

Canberra Social Plan 2011



Foreword

The vision of the *Canberra Social Plan 2011* is that all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of an inclusive community. This 2011 Plan keeps people and community at the centre of the ACT Government's work and builds on the achievements of the 2004 *Canberra Social Plan*.

These achievements include unprecedented investment in health that has resulted in additional hospital beds, a professional health workforce and accessible health services across Canberra.

New schools, quality teaching, smaller class sizes and improved learning facilities have positioned Canberra as the education capital of Australia. For our children and young people it means a better future with the skills and optimism to make the most of their opportunities.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing, maintaining the supply of release-ready land and implementation of the Land Rent Scheme has made the dream of home ownership a reality for many Canberra families.

The *ACT Human Rights Act 2004* affirms the belief held by the Government and the community that everyone can live a life of dignity and value.

In developing this update of the *Canberra Social Plan*, there has been a clear message from Canberrans that we need to build on the strengths of our vibrant community and continue to support the most vulnerable.

Three themes support the vision of this Plan for an inclusive community:

- **Connection** – creating a socially cohesive community now and for the future;
- **Belonging** – making sure every individual has the opportunities and resources to reach their potential; and
- **Collaboration** – working together to improve the lives of all Canberrans.

The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* takes forward our vision for Canberra as an inclusive community. It is a Plan to meet the challenges ahead and capitalise on our significant progress to date.

The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* gives increased prominence to:

- embedding community inclusion principles across government;
- collaborative and joined-up ways of working;

- better engagement with the citizens of Canberra; and
- the liveability and sustainability of our city.

I commend the *Canberra Social Plan 2011* to the people of Canberra.

Katy Gallagher MLA
Chief Minister

Acknowledgements

The ACT is Ngunnawal country. We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of this land and the first inhabitants of this region. Their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this region is respected and valued.

We celebrate the rich diversity of the Canberra community which is made up of people from all over the country and the globe. We embrace the opportunity to learn from each other and to share the benefits of an inclusive community.

The Canberra Social Plan 2011 Case Studies

The case studies in the *Canberra Social Plan 2011* are real stories from Canberrans of varied backgrounds and cultures. We would like to thank them for agreeing to share their stories and experiences. Some names have been changed.

Introduction

The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* builds on the foundation of the 2004 Plan and renews the ACT Government's commitment to building a strong, vibrant and inclusive community.

Canberra is a great place to live. It has a connected community and is a place of great natural beauty. Through a range of community engagement activities on this Plan, from roundtables to online forums, Canberrans have highlighted the importance of every person and family having the opportunities and resources to participate and contribute, as well as feeling they belong and are valued in the community.

The Canberra community has affirmed that future work should build on existing strengths and maintain the commitment to addressing disadvantage for the most vulnerable in the community.

The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* affirms the ACT Government's commitment to an inclusive community.

In addition, the *Canberra Social Plan 2011* is a high-level policy framework for the ACT Government's ongoing investment in the people of Canberra.

The 2011 Plan:

- articulates the Government's commitment to collaboration and strengthening partnerships as the cornerstone of an inclusive community;
- provides direction for planning and service delivery;
- guides new Government initiatives; and
- maintains the commitment to reporting against the 2004 *Canberra Social Plan* targets.

Renewed Vision

The vision of the *Canberra Social Plan 2011* is that:

Canberra is a place where all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of an inclusive community.

This vision for Canberra is based on the themes of connection, belonging and collaboration. These themes are closely linked to keeping people and communities at the centre of the ACT Government's work.

Connection

A connected community is welcoming, vibrant and adaptable. It means a commitment to strengthened social cohesion and a community where people feel connected with each other and the place they live.

A connected community can refer to your local neighbourhood or Canberra as a whole. It is a place where people can have a say in decisions that affect them, have someone they can trust or turn to, and where there are enjoyable things to do. Neighbourhood events such as the school fete, and landmark festivals such as Floriade create connection and cohesion within our community.

Belonging

Belonging is supported by every individual having the opportunities and resources to take part in the community and reach their potential. Participation in the community needs to be supported by responsive and welcoming services. This builds bridges back into the community for Canberrans who can be isolated, such as people experiencing mental illness, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and carers. It is an ongoing responsibility of the ACT Government to make sure that no-one is left out or left behind and we share this responsibility as a community.

Belonging is a priority so that all Canberrans can participate and contribute to the community. Although some people can and do miss out. Poverty can be a significant contributor to social exclusion; however, it is rarely the only one. Structural barriers, as well as social and personal factors, stereotypes and discrimination can all impact on a person's ability to participate.

Collaboration

Working together is the most effective way of building an inclusive community that fosters connection and belonging for all Canberrans. A shared commitment, strong partnerships and collaborative approaches across all sectors underpin this work. The ACT Government provides leadership in building an inclusive community and will continue to work with its

partners in new and flexible ways. This will include aligning effort to support everyone in the community and progressing towards a seamless service system.

Each of these themes is discussed in more detail later in the Plan.

The Canberra Plan Framework

The 2008 *Canberra Plan – Towards our Second Century* sets out the ACT Government's vision for Canberra.

The vision is for an inclusive, sustainable and creative city; a centre of economic growth and innovation; a proud national capital and a place of great natural beauty.

The 2008 *Canberra Plan* is a future-looking, long-term plan. It sets directions and articulates goals for Canberra as the city approaches its second century in 2013. The direction and goals will be achieved in partnership with the community. The Canberra Spatial Plan is a related long-term strategic document that sets the direction for the spatial development of Canberra over 30 years and beyond.

Sitting underneath the *Canberra Plan*, the *Canberra Social Plan* highlights the ACT Government's commitment to individuals, families and the community. It is a medium-term plan that is complemented and supported by three other medium term plans: Capital Development (the ACT Government's economic strategy); Weathering the Change (climate change strategy); and the ACT Infrastructure Plan (a plan to meet the infrastructure needs of Canberra).

In turn, the *Canberra Social Plan* is underpinned by a series of action plans. These more targeted documents detail the ways all members of the community can participate in, contribute to and benefit from living in Canberra. The action plans include, for example, the ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing, ACT Women's Plan 2010 -2015 and Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014, which is the ACT Government's policy framework for people with disability.

