



ACT Government

HOUSING PEOPLE BUILDING COMMUNITIES

September 2004

HOUSING PEOPLE – BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Contents

Message from the Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services	ii
Executive Summary	iii
The Need for Affordable Housing in our Community	1
Government Housing Assistance.....	4
The Key Challenges.....	6
Challenge 1:Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing in the ACT	7
Challenge 2:Building a viable and sustainable social housing sector.....	9
Challenge 3:Improving client outcomes.....	14
Challenge 4:Reducing homelessness.....	20
Glossary & Acronyms	22

Message from the Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services



I have great pleasure in presenting *Housing People, Building Communities*. The release of this report is the culmination of the community, government and business working together for nearly three years to develop strategies to better provide for the housing needs of all Canberrans.

Since the handing down of the Report of the Government appointed Affordable Housing Taskforce in December 2002, we are in a stronger position to address the challenge of housing affordability.

This is a challenge, of course, faced by all Australian jurisdictions. While people have a right to safe, secure and affordable housing, at a national level there has been a failure — to varying extents — to secure this right for the homeless, families on low-incomes, people dependent on social housing and those striving to own a home.

In the ACT, we too have experienced declining levels of housing affordability, driven by a very tight rental market and record house prices. This has led to increased demand for public and community housing and affected our financial capacity to construct or purchase housing stock to meet this demand.

With the assistance of our community partners, we have developed significant initiatives to assist Canberrans in all forms of housing: home ownership, the private rental market, public and community housing, and those who are homeless.

These initiatives are detailed in this publication along with the issues we have still to confront.

I thank everyone who has participated in the development of the measures documented in this report and who have assisted the Government to determine its priorities and identify the challenges ahead.

There is, however, much more to be done if we are to achieve inclusiveness and meet the community's aspirations as expressed through The Canberra Plan.

Bill Wood MLA
Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services

Executive Summary

This report to the community, “*Housing People, Building Communities*” sets out the ACT Government’s commitment to addressing the challenges for a sustained and strengthened affordable and social housing sector. Stable, secure and affordable housing is central to the lives of all people. This report outlines the actions taken by Government to address both the challenges of a tighter housing market that the community currently faces, as well as the challenges that lie ahead.

However, housing options that are safe, secure, appropriate and affordable have diminished for many low and moderate income households in the public, community and private rental sectors, as well as for those wishing to enter the home ownership market. It has been estimated that:

- 8400 low income households experienced housing stress (2002 estimates); and
- around 1200 people are homeless – lacking secure permanent accommodation, with around 100 of them suffering primary homelessness and sleeping on the streets (2001 estimates).

Housing stress and homelessness are significant and complex issues requiring whole of government and community approaches. Whilst the Commonwealth Government holds key responsibilities, so too do State, Territory and local governments.

The challenges identified by the ACT Government are in four main areas:

- ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing in the ACT;
- building a viable and sustainable social housing sector;
- improving client outcomes; and
- reducing homelessness.

Whilst there are ongoing challenges, significant progress has been made in recent times through a strong Government-community partnership. Major achievements include:

Affordable Housing Achievements

- Established the Affordable Housing Taskforce with government, business and community stakeholders.
- Responded to the 2002 *Affordable Housing Taskforce Report* with a comprehensive range of measures to alleviate housing stress and improve housing affordability.
- New funding of:
 - \$6m over two years for community housing;
 - \$13.4m over four years for supported accommodation services;
 - \$33.2m capital funding for social housing;
 - \$20m over four years for affordable housing options; and
 - \$8.8m for the reconstruction of properties lost in the 2003 bushfires.
- Increased residential land supply and provided 500 housing sites specifically for affordable housing over the next five years.
- The *Rental Bonds Assistance Scheme* established and eligibility broadened.
- The *Home Buyer Concession Scheme* established and eligibility increased.
- The *Social Landlord Scheme* established.
- A commitment to invest in the general housing stock from the Home Loans Portfolio

Public and Community Housing Achievements

- The *Public Housing Asset Management Strategy* released.
- The quality and safety of public housing improved.
- The *Community Housing Policy Framework* released.
- The community housing sector expanded.
- *Community Housing Canberra* to be restructured.
- Improved the quality and safety of community housing.
- Improved procurement processes for acquiring new public housing.

Client Outcomes Achievements

- The Indigenous housing sector expanded.
- The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trilateral Agreement* signed.
- Short term housing options for students expanded.
- The number of properties for people with disabilities increased.
- The *Building for our Ageing Community Strategy* released.
- The number of properties for aged people increased.
- The Community Linkages Program expanded.
- A Tenant Participation Program pilot established.
- The Boarding House Program expanded.
- Broadened eligibility to the Public Housing Rental Assistance Program.
- Improved the engagement of the community in housing issues.

Homelessness Achievements

- The *ACT Homelessness Strategy* released.
- Supported accommodation for mothers and their babies, single men and young Indigenous women expanded.
- \$13.4m over four years for supported accommodation services.
- The Canberra Emergency Accommodation Service established.
- The Centacare Crisis Accommodation Service established.
- Diynamal Migay, the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SAAP funded service in the ACT, established.

Challenges Ahead

Whilst the ACT Housing Market is showing evidence of stabilizing there are many challenges ahead, including:

- Meeting the on-going commitment to modernize, improve and grow Public Housing and Community Housing.
- Creating opportunities for greater tenant participation and recognition
- Better meeting the complex needs of tenants and clients, particularly through the Community Linkages Program
- Reviewing the *Housing Assistance Act 1987* and associated programs to ensure it responds to the needs of tenants and the Government
- Improving the regulatory framework for community housing
- Implementing the Homelessness Strategy, including targeted programs in partnership with community organizations to address homelessness and associated support needs for individuals and families in need.

The Need for Affordable Housing in our Community

In August 2004 the ACT Government tabled in the Legislative Assembly a Progress Report on responses to *Strategies for Action*, the Final Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Affordable Housing.

The Progress Report represents the second response to the Taskforce since it reported in 2002. It represents a recognition by Government of the fundamental role of housing and of the social disparities which can emerge unless affordable housing is available to all.

