



# UNIONSACT SUBMISSION TO THE 2019-20 ACT BUDGET CONSULTATION

## ABOUT UNIONSACT

UnionsACT is the peak council representing 24 unions and over 33,000 working people, their families and communities. One hundred thousand more have their conditions of employment shaped by the work of our affiliates. More than 20,000 Canberrans support the work we do through our community campaigning.

We have a long and proud history of independently and fearlessly advocating on behalf of union members, and our mission is to improve working standards and living standards for all working people.

As the leading voice for working people in the ACT, UnionsACT is pleased to make this submission to the ACT 2019-20 Budget Consultation.

## INTRODUCTION

UnionsACT's submission to the ACT Budget Consultation for 2019-20 is informed by our previous budget submissions, and the submissions of our affiliates. We refer the ACT Government and the Treasurer to our 2017 and 2018 submissions, which set out the priorities of the trade union movement in the Canberra region. We also note and support

the submissions made by our affiliates, including the CPSU, AEU and UFU.

Our core focus remains practical policies and budget measures that would tackle workplace exploitation, unsafe working conditions, and disadvantage and inequality in the community.

This year's budget submission focuses on specific budget measures we believe the ACT Government must deliver to adequately ensure workers' rights and safety are upheld.

### PRIORITY AREAS:

- Secure jobs, rights at work and workplace safety
- Tackling inequality and ensuring fair taxation
- Public ownership of public assets and services
- Well-funded public services



### CONTACT US

[unionsact@unionsact.org.au](mailto:unionsact@unionsact.org.au)

02 6225 8116

## SECURE JOBS, RIGHTS AT WORK AND WORKPLACE SAFETY

Workplace exploitation, wage-theft and unsafe workplaces remains common in Canberra.

Wage-theft and non-payment of superannuation affects over 10,000 working people in the ACT. Our research shows that exploitation is exceptionally severe for young workers.

Workplace safety in Canberra remains the second worst in Australia.

There are also alarming levels of insecure and precarious jobs in the ACT public service, and with contractors working for the ACT Government.

Our detailed submission to the ACT Assembly into Insecure Work remains relevant, as do our many recommendations. We refer to the Government to that submission, and the submissions of our affiliates to that Inquiry.

UnionsACT seeks the following priorities in this area:

- Establish WorkSafe ACT as an independent statutory authority.
- Introduce a 4-year temporary Worker Safety Improvement Levy on all registered workers compensation insurance providers and brokers.
- Fund a workplace safety awareness and education program.
- Fund education and awareness of workers rights under the new Secure Local Jobs Code.
- Fund a Young Worker Advice Service.

- Increase funding for Industrial Magistrate Court prosecutions.
- Create an Office of Industrial Relations.
- Invest FY19-20 Comcare premium savings into Safety, Rehabilitation and OV Reduction Fund.
- Expand coverage of Portable Long Service Leave scheme.
- Fund awareness of the Portable Long Service Leave scheme.

### ESTABLISH AND FUND WORKSAFE ACT AS AN INDEPENDENT STATUTORY AUTHORITY

UnionsACT notes that the establishment of an independent Work Safety regulatory authority was a recommendation from the independent review into ACT work safety. This recommendation is supported by UnionsACT.

The ACT Government must establish Worksafe ACT as an independent statutory authority as a matter of priority.

UnionsACT draws the Government's attention to our more detailed response and recommendations to the independent review. We note that some recommendations from the review, and also our response, will have budget implications, for example: greater numbers of workplace safety inspectors, dedicated resources for awareness & education, the greater provision of training for inspectors and other Worksafe staff, greater resources for prosecutions, improved data collection, etc.

**Recommendation: Structurally separate WorkSafe from Access**

## **Canberra and establish an independent statutory workplace safety authority.**

UnionsACT notes the Independent review's discussion of the Regulatory Funding Levy. The purpose of the funding levy is to fund the cost of administering the Workers Compensation Act and WHS Act. The Review states that there is a "considerable shortfall in funding for the estimated cost for administration of both the Workers' Compensation Act and the WHS Act".

The Review also notes that the funding is not directly allocated to Worksafe. This is not desirable. The Review states that "a direct funding allocation from the Levy would provide more accountability and transparency for the expenditure of the levy".

