

● Oaks Estate Strategic Plan 2025-2030



Acknowledgement of Country



The Health and Community Services Directorate acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

We respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and their continuing culture and contribution they make to the Canberra region and the life of our city.

We acknowledge the area known as Oaks Estate was first inhabited by Aboriginal people and served as a significant travel route for the Ngunnawal, Ngarigo and Walgalu peoples and other peoples with connection to the land. The local area includes significant Aboriginal places and objects, including a corroboree ground and cultural area.

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● About this Strategic Plan

The ACT Government is committed to a coordinated, 5-year plan to make Oaks Estate a safer, healthier and more connected place to live.

On 6 May 2025, the ACT Legislative Assembly acknowledged the complexities facing Oaks Estate, including socioeconomic challenges, poor health outcomes, and geographic isolation. In response, it passed a resolution to develop a strategic plan with actions to holistically address the problems entrenching Oaks Estate residents in disadvantage.

Guided by the ACT Wellbeing Framework and the Assembly resolution and following in-depth engagement with residents and stakeholders, we have developed the Oaks Estate Strategic Plan.

The plan summarises what we heard during the community engagement and provides a response to the issues raised, including outlining what services and programs are already provided by the ACT Government and what actions we will commit to over the next 5 years to improve the safety, wellbeing and connectedness of Oaks Estate.



About Oaks Estate

Covering approximately 40 hectares, Oaks Estate is a unique village that contains both urban and rural characteristics.

It is located around 12 kilometres east of Canberra City on the New South Wales border, adjacent to Queanbeyan. The village is bound by the Molonglo River to the north, the Canberra-Sydney railway line to the south, the Queanbeyan River to the east and the Oaks Estate Road to the west.

Oaks Estate was originally part of the township of Queanbeyan, but it was amalgamated into the ACT in 1911 when it was determined the ACT border should follow the railway line and not the river making it the oldest settled suburb in the Territory.

Canberra's historic village

This area was first inhabited by Aboriginal people and served as a significant travel route for the Ngannawal, Ngarigo and Walgalu peoples and other peoples with connection to the land. The importance of this area

to the traditional custodians of the ACT is evidenced by the Corroboree Ground and Aboriginal Cultural Area located along the Queanbeyan River – one of 3 heritage registered places in the suburb.

The Corroboree Ground and Aboriginal Cultural Area registered place represents traditional Aboriginal ceremonies and burial practices, and important figures, such as Billy the Ram, in the Aboriginal history of the ACT.

A large estate known as 'The Oaks' was established in 1837 and was later subdivided into building allotments in 1887, setting out the streets that remain today. The Oaks homestead (c.1837), which was constructed as part of Robert Campbell's Duntroon Estate for members of the Campbell family, is another heritage registered place. It is significant for a range of reasons related to its form, construction, intactness and many historical associations.



Robertsons' House is another heritage registered place in the village and is a notable example of an early 20th Century building constructed by its owner from locally found and recycled materials. It is evidence of a self-sufficient and distinctive way of life.

More information about these registered places can be found on the [ACT Heritage Register](#).

Contemporary Oaks Estate

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics provides the following snapshot of Oaks Estate from the 2021 Census:

- Around 375 people were living in Oaks Estate and around 60% of residents were male and 40% were female, and the median age was 40 years.
- There were 67 children and young people and around 88% of children and young people aged between 5-14 years were attending an education institution.
- Half of the residents over 15 years old were in the labour force, with 45% indicating they were employed, with the majority (111) working full time. The median total personal income per week was \$946, with the median total household income per week at \$1,542.
- 106 people identified as having one or more long-term health conditions, with most (63) indicating one condition. Most residents (275) had no need for assistance, but 18 residents did identify a need for assistance. Half of the residents (9) who indicated a need for assistance identified as having a mental health condition.
- There were 160 dwellings in Oaks Estate, including 18 unoccupied dwellings. A third of the dwellings were separate houses (54) and the balance were semi-detached or apartments.
- More than half of the occupied dwellings (52%) were either owned outright (26) or owned with a mortgage (48). The Commissioner for Social Housing owns 77 dwellings (48%) in Oaks Estate which provides housing for an estimated 17% of the people living in the suburb.
- Of the occupied dwellings, 75% had one or more motor vehicles. Residents at 25 dwellings indicated

no motor vehicle or did not state the number of motor vehicles.

Vision for the future

In the early 2010s, the ACT Government undertook extensive background research, analysis and community and stakeholder engagement to inform and guide the development of the Oaks Estate Master Plan, which was released in 2014.

The Master Plan envisaged that new opportunities for growth and change could be supported while maintaining the history and character of Oaks Estate, its setting and association with the Molonglo and Queanbeyan rivers.

Several of the Master Plan's recommendations were initially implemented through [Plan Variation 328](#) to the Territory Plan in 2022. This variation limited light industrial use to blocks where it was already a permitted use in a lease, and prohibited or restricted other uses, noting these were considered incompatible with the village character of the suburb.

The [East Canberra District Policy](#) now also picks up the vision for the suburb and sets the desired policy outcomes for this area, which have been derived from the Master Plan and the [East Canberra District Strategy](#). Policy outcomes for this area include but are not limited to:

- Enhancing accessibility of services and facilities for Oaks Estate residents.
- Protecting and enhancing heritage and priority environmental and cultural values.
- Protecting and restoring aquatic-riparian corridors and their catchment.
- Limiting new housing development consistent with the zoning requirements of the Territory Plan.
- Retaining capacity and opportunities for rural uses, agribusiness and agritourism.
- Protecting and preserving function and capacity of key transport corridors.

Zoning in the suburb also protects key sites from future residential development, such as the community garden and park, which are a source of community pride. These features are located on Blocks 4-7 Section 5, which are zoned Urban Open Space – which prohibits residential uses.

● Coordinating our response

The ACT Government undertook community engagement over 6 weeks to inform the development of this Strategic Plan. It ran from 14 July to 24 August 2025 and included online and face-to-face opportunities for engagement. More than 10% of local residents engaged in this process.

Feedback from the Oaks Estate community and stakeholders was invited around 6 key themes: safety, housing, places and spaces, transport, health and education. These themes were identified from issues raised by community leaders in their advocacy for action in Oaks Estate, as well as from matters raised by Members of the Legislative Assembly during the debate on the resolution.