The ACT Government has a commitment to understand and address need and disadvantage within our community, whilst at the same time providing a framework for sustainable economic growth, including importantly job growth.

The Government is well aware of the issue of disparity between high and low income Australians. Indeed this has been put quite starkly by social commentator, Hugh Mackay recently, saying that:

"We are in danger of swapping our long-held faith in egalitarianism for a tediously conventional three-class structure of social stratification based on nothing but money. While those at the top of the heap bray about economic growth and prosperity for all, the yawning gap between top and bottom continues to widen. Indeed, the growing disparity between our high- and low-income earners puts us among the least equitable countries in the OECD."

The Canberra Plan, which includes the Spatial Plan, Economic White Paper and Social Plan, is the centrepiece of the Government's efforts to articulate and communicate this direction.

The need for affordable housing as part of a housing system that delivers choice to the community is a feature throughout these documents, and indeed "housing a future Canberra" is a key outcome area of the Social Plan.

Housing is critically important for our overall economic and social well-being. It provides the basic foundation on which individuals and families build stable, healthy and productive lives linked to employment, education, health and other services. Safe, appropriate and affordable housing helps to provide dignity and the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging to a community. Without appropriate and affordable housing, communities are not sustainable.

Most importantly the Government recognises (to take a phrase from Bruce Wright) that public housing has been, and is a "Cornerstone of the Capital", indeed a cornerstone of our community. It provides the basic building block on which all Canberrans can reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of our community.

Inadequate affordable housing has far-reaching economic and social impacts for both the individual households affected, and the ACT community as a whole. Individual well-being is adversely affected as is the economic performance and well-being of the community as a whole. Our capacity to address social needs is reduced.

People on low incomes often struggle to access and stay in affordable housing, either because their incomes are low or appropriate housing is too expensive. Some households also have complex needs that require the effective integration of housing and support services.

"Housing a future Canberra" is a key outcome area of the Canberra Social Plan"

Inadequate affordable housing adversely affects our community

The ACT Housing System

Stable, secure and affordable housing is central to the lives of all people in our community. Without appropriate, accessible housing, we cannot fully participate in education, employment, social and recreational and other activities that support our individual development and general wellbeing, and that of our society.

The housing system has these four main parts: home ownership, private rental, public and community housing, and homelessness. The ACT Government considers that initiatives to improve the interaction between all four parts is critical to improving levels of affordability.

Some primary features that impact upon the ACT housing system include:

- a higher proportion of public housing in comparison with other jurisdictions;
- the highest average age of public housing stock in Australia;
- a low and declining supply of low-cost private rental housing;
- a slowing population growth rate;
- a trend towards smaller household units with more people living on their own;
- growth in the number of outright home owners;
- rising housing costs for both renters and home purchasers;
- a critical lack of exit points from crisis and emergency accommodation (SAAP) services; and
- increasing waiting times for public housing applicants with high needs.

8400 low income households in the ACT experience housing stress.

Housing affordability for home ownership in the ACT is the second lowest of all capital cities, and mortgage payments are now higher than in any other State or Territory except NSW. Rental costs are the highest of any capital city. In 2002, an estimated 8400 low-income households in the ACT were in housing stress, that is they were paying more than 30% of their income in housing costs. For over half of these households, housing costs amounted to more than 40% of their income.¹

Up to 1200 people in the ACT experience homelessness.

In 2001 it was estimated that about 1200 people were homeless – lacking secure permanent accommodation – on any given night, with around 100 of them suffering primary homelessness and sleeping on the streets.

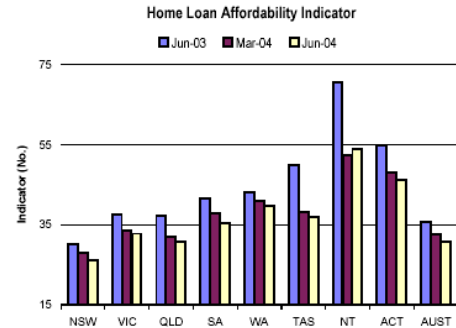
¹ 1999 National Housing Survey quoted in National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling – University of Canberra for the ACT Affordable Housing Taskforce, *Indicators of Housing Affordability in the ACT* (January 2003), p3

Home Ownership

Home ownership is the primary form of housing tenure in the ACT (68% of all households). Between 1986 and 2002, the percentage of people owning their homes outright almost doubled from 18% to 33%, and the share of home purchasers fell from 50% to 33%.

Home purchase affordability is declining

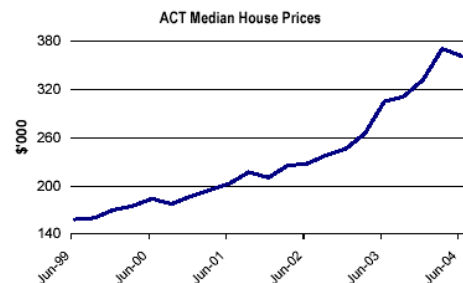
Housing affordability is declining. In June 2004, the ACT recorded the lowest level of home loan affordability ever. The AMP Banking/REIA Home Loan Affordability Indicator (HLAI) for the ACT fell 4% in the June quarter 2004 to 46.2. The HLAI for the ACT fell 15.8% over the year to the June quarter 2004.



Source: REIA

House prices have increased.

House prices have accelerated since the mid 1990s across Australia. In the ACT over the last five years, house prices have more than doubled. In 1998, the median house price was \$160,000. In June 2004 it was \$361,500.



Source: HLEIA

First Home Owner Grant (FHOG)

The Federal Government established grants to first home buyers on 1 July 2000 to compensate for the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax. The grant scheme is non-means tested and it is administered through state and territory governments.

In 2003-04, 1,519 households in the ACT received assistance under the First Home Owner Grant (FHOG), 85% of which were for established properties. Average property values ranged from \$301,000 in Belconnen to \$450,000 in South Canberra.

Private Rental Accommodation

Private rental housing represents about 19% of the total housing stock of the ACT. Between 1986 and 1996, the amount of private rental accommodation increased, but it has declined since then in both relative and absolute terms.

It accounts for 7% of all low-cost housing, compared with 20%-40% of low-cost housing in other capital cities.