The next update of the *Canberra Plan* in 2012-13 will consider how the ACT Government can continue to develop strategic planning and reporting to the community. The new ACT Performance and Accountability Framework includes a range of actions to enhance government service delivery and ensure transparent, accountable decision making and resource allocation.

For more information on the 2008 *Canberra Plan - Towards Our Second Century* visit:
www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystrategic/canberraplan

For more information about Strengthening Performance and Accountability: A framework for the ACT Government visit: www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystrategic

Achievements since the 2004 Canberra Social Plan

The 2004 *Canberra Social Plan* was a milestone in the ACT Government's commitment to building a strong and inclusive community. The ACT Government has reported against the 2004 Plan priority actions and targets every two years. In summary, the ACT Government's achievements include:

Unprecedented investment in infrastructure and services

Substantial resources for new services and programs have been invested in the areas that matter most – health, education and affordable housing – as well as initiatives targeting the most vulnerable in the community. Flagship initiatives under the 2004 *Canberra Social Plan*, including new Child and Family Centres, injected over \$70 million into infrastructure, services and programs to build a strong, inclusive community.

Since the 2004 Plan was released, the ACT has maintained a substantial annual budget commitment to human and community services, accounting for more than two-thirds of all ACT Government expenditure. Across these areas the ACT Budget forecasts a capital program in excess of one billion dollars between 2010-11 and 2013-14. Together, the specific investments made to *Canberra Social Plan* outcomes, and the substantial investments in services, build a sound foundation for the future.

New partnerships that invest in communities

The ACT Government works in partnership at national, regional and local levels to advocate for Canberra and achieve results for Canberrans.

Working in partnership with the NSW Government and local Councils remains a priority as Canberra grows in stature as an employment and service hub for the region. Partnerships with Canberra's community and business sectors have also resulted in new ways of working, for example, the growing social enterprise sector.

The ACT Government continues to work with the Australian Government through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). A series of COAG agreements invest in shared objectives such as closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage, reducing homelessness, improving access to training and skills development and boosting productivity. The ACT Government also values its international partnerships including Canberra's Sister City relationships with Nara (Japan) and Beijing (China) and a Friendship Agreement with Dili (Timor-Leste).

Service approaches that are making a difference

Access to a mix of universal and targeted services is fundamental to the wellbeing of individuals and the community. Universal services such as health and education are building blocks for individuals' reaching their potential. Targeted services reach people in crisis or

people with specific needs so they do not fall through the gaps. Prevention and early intervention approaches – particularly in early childhood and early in the life of a problem – can increase the chances of positive outcomes at key transition times throughout the life course. New approaches to delivering services, such as libraries as community hubs, are providing pathways to real and meaningful change in people’s lives.

Human rights for all

In 2004 the ACT was the first Australian jurisdiction to pass human rights legislation. Since then the ACT Government has developed and implemented strategies that promote respect for human rights, foster a safe and cohesive community, and champion equity of opportunity, access and participation. The five-year review of the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004* in 2009 found that there had been clear improvement in the quality of law-making in the Territory. This means that human rights are given due consideration in the development of new legislation and policy.

Community inclusion

Community inclusion is a central priority of the ACT Government. The 2004 *Canberra Social Plan* marked the beginning of a program of research, community engagement and partnership projects that were initially auspiced by the Community Inclusion Board. This work continues under the banner of the Community Inclusion Policy Agenda and is informed by the principles of leadership, collaboration and engagement. On a practical level, it means greater effort to deal with cross-cutting issues through joined-up policy and service alignment across government and with the community.

Better engagement with the citizens of Canberra

A more participatory approach has ensured the Canberra community is actively engaged in the decision making of Government. Time to Talk – Canberra 2030 was a landmark community conversation on the future of our city with thousands of citizens taking part. The community identified six priority areas for Government, business and the community as well as emphasising the importance of leadership and collaboration. The priority areas articulated through Time to Talk are:

- population growth and the needs of young and old Canberrans;
- management of resources including energy, water and land;
- housing affordability and diversity;
- integrated and sustainable transport;
- a compact city and quality urban development; and
- Canberra’s role in the region.

Time to Talk provides the platform for targeted community consultations on issues that go to the heart of the city's liveability and sustainability such as transport, planning and climate change. The Time to Talk priority areas are reflected throughout the *Canberra Social Plan 2011* and are consistent with the three themes of connection, belonging and collaboration.

New engagement protocols are also expanding the ways the ACT Government engages with the community – from traditional town hall meetings to online forums – and provide ideas about sharing information and feedback. Seeking the voices of the most isolated in the community remains a priority for the ACT Government. Tangible and effective mediums include the Canberra Times and online Community Noticeboard and the Fix my Street feedback site at: www.contact.act.gov.au

Canberra's Social Profile

The ACT is unique amongst Australia's States and Territories. It comprises a city-state with the smallest land area and the second smallest population. As of June 2010 an estimated 358,894 people lived in the ACT, with Canberra the hub of a much wider trans-border region.¹ Canberra is the national capital and the seat of Federal Government, with a large proportion of the population employed in the public sector, both Commonwealth and the ACT. This environment gives rise to a unique set of demographic and social conditions.

Comparative socio-economic features of the ACT – relative to other Australian jurisdictions – include:

- the highest average income;
- the highest level of post-school qualifications;
- the highest work participation rates;
- the highest self-assessed health status; and
- the highest levels of participation in sport, recreation and culture.²

The majority of residents in the ACT enjoy a high standard of living. However, there are individuals and families that experience disadvantage and in an affluent community such as Canberra they can be more isolated. A scattering of disadvantage across the suburbs of Canberra can also reduce its visibility although there are small pockets of concentrated disadvantage.

For more on Canberra's population visit: www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystrategic/actstats

The ACT Government's online report card on life in Canberra is at:
www.measuringourprogress.act.gov.au

The Challenges and Opportunities

The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* keeps the spotlight on persistent challenges and encompasses new and emerging issues. It is also adaptable enough for the ACT Government to capitalise on opportunities to create an inclusive community.

