



10 March 2023

ACT Budget Priorities

A Shared Statement from ACT Disability Organisations

On Friday, 17 February 2023, Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPO) and Disability Representative Organisations (DRO) in the Australian Capital Territory met to discuss and affirm their priorities and expectations for the coming ACT Budget.

We highlighted and affirmed the importance of strategies which will guide disability policy in the ACT and ensuring these were backed by appropriate investments.

These include the ACT's Disability Strategy, the Disability Health Strategy, Disability Justice Strategy and the ACT Inclusive Education Strategy. It is critical that ongoing investments work to elaborate and deliver the ambition of these strategic approaches.

In so doing, we as representative DPO and DRO's intend to ensure that targeted funds and individual programs match and are guided by the broad ambitions of all strategies. We set out our expectations that the ACT Government will retain significant policy and delivery capacity with a discrete focus on delivering better outcomes for people with disability.

To facilitate this expectation as well as the delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of key disability strategies, significant and ongoing investments are needed to ensure a sustainable and viable community sector.

We acknowledged the sector was in a period of steep and rising demand and cost pressures. Specific gaps such as supports for people exiting crisis, acute care or the justice system as well as emergency housing were highlighted. The transition to commissioning needs to occur within a genuine understanding of community need. It is also critically important that people with disability are able to have their voice heard and rights upheld.

We also noted the need for action and attention to the needs for people with disability in the context of an expanding city with impacts on the healthcare system, community services, universal design social housing as well as an opportunity to plan better for accessible digital, built and transport infrastructure within current planning system reviews and transport initiatives.

With recurrent issues such as housing accessibility and affordability, commissioning, justice, and mental health emerging as shared priorities across our organisations, the value and need for investment in services, access and inclusion initiatives to improve the wellbeing of people with disability is very clear as we enter this Budget period. We are elaborating on these in our submissions to the current ACT Budget Community Consultation Process.

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