Private rents are increasing

ACT rents are the highest in the country. The median rent for houses in the ACT rose 3.6% over the year to the June quarter 2004 to \$290 per week. The vacancy rate for all rented dwellings was 4.3% for the June quarter 2004. In 2002, around 2800 low-income households in the ACT in the private rental market were found to be in housing stress, that is their rental costs were more than 30% of their income.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is a non-taxable income supplement paid through Centrelink to individuals and families who rent in the private rental market. In June 2002, there were 7631 recipients of CRA in the ACT.

Rental Bonds Assistance

Private rent assistance is provided to low income households experiencing difficulty in securing or maintaining private rental accommodation. The ACT Government provides assistance under the *Rental Bonds Assistance Scheme*.

Government Housing Assistance

Social Housing Assistance is funded by the ACT and Australian Governments.

Social Housing Assistance

Social housing is affordable rental accommodation provided to people on low to moderate incomes or who have special needs. It includes public housing (delivered by Government) and community housing (delivered by community based agencies)

It contributes significantly to the needs of people who have difficulty accessing the private market for reasons of low and unpredictable income, disadvantage and disability. Today in an environment where there is the rapid escalation of house prices and rents, social housing is the only viable affordable housing option for an increasing number of people.

Social housing assistance is jointly funded by the ACT and Federal Governments through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA). The CSHA funds public housing, community housing and capital funding for crisis and transitional accommodation.

Private market assistance is funded by the Australian Government.

Private Market Assistance

Private market housing assistance is provided by the Federal Government through the Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) program and the First Home Owners Grant (FHOG). CRA is a non-taxable income supplement payable to recipients of some government benefits who pay rents above specified threshold levels in the private rental market. The FHOG is a non-means tested payment of \$7,000 payment to first home buyers.

Funding to address homelessness is through SAAP.

Other Forms of Assistance

The Federal and the ACT Governments also have the capacity to influence the supply of affordable housing through taxation, land and planning policies and programs.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is a jointly funded program supported by the ACT Government and the Federal Government that provides transitional support and accommodation to people who are homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Public Housing

In the ACT, public housing is delivered by Housing ACT in the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services. Income related rental caps ensure that the rent for tenants does not exceed 25% of household income.

Public Housing is provided by government

The *Housing Assistance Act 1987* provides the legislative framework for public housing assistance in the Territory. It establishes the statutory office of the Commissioner for Housing and specifies the Commissioner's functions and powers.

Public Housing in June 2004:

- 11,509 properties managed by Housing ACT, with an asset value of \$2.4 billion.
- Occupancy rate: 97%.
- In 2003-04, 807 new applicants were housed in public housing.
- 91% were allocated on a priority basis.
- 85% of public housing tenants received a rental rebate.

Community Housing is provided by community organisations

Community Housing

Community housing is long term, safe, secure, affordable and appropriate housing provided by not-for-profit community organisations which:

- encourages and maximises opportunities for tenants to assume control over their home and environment through participation in management;
- is flexible, responsive and respectful of individual rights; and
- contributes to the development of communities.

Community Housing is delivered by community based organisations. It includes boarding houses, specialist housing programs and housing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Community Housing in June 2004:

- 320 properties and 452 tenancies.
- Occupancy rate: 97%.
- In 2003-04: 156 new applicants housed in community housing.
- 98% of community housing tenants received rental subsidies.

SAAP assistance is provided by community organisations

Homelessness Supports and Services

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is a support program which provides operational funds to community organisations to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This includes people who are homeless because of domestic violence.

ACT SAAP agencies provide a range of support and accommodation services to young people, single men, single women, families including sole parents with accompanying children, women and/or children escaping domestic violence.

SAAP funds transitional supported accommodation and related services to assist people to achieve self-reliance and live independently. In addition to the support and assistance through housing and accommodation, other basic support is provided, such as showering, meals, general support and advocacy; financial and employment support; and specialist services. Referrals are also made to other services for specialist assistance, including for income support.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program in June 2004:

- Crisis and temporary accommodation for young people – 16 services.
- Refuges and outreach support services for women who are single or have children who are victims of domestic violence – 14 services.
- Crisis and temporary accommodation for men who are single or have children – five services.
- Crisis and temporary accommodation for families – six services.

The Key Challenges

There are four key challenges

The implications of a lack of affordable housing concerns all governments in Australia. It is part of the current national policy debate and research agenda which includes examining the size and role of social housing, considering the options to improve the availability of low-rent private dwellings to low-income households and the role that home ownership has in meeting the housing needs of all (not just those who can afford to buy). These key challenges are:

1. Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing in the ACT
2. Building a viable and sustainable social housing sector.
3. Improving client outcomes.
4. Reducing homelessness.

Challenges of housing stress and homelessness recognised in *The Canberra Plan*.

Homelessness is a significant community issue, including here in the ACT. The reasons for homelessness are often multiple and complex. They may be attributed to by factors such as relationship breakdown and family violence, drug and alcohol misuse and mental health issues. Structural factors can also lead to homelessness, for example, limited affordable housing, unemployment and poverty. There may also be factors attributable to system failure, such as inadequate provision of early intervention and support services.

Government responses to homelessness are therefore more complex than simply the provision of housing. They require a whole-of-Government and community approach which includes dealing with homelessness, public and community housing, private rental and home ownership in an integrated and coherent manner. The ACT Government recognises that housing stress and homelessness will be influenced by a number of actions taken locally as part of its social, economic and planning agendas that are the responsibility of a number of ACT agencies. Accordingly the challenges of housing affordability and homelessness are recognised and addressed as priority issues in the *Canberra Plan*.

The ACT Government considers that the absence of a national housing policy, integrated with the broader economic and social policy agenda, is the single most important impediment to understanding and dealing with issues of housing affordability. As the Commonwealth has a leading role in shaping the economic factors that affect the housing market, it should facilitate the preparation of such a national housing policy. The interaction between the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), the Commonwealth Rent Assistance Scheme (CRA), the provision of short-term accommodation (provided through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program), and taxation policy should all form part of that national policy.

How do we want our housing system to improve?