The engagement was designed to ensure residents' lived experiences, priorities and ideas shaped the actions identified to address the challenges in the suburb. It also provided an opportunity to share information about the services and programs already being delivered by the ACT Government and identify any gaps or issues.

Further detail about the community engagement and what we heard can be found in the [Oaks Estate Strategic Plan Listening Report](#).

Governance, roles and responsibilities

Oaks Estate Executive Working Group

The Oaks Estate Executive Working Group (OEEWG) – which was established to develop this Strategic Plan – will continue to operate to oversee the implementation of the plan over the next 5 years. This is a whole-of-government approach, which reflects that many of the issues being experienced in Oaks Estate are connected and require a coordinated response.

The OEEWG is led by the Health and Community Service Directorate (HCSD) and includes senior representatives from:

- Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS)
- City and Environment Directorate (CED)
- Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR)
- Education Directorate (EDU)
- Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD).

Over the life of the Strategic Plan, the OEEWG will:

- Oversee the implementation of actions.
- Meet twice a year with the Oaks Estate Residents' Association (OERA) to hear feedback and monitor the effectiveness of implemented actions.
- Report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Share updates with the Oaks Estate community, including publishing an annual 'traffic light' update on implementation progress.

Oaks Estate Connected Community Working Group

The ACT Government will pilot an Oaks Estate Connected Community Working Group (OECCWG) to bring together frontline service providers to focus on identifying prosocial and community development opportunities in the suburb. This pilot is modelled on the place-based [Strong Connected Neighbourhood Program](#) that operates in the Inner North.

The OECCWG will be led by HCSD (Housing Assistance) and will include representatives from:

- HCSD (Housing Assistance and Mental Health and Suicide Prevention)
- JACS (Crime Prevention and Policing)
- ACT Policing
- Community service providers, including St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn (Vinnies).

The OECCWG will:

- Work together to respond to specific local issues impacting social cohesion.
- Identify opportunities for prosocial community-building activities.
- Consult and involve residents in design and delivery of community development activities as appropriate.
- Meet 4 times a year for the duration of the pilot.
- Report to the OEEWG on emerging issues and opportunities that align with the Strategic Plan.

The pilot will operate for an initial 2-year period, during which time the ACT Government will consider how social inclusion and community development services are structured beyond the existing Community Inclusion Program, which is currently funded until 30 June 2026.

These governance structures are consistent with the ACT Wellbeing Framework domain **Governance and Institutions** of “having a say, being heard, and working together for better outcomes”.

Implementation

Each ACT Government directorate listed in the Strategic Plan’s action table is responsible for delivering its part of the plan. Implementation of some actions may need to be considered in the context of future budgets.

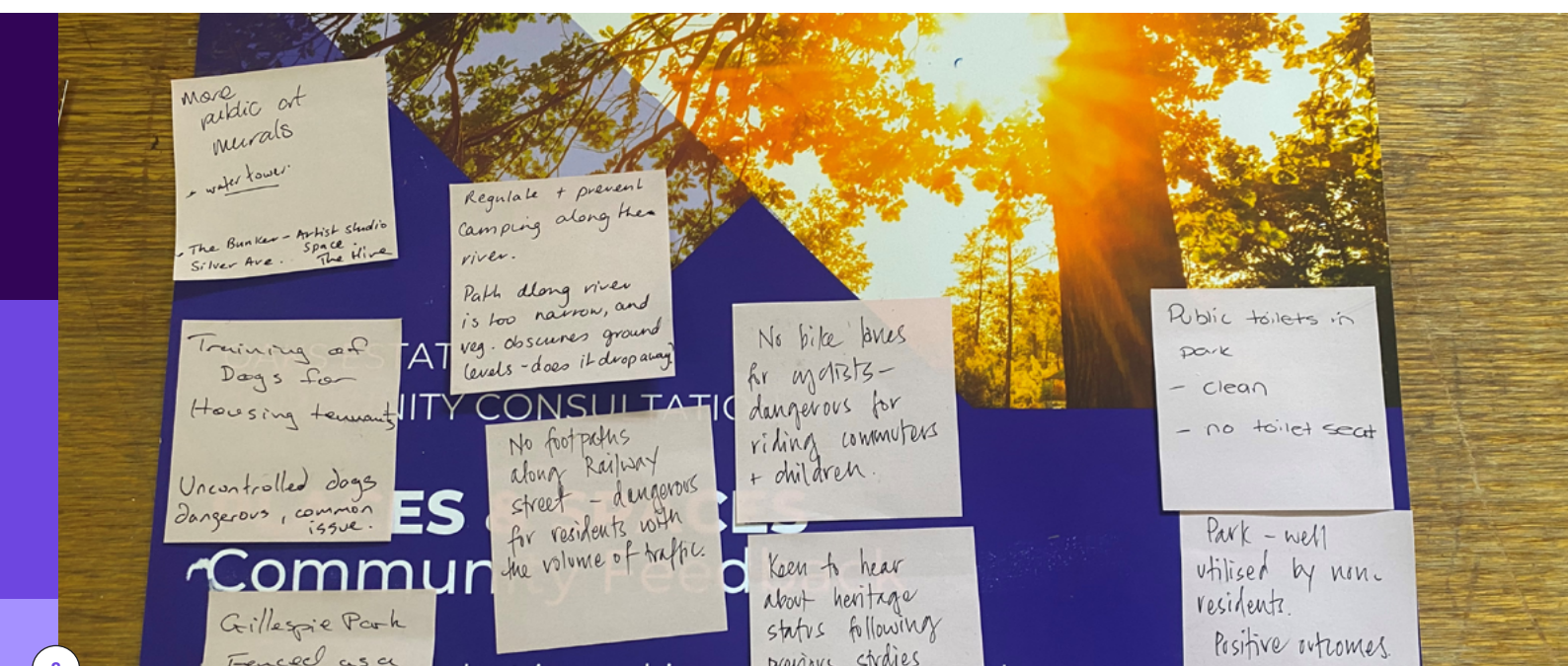
It is expected the OERA will support the implementation of the plan by:

- Representing the views of the Oaks Estate community and providing feedback on progress and effectiveness of implemented actions at the twice annual meetings with the OEEWG.
- Leading or supporting community-led activities at their discretion.