Ongoing issues

The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* re-affirms the ACT Government's commitment to improving outcomes for all Canberrans as part of a vibrant, liveable and inclusive community. The 2011 Plan also recognises that some individuals and groups face particular challenges and have specific needs in realising their aspirations, depending on their circumstances or their time in life. The ACT Government has developed strategies in partnership with citizens and non-government organisations to promote participation right across the community. The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body is one example.

The ACT Government is committed to dealing locally with issues prevalent across Australia. These include: discrimination; cost of living pressures; the availability of affordable housing to rent and buy in rising markets; the need to continue promoting healthy lifestyle choices in the face of the increasing levels of overweight and chronic disease; high levels of car dependence coupled with the need for effective public transport systems; and the challenge of creating communities that are resilient in the face of shocks such as the 2009 Global Financial Crisis and natural disasters.

The ACT Government remains committed to responding and adapting to climate change and its social, economic and environmental impacts. In October 2010, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed legislation for the introduction of the most ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets in the country. The *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010* will see emissions reduced by 40 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050, based on 1990 levels.

Emerging issues

Issues that have gained prominence since 2004 include a changing and ageing population and a greater focus on life's transitions. Technological advances and the advent of new media and social networking are changing the way we communicate with each other and access information. Canberra's role as a regional centre for health, education, employment and business is shaping a longer-term regional approach to the planning of infrastructure and service delivery.

Future opportunities

The citizens of Canberra care deeply about the future of this community and this is one of our greatest strengths. The Centenary of Canberra in 2013 will be a significant occasion to

reflect on the history of our city and take us confidently into the second century. The vision for the Centenary is that all Australians proudly share in the celebration of the nation's capital – the city that tells the story of our country's freedom, spirit, achievements and aspirations.

The future scenario envisaged by Time to Talk – Canberra 2030 is sustainable, has lower carbon emissions, is less dependent on cars, offers people more choice in housing, more choice in lifestyles, builds on its green, clean knowledge and service industries and plays an even more significant role in the region.

This scenario forms the foundation for taking Canberra into its second century, with leadership from the ACT Government and in partnership with the community. The 2011 Review of the ACT Public Service, *Governing the City State*, gives impetus to enhanced co-ordination, cohesion and alignment across ACT Government and in its dealings with citizens.

For information on the 2011 Review of the ACT Public Service, *Governing the City State*, visit: www.actpsreview.act.gov.au/home

Connection – A socially cohesive community

The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* is a plan for the whole community. Everyone benefits from feeling connected with the community and the social cohesion that results. Connection is premised on a commitment to human rights, active citizens, celebrating the diverse population and planning for a liveable community now and for the future.

About us

- A fifth of the ACT population (over 70,000 residents) were born overseas.³
- Approximately 4,300 (1.3 per cent) of the ACT population identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.⁴
- The number of people who report having a disability in the ACT is 45,000 (14.2 per cent of the population).⁵

About our community

- The proportion of Canberrans who have face-to-face contact with family and friends who live outside their households is high at 81.6 per cent.⁶
- The ACT has a higher rate of attendance at sporting events and at cultural venues and events than the national average.⁷
- The percentage of ACT persons who indicated they feel safe at home alone during the day was 95 per cent in 2008-09.⁸
- The ACT has the highest electoral enrolment rate of all States and Territories at 96.6 per cent.⁹
- Just over half (53 per cent) of Canberrans are registered library users, with ACT libraries receiving around 1.65 million visits per annum.¹⁰
- Water use by ACT households has been decreasing over the last decade and per capita waste to landfill has decreased in the ACT. However, the ACT's ecological footprint increased between 1999 and 2004.¹¹

Building a human rights culture

The ACT Government has a long-standing commitment to human rights which enshrines fundamental civil and political rights in the legal system. The ACT Human Rights Commission was established in November 2006, to ensure that human rights are upheld. The Commission consists of three Commissioners with multiple roles – the Children and Young People Commissioner, Health Services Commissioner, Disability and Community Services Commissioner, and a Human Rights and Discrimination Commissioner.

The Commission provides a fair and accessible process for dealing with complaints about discrimination, health and other services, as well as promoting service improvement and developing awareness of human rights in Government and the community.

The Commission works in partnership with both Government and the community to develop an ACT community where rights are respected and promoted, responsibilities are understood and access to quality services is protected. To further strengthen the human rights culture in the ACT, from 1 January 2009, the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004* expressly required public authorities to act consistently with human rights and, when making decisions, to give proper consideration to relevant human rights. The ACT Government has also enacted the Civil Partnerships Act 2008 that provides couples, including same sex couples, with legal recognition of their relationship. There have been 146 civil partnerships from the commencement of the Act in 2008 until June 2010.

The ACT Government is undertaking a joint research project with the Australian National University to look at issues relating to the inclusion of economic, social and cultural rights into the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Active citizens

Active citizens are involved in discussions and decisions that affect them. The ACT Government has adopted a participatory approach so that the Canberra community is engaged in direction setting. The Time to Talk consultation is a measure of the ACT Government's commitment to active citizenry. Thousands of Canberrans took part in imagining a bold future for Canberra in 2030 whilst engaging with some of the complex issues and trade-offs.

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body was established in 2008 to work with the ACT Government to achieve positive outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Elected Body reports to the Government on issues of interest and concern. In their first term, the Elected Body has played a pivotal role in highlighting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and has the support and respect of the ACT Government.

Volunteering provides opportunities for people to be involved, return something to the community, and gain experience, skills and confidence. More than one third of Canberrans participate in voluntary work which is the highest rate in Australia.¹² Volunteers assist at many Canberra events and support essential services for vulnerable people and in areas such as conservation, heritage protection and restoration. The ACT Emergency Services Authority, ACT Emergency Services and ACT Rural Fire Service could not operate if not for the volunteers who freely give their time to assist the community, especially in times of crisis.

