

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY FACILITIES WILL BENEFIT CANBERRA'S MOST VULNERABLE

"The ACT Government's decision to invest nearly \$25million in new community facilities will help provide assistance to some of Canberra's most vulnerable citizens", commented Ara Cresswell, Director of the ACT Council of Social Service, in response to the Community Services Minister Katy Gallagher's announcement today on the future of surplus school sites. The investment will include refurbishing sites at Cook, Chifley and Weston to provide community services hubs with a combined total of 6,600m<sup>2</sup> of available space.

"ACT community organisations have been desperately trying to get access to affordable and appropriate premises to operate from for many years", continued Ms Cresswell. "The ACT Government is responding to these concerns in today's announcement of 3 community services hubs, and by further establishing nine community halls which can be used by community groups for events, classes and meetings."

"There is potential for better services to be delivered to marginalised Canberrans though co-locating community services in a single location. These sites could become 'one-stop-shops' for people needing assistance, with a whole range of similar services located together. There are also opportunities for community organisations to stretch their resources further through lower rental costs and sharing services in these new facilities, helping ensure that resources are directed where they are needed most."

"While ACTCOSS knows there is continued community concern at school closures, we hope that where these facilities have been retained for community infrastructure, local communities will at least be assured that the sites are being put to good use for the social benefit of the people of Canberra", Ms Cresswell concluded.

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