

ACT Recovery Plan

2021 - 22





Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the Canberra Region and acknowledges that the region remains a significant meeting place.

The ACT Government and community partners are committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in the delivery of programs and services and are working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address matters that are important to them.



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Chief Minister's message

As Canberra emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT Government is investing in projects and programs to support our recovery.

The last two years have been tough. Natural disasters and a global pandemic have tested health systems and harmed economies and communities.

Through this time, the Government has worked to protect Canberrans' health, support our most vulnerable, and improve access to essential services.

Now, our focus is building our economic, social and community recovery - which will be rapid because of our successful health response, giving people and businesses the confidence to spend and invest.

A core component of our recovery will be our largest-ever investment in city-improving, job-creating infrastructure: building new

health facilities, public transport, roads, and schools. \$6.4 billion will be invested over the next five years in projects that will make Canberra an even better place to live.

Increasing social and community wellbeing will be another key part of our recovery, with a particular focus on those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic – such as women. Large investments in health, education and training, as well as community support, public safety, arts and culture will support those who need it most.

This document brings together the ACT Government's key measures to make our recovery strong, sustainable and equitable.

Andrew Barr MLA





Our successful response to COVID-19

The ACT's response to COVID-19 has been one of the best in the world. It's a powerful demonstration of what can be achieved when a community works together to keep each other safe.

The ACT Government invested heavily to support our hospitals, testing facilities, contact tracing teams, quarantine facilities and mass vaccination centres. We allocated resources where they were needed, reached out to vulnerable communities, and embraced innovation and digital service delivery, moving many of our government services online.

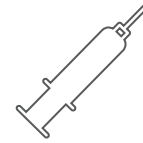
We communicated openly, honestly and regularly. The community responded by following health advice.



Looking after our most vulnerable

We also understood the significant risk COVID-19 presented to our most vulnerable. We acted quickly to adapt our services and work with non-government partners to support those in our community who found quarantine most difficult, providing accommodation, food, financial support as well as personal protective equipment, in-reach testing and vaccination.

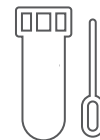
Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Government has provided food relief and material aid to close to 6,000 households, and we have translated thousands of pages of COVID-19 information and resources into many languages.



98% of
Canberrans 12+
are fully vaccinated



Over 1,900
patients cared for as
part of our COVID Care
at Home program



Over 615,000
COVID-19 tests
conducted



Over 250,000
calls answered on
the COVID helpline

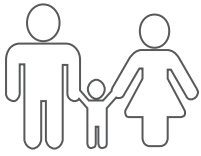
Over 12,500
calls made by
contact tracers

Over 120,000
responses on
social media

Community sentiment
to the Government's
response -

88% positive over
the course of the
pandemic

Our recovery



Vaccination
will protect our community and health system



Tourism
and international education sectors to drive growth

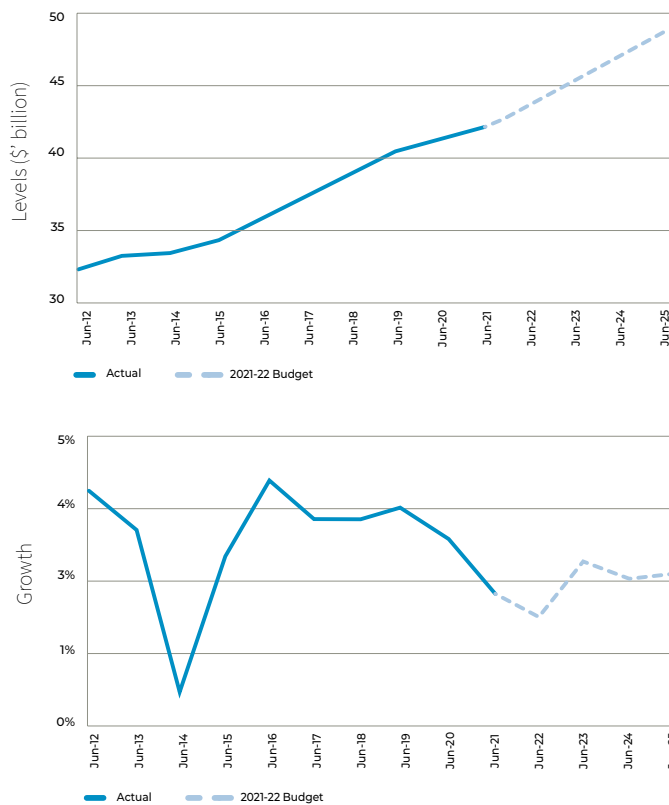


Economic
recovery led by consumer spending, public infrastructure investment and business investment

