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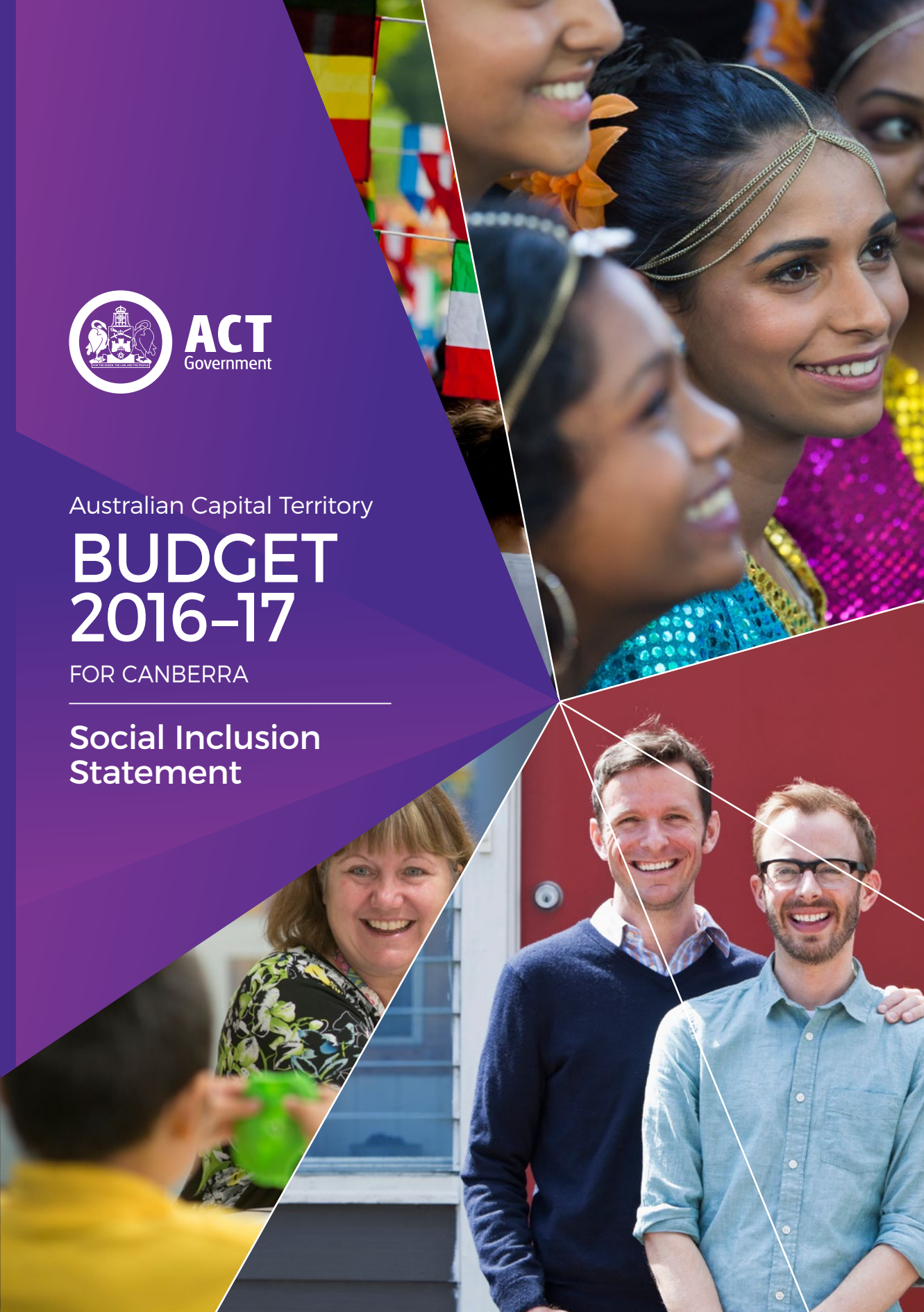
Australian Capital Territory

# BUDGET 2016-17

FOR CANBERRA

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## Social Inclusion Statement





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Government

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**Social Inclusion Statement**





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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF MINISTER

Canberra is going from strength to strength. We have a strong economy, low unemployment and a well-educated population. We are the world's most liveable city. We have world-class health and systems, a thriving and dynamic business sector, and we care for those in need.

But to be the best city we can be, we must ensure that no one is left behind as we advance and develop. It is our responsibility to create a community where all people are treated fairly and equitably. We all know that Canberra is a vibrant, welcoming, multicultural, cohesive and supportive community. This is one of our many strengths – and it is a strength on which we must build.

A genuine focus on social inclusion and equality makes this goal possible. It is a core value of this Government, and it helps to create a Canberra where people feel valued, where differences are respected and where people connect with others in their community.

Our goal is to ensure that our social inclusion agenda is shared across all areas of the Government. We are working so our programs form a cohesive network that makes a real difference for those in our community who are experiencing social exclusion, isolation or disadvantage.

This Budget Statement sets out some of the key areas and programs where we promote social inclusion in our community. Fostering equality and opportunity underpins everything we do – from specialist programs in schools, to our Walk-In Centres, to accessible transport and suitable housing, to our many cultural events that celebrate our diversity. We work in partnership with community organisations and individuals who strive to create a more inclusive city.

We are committed to ensuring that all Canberrans can fully enjoy the supportive and welcoming community that makes our city special.

**Andrew Barr MLA**





# INTRODUCTION FROM THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

Our community is full of great people who work hard to help others. The Government's social inclusion agenda aims to build on this great asset as the foundation for a strong and fair community. We can be proud of the things we are doing together and excited about what we can achieve going into the future.

Some of the best initiatives the government has introduced to the ACT community in recent years have come together through partnerships between government, community and the not-for-profit and private sectors. This kind of approach works to harness power of inclusion and diversity and overcoming some of the challenges we face and the 2016-17 Budget provides further support to these initiatives.

This statement shows the large range of investments the government is making across diverse portfolios to grow inclusion in our community – to give everyone the chance to contribute, to be valued and to have a good crack at happiness. Supporting fairness, equality and inclusion in our community remains a fundamental commitment of the government as we respond to those who experience social exclusion, unemployment, economic disadvantage or physical isolation.

**Yvette Berry MLA**



A photograph of three people sitting outdoors. On the left is a man with glasses wearing a grey suit and tie. In the center is a woman with blonde hair wearing a bright blue sleeveless dress. On the right is a woman with dark hair wearing a light-colored top. They appear to be in a conversation. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a grey wall and greenery.

# ACHIEVING SOCIAL INCLUSION



# ACHIEVING SOCIAL INCLUSION

The ACT Government's social inclusion and equality agenda focuses on participation, opportunity, and improving outcomes for Canberrans. This work is informed by evidence-based research and data so that we can measure our progress and the difference we make in people's lives.

Achieving social inclusion and equality is not just about individual initiatives. It is a cohesive approach aimed at giving every opportunity to people to fully participate in our community, and it underpins everything that we do. We will achieve this by ensuring that diversity and differences are not obstacles to participation. This forms an integral part of what we do and who we are as a Government.

The Government's social inclusion agenda includes: integrating our service responses; embedding innovative and collaborative practice into the development and delivery of services; and working together to improve outcomes.

# BETTER LIVES FOR EVERYONE WITH BETTER SERVICES

*Better Services* is a major ACT Government reform in supporting disadvantaged Canberrans. It has a clear purpose: creating a simple service system to provide targeted and appropriate support to people, when and how they need it.

We want services that allow people to focus on dealing with the challenges they face and encourage them to remain involved in our community.

The *Better Services* objectives are at the heart of the Government's focus on social inclusion. People facing acute challenges often need support in a range of areas, be it in education, justice, health, housing, child protection or community support. Too often, getting access to these services is complex – so we are making it simpler.

*Better Services* is driving the changes we need to simplify the service system and is embedding our underlying reform strategy, the *Human Services Blueprint* (Blueprint). Making these changes to services is a long-term project to which we are thoroughly committed.

The Blueprint is the Government's plan to change the complicated structures of our service system. It's based on design principles that ensure services are person-centred, strengths-based, and focused on outcomes. For Canberrans it means the service system is simple and cohesive.



Across Government, the Blueprint design principles have shaped how we design and deliver services. Examples are:

- > New funding models such as needs based funding for students as part of the Gonski education reforms, and individualised funding packages through the National Disability Insurance Scheme giving people with disability choice and control.
- > Community-focussed change in the *West Belconnen Local Services Network*; providing simple access to information and services in the *Human Services Gateway*, the *Child Development Service* and through the *My Community* online portal.
- > New service models such as the *Strengthening Families* and *Extended Throughcare Programs* that provide individuals and their families with a package of supports.
- > Supporting public housing tenants to establish themselves in new communities through *Public Housing Renewal* and aligning housing stock with the needs of tenants.
- > Far-reaching ambitions of *A Step Up for Our Kids – Out of Home Care Strategy*, the *Justice Reinvestment* strategy and the *Schools for All* program where integrated responses are key to breaking cycles of vulnerability and disadvantage.

In the past 12 months, we have learnt from the *Better Services* reforms. The *Better Services* partnerships (the *Human Services Gateway*, the *West Belconnen Local Services Network*, and *Strengthening Families*) have allowed us to innovate and learn. We are striking a balance between responsible and accountable service design and delivery, while listening to people who use these services to learn what works and what needs to change.

We have laid the foundations to make the services we fund and deliver more efficient and more sustainable. By innovating and ensuring efficiency, we can deliver human services to more Canberrans who need them most.

*Better Services* is showing how the human services system is sharing and aligning its work to achieve common goals. We have learnt that improving the way we work together to design services across health, education, justice and community services, are vital to building the solutions we need to address historic systemic challenges.

The next steps in the reform journey will focus on key result areas to drive service performance and accountability; new investment models to drive the development of person-centred care across human services; and a collective system of governance that drives whole-of-system accountability.

## Women's Plan

The Government is committed to building a community where women and girls equally and fully participate in their community, the economy, and their city. Opportunity, safety and sustainability are key priorities which aim to provide women and girls with opportunities and support to share in all aspects of Canberra life, to the benefit of themselves and their community.

*The Women's Plan 2010-2015* (Women's Plan) was the Government's strategic framework to improve the status and lives of women and girls and to be a best practice leader in addressing the needs and interests of women and girls, increasing and maintaining gender equity in public life, in the community and in the workplace.

The Women's Plan framework sets out priorities, objectives and indicators structured around three inter-related aspects of community building: economic, social and environmental. The Women's Plan required Government Directorates to embed considerations of gender in planning, policy and service delivery, it also required Government Directorates to report policy, programs and services against a set of eleven gender-based performance indicators in their annual reports.

The two progress reports brought together in one publication the whole of government reporting, along with additional gender-based benchmark reporting, to capture progress towards the objectives of the *Women's Plan 2010-2015*.

The next Women's Plan will focus Government efforts to improving outcomes for marginalised and disadvantaged women in our community. This includes women with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women who have or are experiencing domestic violence, and women who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

In developing the next Women's Plan the Office for Women has been working closely with the Ministerial Advisory council on Women to ensure the indicators of progress are measurable.

## Access to Health Services

From 1 May 2016, the Multicultural Health Policy Unit has been renamed the Multicultural Health and Diversity Policy Unit. Additional staffing resources have been provided to this unit in order to improve organisational responsiveness to the health needs of our multicultural community, those with disability and

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer people. The main areas of focus will remain: access and equity; inclusion; elimination of stigma and discrimination; and health literacy.