The Government is seeking:

- A stabilisation in real terms of building costs, house and land prices.
- An increased number of first home buyers entering the market.
- An easing of rental vacancy levels and availability of affordable rents for low cost housing.
- A reduction in primary homelessness with stronger early intervention / outreach services.
- A viable and sustainable social housing system – public, community, emergency accommodation and support services – that better meets the needs of clients
- Housing choice reflected in price, availability and type for all Canberrans.

Challenge 1: Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing in the ACT

Housing options that are safe, secure, appropriate and affordable have been diminishing for all low and moderate income households in the ACT in the public, community and private rental sectors.

The ACT's growing housing need was confirmed through the Report of the ACT Affordable Housing Taskforce, released in December 2002. The report showed that approximately 8% (9200) of all ACT households were experiencing housing stress affordability, spending over 30% of their income on housing. The report also identified that significant numbers of people were unable to access the private rental market because of affordability, discrimination, financial circumstances, or accrued housing debt.

In May 2003 and August 2004, the Government responded positively to the Report of the Affordable Housing Taskforce. A comprehensive range of initiatives to alleviate housing stress and improve housing affordability were announced in the 2003-04 and 2004-05 Budgets. An integrated approach has been adopted to ensure an ongoing priority is given to affordable housing. An interdepartmental committee (IDC) has been overseeing the implementation of these initiatives. The Committee is chaired by the Chief Executive of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, and includes representatives from ACT Treasury, the Chief Ministers Department, ACT Planning and Land Authority and the Land Development Agency.

New Funds for Affordable Housing

\$72.6m new funding

- In 2002-03 and 2003-04: an additional \$3m each year for the expansion of community housing.
- 2003-04 budget: \$13.4m over four years for further short-term supported accommodation for families and single men in services for homeless people, and to more effectively respond to issues of homelessness in the ACT.
- December 2003: an additional \$33.2m from the Home Loan Fund for social housing (public and community housing), this being the most significant injection of capital funding for social housing since self-government.
- May 2004: an additional \$20m over four years for affordable housing options.

Targeted Land Releases

Increased the supply of housing sites

Through the *Residential Land Supply Strategy 2004-05 to 2008-09*, the ACT Government is increasing the supply of land for residential development in Canberra. Approximately 2,100 sites are planned for release for sale in 2004-05, with a further 1000 dwelling sites expected to become available through redevelopment. This level of new sites exceeds the expected demand for new housing and so it is hoped this will stabilise land prices.

Secured 500 housing sites for affordable housing

Under the Government's *Land Supply Strategy 2004-05 to 2008-09*, up to 100 affordable greenfield sites in various estates throughout the ACT will be released by the Land Development Agency each financial year for the next five years. They will be sold through restricted ballot processes to moderate income earners seeking entry into home ownership and affordable housing providers (non-government organisations whose primary aim is to provide housing for low-income and special needs groups). Up to 60 blocks per year will be offered under similar conditions to Housing and Community Services ACT to provide public and community housing.

Established the Rental Bonds Assistance Scheme and increased eligibility to the scheme.

Rental Bonds Assistance Scheme

A Bond Loan Program (the Rental Bonds Housing Assistance Program - RBHAP) was introduced on 1 July 2003 with the principal objective of assisting eligible persons to meet the cost of entering into and sustaining private rental accommodation in Canberra. Eligible people, who are in housing need but who are able to sustain a private tenancy, are provided with an interest free loan for up to 80% of the bond required by private landlords upon signing a tenancy.

During 2003-04, RBHAP was amended to modestly increase the qualifying income, to ease the ACT residency criteria to include people who are enrolled to study in the ACT in addition to those who live or work in the Territory, and to make additional provisions to assist other disadvantaged groups such as Temporary Protection Visa holders to broaden the target group eligible for bond loan assistance.

66 bond loans were issued during 2003-04 totalling \$46,659, with the average loan being \$707. Three loans were fully repaid during the year.

Home Buyer Concession Scheme

Established the Home Buyer Concession Scheme and increased eligibility to the scheme.

The *Home Buyer Concession Scheme* (HBCS) provides stamp duty concessions to low and moderate income purchasers who do not already own a house or land. Eligibility is based upon a set of criteria including household income levels (adjusted for dependent children) and an upper limit on the purchase price of the property.

Reflecting increases in housing prices in the ACT, the 2003-04 and 2004-05 Budgets both broadened eligibility to the HBCS by increasing the property value and income thresholds. The lower property threshold (below which a full stamp duty concession is available) is now based on the bottom 25% of all sales and the upper threshold is based upon the bottom 65% of all sales. Both are updated every six months and at 1 July 2004 were \$273,000 and \$375,000 respectively. Between these thresholds a partial stamp duty concession has been available since 1 July 2004. At that date the income threshold was raised to \$100,000 with an additional allowance of \$3300 per dependent child, to a maximum of five. A full concession will then represent a saving of \$8,400.

In July and August 2004, almost 300 people applied for stamp duty concessions, with around \$1.3 million worth of concessions approved. This compares with less than 40 approvals for the previous two financial years.

Social Landlord Scheme

Established the Social Landlord Scheme.

Under the *Social Landlord Scheme*, announced in February 2004, the Government has provided funding to enable the leasing of properties from the private rental market to assist Canberrans in urgent need of accommodation. The scheme is a partnership between the Real Estate Institute of the ACT, real estate agents and the Havelock Housing Association. The properties will house homeless people, other people in urgent need of accommodation, and people on the public and community housing waiting lists.

Future Challenges

- Increasing affordable housing options in the ACT.
- Increasing the supply of affordable land.
- Identifying strategic sites and opportunities for development in partnership with the private sector.
- Investigation of other affordable housing options, such as shared equity and land rent schemes to encourage home ownership.
- Developing housing assistance options for low to moderate income families.
- Encouraging further debate about affordable housing at a local and national level.

Challenge 2: Building a viable and sustainable social housing sector

Public Housing Asset Management Strategy

The ACT's public housing stock is ageing, in need of repair and maintenance, and in many cases no longer meets the needs of some tenants and applicants. There is a low turnover of tenancies, so the shedding or redevelopment of older properties is a slow process.