UnionsACT recommends that the Regulatory Funding Levy be permanently increased to fund the full cost of the administration of the Acts. Furthermore, UnionsACT recommends that the "growth cap" (the regulatory levy 'target') on the annual increase of the levy be removed. Finally, we recommend the funds be allocated directly to Worksafe.

UnionsACT recommends that the ACT Government clarify whether the ACT Government will contribute to the Fund as a self-insurer.

## **Recommendation: Permanently increase the Regulatory Funding Levy and directly allocate the funds to Worksafe.**

## **INTRODUCE A 4-YEAR WORKER SAFETY IMPROVEMENT LEVY**

The ACT is the second least safe jurisdiction in Australia in which to work. It is clear that a concerted investment in new initiatives is needed to tackle the issue of unsafe workplaces. UnionsACT recommends the ACT Government introduce a new, temporary Worker Safety Improvement levy. This would be in addition to the recommended permanent increase to the Regulatory Funding Levy, Magistrates Court Levy, Default Insurance Fund Levy.

The levy would apply to all registered workers compensation insurance providers (we also recommend the ACT Government investigate how workers compensation insurance brokers could also contribute to the levy).

The levy should be set at an amount where it can collect approx. \$3 million per year. UnionsACT estimates that from a premium pool of \$175m, a levy of at least 1.7% would be sufficient.

The levy should be paid by workers compensation insurance companies, and also workers compensation brokers. Brokerage rates currently average 3.1% of the premium pool, or approx. \$5.4m in commissions paid by insurers to brokers.

The funds raised by this levy would be distributed between funding the establishment dedicated support measures within Worksafe for Health and Safety Representatives (66%) and a dedicated workplace safety awareness program (34%).

## **Recommendation: Introduce a new,**

## **temporary 1.7% levy on workers compensation insurers for 4 years.**

### **FUND A WORKPLACE SAFETY AWARENESS AND EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Awareness and education of workplace safety rights and obligations is essential for the effective operation of work safety regulation.

UnionsACT reiterates our view that awareness and education of workplace safety must be structurally separated from the role of the workplace safety regulator's inspectorate.

Through establishing a temporary Worker Safety Improvement Levy, the ACT Government can fund a dedicated workplace safety awareness and education program.

UnionsACT recommends that the funding:

- Provide a dedicated grant pool for social stakeholders, including UnionsACT and industry associations, for the purpose of raising awareness of workplace safety rights and obligations.
- Provide for the creation of an Injured Workers Network organisation, to provide ongoing casework support and information to injured workers to assist with rehabilitation and return to work.

## **Recommendation: Fund education and awareness of workplace safety requirements, obligations and rights.**

### **FUNDING FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SECURE LOCAL JOBS CODE**

UnionsACT strongly supports the Government's Secure Local Jobs Package and Code. We note that our submissions to the various consultations and inquiries for the package included a recommendation that suitable funding was allocated for awareness raising and education at the commencement of the Code.

It is essential that industry and workers that provide services to the ACT Government have a state of knowledge of the new obligations, so as to ensure the new requirements are adhered to. This state of knowledge will assist the Registrar to ensure compliance with the Act and Code.

UnionsACT therefore supports the establishment of a funded awareness and education program to inform employers and employees of the new Secure Local Jobs Package and Code.

## **Recommendation: Provide funding for an appropriate awareness and education campaign for both employees and employers.**

### **FUND A YOUNG WORKER ADVICE SERVICE**

UnionsACT research has demonstrated that young workers aged 15 to 25 are significantly more likely to experience unsafe work and serious workplace exploitation. This is even more pronounced amongst international students.

UnionsACT notes that funding was allocated for the provision of a young worker service. However, we are concerned that the funding allocated is not sufficient to provide the service proposed in UnionsACT's previous budget proposals.

UnionsACT has previously provided a detailed funding application for this program, and is seeking funding over five years.

**Recommendation: Increase funding allocated to a Young Worker Advice Service to at least \$400,000 per year for four years.**

### **INCREASE FUNDING FOR INDUSTRIAL MAGISTRATE COURT PROSECUTIONS**

UnionsACT again recommends that additional funding be allocated for the Industrial Magistrate, and also to the Director of Public Prosecutions to better manage and run industrial prosecutions.