The Unit will also explore the possibility of seeking external accreditation through the Rainbow Tick. Organisations that are Rainbow Tick accredited are demonstrating their commitment to LGBTI pride, diversity and inclusion. They are letting their LGBTI consumers, staff and community know that they will receive inclusive services from the moment they step through the door.

## Participation

The primary objective of the Inclusive Participation Funding Program is increasing participation opportunities in sport and recreation for identified targeted population groups. The groups eligible to receive funding under this Program are:

- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- > Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) People
- > Older Adults (45 years and over)
- > People with a Disability.

The objective can be achieved in the following ways:

- > To provide financial assistance to eligible organisations in the ACT to create new, or improve existing programs, to increase the participation of the target population groups;
- > To enhance the capacity and usage of sport and recreational facilities through the provision of specialised non-consumable equipment for the target population groups to participate in sport and active recreation programs;

- > Improvement of education and training for those assisting in the development and delivery of sport and active recreation programs and services for the target population groups.

In 2015 a total of \$80,000 in funding was provided to 12 organisations.

## Concessions

The Government wants to ensure that the ACT Concessions Program is targeted to help those who need it most. A review of the Concessions Program was undertaken in 2014-15 to ensure the Government delivers fair and sustainable concessions into the future, in light of increasing demand and significant Commonwealth funding reductions.

This review included consultation with the community on their views on priority, targeting and options to constrain growth of the Concessions Program. The community was further consulted in November 2015 on 10 options to improve the fairness and targeting of the program.

The Government is committed to extending a helping hand to Canberrans in need. Making sure vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community have access to concessions for transport and basic services is a key pillar in the Government's agenda. A large number of people rely on the assistance of the Concessions Program. At present:

- > There are around 15,000 households who access the Water and Sewerage Concession, and around 30,000 households who access the Energy and Utility Concession;
- > Approximately 15,000 households receive the General Rates Rebate;

- > Approximately 37,000 concessions are provided to pensioners and DVA Gold Card holders who receive a 100 per cent concession on the cost of motor vehicle registration;

- > The ACT Seniors Card is available to all permanent residents of the ACT over 60 years of age who work less than 20 hours per week in paid employment. The Seniors Card is issued for free and provides access to discounts on a range of goods and services provided by Government and approximately 300 participating businesses;

- > Those who hold a Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card, ACT Services Access Card, Student Card or a Seniors Card receive concession fares on ACTION buses. In 2013-14 approximately 5.2 million concession trips were taken.

The Government budgeted \$53.5 million for the Concessions Program in 2016-17, which includes an additional \$35 million over four years to meet increased demand for concession payments.

The review of the concessions system has led to some changes that will ensure an equitable and sustainable system. This Government is working to ensure the system helps those who need it most, in a way that will be sustainable into the future.





# SAFER FAMILIES



# SAFER FAMILIES

We are determined to ensure that women and children are afforded their right to live in a safe community, free from harm and violence. The Government's focus is to achieve an integrated and collaborative single service system for families experiencing domestic violence, and to respond to those who perpetrate violence.

The ACT *Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Strategy 2011-17* articulates the Government's commitment to end violence against women and children. The ACT Strategy recognises that domestic and family violence and sexual assault affects people's ability to participate actively in their communities. The Strategy is consistent with renewed efforts across Government to ensure that people receive the services they need at the right time and for the right duration.

## 1. New initiatives

Recent reports commissioned by the Government demonstrate that the service system has not kept pace with the needs of victims of family violence and their families. The service system must also hold perpetrators to account.

Laurie Glanfield AM in his review of the service system in the ACT noted that, 'There is remarkable agreement on the challenges facing the family violence sector and what needs to change.'

The 2016-17 ACT Budget is a catalyst for the next phase of reform in the family violence service system. The \$21.42 million package, over four years, includes funding for:

- > A full-time Coordinator-General for Family Safety and a dedicated safer families team

to lead the whole of government effort to improve outcomes for victims and their families through collaboration, information sharing, awareness raising and working in partnership with the community. A key priority for the Coordinator-General will be to work with community and government partners, including with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to ensure that services provided are culturally appropriate.

- > Strengthening integrated case management and coordination of services for victims of family violence.
- > Enhancing the quality assurance and support improved decision making of child protection services.
- > Training for frontline staff right across Community and Emergency Services, Health and Education to support identification of family violence and early intervention.
- > Increasing the capacity of specialist drug treatment services to deliver programs that integrate best practice in family violence.
- > Much needed investment in translation and interpreting services in ACT Courts and Tribunal and family violence specialist services.
- > A brokerage and bond fund to assist victims of family violence with immediate expenses.
- > The Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the Canberra Rape Crisis Service for the vital work they do to support people affected by family violence.
- > An innovative residential behaviour change program for men who use or are at risk of using violence.
- > ACT Policing to assist victims to apply for Domestic Violence Orders on behalf of victims.



- > Support for the first stage of implementation of the Joint Australian Law Reform Commission and NSW Law Reform Commission Report *Family Violence – A National Legal Response*.
- > The Director of Public Prosecutions to strengthen criminal justice responses to alleged perpetrators of family violence.
- > Legal Aid to improve access to legal services for victims of family violence.
- > The Tara Costigan Foundation for the establishment of the Tara's Angels Service to provide a free caseworker service that supports victims as they rebuild their lives and break the cycle of violence.
- > A Reportable Conduct Scheme to be operated by the ACT Ombudsman to improve the oversight of how organisations with a high level of responsibility for children respond to allegations of child abuse.

The Confiscated Assets Trust Fund (CAT Fund) allows proceeds of crime forfeited to the Territory to be used for priority criminal justice initiatives. The Attorney-General is directing these funds to key initiatives under the Justice Reform Program:

- > \$850,000 will be used to support a Justice Reinvestment trial that targets services and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to improve life outcomes and reduce or prevent contact with the justice system. The funds will be directed towards Aboriginal run organisations, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, and ACT Policing to build engagement with the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander community. It will also provide funding for brokerage, transport and other supports. The 2016-17 Budget also provided \$76,000 to employ a trial coordinator, based in the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, to oversee the operational and evaluation

requirements of the trial. A key priority for the trial will be to examine how the services and supports delivered can impact on the incidence of family violence.

- > \$400,000 will support a trial bail support service to coordinate and facilitate access to appropriate support services in the community, including emergency accommodation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be a key focus for the trial. By reducing barriers to the grant of bail the trial will allow individuals to remain part of the community. This is vital in maintaining family ties, promoting continued employment and supporting long term rehabilitation.
- > \$50,000 will be used in a trial of specialist reports prepared for sentencing courts aimed at shedding light on the cultural and social issues confronted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Attorney-General will also utilise the CAT Fund to partner with Our WATCh in the 2016-17 financial year to help drive nationwide change in the culture, behaviours and power imbalances that lead to violence against women and their children.


## 2. Building on past work

The ACT continues to work with the Commonwealth Government and all States and the Northern Territory to raise awareness about violence against women and their children, and progress the key Actions under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. We are also working with stakeholders to implement recommendations from the *Australian and New South Wales Law Reform Commissions Report: Family Violence – A National Legal Response*.

Domestic and family violence, including sexual offences, cannot be addressed with legislation alone. This is why the Government takes a holistic approach by working with service providers, experts and the community to provide a broad range of responses. The Government:

- > Established in June 2015 the position of Coordinator-General for Domestic and Family Violence in the ACT which oversees strategic efforts in this area and drives the Second Implementation Plan for the *ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017*.
- > Reformed the victims of crime assistance scheme to make it easier and faster to get financial help and counselling services.
- > Established in 2014 the Crisis Services Scheme for women with disability, following a collaboration between the ACT Disability and Community Services Commissioner, Women with Disabilities ACT, the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the Victims of Crime Commissioner and developed an e-learning training package on Disability Awareness for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Workers.
- > Established a special domestic violence leave provision in the ACT Public Service Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. Employees experiencing domestic violence or providing personal care, support and assistance to a member of their immediate family or household because they are experiencing domestic violence may apply for flexible work arrangements. Up to an additional 20 days leave is available to employees who are experiencing domestic violence, or who are supporting a person experiencing domestic violence, to allow them to be absent from the workplace to attend counselling appointments, legal proceedings and other activities related to domestic violence.
- > Supports detainee participation in rehabilitative programs in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) to assist with reintegration into the community. ACT Corrective Services facilitate offence specific and related programs designed to assist offenders to address the causes of their offending behaviour. These programs include the Domestic Abuse Program, Cognitive Self Change Program, Anger Management Program, Harm Minimisation Alcohol and Other Drug Program, Violence Intervention Program and various sex offender programs.
- > ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) facilitates life development programs designed to assist detainees to manage in the community.
  - ‘Self Care for Women’ is a Marymead program co-facilitated by ACTCS designed for women in custody. It focuses on learning strategies to cope with stress, and looks at mental health, mental illness and physical health.
  - ‘Out of the Dark’ is a program for women who have experienced domestic abuse as victims. It is designed to help participants identify issues around domestic violence, as well as identifying options and supports available.

- ‘Being a Man and a Dad’ is a Marymead program co-facilitated by ACTCS. It is designed for men in custody with parenting roles, with a focus on managing strong emotions in a positive way to build resilient and healthy relationships with their partners and children.
- > Is developing an ACT domestic violence data framework, funded women’s safety grants and supported the Domestic Violence Prevention Council with \$300,000 from the Confiscated Assets Trust Fund (2015-16 Budget).
- > Responded on 10 August 2015 to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council’s April 2015 Extraordinary Meeting highlighting current and future actions to respond to family violence.
- > Developed reporting guidelines on violence against women for journalists and embedding respectful reporting into the University of Canberra curriculum on Journalism and Society.
- > Has assisted more than 900 women through the Return to Work Grants, approximately half of whom have experienced domestic violence.
- > Has provided \$615,000 in funding for school Social and Emotional Learning programs over 2015 and 2016. This funding amounts to \$2,500 per school per year. The funding is part of the Government’s early intervention and prevention approach to address domestic violence, by enhancing the skills of children and young people to engage in respectful relationships. Forty four ACT public schools have applied for these grants to support a variety of programs. Social and Emotional Learning programs are typically run by teachers as part of the student regular curriculum throughout the year.
- > Supported the Working with the Man program provided by EveryMan Australia. Working With the Man (WWM) is a specialist behaviour change program for men who have been violent to women, working to effect long-term change and reduce reoffending. The program is voluntary and applicants are assessed by EveryMan violence prevention workers in relation to their capacity to acknowledge and take responsibility for violent and dominating behaviour before being accepted into the program.
- > Supported the annual Partners in Prevention Awards where efforts to reduce violence against women and children are recognised and valued.
- > Funded vocational training for victims of domestic violence through the 2016 ACT Adult Community Education Grants (ACE) Program. The training is delivered by Domestic Violence Crisis Service Incorporated.
- > Supported the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, and Perinatal Mental Health Consultation Team who undertook staff training in identifying and responding to domestic family violence. In October 2015 the Government implemented a routine screening tool for domestic violence for all who engage with the service.



# ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE





# ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

Overcoming disadvantage requires a range of interconnected and holistic support services to heal from the past and allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to reach their potential.

Through the 2016-17 Budget the Government will provide coordinated support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives. The Government will also provide resourcing to increase awareness of the Elected Body's role in representing the views and concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the ACT. In particular, this role will include building greater connections with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to share their views and concerns on matters of significance with the ACT Government.

The Government's commitment to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage is guided by the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2015 – 2018* focus on building and sustaining strong families. The Agreement's focus is supported by seven key focus areas and quality life outcomes.

