



ACT Budget 2010/11 Future Proofing the ACT: What's In It For Young People

Analysis of the ACT Budget 2010 / 11

Part 1 of 3

Media Releases

May 2010

www.youthcoalition.net

The Youth Coalition of the ACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and continuing custodians of the lands of the ACT and we pay our respects to the Elders, families and ancestors.

We acknowledge that the effect of forced removal of Indigenous children from their families as well as past racist policies and actions continues today.

We acknowledge that the Indigenous people hold distinctive rights as the original people of modern day Australia including the right to a distinct status and culture, self-determination and land. The Youth Coalition of the ACT celebrates Ngunnawal culture and the invaluable contribution it makes to our community.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT (Youth Coalition) is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory and is responsible for representing the interests of people aged between 12 and 25 years of age and those who work with them. The Youth Coalition works to actively promote the well being and aspirations of young people in the ACT with particular respect to their political, cultural, economic and social development. The Youth Coalition is represented on many ACT advisory structures and provides advice to the ACT Government on a range of issues related to young people and youth services. For more information phone the Youth Coalition on (02) 6247 3540 or email info@youthcoalition.net

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May 2010

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Thank you to the Youth Coalition team for their support.

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Budget Analysis Overview

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, acknowledges the challenges faced by the ACT Government in developing the ACT Budget 2010/11, and welcomes the announcement of funding for some key initiatives.

The ACT Budget 2010/11 contains a few gains for young people, with a particular focus on improving supports for young people with disabilities, young people in Out of Home Care, and young people in detention. The Budget also features funding for young people aimed at improving access to legal information, and early intervention for young people experiencing violence in their family relationships.

However, the Youth Coalition is concerned about the lack of an overarching vision for the budget. The Youth Coalition is disappointed that the implementation of the goals of the *ACT Young People's Plan 2009 – 2014*, launched in December 2009, has not been identified as a priority for the 2010/11 financial year.

The Youth Coalition calls on the ACT Government to address service delivery, planning and support for young people and their families in a systematic and sustainable way. In particular crisis support services need to be complemented with a suite of long term intervention and prevention programs.

While this year's promising new spending initiatives are welcomed, much of the detail is still to come. We implore the ACT Government to take the opportunity to conduct significant consultations with young people and community youth services to identify the best ways in which these resources can be utilised to benefit young people in the Canberra community.

Some key initiatives announced in the ACT Budget 2010/11 are outlined below.

Young People with Disability

- Funding the Home and Community Care Program an additional \$2.2 million, which will include supports for young people with disabilities;
- Funding of \$1.6 million over four years to provide further supports to young people with disabilities in schools;
- Funding of \$2.4 million over two years into disability support services; and,
- Funding of \$425,000 over four years to employ a community-based family support worker to support families who have a child with autism.

Young People in Care

- Funding of \$5.7 million over four years to support young Canberrans in out of home care.

Multicultural Young People

- Funding of \$105,000 over four years to Multicultural Youth Services to provide support to multicultural, newly arrived and refugee young people.

Young People in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre

- Funding of \$7.1 million over four years to Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, of which part will go towards ensuring human rights compliance.

Legal

- Funding of \$785, 000 over four years to the Youth Law Centre to increase capacity; and,
- Funding of \$200,000 over four years for an Indigenous Liaison Officer in the Legal Aid Commission.

Domestic Violence

- Funding of \$2 million over four years to provide further support to women and children experiencing violence, including early intervention for children and young people experiencing violence in their family relationships.

Young People and Education

- Funding of \$1.1 million over four years to support the Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership by increasing the engagement of young people in education, training and employment.

Infrastructure

- Funding for regional infrastructure, including CIT Vocational Education in Gungahlin, a new Gungahlin Library, and a Gungahlin Health Centre.

Youth Services

- One-off funding of \$70,000 to Warehouse Circus Community Program.