Many Canberra organisations rely on philanthropy to deliver their services to the community. Philanthropy can take many forms including financial donations, grants and volunteering. An example is the Hands Across Canberra Foundation which brings together prominent people from business, government and the community as part of a philanthropic network to assist people in need. The Foundation aims to open up new forms of social investment and to build the capacity of donors and grant recipients to access and effectively manage funds.

ACT Government Grants are another way of supporting the non-government sector, community groups and individuals to build a connected community. ACT Government Community Grants are allocated into one of two streams, Health and Community Wellbeing Grants or City and Territory Services Grants. Over 20 separate community grant programs are listed on the ACT Government Grants website: www.grants.act.gov.au.

The ACT Government will:

- Continue to strengthen the ways it engages with the community using the new Community Engagement Manual and initiatives such as Time to Talk – Canberra 2030 and the targeted consultations to follow on transport, planning, sustainability and climate change. An ongoing challenge is engaging more effectively with so-called ‘hard to reach’ members of the community.
- Work closely with the traditional owners, the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, community organisations, and Canberrans to develop an ACT Government Reconciliation Action Plan to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ involvement in policy making, to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and celebrate their achievements.
- Introduce a whole of government approach to grants programs in the ACT.

Celebrating diversity

Canberra is a diverse and vibrant community with world class festivals, community celebrations and cultural events. ACT residents attend, participate and volunteer as part of arts and cultural activities more frequently than people in other parts of Australia.¹³

The Multicultural Festival, Canberra’s New Year’s Eve celebrations, Australia Day and Canberra Day are publicly funded, family-friendly celebrations where the whole community can come together. The Canberra Nara Candle Festival celebrates the Sister City Relationship between Canberra and Nara in Japan, and is an acknowledgement of the diverse local community and our connections to countries around the globe. The ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013 has as its vision that the ACT will be recognised as a leader in multicultural affairs and human rights.

There are also many community events such as Groovin' in the City that give local artists and musicians the opportunity to perform and are good fun for everyone. Public events and celebrations support strong, diverse communities and provide opportunities to share experiences and build understanding.

The ACT Government has an ongoing commitment to:

- A memorable year of celebrations to mark the Centenary of Canberra in 2013 with opportunities for Canberrans and all Australians to take part. For more information on the Centenary visit: www.canberra100.com.au
- Quality cultural facilities and inclusive events so all Canberrans have opportunities to come together and be part of community celebrations and special occasions.
- Improving outcomes for Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population through partnerships with the Commonwealth and local community organisations under the COAG National Indigenous Reform Agenda. New outcomes and targets are based on the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage key Indicators in the areas of early childhood, schooling, health, economic participation, healthy homes, safe communities and governance and leadership.

Case Study: Celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and Culture

The ACT is renowned for its public art and cultural institutions and has a thriving artistic community. A recent partnership between the ACT Government and the Australia Council for the Arts has had lasting benefits for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts community. Over a 12-month period, 56 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, aged from eight to 60 years, took part in courses and activities in photography, ceramics, glass-making, theatre, dance, printmaking and digital story-telling. Artists accessed programs delivered by a range of ACT arts organisations through the employment of Indigenous Arts Co-ordinator, Jenni Kemarre Martiniello and managed by Billabong Aboriginal Development Corporation. One of the participants was Lyndy Delian. Lyndy is an Indigenous woman, single mother of seven, textile and glass artist, painter, writer, illustrator and more recently, a photographer. She began her arts career in 1998 when she attended the art and storytelling program at Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service. Lyndy went on to complete a Certificate IV in Indigenous Art and Fashion Design at CIT and co founded ITAG, the Canberra-based Indigenous Textile and Glass artists group, which won the 2010 International Women's Day Community Award. Lyndy has immersed herself in glass work, printmaking and teaching and her work is held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia and the National Museum of Australia.

A liveable community

The ACT achieved a ranking as the 26th most liveable city by the 2010 Mercer Worldwide Quality of Living Survey which ranks cities against criteria including economic stability, infrastructure, transport facilities and crime rates. Strength in the areas of education, the environment, housing, sporting facilities and the range and quality of restaurants, theatres and cinemas were also assessed. Canberra was ranked 21st in the world's top 100 eco cities.¹⁴

Canberra's reputation as the 'bush capital' is central to the city's character, identity and liveability. Access to shared open space and Canberra's trees improve the amenity of urban life, as well as individual health and wellbeing. The National Arboretum Canberra will be a place of beauty and renown, with lasting benefits for generations to come.

Planning that prioritises people and their diverse needs as well as engaging places to live, work and socialise, is central to creating liveable communities. Public art, community facilities such as parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, community hubs, local ovals and recreation facilities bring Canberrans together.

ACT Government planning of new suburbs and urban renewal focuses on neighbourhoods that invite growing up and ageing in place – walkable neighbourhoods with easy access to services and infrastructure, and community spaces that enhance access, inclusion and participation. Importantly, a liveable community places the highest priority on the principles of access, equity and participation.

The ACT Government will continue its commitment to Canberra as a liveable, vibrant and inclusive city that is responsive to community needs through:

- Better co-ordination and planning of infrastructure and services (through the ACT Infrastructure Plan and Strategic Asset Management Plans) to meet the diverse needs of Canberrans and maximise the liveability and sustainability of our city.
- Systematically addressing barriers to participation through legislation, policy development, information, and implementation of services. Programs enable people of diverse backgrounds and abilities to share the benefits of our community.
- Strengthening the Territory's commitment to active and sustainable transport by linking cycling, walking and public transport with supportive land use around public transport corridors. Flexible transport options that address transport disadvantage and more frequent public transport in suburban areas will form part of building a comprehensive and sustainable transport system. The transport system will also be supported by a safe and connected road network and smart parking policies aimed at managing congestion and private travel demand.

