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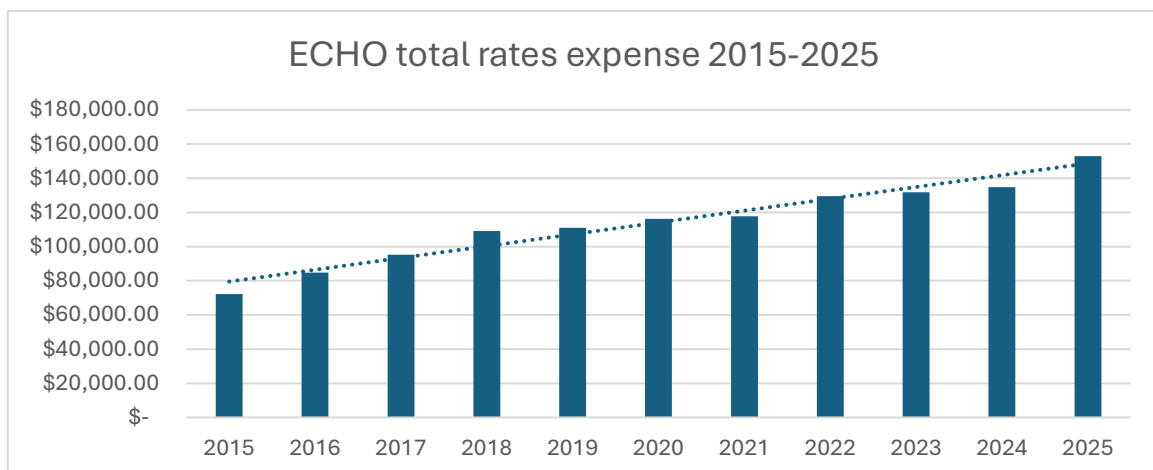
ACT Budget Consultation 2026-27 Submission

Environmental Collective Housing Organisation (ECHO) is a not-for-profit registered community housing provider located in the Inner North of Canberra. We provide affordable, secure rental housing for people on low to middle incomes through a mix of income-based and affordable tenancies.

Our work as a registered community housing provider directly supports the Housing and Home domain of the ACT Wellbeing Framework and also contributes to the Health, Identity and Belonging, Living Standards, Safety and Social Connection domains.

Ongoing from the 2026-27 Budget, ECHO would like to see **the mechanism that currently allows for homeowners to access a concession on their land rates (the Pensioner Rates Rebate) to also be accessible to registered community housing providers, for properties where the tenants receive a pension from Services Australia or the Department of Veterans' Affairs with entitlement to a Pensioner Concession Card, or a Veteran Gold Card and are paying less than market rent.** Allowing access to this mechanism recognises that ECHO and other registered community housing providers do not charge nor receive market rental income from homes tenanted by pensioners.

ECHO's income is derived entirely from the rent we collect from tenants, and we do not receive any additional funding. Property rates are one of our largest expenses, currently at 26% of rent collected in the 2025 financial year. We have seen our rates expenditure increase more than double over the past ten years, from \$72 119 in 2015 to \$152 994 in 2025.



Allowing ECHO to access the Pensioner Rates Rebate concession would enable us to direct resources towards other projects which would improve tenant wellbeing, participation and comfort, such as water tank installation, community activities and tenant-initiated improvements.