Youth Sector Viability

The ACT Budget 2010/11, under the 2010/11 priorities of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services clearly articulates its commitment to working with the community sector to build their sustainability and industrial relations capacity. However, no funding has been allocated towards resourcing this commitment.

Like many sections of the community sector, community based youth services continue to experience significant challenges with regard to workforce development, recruitment and retention of workers, while also facing increased demand for service provision. The increasingly complex nature of the issues youth services and workers are supporting young people with also highlights the challenge of skill development in a sector that must be both pre-emptive and responsive to the changing needs of young people, and have such a broad range of response knowledge.

The viability of the ACT youth and community sectors is important, to ensure that the service system is set up to support young people, able to further develop to address emerging issues and provide targeted support to young people..

The Youth Coalition, in our submission to the 2010 / 11 Budget called for the following key actions in relation to the youth and community sectors:

- Implementation of the 30 recommendations outlined in the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) report, *Finding Solutions: Towards the long term viability of the ACT Community Sector*,
- Investment in workforce development strategies for the youth and community sectors;
- A commitment to no reduction in the funding level supporting young people aged 12 – 25 years within the new service framework that will come into effect during the 2010/11 Budget;
- Development of an updated social and demographic profile of young people in the ACT;
- Contribution of funds to enable the Youth Centre's Network to progress modelling to:
 - Further develop Youth Centre practice;
 - Contribute to the evidence base informing Youth Centre practice; and,
 - Inform future funding of youth services.
- Provision of funding to further develop a Code of Ethics for Youth Work in the ACT;
- Ensuring that the Youth Coalition is able to continue to support specific networks within the youth and community sector which aim to strengthen supports and services for young people aged 12 – 25 years; and,
- Ensure that funding is available to support the continued production of the Big Red Book.

Youth and community sector organisations cannot continue to deliver high quality programs and services with staff shortages, high turnovers and an inability to attract suitably qualified or experienced workers.

The Youth Coalition is pleased that the ACT Budget 2010/11 addresses some gaps in services, with significant spending commitments, and we look forward to working with the ACT Government and other community stakeholders in implementing the initiatives from this budget that relate to young people and youth services.

Budget Analysis Part 1: Media Releases

The Youth Coalition of the ACT Budget 2010/11 Analysis is divided into three parts:

- Part 1: Media Releases (this document)
- Part 2: Expenditure Initiatives
- Part 3: Capital Initiatives

Each part can be downloaded from www.youthcoalition.net or accessed in hardcopy by calling (02) 6247 3540.



MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 1

5 May 2010

ACT Budget and Young People

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, acknowledges the challenges faced by the ACT Government in developing the 2010/11 ACT Budget, and welcomes many of the new initiatives.

However, the Youth Coalition is disappointed that the implementation of the goals of the *ACT Young People's Plan 2009 – 2014* has not been identified as a priority for the 2010/11 financial year.

'For a Government that is aiming to invest in the growth of Canberra, and develop a sustainable footing for the future, it is essential that investment in young people continues to be seen as a priority,' said Director Emma Robertson.

The Youth Coalition commends the ACT Government for:

- Funding of \$5.7 million over four years to support out-of-home care;
- Funding of \$105,000 over four years to Multicultural Youth Services to provide support to multicultural, newly arrived and refugee young people;
- Funding of \$7.1 million over four years to Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, of which part will go towards ensuring human rights compliance;
- Funding of \$785,000 over four years to the Youth Law Centre to increase capacity;
- Funding the Home and Community Care Program an additional \$2.2 million, which will include supports for young people with disabilities;
- Funding of \$1.6 million over four years to provide further supports to young people with disabilities in schools;
- Funding of \$2.4 million over two years into disability support services;
- Funding of \$425,000 over four years to employ a community-based family support worker to support families who have a child with autism;
- Funding of \$4.1 million over four years towards mental health growth, with a focus on promotion, prevention and early intervention;
- Funding of \$2 million over four years to provide further support to women and children experiencing violence, including early intervention for children and young people experiencing violence in their family relationships;
- Funding of \$1.1 million over four years to support the Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership by increasing the engagement of young people in education, training and employment;
- Funding of \$200,000 over four years for an Indigenous Liaison Officer in the Legal Aid Commission;

- One-off funding of \$70,000 to Warehouse Circus Community Program; and,
- Funding for regional infrastructure, including CIT Vocational Education in Gungahlin, a new Gungahlin Library, and a Gungahlin Health Centre.

