



**ACT 2010-2011  
Budget Snapshot**

**5 May 2010**



## About ACTCOSS

ACTCOSS acknowledges that Canberra has been built on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people. We pay our respects to their elders and recognise the displacement and disadvantage they have suffered as a result of European settlement. We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and ongoing contribution to the ACT community.

The ACT Council of Social Service Inc (ACTCOSS) is the peak representative body for not-for-profit community organisations, people living with disadvantage and low-income citizens of the Territory.

ACTCOSS is a member of the nationwide COSS network, made up of each of the state and territory Councils and the national body, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

ACTCOSS' objectives are a community in which all people have the opportunities and resources needed to participate in and benefit from social and economic life and the development of a dynamic, collaborative and viable community sector.

The membership of the Council includes the majority of community based service providers in the social welfare area, a range of community associations and networks, self-help and consumer groups and interested individuals.

ACTCOSS receives funding from the Community Services Program (CSP) which is funded by the ACT Government.

ACTCOSS advises that this document may be publicly distributed, including by placing a copy on our website.

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## Overview

The 2010-11 Budget doesn't provide the 'light at the end of the tunnel' many community organisations are looking for, as they continue to support an increasing number of vulnerable Canberrans.

There has been a reported increase of 12% in demand for services and over 50% of organisations have reported they are not meeting demand for their services.<sup>1</sup> More than 23,000 overtime hours were paid in the 2008-09 financial year,<sup>2</sup> as workers struggled to keep up with the need for service provision.

While the community sector indexation of 3.3% is welcome, it will not go far in meeting this growing need. With a range of significant issues on the horizon for the community sector (such as the pay-equity wages case) investment is needed now to ensure much-needed service provision into the future.

There are a range of welcome initiatives in this budget, but they are small in number and in funding. Highlights include:

- \$5.661 million over 4 years for 'Support for Out-of-Home Care'
- \$1.95 million over 4 years to prevent 'Violence Against Women and Children'
- \$1.825 million over 4 years to 'Upgrade Energy (Electricity and Gas) Concessions'
- \$157,000 'Walk-In Centre Initiative'
- \$618,000 over 4 years for a 'New Jury Courtroom'
- \$9.468 million over 4 years for 'Growth in Home and Community Care Services'
- \$750,000 capital funding to refurbish the 'Early Morning Drop-In Centre'

The significant funding in this Budget is directed towards transport (\$97 million) and infrastructure (\$183 million in new capital works projects for 2010-11).

There are also areas of identified need that have missed out. The Budget papers show a significant increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people receiving support under Child Protection or other services – yet there are no significant initiatives in this Budget to meet this need.

While the Government has made a commitment to produce a co-morbidity strategy, no resources for this has been made available in this budget.

It is disappointing to note there was no further investment in interpreter services which is consistently raised as a major concern for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Despite significant changes in the provision of services to children and young people there is no mention of the Young People's Plan or the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council. Other Ministerial Advisory bodies are referenced, as are other significant plans.

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<sup>1</sup> ACOSS *Australian Community Sector Survey 2008-09 – ACT Report 2010*

<sup>2</sup> HBA Consulting *Review of the Industrial Arrangements in the ACT Community Sector 2010*

We cannot continue to wait until things reach crisis before we intervene. Early intervention and investment in services will produce social and economic dividends in the future. This Budget was a missed opportunity to support vulnerable Canberrans to be part of our 'growing city'.

# Community Sector Viability

## Selected Initiatives

- **3.3% 'Community Sector Indexation'**  
Calculated on the existing indexation formula, indexation shows a slight increase from the 2009-10 financial year, resulting in an indexation figure of 3.3% for ACT Government service funding agreements in 2010-11.
- **\$2.5 million additional funding for the 'Working with Vulnerable People Checks'**  
Building on funding allocated in 2008-09 this will allow the screening of people at three year intervals, rather than the originally envisaged five years. \$1.7 million will be collected over 4 years by charging for the checks. Checks for volunteers will be free.
- **\$3.1 million over 2 years in 'Capital Investment to Regional Community Facilities'**  
Capital funding that will likely be directed towards the community hubs for enlarged car parks, disability access and the renovation of building facades.
- **\$210,000 over 2 years to augment the 'Government's Skills Response'**  
Funding to establish a network mechanism that will promote information sharing, coordination and collaborative approaches to skills and future workforce issues across the ACT.
- **\$9.064 million over 4 years for 'Productivity Places Program'**  
This program aims to reduce skills shortages and increase the productivity of industry and enterprises.

