


How the next ACT Government can create a fair and just Canberra for all Canberrans

A checklist for voters and newly elected members of the ACT Legislative Assembly

These priorities have been developed by the ACT Council of Social Service following engagement with members, peaks and community organisations.

Objective	Actions required by government
<p data-bbox="230 603 589 738">Support the community services sector</p> 	<ul data-bbox="660 592 2027 1348" style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a full needs analysis to understand Canberra’s demographic changes, increasing complexity of needs (including an aging population; growing number of births; greater diversity) and the changed Canberra geography. • Conduct a full cost analysis to accurately assess the cost of delivering community services to include increased levels of regulation, and increasing costs of operations and salaries. • Commit to revitalising the commissioning, procurement and contract management process across the ACT Government <u>in partnership</u> with the community sector. • Support capital investments including zero emissions vehicles and ICT infrastructure for the community sector. • Fund Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander led policy and services. • Renew its commitment to the ACT Social Compact. • Ensure proper resourcing of strategies such as the Carers Strategy and fund the implementation of new legislation such as Crimes (Offences Against Vulnerable People) Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. • Commit to properly fund peaks and organisations representing community voices including changes to legislation to cover peaks under the ACT’s Portable Long Service Leave Scheme.

Support women, children, young people and families



- Build a child protection system capable of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children while working to keep families together and/or connected through measures, including:
 - An independent external review mechanism for child protection decisions in the ACT.
 - Building a restorative child protection system.
 - Better access to advocacy and legal support for women, children and families in the child protection system.
- Implement all recommendations of the Our Booris, Our Way review into the care and protection of Aboriginal children in the ACT.
- Increase investment in the out of home care (OOHC) system:
 - Extension of supported placements for all young people in out of home care, without individual assessments and incremental approval, from 18 to 21 years.
 - Access to an aftercare service for young people up to the age of 25 years.
- Provide additional funding for community-based specialist women's services including domestic violence services, legal services and housing and homelessness services.
- Further improve inclusive education in the ACT to enable children with disability to participate in mainstream schooling safely and successfully.
- Implement Respectful Relationships Education at a minimum standard for all staff and students from Preschool to Year 12.

Act for affordable housing and to reduce homelessness



- Commit to full delivery and proper oversight of the ACT Housing Strategy.
- Achieve target of 15% of the Land Release Program for the supply of public, community and affordable homes.
- Increase *effective* land transfers to ACT community housing providers and empower them to build more community and affordable housing.
- Provide further investment in additional public housing and renewal of current stock.
- Locate public and community housing in a range of locations including suburbs close to established amenities and services.
- Commit to all new residential properties in the ACT built to meet Universal Design standards to make them able to be adapted and accessible to all people regardless of age, disability or other factors, and support reforms of the National Construction Code.
- Re-establish and fund an advocacy voice for tenants in the ACT.
- Develop an Indigenous Housing Strategy for the ACT including a pathway to a community controlled Aboriginal housing organisation.
- Establish a specialist youth homelessness service.
- Implement long-term housing solutions for detainees leaving the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).
- Fund human rights compliant mental health specific supported housing.

Achieve a just Canberra



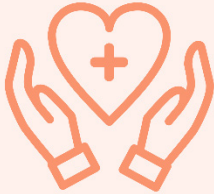
- Raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 to at least 14 years of age.
- Improve access to justice by increasing funding to community legal centres, mediation and individual advocacy supports.
- Resource the Disability Justice Strategy.
- Resource the Justice Reinvestment Strategy: meet recidivism targets, significantly reduce Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander incarceration, and introduce gender-specific rehabilitation and diversion programs.
- Fix the prison: Focus the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) on rehabilitation.
- Implement and fund all ACT Inspector of Correctional Services Healthy Prison Review recommendations.
- Address remand policies at the AMC: separate people on remand, including women's section.
- Implement a needle and syringe program for the AMC.
- Ensure equal access to gender-specific accommodation, services and support for women in the AMC.
- Expand specialist drug and alcohol programs and fix legislative barriers to enable the diversion of Canberrans away from the justice system and towards support.
- Amend the *Crimes Act 1900* (ACT) to include the concept of positive consent as recommended by the Inquiry into Crimes (Consent) Amendment Bill.