Evaluation

Over the next 5 years, the ACT Government will report to the Legislative Assembly every 12 months with an update on the implementation of the Oaks Estate Strategic Plan. This will be supported by an annual ‘traffic light’ report which will be published online.

Unfortunately, due to the small population in the suburb, direct quantitative impact measurement is not feasible. As such, the success of the plan and the effectiveness of actions to improve the wellbeing, safety and connectedness of the suburb will be monitored by stakeholder satisfaction and sentiment, which will be gauged from feedback from the OERA and other local stakeholders.



● Safety

What we heard

Safety is a significant concern for many Oaks Estate residents, with respondents to the YourSay survey listing it as their number one priority for action. The feedback provided during engagement reflected a mix of personal experiences, perceptions, and suggestions for improvement.

In summary, we heard:

- Residents expressed concern about personal safety in some areas, highlighting concerns about alleged drug use and dealing, violence and anti-social behaviour, which are making residents feel frightened.
- Residents reported being afraid to report crime for fear of reprisals.
- Residents called for greater proactive police presence in Oaks Estate.
- Residents described concerns about aggressive and/or roaming dogs in the village and poor signage in off leash areas.
- Residents reported speeding and reckless driving, as well as heavy vehicle movement through the suburb, as risks to their safety.

Our goal

People living in Oaks Estate feel safe and are safe in their homes and community.

This goal is consistent with the ACT Wellbeing Framework domain **Safety** of “feeling safe and being safe”.

What we already do

The ACT Government supports several ACT-wide initiatives that contribute to a safe, more connected community, including:

- The SafeHome Program, which aims to improve security for households in the ACT that are vulnerable to property crime. The program provides safety assessments in the home to victims of property crime, vulnerable households, and/or persons at risk. It also provides minor modifications to eligible residences.
- Outsmart the Offender is a public awareness initiative in partnership with ACT Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers. It provides information on how people can protect themselves against theft and crime, noting everyone has a responsibility to take steps to keep their property safe.
- Victim Support ACT offers free, confidential support to victims of crime. It works with victims of crime to help them access their rights and entitlements and assist with their recovery. To access most of its services, crimes do not need to have been reported to police.
- Domestic Animal Services provides community education about responsible pet ownership, as well as animal control services to the Canberra community. This includes the collection of stray and roaming dogs, responding to dog attacks and reports of aggressive dogs, and management of the dog shelter.

What we will do

Crime prevention and policing

We have heard some members of the community feel less safe and perceive there has been an increase in anti-social, criminal and unsafe activities in Oaks Estate in the last few years. Whilst data from ACT Policing indicates reported offences have been

trending down over the last 5 years, we acknowledge that some residents indicated they are reluctant to report crime for fear of reprisal.

Reporting crime helps to keep the community safe and ensures offenders can be held accountable. It also assists ACT Policing to understand the need for policing and plan its services.

The Oaks Estate community has called for a greater community approach and proactive presence of ACT Policing in Oaks Estate. Consequently, we will focus on community engagement activities and the promotion of community safety and policing initiatives, including the following actions:

- We will explore proactive opportunities for police and other emergency services to engage with members of the community.
- We will provide information on how and where to report crime and how to call emergency services when required.
- We will provide information about Victim Support ACT.
- We will provide information on SafeHomes, including eligibility and how to access the program.

Roaming and aggressive dogs

We recognise that dog ownership is enjoyable and rewarding and can provide comfort and companionship. This in turn can reduce loneliness and help improve people's quality of life, but it brings with it responsibilities. This includes keeping dogs happy and healthy, as well as making sure they do not negatively impact others.

Unfortunately, we heard that some residents in Oaks Estate are being negatively impacted by dogs in the area, so we will focus on the following actions to make sure people can both feel safe in their neighbourhood and enjoy the benefits of dog ownership:

- We will provide information on responsible dog ownership.

- We will review signage in unleashed areas.
- We will explore engaging a mobile veterinary service, through the Community Inclusion Program provided by Vinnies, to undertake 'pop-up' clinics to provide low-to-no cost microchipping and desexing services to low-income community members.
- We will conduct patrols to detect roaming dogs and non-compliance with registration, microchipping, desexing, and licensing of multiple pets and declared dangerous dogs.

Road safety

Road safety was also raised as a concern by residents reporting speeding, heavy vehicle movements and problems with signage as affecting their perceptions of safety in their suburb.

Roads ACT uses a ranking system to assess the need for, and priority of, improvements at intersections and mid-blocks. The top 300 intersections and 150 mid-block locations ranked using this system are continuously monitored and updated annually, and the ranking forms the basis for projects which are considered for road safety improvements. As of August 2025, all intersections and mid-blocks in Oaks Estate were ranked outside the top 300 and 150; however, the next survey of traffic data on vehicle speeds and traffic volumes is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2025.

We acknowledge these rankings are based on crash data and reckless driving – even when it doesn't result in an accident – can still impact how people feel moving around their local area. In response, we will focus on the following actions:

- We will schedule mobile speed cameras and evaluate the impact of speeding in the suburb and assess if the situation has changed and requires a renewed response.

Actions that support safe pedestrian movement through Oaks Estate are included in the Places and Spaces section of this Strategic Plan.

Housing

What we heard

Feedback received during community engagement covered the full spectrum of housing, including homelessness, social and affordable housing, and private housing. We heard that residents value living in the suburb and love its 'village feel'.

We also heard that the role and function of social housing in Oaks Estate is a deeply felt issue, with respondents emphasising the importance and value of providing housing assistance to people in need whilst also expressing concern about the density and condition of social housing in the suburb. Some respondents believe the disturbances they have experienced are associated with social housing and described perceptions that social cohesion has deteriorated over time because of anti-social behaviour, safety incidents, and the impact of drug and alcohol issues in and around local social housing.

We also heard that local residents value their neighbours and want to ensure people in their community – regardless of what sort of housing they call home – can access the services and supports they need.

In summary, we heard:

- Residents value calling Oaks Estate home but highlighted a range of factors making them feel unsafe.
- Respondents called on government to provide more information about future land releases and explore opportunities to provide more private housing options in the suburb, particularly for affordable and 'missing middle' housing.
- Some social housing residents expressed positive sentiments about being members of the Oaks Estate community, whilst also describing some noise and anti-social behaviour in the suburb.
- Perceptions that some social housing residents were facing complex challenges and concern they may not have the appropriate supports in place to meet their needs.