Before the pandemic, the ACT economy was strong and stable. COVID-19 hit some sectors harder than others, and the resulting challenges faced by some businesses have been significant. However, our high vaccination level has put our economy in the best position to spring back.

Consumer spending has rebounded strongly as restrictions have eased. With international borders gradually reopening, our tourism and international education sectors are also expected to drive growth into 2022 and beyond.

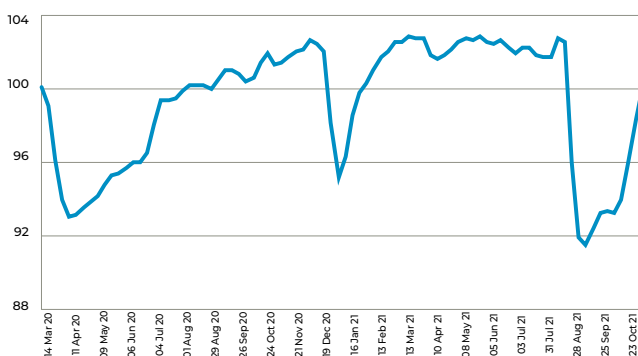
Figure1: Gross State Product (GSP), ACT



Sources: ABS Australian National Accounts; State Accounts; and Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Over the fortnight ending 30 October 2021, payroll jobs increased by 4.4 per cent in the ACT as the Territory came out of its lockdown. The ACT's growth rate was the highest of all jurisdictions and higher than the national average of 1.4 per cent over this period.

Figure2: Payroll job index, 14 March 2020 to 30 October 2021, ACT



Sources: ABS Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia, interim



Largest ever infrastructure program

At **\$5 billion**, our five year General Government Sector infrastructure investment program will deliver investments in health and community wellbeing, education and skills development, and in environment, climate, transport and planning. The program will be the foundation for a vibrant, inclusive, and innovative society that connects people with places.

Importantly, our projects will have a high local content to provide good local jobs and ensure fast delivery. An additional **\$1.4 billion** over five years will be delivered through Government's public trading enterprises bringing the total to **\$6.4 billion**.

\$6.4b

government and public trading enterprise total infrastructure investment, including:



Housing \$664m

(Growing and renewing public housing, Common Ground, social housing and homelessness services)

Transport and digital connectivity \$2.3b

(Public transport, active travel, public spaces, roads and bridges and online services)

Education \$963m

(Schools, CIT campuses, libraries and digital education)

Health \$877m

(Canberra Hospital upgrades & expansion, Calvary upgrades, Northside hospital, health ICT system upgrades, mental health infrastructure)



Environment and climate \$257m

(Zero emission vehicles and bus network, urban forest, waste management, reserves, waterways, efficient government buildings)

City renewal \$636m

(Land release, town centres, government assets, look and feel of the city)



Public safety \$273m

(Emergency Services and policing infrastructure and equipment, corrections facilities and systems improvements and road/stormwater safety improvements)



Arts, culture, sport & recreation \$100m

(Improvement for Arts and cultural facilities, venues, sport and recreation facilities and community facilities)

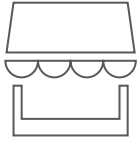


\$80m
for maintenance
of existing public
housing properties

Housing

The ACT Government has allocated **\$1 billion** for public housing across Canberra, and since 2015 we have delivered 1,505 new properties. We have also provided an additional \$80 million for the repair and maintenance of existing public housing properties, which will improve the quality of life of current and future tenants. In addition, the Government's Common Ground Dickson development will include 40 residential

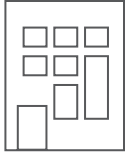
units as well as communal areas, community spaces, onsite support services and provision for a social enterprise business. The complex will provide long-term, high-quality housing options for people experiencing chronic homelessness and for low-income earners, such as older women, single parents and families with children.