## 1. Cultural Identity

- > The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships Grant program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations to undertake a range of personal study, training, and leadership opportunities. These opportunities assist in achieving personal life goals and contribute to sustainable communities highlighting and promoting cultural diversity and social harmony.
- > Yurauna, a dedicated support centre at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), provides culturally appropriate support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- > Support for the arts and culture sector will build the capacity of and develop and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community within the ACT. The Government will provide funding of \$100,000 for work with artists and cultural organisations to build their capacity. The Government supports the Canberra and District NAIDOC Committee to facilitate NAIDOC week activities.

## 2. Healthy mind, healthy body

- > The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Smoking Cessation Program supports a number of smoking cessation activities including development of new targeted information materials for pregnant smokers, community education and events, staff education and professional development, the purchase of new educational resources, and provision of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (free to clients where costs would otherwise be associated).

- > The Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm (NBHF) will provide a culturally appropriate alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation facility for adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT. It will be an eight bed facility located in a rural area close to Namadgi National Park and the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, both of which contain important Aboriginal cultural sites. The NBHF is currently under construction and is expected to open in late 2016.
- > The Government has continued to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dedicated health and community services such as the:
  - Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health Service to deliver primary health services, and
  - Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation which provides health and support services for young people.
- > The 2016-17 Budget provides \$1.06 million to extend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services in the ACT. The funding will support additional specialist outreach programs and extension of selected existing programs.

### 3. Feeling Safe

- > The Government funds the position of an Indigenous Liaison Officer at the Women's Legal Centre, and provides funding to the Aboriginal Legal Service.
- > Culturally appropriate housing including for elderly members of the community is provided, and capital upgrades are being made to rental properties for larger families. In 2014-15 \$1.05 million was allocated for upgrades to Housing ACT properties, specifically to address issues of overcrowding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2016-17 it is anticipated that upgrades or extensions to three properties will be undertaken. Further options will be explored to expend the remainder of the funding in 2016-17.

- > Suitable and culturally appropriate accommodation is being constructed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to 'age in place', with the construction of five two-bedroom units on a single site designed specifically for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Kambah. The project is scheduled to be completed by September 2016 with \$1.5 million in funding provided in the 2013-14 Budget.
- > The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Partnership (2015-18)* continues the work of the ACT's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement (2010-13) in addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation in the ACT justice system, as both victims and offenders. This program works to reduce the incarceration rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.
- > *A Step Up for Our Kids* provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through Uniting's Children and Families ACT program. These new services provide supports within families to prevent children from coming into care, or return them home as soon as it is safe to do so. A priority in the design of this program is that it is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, appreciates family and community relationships and networks, is appropriate, accessible and culturally safe.

### 4. Connecting the community

- > The Growing Healthy Families Program at the Gungahlin, West Belconnen and Tuggeranong Child and Family Centres was expanded to provide resources that support engagement, inclusion and access to culturally informed services by the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- > The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Job Readiness Support Program, known as the Connxtions Program, provides nationally recognised job-ready training and ongoing wrap-around support to

members of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

- > In partnership with ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS) the Government funded the Gulunga Program, to improve the cultural competency of services working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families.
- > The Offender Services and Corrections Programs Unit in ACT Corrective Services provides and facilitates programs that address identified risks and criminogenic needs. These programs are tailored for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC); Certificate II Conservation and Land Management through the Culture and Land Management (CALM) Program, Indigenous Traditional Culture Healing Yarning Arts Program, Winnunga Social Well-Being Program, Elders and Community Leaders Visitation Program, Pastoral Care, and counseling provided by Dhunlung Yarra Service.
- > A Men's Re-Connect program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders who appear before the Circle Court was established in a collaboration between ACT Corrective Services with ACT Parks and Conservation Services, Indigenous Programs Unit and the Galambany Circle Sentencing Court.
- > An Aboriginal Client Services Officer within ACT Corrective Services, introduced in 2014, works closely with Community Corrections Officers to assist in the case management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders and is also a liaison point between the community and ACT Corrective Services.
- > An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Learning Coordinator, recruited in March 2016 to Libraries ACT, engages the local community with the library to develop services and collections.
- > The CBR Innovation Network runs an Indigenous Business Support Program

aimed at increasing the participation of Indigenous people in business, with support from the Government. The CBR Innovation Network promotes involvement with Supply Nation's Indigenous Business Direct register to facilitate connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses with government and private corporations.

- > In partnership with the Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service, a community-based reporting hub was created for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult offenders on community based orders. This service commenced operation in November 2015.
- > The Yeddung Mura (Good Pathways) Aboriginal Corporation has partnered with the Government, and will link in with the Extended Throughcare Program and provide additional case management support to detainees exiting the AMC.

## 5. Employment and economic independence

- > The *ACT Public Service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2016-2019* will be launched in 2016 and will focus on increasing the ACT Public Service's proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees; retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the Service and working towards agreed capability building for all levels.
- > The ACT Indigenous Employment Program, which commenced in August 2015, is a 12-month program where the trainees obtain certification in various fields of study depending on their placement areas. Currently there are 10 trainees in the program, with permanent positions available at the end of their successful placements in August 2017.
- > Through the ACTPS 2017 Graduate Program the Government is increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduates through separate Identified advertising, selection, training



and assessment centres.

- > The Government will invest \$107,000 in additional mentoring and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the ACT Public Service to improve their career development outcomes.
- > The Canberra Business Yarning Circle, a community engagement initiative to support ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business development and economic participation, receives funding from the Government and is led by members of the ACT Indigenous business community and delivered in collaboration with CBR Innovation Network and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB).
- > The ACT NAIDOC Business of the Year Award, which aims to recognise the range of great Indigenous owned and operated businesses in the ACT, continues to receive Government sponsorship.

## 6. Leadership

- > The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (the Elected Body) was established to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT have a strong democratically elected voice. To consider how the Elected Body can be strengthened, a review of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008* has been commissioned. A comprehensive community engagement and consultation process will follow to discuss the outcomes of the review to ensure the Elected Body continues to represent the interests and aspirations of the local Indigenous community.
- > Indigenous Guidance Partner to Adult Restorative Justice Referrals is a program which funds an Indigenous guidance partner (IGP) and vehicle to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults referred to restorative justice. The adult specific IGP supports adult offenders' understanding, participation, accountability to victims and accessing

and maintaining contact with support services, intervention programs, training and employment opportunities (such as apprenticeships) as a result of their involvement with restorative justice.

- > The Justice Reform Program comprising of the Aboriginal Justice Partnership, Justice Reform Strategy and Justice Reinvestment Strategy, is working to develop a whole of government framework to deliver services and support to offenders with high and complex needs and their families. In particular the program addresses the challenges faced by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as evidenced by their over-representation in the criminal justice system.
- > The Confiscated Assets Trust Fund allows proceeds of crime forfeited to the Territory to be used for priority criminal justice initiatives. The Attorney-General is directing these funds to key initiatives under the Justice Reform Program:
  - \$850,000 will be used to support a Justice Reinvestment trial that targets services and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to improve life outcomes and reduce or prevent contact with the justice system. The funds will be directed towards Aboriginal run organisations, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, and ACT Policing to build engagement with the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. It will also provide funding for brokerage, transport and other supports. The 2016-17 Budget also provided funding to employ a trial coordinator, based in the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, to oversee the operational and evaluation requirements of the trial.
  - \$400,000 will support a trial bail support service to coordinate and facilitate access to appropriate support services in the community, including emergency accommodation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be a key focus for the trial. By reducing barriers to the

grant of bail the trial will allow individuals to remain part of the community. This is vital in maintaining family ties, promoting continued employment and supporting long term rehabilitation.

- \$50,000 will be used in a trial of specialist reports prepared for sentencing courts aimed at shedding light on the cultural and social issues confronted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## 7. Education

- > The *Accepting the Challenge* program coordinates and delivers professional learning and support for teachers and staff in school leadership positions to conduct school based action inquiry projects related to improving educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Nineteen teachers from 12 schools are participating in the 2016 Action Inquiry Program.
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are supported in their training through provisions built into all ACT funded training initiatives. Skilled Capital, the ACT's signature entitlement training program, and the Australian Apprenticeships (User Choice) program both provide loadings of \$500 for registered training organisations to provide supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Registered training organisations may also apply for further financial supports (up to \$3,000 in some cases) to meet specific additional training needs of students.
- > Strengthening Ngunnawal Culture and History in Schools - Through this initiative \$300,000 will be allocated in the 2016-17 Budget to a new two year pilot which will increase opportunities for local youth to build their connection and engagement with Ngunnawal culture and history. Educational programs involving guided nature tours for local youth in schools will be undertaken during the school term in 2016-17.
  - Students will be able to participate in cultural activities at the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre, Yarramundi Reach. Students will learn about the significant Aboriginal site, engage with the ACT's Traditional Owners and gain an understanding of the plant resources of this region for food, medicine, tools and weapons, fire, ceremonial purposes, water, fibre, dye and paint.
  - The interaction with Ngunnawal Elders and key Aboriginal members of the ACT Aboriginal community will reinforce the current Aboriginal learning contexts with the education sectors that are already embedded in the school curriculum.
- > The Government recognises the need to expand opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. The Kickstart My Career Program will support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at risk of leaving school. The program will develop culturally appropriate Flexible Learning Options to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in nationally accredited and vocational training in culture and land management. The total cost of \$651,000 will be met from the existing resources of the agencies involved.

# CLOSING THE GAP IN EDUCATION

This Government is committed to closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by 2018 in three key areas; attendance, literacy and numeracy and year 12 attainment.

Supplementary funding is available to primary or secondary schools to implement a broad range of programs and strategies aimed at improving learning outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Literacy and numeracy skills acquisition is the focus of the majority of the programs and strategies. ACT public schools continue to implement whole school approaches to personalised learning including the use of personalised learning plans (PLPs). Schools have accessed support to develop, monitor and review the effectiveness of PLPs for their school context.

To achieve the best educational outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:

- > Eleven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers are employed across ACT public schools. Their role is to support students through key transition points in their education, build connections and relationships between schools, families and communities and support students and teachers in the school environment.
- > Vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in public schools across Canberra are supported through the work of a Senior Social Worker, Family Support Officer and Student Engagement Officer, who work across the system to encourage greater student engagement and assist with resolving barriers that hinder school attendance.
- > The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teacher Education Scholarship offers financial support with the aim of:

- Improving retention and completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying a teacher education course.
- Giving students the opportunity to be role models to other students.

The Scholarship program aims to increase the amount of quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools who can support students to achieve positive education outcomes.

From 2009 to 2016, the Education Directorate awarded 43 scholarships of \$5,000; 37 for students wishing to pursue a career in teaching and six for students interested in a career in health.

In addition to 10 secondary scholarships, four tertiary scholarships worth \$20,000 are offered each year, three for students studying teaching and one for a student studying an approved health course.