- Concern about the age, condition and dwelling mix of social housing in the suburb.

Our goal

Improving housing diversity in Oaks Estate to support choice, ensure quiet enjoyment for people calling the suburb home, and improve connection and access to supports.

These goals are consistent with the ACT Wellbeing Framework domains **Housing and Home** of "having a place to call home", and **Social Connection** of "being connected with family, friends and community".

What we already do

Land release and future development opportunities

The Suburban Land Agency manages the release and sale of land in the Territory. The Indicative Land Release Program identifies sites in Oaks Estate for release in future years which are expected to provide up to 15 dwellings and 4,380m² of commercial space. The timing and release of land is subject to planning requirements and the outcome of various assessments.

Social housing

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring people in the ACT have access to housing that is affordable, secure and appropriate to their needs. Through the Commissioner for Social Housing, it facilitates the provision of housing assistance for those most in need, whether that be emergency, short-term, medium-term, or long-term housing.

The Commissioner for Social Housing owns 77 properties in Oaks Estate consisting mostly of bed-sits and one-bedroom apartments.

Approximately 10 units are managed by Housing ACT's Tenant Experience team, offering tenancy support tailored to resident requirements. In 2019, ACT Government contracted Vinnies to provide transitional accommodation across many of the apartments at Oaks Estate under the Housing Asset Assistance Program (HAAP). In 2025 this was further expanded, and Vinnies now manages 67 properties in Oaks Estate.

Housing ACT staff visit fortnightly with Vinnies and with Programmed, the total facilities manager, to provide coordinated support for all residents.

Community Inclusion Program

The ACT Government committed over \$900,000 across 2024-25 and 2025-26 to fund Vinnies to deliver the Community Inclusion Program (CIP). The program employs 2 dedicated case workers who work daily to strengthen community wellbeing and stability at social housing in Oaks Estate.

Working with all residents, the CIP seeks to:

- build community cohesion
- conduct regular welfare checks
- deliver social inclusion activities
- support residents with a complexity of needs and behaviours
- work intensively with residents, the broader community and government services.

The CIP also supports and coordinates the in-reach of a range of community support services onsite including:

- Directions Health
- Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation (CAHMA), hosting a fortnightly BBQ
- Feros Care, a NDIS disability support provider
- Reclink, a community development organisation for improved physical health, mental health and greater social inclusion
- Orange Sky, a free laundry service.

CASE STUDY: Improving outcomes for people in social housing in Oaks Estate

Vinnies' supported transitional accommodation

Vinnies' transitional accommodation service at Oaks Estate provides tenancy and property management across the 67 dwellings it headleases, with additional case management and wrap around supports provided at 19 of those homes for residents with a complexity of needs.

The Vinnies program provides transitional housing supporting people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and is aimed at supporting residents to secure long-term housing solutions, usually within 12 months. Over the last 3 years, Vinnies has worked closely with Housing ACT and other partners to improve outcomes for residents in Oaks Estate.

Vinnies has introduced a structured approach

for identifying residents in need of its services at Oaks Estate. Typically, residents are now referred to Oaks Estate from Vinnies' programs operating across Canberra such as its Street to Home program and Samaritan House and from other organisations such as Toora Women or St Benedict's in Queanbeyan. Today, most tenants will arrive at Oaks Estate already on the waiting list for a long-term social housing solution and will move out of Oaks Estate within the 12-month transitional period having stabilised their tenancy readiness.

Renovations and improved liveability

Following a fire at one of the social housing complexes, 15 dwellings have progressively been renovated, and the complex's electrics have been upgraded. These works were managed by Housing ACT in collaboration with



its stakeholders. The works are now complete, and all 15 dwellings came back into operation between June and August 2025.

These dwellings are head leased by Vinnies and it is utilising these refurbished apartments to further strengthen its intensive case management support of residents in Oaks Estate.

Vulnerable Households Energy Support Scheme

The Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme is a \$50 million commitment over 5 years to improve building efficiency and sustainability for public and community housing, low-income owner-occupiers, and the lowest performing

rental properties. The scheme recognises that Canberra's most vulnerable households are disproportionately impacted by 'energy hardship' and seeks to improve their wellbeing, thermal comfort and climate resilience. It also supports the ACT's transition away from the use of fossil fuel energy.

Under this scheme, Housing ACT completed ceiling insulation upgrades at most of the social housing properties in Oaks Estate in the first half of 2025. The upgrades also included electrical safety upgrades to support the insulation. A recent assessment shows that all properties inspected in Oaks Estate are now fully electric.

What we will do

Future housing opportunities

The ACT Government is committed to increasing housing supply, access and choice across the Territory, including enabling 30,000 homes in Canberra by the end of 2030, including delivering 5,000 additional public, community and affordable rental dwellings. Meeting these goals is not just about building more houses – it is about making sure new homes provide more choice and make better use of our existing suburbs.

The availability of vacant Territory-owned land in Oaks Estate, whilst limited, does provide an opportunity to consider how future development could be utilised to increase the supply of housing in the village, particularly affordable and ‘missing middle’ housing.

These policy settings, along with the availability of vacant land, also provides a context in which the ACT Government can consider the future of its social housing assets in the suburb.

To explore future housing opportunities, we will focus on the following actions:

- We will explore planning and related assessments to support the release of vacant blocks.
- We will develop an Asset Strategy for properties owned by the Commissioner for Social Housing that will explore opportunities for the renewal, redevelopment, redistribution and/or divestment of social housing assets in Oaks Estate.

Condition of social housing

Whilst work is undertaken to develop an Asset Strategy for the social housing in the village, the ACT Government will continue to support people living in social housing by maintaining their homes. To do this, we will focus on the following actions:

- We will provide information to social housing tenants, residents and service providers about to how to raise repair and maintenance requests, and how and when common areas are maintained.
- We will attend to all repairs and maintenance requests raised by tenants and services providers.

Social inclusion

Social inclusion supports people from all backgrounds and experience to participate in society with dignity, security and acceptance. It is important for creating healthy and connected communities and creating a sense of belonging, which directly impacts wellbeing.