## Issues

The increase in community sector indexation from the 2009-10 financial year goes some way to reflecting the increased costs of providing services in the ACT community. However, the growth in demand on community sector organisations is not being met by increased funding and the only increases in funding are the minimum amounts of indexation provided each year. The Australian Community Sector Survey for 2008-09 showed an increase of 12% in demand for services in the ACT and over 50% of local organisations reported they were not meeting demand for their services. The community sector has very little capacity to respond to the increasing need for support among the ACT community.

A number of imminent changes, including the pending pay-equity case and the recent Commonwealth announcement around increases to superannuation contribution to 12% will be of concern to organisations over the coming years. ACTCOSS hopes the ACT Government will build on the lead of the Queensland Government by providing those who are working to support our most vulnerable with the recognition and remuneration they are entitled to and we hope to see such a commitment reflected in future Budgets.

Workforce issues and skills shortages in the community sector continue to impact on the viability of the sector and our ability to meet the needs of the community. The funding to coordinate and support collaborative approaches to skills shortages and workforce development is welcomed as is the investment to reduce skills shortages through the *Productivity Places Program*. It is essential the community sector is engaged in these initiatives and community sector workforce issues are considered as essential parts of the program.

While it is positive the Government has responded to information provided by organisations during the consultation period regarding the need for *Working with Vulnerable People* checks to be conducted every three years organisations or individuals will be required to pay for this service - initially proposed to be free. Government will meet the associated fees for volunteers. This will place a significant cost on organisations.

Additional funding for parking, access and facades for the new community hubs will promote and support the long-term settlement of many organisations and services at these centres. However, there is also a need to recognise and address additional new challenges which emerge including ensuring adequate reception facilities, processes for reporting and addressing building maintenance matters, IT networking and general fit-out and infrastructure issues.

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$100,000 over 2 years for ‘Traditional Owners Genealogy Project’**  
To compile the genealogies and family histories for each of the acknowledged traditional clans based in the ACT.
- **\$194,000 over 4 years for ‘Indigenous Liaison Officer’**  
This will allow the *Legal Aid Commission* to employ an *Indigenous Liaison Officer* to foster links with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT. It is intended this will reduce barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing legal services.
- **A portion of \$690,000 to ‘Prevent Violence Against Women’**  
A portion of the \$690,000 will enable the *Women’s Legal Centre* to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to access legal services in the ACT.

## Issues

ACTCOSS has a number of concerns with the funding allocated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues in the ACT 2010-11 Budget. Unfortunately, despite the ACT Government’s intention to close the gap in Aboriginal disadvantage, the allocation of resources does not reflect this commitment.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community have raised a number of concerns with the Elected Body they would like to see addressed. These include specific housing and homelessness services, and action to address the over representation of Aboriginal people involved in the legal system. Representatives of the ACT Aboriginal community would have liked to see funding allocated in the 2010-11 Budget to support the ACT Justice Agreement.

Following a 2009 estimates style consultation with ACT Government department heads, the ACT Indigenous Elected Body tabled a report identifying key areas for action. There are six priorities for funding of policy and programs identified by the ACT Elected Body, which were directly related to closing the gap between Aboriginal and other Australians. The areas included health, housing and children’s services. The ACT Indigenous Elected Body are disappointed to report none of these areas have received targeted funding in the 2010-11 Budget.

The provision of \$194,000 over four years for the Indigenous Legal Officer appears inadequate. ACTCOSS notes there is funding for 16 new Police Officers in the ACT, and one Aboriginal Liaison Officer. Furthermore, less than \$50,000 per year has been allocated to this position, raising questions regarding the hours of the Liaison Officer, the wages and operations.

While the \$50,000 per year funding to compile the genealogy project is welcome, the ACT Indigenous Elected Body report when the body was founded, \$80,000 per year was allocated for the genealogy project. This raises questions regarding whether this is indeed a new initiative, or old money simply repackaged.