There is a mismatch between the location of existing properties and the locational preferences of new applicants, an increasing demand for one or two bedroom dwellings (60% of applicants) and a decrease in demand for three bedroom and larger dwellings.

These issues are addressed through the *Public Housing Asset Management Strategy* 2003–08, and involve the sale, redevelopment and refurbishment of a large proportion of the property portfolio. The Strategy, released in November 2003, outlines the major responsibilities for asset management. Implementation takes account of the following key principles:

- To align the housing portfolio with changing social structures and tenant and prospective tenant needs, and respond to environmental standards particularly in the areas of energy and water efficiency;
- To protect the Territory's investment in its public housing assets, including management of the preventative and regular maintenance and upgrade programs;
- To provide sustainable tenancies and build stronger communities; and
- To pursue opportunities for better leverage of the asset base through private sector partnerships and using the value of the asset to assist in restructuring the portfolio.

Capital Works Program for Housing ACT

The total funds spent on the capital works program for Housing ACT was:

- 2001-02 \$35.2m
- 2002-03 \$60.2m
- 2003-04 \$86.6m
- 2004-05 \$74.2m (expected projection)

The capital program for 2003-04 for the acquisition and/or construction of dwellings was the largest to date, with outlays of \$86.580m. This was 44% higher than the program for 2002-03 and 146% higher than the 2001/02 program. The increased size of the program was largely the result of the Government providing additional funding to address homelessness and housing affordability through expanding the supply of public and community housing and to replace the rural properties lost in the January 2003 bushfire.

About \$28.3m was spent for these purposes during 2003-04, of which some \$22.7m was from additional funding by the Government. The Government provided capital injections of \$2.964m for replacing the rural properties and \$33.200m for expanding the supply of public and community housing, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing. Of this money \$20m was to expand the supply of public housing, with expenditure of \$17.4m to acquire 55 properties occurring during 2003-04. The balance will be spent early in 2004-05.

Included in the \$33.2m initiative was \$3.2m for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing needs identified in *Breaking the Cycle - the ACT Homelessness Strategy*, including a boarding house. A further \$7m was for expansion of community housing

Released the
Public Housing
Asset
Management
Strategy

Improved the
quality and
safety of public
housing

through the acquisition of houses for leasing to community organisations under the Community Organisation Rental Housing Assistance Program (CORHAP). Expenditure to acquire these properties is scheduled for 2004-05.

The main source of funding for the capital program was the sale of 126 properties, which yielded \$42.463m. The sales included 77 sold at auction and 49 sold to tenants. A further 7 properties were demolished and 4 were transferred to Community Housing Canberra Limited as replacements for their holdings in the Currong Apartments which is being de-commissioned (see below).

Under the program, 264 units were acquired during the year, of which 23 units were constructed and 237 units were purchased on the market. 4 units were returned from Community Housing Canberra Limited in exchange for the 4 units transferred to them during the year. Included in the properties acquired were 24 units suitable for older persons and 8 properties for people with special needs.

The value of work committed but not completed by 30 June 2004 was \$58.74m and included 54 units under construction and 55 properties that were acquired but had not settled by 30 June 2004.

The total number of dwellings at 30 June 2004 was 11,509, which is an increase of 127 for the year, including 51 properties acquired to replace those lost in the January 2003 bushfire.

The decommissioning of the Currong Apartments (212 units) was announced by the Minister in October 2003. All but 78 tenants were relocated by 30 June 2004, and final decommissioning will be completed by December 2004. Ten flats in northern Canberra were acquired as part of the 2003-04 capital program to house those tenants exiting Currong. Other units currently under construction and being acquired from a builder in Braddon and Turner may also be used to house tenants from Currong.

The Government has also announced its intention to redevelop part of the former Burnie Court site in Lyons, Currong Apartments in Braddon and Fraser Court in Kingston as joint ventures with the private sector to include a mix of public, private and affordable housing.

The fire safety works at the multi unit properties resumed following a review that generally allowed the retention of security screen doors. Most properties will be able to have upgraded security screen doors installed as part of the works. \$4.244m has now been spent on the fire safety program.

The first adaptable display home constructed in partnership with the Master Builders Association of the ACT was built in a display village in Lovely Close Dunlop. The partnership promotes the concept of adaptable and accessible housing. There has been considerable interest in the property from the general public and work is proceeding to identify and plan a second property in a new display village.

Response to the 2003 Bushfires

In 2003, the Government provided \$8.8m for the reconstruction of 81 Housing ACT properties lost in the January 2003 bushfires (69 have been replaced so far). Housing ACT played a significant role in the direct response and longer-term recovery actions to the community members affected by the January 2003 bushfires. This included:

- providing emergency accommodation assistance for both public housing tenants and private owners and renters affected by the bushfire;
- providing \$250 each to more than 120 ACT Housing tenants whose properties were damaged but not destroyed in the January 2003 bushfires, and \$5000 or \$10,000 to tenants whose properties were completely destroyed;

\$8.8 million for the reconstruction of properties lost in the bushfires

- staffing the four evacuation centres to provide emergency accommodation assistance;
- staffing the Recovery Centre to provide accommodation assistance and advice to the community members affected by the bushfire;
- establishing a project team to deal with ongoing tenancy and repairs and maintenance issues for those clients rehoused and in damaged properties.

In July 2004 the redevelopment of rural villages burnt out by the bushfires at Uriarra, Stromlo and Pierces Creek was announced. The redevelopment will include public housing, and former public housing tenants will offered properties in the new villages.

Improved Procurement for Housing ACT

For a number of reasons the current panel for pre-qualified home builders does not necessarily provide 'value-for-money' when compared with going to the open market. This is especially the case when a significant proportion of suppliers in a market choose not to pre-qualify.

The replacement of Housing ACT properties lost in the bushfires demonstrated in a very practical way, from a cost, timeliness and achievement of required outcomes perspective, that going to the open market produced a better result when compared to utilising the pre-qualified panel to tender. This is demonstrated by prices offered by prequalified builders who responded to the open process being competitive with those of the successful non-prequalified builders, indicating that more competition forced prices down from levels for building projects for Housing ACT recently tendered by these builders under the prequalification panel process. Using the prequalified panel would have added roughly 30-40% to the cost of construction.