UnionsACT draws the Government's attention to the Magistrates Court Levy of 0.3% of the workers compensation premium pool. We recommend that this levy be increased to increase resources for the DPP and the Industrial Magistrate

**Recommendation: Raise the Magistrates Court Levy so as to increase funding for Industrial Magistrate Court prosecutions.**

### **CREATE AN OFFICE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

UnionsACT proposes that the ACT Government bring together the various units and entities into a single Office – the Office of Industrial Relations for the private sector. The combined Office would:

- Combine all existing entities with industrial relations and procurement regulation responsibilities.
- Be the principle repository within the public service for industrial relations policy, enforcement and compliance, principally for the private sector.
- Ensure inspectors have access to a broader range of inspection powers.
- Provide advice to ACT Government business units and directorates regarding compliance with relevant industrial relations obligations.
- Be a single point of contact for disputes or complaints about industrial matters.
- Work closely with unions, and employer organisations.

A combination of these resources would improve the compliance, inspection and monitoring functions, without sacrificing any of the current work or obligations of the former work units to their current larger entities.

The new Office of Industrial Relations should:

- Be separate to CMTEDD and Access Canberra.
- Be separate to Worksafe.
- Should incorporate existing regulatory resources, with no diminution of current staffing or other resources.

**Recommendation: establish a new Office of Industrial Relations that incorporates existing entities with industrial relations functions, enforcement roles and policy development.**

### **INVEST FY19-20 COMCARE PREMIUM SAVINGS INTO PUBLIC SECTOR SAFETY, REHABILITATION AND OV REDUCTION FUND**

In the FY18-19 Budget, the ACT Government realised an approx. \$15 million saving in Comcare premiums. As the ACT heads towards self-insurance for the ACTPS, UnionsACT believes the ACT Government should establish a special Fund, for the purpose of improving HSR training, rehabilitation and occupation violence reduction, funded through a once-off cash investment from Comcare premium savings. The Fund would focus principally on ACT public service safety, HSRs, rehabilitation and return-to-work of injured public servants, and would contribute to the funding of OV-reduction strategies.

The Fund could be administered as an ancillary fund to the ACT Public Sector Workers Compensation Fund and PSWC Commissioner, with oversight and advice from the PSWC Advisory Committee.

**Recommendation: establish a hypothecated Fund from Comcare premium savings, to enable greater HSR training, rehabilitation and OV reduction.**

### **EXPAND COVERAGE OF THE PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE SCHEME**

The Portable Long Service Scheme was established with the express intention to expand to other sectors. Since it commenced, it has grown to include community services and aged care. Unions have been at the forefront of the expansion.

UnionsACT supports the expansion of the Scheme to include contract catering. The contract catering industry shares many of the characteristics of contract cleaning and contract security, both covered by the Scheme. Many companies provide all three services as part of 'Total Facilities Management' business models.

UnionsACT therefore recommends that the ACT Government commence the expansion of the Scheme to contract catering and food services.

**Recommendation: include contract catering in the Portable Long Service Leave Scheme.**

### **FUND AWARENESS OF THE PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE SCHEME**

The Portable Long Service Scheme was created at the instigation of the Canberra trade union movement, and has for decades ensured that working people in the construction, cleaning, security and now community services sectors can access long service leave.

The introduction of community services and aged care into the scheme, as well as the longevity of the scheme, means that it is timely for an education campaign to be run to ensure employers and employees are aware of their obligations and rights under the scheme. This can be properly funded by the Authority, through interest and returns earned on levy payments.

**Recommendation: raise awareness of the portable long service leave scheme through an education and awareness campaign.**

## WELL-FUNDED PUBLIC SERVICES

The public sector is a major contributor to social and economic life in Canberra. ACT Government investment in the public sector, specifically through direct employment, is essential for economic stimulus of the private consumer economy.

UnionsACT seeks the following priorities in this area:

- Fair remuneration, including improved superannuation for all public-sector workers.
- Real increases to the numbers of public servants in secure employment.
- Phasing out of the use of labour hire in the ACT public service.

### FAIR PUBLIC SECTOR REMUNERATION, INCLUDING IMPROVED SUPERANNUATION

UnionsACT notes collective bargaining is concluding at the time this submission was made.

