



ACT Budget Submission 2025–26

Community Infrastructure, Governance Capability and Sector Sustainability

Submitted by: ClubsACT

For: ACT Treasury – Budget Statement B (Wellbeing Framework)



Executive Summary – Budget Statement B Indicators

Community clubs materially contribute to the ACT's wellbeing outcomes as articulated in Budget Statement B, particularly across:

- Strong, Vibrant Economy
- A Fair and Safe Community
- Healthy and Active Living
- Environmental Sustainability and Liveability
- Strong Institutions and Good Governance

This submission proposes targeted budget measures that directly support these indicators while reducing longer-term fiscal risk through prevention, transition and capability building.

Five Key Recommendations (Quick Reference)

1. Concessional Water Tariffs for Community and Sporting Infrastructure
2. Community Club Sustainability and Transition Fund
3. Targeted Utilities and Cost-of-Service Relief
4. Governance and Training Support Fund (Mandatory Capability Uplift)
5. Formal Recognition of Community Clubs as Infrastructure Providers

Introduction

Fiscal Payoff and Community Benefit – Overview

While the proposed measures represent a modest short-term budget outlay, they are designed as preventative investments that reduce the ACT Government’s medium-term fiscal exposure and service delivery risk. By stabilising the operating environment for community infrastructure providers, the measures help avoid higher downstream costs associated with facility closures, emergency intervention funding, deferred maintenance failures, and increased reliance on government-delivered community services.

Importantly, community clubs and not-for-profit facilities already deliver a significant share of local sporting, recreational, and social infrastructure at a lower cost than direct government provision. Supporting their continued operation preserves this value and defers the far greater capital and operating costs that would otherwise fall to future budgets.

Community Benefit

- Maintaining access to local sporting, recreational, and social facilities;
- Preserving volunteer-supported community services and programs;
- Sustaining employment and skills pathways within community organisations;
- Avoiding replacement and operating costs to government arising from the loss of community infrastructure.

Taken together, the proposal aligns with Budget Statement B’s invest-to-save and risk-avoidance philosophy, balancing short-term fiscal restraint with long-term sustainability and wellbeing outcomes.

1. Wellbeing Framework Alignment – Explicit Indicators

Wellbeing Domain	Relevant Budget Statement B Indicators
Strong, Vibrant Economy	Employment participation; organisational productivity; skills and capability
A Fair and Safe Community	Social connection; access to community services; institutional trust
Healthy and Active Living	Physical activity participation; access to sporting infrastructure
Environmental Sustainability and Liveability	Green space maintenance; water-efficient asset management
Strong Institutions and Good Governance	Governance capability; regulatory compliance; effective use of public funds

2. Budget Measures – Indicators, Costings and Compliance

Policy Topic A: Community Infrastructure Cost Pressures

Recommendation 1: Concessional Water Tariffs for Community and Sporting Infrastructure

Budget Statement B Alignment: Healthy and Active Living – access to sporting infrastructure; Environmental Sustainability and Liveability – stewardship of green space.

Proposal

Create a concessional water tariff class for:

- Not-for-profit sporting facilities;
- Club-owned sporting fields, greens and courts;
- Community facilities with demonstrated public access.

Indicative Costings (Annual)

- Low option: \$1.0–\$1.5 million (limited to high-water-use sporting assets)
- Medium option: \$2.0–\$3.0 million (broader not-for-profit eligibility)

Grant / Eligibility Framework

- Registered not-for-profit organisations;
- Demonstrate majority community or sporting use;
- Provide public or member-based access rather than commercial hire only.

Compliance and Accountability

- Annual declaration of facility use;
- Water-efficiency plans required for high-volume users;
- Periodic review administered by EPSDD and ICON Water in consultation with ACT Treasury (CMTEDD).

Policy Topic B: Sector Sustainability and Orderly Transition

Recommendation 2: Community Club Sustainability and Transition Fund

Budget Statement B Alignment: Strong, Vibrant Economy – economic participation and employment; A Fair and Safe Community – continuity of local services; Long-term Fiscal Sustainability – invest-to-save transition.