This is particularly important for vulnerable people. We acknowledge calls from the community to ensure social housing tenants have access to supports and services that meet their needs and enable them to participate in a range of activities. In response, we will focus on the following actions:

- We will promote the Tenant Participation Grants to eligible residents to support community inclusion and encourage public and social housing tenants to participate in a range of sporting, arts, cultural, education, employment and training activities.
- We will explore opportunities to continue funding the Community Inclusion Program beyond 30 June 2026, noting this may be subject to a future budget process.

Social inclusion is also included in the Health section of this Strategic Plan.

● Places and Spaces

What we heard

Feedback from the community highlighted a strong connection to the unique character and open spaces of Oaks Estate, with residents expressing both appreciation and concern for the condition, accessibility, and future of local parks, pathways, and public facilities.

In summary, we heard:

- Residents expressed positive sentiments about many of the features of the area (park areas, community gardens, river trail) with some requests for upgrades, checking overhanging trees, removal of abandoned cars, and development of public murals.
- Frequent requests for improving existing footpaths and extending the footpath network were made, noting many local streets lack footpaths which forces people to walk on the road.
- Many respondents described the beauty of the river corridor as a treasured feature of their suburb, but some were concerned about accessing it safely and requested the installation of a handrail on the steps leading down to the river walk.
- Community members expressed frustration at not being able to utilise the Community Hall as hire fees were cited as cost-prohibitive for community groups.
- There was interest in the status and use of various heritage places in the suburb, and particular concern expressed about fire damage to outbuildings at Robertsons' House.

Our goal

People in Oaks Estate maintain a strong connection to the heritage, buildings, public realm and natural environment of the area.

This goal is consistent with the ACT Wellbeing Framework domains **Environment and Climate** of “the environment sustains all life now and into the future” and **Identity and Belonging** of “being able to express identity, feel a sense of belonging, and participate fully in society”.

What we already do

Mowing, horticultural and tree maintenance

- Oaks Estate is part of a regular mowing schedule to maintain amenity and manage bushfire risk.
 - During the growing season (October to April), all grassed areas – parks, laneways and public verges (excluding nature strips) – are mowed every 4-5 weeks, depending on weather conditions (noting wet weather may delay mowing due to bogged equipment and dry seasons may reduce mowing frequency).
 - In the colder months, the focus shifts to horticultural maintenance, including shrub bed upkeep and weed control. During this time, residents may notice chemical spraying in parks and along streets.
- Tree maintenance and planting in Oaks Estate aligns with ACT's long-term vision for urban greenery.

- Damaged trees are triaged and addressed by CED crews in coordination with ACT Emergency Services.
- Residents can report tree damage or request a tree to be planted through [Fix My Street](#) or by calling Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

Playground, parks and public toilets

- Oaks Estate has 2 playgrounds, including River Street which has barbecue facilities.
- Equipment is inspected regularly (up to weekly), and any faults identified are prioritised for repair.
- The toilet in Gillespie Park is cleaned daily.

Waste management

- Oaks Estate has regular waste collections on a Friday, including the weekly Red Bin (general waste) and fortnightly Yellow Bin (recycling). There is also a fortnightly Green Bin (garden organics) collection that is available for an opt-in, one-off registration fee. Registration can be done [online](#) or by calling Access Canberra on 13 22 81.
- All Canberra households, including those in Oaks Estate, are eligible for one free bulky waste collection of up to 2 cubic metres each financial year. Bookings for this service can be made [online](#).
- In the ACT, it is an offence to dump or store rubbish in a public place, including on a nature strip. Where the owner of the dumped items can be identified, enforcement action can be taken. Members of the community can report illegal dumping through [Fix My Street](#) or by calling Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

Oaks Estate Community Hall

Managed by iCBR (Infrastructure Canberra), the Oaks Estate Community Hall opened in 1952 and is a versatile venue ideal for a wide range of community and private events. The Hall has multiple rooms and flexible spaces and can be used for seminars, functions, meetings, playgroups, and training sessions.

What we will do

City services and public realm upgrades

Residents expressed positive sentiments about many of the features of Oaks Estate but were keen to ensure these areas, particularly the public realm, were maintained, accessible and safe. In response, we will focus on the following actions:

- We will investigate the requests for tree maintenance and commemorative plantings that were made through the community engagement.
- We will provide information on using Fix My Street to report issues and concerns and/or make requests for City Services, such as damaged footpaths, abandoned cars, illegal dumping and bulky waste collection.

The Oaks Estate Master Plan 2014 identified several public realm improvements that would realise the plan's vision, including a heritage walk to encourage passive recreation along the river. The Heritage River Walk has since been delivered. In 2018, a footpath along part of Hazel Street and McEwan Avenue (including kerb ramps on Hazel Street) was constructed to improve accessibility and wheel stops were installed in car park areas to respond to parking issues.

We heard from residents that they would like to see further improvements to the footpath network, and improved accessibility to the river work. In response, we will focus on the following actions:

- We will explore options for footpath upgrades and explore installing handrails to the river walk, noting this may be subject to a future budget process.
- We will investigate damage to road signs and line markings, particularly to ensure safety for pedestrians.
- We will explore opportunities to improve the streetscape and pedestrian linkages around the Territory-owned vacant blocks as they are prepared for release.

Access to the Community Hall

The community expressed frustration at not being able to utilise the Community Hall citing that hire fees exceed community groups' resources. The desire for improved access to the Community Hall was also consistent with calls for more activities that support community inclusion and social connection in Oaks Estate. In response, we will focus on the following action:

- We will explore options to facilitate increased community access to the Oaks Estate Community Hall.

Heritage places

Residents also took great pride in the heritage of the area and were seeking information on the outcome of heritage investigations undertaken by the ACT Heritage Council. In response we provided information about the 3 heritage registered places in Oaks Estate in the opening sections of this Strategic Plan.

Residents were also concerned about damage to Robertsons' House, a heritage listed building on Hazel Street. In response, we will deliver the following action:

- We will provide an update to the community on Robertsons' House.

Public art

Public art can be transformative and can create a sense of identity for a place. Several residents suggested commissioning a public mural on some local landmarks, such as the elevated water tank at the entrance to Oaks Estate. Local residents may wish to explore grant opportunities to progress this as a community-led project.

