

SCOA's Submission for ACT 2011-12 Budget Consultations

In November 2010 the ACT Treasurer invited community and business groups, organisations and individual ACT residents to share their views and suggestions on budget expenditure and capital priorities, savings and efficiency measures that may be considered by the Government in framing the 2011-12 Budget.

SCOA ACT took this opportunity to present to the ACT Government several important issues of current concern primarily to current Commonwealth superannuation pensioners, their spouses, partners and dependants in the ACT. They will become relevant to those not already retired when they do eventually retire.

In particular, SCOA ACT expressed concern that budgetary pressures should not result in savings at the expense of some of the most vulnerable in our community.

SCOA's submissions were summarised into the following recommendations set out below. The full submission may be found on the SCOA website at

Strengthen the Home and Community Care Program

SCOA recommends that the ACT Government continue to monitor and improve the operation of the ACT Home and Community Care Program to identify and address deficiencies in the current system that are delaying provision of timely services to existing service recipients and those on the waiting list.

ACTION Gold Card

SCOA recommends that the ACT Government reduce the eligibility age for the ACTION Gold Card from 75 to 70.

Improved Rubbish Collection

SCOA recommends the introduction of a fortnightly collection of light garden waste and a monthly collection of unwanted heavy household items (such as armchairs, washing machines etc), clean used clothing and blankets (bagged), and heavy garden waste (such as dead tree branches) and continued e-waste collections.

Provision of Footpaths in all Canberra streets

SCOA recommends that all Canberra streets have a footpath.

Mature Age Employment

SCOA recommends that the ACT Government

- Give priority to making workplaces more welcoming and "friendly" for mature age employees, including more flexibility in employment and hours and greater emphasis on issues such as job interest and variation rather than simply salary and career;
- Give priority to strengthening age discrimination laws;
- Create incentives to encourage mature age workers to increase their skills; and
- Recognise that 25% of its current workforce (with a considerable proportion of the Government's experience and corporate memory) retire in the next five years thus

emphasising the potential value and benefit available in promoting mature age employment.

Liability Insurance Cover for Volunteers

SCOA recommends that the ACT Government

- Underwrite public liability cover for volunteers who are operating away from premises which are covered for public liability for their organization; and
- Note the exclusion of older people as volunteers due to age limits placed on public liability insurance and seek to take action to change this to allow older retirees to continue as volunteers in community activities.

Access to Dental Services

SCOA recommends that the ACT Government take action to reduce waiting time for treatment under the ACT Public Dental Scheme to two months by 30 June 2011; and

Shortage of General Practitioners in the ACT

SCOA recommends that the ACT Government

Intensify its efforts to significantly reduce the shortage of General Practitioners in the ACT.

Seniors Card

SCOA recommends that the ACT Government

Resume the previous process of consultation with stakeholders (including COTA and SCOA) in relation to the ACT Seniors Card and undertake a review of its scope and benefits.