# Social Impacts of Climate Change

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$2.58 million over 4 years for ‘Progressing Action on Climate Change’**  
This initiative is necessary for the Government to report against proposed greenhouse gas reduction targets, including zero net emissions. This initiative will allow the government to design and implement energy efficient projects and to meet the commitment to the COAG national energy reforms.
- **\$100,000 for the development of a ‘Biodiversity Conservation Model’**  
This will enable the development of a model, including investigations into potential offset schemes, to improve the assessment of development proposals.
- **\$100,000 for a ‘Wood Heater Survey and Educational Awareness Campaign’**  
Provides for the development and delivery of a targeted survey to identify incentives to encourage ACT residents to remove wood heaters.
- **\$33,000 over 4 years to fund a ‘Water Resources Regulatory Officer’**  
This provides for a regulatory officer to more effectively monitor the use of water resources in the ACT and participate in the proposed National Water Initiatives to facilitate the security of water resources within the Territory.
- **\$1.825 million over 4 years to ‘Upgrade Energy (Electricity and Gas) Concessions’**  
The *Energy Concession* for hardship consumers is increased by \$20 per year.
- **\$100,000 over 2 years for the trial of the ‘Bulky Waste Collection’**  
This will allow for the collection of bulky waste from households. The service will be offered free-of-charge to concession card holders.

## Issues

Climate change has been noted as one of the most pressing issues of the 21st century. Without due and appropriate action, the effects of climate change will lead to environmental, social and economic catastrophes in the decades to come.

This concession results in a 14% increase since the 2004-05 rate, however electricity prices have increased on average by 23%. The concession is a step in the right direction, however it does not make up for the costs low-income consumers will need to make.

ACTCOSS advocated subsequent to this initial increase, for an annual review process to keep pace with rising market costs. The concession scheme should continue to increase to be on par with the costs associated with rises in water and energy costs.

# Transport

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$8.3 million over 4 years for the ‘Expansion of ACTION Network Services’**  
Funding to enhance ACTION public transport services to increase use of public transport in the ACT.
- **\$1.2 million over 3 years for a ‘Transport Coordination Team’**  
Funding to coordinate the delivery of a program of transport infrastructure investment encouraging people to seek alternative means of transport, including public transport, cycling and walking.
- **\$1.4 million over 3 years for ‘Transport Strategic Planning’**  
Funding to engage in planning to support future transport decisions in the ACT, including looking at demand responsive transport, implications of future urban development, pricing and parking issues and broad sustainability goals.
- **\$86.3 million over 4 years in capital funding for the new ‘Transport for Canberra Program’**  
Capital funding for increased services, driver numbers and reliability of ACTION services, building of improved bus stations and facilities and for the investigation or development of Transit Ways in areas including Belconnen to City, Northbourne Avenue, Canberra Avenue and Barry Drive.

## Issues

It is clear access to transport is an important element in enhancing social inclusion for all. People without access to transport have difficulty accessing employment, education, health and other services, cultural and social activities. People experiencing disadvantage, young people and older people, people from CALD backgrounds, people with a disability and people on low incomes are all at risk of transport disadvantage and therefore social exclusion. For this reason the large amount of targeted funding for transport services in this Budget is very welcome.

In particular, ACTCOSS welcomes the investment in coordination and strategic planning for transport services which we hope will support the development of a more cohesive and less fragmented transport system. It is important people experiencing disadvantage are engaged in the process to ensure a transport system is developed that meets the needs of people at risk of social exclusion as well as furthering important environmental goals.

ACTCOSS is concerned about the proposed further increases in parking prices, as people experiencing disadvantage often have fewer choices around transport and a higher dependence on private motor vehicles as a result of living in outer areas and requiring transport outside of peak times. Therefore, it is often people with the least ability to pay who are most affected by such increases. Increases in parking prices must be matched by increased transport options and rises in concessions to ensure people are able to access these options.

It is not clear at this point what portion of the funding, if any, will be allocated to community transport, including expansion of the community bus program operating through the regional community services.

# Justice & Corrections

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$1.56 million over 4 years for ‘Resources for Escort of Prisoners’**  
To provide funding for an additional three staff at corrective services to escort prisoners to appointments.
- **\$785,000 over 4 years for ‘Youth Law Services’**  
To employ a full-time lawyer and a youth worker to maintain the legal law centre.
- **\$7.078 million over 4 years for ‘Bimberi Youth Justice Centre Operational Costs’**  
Meet the needs of staffing, building maintenance and general operational costs.
- **\$618,000 over 4 years for a ‘New Jury Courtroom’**  
This recurrent funding provides for the operation of a new jury courtroom in the Magistrates Court building, which could increase accessibility to court rooms for people with a disability as well as utilising remote audio-visual technology to support women and girls who are victims of crime and/or primary witnesses.

## Issues

While there are a range of welcome initiatives in the justice and corrections area, there are unaddressed needs relating to Human Rights and the delivery of services associated with the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).

