



2026-27 Budget Consultation

Report on what we heard

The annual budget consultation provides an important opportunity for the community to have its say on priorities for government investment, service delivery and the future wellbeing of Canberrans.

The ACT Government continues to focus on the services needed to meet our growing community in a fiscally responsible way. Many of the key initiatives announced in the 2026-27 Budget align strongly with what we have heard from consultation with communities.

The 2026-27 Budget is making generational investments in new affordable, community and public homes. At the same time, we are also making significant long-term investment in the repair and maintenance of public housing properties, including insourcing maintenance staff, to deliver more responsive services to tenants.

In the face of economic uncertainty and disruptions associated with conflict in the Middle East, the 2026-27 Budget takes a measured approach to budget repair while targeting cost-of-living support to those most in need, including additional assistance for food relief, family school expenses, tertiary student transport concessions, energy cost reduction measures and crisis support services. The Budget also recognises the critical role of the community sector through longer-term funding certainty, additional support for homelessness and domestic, family and sexual violence services, and ongoing funding reform aimed at better responding to changing community needs.

Through the 2026-27 Budget, the Government is maintaining a responsible fiscal approach, focusing new expenditure on frontline services, implementing measures to improve public sector efficiency and reduce reliance on external contractors. Long-term investment in health, education and transport infrastructure continues to be a priority for this Government while ensuring the Territory's infrastructure pipeline remains affordable, sustainable and aligned with local industry capacity.

Now in its seventh year, the Wellbeing Framework helps the Government make decisions that improve Canberrans' quality of life and remains embedded in policy development and decision-making. This reflects the Government's commitment to intergenerational equity and long-term community wellbeing. Balancing the Wellbeing Framework alongside the Government's Fiscal Strategy ensures these efforts invest in Canberra's future prosperity and liveability, maintains high-quality services, responds to external challenges and supports sustainable public finances. Supported by a strong economy and targeted community investments, these measures will support positive outcomes for Canberrans now and into the future.

The conversation

Budget consultation is an important part of the Government's budget planning framework, providing an opportunity for community members, businesses and local organisations to share views and ideas on how government services can be delivered more efficiently, innovatively and effectively for the Territory.

Community members, businesses and local organisations were invited to contribute ideas for the 2026-27 Budget through written submissions via the Budget Consultation project page on the YourSay Conversations webpage and the Input Received website. Members of the YourSay Panel were also invited to complete a survey.

In February and March 2026, the Government met with more than 60 local community and business groups to better understand the issues affecting their members and clients, and to seek input on their social, environmental and economic priorities.

Who we engaged

Written submissions were received from 119 ACT residents, community and business groups, unions and other stakeholders, and 1,801 people completed the Community Priorities survey through the YourSay Panel.

Members of the public, and business and community organisations could provide written submissions regarding their views on longer term expenditure and revenue priorities and how the Government can best support the wellbeing of the Canberra community. The written submission process remains open through the year, with any input received after publication of the 2026-27 Budget being used to inform future budgets.

Written contributions received as part of the 2026-27 Budget consultation process have been published, except when provided in confidence. All non-confidential submissions are available through the [Input Received](#) website.

The 2026-27 Budget consultation process included survey, which sought feedback on the prioritisation of government expenditure, with a particular focus on community priorities. Access to the survey was available to the members of the YourSay Panel, which people were able to join if they wished to participate. The survey was open from 27 October and 4 November 2025, with 1,801 completed responses received. A [summary report](#) from the Community Priorities survey is available from the ACT Government Transparency Portal [YourSay Panel survey reports](#).

A series of round table meetings with key community and industry groups were held over February and March 2026 with ACT Government officials to discuss priorities.

The submissions, survey responses and direct engagement reflected the diverse range of issues and priorities of Canberrans including:

- support for community services and groups (including support for disability, youth, women, domestic violence services, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services);
- social inclusion;
- education and skills, including early childhood support;

- environment and climate;
- transport and the amenities of our city (including active travel);
- infrastructure proposals;
- business resilience and activity, including tourism, events and creative industries;
- proposals for regulatory and planning amendments;
- health services (including mental health);
- housing access and support;
- seniors; and
- wellbeing.

Key insights from the community

Housing and home

- Access to affordable, appropriate and secure housing was one of the most frequently raised issues throughout the consultation process. Stakeholders expressed concern about housing affordability, homelessness, long social housing wait times and growing demand for housing assistance, particularly for low-income households, older women, refugees and migrants, people with disability, and those escaping domestic and family violence.
- Community organisations highlighted the importance of maintaining investment in social, affordable and community housing, supported by clear targets, sustainable operating funding and long-term certainty. Housing was consistently identified as preventative social infrastructure that can reduce demand on health, justice and community services while improving wellbeing outcomes.
- The supply of new housing remained a significant concern for both community and industry stakeholders. Feedback identified barriers associated with land supply, development feasibility, taxation settings, infrastructure costs and approval processes, with stakeholders emphasising the need to support a diverse range of housing options to meet Canberra's changing needs.

