

## ACT 2025-26 Budget Consultation - Budget Submission

Submitted via: [ACT Budget Consultation Portal](#)

### Making Participatory Budgeting a permanent part of the ACT budget process.

**Summary:** The Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy (CAPaD) proposes that the ACT Government:

1. **Fund a further participatory budgeting (PB) trial** in the 2025-26 budget, similar to the successful Better Suburbs Program of 2018.
2. **Embed participatory budgeting as a standing feature** of the ACT budget process.
3. **Conduct a public education campaign** to ensure ACT citizens understand how participatory budgeting operates.

### Background and Rationale

Building on the success of previous PB trials—the **Better Suburbs Program (2018, \$1.9 million allocation)** and the **Fostering Neighbourhood Democracy trials (2023)**—we seek to establish participatory budgeting as a core element of ACT’s democratic process.

Evaluations of these trials underscore the effectiveness of PB in fostering citizen engagement and improving government transparency:

- **Better Suburbs Program (2018) Evaluation Recommendations included:**
  - *“The ACT Government should continue PB as it is an effective tool for citizen engagement—particularly in helping citizens understand the complexities of allocating limited resources.”*
  - *“PB should be extended to other directorates to cover discretionary grants and capital funding.”*
- **Fostering Neighbourhood Democracy (2023) Evaluation:**
  - *“If government wants to build community connectivity, capacity, and resilience, further PB trials should be supported through long-term research to assess their impact.”*

### Proposal for 2025-26 Budget Allocation

#### 1. Fund a Participatory Budgeting Trial (\$2 million allocation)

- Modelled after the Better Suburbs Program, this trial would involve community members in the decision-making process for allocating a defined portion of the public budget.
- The program should include both discretionary capital funding and discretionary grants.

#### 2. Establish PB as a Standing Feature of the ACT Budget Process

- Commit to annual or biennial PB initiatives across multiple directorates.
- Develop a governance framework to institutionalize PB as part of the budget cycle.

Mail: Unit 1 16 Berrigan Crescent, O’Connor ACT 2602

Email: [secretary@canberra-alliance.org.au](mailto:secretary@canberra-alliance.org.au) <https://canberra-alliance.org.au/> BlueSky: @CAPADAUS

Active Democracy Australia <https://activedemocracy.org.au> (a project of the CAPaD)