- > Five Koori Preschools located in Government schools offer targeted early learning programs to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (aged 3–5 years) develop strong language, numeracy and cultural understanding. Children are given opportunities to engage in rich play based experiences which build their wellbeing, love of learning, early literacy and numeracy skills, and confidence to transition into school. The program also focuses strongly on fostering children's sense of cultural identity. Collaborative partnerships between families and educators guide children's understandings in a culturally safe and inclusive learning environment. Partnerships with external organisations such as the Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service and Child and Family Centres provides additional support to children and families. At the February 2016 Census, there were 78 children attending the five Koori Preschools located at:
  - Ngunnawal Primary School;
  - Wanniasa School;

- Richardson Primary School;
  - Narrabundah Early Childhood School; and
  - Kingsford Smith School.
- > *The Education Capital: Leading the Nation Strategic Plan 2014-17*, developed by the Government, commits to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander year 12 completion rates and the commencement of high level qualifications.
- > A Tutorial Support Scheme is also available to schools in order to implement targeted strategies and programs to best meet the individual learning needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Tutoring is provided by qualified teachers or tutors through an accredited tutoring agency and is best utilised when aligned with students' personal learning goals.
- > The Government works closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Group to achieve significant and sustainable education improvements to ensure all students believe, "I can achieve. I am confident. My future is exciting."
- > The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2014-2017* articulates 35 initiatives relating to attracting and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and building capacity and cultural proficiency across the workforce. The Action Plan aims to empower:
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees through the ongoing support of the Directorate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network, including the provision of consultation, mentoring and career development opportunities;
  - non-Indigenous employees by creating opportunities to build cultural integrity and provide cultural supervision to managers and principals; and
  - future employees by building pathways for potential employment and career development.
- > The Student Resource Allocation (SRA) program is a transformative initiative, designed to improve educational outcomes for all Canberra public school students, and make better use of resources. Resources will be allocated to schools on the level of student need. This needs based funding model is consistent with the Australian Government's Gonski review into school funding.
- > A new program to support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People at risk of leaving school is being developed. The program will develop culturally appropriate Flexible Learning Options to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in nationally accredited and vocational training in culture and land management.
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from years 5 to 12 who show strong academic and leadership qualities are supported through the Student Aspirations Program to reach their potential through successful completion of secondary school and progression to further education, training and employment options. There are approximately 140 students participating in the 2016 Student Aspirations Program.
- > the Mura Achievement Awards were launched in 2014 and are supported by the Government. Mura is a Ngunnawal term meaning 'pathways'. Students can be nominated for a Mura Award for demonstrating excellent attendance; strong commitment to their learning, greatly improved engagement, good academic progress or active involvement in the community.



In addition to these initiatives the Government demonstrates its commitment to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage through:

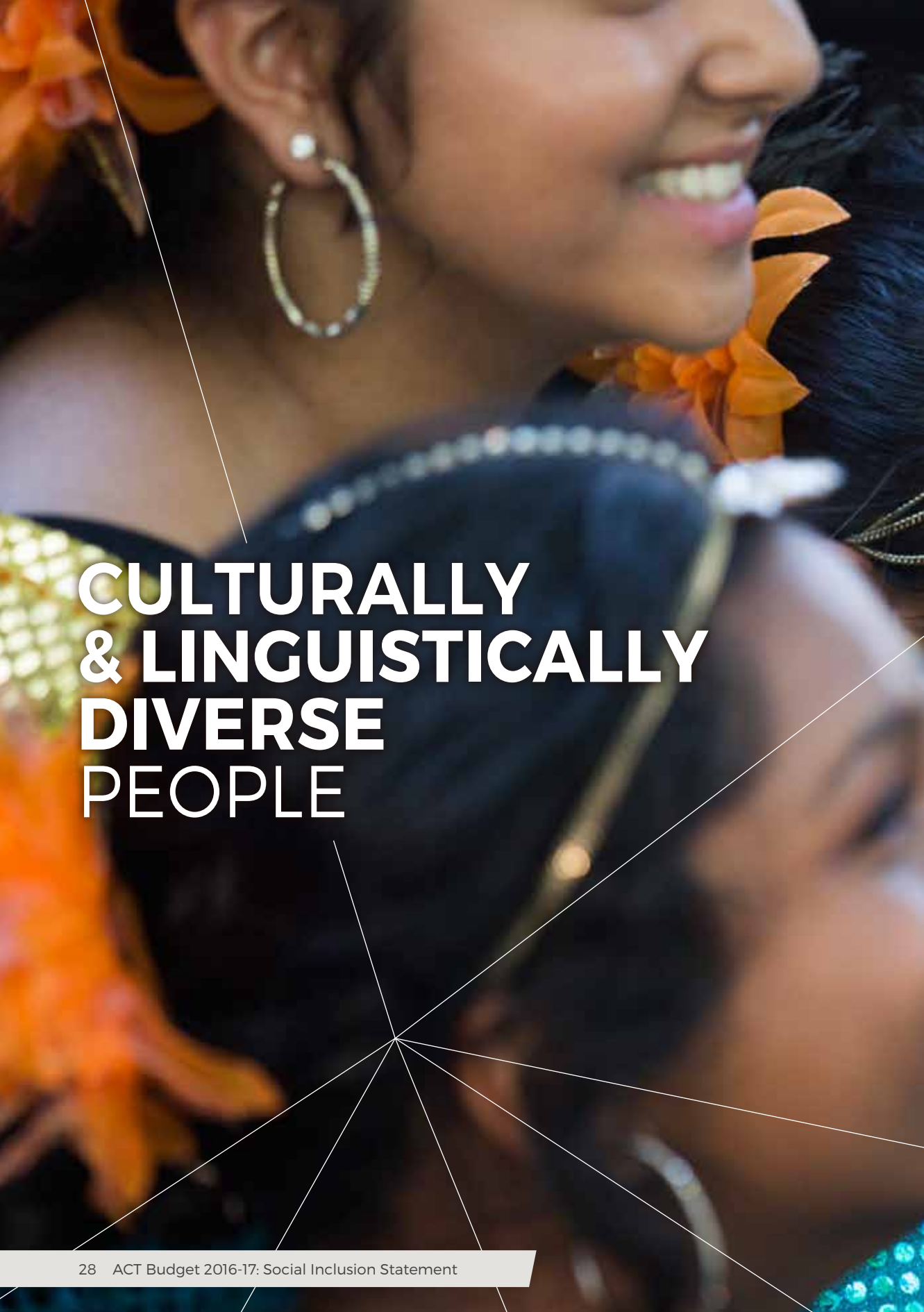
- > The *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 2015 – 2018 Agreement* was officially endorsed on 23 April 2015. The Agreement will help to build strong foundations, resilient families, and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to achieve their personal life goals. The relationship principles set out in the Agreement, which include respectful interaction, continuously improving the level of service and information sharing to simplify the service experience for the community, are closely aligned with the integration and outcomes focus of the family violence package funded in the 2016-17 ACT Budget.
- > A new position which will be established for an Aboriginal staff member to manage the recently created ACT Parks Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Council and provide leadership and mentoring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, conduct high-level stakeholder engagement and oversee operational, cultural interpretation and visitor service programs in 2016-17.
- > The Government successfully applied for funding through the Commonwealth's Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) and is currently managing funding for the delivery of:
  - the 2015-16 Indigenous Sports Grants Program (ISGP), which provides funding support to individuals for their sport or active recreation registration or membership;
  - the 2016 Indigenous Sports Partnered Programs (ISPP) initiative, providing funding support to organisations for programs seeking to increase participation opportunities in sport or active recreation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to build capacity within the community; and

- a research report into the sporting needs and participation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT and region.

- > Work to return Boomanulla Oval to sustainable Indigenous management as soon as possible. This work continues to progress thanks to a collaboration between the Government and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

We look forward to the broader ACT community working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to build strong foundations, resilient families.

Together we can bridge the gap and ensure all Canberrans receive the opportunities to achieve equitable outcomes in all aspects of their life.



# CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE



# CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE

The ACT has a strong history of valuing and promoting our diverse cultural communities. In particular, the *2010-2015 ACT Multicultural Strategy* has delivered a range of initiatives and programs aimed at supporting the social inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans.

## Celebrating 20 years

In February 2016, the National Multicultural Festival saw its 20th year of celebration in the ACT. In total, an estimated 280,000 people attended the festival, and there were over 4500 community volunteers. The National Multicultural Festival has important social and community benefits including:

- > strengthening communities and building bonding and bridging social capital;
- > reducing social isolation and exclusion;
- > contributing to generating a sense of identity and self-confidence;
- > changing perceptions of the nature of the ACT community; and
- > raising the profile of community groups.

Complementing this, we continue to celebrate our cultural diversity and offer assistance to those from diverse backgrounds in times of need:

- > The ACT was the first Australian jurisdiction to declare a Refugee Welcome Zone last year which was a pinnacle moment for the Government and for our city.
- > Since 2011, approximately 3,000 projects have been funded through our multicultural grants programs to support local multicultural community groups to help build our harmonious and inclusive society.
- > As part of making every ACT Public School inclusive, students who require intensive English language support are able to attend one of the six Introductory English Centres. Three year olds who have had little to no exposure to English can enrol in preschool for six hours per week from July to December in the year before they would otherwise start preschool. These centres are an important part of our inclusivity practice in ACT public schools and help prepare students both academically and culturally for future learning in a mainstream school.
- > On 20 March 2015, the new Gungahlin Introductory English Centre (IEC) at Palmerston District Primary School was opened. This centre is the sixth IEC established in Canberra. It provides a more suitable location for newly arrived students residing in Gungahlin to begin their education in a safe and supportive environment.
- > The Teacher Quality Institute runs an accredited English as an Additional Language/ Dialect Teachers' Professional Learning Forum to continue to improve teacher understanding of the complexities for students transitioning from an Introductory English Centre into mainstream settings.
- > At the Alexander Maconochie Centre educational courses including Remedial Language, Literacy and Numeracy continue to be facilitated. Detainees who enter custody with significant language barriers are also permitted, where possible, to converse with members of their own culture



in order to reduce feelings of isolation.

- > A Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learning Coordinator has been appointed by Libraries ACT to engage with local CALD communities to ensure that the library is developing services and collections to meet their needs.
- > ACT Health initiatives include the development and implementation of *“Towards Culturally Appropriate and Inclusive Services – A Co-ordinating*

*Framework for ACT Health (2014-18)*, staff development, including face-to-face and e-learning on cultural competence and working with interpreters, and the development of internet materials and other resources to support consumers, including publication in print and electronic versions of *Using Health Services in the ACT*, and a related publication *Which Health Service do I need?*, currently available in seven languages.

## **The 2015-2020 ACT Multicultural Framework**

The 2015-2020 ACT Multicultural Framework and first action plan were released in late 2015. The Framework is built around three broad themes: accessible and responsive services; citizenship, participation, and cohesion; and capitalising on the benefits of cultural diversity.

The Framework gives full expression to the Government’s commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, maintaining social cohesion, building social capital, and minimising social exclusion for culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans.

Some key actions that will be progressed under this Framework include a focus on young people through leadership and recognition initiatives, enhancing access to information for refugees, and further investment in social cohesion initiatives.

Specific initiatives include:

- > targeted programs to assist new arrivals to gain meaningful employment, building on from the success of programs like the Work Experience and Support Program and tailoring to the unique needs of particular cultural groups;
- > delivering an online register of interest for people from our culturally and linguistically diverse communities to serve on ACT boards and committees, to ensure decisions made reflect the diverse needs of people in our community;
- > encouraging culturally and linguistically diverse communities to utilise existing community facilities for cultural events through the introduction of an online booking system for Government managed facilities; and
- > developing an online calendar and directory to promote opportunities to connect with multicultural groups and to celebrate the vibrancy that multicultural groups add to this city.



# PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY



# PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

## Implementation of the NDIS

- > On 1 July 2014, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) trial began in the ACT. The NDIS is a new way of providing individualised support for people with a permanent or significant disability. By mid 2016 the ACT will be the first jurisdiction to accept all eligible residents into the scheme which equates to approximately 5,000 people.
- > The transition to the NDIS is a major change for organisations as well as individuals across the ACT. The Commonwealth and ACT Governments are investing \$21.8 million to prepare the ACT sector and people with disability for the NDIS.
- > Joint investment into the scheme in the ACT will continue to grow to \$342 million, when the NDIS is at full scheme nationally. In 2019-20, at full scheme, it is expected that the Government will provide \$167million (49%) and the Commonwealth will provide \$175 million (51%).
- > At 31 December 2015, 2,947 people had approved NDIS participant plans representing 97% of the agreed target, to that date, of 3,307. This rate reflects the effectiveness of the range of supports established to assist ACT residents to prepare for, and access, the NDIS. For example *Your Voice Your Choice, Good Life Planning* was launched in September 2015. The program will run until December 2016 and is developing, delivering, coordinating and supporting events, tools and resources which focus on people who have not traditionally engaged with disability services.
- > The number of providers of disability services in the ACT continues to grow as it must to ensure NDIS participant needs can be met under the NDIS. As of February 2016, 201 organisations were registered with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to provide services in the ACT. ACT providers have benefited from access to a range of resources and supports funded through the Commonwealth NDIS Sector Development Fund. Three programs were launched at the end of 2015 to support ACT disability providers to operate successfully in the NDIS environment. Each of the following programs will run until December 2016:
  - **Ready4** is providing a central point of information and delivering direct one-on-one and small group support for NDIS service offer, and business, system and governance model development.
  - **Opening Doors** is providing an intensive targeted response to Aboriginal organisations looking to build their capacity to enter disability provision in the ACT; and working with selected mainstream disability providers looking to deliver more culturally sensitive services.
  - **Values in Action** is providing intensive assistance to selected disability providers committed to develop a sustainable high-performing person-centred workforce.
  - Throughout 2015 and in February 2016, ACT providers had three opportunities to apply for tailored NDIS development assistance through NDIS Business Investment Packages valued up to \$50,000 per organization; 50 allocations were made totaling \$1,712,170.
- > An additional \$718,000 has been allocated for 2016-17 to support the implementation of the NDIS.



The ACT Government recognises that our community is stronger for the contribution of every member. That is why we are acting to help everyone participate and reach their full potential, through:

- > INVOLVE – Canberra's Disability Commitment is the Government's localised approach to progressing the six outcome areas of the National Disability Strategy. INVOLVE provides a framework to promote and achieve positive social and economic outcomes for people with disability through the collaborative action of government, business and community. Change is being achieved through social campaigns that focus on practical actions in each priority area and which galvanise support using digital and non-digital approaches. INVOLVE was developed through community consultation and a whole of Government approach. In 2015-16, the priorities are housing, NDIS implementation, jobs and skill development. In 2016-17, the priorities will be health, justice and inclusive communities. The ACT Disability Expert Panel and the ACT Inclusion Council are providing advice on the development and implementation of INVOLVE.
- > The Government is providing \$1m in funding for the design and construction of upgrades to around 100 bus stops to meet Disability Standards. The upgrades will include improved wheelchair accessibility to bus stop boarding areas, tactile for vision impaired customers, and access paths.
- > All new bus fleet purchases are to be Disability Discrimination Act compliant.
- > Nearly 400 eligible students with disability access the Special Needs Transport program. This program provides a door-to-door service to and from school for eligible students accessing a Disability Education program. Special Needs Transport is provided by the Education Directorate as an in-kind support under the NDIS.
- > Provisions to support students in their training are built into all ACT funded training initiatives. Skilled Capital, the ACT's signature entitlement training program, and the Australian Apprenticeships (User Choice) program both provide loadings of \$500 for registered training organisations to provide supports to a range of eligible students including people with a disability. Registered training organisations may also apply for further financial supports (up to \$3,000 in some cases) to meet specific additional training needs of students.
- > The CBR Innovation Network supports Enabled Employment, a Canberra based startup business specifically designed for people with disabilities. The company was accepted into the highly competitive GRIFFIN Accelerator program and won a startup of the year award.
- > Detainees with a disability at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) have access to support in line with that available in the community, and that the Government is committed to ensuring that detainee needs are not overlooked in the implementation of the NDIS. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate's Corrective Services is involved in cross-jurisdictional discussions with the NDIS Taskforce about how the NDIS will be introduced in the custodial system and the implementation of appropriate processes, including improved screening tools to identify issues.
- > New accommodation facilities inside the existing AMC campus have been built in response to increasing detainee numbers. The new Accommodation Unit significantly enhances the accommodation capability of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate's Corrective Services and, in conjunction with the 30 cell Special Care Centre, has significantly enhanced capacity at the AMC. The new accommodation areas have the capacity to allow detainees with mental or physical disabilities to be housed appropriately and cared for according to their needs.

A young child with blonde hair, wearing a white t-shirt, dark shorts, and blue and pink sneakers, is climbing a red rope play structure in a park. The child is seen from behind, walking across a horizontal rope. The structure is made of a complex network of red ropes. The background shows a grassy area and trees under a bright sky. The text 'CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

# CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE





# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

*The ACT Children and Young People's Commitment 2015-2025*, released in December 2015, provides a whole of government and whole of community approach to promote the rights of children and young people aged 0 to 25 years in the ACT.

Developed in consultation with over 1,500 people, the Commitment outlines what our children and young people see as priorities for them. Importantly, key initiatives have been designed to improve outcomes and supports by considering these identified priorities. This Government places a high priority on supporting our children and young people and is identifying, supporting and assisting those who need our help, through:

- > *A Step Up for Our Kids* which began in 2015 and will continue through 2016-17. A number of key milestones have been reached, including the commencement of the Uniting Children and Families ACT program delivering a range of brand new services and supports within families to prevent children from coming into care, or return them home as soon as it is safe to do so. *A Step Up for Our Kids* is an additional investment of \$16 million over four years in new services and reforms to the out of home system, to deliver better outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in the ACT. *A Step Up for Our Kids* is designed to stem the rate of entry to care through new placement prevention and reunification services; improve outcomes for children and young people in care; and place children and young people in care with permanent alternative families in a timely way. It represents a major departure

from current practice and will reduce duplication in the role of government services and non-government services; improving the way the system supports children, parents and carers.

- > The West Belconnen Local Services Network, which aims to build services and supports around the needs of the local community. In 2014-15, intensive engagement was undertaken with local residents to find out what matters to people who live in that community. Youth unemployment was identified as an issue with work now underway to deliver tailored employment pathways and a youth employment hub to respond to these needs.
- > CCCares – a program providing an education and support program for pregnant and parenting students in the ACT and surrounding districts. CCCares offers Year 12 Certification, goal orientated learning packages, online learning, education and welfare support, health services, and vocational education and employability skills within a mainstream Government College environment. Students can remain in the program for 5 years. In 2015 there were 172 students enrolled. On average 12 – 15 students graduate with an ACT Year 12 Certificate each year.
- > A new dental service introduced during 2015 for children and adolescents with special needs. Currently this outreach service involves collaboration with four schools and includes health education, dental assessments and treatment and family support. Since the commencement of the service, 75 students with special needs have received dental assessments and interventions.



- > The *Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012-22* which continues to demonstrate reducing numbers of young people coming into contact with, or becoming further involved in, the youth justice system; ultimately improving outcomes for young people in the ACT.
- > Construction of a purpose built respite property for young people aged between 13 and 18 years old to replace an existing respite property currently operated by Disability ACT.
- > The Children and Young People Commissioner, who plays an important role in ensuring that the views and interests of children and young people are considered in Government policy and in decisions that affect them. Recent work of the Commissioner has included the *Schools for All Report*, as a member of the *Expert Panel on Children and Young People with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour in ACT Schools*, and the *Report on Children and Young People with Complex Needs in the ACT Youth Justice System*, as well as the Right Here Right Now project which captured the self-portraits and views of over 11,500 ACT school students. From 1 April 2016 the roles of the Children and Young People Commissioner and the Public Advocate of the ACT have been combined to a single position within the ACT Human Rights Commission, which will provide greater opportunities to identify areas for systemic reform to benefit the most vulnerable children and young people.
- > *Our Community Grants* which have been promoted through local services, businesses and schools, encouraging local residents, and young people in particular, to identify and drive local community responses to the priority areas.
- > The Youth Advisory Council (Council) which is a group of 15 dynamic and passionate young people aged from 12 to 25 years, from diverse cultures, backgrounds and life experiences. The Council provides young people with an opportunity to take a leading role in participation and consultation activities on issues that affect their lives. The Council has identified three broad priority areas, including gender and sexuality, youth homelessness, and alcohol and drugs, and provides advice to government to help ensure the best possible supports for young people in our community.
- > A Ministerial 'listening tour' of 15 local youth groups, currently underway to hear first hand of concerns and perspectives that are held by Canberra's young people in a range of different settings.
- > A Youth Symposium to be held in August 2016, providing a platform for young people to present views on what needs to be done to sustain our socially harmonious community and the supports that would need to be put in place to ensure no young person falls through the gaps.
- > A renewed research agreement with the Institute of Child Protection Studies at the Australian Catholic University to help find new ways to prevent child abuse.
- > Libraries ACT who continue to provide a variety of popular, exciting and innovative learning programs, including through its Makerspace. Makerspace houses a range of electronics and computing equipment that is available for use like- 3D printers, Raspberry Pis and Mindstorm robot. It is a self-facilitated project and each individual shares the responsibility for the appropriate use of the space, tools and technology made available.

- > Provisions to support students in their training which are built into all ACT funded training initiatives. Skilled Capital, the ACT's signature entitlement training program, and the Australian Apprenticeships (User Choice) program both provide loadings of \$500 for registered training organisations to provide supports to a range of eligible students including young people (15-24 years of age) at risk, particularly those who have been unemployed. Registered training organisations may also apply for further financial supports (up to \$3,000 in some cases) to meet specific additional training needs of students.
- > Support provided to the CBR Innovation Network to offer a program to encourage students and youths aged 10-17 years to learn ICT, coding, entrepreneurship and the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

Another stream of activity in youth engagement is being led by the Canberra Islamic Centre which has identified 20 to 30 Muslim youth living in the ACT who are potential leaders who could be trained to work with their peers, to impart the value of participation, volunteering and social harmony in our community. The Canberra Islamic Centre will be supported by the Government to deliver a series of workshops for these potential young leaders. These workshops will culminate in a Youth Summit for about 100—150 local and interstate Muslim youth.





A photograph of two men standing outdoors in front of a red door and a window. The man on the left is wearing a dark blue sweater over a collared shirt and has his hands in his pockets. The man on the right is wearing a light blue button-down shirt, glasses, and has a beard. Both are smiling. The text 'LGBTIQ PEOPLE' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# LGBTIQ PEOPLE





# LGBTIQ PEOPLE

The ACT continues to be the most welcoming city in Australia for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) persons. The ACT Government is committed to providing support and services to Canberra's LGBTIQ communities. This is an important part of the Government's commitment to social inclusion and equality.

The Government's recognition of LGBTIQ people comes in many forms – and includes legislative change to eliminate discriminatory laws, sponsorships and a commitment to ensuring that development of a truly accepting and welcoming community begins with children.

The ACT Government has made a number of legislative changes that aim to remove discrimination from our legislative framework:

- > Recognised same-sex relationships through the *Domestic Partnerships Act in 1994*, which granted unmarried heterosexual couples and same sex couples similar property rights to those enjoyed by married couples.
- > Commenced a law reform process to clear our statute book of discrimination against LGBTIQ people in areas ranging from property rights to adoption laws, in 2001.
- > Passed civil partnership legislation so that all loving, caring relationships are recognised the same way under law, regardless of sexuality.
- > Passed laws that updated the definition of 'intersex' in ACT law, including the removal of reassignment surgery as a prerequisite for a person to change their legal status. New arrangements include a clear and simple process for intersex people to change the sex on their birth certificates, making a significant difference to the lives

of sex and gender diverse people born in the Territory.

