2026–27 ACT Budget: Key Announcements for the Community NGO Mental Health Sector

The 2026–27 ACT Budget includes a number of important investments for the community NGO mental health sector, including targeted funding for an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perinatal mental health safe space** delivering culturally grounded, community-based, wrap-around support. The Budget also reinforces the role of community services in supporting wellbeing of the most vulnerable people in our community and responds to increasing demand across housing, cost-of-living and safety supports.

While the Budget does not include a dedicated community mental health NGO package, it makes several important investments in the **social and economic conditions** that shape mental health and wellbeing. The strongest signals for our sector are the Government's investment in **community services, homelessness and housing supports, domestic, family and sexual violence services, and cost-of-living relief**.

These measures recognise that mental health outcomes are shaped by housing security, financial pressure, safety, access to justice, community connection and inclusive services. Together, they represent an important investment in the broader service system and safety net that supports prevention, reduces demand for crisis responses, and enables recovery.

Key ACT budget announcements relevant to our sector

- **$1.2 million over 4 years for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perinatal mental health safe space** to deliver wrap-around, community-based, culturally grounded perinatal support.
- **$57 million over four years for community services**, including ongoing and targeted support across the community sector. Key elements include:
    - **$22.7 million in ongoing permanent funding** to strengthen a responsive and evolving community sector, with a focus on areas of greatest need and direct support for organisations under pressure.

- **$16.7 million for community legal organisations** and **$2.15 million for Legal Aid ACT** to improve equitable access to justice and respond to increased demand.
- **$16.9 million for housing and homelessness services** to expand and sustain frontline responses, including support for Samaritan House, Blue Door and RoadHouse, and expansion of the Housing Asset Assistance Program (HAAP) providing wraparound support for people with complex needs experiencing long-term homelessness.
- **$894,000 for LGBTQIA+ services and advocacy**, including support for LGBTQIA+ parents and children.
- **$100,000 for Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT** to continue essential sexual and reproductive health services in 2026–27.

- **$44.2 million over four years for domestic, family and sexual violence services** to strengthen frontline services, provide longer-term funding certainty, and support crisis response, sexual violence services, behaviour change programs, and supports for children and young people. This includes ongoing funding for core services such as [Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and YWCA Canberra].
- **Housing stability and cost-of-living relief**, including:
  - the Housing Crisis Support Fund, which will provide relief to more than 3,300 Canberrans experiencing rental stress, and a $250 Crisis Support Payment for essential household expenses
  - reducing barriers to buying a home through the removal of stamp duty for all first-home buyers,
  - a new Public Housing Pipeline program to build and buy and buy new public homes, investment into repairs for existing public housing, alongside broader housing investment and support for crisis and transitional accommodation.

Other relevant funding – Commonwealth to ACT

- **$3.9 million in 2026-27** is being provided to the ACT under the bilateral schedule of the **National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement**. This funding supports agreed national priorities in mental health and suicide prevention and contributes to

the broader service system in which ACT community mental health organisations operate.

Breakdown of Total Community Services Funding – 26/27 Initiatives

Initiatives	2026–27 ($'000)	2027–28 ($'000)	2028–29 ($'000)	2029–30 ($'000)	Total ($'000)
30,000 homes by 2030 – Supporting community housing	-500	–	–	–	-500
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leadership on justice overrepresentation	-50	–	–	–	-50
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perinatal mental health space	-250	-250	-300	-400	-1,200
Building safer communities – Strengthening DFSV system foundations	-467	-355	-365	–	-1,187
Building safer communities – Supporting DFSV frontline services	-7,688	-11,170	-9,823	-12,361	-41,042
Climate action – ACT Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan	-360	-365	-200	–	-925
Climate action – Community-led environmental outcomes	-330	-330	-280	–	-940
Community Sector Indexation	-2,288	-1,984	-1,990	-1,962	-8,224
Continuing humanitarian support funding	-285	–	–	–	-285
Cost of living – Housing Crisis Support Fund	-2,631	-2,531	–	–	-5,162
Delivering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans	-336	-418	–	–	-754
Investing in housing and homelessness services	-2,796	-3,934	-4,547	-5,442	-16,719
Justice Housing Program	-1,512	-1,573	-1,635	-1,700	-6,420
More support for the community legal assistance sector	-4,010	-4,129	-4,243	-4,361	-16,743
Outpatient transport for patients with chronic conditions	-300	-359	-318	-327	-1,304
Parent Advocacy Service	-205	-230	-115	–	-550

Strengthening community services and inclusion	-262	-266	-191	-175	-894
Support for Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT	-100	–	–	–	-100
Supporting a strong and responsive community sector	-5,999	-5,908	-5,308	-5,462	-22,677
Supporting a strong and responsive community sector (MEA)	–	NFP	NFP	NFP	NFP
Supporting culturally responsive reintegration pathways	-606	-621	-637	-653	-2,517
Supporting disability services – Design and implementation of Thriving Kids	NFP	–	–	–	NFP
Supporting our health workforce – Indigenous Allied Health Australia ACT Health Academy	-451	-462	-474	-486	-1,873
TOTAL	**-31,426**	**-34,885**	**-30,426**	**-33,329**	**-130,066**

n.b: where possible, initiatives have had funding associated with delivery by the ACT Government or its agencies split out to show only the component that is going to a community sector organisation or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation. This ia not a compete list, nor does it reflect total ACT Government investment in the sector over the Forward Estimates in 2026-27.

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Continuing funding

Partially new funding

New funding