Proposal

Establish a Community Club Sustainability and Transition Fund to support:

- Diversification projects aligned with community use;
- Capital works that enable non-gaming revenue;
- Technology, service and business model transition.

Indicative Costings

- Low option: \$3–4 million over 4 years
- Medium option: \$6–8 million over 4 years

Grant Structure

- Competitive, merit-based grants;
- Co-contribution required (cash or in-kind);
- Priority for projects reducing long-term revenue risk.

Compliance and Accountability

- Business case required demonstrating sustainability benefits;
- Milestone-based payments;
- Acquittal and outcomes reporting aligned to wellbeing indicators; administered by ACT Treasury (CMTEDD).

Policy Topic C: Essential Service Cost Pressures and Risk Prevention

Recommendation 3: Targeted Utilities and Cost-of-Service Relief

Budget Statement B Alignment: Strong Communities – service continuity; Efficient Government – avoiding downstream costs.

Proposal

Provide time-limited, targeted relief for:

- Energy and essential utilities;
- Mandatory regulatory and compliance costs.

Indicative Costings

- Low option: \$1.5–2.0 million per annum
- Medium option: \$3.0–4.0 million per annum (broader eligibility)

Eligibility Criteria

- Not-for-profit status;
- Demonstrated delivery of community infrastructure or services;
- Financial need evidenced through audited accounts.

Compliance

- Relief capped per entity;
- Annual reassessment to ensure temporary, not structural, reliance; administered by ACT Treasury (CMTEDD) in coordination with relevant utilities.

Policy Topic D: Governance Capability and Institutional Resilience

Recommendation 4: Governance and Training Support Fund (Mandatory Capability Uplift)

Budget Statement B Alignment: Strong Institutions and Good Governance – governance capability; Strong, Vibrant Economy – organisational productivity; Trust in Public Administration – effective grant use.

Proposal

Establish a Governance and Training Support Fund for clubs and not-for-profit organisations to support:

- Board and committee governance training;
- Financial, risk and compliance capability;
- Executive and senior management leadership development.

Mandatory Training Condition

As a condition of eligibility for ACT Government grants:

- At least two board directors or management committee members must complete governance training aligned with registration obligations every two years, and
- Senior managers must complete approved compliance or leadership training within the same cycle.

Indicative Costings

- Low option: \$0.8–1.2 million per annum
- Medium option: \$1.5–2.0 million per annum

Eligible Training

- Accredited governance providers;
- ACT Government-approved training programs;
- Sector-specific governance courses;
- Industry-specific training conducted by industry associations.

Compliance and Grant Conditions

- Training completion certificates required at grant application or acquittal;
- Central register of approved training maintained by government;
- Transitional arrangements for existing grant recipients; administered by ACT Treasury (CMTEDD) with sector partners.

Policy Topic E: Recognition of Clubs as Community Infrastructure

Recommendation 5: Formal Recognition of Community Clubs as Infrastructure Providers

Budget Statement B Alignment: Fair Access to Services; Strong Communities.

Proposal

Formally recognise community clubs as community infrastructure providers within ACT budget and grant frameworks; this also recognises the smoke and heat refuge status of industry clubs.

Indicative Costings

- Minimal direct cost; primarily policy and eligibility alignment
- Potential future access to existing infrastructure funding pools

Compliance

- Recognition contingent on demonstrated public benefit;
- Periodic review to ensure alignment with wellbeing objectives; administered by ACT Treasury (CMTEDD).

3. Aggregate Fiscal Impact (Indicative)

Measure	Low Option (p.a.)	Medium Option (p.a.)	Low Option (4-year total)	Medium Option (4-year total)
Water tariff concessions	\$1.0–1.5m	\$2.0–3.0m	\$4.0–6.0m	\$8.0–12.0m
Transition Fund (averaged)	\$0.75–1.0m	\$1.5–2.0m	\$3.0–4.0m	\$6.0–8.0m
Utilities relief	\$1.5–2.0m	\$3.0–4.0m	\$6.0–8.0m	\$12.0–16.0m
Governance & training fund	\$0.8–1.2m	\$1.5–2.0m	\$3.2–4.8m	\$6.0–8.0m
Total (approx.)	\$4.0–5.5m	\$8.0–11.0m	\$16.2–22.8m	\$32.0–44.0m

These costs are modest relative to the replacement cost of lost community infrastructure and align with Budget Statement B’s preventative investment philosophy.