A key consideration for UnionsACT remains that the ACT is a high-wage economy, and in particular that the ACT public service has fair wages as a result of collective bargaining with public sector unions.

Strong wages in the ACT public sector has an immediate positive jobs multiplier through to the private sector economy. The salaries of employees represent approx. 34% of ACT Govt expenditure, or 5% of GSP, almost all of which is spent by public servants into the consumer economy.

UnionsACT stridently holds that the ACT Government should aspire to improve remuneration for public sector workers above CPI, as part of the collective bargaining process.

**Recommendation: Through collective bargaining, increase public sector wages above CPI.**

Similarly, UnionsACT notes the current disparity in superannuation for public sector workers, whereby some public-sector workers receive lower superannuation than others, harms the ability of many working people to retire with dignity, as well as being founded on little economic sense. UnionsACT reiterates our recommendation from last year that the ACT Government raise all superannuation through collective bargaining with unions.

**Recommendation: Through collective bargaining, ensure that all public sector workers have their superannuation increased to the same level.**

### **REAL INCREASES TO THE NUMBERS OF PUBLIC SERVANTS, IN SECURE EMPLOYMENT**

The impact of various restructures and savings measures within the ACTPS over the past 5-10 years has been substantially increased workloads for public servants across all directorates, leading to decreased productivity and low morale. Furthermore, the ACTPS has increased its reliance on insecure forms of employment, such as temporary and casual, in response to the 'savings' measures and workload pressures.

Work intensification is a major contributor to stress, and can also contribute to other workplace safety risks. UnionsACT again draws the Government's attention to the 2016 survey of ACT public servants found that 40% felt their workload "increased significantly" over the past 18 months, with 31% feeling it was dramatic enough to damage their health.

UnionsACT refers to our two previous submissions, where we calculated that, conservatively, there are over 20,000 unpaid daily overtime hours contributing to excessive workloads for the ACT's public servants.

UnionsACT is again calling for a real increase in its overall size in the ACT. This should be in

sufficient numbers to materially reduce public sector workloads.

An additional 823-1062 new full-time positions, in addition to natural growth, could substantially and materially address the enormous workload challenge.

Furthermore, we note the CPSU's recommendation regarding the use of non-ongoing employment. The use of insecure employment is a common management response to insufficient resources, for example, imposed 'savings' measures that prevent the hiring of sufficient permanent staff.

**Recommendation: deliver real increases to the numbers of public sector workers as a means to address chronic workload issues.**

### **COMPLETELY PHASE OUT THE USE OF LABOUR HIRE**

UnionsACT reiterates our call from our 2016 and 2017 Budget Submissions for the ACT Government to improve job security in the public service by phasing out the use of labour hire. Labour hire is principally used by employers to avoid their obligations as employers; flexibility and unexpected demand for labour can be met through direct employment, for example through casual employees.

**Recommendation: Completely phase out the use of labour hire in the ACTPS.**



## QUALITY PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE

Ensuring access to affordable, universal health services for all Canberrans must remain a key priority for the ACT Government.

UnionsACT notes and welcomes the ongoing commitments made by the ACT Government to invest in the public health system. Nevertheless, more must be invested to counter the funding cuts imposed by the Federal Government.

UnionsACT's priorities in this area are:

- Support nurse/midwife-patient ratios.
- Increase staffing in the Health Directorate and The Canberra Hospital.

### INTRODUCE NURSE/MIDWIFE-PATIENT RATIOS

Introduce Nurse/Midwife-Patient Ratios. UnionsACT supports the ANMF's calls to introduce mandated minimum Nurse/Midwife-patient ratios. Nurse and Midwife workloads poses significant risks to patient health outcomes, and increases workplace safety risks for Nurses, Midwives and other health workers.

UnionsACT recommends that the ACT Government work with the ANMF to develop mandated ratios similar to what exists in other states. Increasing the number of nurses and midwives represents an investment in the health of the Canberra community and any associated increase in costs will be offset by

reduced costs related to hospital acquired complications and preventable re-admission rates.

**Recommendation: introduce nurse-patient ratios, in consultation with the ANMF and health unions.**

### INCREASE STAFFING IN THE HEALTH DIRECTORATE

UnionsACT notes that health unions report concerns from members in ACT Health and at The Canberra Hospital that stress, fatigue and work intensification amongst medical and support staff is a widespread and worsening problem.