Deliver the promise of the ACT as a human rights jurisdiction



- Incorporate all Economic, Social and Cultural rights in the *ACT Human Rights Act (2004)* including: the right to housing; the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to physical and mental health; and the right to a healthy environment.
- Through improved access to legal support and better funding for the ACT's community legal services, ensure equality before the law for all ACT residents, including women and children, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and other Canberrans facing legal disadvantage.
- Improve access to the ACT Human Rights Act (2004) by adding a direct complaints mechanism through the ACT Human Rights Commission followed by referral to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) if the complaint cannot be resolved.
- Embed human rights principles and obligations in all procurement processes and service contracts.
- Include a human rights reporting component in Director-General annual reports.
- Establish an annual evaluation and report to the ACT Legislative Assembly on human rights in the ACT.
- Implement and resource clear strategies to address racism, discrimination against LGBTIQ+ Canberrans, gendered discrimination and violence, and ableism.
- Foster an independent advocacy voice for culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans in the ACT.
- Publicly commit to a federal Human Rights Act.
- Commit to review police complaints handling mechanisms to ensure greater practical independence, accountability and transparency of investigations.
- Commit to not introducing anti-consorting laws.
- Commit to not introducing any laws that are inconsistent with human rights obligations.

Work for better health



- Commit to real increases in spending on frontline health services to raise ACT service standards up to those of other jurisdictions.
- Through a commitment to the Wellbeing Framework and the Preventative Health Strategy, increase investment as part of the ACT's health policy in the non-clinical needs of low-income and disadvantaged Canberrans as an acknowledgement of the social determinants of health.
- Produce a blueprint for the development of the Canberra Hospital.
- Design and implement a Disability Health Strategy.
- Adequately fund sexual and reproductive health services.
- Support for pain management services.
- Expand palliative care services.
- Invest in trauma-informed practice and service design training for government and non-government workers.
- Build a robust mental health sector that reflects Canberra's diversity, prioritising family programs, an adolescent mental health program and sub-acute mental health services.
- Invest in alcohol and drug treatment facilities, including in the design and construction of an Aboriginal residential alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation facility.

Take action for people with disability and carers



- Resource all six areas of the National Disability Strategy.
- Commit to ending restrictive practices and meet Operational Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) obligations in all congregate living situations in the ACT and aged care facilities.
- Ensure concessions are targeted to need.
- Improve access to justice for people with disability and other vulnerable cohorts by expanding individual advocacy supports.
- Design and implement a Disability Health Strategy.
- Establish and support a consultative forum on transport for people with disabilities.
- Properly fund the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme by removing the trip limit and increasing the monetary cap to keep pace with increases in taxi fares.
- Establish an access reference group to improve physical and sensory access.
- Commit to all new residential properties in the ACT being built to meet Universal Design standards.
- Commit to a target to reduce the number of people in congregate living situations and special education.
- Reduce violence and institutionalisation, and fully fund implementation of the Crimes (Offences Against Vulnerable People) Legislation Amendment Bill 2020.
- Ensure gaps in National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) services are met.
- Fully funded and appropriate respite care facilities for carers and for palliative care patients and carers.

Poverty, inequality and the cost of living



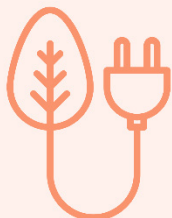
- Take action on the fundamentals of social and economic justice, including:
 - Publicly call for a permanent and adequate increase (above the poverty line) to JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and related Commonwealth payments.
 - Incorporate all economic, social, and cultural rights in the *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT).
 - Conduct a detailed analysis to better understanding the need for community services in the ACT.
 - Adequately fund our community services – they play a vital role in preventing, reducing, and alleviating the impacts of poverty and disadvantage in the ACT.
 - Ensure that revenue is collected in a way that is progressive, equitable, efficient, and sufficient to fund quality services and infrastructure.
- Take action on targeted financial assistance, including:
 - Review the ACT Targeted Assistance Strategy to ensure concessions and rebates are targeted to need.
 - Recognise the contribution of older Canberrans to our community through a range of targeted supports and assistance points across the city.
 - Extend financial and other support for all young people transitioning from care.
 - Increase funding to financial counselling services.
- Take action on key cost of living pressures, including housing, health, transport and energy.
- Take action to ensure equal access to justice.
- Implement the Canberra Gambling Reform Alliance’s program for reducing gambling harm.