\$300m
in COVID-19
Business Support
grants (jointly funded
with the Commonwealth
Government)



\$46.5m
in small business
hardship grants



\$6m
in commercial
tenancy support

Continued business support

Over the course of the pandemic, the ACT Government has supported Canberra businesses with over **\$475 million** in direct payments and tax relief measures.

- **Rental relief** on government leases.
- **Payroll** tax waivers and deferrals.
- **Commercial** liquor permit fee waivers.

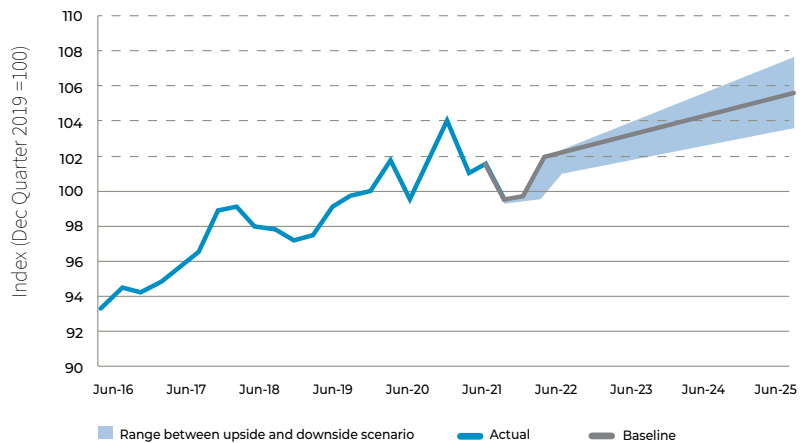
Electricity rebates.



Waivers
of vehicle
registration fees.



Figure 3: ACT Forecast employment



Sources: ABS Labour Force Australia and ACT Government estimates.

The jobs horizon
250,000
jobs by 2025



As our economy recovers, the demand for workers will increase. So the Government is providing a record **\$126.3 million** in funding in 2022 for apprenticeships, traineeships and other vocational education activities including through the User Choice (Australian Apprenticeships) and Skilled Capital programs.

In addition, our Workforce Attraction Cooperative Grants Program will assist local businesses to attract the workforce they need to recover and grow.

\$28m to



Promote and stimulate international trade



Support innovative business start-ups and venture capital investment in Canberra-based companies

- Support Screen Canberra to grow the ACT screen industry

- Support the tourism sector

The Secure Local Jobs Code will ensure workers are treated fairly when their companies undertake new Government contracts



More than
\$500m
for Health

Wellbeing at the center of everything we do

The ACT Government's focus on wellbeing is one of Canberra's key strengths - and one that sets our city apart.

It meant the health and wellbeing of every single Canberran was at the centre of the Government's response to the pandemic. We are continuing to invest in health, particularly mental health, to support recovery and longer-term resilience within the community.

Delivery of booster vaccinations and vaccinations to children once they become eligible.

Increased alcohol and drug support services, additional counselling and social support services, and individual advocacy services with support from the community sector.



A Post-Acute COVID rehabilitation clinic.

Additional BreastScreen clinics and outpatient appointments to cover those lost during lockdown.

Community led health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services has been central to our pandemic response and will be critical throughout our recovery as we invest \$803,000 to commence work to design a community-led mental health treatment precinct and \$2.3 million to ensure Winnunga can continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders that need it most.

