



## Federal Budget should not miss opportunity to create a fairer future

ACTCOSS media release, Monday 10 May 2021

The ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) today called on the Morrison Government to use tomorrow's Budget as an opportunity to create a fairer future by supporting priorities outlined by the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

Dr Emma Campbell, ACTCOSS CEO, said: "This Federal Budget provides an opportunity for investment that not only drives economic recovery but also reduces disadvantage and inequality. ACTCOSS calls on the Australian Government to prioritise investment that will create a fairer future for all Australians."

ACTCOSS's top three priorities for the ACT in the Federal Budget are:

- investment in the community service sector to generate jobs while supporting those facing disadvantage;
- significantly increased investment in social housing; and
- better support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve self-determination.

Dr Campbell continued: "The community service and care sector is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the ACT as we try to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding and diverse population and an increasing population of older Canberrans.

"However, services are struggling to meet demand, particularly following COVID-19. We need to see federal investment in the community sector. This will generate new

community sector jobs, and allow the proper resourcing of important services such as aged care, child care, sexual violence crisis and advocacy services, and other supports – services which should be available to every Canberran that needs them.

“Job generation in the community service and care sector also delivers on women’s economic security, with sector workforces made up of 80% women. Existing COVID-19 economic stimulus measures have been focussed on male-dominated sectors such as construction and roads: investment in the community sector not only generates jobs at less expense, but also helps redress the gender imbalance in recovery measures. Bolstering the care sector also allows people who have been constrained by unpaid caring duties to return to the workforce, increasing overall economic participation.

“Social housing is another area where federal investment is urgently needed. The Anglicare [Rental Affordability Snapshot](#) shows that the ACT remains unaffordable for people on low incomes. Canberra faces a shortage of 3,000 social houses, with a three-and-a-half year wait for public housing and 1,600 people experiencing homelessness.

“Again, this is an area where investment makes economic sense – for every million invested in social housing, around \$1.3 million in total turnover is generated in the economy.

“Finally, ACTCOSS calls on the government to address the deep and ongoing wrongs inflicted against First Nations people, through commitment to the implementation of all recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody; a constitutionally guaranteed Voice to Parliament; and a commitment to Closing the Gap. We also need to invest in services, supports and initiatives that can enable all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve full self-determination.

“We continue to see unacceptable rates of disadvantage among Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Canberra. We should be empowering communities through community-controlled organisations to make change.

“This Budget is an opportunity for the Australian Government to adopt evidence-based, economically sound policies that will have a positive impact not only on people facing disadvantage, but the entire community. We call on the Australian Government to seize this opportunity,” Dr Campbell concluded.

*ACTCOSS advocates for social justice in the ACT and represents not-for-profit community organisations.*

**For more information or comment, please contact  
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