'While the Youth Coalition welcomes these initiatives, further information will need to be provided on how they will be implemented.'

'It is vital that these initiatives are further progressed in consultation with key stakeholders, including young people and youth services.'

'We look forward to working with the ACT Government on the further development of these initiatives.'

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469

The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory and is responsible for representing the interests of people aged 12 to 25 years, and those who work with them.

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MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 2

5 May 2010

Newly Arrived Young People Receive Some Support

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, commends the provision of additional funding to support newly arrived and refugee young people, as announced in the 2010/2011 ACT Government Budget.

The new initiatives include a small amount of recurrent funding to Multicultural Youth Services (MYS), Canberra's only youth specific service in the ACT for refugee, newly arrived and multicultural young people. MYS has been repeatedly recognised for their practice and importance, winning an ACT Early Intervention Award (2006), an ACTCOSS Diversity Award (2008), a Yogie Award for Excellence in Organisational Practice (2008), and a Yogie Award for Collaboration for Change (2009).

'Our consultations for the *ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010 – 2014* found that young refugees and newly arrived young people have very specific needs and are particularly affected by settlement, and identified the lack of programs to support young people,' said Director Emma Robertson.

'This is the sixth budget in which the Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, has called on the ACT Government to provide recurrent funding for MYS.'

'The Youth Coalition is pleased at the allocation of funding to MYS. However, we are disappointed with the level of funding, which is only \$25,000 per year over four years.'

The ACT Government has stated that all migrants should be able to gain access to targeted essential services and programs; and committed to providing the full range of essential settlement services, such as housing, transport, education, work experience programs, counselling and orientation assistance for newly arrived migrants.

'MYS is a specialised organisation with a high degree of skill and knowledge in working with multicultural young people.'

'In addition to multicultural young people and their families relying on services such as MYS, other mainstream and multicultural services rely on being able to work with and refer to a service with specialised expertise.'

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Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 3

5 May 2010

Beyond the Revolving Door

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, is concerned about lack of investment in services and supports for young people who are transitioning from Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

We commend the ACT Government in allocating \$7.1million (over four years) to ensure that appropriate supports are provided whilst incarcerated. In particular we highlight the ACT Government's commitment to ensuring compliance with the human rights framework. However, we believe that this will only go some way in addressing the significant challenges facing young people returning to the community from detention, and ultimately, in reducing their future criminality.

'Research tells us that unless programs are put in place to help young people transition from detention, positive outcomes are not sustainable', said Director Emma Robertson.

'Young people often revolve through the doors at Bimberi because the level of support that they require to reconnect to their communities, to re engage with schools and to continue with their alcohol and other drug treatments fall away once they are released. We would argue that every dollar spent on young people in detention needs to be matched on their release.'

The Youth Coalition continues to be concerned about the number of young people incarcerated at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and calls on the ACT Government to invest in evidence based diversionary programs.

'In addition to increasing the staffing and building and maintenance costs at Bimberi we would call on the ACT government to recognise the value of programs to keep our young people out of the system. Once in detention young people are more likely to reoffend and have a long list of negative outcomes.'

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MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 4

5 May 2010

Funding for Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, is pleased that the ACT Government Budget 2010/11 included funding of \$4.1 million over four years towards mental health growth, focusing on promotion, prevention and early intervention.