Details on possible grant opportunities are outlined later in this Strategic Plan.



● Transport

What we heard

Transport emerged as a concern for Oaks Estate residents due to its relative geographic isolation from the rest of the ACT, particularly in relation to school access and public transport connectivity. The feedback called for more reliable, inclusive, and locally responsive transport solutions.

In summary, we heard:

- Concerns about limited options for accessing schools on public transport.
- Calls for better public transport linkages, including into Canberra and Queanbeyan, and reports that the area is not supported by taxis and rideshare services.
- Some respondents were concerned for neighbours without cars, and the impact this has on them accessing services and support.

Our goal

People in Oaks Estate have effective access to services, jobs and activities.

This goal is consistent with the ACT Wellbeing Framework domain **Access and Connectivity** of “getting around to places we value and accessing the services we need”.

What we already do

Public transport

The ACT Government provides public transport within the urban areas of Canberra. Areas of the ACT outside of the Transport Canberra public transport network are also supported by third party operators, such as CDC Canberra.

The ACT Government engaged with the NSW Government as part of its '16 Cities' Bus Network Improvement Program for Queanbeyan. This led to

improvements to the local bus network and to cross-border travel. Additionally, CDC Canberra's Route 838 was rerouted and frequency enhanced offering better connectivity between Queanbeyan and Oaks Estate for onward connection to the ACT on cross border bus services.

Route 838 stops on Hazel Street and operates Monday to Saturday and provides a direct service to the Queanbeyan interchange.

The following CDC Canberra bus routes can be accessed from the Queanbeyan interchange:

- **Route 830** operates daily, including public holidays, and connects Queanbeyan, Jerrabomberra, Kingston and Canberra City.
- **Route 831** operates daily, including public holidays, and Queanbeyan, the Canberra Outlet Centre, Canberra Hospital and the Woden interchange.
- **Route 834** operates Monday to Saturday and connects Queanbeyan, Fyshwick, Brindabella Business Park, Majura Park and Canberra Airport.
- **Route 844X** operates during weekday peak times (in the peak direction) and connects Queanbeyan, Kingston, Russell and Canberra City.

Residents of Oaks Estate can transfer tickets between Transport Canberra public transport services and CDC Canberra bus services. This can be achieved by purchasing a ticket on board CDC Canberra bus and connecting on to Transport Canberra services within 90 minutes of purchase. Just present your ticket to the driver with proof of Oaks Estate address.

Transport options for school students

Whilst most school students pay a student fare to access these services, the ACT Government also offers a means tested School Transport Program that provides free public transport on the Transport Canberra network on school days.

Additionally, the ACT Government offers a subsidy to parents or guardians of eligible school students who live within the ACT but are situated outside of

the Transport Canberra public transport network to subsidise the costs of travel by car between home and the nearest Transport Canberra public transport stop. Details are available on the [Transport Canberra website](#).

What we will do

Connecting the Oaks Estate community

Being able to move easily within the city helps people connect with others, work, and places and services to enable them to live good lives. We acknowledge for those living in Canberra's outer suburbs, like Oaks Estate, transport choice can be limited, particularly for people who cannot afford the costs of driving or are unable to drive. In response, we will focus on the following actions:

- We will review public transport policies regarding support mechanisms available for isolated communities or communities that experience barriers to accessing public transport.
- We will continue engagement and collaboration with NSW Government and bus operators on public transport for the benefit of people living in Oaks Estate.
- We will write to local taxi and rideshare companies and encourage them to service Oaks Estate.
- We will explore opportunities to collaborate better with Vinnies (and other non-profit organisations supporting the local community) to facilitate access to, and journey planning for, public transport.

Transport options for school students

The ACT Government believes every child deserves a great education and the life chances which flow from it, and it is committed to ensuring it addresses any barriers to accessing this education. In response to concerns we heard that transport is a barrier to accessing school for some Oaks Estate residents, we will focus on the following actions:

- We will seek to better understand the transport needs of Oaks Estate students enrolled in ACT Public Schools.



● Health

What we heard

Health and mental wellbeing emerged as concerns for Oaks Estate residents, with feedback highlighting challenges in accessing services, gaps in emergency and mental health support, and a strong desire for more inclusive, community-based health and social initiatives.

In summary, we heard:

- Residents were generally positive about their access to healthcare in the ACT and neighbouring Queanbeyan, despite the reliance on public transport.
- There were strong appreciation and positive feedback on outreach mental health and alcohol and other drug services (AOD) operating in Oaks Estate, but some respondents expressed concern about the lack of out-of-hours support services for people experiencing mental illness, mental distress and/or AOD-related crises.
- There were calls for increased investment in health and wellbeing supports for disadvantaged members of the community.
- Respondents spoke of their desire for more social inclusion activities in the suburb to enhance connection and cohesion.
- Community members highlighted that Medicare lists Oaks Estate as NSW, which can affect access to services and rebates.

Our goal

People living in Oaks Estate have access to services for physical and mental wellbeing and are connected and supported in their community.

This goal is consistent with the ACT Wellbeing Framework domain **Health** of “being healthy and supported with the right care”, and **Social Connection** of “being connected with family, friends and community”.

What we already do

The ACT Government supports and provides funding for a range of community-based health, NGO-delivered mental health and alcohol, tobacco and other drug support services and programs that are active in the Oaks Estate, including:

- Chat to PAT (Pathways to Assistance and Treatment), operated by Directions Health, is purpose-built mobile clinic that is staffed by an interdisciplinary team including a GP, a nurse, a mental health practitioner, and an AOD counsellor. It attends Oaks Estate fortnightly.
- Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) hosts fortnightly barbeques at Oaks Estate providing community engagement and support to “Chat to PAT”.
- Hepatitis ACT Testing and Support provides biannual hepatitis testing and support at Oaks Estate in partnership with CAHMA.

The following ACT-wide initiatives support the health and wellbeing of Canberrans, and can be accessed as needed by people living in Oaks Estate:

- The Access Mental Health Team is available for people who have concerns about their own or someone else’s mental health, and provide information, makes recommendations, and can refer people for further mental health support. It operates 24 hours / day, 7 days a week, and they can be contacted on 1800 629 354.
- The Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Program (CPSP) is provided by Woden Community Service (WCS) and is a recovery-focused mental health program supporting people with a severe mental illness or disorder who are not more appropriately supported through the NDIS and helps to provide psychosocial supports and improve service coordination.
- Transition to Recovery (TRec), also provided by WCS, is a short-term (up to 12 weeks) intensive

outreach program that includes after-hours support and uses a strengths-based, recovery-oriented approach.