Housing ACT, consistent with procurement best value-for-money guidelines, intends going to the open market for the construction of stand-alone public housing dwellings.

Use of Funding from The ACT Home Loans Portfolio

A financial assessment by KPMG of the ACT Home Loans formed the basis of a withdrawal of \$33.2 million for a capital injection for public and community housing, announced by the Chief Minister late last year. In line with the KPMG recommendation that the performance of the Home Loan Portfolio be monitored closely, the Government is proposing the Home Loan Portfolio be reviewed biannually and the availability of equity funds for distribution be assessed.

Depending on the level of interest rates and the risks associated with the portfolio being appropriately managed there is potentially between \$2-5 million available annually for social housing purposes. This gives greater flexibility in the source of capital funds available for social housing, and will provide the opportunity for injections into rejuvenating and building our social housing stock.

Community Housing Policy Framework

The *Community Housing Policy Framework* (May 2003) provides a strategic policy document for the expansion of community housing in the ACT. It:

- outlines policy directions for the expansion of the community housing sector;
- provides a strategic context for the development of a Community Housing Plan, in consultation with the sector; and
- ensures that community housing strategies agreed in other forums, including the bilateral agreement for the Commonwealth-State Housing Bilateral Agreement 2003- 08, are aligned with Government policy.

The Framework is based on a collaborative approach between Government and the community sector for developing strategies for community housing in the ACT. It is a

Housing ACT, intends going to the open market for the construction of stand-alone public housing dwellings.

More flexibility in the source of capital funds available for social housing

Released the Community Housing Policy Framework

precursor to a broader Community Housing Plan, which will clearly state the Government's position on community housing, and take into account possible delivery mechanisms and models within the broader social housing system.

In addition, a pilot accreditation system based on the National Community Housing Standards was successfully completed by Havelock Housing Association. This pilot will form the basis of future discussions with the community housing sector around their training, service delivery and developmental needs.

Expansion of Community Housing

The following funding was provided to community housing organisations as part of the 2002-03 Budget

- Canberra Co-Housing – \$620,000 to build six dwellings;
- Billabong Aboriginal Corporation – \$430,000 to purchase two homes for Indigenous families;
- Community Housing Canberra – \$674,000 for a four-bedroom Group House project, and four one-bedroom units under the Big House Project;
- Abbeyfield Disability – \$1.1m for 10 units for people with a disability;
- Tamil Senior Citizens Association – \$400,000 to build four dwellings; and
- Poachling Incorporated – \$114,850 for the construction of three yurts.

The following funding has been provided to community housing organisations as part of the 2003-04 Budget

- Centacare – \$957,400 to purchase five one and two bedroom properties for people with disabilities;
- Billabong Aboriginal Corporation – \$400,000 to purchase one house to accommodate an Indigenous family, and to finalise the purchase of another property;
- Havelock Housing Association with the AIDS Action Council – \$815,000 to purchase two properties, both with self-contained flats (four dwellings in total), for supportive accommodation for people living with HIV Aids;
- Havelock Housing Association with Anglicare (Canberra and Goulburn) – \$815,000 for the purchase of two properties, both with self-contained flats (four dwellings in total), designed to provide longer-term options for homeless people.

Community Housing Canberra

In November 2003, the ACT Government announced the restructure of Community Housing Canberra Ltd (CHC) following a review undertaken earlier in the year. The review Steering Committee's recommendations were accepted, with the Government agreeing to begin implementing the following actions

- making the Territory a member of the company with special rights that enable it to protect the public interest in the assets invested in the company;
- revising the objectives of the company to strengthen the focus on providing community housing for low income households and alleviating poverty;
- requiring certain skills and experience for the Directors of the Board;
- requiring CHC to produce a business plan for all of its activities; and
- placing limitations on the company's borrowings from private financial institutions, participation in joint ventures and any disposal of assets without the approval of the Territory.

As part of the proposed restructure (which is expected to be completed in the second half of 2004), the title to 153 properties will be transferred to CHC. This approach for expanding the stock of community housing is consistent with the Government's policy directions in the Community Housing Framework.

Expanded
community
housing sector

Announced the
restructure of
Community
Housing
Canberra

Ainslie Village

Ainslie Village provides long term, crisis and transitional supported accommodation for single men and women aged over 18 years of age who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

A report on Ainslie Village was completed in March 2002, and recommended: changes to support arrangements, improvements to fire safety and building standards, and also proposed a range of accommodation options for the site. The 2002-03 Budget provided \$1.4m over four years (\$500,000 each in 2002-03 and 2003-04 and \$200,000 each in 2004-05 and 2005-06) to address the issues identified in the report

The Department established an Implementation Committee at Ainslie Village, in partnership with ACT Shelter, Centacare and Ainslie Village residents, to oversee the implementation of important improvements to the support and housing arrangements at Ainslie Village, as well as the physical buildings and site. As part of these arrangements funding was provided to the Coalition of Community Housing Organisations of the ACT for a Community Housing Worker to work with residents of Ainslie Village and the Housing Working Group to examine long-term community housing options. Fire safety work and landscaping were undertaken during the year, repair works for accommodation were commenced and additional work scoped for completion later in 2004.

Future Challenges

- Improving the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the public housing sector.
- Expanding community housing and other affordable housing options in the ACT.
- Building the capacity of the community housing sector and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing sector.
- Investigating private sector and community partnerships to modernise the asset base.

Challenge 3: Improving client outcomes

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

\$1.4 million over 4 years for Indigenous housing

In the 2002-03 ACT Budget, the Government committed \$1.4m over four years to develop and implement strategies to increase community housing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and for community-capacity building. Funding was provided to Billabong Aboriginal Corporation and Havelock Housing Association for capacity-building and training initiatives.

Supported accommodation for young Indigenous women

In December 2003, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service opened Diyramal Migay, the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SAAP funded service in the ACT. It provides supported accommodation for six young Indigenous women aged 12-17 years. The service is funded by the ACT Government and Aboriginal Hostels Limited.