However, the Youth Coalition seeks further clarification on how this funding will be implemented, and highlights the importance of ensuring that young people are a key target in this process.

'Research indicates that 70% of mental health issues manifest between the ages of 15 and 25, with early intervention increasing the chances of recovery for these young people,' said Director Emma Robertson.

'We strongly recommend that a portion of this funding be allocated to existing local youth mental health services, such as headspace ACT, which provides vital support to young people aged 12 – 25 years who are experiencing emerging mild to moderate mental health issues.'

'It is also very important that initiatives progressed through this funding pool are developed and implemented in collaboration with key stakeholders, including young people and youth services.'

'We look forward to participating in further discussions with Mental Health ACT about the implementation of this funding.'

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469

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MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 5

5 May 2010

Funding for Young People with Disabilities

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, commends the ACT Government for providing funding for a number of initiatives to support young people with disabilities in the ACT, including:

- Funding the Home and Community Care Program an additional \$2.2 million, which will include supports for young people with disabilities to be more independent and to prevent their early or inappropriate admission to long term residential care;
- Funding of \$1.6 million over four years to provide further supports to young people with disabilities in schools;
- Funding of \$2.4 million over two years into disability support services;
- Funding of \$425,000 over four years to employ a community-based family support worker to support families who have a child with autism;
- Funding of \$70,000 to Warehouse Circus Community Program, which offers training and performance opportunities to young people with disabilities; and
- Feasibility study of options for the replacement of four centre-based respite houses for people with a disability, incorporating best practice approaches for the provision of respite services for children, young people and adults.

'Young people with disability make up 10% of the ACT's population aged between 12 and 25 years old,' said Director Emma Robertson.

'The Youth Coalition is pleased that the ACT Government has recognised young people in the ACT with disabilities as a priority.'

'It's very important that these initiatives are aligned with the ACT Government's *Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014 – the next ACT Government Disability Policy Framework*, and that supports for young people with disabilities remain on the agenda.'

'We will be particularly keen to see the ACT Government's response to the Legislative Assembly's *Inquiry into the Needs of Students With A Disability*.'

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MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 6

5 May 2010

Earn or Learn

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, is working closely with The Department of Education and Training around the new legislation changes concerning educational attainment, which require a young person to be engaged with employment, education or training until they are 17 years old, or complete Year 12.

'We welcome DET's commitment to engagement with the community youth sector regarding these major new changes,' said Director Emma Robertson.

The ACT Budget 2010/11 outlines an investment of \$1.1 million dollars over four years to support the implementation funding provided by the Australian Government for the ACT Youth Commitment and Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership.

Funding for support for young people with disability in education, a new teacher quality institute for pre teacher accreditation, and funding for the newly constructed schools in Harrison, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin, were amongst other initiatives announced.

'We will be interested to find out more details about the productivity places program, which aims to reduce shortages in the workforce by offering more training places, and how the department will engage young people regarding this initiative.'

'It is clear that the ACT Government has committed to increase our retention rates, which are already higher than the national average, in a comprehensive manner, however we have some concerns about how this will be achieved.'

In light of the recent legislative changes, we call for clear support from the ACT Government to the alternative education providers, who can reasonably expect to be working with greater numbers of young people. Unfortunately, despite recognition of the need for greater options for young people to continue study or engage in training for the work force, this has not translated in financial terms.'

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MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 7

5 May 2010

Youth Law Centre

The Youth Coalition of the ACT commends the ACT Government on the announcement of ongoing funding for the Youth Law Centre. The initiative will employ a supervising lawyer, and a part time youth community legal educator, and will ensure the continued operation of the Centre.

'We believe resourcing the young people of Canberra to have access to legal information, assistance and advice, for young people, is essential,' said Director Emma Robertson.

'We look forward to working with the Youth Law Centre, and supporting young people and the wider youth sector to engage their services.'

It is anticipated that the centre will have scope to continue providing outreach services, as well as developing up to date and relevant publications and resources for young people and those agencies that work with young people.