- > Passed the *Marriage Equality (Same-Sex) Act 2013*, which commenced on 4 November 2013. The Act represented landmark law reform in Australia. Thirty one marriages were registered under the Act between its commencement on 7 November and 12 December 2015 when the Act was found invalid by the High Court. Couples who married under the Act were able to keep their certificate but are unable to use it as legal proof of their marriage. While the issue of marriage equality is now a decision for the Commonwealth Parliament, the ACT Government will continue to strongly support true legal equality for all couples.
- > Improved recognition of diverse Canberrans by:
  - Introducing details certificates, which set out personal information including gender. The details certificate will allow intersex, transgender and gender diverse people residing in the ACT, who were not born here, to have their gender identity officially recognised in the same way as those people born in the ACT;
  - Giving parents greater choice as to how they are referenced on a child's birth certificate;
  - Allowing for recognition of interstate parentage orders;
  - Providing flexibility in documenting name changes; and
  - Allowing for proof of identity cards to assist people who do not have other forms of identity and where a proof of age card is not appropriate.

## Improving Social Inclusion for LGBTIQ Students in Schools

The Australian Curriculum builds the understanding and relationship skills of student by requiring teacher to cover in the classroom general capabilities including:

- > Personal and social capabilities which involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills.
- > Ethical understandings which involves students building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others. It does this through fostering the development of 'personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others'.

The *Safe and Supportive Schools* policy articulates the position of the ACT public schools to provide a safe, respectful and supportive school environment. It focuses on safety by ensuring that schools have processes and procedures in place to address bullying, harassment and violence, which was also a focus of the *Report of the Expert Panel on Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviours* (2015). The *Safe and Supportive Schools* guidelines provides further guidance to schools to ensure that all schools will have in place practices and programs that are designed to ensure that all students are protected from sexual harassment.

- > The Government has provided \$430,000 in funding for school Social and Emotional Learning programs over 2015 and 2016. The funding is part of the ACT Government's early intervention and prevention

approach to respectful relationships by enhancing the skills of children and young people in schools.

- > Safe and Supportive Schools Contact Officers (SASCOS) in each school who work with students to address harassment and provide support as well as promoting tolerance and safety within the school environment. SASCOS are provided training to support them in their roles.

The Education Directorate also co-ordinates school activities on the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (usually mid March of each year).

Twenty four schools in the ACT have joined the *Safe Schools Coalition*. The Coalition comprises of schools dedicated to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, staff and families, and is working to create inclusive and positive environments for same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, through:

- > School psychologists - as well as providing counselling to students, also provide advice to school staff on wellbeing issues for LGBTIQ and work collaboratively in school teams with the Safe Schools Coalition to support staff to understand and address the needs of student who identify as LGBTIQ.
- > The Education Directorate is currently revising the *Uniform Policy, Procedure and Guidelines* based on advice from the ACT LGBTIQ Ministerial Advisory Council regarding inclusive approaches, and a student's right to choose a uniform which is consistent with their gender identity.
- > Play by the Rules and Fair Go, Sport programs aim to encourage everyone to participate in sport in a safe welcoming environment, increase awareness of sexual and gender diversity, and reduce discrimination or harassment.

In support of our LGBTIQ community, the Government has:

- > Received the records of the AIDS Action Council of the ACT in August 2015 at the ACT Heritage Library, and exhibited items from the collection in September 2015.
- > Provided sponsorship of the SpringOUT festival. SpringOUT is the ACT LGBTIQ pride event and has been an annual event since 1999. Through a range of activities over a number of weeks SpringOUT celebrates the LGBTIQ community and raises awareness of services and issues that affect them.
- > Joined the Pride in Diversity program in May 2015 to strengthen diversity training for Government officials, particularly frontline staff. The Chief Minister also called on the Canberra Business Chamber and the Community Sector to nominate “Diversity Champions” to work with Government champions to promote social inclusion and equality.
- > Provided funding to A Gender Agenda to provide support to the Transgender and Intersex community of the ACT through support, advocacy, workshops, community events, information and resources, training and community education and human rights and law reform.

The LGBTIQ Advisory Council provides Government with practical and strategic advice to support the LGBTIQ community, improve the lives of people who identify as LGBTIQ and promote an inclusive Canberra. The Council is currently progressing key pieces of work including furthering links with important human services areas such as age care, education, justice and community participation.

The AIDS Action Council of the ACT, along with its partners - A Gender Agenda, Northside Community Services, and Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, provide support services and community development activities in the ACT’s LGBTIQ communities. These support services include strengthening service provision to LGBTIQ people, who can be particularly vulnerable, at risk, or isolated. A key focus is to improve the capability and awareness in the community around LGBTIQ issues and provide LGBTIQ focussed training for employees and volunteers across the community sector. The outcomes support the development of services for LGBTIQ persons, as well projects which provide improved mental health, social and emotional wellbeing support.









# OLDER PEOPLE





# OLDER PEOPLE

The percentage of Canberrans aged over 65 years is set to double from the 2015 level of 12.2 per cent of total population to 22.5 per cent in 2062.

The *Active Ageing Framework 2015-2018* brings to life the Government's commitment to supporting seniors to be socially connected and active participants in community life through lifelong learning and social and economic engagement. Importantly, the Framework sets out how we will ensure Canberra functions as a sustainable age-friendly city for the modern world, and covers areas including employment, social participation, community and health services, housing and transportation.

- > Events and activities are incorporated into the Seniors Week Program, the ACT Seniors Card Program and their membership databases through a collaboration with, and provision of funding to, community organisations such as the Council on the Ageing ACT. These initiatives provide an opportunity for local seniors to be recognised and assist them to continue to access services and remain active in our community.
- > A free service to eligible concession card holders is offered for the collection of bulky waste. The scheme provides a booked waste collection service, where residents may have up to two cubic metres (a standard trailer load) of unwanted items removed from within their property boundary.
- > Free ACTION bus travel is offered for over 70s.
- > The Career Checkout Expo is an initiative of the Illawarra Retirement Trust Foundation being delivered in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Government to provide seniors a one-stop

- > shop for planning their future and getting the right advice about working and retirement.
- > A flexible transport bus service was launched in September 2014, to provide travel to areas within the ACT to assist their access to shopping centres, get to medical appointments or attend social events such as seniors week.
- > Access to dental services is made available at aged care facilities through the mobile dental clinic;
- > Opportunities are provided for older people to continue their learning and to socialize through learning programs and activities at ACT libraries such as bridge, arts, board games, knitting and other groups.
- > Legislation to support portable long service leave for aged care sector workers has been introduced, to ensure that those who care for our older Canberrans have access to award entitlements available to other workers in the ACT community.
- > The annual Life's Reflections Photographic Competition and Exhibition continues to promote positive community awareness of older people, the importance for older people to maintain healthy and active lifestyles, the importance and the value of intergenerational relationships, and the emerging awareness of Canberra as an age friendly city. The competition is supported by the Government and is now in its 13th year and has maintained a significant profile within the ACT community, has attracted over 1,200 individual photographers of all ages to enter the competition since its inception.

Under the *Active Ageing Framework 2015-2018*, a range of initiatives will be delivered including:

- > An IRT Checkpoint plan pilot to support mature aged workers plan for their encore careers;
- > Educating local employers about the benefits of employing mature aged workers, including through distribution of the ACT Business Chamber Mature Age Workers Toolkit to local businesses;



- > Ensuring all relevant Government grants programs include a seniors focus in their criteria to promote social inclusion and community connectedness for seniors;
- > Computer training courses for seniors and identifying opportunities for intergenerational collaboration aimed at connecting seniors within their communities;
- > Working with Government and relevant health services to support initiatives that encourage identification of and responses to elder abuse;
- > Include consideration of age friendly strategies, including investigating the feasibility of vertical age-friendly communities in the development of Government facilities.
- > Transport initiatives including the development of a cyclist code of conduct, raising awareness of road safety issues for older road users, and identifying options to extend the Flexible Bus Service to meet the specific needs of isolated seniors in future years.
- > Affordable Housing for Older People – making available two schemes which broaden the range of affordable housing options for older people. The schemes are consistent with the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Action Plan and increase the range of affordable housing options for older people across tenure and income groups. These scheme are:
  - The Affordable Rental Scheme – a model of mixed public and affordable housing properties for older public housing tenants. The scheme provides an affordable rental product and reduces the amount of rent older people on low incomes are required to pay; and
  - The Lease Licence Scheme – provides a long term affordable lease option for older people who own their own homes and are facing housing affordability issues.
- > Extension of the Bulky Waste Collection service for 2016-17. The service will provide a booked bulk waste collection service, where residents may have up to two cubic metres (a standard trailer load)

of unwanted items removed from within their property boundary. This service will be at no cost to eligible concession card holders (e.g. those in receipt of Centrelink benefits). This service may be utilised once a year for each eligible rateable residential property including residents of multi-unit developments.

## Age Friendly Suburbs

The Age Friendly Suburbs project is an ongoing expanded program, costing \$750,000, delivering a program of age friendly improvements in the suburbs of Ainslie, Weston, Monash and Kaleen.

All suburbs for age friendly suburb improvements are prioritised based on current and future demographic profiles, the location of age care facilities, and the suburb's need for additional active travel facilities.

In late 2015 consultation was conducted with residents of Ainslie and Weston, the Office of Aging and the Environment and Planning Directorate, who had met with the Council of the Ageing (COTA), to identify improvements to make it easier for older residents to get around. Construction of priority improvements commenced in May 2016 in Ainslie and Weston and is to be completed by September 2016.

Implementation of further priorities will be considered as part of the Government's ongoing maintenance programs. These are likely to include construction of new pathways and widening of some existing paths, lighting in some underpasses, provision of safer road crossing facilities, and the provision of seating at locations adjacent to community facilities.

In February 2016 the Government held new community consultations to identify issues that impede active travel by older residents around Kaleen and Monash, to develop a list of priority improvements for the two suburbs. These will be designed and constructed in the 2016-17 financial year.



# **SUPPORTING DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE & FAMILIES – INCLUDING HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & TRANSPORT**



# SUPPORTING DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE AND FAMILIES INCLUDING HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND TRANSPORT

The wellbeing of disadvantaged people and families is one of the most important responsibilities of governments and the wider community. The Government continues to implement important reform to the support service system for vulnerable children and families. Equal access to housing and transport are key to ensuring all Canberrans can fully participate in our community.

## SERVICES WITH DIGNITY

Whole of government approaches through the Human Services Blueprint include a mix of prevention and early interventions initiatives to improve the way human services are delivered across Canberra. Specific measures also provide better homelessness support, referral services, and family support to ensure that all Canberrans are able to fully participate in strong, healthy and inclusive communities. The Blueprint is a long-term plan for community, health, education and justice systems to work together as one system.

Further to this the Government has been working to provide a cohesive service to our most vulnerable families:

- > Three Better Services Initiatives have received a total of \$3.2 million in funding over 2014-16 to improve how the government and community can work together to meet the needs of people facing significant life challenges.
  - The Initiatives of Human Services Gateway; the West Belconnen Local Services Network; and Strengthening Families are working to achieve the Blueprint vision of increasing social and economic participation of all Canberrans.
- > Strengthening Families - a Better Services flagship initiative focused on achieving service system improvements through greater coordination and integration of service access and delivery across the human services system:
  - Strengthening Families has established the systemic supports required to authorise Lead Workers across programs and service systems to tailor service offers to meet the needs of individual families, and to address the barriers to achieving positive outcomes.
  - To date the Strengthening Families program has supported 65 families, including 293 individual family members.
  - Children aged 3-11 years make up 38% of participants with young people aged 12-18 years making up a further 17%. In addition, 31% of families identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families, 14% of families were from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, and 52% of families were single parent households.
- > The Better Services Local Services Network in West Belconnen through an innovative Collective Impact project in partnership with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).