The CPSU submission with respect to the importance of back-office and support staff is noted by UnionsACT. We support their recommendation that the Budget increase funding available for staffing in Health and TCH.

**Recommendation: increase funding for staffing in ACT Health and TCH to reduce workloads and stress.**

## HIGH QUALITY, WELL-RESOURCED EDUCATION

Education remains the key pathway for social mobility and tackling entrenched disadvantage. Our community needs to ensure that resources are based on the needs of students, with investments from

early childhood, through primary and secondary, and post-secondary, especially TAFE.

UnionsACT also believes it is important that the voices of educators and workers in the education sector be heard and genuinely consulted on education policy. This means recognising education unions in governance boards of education institutions such as CIT, and on advisory and governance bodies.

UnionsACT notes the Australian Education Union submission, and UnionsACT supports that submission, especially their recommendation that the government fully fund the outcome of collective bargaining. We also note and support the AEU's ongoing calls for the ACT Government to continue the rollout of its 2016 infrastructure commitments.

In 2018, UnionsACT engaged with the Apprentice and Young Worker Safety Advisory Committee, established by the Work Safety Council. It is clear from the report of that advisory committee, that more support is required for apprentices and TAFE students. Vocational education is essential to our future prosperity. Unfortunately, it is clear that the quality of apprenticeships and the safety of apprentices is at risk.

The ACT Government must better protect the quality of TAFE training courses and guard against exploitation of apprentices. For example, apprentices are injured at twice the rate of other workers. UnionsACT therefore recommends that the ACT Government create an Apprentice Advocate within Skills Canberra, to provide greater support for apprentices, hold dodgy training providers to account, and advocate

for the creation of apprenticeships within the ACT Government and ACT industry.

The priorities that UnionsACT seeks are:

- Deliver on capital infrastructure investments, including heating and cooling.
- Create an Apprentice Advocate within Skills Canberra.

## **DELIVER ON CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS**

Improving standards, energy efficiency and heating/cooling for school buildings will have a significant impact on learning outcomes, and reduce running costs of schools, and is strongly supported by UnionsACT.

UnionsACT notes and supports the AEU's submission on this issue, and we support the focus on heating and cooling.

**Recommendation: Deliver infrastructure commitments in full, prioritising thermal upgrades and ensuring projects are covered by the Local Jobs Code.**

## **CREATE AN APPRENTICE ADVOCATE**

Apprenticeships and vocational education are crucial to the long-term prosperity of Canberra. It is essential that apprentices and TAFE students are better supported to complete their courses and gain essential skills. By creating an Apprentice Advocate, the ACT Government can central the various supports available within Skills Canberra to help lift the quality

of training and the retention and completion rates of apprentices, and ensure apprentices are supported if they experience bullying, harassment or unsafe workplaces.

In creating this position, the Government should also articulate a clear vocational education and training policy, and engage with unions and industry.

**Recommendation: Create an Apprentice Advocate within Skills Canberra.**

## TACKLING INEQUALITY AND ENSURING FAIR TAXATION

Inequality in Australia is at 70-year highs, and is also worsening in the ACT. The increase in inequality is corrosive to our democracy, and is the cause of significant harm to vulnerable people in our community.

Tax policy is one key policy lever available to the ACT Government to reduce inequality. UnionsACT notes that the ACT Government receives approx. 41% of its revenue from the Federal Govt, and only 33% from own-source taxation.

An objective of the ACT Government should be to gradually increase the progressive own-source taxation measures to create a stronger, more stable fiscal foundation. More progressive taxation measures also assist with reducing inequality.

UnionsACT seeks the following tax priorities:

- Phasing out regressive taxes and increasing progressive taxes.
- Retain the Lease Variation Charge.
- Significantly expand the EEIS and other energy efficiency policies.
- Increase the vacancy charge

### PHASE OUT REGRESSIVE TAXES AND INCREASE PROGRESSIVE TAXES

UnionsACT reiterates our suggestions from our previous submissions regarding progressive taxation. Further, the ACT Government must do more to increase marginal tax rates for top income earners, and for large, profitable companies.

