

COMMUNITY SHARED STATEMENT FOR ACT 2016 ELECTION

There should be no better place in the world to live than Canberra. When we built Canberra together, we created a city to be proud of. We do not want to see two Canberras where the common good suffers with some in our community isolated, disadvantaged and/or impoverished.

In 2015 the OECD launched a publication titled *In it Together: Why Less Inequality Benefits All* with the following statement: "The gap between rich and poor keeps widening. Growth, if any, has disproportionately benefited higher income groups while lower income households have been left behind. This long-run increase in income inequality not only raises social and political concerns, but also economic ones. It tends to drag down GDP growth, due to the rising distance of the lower 40% from the rest of society. Lower income people have been prevented from realising their human capital potential, which is bad for the economy as a whole." (<http://www.oecd.org/social/in-it-together-why-less-inequality-benefits-all-9789264235120-en.htm>)

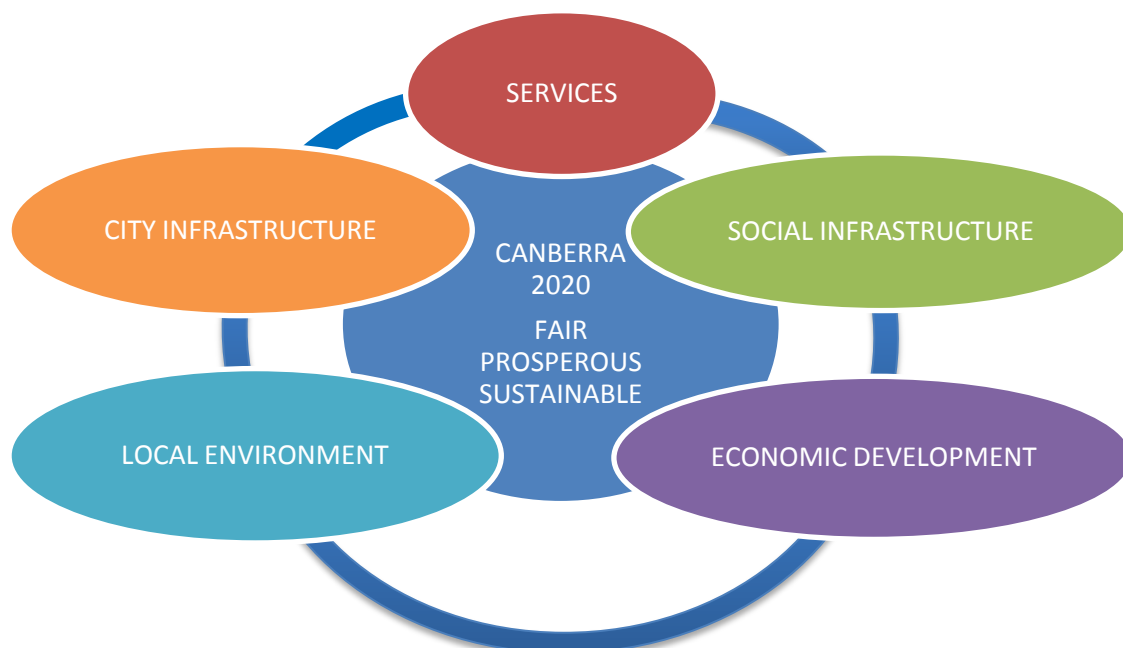
We see this every day in the ACT. We see a growing gap between those who enjoy Canberra's prosperity and liveability and those who don't. This growing gap compromises individual and family economic and social wellbeing, compromises environmental values and threatens our collective success.

For Canberra's political leaders on all sides, the major task in the next term of government is to resist and reverse trends for growing inequality and division in our local economy and community. The ACT Election is a moment for candidates for public office to raise the alert about the enormous risks of growing social inequality in Canberra, and commit to find solutions.

The signatories to this document urge all parties and candidates contesting the ACT Election to set out practical policies and specific measures to address inequality in the ACT, and to do so early in the election campaign. We believe we can build a more egalitarian, inclusive and sustainable Canberra if in the next term of government well targeted investments are made in city infrastructure, social infrastructure, services the local environment and economic development.

Whatever is important to you, the chances of making it happen will be eroded by rising inequality. When you understand that inequality hurts all of us, it is clear what needs to be done.

City infrastructure, services, social infrastructure, the local environment and economic development are linked underpinning resources that we need to invest in and harness in unison if we are to achieve a fair, prosperous and sustainable Canberra for all of us over the life of the next ACT Legislative Assembly.



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City Infrastructure

Increase affordable housing for households in the bottom 40 per cent income quintiles and increased supply of housing which is accessible for and visitable by people with disabilities. Reduce homelessness, and ensure adequate responses to meet the demand for homelessness services. Share responsibility for funding and delivering improved outcomes for affordable housing, including social housing, and reducing homelessness across all ACT Government portfolios.

Develop transport services that are accessible, affordable and fit for purpose, especially for people working outside 9-5 Monday-Friday jobs, for people with disabilities and for people who do not drive or have access to a private vehicle. Ensure transport information is easily accessible, the services are accessible to people with mobility and/or cognitive barriers, and services offered enable people to complete activities of daily living and participate in their community.