- A community owned scorecard will be co-designed with local residents to identify key measures of success in meeting the needs of local children and families. This project will contribute to the local priority areas- creating a better start for children, and building strong families.
  - The project will enable local services to better meet the needs of disadvantaged children and families by targeting services and supports to areas of greatest need, and with the highest potential to create long lasting social change.
- > An initiative under Better Services where local services and schools in West Belconnen will be working collaboratively to implement an Information Sharing Protocol which will enable services to support people with multiple needs without them having to tell their information multiple times. The Information Sharing Protocol will also support greater choice and control for people around how they tell and share their own information, including through an innovative My Family online profile tool due to be launched in the second half of 2016.
  - > The My Family program which will be complemented by an innovative 'My Canberra' online information portal also due to be launched in the second half of 2016. 'My Canberra' is an intuitive directory that supports individuals to find the right service, at the right time, and right for them. 'My Canberra' will also support social inclusion through connections to community groups, events, and facilities. For example, 'My Canberra' will assist with gaining access to information on peer based groups, sporting groups, festivals, and local community facilities.
  - > The Mobile Dental Clinic provides preventative and restorative dental services at aged care facilities, from a purpose-built mobile dental facility. The Clinic provides services to some of Canberra's vulnerable people and those who have restricted mobility. The Mobile Dental Clinic aims to reduce barriers to access, such as cost and transport, and increase the levels of preventative and early intervention treatments provided to vulnerable groups.
- > Through the 2016-17 Budget an additional primary health care service, like that established in 2014 at the Early Morning Centre at UnitingCare in the city will be established. The service will include GPs and/or nurse practitioners providing primary health care and links to further services on a regular part-time basis at a location that already caters for vulnerable people and/or on a mobile basis. Existing premises will be utilised, along with MBS and PBS funded GP services.
  - > A customer service platform within Access Canberra and additional online services will be facilitated to improve efficiency across the ACT public service and offer a better interface for customers of Government services.
  - > The commitment as part of the 2016-17 Budget to continue the Justice and Community Safety Directorate's extended Throughcare program for one year with funding of \$1.141 million. The Throughcare model provides assistance to detainees pre-release and for up to 12 months post-release. Detainees are assisted to overcome barriers around re-entry across five core areas: accommodation, health care, income, connections, and basic needs. This has a flow-on benefit to the detainees' families and community.
  - > Free access is available to books, eBooks and other resources through Libraries ACT, loaning nearly three million items annually, as well as providing free access to computers, internet, internet-enabled devices and wifi. Library branches remain places of respite from weather conditions for homeless people, as well as a means for them to access services through the use of free technology.

- > In February 2016, Libraries ACT held a Food for Fines campaign in partnership with OzHarvest Canberra. Library members with overdue items were encouraged to participate in Food for Fines and donate tins or packets of non-perishable food in exchange for fines being removed from their membership record. All food was donated to OzHarvest Canberra to provide support to charities across the region.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- > Common Ground was developed to address homelessness in the ACT. Common Ground Canberra was completed in 2014-15. Common Ground creates a cohesive community in which people who were previously homeless can sustain long term accommodation. This is achieved through the coordinated delivery of stable accommodation with on-site and assertive support and by creating a 'normalised', inclusive community environment. All 40 units in Common Ground have been allocated to people who have previously experienced homelessness (20 units) and to affordable renters (20 units).
- > Housing ACT continues to work closely with community and government support agencies to ensure tenants have the appropriate level of support to enable them to sustain their tenancies and to live, contribute and engage positively in the community.
- > Increasing affordable rental housing and better targeting housing assistance to help low income households is a priority for the Government:
- > The ACT Government is implementing taxation reform to reduce the cost of purchasing properties by abolishing stamp duty over a 20-year period.
- > The 2016-17 Indicative Land Release Program which proposes a release target of 4,550 residential dwelling sites, with a grand total of 17,780 residential dwelling sites released over the four-year program supports the Government's commitment to maintaining housing affordability in the Territory. The program also continues to make provision for a range of community land releases to provide housing options for an ageing population and for child care services. This program will deliver new housing supply above demand, keeping downward pressure on housing prices, accommodating the Government's affordable housing targets and initiatives, and establishing an inventory of serviced land.
- > Grants to low income households assist with the uptake of solar energy by overcoming up-front cost barriers. These grants allow low income households to realise the cost of living benefits of solar panel ownership.
- > The Government has also made a submission to the Commonwealth-led Affordable Housing Working Group, as it seeks to identify potential financial and structural reform models to increase the national supply of affordable housing. Housing affordability is a national issue and it demands a national response. The ACT Government is interested in pursuing further multi-lateral and bi-lateral discussions with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions; a national approach is vital to achieving delivery of effective affordable housing solutions.
- > The Government will introduce a Disability Concession Scheme commencing from 1 July 2016. The Scheme will provide a conveyance duty concession to any entity (including individuals) who purchase a home to be used as the principal place of residence for a person with a disability. The intention is to encourage long-term private accommodation options for adults with a disability.

## Public housing renewal

- > The Government's public housing renewal program is delivering the biggest upgrade to Canberra's ageing public housing since self-government in 1989. The program will improve outcomes for public housing tenants with more sustainable housing that better meets their needs.
- > Under the public housing renewal program the Government will build or buy 1,288 public housing properties to replace existing multi unit public housing along Northbourne Avenue and in other locations around Canberra. Significant progress has been made on this initiative, including commencing construction on over 350 new public housing properties, purchasing over 100 properties for public housing and engaging with existing public housing tenants to support them in relocating to improved accommodation as part of this program
- > Renewing Canberra's public housing portfolio means that the Government can: better support the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our community; break down aggregations of disadvantage; and better integrate public housing and public housing tenants into the community. This investment will see a greater level of social inclusion and equality and mean that Canberra's communities of the future will be sustainable – environmentally, socially and economically.

## THE BEST START

Provisions to support students in their training which are built into all ACT funded training initiatives. Skilled Capital, the ACT's signature entitlement training program, and the Australian Apprenticeships (User Choice) program both provide loadings of

\$500 for registered training organisations to provide supports to a range of eligible students. Registered training organisations may also apply for further financial supports (up to \$3,000 in some cases) to meet specific additional training needs of students.

## ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

The ACT Government is also providing high quality and accessible public transport options:

- > The Government is providing \$1m in funding for the design and construction of upgrades to around 100 bus stops to meet Disability Standards. The upgrades will include improved wheelchair accessibility to bus stop boarding areas, tactile for vision impaired customers, and access paths.
- > All new bus fleet purchases are to be Disability Discrimination Act compliant.
- > The Special Needs Transport Service now delivers nearly 400 eligible students to 34 specialised and mainstream schools in the Canberra region, using 46 buses and 14 taxis.
- > In 2014, the ACT Government established the Community Transport Coordination Centre as a one-stop shop for specialised transport services for people in our community who are at risk of social isolation due to a lack of access to regular transport services. This service will receive an allocation of \$600,000 in the budget to meet the costs of an expansion of services into Gungahlin.
- > The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Transport services provide wheelchair accessible transport to local Indigenous people who are at risk of social isolation due to a lack of transport alternatives. The Service is staffed by a coordinator and an indigenous trainee, and receives recurrent funding of \$190,000 in support.





# MENTAL HEALTH





# MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services provide health services directly and through partnerships with community organisations.

On 1 March 2016, the ACT's new *Mental Health Act 2015* (the Act) came into effect, giving those in the ACT living with a mental illness, or their carers and family members, greater opportunity to contribute to decisions on their treatment, care and support.

The Act, which replaced the *Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Act 1994*, creates a fresh approach to service delivery and brings the ACT's mental health legislation into line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with a *Disability and the ACT Human Rights Act*.

The Act is the result of years of consultation with people with lived experience of mental illness, together with their carers and clinicians, and is about empowering people in our community with mental illnesses and mental disorders to make critical decisions about their treatment, care and support to the best of their ability, and with the involvement of carers, close family and friends. It is also about helping them with self-management and optimising recovery.

The key principles driving the legislation create a legal environment geared toward supporting people in recovery from their illness, and providing the least restrictive care.

The services provided range from prevention and treatment to recovery and maintenance and harm minimisation. Consumer and carer participation is encouraged in all aspects of service planning and delivery. The Division works in partnership with consumers, carers and a range of government and non-government service providers to ensure the best possible outcomes for clients.

Services are delivered at a number of locations, including hospital inpatient and outpatient settings, community health centres, detention centres and other community settings including people's home. These services include:

- > ACT Wide Mental Health Services
- > Adult Mental Health Services
- > Alcohol & Drug Services
- > Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
- > Justice Health Services

Through collaborative efforts with Government Directorates and community organisations and providers the Government delivers a range of programs and services.

- > The secure mental health unit providing 15 rehabilitation and 10 acute beds is scheduled to open in August 2016.
- > A new program has been established of early identification for children presenting with emerging mental health illnesses or disorders.
- > Access to specialised services has been improved for patients at the Canberra Hospital by extending the operation of both the Alcohol and Drug and the Mental Health consultation and liaison services.
- > More adult community mental health services have been provided including a local service for the Gungahlin region, additional intensive psychogeriatric care, a self-harm diversion service, expansion of the primary care team at the Alexander Maconochie Centre, and more in-home support for people experiencing acute mental health problems.

- > The ACT Mental Health Consumer Network, Carers ACT and the Mental Health Community Coalition have received funding to ensure mental health consumers, carers and community organisations are represented in the development and delivery of mental health policy and services.
- > A range of community sector services have received funding to assist mental health consumers and their families and carers to participate in the community, examples include: Barnardos Australia provide respite and holiday camps for children of parents with mental illness, Grow provide self-help groups and medium to long term psychosocial rehabilitation to people experiencing mental illness and Woden Community Service provides an adult mental health outreach service.
- > The Government is cognisant of the mental health needs of detainees in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). ACT Corrective Services, ACT Health and Justice Health operate in conjunction with one another within the AMC to provide a continuity of quality care.
- > The Extended Throughcare program delivered by ACT Corrective Services makes referrals to appropriate community agencies including the Mental Health Detention Exit Community Outreach program to provide post-release and wrap-around support for exiting detainees.
- > The Corrections Psychological and Support Services (CPSS) Unit, established in 2013 works within ACT Corrective Services to ensure that there is adequate provision of recovery focused service delivery in partnership with ACT Justice Health. The CPSS model has been shown to assist Justice Health Services to stabilize detainees in the Crisis Support Unit (CSU), provide individually identified 1:1 support for CSU detainees, screen and assess cognitive functioning, and allow CSU detainees to exit in a timely and stable manner.
- > Funded in the 2016-17 Budget, Mental Health Follow-up for Young People and Mental Health Intensive Rehabilitation is a new outreach service for children and adolescents and a Young Peoples Assertive Mental Health Treatment Team for young people who are at high risk of developing or are experiencing serious mental illness.
- > The Government also committed through the 2016-17 Budget to design and construct accommodation to support people with mental health issues to recover and live in our community including an additional adult Step Up/Step Down facility on the southside with tenancy of up to three months.
- > The Mental Health Detention Exit Community Outreach program has been expanded for a further year. This is a community mental health service providing short term intense transitional psychosocial support for individuals with a diagnosed mental illness, who are referred from ACT Forensic Mental Health Services, to support them re-engage with the community and to gain independence following release from involuntary institutional care and/or the criminal justice system, particularly the Alexander Maconochie Centre. Since 2014 this program has also supported people with severe mental health problems, who are clinically managed by the ACT Forensic Mental Health Service, and who have engagement with the justice system and live in the community. This program will be expanded with the existing community sector DECO provider working with the Forensic Mental Health Service to provide the treatment and short term support services required to assist people with severe mental health problems leaving the new ACT Health Secure Mental Health Unit.
- > Additional intensive and specialised support for older people through the expansion of the Older Person's Mental Health Community Team will also be provided.





