

# ACT Budget 2021/22

## Overview

The Australian Capital Territory Budget was handed down on Wednesday, 6 October 2021 by ACT Chief Minister and Treasurer, Andrew Barr. This is the Chief Minister's eighth Budget since he became Treasurer in July 2011, making him the longest current serving Treasurer in the country.

The Budget addresses health, education, social housing and community services, infrastructure and the environment. A strong focus of the Budget is the economic recovery from the recent COVID-19 lockdowns which have impacted Canberra's local economy.

The Territory deficit is forecasted to reach \$951.5 million in 2021-22, however, the deficit is expected to decrease to \$474.1 million by 2024-25. The Territory's net debt in 2021-22 is expected to be \$5.7 billion and grow to \$9.6 billion by 2024-25.

The summary below provides an overview of the Budget measures announced.

## Health and Community Wellbeing

- \$90 million towards the Territory's COVID-19 health response
- \$500 million over four years for core health services, including:
  - first stage of minimum nurse/midwifery to patient ratios at Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce
  - expanding Canberra Hospital Emergency Department
  - increased home-based palliative care services
- \$43 million over four years providing ten additional acute mental health inpatient beds at the Canberra Hospital
- \$7.5 million delivering a phased implementation of integrated face-to-face and digital mental health care for young people
- \$3.6 million for COVID-19 mental health support
- \$0.8 million for design work delivering a community-led alcohol and other drug and mental health treatment precinct
- \$36.2 million for infrastructure upgrades at Calvary Public Hospital Bruce
- \$13.5 million to continue planning and design work for future hospital infrastructure in Canberra's north
- \$7.2 million establishing a new Cancer Research Centre at the Canberra Region Cancer Centre

## Education and Life-long Learning

- \$12.5 million over four years for the Set Up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT, enabling the provision of free education to 500 priority three-year-olds for two days per week, 48 weeks per year
- \$5 million per year in additional funding for 42 full-time learning professionals and support staff to meet recent growth in the ACT school system
- \$9.1 million for continuing the Muliyan Off-Campus Flexible Learning program to support 30 vulnerable students and continuing to provide culturally safe supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are disengaged or disengaging with education
- \$12.9 million over four years for a Future of Education Equity fund to provide grants to disadvantaged families to support them to meet their educational expenses and deliver a two-year trial at five schools to provide breakfast and lunch for students three days a week
- \$99 million over four years for the improvement of the amenity, functionality, and inclusivity of schools, including replacing end-of-life heating systems and roofs, improving the thermal comfort of schools, installing solar and battery energy storage systems, and providing bike storage facilities
- \$15 million over four years for accelerating the removal of hazardous materials from ACT public schools
- \$19.8 million to install new Modular Learning Centres across Canberra to meet projected enrolment growth
- \$12.5 million for feasibility studies, master planning and forward design works for new and expanded schools in the Inner South, the Inner North, Molonglo, and Central Belconnen regions and for specialist school services in the north of Canberra.
- \$2 million for the expansion of the Future Jobs Fund providing grants to the higher education and research sector to create jobs in growth industries

## Community, Housing, and Safety

- \$30 million over the next four years to increase the Safer Families Levy, taking the Levy from the current \$30 per household to \$50 per household by 2024-25
- \$4.1 million for the Health Justice Partnership so that pregnant women and new families at risk of domestic and family violence can continue to receive safe and confidential legal support in a hospital or healthcare setting
- \$0.4 million towards advancing priorities in the Fourth Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022
- \$8.6 million over four years for supporting the specialist homelessness service sector
- \$7 million over four years for the operation of the Safe and Connected Youth program, which will support youth at risk of homelessness and received \$1.2 million in capital funding to refurbish a facility through the recent Fast-track program.
- \$4 million over four years increasing the indexation applied to annual community sector grants funding, assisting community organisations to help meet higher wage costs following the recent Fair Work Commission decision
- \$20 million towards establishing the Healing and Reconciliation Fund
- \$0.92 million for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business support package
- \$15 million for the construction of a purpose-built facility for Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
- \$0.15 million per annum for A Gender Agenda to continue their work with vulnerable trans, gender diverse and intersex Canberrans. This includes peer support, intersex specific project work and the peer-based navigation and information service, The Friday Centre
- \$0.75 million for the Holocaust Museum and Education Centre in Canberra