'It's great to have a legal advice service that has capacity to provide outreach into the community and engages with young people in schools and youth services, while maintaining a central office that will be staffed during the week.'

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469

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MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 8

5 May 2010

More Support for Young People in Out of Home Care

The Youth Coalition is pleased with the ACT Government's further increase in support of young people in Out Of Home Care in 2010/11 ACT Budget.

Children and young people in care are a diverse group who share a common experience of not being able to live with their parents and are cared for by someone else. Many have experienced a number of placements and disruptions to their connections with family, friends, school, community and culture.

The key issues faced by young people in care remain to be relocation, continuity of care, the disruption of key connections, poorer educational outcomes, and poorer physical and mental health.

The CREATE Foundation highlights the key improvements needed, including:

- Early commencement of transition planning (at 15 years);
- Continuity of support until the young person reaches 25;
- Better integration between Departments to support young people;
- Planning in collaboration with young people and carers (youth participation);
- High representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in care; and;
- Acquisition of life skills.

Every young person in care has a right to be safe, actively participate in decisions that affect their lives, and to be fully supported in the care system and through their transition from Out Of Home Care.

'The ACT Government funds a range of non-government agencies to provide support to young people who have been in Care or are planning to leave Care in the future. However the Youth Coalition calls on the ACT Government to guarantee that no young people will exit Care into homelessness,' said Director Emma Robertson.

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MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 9

5 May 2010

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, is concerned about the lack of targeted initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in yesterday's budget.

We commend the budget for its inclusion of initiatives such as:

- The proposed employment by the Legal Aid Commission of an Indigenous Liaison Officer, who will be tasked with reducing barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing legal services; and
- The increased capacity of the Canberra Woman's Legal Services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, under the *Prevention of Violence Against Women* initiative.

However, we believe there are many areas that warrant more direct programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

'It is well established that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people experience significant barriers to engaging in education opportunities. The Youth Coalition believes that in light of the recent legislative changes to education attainment requirements, the ACT Budget 2010-11 should reflect more proactive initiatives to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people,' said Director Emma Robertson.

In a recent submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly's *Inquiry Into the Educational Achievement Gap*, it was identified that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have, on average, lower retention and completion rates than their non-Indigenous counterparts; and while almost all non-Indigenous students complete their junior secondary education, one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student in seven nationally will leave school before completing Year 10.

'We are also concerned about the lack of initiatives focused on reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's incarceration and detention rates. We call on the ACT government to direct resources to evidence based diversion and early intervention programs to address the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in ACT detention centres.'

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469

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MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Coalition 2010/11 Budget Analysis

No 10

5 May 2010

Community Sector Workforce Development

The Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs, is disappointed that the ACT Government Budget 2010/11 did not include funding to support sector viability or workforce development initiatives for the community sector.

'The Budget clearly articulates its commitment to working with the community sector to build their sustainability and industrial relations capacity, under the 2010/11 priorities for the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services,' said Director Emma Robertson.

'However, no specific funding has been allocated towards resourcing this commitment.'

Like many sections of the community sector, community based youth services continue to experience significant challenges with regard to workforce development, recruitment and retention of workers, while also facing increased demand for service provision.

The increasingly complex nature of the issues youth services and workers are supporting young people with also highlights the challenge of skill development in a sector that must be both pre-emptive and responsive to the changing needs of young people, and have such a broad range of response knowledge.

'The viability of the ACT youth and community sectors is important, to ensure that the service system is set up to support young people, able to further develop to address emerging issues and provide targeted support to young people.'

'The Youth Coalition continues to call on the ACT Government to implement the recommendations of the 2008 ACTCOSS report, *Finding Solutions, Towards Long Term Community Sector Viability*, and to commit resources to implement a workforce development strategy for the youth sector.'

For further comment please contact Emma Robertson on 0422 665 469

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