Ensure urban renewal increases affordability, accessibility, sustainability and inclusiveness for all ages, promoting a diverse economy, high amenity green spaces, enhancing biodiversity, maintaining natural spaces in urban settings, affordable community facilities, affordable, fit for purpose accommodation for community organisations and a socially rich experience for all residents. Ensure that urban planning and city design decisions are made with genuine involvement and consultation with the communities that live, work and use those spaces, including residents, workers and local businesses.

Invest in health infrastructure that prioritises increasing access to services, especially mental health, sexual and reproductive health, drug and alcohol, chronic disease and aged care services; promote consumer control in service design and delivery; amplify consumer advocacy voice; expand access to services for people with the poorest health status and outcomes by providing health services in diverse settings, increasing the cultural appropriateness, cultural competence and quality of services.

Services

Improve education attainment and outcomes for students not meeting attainment benchmarks and students who have disengaged, or are at risk of disengaging, from school. The focus should be on children and young people in the out of home care system, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, those living with disability, dealing with financial disadvantage and culturally and linguistically diverse people. Schools and local community service agencies are resourced to build strong collaborative relationships, and have capacity to respond flexibly and share resources to improve educational outcomes for young people. Better support for students who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education.

Reduce violence and improve support for people recovering from trauma - especially women and children experiencing domestic, family and/or sexual violence. Actions and investments should be guided by the voices of people who experience violence, reflect the evidence based approaches that have been recommended by the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and respond to the recommendations from the three reports on the impact of family violence on the ACT community and service system responses to this serious issue.

Sustain and expand access to specialist legal information, advice and representation, including through community based legal assistance services; and engage with community advocates on reducing the social determinants of contact with the legal and criminal justice system.

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Social Infrastructure

Develop a comprehensive Disability Strategy to guide whole of government action through a dedicated policy capacity within the ACT Government. This strategy will have a whole of community focus on and capacity to deliver a truly accessible and inclusive community across the domains of education, recreation, economic participation, employment, housing, transport and access to services.

Develop a comprehensive Carer Strategy to guide whole of government action through a dedicated policy capacity within the ACT Government. This strategy will have community capacity to support and respond to the needs of carers - improve health, wellbeing, housing, work opportunities and education attainment (especially for younger carers 12-25 years old).

Support ongoing implementation and further development of the ACT Government agreement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Develop an inclusive community-consulted and led multicultural policy that listens to, understands and commits to addressing the priorities and needs of ACT Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, newly arrived migrants, refugees and established multicultural communities (including the health and pastoral care needs of multicultural seniors) and their faith-based groups. Defending multiculturalism, build on multicultural celebrations and take action to engage at grass roots, build broad community acceptance with understanding and address racism and exploitation.

Support volunteering as a key strategy to improve community well-being by supporting volunteer engagement and management through actively advancing a whole of government and community approach by effecting the 2016 - 20 ACT Volunteer Statement and Implementation Plan.

Build and sustain independent Non Government Organisations that enable self determination and community control. These organisations, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations, should have the capacity and authority to hold services and decision-makers to account, and advocate for policies and services that meet community needs.

Economic Development

Increase access to secure jobs that pay a living wage, including by investing in the public sector, public services, public and social infrastructure projects that increase jobs in the local economy. Improving access to secure jobs should pay particular attention to young people, older people, people who are returning to work from caring roles and people who have been long term unemployed.

Ensure there is a safe climate and clean energy by supporting 100% renewable electricity by 2020 and zero net emissions by 2040. Address climate change and reduce energy poverty through targeted expansion of household energy efficiency measures, and ensure a just transition to adapt to climate change by developing further responses in consultation with climate affected communities and workers.

Develop a fit for purpose service procurement framework that includes processes that engage directly with the community to ensure services meet expectations, improve quality, continuity, diversity and sustainability of both the service offer and the workforce. The procurement framework should ensure funder accountability to the community entitled to and/or accessing the service and drive ongoing improvement of procurement processes and outcomes from the perspective of service users.

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Listed below are the organisations that have developed this shared agenda for the 2016-2020 term of the ACT Government.

ACT Council of Social Service www.actcoss.org.au

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body – www.atsieb.com.au

ACT Shelter Inc www.actshelter.net.au

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network www.actmhcn.org.au

Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) www.atoda.org.au

Carers ACT www.carersact.org.au

Canberra Multicultural Community Forum www.cmcf.org.au

Conservation Council of the ACT www.conservationcouncil.org.au

Council on the Ageing (COTA) ACT www.cotaact.org.au

Create www.create.org.au/what-we-do/research-and-advocacy/position-papers/

Families ACT www.familiesact.org.au/

Health Care Consumers Association of the ACT www.hcca.org.au

Mental Health Community Coalition ACT www.mhccact.org.au

P&C Council of ACT www.actparents.org.au/index.php/component/k2/item/249

People With Disabilities ACT www.pwdact.org.au

Unions ACT www.weareunioncbr.org.au/priorities

Volunteering and Contact ACT vc-act.org.au

Women's Centre for Health Matters www.wchm.org.au

Youth Coalition of the ACT www.youthcoalition.net