



Australian Capital Territory

# Budget 2011-2012

## Media Release

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### Budget to target chronic homelessness

The ACT Government will expand a homelessness program providing outreach services to rough sleepers, with a view to getting them into sustainable accommodation, and undertake a feasibility study into establishing a Common Ground housing model in Canberra in initiatives outlined today by the Minister for Housing, Joy Burch MLA.

“The 2011-12 Budget provides targeted support for those with greatest need, and will support those in our community who are most vulnerable,” Ms Burch said.

“\$508,000 over four years will see the expansion of the existing *Street to Home* program, to actively engage people experiencing chronic homelessness, link them with support services and help them successfully sustain a tenancy,” Ms Burch said.

The *Street to Home* program commenced in February 2010 with \$900,000 in funding provided by the Commonwealth Government under the Homelessness National Partnership Agreement and is being delivered by St Vincent de Paul. The program is one of eight ACT Government initiatives to address homelessness.

“The expansion of *Street to Home* will help reduce the number of rough sleepers, increasing the capacity of St Vincent de Paul to work with individuals to address the underlying causes of their homelessness.

“The advantage of *Street to Home* is that it coordinates service delivery on the streets, rather than requiring individuals to attend appointments in offices, which can be daunting and deter them from engaging.

“St Vincent de Paul actively engaged 94 rough sleepers through *Street to Home* between July-December 2010, including three young people, and supported 36 people off the street into accommodation options. This additional funding will allow them to increase their resources” Ms Burch said.

The 2011-12 Budget also delivers \$150,000 to undertake a feasibility study to assess whether the ACT would benefit from a Common Ground model of support for homeless people.

The Common Ground supportive housing model is recognised internationally for its effectiveness in successfully housing people who have been chronically homeless, including people who have been long term rough sleepers.

Common Ground's strategy has three main components:

- Affordable Housing – the construction and operation of a range of housing options;
- Outreach – identifying and accommodating the most vulnerable; and
- Prevention - strengthening communities and preventing future homelessness.

“Using a mix of State and Federal Government funding, in kind support and contributions from individuals and private companies, Common Ground aims to provide opportunities for people with diverse backgrounds to live together as they do elsewhere in the community. This also avoids stigma and an institutional-like setting.”

“The 2011-12 Budget continues to support those who are in the most need, building on our previous commitments, taking the ACT Government's investment in targeting homelessness to \$5 million, matching Commonwealth's commitment under the *A Place to Call Home* program,” Ms Burch concluded.

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