

Business and community sectors united on key elements of community and economic recovery

The peak bodies representing the business sector and community not-for-profit organisations in the ACT today announced their shared priorities ahead of the 2020 ACT Election.

The Canberra Business Chamber and the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) highlighted shared priorities for the next ACT Government including social housing, community sector funding and a just transition to net zero emissions as essential to achieving community and economic recovery over the next four years and beyond.

The Canberra Business Chamber and ACTCOSS are calling for the next ACT Government to support Canberra's community and economic recovery through measures including:

- Investment in building of more social and affordable housing
- Adequate, secure, long-term funding for local not-for-profit community service providers
- A just transition to net zero emissions for residential, not-for-profit, and small business energy consumers.

Quotes attributable to Mr Graham Catt, CEO, Canberra Business Chamber:

"Canberra is no longer a public service town. There are thirty thousand businesses operating in the ACT, many of them small or micro businesses. Those enterprises, along with the government and community sectors form the foundations of the ACT's tripartite economy. Each sector has a vital role to play in Canberra's community and economic recovery by delivering jobs, income and opportunities.

"There is agreement across sectors that investment in much-needed social and affordable housing infrastructure will further support economic recovery, meet an increasing community demand for shelter, and deliver positive social outcomes. There are a variety of funding tools that can be considered to enable this to proceed.

"Many of the ACT's community-based organisations are members of the Chamber. They currently operate on short-term arrangements with government, often on year-by-year contracts, which creates uncertainty and risk. Long-term funding will allow organisations to undertake more effective planning, invest in delivering better client services, and allow them to provide secure jobs and develop skills.

"Government initiatives such as climate change targets have an impact on local business. The ACT business community supports action on climate change, but we must ensure we ease the costs of transition (including capital expenses) to new energy policy settings, provide information, and ensure that the ability of ACT businesses to compete is not compromised."

Quotes attributable to Dr Emma Campbell, CEO, ACTCOSS:

“Together, the not-for-profit and business sectors provide around two thirds of Canberra’s jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how vital the relationship is between the government, business and the community sector in protecting people’s lives and livelihoods. It is vital that all three sectors work together to support Canberra’s community and economic recovery.

“Along with Australia’s top economists, our local business and community sectors agree that investment in social housing should be a top priority for government. There is a shortfall of over 3,000 social housing dwellings in the ACT. Addressing this shortfall would boost community and economic recovery by providing affordable housing to those in need, providing jobs, and growing local businesses, including local not-for-profit community housing providers.

“The ACT’s community service organisations provide support to people when they need it most – when they’re facing homelessness, escaping domestic violence or dealing with mental health struggles. Basic funding for community services has remained static despite rising demand and rising costs. The sector also desperately needs capital investments in fit-for-purpose facilities with accessible infrastructure and critical ICT to ensure staff and consumers are safe and supported.

“Action on climate change is a social justice issue. People living in low-income households are more likely to be negatively impacted by climate change. These households are also at risk of being left behind as we transition away from fossil fuels such as natural gas for our heating and cooking, and petrol and diesel for our cars and buses. We need the next ACT Government to develop a clear plan for a just transition to net zero emissions that protects vulnerable consumers and ensures everyone has access to healthy and affordable housing that is energy efficient.”

Find the [ACTCOSS 2020 ACT Election Platform here](#)

Find the [Canberra Business Chamber’s 2020 ACT Election Policy Platform here](#)

Find the [Canberra Business Chamber’s 2020 ACT Election Manifesto here](#)

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