Expanded housing options for Indigenous people

In 2000-01 ACT Housing established and transferred six properties to Billabong Aboriginal Corporation to increase housing options for Indigenous people in the ACT. In 2003-04, \$400,000 was provided to the Corporation to purchase one house to accommodate an Indigenous family, and to finalise the purchase of another property.

Partnership to expand of Indigenous housing sector

In February 2004, a joint initiative was announced between the ACT Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS) to expand the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community housing sector in the ACT. ATSIS contributed \$399,000 and the ACT Government \$471,000.

Signed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trilateral Agreement

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trilateral Agreement between the ACT Government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the Commonwealth Government was formally signed in July 2002. Through the multilateral CSHA agreement, CSHA Annual Indigenous housing plans will be based on Building a Better Future: Indigenous Housing to 2010.

Established the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Committee

In 2003, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Committee was established to advise the ACT Government on how to better meet the housing needs of Indigenous people. The Committee will develop a comprehensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing program and will assist in the identification of funding priorities for 2004 and 2005. It has already considered the recommendations of a Viability Study into housing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Students

Expanded housing options for students on a short term basis

In February 2004, the ACT Government announced that following discussions with tertiary institutions and other interested parties, students would be able to rent vacant units at the Currong Apartments in Braddon. The decision was made in response to the current student accommodation shortage, with students to be tenanted on the understanding that the building is being decommissioned as public housing and the units must be vacated at the end of the 2004 academic year.

23 units were provided to students under this arrangement.

Expanded the number of houses for people with disabilities.

People with Disabilities

In 2000-01 the ACT Government opened new units at the City Edge ACT Housing complex in O'Connor, specifically designed for people with severe disabilities.

In 2002-03, funding was provided for a new Accessible and Adaptable Design Service, Access/Adapt, to promote adaptable and accessible housing in the ACT.

In November 2003, a partnership was formed between the ACT Government and the Master Builders Association of the ACT (MBA), with the Government loaning \$500,000 to the MBA to build a number of accessible or adaptable homes in display villages around Canberra over the next 10 years. The funds will be repaid on the sale of the final home, with any surplus from profits to be equally shared between Housing ACT and the MBA. In March 2004, the first of a number of adaptable/accessible homes to be built by the Master Builders Association (MBA) was opened in Lovely Place, Dunlop.

In 2002-03, \$1.1m was provided through the community housing program to Abbeyfield Disability, for 10 units for people with a disability

In 2003-04, \$957,400 was provided through the community housing program to Centacare for the purchase of five one and two bedroom properties for people with disabilities.

Aged People

Released the Building for our Ageing Community Strategy.

In December 2003, the ACT Government released the *Building for our Ageing Community Strategy*. The strategy contains a broad range of measures aimed at increasing the level of aged care accommodation in the ACT including:

- a specific rolling program, or land bank, of aged persons' accommodation development sites, of which several sites have already been identified for release;
- support and guidance for proponents of aged care accommodation to ensure they can successfully navigate the planning and development process;
- strong case management to simplify the process to reduce unnecessary delays in the planning process for aged projects; and
- a focus on developing a more proactive relationship with the Commonwealth so that their allocations meet the needs of the ACT community and so that the Territory can ensure that land, planning and bed allocation processes are streamlined.

The strategy targets the full range of accommodation for older people, from high and low care accommodation usually referred to as nursing homes and hostel accommodation, to independent living units. The strategy is designed to streamline the approval process for developers wishing to build aged care housing in the ACT.

This strategy has already yielded the following initiatives:

- a "land bank" of sites which will enable the development for 400 new, high and low care beds and 600 Independent Living Units in the future;
- the services of a case manager in the Chief Minister's Department to assist aged care providers with development proposals; and
- the provision of almost \$4million in concessions to a number of service providers to assist in developing their accommodation projects/

Expanded the number of houses for aged people

Other specific affordable housing initiatives for aged people on low incomes have included:

- Ten new older persons units in Ainslie open in 2000-01. The \$1.3m development was designed specifically to make life easier and safer for older tenants.
- Three new award-winning adaptable housing units specially designed for older people at Downer. The units, built by Sutton and Horsley Projects for Housing ACT, won the 2003 HIA ACT and Southern NSW Housing Award, Special Purpose Housing Project of the Year, and were opened in November 2003.
- Two additional sites for aged care facilities on Canberra's north and south sides.
- A multi million-dollar tender to build 24 older persons units on the site of the old Burnie Court in Lyons announced with construction is expected to be completed late this year or early in 2005.
- The construction of an 18 older person's apartments in David Street, Turner, at a cost of \$3.9m which was announced.
- 1395 units with accessible features suitable for people with reduced mobility that Housing ACT has acquired over the last 5 years.

The Community Linkages Program

Established the community linkages program.

The Community Linkages Program provides approximately \$2m over four years to achieve safer living environments, more sustainable tenancies and to enhance social interaction between tenants and the wider community

In 2003-04, thirty projects were funded under the program ranging from a horticultural project (community gardens) through to a playgroup.

Coordinated activities have included art and craft classes for women, community room activities, food events and workshops. Tenants also have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in areas such as financial management, nutrition, furniture restoration, music and art.

These projects have resulted in:

- improved relations between Housing ACT staff and tenants;
- early intervention to prevent issues escalating to an extent that would result in eviction, through the Prevention of Eviction Program; and
- ability to sustain tenancies at risk due to improved social connectivity and support for tenants within their immediate environment and the community.

In its 2004-05 Budget, the Government was pleased to announce the continuation of this highly successful program through recurrent annual funding of \$550,000 (indexed). This will enable the program to continue from 1 July 2005.

Tenant Participation Program

Established the tenants participation program.

In December 2003, Government provided non-recurrent funding of \$85,000 for a joint program between ACT Shelter, the Tenants Union and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services to develop a tenant participation program. The aims of the program are to:

- encourage tenant participation in policy and decision making;
- engage tenants in a partnership with the department;
- improve service delivery and increase client satisfaction;
- reduce anti-social behaviour and address emerging problems at flat complexes; and
- improve media and public perception of Housing Act's management of major flat complexes.

Established the boarding house program

While Housing ACT is at the early stages of its project on Tenant Participation, it is working to ensure that when the project is finalised, operations are set up to ensure that tenant participation is a fundamental element of how it delivers housing services.