Failure to invest in through-care and post release programs puts at risk the rehabilitation outcomes of prisoners in the AMC. Connections with both clinical and community mental health services and alcohol and other drug support services need to be made prior to release through effective discharge planning and transitional care arrangements. Currently too many prisoners continue to ‘fall through the cracks’ and as a result are at risk of reoffending and returning to prison.

Extra funding is needed to provide prisoners access to confidential counselling by trained non-custodial staff. Currently there is a staffing shortage of custodial officers, additional funding is required to address this issue. The funding will ensure the human rights of prisoners are upheld by minimising the number of lockdowns and restrictions on access of prisoners to non-government organisations providing services to the AMC. Additionally adequate resourcing of the AMC (including staffing) may improve current case management systems which could indeed be strengthened.

Investment in community legal centres and Legal Aid is welcome, as people in the ACT continue to struggle to access legal services. ACTCOSS is disappointed no funding was made available for a mental health legal centre, as this has been consistently identified as a gap in the ACT.

Once again there was no additional funding specifically allocated to the Human Rights Commission. To build a human rights culture in the ACT, ongoing education and awareness programs are required.

Delays to the new Supreme Court forward design associated with site selection, contributes to further delays to this vital infrastructure project, which in turn further delays an accessible Supreme Court building and equitable access to justice for people with disabilities.

# Housing & Homelessness

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$2.5 million over 3 years for ‘A Place to Call Home’ – additional housing for homeless families**

This \$2.5 million over three years is a continuation of a previous initiative which saw \$2.5 million allocated in 2008-09 from the ACT Government and \$5 million Commonwealth funding (\$10 million total). Twenty additional dwellings will be provided over five years to house homeless families and assist them to sustain their tenancies.

- **\$391,000 over 2 years for ‘Outreach Support to Sustain Tenancies in the Private Rental Market’**

This initiative builds on the homelessness and supported accommodation initiatives funded under the *Homelessness National Partnership Implementation Plan* in the 2009-10 Budget. It will provide outreach support to sustain tenancies for low-income and vulnerable families in the private rental market.

- **\$750,000 in 2010-11 for the ‘Refurbishment of the Early Morning Drop-In-Centre’**

Funding to refurbish the *Early Morning Centre* which provides support to people experiencing homelessness, in particular those who are sleeping rough.

## Issues

While ACTCOSS has welcomed the increase in capital funding for homelessness through *A Place to Call Home* and other stimulus initiatives, we note there has been no additional funding allocated for support services associated with these additional properties. We are concerned the community sector is expected to absorb the costs of providing additional support services. Services are already at capacity and have nothing more to give.

*A Place to Call Home* is not a new initiative and has been previously announced. Total funding will provide 20 houses, ten of which were forecast to be built in 2009-10. As of today only three have been provided.

ACTCOSS welcomes the funding for outreach support to sustain tenancies in the private rental market. We acknowledge this is a result of reprioritisation within Housing ACT.

The main problem we foresee is the heavy reliance on the Commonwealth’s stimulus package money which will run out at the end of the next fiscal period. This is a particular concern in the context of increasing unaffordability in the private rental market and an increasing ACT population.

The development of a comprehensive asset management plan is necessary to support the maintenance of the Territory’s largest single asset (public housing) once the Commonwealth Government’s stimulus money has been spent.

# Health

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$14 million capital funding – ‘Tuggeranong Health Centre’**  
This is part of the *Capital Asset Development Plan* (CADP) for ACT Health and builds on the governments commitment to move services out of the hospital campus to deliver some services in a community setting including chemotherapy and dialysis. It is anticipated to commence in 2011-12.
- **\$4.184 million growth funding over 4 years for ‘Cancer Services’**  
This initiative enhances capacity to meet the continuing growth in *Capital Region Cancer Service* (CRCS) activity, which is responsible for the provision of acute inpatient, outpatient and community based cancer treatment and screening services.
- **\$157,000 ‘Walk-In Centre Initiative’**  
The *Walk-In Centre* is to be integrated into the health system with the aim to reducing current waiting times at the Emergency Department.

## Issues

ACTCOSS welcomes the *Walk-In Centre* initiative for 2010-11, and we look forward to the integration of the Centre into the health system. However there is some concern the allocated \$157,000 may not be adequate to reach the objectives of the initiative, as well as roll-out a sufficient communication strategy in the community.

As reported in the Budget papers, there continues to be a waiting time of 12 months for adults seeking dental treatment. This is not adequate and ACTCOSS encourages the government to turn it's attention to improving the access and service provision of oral health for our community.

