

## **ATODA analysis of the ACT Budget 2026-27**

The ACT Budget 2026–27, handed down on 10th June, contains a number of welcome investments that will strengthen community services and support vulnerable Canberrans. ATODA particularly welcomes the ACT Government's commitment to long-term funding for the community sector, including substantial investments in frontline services responding to domestic, family and sexual violence, housing and homelessness, primary healthcare, and legal assistance.

Of particular significance is the Community Sector Permanent Uplift of \$23.7 million to help non-government organisations improve wages, retain skilled staff, and strengthen service delivery. This recognises the critical role community organisations play in supporting the Canberra community where it is most needed.

The Budget includes positive investments that may benefit people who use alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, including new and continuing investment in public healthcare infrastructure, support for housing and homelessness services, expanded community legal assistance, more support for LGBTQIA+ communities, funding for domestic and family violence services, and work to improve collaboration across the mental health, AOD, suicide prevention and primary healthcare systems.

ATODA welcomes the Government's commitment to continue working with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services on the establishment of an Aboriginal-led residential AOD rehabilitation service at the Watson Health Precinct. We also note funding to develop a consumer-centred mental health services plan that includes stronger connections between mental health and AOD services.

We note that, despite these positive developments, there is relatively little new investment directed specifically towards the AOD sector. While the Budget includes a feasibility study for AOD facilities within the future Northside Hospital and continues planning work in several areas, there are few direct commitments to expanding treatment capacity, addressing workforce shortages, improving service sustainability, or increasing provision of harm reduction services.

ATODA's 2026–27 pre-budget submission called for targeted investment in five priority areas: strengthening the sustainability and capacity of the AOD sector; expanding evidence-based harm reduction measures; reducing alcohol-related harms; reducing nicotine harms; and improving equity and access to AOD treatment and harm reduction in custodial settings. The Budget does not substantially advance these priorities.

ATODA looks forward to engaging with government, members and stakeholders to advocate for the investments and policy reforms needed to strengthen the ACT AOD sector and improve outcomes for people affected by alcohol and other drug harms. We will be working with members over the coming months to identify opportunities arising from the Budget to progress our shared priorities.