

ACT Budget 2019-2020

Impact for Carers – an Overview

June 2019

Background

In October 2018 Carers ACT made budget recommendation to the ACT Government. The issues we raised at that time were:

- Carers ACT recommended that in the 2019/2020 budget the ACT Government invest in supporting Canberrans living with disability using services not met by the NDIS, particularly older Canberrans. We recommended initiating pathways between age, health and disability care to improve access to necessary supports and advocacy services.
- Carers ACT strongly supported ACTCOSS and others to push for affordable housing options. Carers ACT welcomed the Affordable Housing Strategy of October 2018 acknowledging that affordable housing significantly affects Canberran carers and the people they care for.
- Carers ACT congratulated the government for endorsing the first three-year action plan for the ACT carers strategy and also called for funds to enable Carers ACT to drive the policy and service changes required under the strategy.
- Carers ACT commended the Future of Education initiative and sought the ACT Government agencies responsible for education, disability and NDIA to work together.
- Carers ACT recommended urgent negotiations regarding arrangements for the provider of last resort arrangements and similar concerns about the provision of crisis accommodation.

Budget Themes

The 2019-20 ACT Budget has had a focus on investment in the ACT health system, local schools, and in assisting the most disadvantaged in our region.

Areas that might interest carers:

Health

- Expanding Clare Holland House to strengthen palliative care and expanding palliative care for older Canberrans through the INSPIRED program integrating palliative care into residential facilities.
- Delivering better care for Canberrans with complex needs through General Practice.
- Inner North and Weston Creek walk in centres.

- Expanding frontline services at the Canberra Hospital.
- Delivering the Surgical Procedures, Interventional Radiology and Emergency (SPIRE) Centre.
- Expanding the emergency department at Calvary Public Hospital.
- More surgical theatres and urology services at Calvary Public Hospital.
- Strengthening care for childhood and gestational diabetes, chronic disease, and for older Canberrans.
- Expanding pharmacy services at the Canberra Hospital.
- Increasing the life support rebate which provides help with electricity bills for those who need electrically operated life support equipment.

Education

- More support to meet individual student needs – \$41.58 million over 4 years may translate to 92 fulltime learning professionals and support staff.
- Strengthening mental health care in ACT public schools with \$3 million providing 4 full time psychologists.
- The development of the ACT early childhood strategy.
- A new primary school for Throsby and a new high school for Kenny.

Housing

- 488 new homes for low income households, 60 new community housing homes, and 80 public housing homes.
- Reducing homelessness by providing another Common Ground (a 40 unit accommodation for low income and people who have experienced homelessness with support services as needed) with \$3.04 million. Extension of the Pensioner Duty Concession Scheme which assists eligible pensioners to move to accommodation more suited to their needs as they age (downsizing).

People with disability

- Maintaining support for disability services in the transition to the full scheme NDIS - \$40.57 million over 4 years including maintaining the children and young people's Equipment Loan Scheme, the child development service, the ACT taxi subsidy scheme, the rehabilitation, aged and community care service, and the integrated service response program.
- Continuing to reduce and eliminate restrictive practices within disability, education, and out of home care settings.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

- Strengthening services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with \$1.74 million over four years through various programs.

Carers

- More support for families travelling for health care via increasing the subsidies for accommodation and parking and expanding the interstate patient travel scheme.
- Strengthening capacity for mental health carers with the recruitment of two carer engagement clinicians.

Accessibility

- Delivering light rail to Woden.
- Supporting social inclusion through continuing the flexible bus service.
- Moving the delivery of more community services online.

Out of Home Care (OOHC)

- Establishing a therapeutic care court within the ACT Children's Court providing court-led interventions for parents whose children have been removed or are at risk of being removed. Legal Aid will also have funding to deliver a new duty solicitor to provide extended services to parents and grandparents.
- \$39 million over four years to support vulnerable children and young people, their families and carers through more sustainable OOHC placements. Providing additional resources for the next phase of *A Step Up for Our Kids* reforms.

Community

- Supporting community legal centres.
- Supporting local community groups to improve social inclusion and equality.
- Continuing Canberra's free public wi-fi.

Moving Forward

The budget delivered some socially conscious items and physical infrastructure investments. You will note that several of the recommendations Carers ACT made have started to be addressed.

There is always more to achieve and work towards.

Carers ACT will continue to push for carer specific supports and for the issues that are important to carers and the people they care for. In the next few months we will be focusing on achieving the actions of the ACT Carer Strategy in the areas of information access and enhanced support services, recognition and awareness of carers, young carer issues, inclusion of carers in decision making, and recognition and balance for working carers.

Please share your thoughts

As a carer, if there are issues that concern you that you feel are not been addressed nor seen, please raise these with us at policy@carersact.org.au . We would love to hear your thoughts.

For more information contact:

Ms Lisa Kelly
Chief Executive Officer
Carers ACT
Unit 2, 80 Beaurepaire Crescent
HOLT ACT 2615
P 02 6296 9900 F 02 6296 9999
Email: Lisa.Kelly@carersact.org.au
www.careract.org.au

Carers ACT acknowledges that modern day Canberra has been built on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people. We offer our respects to their Elders past and present and celebrate the Ngunnawal people's living culture and valuable contribution to the ACT community.

Who is Carers ACT?

Carers ACT is a non-profit, community-based, incorporated association and registered charity dedicated to improving the lives of the estimated 48,850 carers living in the Australian Capital Territory.

These carers provide ongoing unpaid care for people with disabilities, mental illness, chronic conditions, who have palliative care needs, or who are aged and frail.

Carers ACT currently provides direct support to around 8000 families through our counselling, information, respite support, education, social support and case coordination services. We continue to meet national accreditation standards for delivery of our services to carers at a high level.

Carers ACT has a constitutional mandate to represent the voices of mental health carers to government and the wider community. We actively consult with a wide diversity of caring families on an ongoing basis to enable improved understanding of their needs and enable better inclusion for them and the people they care for.

Policy work in consultation, research and representation is kept separate from service delivery to ensure that the privacy of individual service recipients is respected.

All carer participation in policy work is voluntary.