ACTCOSS would like to note commonwealth funds to sub-acute care and the flow of these funds to sub-acute care is to be welcomed.

A substantial amount of funding has been allocated to acute care needs rather than chronic or preventative, community based intervention initiatives.

# Alcohol & other Drugs (AoD)

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$7.406 million over 4 years on ‘Liquor Reforms for a Safer Community’**  
This will provide ten additional police officers to inspect and enforce responsible service of alcohol practices in licensed premises on weekends and two additional staff for the *Office of Regulatory Services* to support new liquor reforms. One-off funding is also provided for a review after 18 months of operation.

## Issues

It is disappointing there are no new resources made available for AoD community service providers in the ACT Budget, despite commitments outlined in the draft *ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Strategy 2010-2014*. The only new initiative relates to regulation and enforcement and there is no new resources for intervention and support services.

There are no funds allocated in the Budget for the provision of through-care into the ACT prison carried out by community organisations despite the requirement for additional service provision to prisoners in the AMC, through AoD funding agreements.

A number of AOD Sector priorities have been ignored by this Budget, including:

- the need for a short term rehabilitation service;
- increased access to needle and syringe program outlets – particularly for Belconnen and Gungahlin areas; and
- a continued unmet need for detoxification services for women with children in the ACT.

It is disappointing no funds have been allocated for the development of the new ACT AoD Peak Body ATODA (Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Association) despite the ACT Government’s commitment to the formation of ATODA.

In conclusion ACTCOSS notes this is the second budget in a row where no new funding has been provided for the ACT AoD sector, a sector with increasing demand for services by vulnerable Canberrans.

# Mental Health

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$4.2 million over 4 years for 'Mental Health Growth'**  
Funding for promotion, prevention and early intervention services, community based recovery and rehabilitation services, clinical services and individual advocacy. This funding will be split 50/50 between Mental Health ACT and the community mental health sector.
- **TBA number of mental health sub-acute beds over 4 years**  
Flowing from the recent National Health Reform Package, a yet to be decided number of the ACT's 22 designated sub-acute beds will be directed towards mental health.

## Issues

ACTCOSS welcomes the additional \$2.1 million invested in the community mental health sector, furthering the ACT Government's 2008 election commitment of \$14.5 million additional funds in mental health services by 2012. While the Government's commitment to expanding the capacity of the mental health sector is welcome the funding will be insufficient to meet the needs of the ACT community when spread across the large number of target areas mentioned in the Budget papers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, vocational rehabilitation, out-of-hours outreach services and individual advocacy.

It is not clear how many of the 22 new sub-acute beds allocated to the ACT through the recent COAG *National Health Reform Package* will be specifically for mental health. It is important some of these beds are allocated to the community mental health sector through the establishment of another community based *Step Up/Step Down* facility. Currently there is extremely limited capacity in the existing facility. Many people are missing out on the opportunity to access services to prevent hospital admissions or support integration to the community and recovery after hospitalisation.

Disappointingly, there was again no funding allocated to the building of the *Adolescent and Young Adult Inpatient Facility* nor to the development of a much needed mental health legal centre.

# Children, Youth & Families

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$5.661 million over 4 years for ‘Support for Out-of-Home Care’**  
This is designed to meet the current costs of children and young people in out of home care.
- **\$425,000 over 4 years for a ‘Community Based Autism Family Support and Coordination Service’**  
Support to families with a child with autism (or suspected autism) to assist families to coordinate and maximise the effectiveness of available services.
- **\$1.546 million over 4 years for ‘Early Childhood Reform and Supporting Vulnerable Families’**  
Further develop and enhance the continuum of services available to improve outcomes for children by providing coordinated services and intensive case management for vulnerable families and divert them from the statutory care and protection system. The funding will also support the implementation of the *National Partnership Agreement for Early Childhood Education and Care*.
- **\$1.1million over 4 years for ‘ACT Youth Commitment and Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership’**  
Provides for the establishment of the ACT youth commitment and the development of the *ACT Career and Transition Framework* to increase young people’s participation in education and training.

## Issues

The funding for *Support for Out of Home Care* is in addition to the \$11 million over four years allocated in the last budget (totalling \$16.661 million over five years). This increasing cost recognises the significant need in Out of Home Care but also reinforces the need for early intervention in care and protection to help manage high investment at the tertiary end.