Additional Budget Measures – Inquiry Alignment Addendum

ACT Clubs Industry Inquiry – Budget Statement B Alignment

Purpose: To identify targeted, budget-appropriate measures that align the 2025–26 ACT Budget with the key findings and recommendations emerging from the ACT Clubs Industry Inquiry.

Context

ClubsACT welcomes the ACT Government’s wellbeing-led budget approach and the proposed measures supporting community infrastructure, governance capability and organisational sustainability. This addendum identifies additional, low-risk budget measures that respond directly to issues raised through the Clubs Industry Inquiry and support orderly transition, fiscal sustainability and continued delivery of community outcomes.

1. Policy-driven Revenue Transition Support

Inquiry Issue: Long-term gaming machine reductions and declining real gaming revenue have materially reduced clubs’ capacity to cross-subsidise community infrastructure and services.

Budget Alignment Proposal: Recognise policy-driven revenue contraction within the Community Club Sustainability and Transition Fund by prioritising clubs demonstrably impacted by historical or future gaming machine reductions; and frame transition funding as support for orderly adjustment to government-led reform.

Wellbeing Alignment: Strong, Vibrant Economy; A Fair and Safe Community; Long-term Fiscal Sustainability.

2. Planning and Redevelopment Facilitation for Community Clubs

Inquiry Issue: Clubs’ ability to diversify is frequently constrained by planning controls, Crown lease conditions and redevelopment approval complexity.

Budget Alignment Proposal: Resource a Planning and Redevelopment Facilitation Stream to fast-track eligible club redevelopment proposals; provide technical and planning assistance for diversification projects; and support alignment with Territory planning and housing objectives.

Wellbeing Alignment: Strong Communities; Efficient Government; Environmental Sustainability and Liveability.

3. Insurance Cost Pressures for Sporting and Community Facilities

Inquiry Issue: Insurance premiums for sporting and community facilities have increased sharply, creating material cost pressure and risk exposure.

Budget Alignment Proposal: Explicitly recognise insurance premiums as an eligible cost under targeted cost-of-service relief and/or an allowable expenditure under sustainability and transition grants.



Wellbeing Alignment: A Fair and Safe Community; Strong Institutions and Good Governance.

4. Harm-minimisation and Regulatory Compliance Transition Costs

Inquiry Issue: Enhanced harm-minimisation and regulatory requirements impose significant capital and operating costs on clubs.

Budget Alignment Proposal: Enable transition funding to support digital and compliance system upgrades; implementation of evidence-based harm-minimisation technologies; and associated governance and operational changes.

Wellbeing Alignment: Strong Institutions and Good Governance; A Fair and Safe Community; Trust in Regulation.

5. Interaction with the Community Contributions Scheme

Inquiry Issue: Mandatory community contributions, when combined with declining revenue, reduce clubs' capacity to maintain facilities and services.

Budget Alignment Proposal: Commit to reviewing the interaction between sustainability measures and mandatory contributions; or allow transition funding to offset demonstrated contribution impacts during adjustment periods.

Wellbeing Alignment: A Fair and Safe Community; Sustainable Service Delivery.

Conclusion

This submission presents wellbeing-aligned, fiscally responsible measures that protect existing community assets, reduce future government liabilities, strengthen governance and accountability, and deliver measurable Budget Statement B outcomes. ClubsACT submits that these proposals represent low-risk, high-value investments consistent with the ACT Government's wellbeing-led budget strategy. The additional measures do not alter the Government's policy direction; provide practical alignment with Inquiry evidence; support orderly transition and institutional resilience; and reduce long-term fiscal and community risk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Shannon".

Craig Shannon

Chief Executive Officer

ClubsACT

22 December 2025