Levies and taxes that could be reviewed include:

- **Lease variation charge remissions:** the ACT Government must cease providing tax cuts to property developers and builders, which provide little benefits for the public but are massive windfall gains for already enormously profitable companies. This is effectively a tax transfer from tax payers to millionaires.
- **The Fire and Emergency Services Levy:** this is a flat tax, paid by property owners regardless of property value, and is normally passed on to renters. Consideration to making this a value-based tax could address its current regressive nature.
- **Motor Vehicle Registration:** This is a flat tax paid by all vehicle owners. The tax can only be avoided by choosing not to drive a car. Consideration could be given to introducing a low-income concessional rate. (UnionsACT also notes that car registration costs could be

reduced by increasing competition amongst compulsory third-party insurance companies.)

**Investigate income-based fines:** With respect to fines, a form of regressive flat-taxation, UnionsACT suggests the ACT Government should conduct a trial of income-based fines. This concept was debated at the 2018 NSW Labor Conference, and a developed proposal was published by The Australia Institute in 2016 in a paper titled *Finland's Fine Example: How to fix the regressive nature of traffic fines in Australia*.

While the paper does not include the ACT, UnionsACT believes that the concept merits consideration by the ACT Government, and we recommend the ACT consider a trial.

#### **More top bands for Rates valuations**

The top AUV (average unimproved value) residential band is \$600,000. UnionsACT supports increasing progressivity at the top wealth levels, especially because capital income is distributed more unequally than labour income. Therefore, UnionsACT recommends the ACT investigate establishing a greater number of top bands for rates valuations (both residential and commercial). Taxes on real estate and land (especially high-value land) are both equitable and efficient.

#### **Consider greater use of land value capture (betterment) taxes and levies, especially along the Light Rail route**

UnionsACT notes that land value capture taxes, can be an important tool to advance progressive fiscal and social outcomes, especially when used

in conjunction with good governance and urban planning principles. This principle is enshrined in the Leave Variation Charge, and the ACT Government should give consideration to extending a similar charge to a zone that captures residential and commercial property on the Light Rail route. UnionsACT notes that a betterment charge was considered by the Government in 2014.

#### **RETAIN THE LEASE VARIATION CHARGE**

UnionsACT strongly supports the lease variation charge. The ACT Government must attempt to recover the full cost of providing amenity and services to private property owners. The LVC is the principle means by which the public can realise a financial benefit from changes to land lease conditions.

We are concerned that the 2018 review of the LVC is a stalking horse to reduce or remove the charge.

UnionsACT strongly supports the continuation of the Lease Variation Charge, and would oppose any efforts to remove or reduce it. We also recommend that the use of remissions should be subject to a strict public interest test.

**Recommendation: Preserve the Lease Variation Charge, and restrict the use of remissions.**

## **EXPAND THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCHEMES THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE RETROFIT PROGRAM**

The dual urgencies of climate change and growing inequality make the mass retrofitting of the ACT's housing stock a moral imperative. UnionsACT strongly urges the ACT Government to invest in and mandate the improving of residential energy and water efficiency.

UnionsACT again refers to our detailed discussion paper, *A Comprehensive Residential Energy and Water Efficiency Retrofit Program for the ACT* released in 2016. That paper provides a thorough outline of a retrofit program that would create approx. 840 jobs and save households and the Government a substantial amount through reduced energy and water use.

UnionsACT recommends the ACT Government invest over 10 years in improving the ACT's housing stock from approx. 1.7 stars to five stars. This investment would be approximately \$63 million per year, improve the energy ratings for 100,000 homes, create 800 jobs, and save households and the Government between \$84 and 142 million per year.

**Recommendation: Substantially expand the package of home energy efficiency programs as outlined in the "Comprehensive Residential Energy and Water Efficiency Retrofit Program for the ACT" paper.**

## **INCREASE THE VACANCY CHARGE**

UnionsACT commends the ACT Government increasing the vacancy charge. This charge encourage owners of residential dwellings to make empty houses available for rent where they are not used as a residence and so increase the number of dwellings available for local Canberrans to live in.

UnionsACT recommends the vacancy charge be increased. In addition to increasing revenue, an increased vacancy charge will increase the supply of housing and contribute to tackling housing affordability.