ACTCOSS is uncertain as to the focus of the *Early Childhood Reform and Supporting Vulnerable Families* initiative. Is it a continuation of the *Integrated Family Support Project*, the *Protecting Australia’s Children Panel*, or the development of a new program? The *National Partnership Agreement for Early Childhood Education and Care* is focused on preschool program and working collaboratively with early childhood education and care providers across the diversity of settings to deliver universal access

A significant proportion of the initiatives listed above focus on people already in, or very close to, the statutory service system. It is of concern comparatively little has been spent on new initiatives to strengthen the early intervention and prevention end of the service system.

# People with Disabilities

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$2.444 million over 2 years ‘Support for Disability Services’**  
Disability ACT to receive funding to assist in ensuring disability services are sustainable.
- **\$1.614 million over 4 years for ‘Support for Students With a Disability’**  
Provides support to students with a disability in ACT public schools.
- **\$379,000 over 12 months for ‘Bus Stop Disability Improvements’**  
Upgrade of selected bus stops to meet disability standards.
- **\$9.468 million over 4 years for ‘Growth in Home and Community Care Services’**  
Provides for already identified growth in the HACC program, which provides a range of services supporting older Australians, young people with a disability and their carers. HACC is a joint venture between ACT and Commonwealth Governments.

## Issues

The extra funds to support disability services are important; however this money appears to be targeted at government service provision, without recognising the increasing demand on community based services.

Also of concern is the lack of clear commitment to progressively implement the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and continuing lack of support for disability consumer directed service provision, including a strong representative voice for consumers.

There appears to be no support to implement *Future Directions – Towards Challenge 2014*, and no specific funding to implement the new five year forward plan for people with disabilities in the ACT, including:

- No provision to support students with disabilities leaving school in 2010 to live real lives in the community; and
- No provision to support people with disabilities who rely on ageing carers.

The growth funding for Home and Community Care is welcome. However, the need for ongoing planning and service development to meet the complex needs of an ageing population is paramount, especially as COAG reforms impacting on HACC are rolled-out.

# Women

## Selected Initiatives

- **\$1.266 million over 4 years to prevent ‘Violence Against Women and Children’ (DHCS)**

This will provide funding for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre for an additional worker, and for Domestic Violence Crisis Service to run an early intervention program for young people prone to violence in their family relationships.

- **\$690,000 over 4 years to prevent ‘Violence Against Women’ (JaCS)**

This provides further funding for the delivery of victims support services by the community sector. The funding will also increase the capacity of *Women’s Legal Centre* to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to access legal services.

- **\$8.6 million over 4 years to increase ‘Obstetric and Gynaecological Services’**

The additional funding will assist to meet increasing demand for obstetric and gynaecological services for ACT women.

## Issues

ACTCOSS welcomes the extra funding to prevent violence against women. Violence against women has a wide range of emotional and psychological consequences, and ACTCOSS believes the allocation of resources to target this problem will further aid the status of ACT women. However, further preventative measures such as educational programs are needed to assist in the elimination of violence against women in the ACT.

The omission of a Woman’s Budget Statement, for the second year in a row, is of particular concern. This indicates a lack of focus and attention to the specific needs of women in the ACT. Furthermore, the ACT Labor-Greens Parliamentary Accord committed to the publications of gender impact statements and gender disaggregated data associated with ACT Government policy measures by 2010.

ACTCOSS welcomes a proportion of the funding allocated to the *Women’s Legal Centre* to ensure the Centre is able to continue delivering much needed support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

## Other Initiatives of Interest

### Selected Initiatives

- **Carers**

- **\$424,000 to 'Carers Advocacy Service'**

- Support for young carers, carers of people with alcohol and other drug dependencies, mental health carers, carers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

- **Multicultural Youth Service**

- **\$105,000 over four years for 'Multicultural Youth Services'**

- This funding will assist young refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants at risk of social exclusion gain access to appropriate services and programs.

### Issues

ACTCOSS notes *Carers Advocacy Service (CAS)* is a welcomed initiative and delivers on an ACT Labour election promise, however the level of funding is inadequate to meet the needs of 43,000 family carers.

ACTCOSS welcomes the Carers Advocacy Service and this support for carers, however we emphasise there is no ACT Government individual advocacy funding for people with disabilities.

ACTCOSS welcomes the funding fulfilling the Government's 2008 Election commitment to assist multicultural youth at risk of social exclusion. This will go some way to address the loss of funding to the *Multicultural Youth Service* at the conclusion of the *Community Inclusion Grants* program in 2009, however \$25,000 per year is not enough to adequately run this service.