Health and community wellbeing

- Health and wellbeing remained a significant focus of consultation, with stakeholders identifying pressures across mental health, preventative health, primary care and specialised community supports. Participants emphasised growing demand for mental health services, particularly for young people, carers, people experiencing psychosocial disability and those with co-occurring alcohol and other drug issues.
 - A consistent theme was the need to shift investment towards prevention and early intervention, including perinatal mental health supports, community-based mental health services, school-based wellbeing programs, harm reduction initiatives and social connection programs. Better integration of services, stronger peer workforces and increased support for carers and respite services were also identified as priorities.
 - Stakeholders highlighted the importance of culturally safe and accessible services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, multicultural communities and
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other groups facing barriers to participation. Concerns were also raised about access to disability supports, specialist health services and the sustainability of many non-government organisations delivering health and wellbeing outcomes.

Environment, climate and transport

- Participants highlighted the importance of continuing investment in environmental protection, climate resilience and sustainable transport. Stakeholders advocated for stronger implementation of biodiversity conservation, invasive species and weed management, habitat restoration, biosecurity capability and community-led environmental programs.
- Climate adaptation and resilience emerged as increasing priorities, with participants noting the need for greater preparedness across government, community organisations and local infrastructure to respond to climate-related risks and extreme weather events.
- Reliable public transport, active travel infrastructure and safe community spaces remained important themes. Stakeholders highlighted concerns about ageing local infrastructure, road and footpath maintenance, transport connectivity and the impacts of major construction works, while emphasising the need to improve accessibility, city amenity and active transport options.

Community support, social inclusion and safety

- Community support, social inclusion and safety remained a dominant theme of consultation, with stakeholders highlighting rising demand for community services driven by cost-of-living pressures, housing insecurity and increasing complexity of need. Organisations reported growing demand for food relief, homelessness services, family violence support, legal assistance and financial counselling, alongside concerns that short-term funding arrangements, workforce shortages and inadequate indexation are undermining service sustainability.
 - Participants emphasised the importance of early intervention and prevention, noting that vulnerable people often fall through gaps between health, housing, justice and community service systems. Particular focus was placed on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability, carers, women and children affected by domestic and family violence, refugees and asylum seekers, and LGBTIQ+ communities. Stakeholders also called for stronger community-led service models, longer-term funding certainty and greater support for advocacy and participation in decision-making.
 - Community safety concerns were also raised, including antisocial behaviour, family violence, localised crime and community amenity. Stakeholders highlighted the benefits of coordinated early intervention, diversionary and community-based responses to reduce pressure on emergency services and the justice system while improving long-term wellbeing outcomes.
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Jobs, sport, arts, culture and entertainment

- Stakeholders highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong and diverse economy that supports employment, business investment and community wellbeing. Businesses reported concerns about operating costs, taxes, rates, fees, insurance and regulatory burdens, while noting workforce shortages across several industries and the importance of attracting and retaining skilled workers.
- Construction, tourism and business groups raised concerns about market conditions, housing delivery, workforce availability, skills development and business confidence. Stakeholders emphasised the need for policy certainty, streamlined government processes, improved procurement practices and infrastructure investment that supports economic growth and productivity.
- Arts, culture and tourism organisations highlighted their contribution to Canberra's economy, identity and wellbeing. Participants noted strong community engagement and visitor demand but raised concerns about workforce sustainability, funding certainty and the capacity of organisations to continue delivering cultural, tourism and community outcomes.

Education and life-long learning

- Education, training and lifelong learning continued to be viewed as critical enablers of economic participation and community wellbeing. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of early childhood education, school-based supports and programs that assist vulnerable children, young people and families.
 - Participants emphasised the value of culturally responsive and inclusive education, with particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, people with disability, culturally diverse communities and young people experiencing disadvantage. Improved connections between education, employment and community supports were also identified as important.
 - Workforce development and skills shortages remained prominent themes. Stakeholders highlighted challenges in attracting and retaining apprentices, supporting workforce transitions and ensuring training pathways align with future labour market needs, particularly across construction, community services, health and tourism sectors.
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What's next?

We used your ideas to help inform the priorities for the ACT's 2026-27 Budget and have already begun preparing for the 2027-28 Budget.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback. The 2026-27 Budget is available online and can be viewed at: [Home - Budget 2026-27](#) and all non-confidential submissions can be viewed at: <https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/budget/budget-consultation/input-received>.

The written submission process remains open – written submissions can be provided at any time and can help inform the development of the 2027-28 ACT Budget and future budgets.

Timeline
Always open: Online submission process
21 October - 4 November 2025: 2025 Community Priorities Survey
5 February 2026: 2025-26 Budget Review was released
February and March 2026: 2026-27 Budget consultation peak-body roundtables were held
10 June 2026: 2026-27 Budget was released
August 2026: Listening Report released

Thank you for your feedback		
119	1,801	3,349
Written submissions received until 28 May 2026	Responses to the YourSay Panel survey	Unique users to Budget Consultation YourSay *

* Over the period 28 November 2025 to 10 June 2026.