

SUBMISSION TO ACT BUDGET 2019/20

We are concerned at the difficulties faced by less advantaged members of our community, and request additional provisions and financial arrangements in the 2019/20 ACT Budget to create a more equitable and cohesive community.

Housing

We congratulate the ACT government for conducting recent public survey and discussion on housing needs in Canberra and note the frequency of requests for more public/social housing options. Lower-income earners are almost priced out of the current rental and ownership private market, and yet the community depends on the work of cleaners, child-care workers, and hospitality and retail staff. Tertiary students are reporting high rates of difficulty in finding suitable accommodation, and even homelessness. Other groups at risk include older people, women and children. Suitable housing is probably the key social indicator and strongly influences outcomes in health, education and employment.

Housing Recommendations

- The answer is an additional stock of a range of dwellings available on a non-profit basis because they are not owned by investors. If the ACT government provides funds for an expanded social housing scheme in Canberra, these properties form social capital, and provide for the well-being of the community as a whole. We believe that this is a better use of taxpayer money than, say, incentives to developers.
- We encourage the ACT government to use the findings from recent investigations to justify, encourage and facilitate co-housing, affordable housing and less rigid regulations around zoning, in both the public and private housing markets. Greater innovation and flexibility would allow more people to be homeowners by sharing some resources.
- We look forward to the ACT being self-sufficient in solar energy in the near future. If a surplus is produced, we recommend that these funds be used to establish a Housing Trust Fund, using the interest earned to create innovative, affordable rental accommodation.

Casual work

In addition to workers who earn low wages, there are many workers who engage in ongoing, even full-time employment, but on a casual basis. This lack of job security impacts on all aspects of the worker's life from housing to getting a loan. The ACT government itself employs many thousands of workers as casuals.

Casual work recommendations

- We ask the ACT government to set a good example nationally and make sure that their workforce receives appropriate conditions and status. With a policy decision in place, the ACT budget could initially fund an office where workers could apply to have their status reviewed. A strong commitment to permanent employment could save the ACT government money in the long run and contribute to an equitable community.

Name/address

Name/address

25/10/18