\$2.3m
support for
Winnunga
services



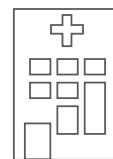
\$57m

for mental health and community health care support



\$50m

to commence implementation of nurse/midwife-to-patient ratios



\$49.7m

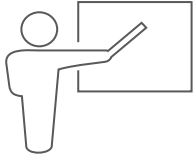
for Calvary Hospital upgrades and Northside hospital planning

\$30m

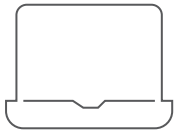
for more capacity at the Canberra Hospital Emergency Department and for more elective surgeries

\$7.2m

for a new Cancer Research Centre



\$27m
for more staff,
teachers and
teacher librarians



\$21m
to continue
provision of
devices for
students



\$9m
to continue
the Muliyan Off-
Campus Flexible
Learning to support
vulnerable students in
a culturally safe way

Education and lifelong learning

Education has been one of the most impacted sectors during the pandemic – from the disruption to children’s education, to educators delivering curriculum online, through to the loss of domestic and international tertiary students.

The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on young people, and it has become clear that students value schools and educational institutions as places of belonging, connection and community.

As international borders re-open and young people get back to school and university, the ACT Government will continue to invest so that education and lifelong learning can get back on track.

\$12.5m
for free education to 500
priority three-year-olds.

\$8.5m
for inclusion, gender equality
and to address occupational
violence in schools.

\$8m
to extend JobTrainer.

\$2.2m
for Headstart program for 50
senior secondary students.

\$7m
for additional
youth and
social workers

\$13m
for disadvantaged
families to meet
**educational expenses
and trial breakfast
and lunch
for students**

Support for kids who have fallen behind

Students had different experiences with remote learning. Some found it challenging, while others flourished. Teachers will use a range of tools to identify students’ progress during remote learning, and to inform what supports individual students may need as they return to on campus learning. In addition, the ACT Government has allocated a further \$21.1 million to support safety and wellbeing for on campus learning.

This is part of the Government’s \$50 million COVID Response fund and will provide face masks and sanitiser, improved ventilation and shade structures, as well as additional telehealth and relief staff to assist with operational changes required due to COVID-19.



\$200m
Education and
lifelong learning



\$13m
arts and
culture

Vibrant arts and culture

Arts and culture will form a key part of our recovery so that we can articulate ideas, emotions and stories about what we have been through. The arts and cultural sector has been particularly impacted during the pandemic and so ACT Government is investing **\$13 million** to assist the sector to recover and grow.

Community support, housing and safety

With help from the non-government sector, the ACT Government is providing critical frontline support for those most vulnerable – the elderly, people with disability, those in contact with the justice system, experiencing domestic and family violence or those from culturally diverse communities. As we emerge from the pandemic, the Government is focused on reconnecting the community safely.

\$75m
to build strong social connections, reduce loneliness and foster resilience amongst our most vulnerable - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, multicultural communities, young people and our LGBTIQ+ community



Helping communities to reconnect through the 'Mingle' initiative in partnership with local stakeholders and community organisations



\$60m
for justice and human rights

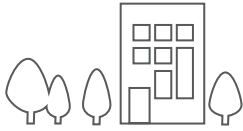


\$65m
so that our Emergency Services can continue to keep us safe



\$30m
for system reform and service improvements in relation to domestic and family violence funded by the Safer Families Levy





\$70m

for urban renewal including city activation, raising London Circuit and East Lake urban renewal



Transport improvements including an expansion of bus services to new suburbs and a **\$45m** pipeline of active travel projects

Environment, planning, transport and climate

Local green spaces became welcome refuges for the people of Canberra during our lockdowns, with over half of Canberrans spending time in their local neighbourhood places.

Now libraries, outdoor playgrounds, skate parks, fitness stations, dog parks and BBQs are back open for people to enjoy.



Support for people to volunteer and get outside in nature for personal wellbeing and to aid in social recovery

New floating wetlands at Yerrabi Pond

Establishment of Namarag - a special purpose nature reserve, codesigned with the Ngunnawal Community to support recovery of country and community





Climate action

Faced with a changing climate, enhancing our environmental resilience is crucial and it is essential that more vulnerable members of the community are not left behind. The ACT Government is rolling out the five-year **\$150 million** Sustainable Household Scheme to provide zero interest loans for households and not-for-profit community organisations to meet the up-front costs of investing in climate action infrastructure or vehicles.