- \$95 million towards supporting community infrastructure and venues, including:
  - \$18.7 million for local shopping centre upgrades
  - \$5.3 million for new or upgraded play spaces in Kaleen, Ngunnawal, Chisholm, Gordon, Lyons and Aranda, new dog parks in the Lanyon Valley and Franklin, and refresh works at existing dog parks in Casey and O'Connor
  - \$9 million for the Throsby Home of Football
  - \$3.2 million for a new community recreation park in Casey
- \$3.1 million to support the Cultural Facilities Corporation to address the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its operations
- \$6.6 million for local artists, arts organisations and cultural facilities, including Emergency Organisation funding (\$1 million), Rent Relief (\$518,000), the Creative Recovery and Resilience Program (\$650,000) and HOMEFRONT grants (\$950,000).
- \$13 million of further support for the arts sector, including:
  - \$3.1 million to support the Cultural Facilities Corporation to address the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its operations
  - \$2 million for upgrades at the Tuggeranong Arts Centre Theatre
- \$65 million in new funding to future-proof our emergency services' capabilities, including:
  - \$15.2 million for supporting ACT Ambulance Service
  - \$9.8 million for improving accommodation for the State Emergency Service (SES), the Rural Fire Service (RFS) ACT Policing, the ACT Ambulance Service and ACT Fire and Rescue
- \$60 million will be provided for the justice system, including:
  - \$7.2 million supporting the Victim Services Scheme and the Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme
  - \$17.8 million continuing the Drug and Alcohol Court
  - \$1.3 million continuing the Therapeutic Care Court
  - \$3.8 million establishing a dedicated Coroner's Court for the ACT

## Environment, Climate, Transport, Infrastructure and Planning

- \$17.3 million over four years for city-wide active travel projects
- \$14.9 million for the expansion of a tree planting program to improve urban canopy coverage to 30 per cent by 2045
- \$3.5 million towards the ACT Environment Grants program and to increase support provided the ACT's three catchment groups
- \$5 million for the Healthy Waterways Project which improves and restores Canberra's waterways
- \$15,000 no interest loans to households and not-for-profit community organisations as part of the Sustainable Household Scheme providing assistance for investing in solar panels, battery storage, zero emissions vehicles and energy efficient electric appliances over 5 years
- \$5 million over four years for the Community Club Building Energy Efficiency Fund to provide rebates to community clubs to improve equipment, improve building efficiency, and to install rooftop solar and batteries to reduce energy bills
- \$50 million over five years establishing a Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme to improve thermal comfort and reduce energy hardship in vulnerable households, including public and private rentals and eligible low-income homeowners
- \$0.95 million for upgrading sport and recreation facilities
- \$4.8 million over three years improving the Tuggeranong Foreshore precinct
- \$0.6 million towards a feasibility and design study for the Yerrabi Pond
- \$63.25 million duplication of the William Hovell Drive from the intersection of Drake Brockman Drive to John Gorton Drive



- \$136.5 million towards undertaking design and construction for the overpass and traffic interchange at Lanyon Drive jointly funded with the Federal Government
- \$5 million for active travel, road and public space improvements along Beltana and Kallaroo Roads in Pialligo jointly funded with the Federal Government
- \$1.8 million for additional buses, drivers and public transport infrastructure in the suburb of Whitlam
- \$3.1 million towards delivering stormwater and placemaking improvements on the southern side of the Mawson Group Centre
- \$5.6 million for road and pedestrian infrastructure for the future Kenny High School
- \$6.5 million towards revitalising the heritage-listed Sydney and Melbourne buildings
- \$1.65 million for Stage 1 of the Southern Memorial Park
- \$0.75 million for replacing the weighbridge system at the Mugga Lane and Mitchell Resource Management Centres

### **Governance and the Economy**

- \$290 million for COVID-19 Business Support grants jointly funded with the Federal Government
- \$46.5 million for the Small Business Hardship Scheme providing up to \$10,000 in financial support for businesses significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$6 million for commercial tenancy support