- Investing in community infrastructure that promotes connection and allows for diverse activities. For example, new Regional Community Centres are providing long term tenancies for over 40 community organisations across Canberra and new neighbourhood halls provide meeting and recreational space for the benefit of local communities.
- More flexible use of schools, libraries and civic places through co-location and provision of common facilities for art, sport, recreation, gardening, bringing together communities of interest and everyday social interaction.
- Supporting collaborations between industry, employers and education stakeholders to drive initiatives and research, building the knowledge capital of the Territory and promoting the economic development of the region.
- Creating schools that provide 21st century learning and teaching environments and ensuring these sites are genuine community use facilities, in some cases incorporating child and family services, creative and performing arts facilities, and sporting and recreational facilities.
- Investing in modern libraries that give people access to information from all over the world and provide meeting places for the local community. Libraries support literacy and lifelong learning through access to books, newspapers, journals and the array of information available online. Libraries are also a resource for local organisations and business. As community hubs, libraries play an essential role in reaching out to people who may be isolated as well as communities of interest such as book groups.
- Maximising community participation in sport and active recreation through access to quality and sustainable infrastructure. This recognises that the ACT's sport and recreation sector is a diverse and vibrant part of the community, building social cohesion, promoting active and healthy lifestyles and engaging with members across the community. Future priorities include ensuring access to activities, programs and facilities across all ages and abilities. Creation and greater use of multi-sport and recreation facilities will be championed through sharing resources, management and accessibility.

Resilience and adaptability to a changing environment

The ACT Government takes its obligations on sustainability issues seriously. Planning of Canberra's social infrastructure is underpinned by the principle of sustainability – meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Green infrastructure takes our urban planning and management beyond resource use to encompass the restoration and regeneration of Canberra's natural and community assets.

The goal of a sustainable city has been progressed through initiatives that include the construction of the enlarged Cotter Dam to secure Canberra's water supply; support for renewable energy through the ACT Feed-in Tariff Scheme; the introduction of legislation setting targets for ACT greenhouse gas reductions; and legislation to ban one-use disposable shopping bags.

The ACT Government is helping to reduce energy bills through services such as the Home Energy Advice Team, which provides rebates and advice to householders on reducing their energy use. The Australian Sustainable Schools initiative is a partnership between the Australian Government and States and Territories to support schools to work towards a sustainable future. It is now active in 100 schools across the ACT.

The ACT Government has developed measures that buffer low income households from the cost pressures associated with the long term impacts of climate change. This includes increasing energy concession payments, reviewing utilities concessions, and ensuring low income and other vulnerable households are targeted in energy efficiency and water efficiency programs.

The ACT Government will:

- Continue to implement the Sustainable Futures Program to build resilience to climate change through mitigation and adaptation measures, including an evaluation of the Canberra Spatial Plan.
- Continue implementation of a co-ordinated set of initiatives and programs that build the capacity of individuals, families, organisations and the wider community to reduce their carbon footprint. For example, the \$20 million expansion of the ACTSmart program features a single ACTSmart website with information to help householders and business reduce their energy consumption; CitySwitch for energy efficiency in tenanted offices; the WEST low-income audit and re-fit program; and community grants to support installation of solar panels. For more information on ACTSmart visit: www.environment.act.gov.au/actsmart
- Continue to support low income households given the disproportionate effect that climate change and adaptation will have on these families.

Case Study: People focused urban design - Belconnen Town Centre

Belconnen Town Centre is a community hub for the residents of north Canberra and the ACT. In 2009-10, the Town Centre underwent significant redevelopment following five years of planning and design of a greatly improved public transport system for Belconnen.

The old bus interchange has been redeveloped into three bus stations: the Belconnen Community Station provides direct access to services and facilities at the East of the centre; the central Westfield Station includes a world-class waiting lounge integrated with the

shopping mall; and the Cohen Street Station provides a simple interchange point for connecting services to West Belconnen and local schools. From mid-2011 there are also more options to park and ride and improved cycling facilities for commuters at the Community Station. The redevelopment of the Belconnen Town Centre includes the revitalisation of the shopping precinct. The redevelopment showcases the ACT Government's work with the private sector to deliver for the Canberra community.

The nearby Belconnen Arts Centre, which opened in 2009, is the arts and cultural hub of the area with exhibitions, classes, community events, a café and panoramic views. The landscaped grounds of the Centre, on the foreshore of Lake Ginninderra, have space for festivals and concerts. This centre is linked by clear walking and cycling paths, and combined with the library, community services and educational facilities such as Lake Ginninderra College, creates a vibrant centre for Belconnen.

Belconnen Arts Centre: www.belconnenartscentre.com.au

Belonging – Everyone reaching their potential

Belonging is supported by every individual having the opportunities and resources to take part in the community and reach their potential. The foundations of belonging include government investment in services; education and employment opportunities; secure and sustainable housing; good health and wellbeing across the life course; and a collaborative and concerted effort to address the causes and effects of disadvantage.

About us

- In the decade to 2008, the life expectancy at birth for males rose to 80.1 years and the life expectancy at birth for females rose to 84 years.¹⁵
- The increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity has emerged as an important health issue. The percentage of ACT residents who reported that they were overweight or obese increased significantly between 2004-05 and 2007-08.¹⁶
- The level of Year 12 or equivalent attainment in the ACT was 95.2 per cent in 2009. This is an increase from 90.4 per cent in 2005 and places the ACT above the national average of 84.5 per cent in 2009.¹⁷
- The ACT unemployment rate has remained below 4 per cent since November 2003 and is well below the national average.¹⁸

About our community

- Despite high levels of family and community support in the ACT, 29.5 per cent of people in the lowest income quintile have indicated they would be unable to raise \$2,000 within one week in the case of emergency. One parent families where the adult is unemployed face greatest difficulty in raising emergency money.¹⁹
- In the ACT, almost three quarters of low income households live in a household in which the head is either unemployed or not in the labour force. The majority of one parent families are headed by women.²⁰
- The ACT does not have the range of regional poverty rates found in other parts of Australia. However, the ACT does have small pockets of locational disadvantage.²¹

Investing in education and skills

The ACT Government's approach to education is that 'everyone matters'. This is a commitment to enhance educational opportunities for every student. It is supported by investment in children's early years development, meeting the needs of all students throughout their education experience with a priority of improving literacy and numeracy, and engaging young people in the development of their own pathways through flexible education, training and employment options.