# LAW & JUSTICE





# LAW & JUSTICE

The ACT Government has progressed a number of initiatives to make our justice system fairer and more effective.

Key changes in the ACT Courts and Tribunal have improved access to justice by reducing waiting times. Progressing the redevelopment of the ACT Supreme and the Magistrates Court through the new ACT Courts Public Private Partnership (PPP) Project and the completion of new information technology will drive further improvements to the way justice is delivered in the ACT.

Strengthening responses to family violence including sexual assault and addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our justice system remain key law and justice priorities for the ACT Government.

The delivery of safe and effective detainee and offender management through ACT Corrective Services is holding offenders to account and providing opportunities for better integration into the community and rehabilitation. Further opportunities for diverting people away from the justice system are also being driven by the Justice Reform Program.

The Government has established the Justice Reform Program which comprises three interlinked program streams:

- > the Justice Reform Strategy,
- > the Justice Reinvestment Strategy, and
- > the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Partnership.

The three program streams have a shared focus on a common set of vulnerable people who have contact with the criminal justice system and the more intensive parts of the human services system.

The Justice Reform Strategy:

- > Is strengthening the capability of ACT Community Corrections to enable successful uptake and supervision of offenders subject to community-based sentencing options as an alternative option to full-time imprisonment. The Intensive Corrections Order (ICO) commenced on 1 March 2016. A fundamental objective is to put offenders on better pathways and reduce recidivism.
- > Is creating a two stage roll-out of phase 2 of the restorative justice program, which expanded the scheme from February 2016 to include adults and more serious offences, with the exception of sexual and domestic violence offences. The further expansion of the scheme to include sexual and domestic violence offences will occur by way of ministerial declaration, anticipated in approximately 12-18 months. The expansion of the scheme \$2.058 million over four years from 2015-16 provides an increased opportunity for the need of victims to be met and for offenders to accept responsibility for their actions with the aiming of changing future behaviour.
- > Is consulting extensively in respect of broader sentencing and related reforms with proposals to be included in a report to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice by 31 July 2016 when the Justice Reform Strategy is due to conclude. For example, expanding bail support options would be a cost-effective and socially inclusive alternative to remand. Types of services being examined include housing, transportation and employment needs of people applying for bail that might increase the likelihood of people being granted bail and improve compliance with bail conditions.

- > Is developing a whole of government strategy aimed at reducing recidivism and diverting offenders, and those at risk of becoming offenders, from the justice system.
  - > is working closely with a range of government and non-government stakeholders, over a four year period, to identify drivers of crime and criminal justice costs and then develop and implement new ways of reinvesting scarce resources – both in the community and within the prison system – in a way that results in a more cost-effective justice system that strives to improve public safety and strengthen community.
  - > is continuing to progress work in relation to economic modelling to identify savings to the community from preventing or delaying a person’s contact with justice system and how they can be reinvested.
  - > is developing a trial that will focus on targeting services and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to improve life outcomes and reduce or prevent contact with the justice system.
- > The High Density Housing Safety and Community Program is a service facilitation initiative working with residents living in 6 public housing sites along Ainslie Avenue in the Canberra City. The objectives of the program are to deliver events, activities or programs, and promote ongoing participation opportunities that:
    - prevent or reduce opportunities for crime;
    - promote community safety and security;
    - develop pro-social and law abiding community engagement; and
    - facilitate access to services that are related to justice, health, mental health, education and employment.
  - > The service provider works with high and complex needs residents who have been, are currently, or are at risk of becoming, involved in the criminal justice system. The service provider facilitates the effective coordination of existing services, as well as introduces new services that foster resident involvement by overcoming their barriers of participation, particularly of the following groups:
    - residents who have previously been, are currently, or are at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system;
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
    - women (including mother and child activities/groups);
    - children and youth; and
    - socially disengaged or isolated people.

An increase in funding from the 2015-16 budget saw an extension to service provision from the High Density Housing Safety and Community Program. The Program is an important recognition of place-based justice reinvestment in the ACT. The place based approach to justice reinvestment involves understanding the crime reduction and community strengthening impacts of programs and supports that are provided in a geographic location where the people who need them reside.

Galambany Circle Sentencing Court continues to provide culturally appropriate specialist court for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults or young people. The aims of the court includes to:

- > involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the sentencing process;
- > increase the confidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the sentencing process;
- > reduce barriers between Courts and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- > provide culturally relevant and effective sentencing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders;
- > provide the offender with support services that will assist them to overcome his or her offending behaviour;
- > reduce repeat offending in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- > provide support to victims of crime and enhance the rights and place of victims in the sentencing process;
- > through Galambany Circle Sentencing Court refer eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the Outward Bound Skills for Life Program. This program is a five day wilderness training program aimed at assisting them to develop their own self-belief, self-awareness, self-confidence, coping mechanisms, conflict resolution, resilience and leadership skills. Participants are fully supported in a culturally appropriate environment and encouraged to challenge their own perception of their limitations.

The Government has a further \$1.141 million in the 2016-17 Budget to continue the Extended Throughcare model which assists offenders' transition to the community and helps to reduce rates of recidivism. The Throughcare model provides assistance to detainees pre-release and for up to 12

months post-release. It blends re-integration planning with rehabilitation needs so that detainees have access to targeted support and interventions.

The Government has also agreed to fund new infrastructure in the AMC to support and enhance detainee industries. The first stage in the development of industries capacity will include the expansion of existing laundry facilities. The 2016-17 Budget provides funding to employ additional staff to support the extended laundry operations which will provide additional employment opportunities for detainees. A bakery facility will be constructed, and a multi-purpose facility will also be built. By developing work industries within the AMC, detainees will be assisted to build work skills that will support their rehabilitation and reintegration back into society.

The Government has provided further funding in the 2016-17 Budget to support ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) through:

- > the implementation of an offender management system;
- > new accommodation premises and fit-out for ACTCS and Community Corrections client service areas; and
- > replacement of ACTCS' analogue radio system with digital radio, which will be connected to the Territory Radio Network system.

Through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Partnership 2015-2018, launched in July 2015, a targeted approach is being taken to addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT criminal justice system through the identification of three key objectives which detail targets, measures, actions and areas of accountability.



- > The three objectives of the new Agreement are:
  - reducing over-representation by reducing recidivism and increasing access to diversionary programs;
  - improving access to justice services; and
  - improving data collection and reporting.
- > The objectives have been identified to focus specifically on priority areas where there is an identified need. This includes addressing high incarceration rates for both adults and youth and over representation in the criminal justice system.

The ACT Government has demonstrated its ongoing commitment to an efficient and effective justice system through the construction of a new ACT Law Courts precinct that will improve access to justice for all court users. The new facility will have modern courtrooms equipped with the latest technologies to support the efficient and safe conduct of trials and hearings. It will also provide dedicated facilities for vulnerable witnesses, domestic violence support agencies and community service agencies. The facility will accommodate the increasing use of alternative dispute resolution with a number of dedicated mediation suites. As the Territory's pathfinder Public Private Partnership project, the project demonstrates the Government's commitment to working innovatively in partnership with the private sector to deliver the infrastructure needs of Canberra.

In conjunction with this major project the Government has provided:

- > \$10.6 million in capital funding in prior year budgets for a new integrated Courts and Tribunal case management system. Once established, the case management system will provide a platform for a range of online services that will improve court and tribunal accessibility.
- > recurrent funding for the appointment of a 5th Supreme Court Judge in the 2016-17 financial year to reduce waiting times in the ACT Supreme Court; and
- > funding for acting judicial officers has contributed to a reduction in the backlog of pending cases in the Supreme Court. In particular, the Report of Government Services (ROGS) indicates that the number of civil matters pending for more than 24 months was reduced from 381 in 2010-11 to 66 in 2014-15 while the number of civil matters pending for more than 12 months dropped from 800 in 2009-10 to 210 in 2014-15. This is against a background of a steady increase in total civil lodgements.
- > a further \$150 million in capital funding for a new ACT Law Courts precinct.



# EDUCATION



# EDUCATION

All children and young people have the right to a high quality education so they can flourish and become the best they can be. The Government is implementing a range of major initiatives for families, schools, teachers and school leaders, to ensure they are all well supported to provide a high quality inclusive and equitable education to all students.

A strong education correlates directly to social inclusion, civic and political engagement and improved life outcomes. The three major initiatives to improve social inclusion and equality in schools are the Student Resources Allocation, ICT in Schools and the *Schools for All* program.

## Student Resource Allocation (SRA)

The SRA is one component of the broader reform agenda set out in the Australian Government's Gonski Review of Funding for Schooling Final Report (2011). The principle of student needs based school funding is to more effectively respond to need, drive broader school reform, value for money and accountability. It is also to ensure transparency and clarity of funding across schools and for school communities.

The SRA funding model is structured around:

- > Core Funding which is made up of Base Funding, Per Student Funding, and adjustments for Stages of Schooling (weightings); and
- > Needs Based Loadings to address student needs of key equity groups, which will be implemented through a staged approach. These include:
  - Students from Low Socio-Economic (SES) backgrounds (2016);

- Students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (2017);
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (2017); and
- Students with Disability (2018).

About 76% of a Canberra public school's budget for 2016 is being provided through the Student Resource Allocation (SRA) funding model. This consists of Core Funding and additional needs based funding for students with low socio-economic backgrounds.

- > The balance of school budgets in 2016 will be based on a student needs form, the School Operational Allocation and preschool allocation. These are determined using the previous funding methodologies.

The following reviews are currently in progress for school budgets in 2017:

- > English as an Additional Language or Dialect;
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status;
- > Students with Disability;
- > School Operational Allocation; and
- > Student Support in Secondary Schools Allocations.



## ICT in Schools

ACT Public Schools are using cutting-edge technology to ensure that students can build their ICT capabilities in order to analyse information, solve problems and communicate effectively in a highly digital society.

- > The implementation of a centrally managed ICT network is delivering equitable and reliable access in an efficient and cost effective way for all ACT Public Schools.
- > Over 2,500 wireless access points have been deployed across the 29 secondary schools, making all students in ACT Public Schools, regardless of their socio economic status, the best connected in the country with the highest speed internet connections of any education jurisdiction in Australia. The Sustaining Smart Schools initiative forms the second phase of this project, which will upgrade wireless connectivity across all primary schools and preschools by June 30, 2017.

## Schools for All

*Schools for All* is a program established to implement the 50 recommendations of the Report from the *Expert Panel on Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour* over a 3 year period.

\$7 million has been allocated to implement a range of initiatives involving the Government, human services Directorates, the Association of Independent Schools and the Catholic Education Office.

The outcomes of the *Schools for All* Program will be evidenced through:

- > Greater connection of schools to their communities
- > Supports and programs that meet the needs of students and staff
- > Increased investment in teachers and quality teaching practices
- > Physical environments that facilitate good outcomes
- > More accessible, best practice policies consistently implemented
- > Improved accountability and open communication.



