

Mr Andrew Barr
Treasurer
ACT Budget Consultation
Department of Treasury
GPO Box 158
Canberra ACT 2601

Andrew Barr MLA
Received
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CYFAACT
child, youth and family agencies ACT
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24 November 2011

Dear Mr Barr

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the ACT 2012/13 ACT Budget deliberations.

This submission is provided on behalf of Child, Youth and Family Agencies ACT which consists of not-for-profit, community organization which specialize in Out of Home Care programs for children and youth. Our membership includes Communities@Work, Richmond Fellowship, Marymead, Barnardos Canberra and Premier Youth Services.

Out of Home Care programs provide foster care and residential placements for children in need and at risk. These programs provide children and youth with a nurturing, safe and loving environment in which they can grow and develop their full potential for fulfilling and productive lives.

The Out of Home Care programs have been under stress for some time; caught between growing demands, rising costs and insufficient resources. While more money alone would be of great assistance, we believe that there are opportunities to achieve better outcomes in a number of ways; for example:

- Researching and developing improved programs for preventing the need for placements and for early intervention to lessen the impact on children and youth and to reduce the amount of resources needed to overcome problems.
- Exploring what innovative type of placements are used in other jurisdictions (nationally and internationally) and how proven models could be adapted for use in the ACT.
- The most cost effective way to manage placements to reduce costs and hence increase the number of placements that can be delivered with given resources.

We ask that the ACT Government provides funding of up to \$100,000 in 2012/13 to allow this work to be undertaken with the assistance of appropriate experts. The money would be used to pay for a research assistant and time of consultants specialising in this field and in relevant social research areas. We would see a report with recommendations being provided to the ACT Government before the end of 2012/13.

Given our committee is made up of very busy CEOs we seek the ability to be able to fund annually an administrative officer who, under our direction, would be able to respond to and engage with relevant consultations, submissions and discussions. We believe this work could be undertaken on a contract basis of approx 0.5 hrs FTE per week.

We look forward to your consideration of this proposal and would be pleased to discuss it or provide any additional information you may require.

Yours sincerely

Wilf Rath
CEO
Richmond
Fellowship

Hilary Martin
CEO
Marymead

Annette Kelly Egerton
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