Innovative and tailored learning opportunities to engage vulnerable students through the education, training and employment continuum are being supported through partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses, and the provision of extended services.

Canberra is home to first class tertiary institutions that provide opportunities for local students and a base for academics and researchers from across Australia and around the world. Our universities and vocational institutions position Canberra as a centre for excellence and innovation in education and research.

The ACT Government has an ongoing commitment to education and skills development through:

- Investment in early childhood infrastructure and quality early learning and care, including universal access to 15 hours per week of government preschool education by 2015.
- Supporting quality teaching including the introduction of the Quality Teaching Model in ACT public schools and establishment of the ACT Teacher Quality Institute.
- A Youth Commitment where all organisations that service young people will work together to ensure no young person is lost from education, training or employment.
- Support for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training and skills development that meets the needs of local employers.
- Continuing consultations foreshadowed by the ACT Tertiary Taskforce with tertiary education stakeholders including education providers, industry and employers, government and the community.
- Support for development of an integrated tertiary sector encompassing providers of higher education and vocational education and Training (VET).
- Supporting students to access higher education by improving pathways from school to VET and university.
- Funding the development of foundation skills and the provision of enhanced pathways to nationally recognised higher VET qualifications.
- Improving adult literacy levels through a government and community partnership to develop and promote programs for people seeking assistance with literacy. Libraries will extend their role as centres for adult literacy and language programs. Library based volunteer tutor programs will continue their essential work in supporting people whose first language is not English and new readers.

Case Study: Staying the course with education

The ACT Government has invested in innovative and flexible ways of keeping young people engaged with learning so they can make the most of their future.

Canberra College Cares

At the Schools First Awards in 2009, the winning Canberra College Cares (CCCares) Program was described as an exemplary partnership between the College and ACT Health. The CCCares Program offers a one-stop-shop for education, health and welfare services for young parents within the College environment. The students bring their young children to the school, continue their education and access health and parenting services all in one location.

Following a period of drug use and homelessness, Cherie returned to CCCares as a soon to be parent. Over time, she stopped using drugs, secured accommodation, re engaged with schooling and was ultimately the recipient of the Principal's Award for outstanding academic achievement. Cherie now lives with her partner and son and works full-time.

She has said via text message: *love my new job so much, so happy i finished school u guys r the bestest lol.*

The CCCares model is about to be showcased for adoption nationally. For more information on CCCares visit: www.canberrac.act.edu.au/curriculum/cccares

Connect 10

The Connect 10 Program has been designed to re-engage Year 9 and Year 10 students with education, training and work. The program is staffed by the Department of Education and builds on partnerships between schools and training providers. For example, John had significant issues at home that resulted in low self-esteem and little motivation or encouragement to continue with school. He took up a work experience opportunity, through Connect 10, and the reports were extremely positive. However, there were some concerns about John's literacy levels as a result of missing so much school. John was encouraged to remain in school and complete Year 10 while completing a Certificate I in Automotive one day a week with a Regional Training Group. John finished his Certificate and Year 10 and enrolled in College with the goal of completing a school based apprenticeship.

Since the beginning of 2009, there has been a Connect 10 program in each ACT school district.

For more information on Connect 10 see the ACT Department of Education:
www.det.act.gov.au

Good health and wellbeing across the life course

The ACT Government's goal for Canberrans is 'good health for all' - healthy individuals participating in a healthy community. This means striving to ensure that all members of the ACT community are able to make healthy lifestyle choices, achieve equitable health outcomes and act as partners with their health care professionals in their own health care.

The ACT Government uses a population health framework to develop services which support and enhance the capacity of people to achieve good health and support their overall wellbeing. This is underpinned by strategic planning for the delivery of services. For instance, mental health can be affected by many different variables including financial security, education and employment. The Government's strategic planning takes account of the complexity of the issues and the importance of health promotion and prevention to enhance mental health and wellbeing.

The ACT Government delivers early intervention and prevention services and health promotion activities in a range of community settings.

The Capital Asset Development Plan is a comprehensive response to the pressures of an ageing population, changing technology, and community expectations – all of which contribute to a significant increase in demand for health services in the ACT.

The ACT Government will support health and wellbeing through:

- Concerted action on health promotion, early intervention, disease prevention and better integration of care in community settings.
- The Capital Asset Development Plan as the ACT Government's health infrastructure program to respond to growing service demand.
- Promoting mental health and wellbeing in the community whilst funding the right mix of services.
- Ongoing work to attract, train and retain health care professionals.
- Assuring the financial future of the health care system by participating in National Health and Hospitals Network reforms.

Case Study: Innovations in health - The ACT Walk-in Centre

The ACT Walk-in Centre, located at The Canberra Hospital, is the first of its kind in Australia. The Walk-in Centre is staffed by highly skilled nurses and reception staff to provide fast, publicly funded, one off advice and treatment for people with minor illness and injury. The Walk-in Centre is open seven days a week, early until late, and no appointment is necessary. As well as providing an innovative and accessible service to the Canberra community, the Walk-in Centre is also designed to take some pressure off hospital emergency departments.

The 10,000th Walk-in Centre client was seen in February 2011, less than one year after the Centre opened.

The ACT Walk-in Centre: www.walkincentre.act.gov.au

Delivering diverse and sustainable housing

A key ACT Government priority is diversity of housing choice to meet the needs of people of all ages, abilities and lifestyles. The focus is on the development of sustainable, universally designed houses, apartments, and town houses to enable ageing in place. Well designed infill housing in locations that will support access to services and sustainable public transport will encourage greater social mix and the richness of local neighbourhoods.

Access to affordable and appropriate housing is a basic right and the ACT Government has made upholding that right one of its highest priorities. Although the ACT is usually rated as affordable by national standards (taking into account the ACT's relatively high incomes), real barriers to secure housing and appropriate rental properties still exist for some people and families. A combination of accommodation and support services are provided for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The ACT Government's Affordable Housing Action Plan is creating more affordable entry points into the market for home buyers, and aims to boost the supply of rental accommodation in the Territory. The Action Plan also places greater emphasis on community and not-for-profit housing, and makes more effective use of the Territory's public housing.

