88, 158).
- \$791,000 over four years for the **Human Rights Commission**, to support ICT and whole-of-Commission information management system supports, and in response to growing demand for the Commission's services and expanded functions commencing in 2024 (*Budget Outlook* p 88, 159).



- \$3.62m in net funding over three years for **initiatives to reduce the overrepresentation of First Nations people in the ACT criminal justice system**, including the continuation of the Circle Sentencing Court and ACT Corrective Services alternative reporting sites, and an extension of funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers to continue to deliver Empowerment Yarning Circles, Ngurrambai Bail Support Program, the Yarrabi Bamirr expansion and the Yurwan Ghuda On Country Program for young people (*Budget Outlook p. 88, 159-160*).
- \$274,000 in net funding over two years to continue the **Justice Housing Program** and **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men’s Transitional Accommodation Program**, which provides short-term transitional accommodation and wraparound support for those eligible for bail, parole or community based orders, and who otherwise would be incarcerated due to a lack of suitable accommodation or have no alternatives on release from a head sentence (*Budget Outlook p. 88, 159*).
- \$344,000 over one year (2024-25) for **Phase 2 of the Reducing Recidivism in the ACT by 25% by 2025 Plan**, involving community engagement and co-design of a **Justice Futures Fund** to support the delivery of community-led programs focussed on addressing gaps in the justice system, improving outcomes and ultimately reducing recidivism (*Budget Outlook p. 88, 161*).
- \$299,000 (net capital) and \$496,000 (net cost) for **Strengthening Restorative Justice in the ACT**. This will fund additional resources including information and communications technology (*Budget Outlook p. 88, 162*).
- \$9.54m over four years for supporting **the implementation of the Project Assisting Victims Experience and Recovery Review (PAVER Review)**, mostly offset by expenses and revenue (*Budget Outlook p. 162*).

Gambling

Expenditure



- Total cost for **gambling regulation and harm minimization** is set to increase from \$9.24m in 2023-24 to \$9.85m in 2024-25 (*Budget Statements B p.101*).
- **Controlled Recurrent Payments** are set to increase from \$6.19m to \$6.76m in 2024-25 and then decrease to \$6.12m in 2025-26 with a slow increase following (*Budget Statements B p.103*).
- Expenses are set to mostly mirror overall income through 2027-28, with **total equity increasing from \$6.01m to \$6.77m** (*Budget Statements B p.105, 106*).



Revenue

- **Revenue from gambling is set to increase** over the estimates from \$82.47m 2023-24 to \$102.84m in 2027-28. This includes an increase from Betting Operations Tax from \$21.72m to \$44.37m, but a decrease in the Gaming tax from \$38.81m to \$35.49m (*Budget Outlook p.204*).
- The **Problem Gambling Assistance fund** is set to increase marginally from \$3.07m in 2023-24 to \$3.27 million in 2027-28 (*Budget Outlook p.218*).

Social inclusion



- **\$350,000 in 2024-25 for Continuing the Family Settlement, Assistance Grant and Refugee Asylum Seeker and Humanitarian programs**, but after this zero funding (*Budget Outlook p.84, 114*).
- **Improving care for older Canberrans** will see investment across two programs of about \$4.6 million in 2024-25, with sharp reductions from 2026-27 (*Budget Outlook p. 87*). This is probably due to it being at least partly capital expenditure (*Budget Statement C p.45,47*). This includes the North Canberra Hospital being made more dementia friendly, and the Care, Optimisation and Transition Unit at Canberra Hospital (*Budget Outlook p.147-8*). This appears to be from New National Partnership Payments (*Budget Outlook p.229, p.231*).
- **\$300,000 for implementing the Capital of Equality LGBTIQA+ Strategy in 2024-25**, with no further funding (*Budget Outlook p.83, 103*).
- **A stamp duty exemption for people with severe disability and their carers** will start 1 July 2025 (*Budget Outlook p. 110*).
- **Projected decrease in the number of community engagement opportunities for veterans and seniors decreasing** between 2023-24 and 2024-25 (9 to 8 for veterans and 8 to 7 for seniors (*Budget Statement C p.18*).
- **\$120,000 in care for older Canberrans seemingly shifted from 2023-24 to 2024-25** (*Budget Statement G 25*).
- **\$135,000 in funding for a Centre of Excellence for Older Canberrans** being shifted over the same period (*Budget Statement C p.16*)

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