**Recommendation: Increase the vacancy charge.**

## **PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC ASSETS AND SERVICES**

UnionsACT opposes the failed public policy trend of outsourcing, "contestability" and exotic contracts such as "design-build-maintain" in the delivery of public services and infrastructure. This regressive and undemocratic approach to delivery of public services erodes the public services' indispensable expertise and experience in the provision of policy work and service delivery.

The priorities that UnionsACT seeks are:

- No further outsourcing, including no further use of public-private partnerships or exotic contracts such as Total Facilities Management

and Design-Build-Maintain contracts.

## **NO FURTHER OUTSOURCING**

UnionsACT repeats our calls that the ACT Government to cease outsourcing. Outsourcing relies on the disproven theory that private contractors can do the work of directly employed public servants better and at less cost.

UnionsACT is opposed to the further use of public-private partnerships and similar contract types such as Total Facilities Management and “design-build-maintain”.

UnionsACT is in particular concerned at the democratic deficit associated with these forms of privatisation and outsourcing, whereby a substantial element of public administration and delivery of projects and/or services are contracted out to the private sector.

**Recommendation: The ACT Government cease outsourcing, including cease any further use of public private partnerships or similar forms of contracting out.**

## **ADDITIONAL BUDGET MEASURES**

While our core priorities remain secure jobs, workplace safety and public services, UnionsACT and working people have interests in a wide range of social and cultural areas.

## **CELEBRATION OF 90 YEARS OF CANBERRA'S UNION MOVEMENT**

The year 2021 will be the 90th year of the founding of the Trades and Labour Council of the ACT, a historic moment when Canberra's trade union movement came together and unified.

Unions have has a profound impact on the economic, social and cultural fabric of our city. The campaigning and actions of workers in unions have made Canberra the best, most progressive, city in Australia in which to live and work.

UnionsACT believes it would be appropriate for the ACT Government to collaborate with the union movement on a celebration that honours the founding of UnionsACT. This should include specific funding for a community arts project to mark 90 years of the Canberra union movement, culminating in an exhibition of art recognising the contributions of working people and unions to the ACT.

Funding in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years is sought: \$60,000 in 2019-20 for a coordinating project officer, and \$120,000 for events marking the 90th anniversary including the arts project.

## **CONTINUE TO SUPPORT LABOUR DAY**

Approximately 4000 people attended the Union Picnic and Labour Day Festival this year. UnionsACT welcomed the sponsorship from Events ACT that helped ensure the event was a success.

UnionsACT is seeking an ongoing five year sponsorship commitment for the Labour Day Festival, at a value of \$40,000 per year.

### **BREAD AND ROSES SCHOOLS PROGRAM**

UnionsACT is seeking support for a program in 2019 to promote awareness of the Eight Hour Day, through the planting of commemorative rose bushes in public schools.

We are seeking ACT Government support for this program, by providing funding of \$9,000. The funding would assist with the purchase, planting and maintenance of a ceremonial rose bush at each school in Canberra, including installation of an explanatory plaque.

### **FUND A PEOPLE'S JURY ON THE QUESTION OF THE ACT'S MOTTO**

UnionsACT believes that relevance of the ACT's motto, "For the Queen, the Law, and the People", should be considered as part of the ACT Government's commitment to participatory democracy.

A citizen's jury should consider whether the motto is relevant for the ACT. The jury should also consider whether it is appropriate to change the motto via a referendum.

### **INVESTIGATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INSTITUTION FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEBATE, WRITING AND IDEAS**

Canberra is home to Australia's national cultural institutions, but has no institution dedicated to the promotion of uniquely Canberran ideas, or develop and celebrate economic, social and cultural debates. An institution dedicated to fostering broad public engagement in social, economic and cultural ideas, writing and debate would be of incalculable benefit to Canberra, as well as foster greater collaboration between the many disparate ACT-focused and national organisations, institutions and groups active in the ACT, e.g. universities, innovation hubs, literary/books and arts shops, unions, and civil society groups.

UnionsACT recommends that the ACT Government provision funds to conduct a feasibility study into the establishment of such an institution.

Authorised by A White, 11 London Circuit, Canberra 2600.

Trades & Labour Council of the ACT **ABN 31 724 041 495**

UnionsACT acknowledges that Canberra has been built on the land of the Ngunnawal people.

We pay respect to their Elders and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.