We will continue our work to increase the proportion of zero-emission vehicles through free registration and increasing the number of charging stations, and we will commence our **\$50 million** Vulnerable Household Energy Support Scheme to improve thermal comfort and reduce energy hardship among vulnerable households.

\$70m
new funding for
climate and
the environment

What does this mean for me?

Households

- Zero interest loans of up to \$15,000 for households and not-for-profit community organisations to assist with the upfront costs of investing in rooftop solar panels, battery storage, zero emission vehicles and energy efficient electric appliances as part of the Sustainable Household Scheme.
- Free registration for two years for new and second hand zero emission vehicles.
- Continuation of solar for low-income scheme to provide subsidies for low-income homeowners to install rooftop solar systems.
- Pilot of Build-to-Rent accommodation with an affordable rental component on nominated land release sites.
- Continued investments in sport and recreation facilities, play spaces, dog parks and shopping centres.



Small and Medium Businesses

- Continued support for clubs for equipment upgrades, building efficiency improvements, and the installation of rooftop solar and batteries to reduce electricity and gas bills.
- Continued promotion and generation of opportunities for international trade with the ACT.
- Additional support for innovation and investment in business in the Territory.
- Expansion of the Future Jobs Fund to provide grants to the higher education and research sector to create and sustain jobs in growth industries.
- A Business Accelerator program and a networked concierge service that will link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to appropriate support mechanisms.
- Extension of payroll tax exemption for wages paid to new apprentices or trainees.
- Liquor licence fee reductions until March 2022 for on licences, special and club licences.
- Workforce Attraction Cooperative Grants Program to assist local businesses to attract the workforce they need.
- Significant subsidies for training and upskilling workers to meet skills needs.

Tourism and Hospitality

- Funding to expand destination marketing activities, provide support for the aviation sector, continue support for the National Capital Educational Tourism Project, support the continuation of Brand Canberra and extend the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund.
- More support for accommodation providers and private tourism venue operators through the Accommodation and Tourism Venue Operator Support Program, Small Tourism Operator COVID Recovery Payment and vehicle registration fee waivers for hire cars and chartered buses.
- One-off grants to eligible businesses in the tourism, accommodation, arts and events, hospitality, fitness and sports industries in a cost sharing arrangement with the Commonwealth.



Arts and entertainment

- Bringing back events such as the Enlighten Festival, Canberra Day and Australia Day celebrations and attracting major events in partnership with the Canberra Convention Bureau.
- A third round of HOMEFRONT grants to support artists who have been impacted by COVID-19.
- Continued support for Screen Canberra to develop local capacity and attract screen production projects to the Territory.
- Operational funding for the Belconnen Arts Centre and Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres and improvements to the Tuggeranong Arts Centre theatre.
- Additional funding to support multicultural community groups in celebrations and events in the lead up to the National Multicultural Festival's 25th anniversary.
- Celebration of a significant woman or non-binary individual through public art by commissioning a female or non-binary artist.

Children and Young people

- Personal devices for students in years 7 to 10 to support learning.
- An extension of the JobTrainer Fund to provide free training places for young people and others who face barriers in the labour market.
- Free education for 500 priority three-year-olds for two days per week for 48 weeks per year.
- Additional funding for apprenticeships, traineeships and other vocational education activities through the User Choice (Australian Apprenticeships) and Skilled Capital programs.
- A Headstart pilot program to provide 50 senior secondary school students with the opportunity to complete an apprenticeship and extend their ACT senior secondary certification by a year.



Our most vulnerable

- Vulnerable household energy support scheme.
- Expansion of concessions for utilities, pensioner rates and conveyance duty for lower cost off-the-plan units.
- Grants for disadvantaged families to help meet the costs of educational expenses and a trial of breakfast and lunch for students at five schools for three days a week.
- Expanding capacity of existing homelessness services.
- Support for children and young people, including accommodation options for those affected by family conflict and that are at risk of homelessness.
- More funding for the Integrated Service Response Program for people with disability whose needs are not met by the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- Continuing the community support package funding for community organisations to provide a range of crisis and emergency supports.
- Continued funding for A Gender Agenda to deliver specialist services to trans, gender diverse and intersex people.