**Achieve
self-determination for
Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait Islander
people**



- Implement mandatory Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and Ngunnawal cultural awareness training for all Members of the Legislative Assembly.
- Invest in celebrating and protecting Ngunnawal land and culture.
- Enact a United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC) partnership agreement, which outlines shared policy goals and commits to genuine, regular consultation between Ministers and the UNEC.
- Develop a comprehensive Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander policy statement.
- Support and invest in Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to deliver fully funded community services.
- Invest in supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children, youth and families with measurable outcomes.
- Expand the ACT Human Rights Commission to include an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner.
- Support the design and commencement of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Child Care Agency.
- Implement all 28 recommendations from Our Booris, Our Way Steering Committee to improve the systemic failures for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children involved with child protection in the ACT.
- Develop an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Housing Strategy for the ACT including a pathway to a community-controlled Aboriginal housing organisation.
- Invest in the design and construction of a community-controlled Aboriginal residential alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation facility.
- Provide additional investment for autonomous, holistic health and wellbeing services at the Alexander Maconochie Centre.
- Investigate the expansion of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm to have cottages that can accommodate families.
- Fund the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB) positions at a full-time rate.

Climate and energy: a just transition



- Implement an effective plan for a just transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the ACT by 2045, if not sooner.
- Develop a roadmap for low-income and other vulnerable households in the transition from natural gas and to zero emission vehicles that identifies and addresses barriers, ensuring no one is left behind.
- Resource the collection of detailed data to assess whether a just transition is occurring in the ACT.
- Fund independent research on the relative cost-benefit of growing the electricity grid versus maintaining and growing gas infrastructure.
- Undertake and invest in workforce planning and skills training to ensure adequate capacity to deliver high quality services across the energy efficiency sector, and create jobs.
- Establish a mechanism for joint governance of a just transition by community, government, technical experts, and business.
- Ensure Utilities Concession eligibility is adequate and targeted toward need (including to ACT Services Access Card holders) and continue the Energy Support Voucher program across all ACT energy retailers through the Utilities Hardship Fund.
- Require ACT energy retailers to provide regular 'better offer notifications' to their customers, telling them if they have a plan that could reduce their bills.
- Introduce legislation for staged minimum energy performance requirements for rental properties by the end of 2021.
- Expand energy efficiency and productivity programs for low-income and rental households, aligned with the proposed National Low-income Energy Productivity Program.
- Fund community energy consumer advocacy to represent the long-term interests of low-income, small business, and community sector energy consumers in decision making on climate and energy policy and programs.

Take action for older Canberrans and aged care



- Invest in social housing and community transport to meet community need, including for older Canberrans.
- Commit to all new residential properties in the ACT being built to meet Universal Design standards making them accessible to all people regardless of age, disability or other factors.
- Provide a range of targeted supports and assistance points across the city for older Canberrans, including seniors hubs in the southern suburbs of the ACT (Tuggeranong) and in a northern suburb of Canberra.
- Ensure footpaths in Canberra are suitable for people who are aged and enable independent community participation and support independence.
- Commit to ending restrictive practices and ensure Australia's Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) obligations apply to all congregate living situations in the ACT, including aged care facilities.
- Reduce violence and institutionalisation and fully fund the implementation of the *Crimes (Offences Against Vulnerable People) Legislation Amendment Act 2020 (ACT)*.
- Ensure adequate levels of both wellbeing and mental health supports are available to Canberra's older people and their carers.
- Improve access to justice for older people engaged with the justice system by expanding individual advocacy supports.
- Support respite opportunities including for carers and palliative care patients and their carers.

Invest in community infrastructure



- Carry out an audit and stocktake of community needs in planning and transport including community facilities.
- Demonstrate a renewed focus on social planning and engagement with marginalised groups.
- Develop a policy framework and investment model for the long-term provision of community facilities across the city leading to proper funding for community facilities and community development.
- Require developers to build community infrastructure into new developments.
- Provide appropriate incentives and place greater responsibilities on developers to create community facilities and make developed spaces more liveable.
- Guarantee on-demand transport (like community transport) as well as mass transit (like trams and buses).
- Develop a cost benefit business case to make travel on public transport free.
- Fund the Community Development Network for the ACT and Region (CDNet).

For our full set of 12 election briefs, go to
www.actcoss.org.au/policy/act-election