- MOST (Moderated Online Social Therapy) is provided by Orygen and is a digital therapy service for people aged 12 to 25, combining online therapy, peer support and clinical guidance.
- The Youth and Wellbeing Program is provided by CatholicCare Marymead and offers home-based outreach and case management for young people aged 15 to 25 experiencing mental health challenges.
- Detention Exit Community Outreach (DECO) Program is operated by Wellways and provides intensive case management and psychosocial support for up to 18 months for people with diagnosed mental health conditions exiting detention. Support is provided to encourage community linkage and assist with reintegration into the community.
- Safe Haven is operated by STRIDE and is a peer-led service that provides a warm, welcoming, non-clinical, safe space that people can freely go to if they are experiencing suicidal thoughts, emotional distress, mental health concerns, isolation or loneliness and are seeking connection and support. The Safe Haven is located in Belconnen and is open from 3pm to 10pm Tuesday to Saturday. No appointments are needed and services are free.

What we will do

Enhance existing services

The ACT Government is committed to supporting healthy, inclusive and strong communities where everyone has the opportunity to live life to their full potential. Whilst we provide a range of ACT-wide and Oaks Estate-specific services to support this commitment, we acknowledge some residents in

Oaks Estate perceive some gaps in how these services support their community. In response, we will focus on the following actions:

- We will explore opportunities to enhance service delivery for the Chat to PAT mobile outreach van in Oaks Estate through the Capital Health Network.
- We will provide digital health service promotional material to residents and service providers to raise awareness of the available health supports for the Oaks Estate community.
- We will raise postcode-related digital services access issues with the Australian Government.

There is an opportunity to explore additional services that could benefit all residents of the ACT, including Oaks Estate residents. This could include programs which focus on mental illness prevention and mental health promotion, and outreach and targeted community supports, including psychosocial support programs. To progress this, we will focus on the following action:

- We will explore opportunities for new NGO mental health support services through the mental health commissioning process.

Social inclusion

The ACT Government recognises the importance of social inclusion and acknowledges it as a social determinant of health. The Oaks Estate Connected Communities Working Group pilot provides a vehicle to identify opportunities for prosocial, social inclusion and community development activities in partnership with other frontline service delivery agencies.

Whilst government programs can support social inclusion, everyone has a role to play in creating inclusive communities. Local residents may wish to explore grant opportunities to progress community-led social inclusion and community development activities. Details on possible grant opportunities are outlined later in this Strategic Plan.

● Education

What we heard

Access to education is important to Oaks Estate residents.

In summary, we heard:

- Some residents reported challenges with enrolling at ACT and NSW schools.
- Concerns about the lack of public transport options to enable access to schools.

Our goal

People living in Oaks Estate feel supported accessing schools and education.

This goal is consistent with the ACT Wellbeing Framework domain **Education and Life-long Learning** of “gaining the skills and education needed at all stages of life”.

What we already do

Early childhood

The ACT Government provides a range of early childhood education and care and supports for Canberra families, including:

- Free Preschool for 3-Year Olds: up to 300 hours/ year of free preschool available at over 140 services across Canberra, including 18 providers in the Inner South.
- Extra Support for Children: children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage can access 2 days of free early childhood education per week. ACT Government and community organisations identify priority children and can refer children into the program.

- Koori Preschool is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 3-5 years (and children under 3 may attend with a parent). Koori Preschool is available in 5 ACT public preschools, including Narrabundah Early Childhood School.

ACT public schools

Children and young people who live in Oaks Estate are guaranteed a place from kindergarten to year 12 at an ACT public school within their Priority Enrolment Area (PEA), this includes:

- Narrabundah Early Childhood School (preschool to year 2)
- Forrest Primary School (P – year 6)
- Red Hill Primary School (P – year 6)
- Telopea Park High School (year 7-10)
- Narrabundah College (year 11-12)

The ACT Government also provides support for families accessing schools, including:

- The [Future of Education Equity Fund](#) gives financial help to families to support their child’s needs for school and their wellbeing. It can help cover costs like uniforms, excursions, sporting equipment and activities, and music lessons. Under this Fund, eligible low-income families can receive an annual payment for each student (primary to year 12) attending any ACT school.
- The [Meals in School Program](#) – which operates in 5 participating schools, including the Narrabundah Early Childhood School – offers free breakfast and lunch 3 days a week and aims to help students stay focussed and engaged in learning by ensuring they have access to healthy food.

What we will do

The most frequent concern residents reported during the community consultation under the education theme was the lack of public transport options for students to attend their PEA school. The Transport section outlines how we will respond to these challenges.

We heard from some residents that they experienced some challenges when enrolling their children in schools in their PEA. During the development of this plan, we have ensured that all relevant PEA schools are aware Oaks Estate residents are guaranteed enrolment.

Whilst Oaks Estate residents are guaranteed enrolment in ACT public schools within their PEA, we heard from some residents that nearby NSW schools are a preferred option given their proximity. The overarching requirement for enrolment in NSW public schools is that a student resides within NSW; however, we understand there is some discretion available

to consider unique situations – like cross-border communities – which can be made at the local school level.

We did hear that some families had encountered challenges when they had sought this discretion to enrol in NSW schools.

The ACT and NSW Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Regional Collaboration establishes a framework for collaboration between the ACT and NSW governments. Among other things, it describes the shared commitment to work together to focus on achieving outcomes for communities and a borderless approach to accessing services. In response to challenges we heard from some families about accessing local NSW schools, we will focus on the following action:

- We will explore cross-border school access through the MOU.



● Opportunities for community-led activities and initiatives

In addition to provision of services, the ACT Government has a range of grant opportunities to support participation, inclusion and development activities. Depending on the grant, individuals, groups or organisations can apply at various times of the year. Some of the grant programs most relevant to the Oaks Estate community are listed here.