The ACT Government has an ongoing commitment to:

- Implement the recommendations from the Affordable Housing Action Plan, including meeting the land release target of 17,000 dwelling sites between 2010 and 2014.
- Meet the targets set by the National Affordable Housing Agreement, the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.
- Continue to reform the homelessness system by addressing the needs of homeless people and people at risk of losing their home through preventative and outreach strategies such as the Street to Home Program.
- The continued development of ACT Government housing stock with a focus on new homes for older public housing tenants and freeing up larger homes for eligible families.
- Streamlined access to services through implementation of initiatives such as the First Point service and Social Housing Register to ensure clients no longer have to access multiple organisations in their time of need.

Addressing the causes and effects of disadvantage

A challenge in addressing persistent disadvantage is the way it can become entrenched in locations and across generations. There are geographic concentrations of disadvantage in some parts of Canberra but it is not as distinct or widespread as other major cities in Australia and overseas. In the ACT, the locations where there is persistent disadvantage are often small and in close proximity to highly advantaged areas.

The ACT Government has a wide range of targeted programs to address the causes and effects of disadvantage. The challenge is to align and sustain the responses.

The ACT Government will lead this work by:

- Strengthening the co-ordination of prevention and early intervention approaches for the most vulnerable children, young people and families.
- Developing an ACT Homelessness Accord so that responsibility for housing and homelessness is effectively shared and managed right across government and in partnership with the community.
- Trialling a place based approach to long term unemployment through better integration of support and employment services through the Home to Work project.
- Strengthening data and research on disadvantage in Canberra, including the locational and intergenerational dimensions.

Case Study: Libraries as community hubs - Ron's story

Every day, Canberrans make important life decisions, develop new skills, seek knowledge and connect with their community through the resources and services provided in the ACT's libraries. Libraries provide access to technology for those who cannot afford it at home and support early literacy for babies and toddlers. Isolated or lonely people communicate with the library staff and other library users and feel connected to their community. Volunteers give back to the community through the home library service and people share their skills and knowledge with others through interest groups and learning programs.

This is Ron's story which he has called *Ron's Library*.

The Kippax Library keeps me going. I read and talk and meet with others at the Kippax Library. We have a Bridge Club at the Kippax Library where oldies like me keep our brains going and lives interesting. We also have a writing group where we share our creativity and our much pondered written words.

At the library, you have the freedom to discover self. You have the freedom to meet new friends. You have the freedom to find contentment. Better than that, you have a special

person (or group of people) who has the motivation, without conflict of interest, to help you find the way.

Whenever I get to have doubts about myself and my understanding of the purpose of life, I visit the library there to restore my faith in the goodness of humanity and the reason for being. With a little patience, and a lot of work you discover the who that is you and the esteem that is yours in our libraries. The library sets me free. The library and its staff welcomes me and everyone in the community and I stay well and happy for being a part of my library.

For more information visit: www.library.act.gov.au

Collaboration – working together to meet the needs of citizens

Working in partnership is not new for the ACT Government. However, this 2011 Plan gives prominence to strengthening collaborative and joined-up ways of working. This recognises that while the ACT Government is a leader in the community it is also a partner with citizens, community organisations and business. The importance of leadership and collaboration were emphasised by the community during the Time to Talk community conversation in 2010. The 2011 Review of the ACT Public Service, *Governing the City State*, also emphasises the importance of co-ordination, cohesion and alignment of effort to get the best outcomes for and with the citizens of Canberra.

The key elements of collaboration are: embedding a community inclusion approach in the work of ACT Government; collaborative policy development and planning; working with non-government organisations as advocates and service providers; continuing to build the evidence base; and accountability to the community on progress through mechanisms such as the Measuring Our Progress website and Triple Bottom Line Reporting.

Community inclusion principles embedded across Government

To progress the vision of an inclusive community, the ACT Government will continue to embed leadership, collaboration and engagement as part of everyday business. These principles support the ACT Government in its dual roles as a community leader and a community partner. They also provide guidance for the ACT Government and its partners when dealing with complex and cross-cutting issues.

The ACT Government will continue to provide quality services that are responsive to the diverse needs of citizens. This will include new and flexible ways to align our effort, which will be intensified to meet high, multiple and complex needs of the most vulnerable in the community. Systematically addressing barriers to access remains a priority of the *Canberra Social Plan 2011*. This will be achieved through mechanisms such as enabling legislation, policy, information, and the development and implementation of services and programs.

The ACT Government will:

- Implement community inclusion principles of leadership, collaboration and engagement in the areas of long term unemployment, homelessness and vulnerable families.
- Draw together the lessons from policy development and projects in these areas and incorporate them into an investigation of the drivers and impediments to adopting system-wide inclusion principles.

- Report on a regular basis to the Community Inclusion Committee of Cabinet to ensure high level scrutiny and accountability.

Collaborative policy development and planning

The ACT Government has numerous mechanisms for working collaboratively. They include inter-departmental committees, working groups, memoranda of understanding, contracts and funding arrangements. Working outside organisational boundaries is not new but this Plan re-states the ACT Government's commitment to collaboration and building the capacity of the public sector to engage with its partners and citizens. There is also an ongoing challenge to be innovative in our policy development and planning. one of the key findings of the 2011 Review Governing our City State is that the ACT is well placed to be a leader in public service practice and performance due to the small size of our city, our government and the presence of leading academic and public sector organisations.

The ACT Government will continue to:

- Share what works across the government, community and business sectors to create opportunities for joint initiatives. Data, research and case studies will be used as a catalyst for sharing learning and understanding the efficacy of approaches.
- Develop an Outcomes Based Funding Framework and tools, including a pre-qualification framework, to provide certainty around service funding for the community sector within a consistent quality framework.

Working with the non-government sector

The non-government sector is a key contributor to community inclusion and a partner with ACT Government in achieving this goal. ACT Government partnerships with the community sector are strong, as guided by the 2004 Social Compact. Forums such as the Joint Community Government Reference Group – with senior representation from ACT Government and the community sector – provide a vital consultative mechanism for strategic advice on important issues for government and non-government organisations in the services sector.

The ACT Government will:

- Continue to work with the community sector to address ongoing and emerging issues that affect service delivery and sector viability including, for example, the equal remuneration case under the Commonwealth Government's *Fair Work Act 2009*.

Building the evidence base

A strong theme from consultation on this 2011 Plan was the importance of local data and research. This needs to be coupled with better evaluation to assess the effectiveness of

government and community interventions and inform sound decision making and investment. There will be further work on regional demography to inform the future service footprint for the ACT. This work recognises the ACT Government's important role as a regional centre and how the ACT is responsive to this role through the planning of service delivery and infrastructure.

The ACT Government will:

- Continue to produce high quality and publicly available demographic reports to inform decision making. For example, a Whole of Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Monitoring Scoping Project is actively supporting the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data collection and management. The ACT Ageing Population: Economic, Fiscal and Policy Implications Report will present research and analysis undertaken by the ACT Government on the ageing population.
- Continue to build research partnerships with local research institutions. For example, ACT Health's partnership role in an Australian Research Council Linkage Project is strengthening Australia's capacity in health policy development, implementation and evaluation. Other examples include joint projects with the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) to analyse ACT data from the Australian Early Development Index with socio-economic data for targeted communities across Canberra.
- Support evaluation capacity within government by adopting an evaluation framework. For example, the Home to Work pilot project will be evaluated jointly by the ANZSOG Institute for Governance and NATSEM and provide good evidence for future policy development.

Case Study: Schools for the future - Namadgi School

The Namadgi School in the south of Canberra opened its doors to students in 2011. The vision for the school is to: provide an outstanding curriculum through quality teaching; be a hub of the community; build quality relationships between all stakeholders; and be a centre of excellence for world's best practice.

The planning for the Namadgi School ensured the strong participation of local school and community representatives and was based on data and demographic projections for the area.

The school has incorporated sustainable design features across indoor and outdoor areas, buildings and landscape design.

Namadgi School: www.det.act.gov.au/namadgi

Progress and accountability

The ACT Government's accountability framework focuses on the impact of the Government's investment and tracking change over time.

The website *Measuring our Progress* is the ACT Government's online report card on life in Canberra and reports on 28 indicators of progress aligned with the seven goals of the *Canberra Plan*. You can visit the website at: www.measuringourprogress.act.gov.au

Strengthening Performance and Accountability: A framework for the ACT Government includes a number of key actions to strengthen government efforts. The ACT Government Evaluation Policy and Guidelines aim to build evaluation maturity across government and to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of services.

The ACT Government will:

- Continue to regularly update *Measuring our Progress* against indicators that include Canberra's health, prosperity, liveability and sustainability.
- Develop a Triple Bottom Line assessment framework to guide Government decision making. The assessment framework builds on the Government's earlier work investigating Poverty Impact Analysis and will be used to assess the benefits and impacts of ACT Government initiatives, taking into account economic, environmental and social considerations. The social considerations will include individuals and groups in the community who may be affected by new policy, legislation and decision making of Government. This will include gender analysis.
- Implement a performance and accountability framework to ensure the impact of Government interventions are measured and understood.
- Continue to strengthen the Government's strategic planning framework under *The Canberra Plan – Towards our Second Century*.

Case Study: Child and Family Centres - Making the world of difference

Child and Family Centres were a flagship initiative of the 2004 *Canberra Social Plan*, providing the cornerstone of the ACT Government's early intervention platform. Two Child and Family Centres have been established, the first at Gungahlin (opened in May 2006), and the second at Tuggeranong (opened in June 2007). Based on the success of these Centres, a third Child and Family Centre opened in West Belconnen in 2011.

The Centres, which are extremely popular with children and parents, are a publicly funded, one-stop-shop with a wide range of universal through to more targeted services.

Prevention and early intervention services include parent education sessions as well as programs specifically for more vulnerable families. Primary health care services such as

Maternal and Child Health Clinics and midwifery clinics operate from the Centres. Most programs are offered in partnership and are based on or replicate evidence based programs, reflecting the priority on providing effective services.

Growing Healthy Families uses a community development approach to engage, support and link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families to existing services, including the Child and Family Centre. Support is offered through individual case management, family support, group programs, community development activities and drop in assistance.

As one mother who has been part of Growing Healthy Families says:

Without the support of the Child and Family Centre I would be isolated and lonely. My kids really love taking part in the activities organised by the Centre. I've been helping out the Homework Centre to help out those kids who might need a bit of extra help with their homework so they don't fall behind in school. With the support and encouragement from the staff at the Centre, I'm going to be starting a new course soon. I just don't know where I would be without them. They've made the world of difference to my life.

ACT Child and Family Centres: www.dhcs.act.gov.au/childandfamilycentres

Monitoring and Reporting

Reporting on the *Canberra Social Plan 2011* will form part of a broader approach to performance reporting across the ACT Government under the *Canberra Plan – Towards our Second Century*. The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* maintains the ACT Government's commitment to biennial reporting on the Plan.

Maintaining our targets

The 2004 *Canberra Social Plan* incorporated a number of long term targets to assist in reviewing the effectiveness of the Plan and its implementation. The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* maintains the Government's commitment to reporting on these targets as they remain robust and chart progress over time.

The targets are:

- Reduce long-term unemployment (reduce the level of long-term unemployment to 12.5 per cent of total unemployment by 2013).
- Decrease income inequality (decrease income inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient, to average at most a figure of 0.25 over the decade to 2013).
- Reduce homelessness (reduce primary homelessness to as close as possible to zero by 2013).
- Increase the proportion of young people successfully completing secondary or vocational studies (increase to 95 per cent the proportion of 19 year olds with a Year 12 certificate or equivalent by 2013).
- Increase the proportion of adults with post-school qualifications (increase to 70 per cent the proportion of 25-64 year olds with post school qualifications).

Reporting against these targets is incorporated in the 2007 and 2009 progress reports against the *Canberra Social Plan 2004*. The biennial progress reports are available at: www.cmd.act.gov.au/policystrategic/socialplan

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