Title	Website
Environment related	
Community Garden Grants	www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/policy-programs/community-garden-grants
Environment Grants	www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-to-help-enhance-protect-and-promote-the-local-environment
Environmental Volunteer Group Assistance Grants	www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-to-support-environmental-volunteer-groups-to-build-their-capacity
Adopt-A-Park Community Grants Projects	www.cityservices.act.gov.au/public-land/maintenance/volunteering
Arts related	
Arts Activities funding	www.arts.act.gov.au/funding/arts-activities-funding
ACT Heritage Grants	www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-to-protect-and-promote-the-heritage-of-the-act
Participation grants	
Women's Participation Grants	www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-to-promote-act-women-and-gender-diverse-people
Veterans Grant	www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-to-help-veterans-and-their-families-engage-with-the-community
ACT Adult and Community Education (ACE) grants program	www.act.gov.au/skills/grants/act-adult-and-community-education-ace-grants-program
Seniors Grant	www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/seniors-grant
Disability Inclusion Grants	www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-to-improve-the-inclusion-and-participation-of-people-with-disability
ACT Women's Safety Grants	www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-to-promote-act-women-and-gender-diverse-peoples-safety
Community Sport Facilities Program	www.sport.act.gov.au/grants/community-sport-facilities-program
Tenant Participation Grants	www.act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-public-social-housing-tenants-to-participate-in-community

Oaks Estate Strategic Plan Actions

The following table summarises the actions identified in the Strategic Plan. These actions may be updated and refined over the life of the plan as further work is undertaken and feedback on implementation is received from the community.

Short-term actions are to be implemented within the first year, medium-term actions are to be implemented within 2 years, and long-term actions require further development and planning over the life of the plan. Ongoing actions will be in place for the life of the plan.

Any actions that require additional resources will be subject to agreement through future ACT Budget processes.

What we will do	Timeframe	Lead
Implementation, engagement and reporting		
1. Continue the OEEWG to oversee the implementation of actions.	Ongoing	HCSD
2. Meet twice per year with OERA to hear feedback and monitor the effectiveness of implemented actions.	Ongoing	OEEWG & OERA
3. Establish the OECCWG to focus on developing prosocial and community development opportunities in the suburb.	Short	HCSD
4. Annual report to the Legislative Assembly to provide updates on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.	Ongoing	HCSD
5. Publish an annual 'traffic light' update on implementation progress.	Ongoing	HCSD
Safety		
6. Explore proactive opportunities for police and other emergency services to engage with members of the community.	Medium	JACS
7. Provide information on how to report crime and call emergency services when required.	Short	JACS
8. Provide information about Victim Support ACT.	Short	JACS
9. Provide information on SafeHomes, including eligibility and how to access the program.	Short	JACS
10. Provide information on responsible dog ownership.	Short	CED
11. Review signage in unleashed areas.	Medium	CED
12. Explore engaging a mobile veterinary service, through the Community Inclusion Program provided by Vinnies, to undertake 'pop-up' clinics to provide low-to-no cost microchipping and desexing services to low-income community members.	Medium	HCSD/CED

13. Conduct patrols to detect roaming dogs and non-compliance with registration, microchipping, desexing, and licensing of multiple pets and declared dangerous dogs.	Medium	CED
14. Schedule mobile speed cameras and evaluate the impact of speeding in the suburb and assess if the situation has changed and requires a renewed response.	Medium	CED
Housing		
15. Explore planning and related assessments to support the release of vacant blocks.	Medium	SLA
16. Develop an Asset Strategy for properties owned by the Commissioner for Social Housing that will explore opportunities for the renewal, redevelopment, redistribution and/or divestment of social housing assets in Oaks Estate.	Long	HCSD
17. Provide information to social housing tenants, residents and service providers about how to raise repair and maintenance requests, and how and when common areas are maintained.	Short	iCBR
18. Attend to all repairs and maintenance requests raised by tenants and services providers.	Ongoing	iCBR
19. Promote the Tenant Participation Grants to eligible residents to support community inclusion and encourage public and social housing tenants to participate in a range of sporting, arts, cultural, education, employment and training activities.	Short	HCSD
20. Explore opportunities to continue funding the Community Inclusion Program beyond 30 June 2026, noting this may be subject to a future budget process.	Medium	HCSD
Places and Spaces		
21. Investigate the requests for tree maintenance and commemorative plantings that were made through the community engagement.	Medium	CED
22. Provide information on using Fix My Street to report issues and concerns and/or make requests for City Services, such as damaged footpaths, abandoned cars, illegal dumping and bulky waste collection.	Short	CED
23. Explore options for upgrades to footpath and installing handrails to the river walk, noting any upgrades and new infrastructure may be subject to a future budget process.	Medium	CED
24. Investigate damage to road signs and line markings, particularly to ensure safety for pedestrians.	Medium	CED
25. Explore opportunities to improve the streetscape and pedestrian linkages around the Territory-owned vacant blocks as they are prepared for release.	Medium	SLA
26. Explore options to facilitate increased community access to the Oaks Estate Community Hall.	Medium	iCBR
27. Provide an update to the community on Robertsons' House.	Short	iCBR
Transport		
28. Review public transport policies regarding support mechanisms available for isolated communities or communities that experience barriers to accessing public transport.	Medium	CED
29. Continue engagement and collaboration with NSW Government and bus operators on public transport for the benefit of people living in Oaks Estate.	Medium	CED
30. Write to local taxi and rideshare companies and encourage them to service Oaks Estate.	Short	HCSD

31. Explore opportunities to collaborate better with Vinnies (and other non-profit organisations supporting the local community) to facilitate access to, and journey planning for, public transport.	Short	CED
32. We will seek to better understand the transport needs of Oaks Estate students enrolled in ACT Public Schools.	Short	CED/EDU
Health		
33. Explore opportunities to enhance service delivery for the Chat to PAT mobile outreach van in Oaks Estate through the Capital Health Network.	Short	HCSD
34. Provide digital health service promotional material to residents and service providers to raise awareness of the available health supports for the Oaks Estate community.	Short	HCSD
35. Raise postcode-related digital services access issues with the Australian Government.	Short	HCSD
36. Explore opportunities for new NGO mental health support services through the mental health commissioning process.	Medium	HCSD
Education		
37. Explore cross-border school access through the MOU.	Long	EDU/CMTEDD

Produced by Health and
Community Services Directorate

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