The Boarding House Program

The Boarding House Program is a \$5m initiative to give single people with low incomes an additional option for public or community housing. It includes more intensive tenancy management than public and community housing and incorporates outreach support. It particularly supports people on low incomes between transitional accommodation services and entirely independent living.

Betty Searle House, which provides supportive accommodation for eight older women, commenced operations with the housing management and support services being provided by Toora Women's Inc, and Havelock Housing Association, following an open tender process.

The first of the boarding house pilot projects, the supportive accommodation for up to six young people managed by Lowanna Young Women's Service, was evaluated. The evaluation confirmed that the Boarding House Program has provided successful housing outcomes for vulnerable young people. The outcomes of the evaluation will inform the next supportive housing development in Gungahlin.

Planning approval was obtained for the third boarding house for up to 20 single people in Gungahlin, and tenders for construction were sought in May 2004. A tender process to confirm the successful construction company was undertaken between May and July 2004. Construction is to be completed by early 2005.

Improved access to public housing

In December 2002 the ACT Government restored security of tenure for public housing tenants, which had been removed by the previous Government.

In June 2003 the ACT Government amended the Public Rental Housing Assistance Program (PRHAP) to:

- allow a housing applicant's effective registration date to be changed where their priority category is upgraded;
- permit the Commissioner of Housing to determine that a housing applicant living outside the ACT remains eligible for assistance when they lose their employment in the ACT, provided they regain employment in or move to, the ACT within three months;
- make specific program provision to defer the allocation of priority assistance to applicants with only short-term residence in the ACT; and
- clarify and expand the program provisions relating to the order in which housing assistance is provided to eligible applicants.

Further reforms were made to PRHAP in November 2003 to address problems identified by the Homelessness Advisory Group. The reforms included:

- reducing the minimum rent from \$20 to \$5 per week;
- abolishing the requirement for people participating in residential rehabilitation programs for alcohol and other drugs, and mental illness, to pay 25% of their income in rent for their public housing dwelling (they will pay the minimum \$5 per week rent);
- removing the barrier that made Temporary Protection Visa holders technically ineligible for public housing;
- removing the requirement for tenants to pay two weeks rent in advance at the time of entering public housing; and

Broadened eligibility of Public Housing Rental Assistance Program

- allowing the Commissioner for Housing to exercise discretion in removing public housing debt as a barrier to re-entry into public housing for people escaping domestic violence.

Improving Tenancy Legislation

The Government has recently passed amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 which recognise and provide protection to boarders and lodgers. The amendments also modernise agreements for all tenants by removing unnecessary paperwork and improving the function of the Residential Tenancies Tribunal.

The Government will improve on recent improvements to the Public Rental Housing Assistance Program (PRHAP), by reviewing the Housing Assistance Act 1987 and associated programs to ensure it responds to the needs of tenants and the Government. It is clear that PRHAP, the program that controls the overall allocation of public housing, requires review to identify areas for improvement. This will be undertaken in conjunction with the community.

Community Engagement in Housing Issues

In February 2002 the Government formed an Affordable Housing Taskforce, comprising representatives from the community, business and Government. The Taskforce consulted broadly with the community, and held a number of meetings and seminars, before reporting in December 2002.

The Government also re-established the Housing Advisory Committee to provide independent advice and consultation to the Minister on strategic issues of national and local significance. It has met regularly since 2002 and has consulted the community on housing affordability, and more specifically on the Report of the Affordable Housing Taskforce.

A range of other forums have also facilitated community engagement, including:

- The Trilateral Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Steering Committee established under the CSHA, which helps identify strategies and housing priorities and advise on will substantially inform the Government's strategy for the direction. As such it will be instrumental in the development of a comprehensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing program.
- The ACT Homelessness Advisory Group, comprising representatives from across ACT Government and community service agencies, independent community representatives and people from the general community, met between 2002 and 2004 to develop the ACT Homelessness Strategy.
- Extensive consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, ATSIC and the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in Chief Minister's Department occurred over a viability study on options to progress an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled housing organisation in the ACT.
- Various Indigenous Housing Forums have been held to highlight the importance of gaining access to and maintaining appropriate, safe and affordable housing for the Indigenous communities.
- Between December 2002 to January 2003 a draft Community Housing Framework was distributed to community housing organisations, Housing Advisory Committee and participants in consultation process conducted in 2001-02. The consultations developed agreed principles and objectives for the community housing framework.

Improved the engagement of the community in housing issues

- In December 2002 a forum was held with Senior Centrelink officers, the regional community development officer an social worker and SAAP providers. The consultations improved understanding of the role of each sector and strategies to improve outcomes for mutual clients.
- In February 2003, a series of forums were held with Youth SAAP/Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service on addressing Complex Needs for the purpose of informing a work plan of actions to support Youth SAAP providers to respond to complexity.
- In April and May 2003, two forums were held with representatives from disability, housing and community service providers regarding contractual performance measures. The consultations informed the development of specific performance measures agreed for inclusion in purchase agreements.
- In May 2003, a consultation was held with people from ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and services to build support and involvement from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the Homelessness Strategy. The consultations developed a broader understanding of the process of developing the strategy and identified working group members.
- Consultation on the development of new rental bonds program and Amendment of the Public Rental Housing Assistance Program was conducted with the Housing Advisory Committee, Welfare Rights and Legal Centre, Real Estate Institute of the ACT. Views of groups taken into account in finalising proposals.

Future Challenges

- Ensuring housing assistance is responsive to the specific housing needs of target groups, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, aged people, disabled people and students.
- Expanding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community housing sector.
- Improving and integrating service delivery so that clients receive better, equitable access to housing.
- Facilitating and increasing tenant participation.
- Developing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Trilateral Agreement for the provision of housing assistance that addresses socio-economic disadvantage.
- Ensuring rent policies and location of social housing supports access to employment.
- Evaluating the Community Linkages Program to identify the most effective models for engaging public and community housing tenants, and achieving the program objectives of enhanced community engagement and resilience. This will commence in August 2004 and will inform the allocation of the funding into the future.

Challenge 4: Reducing homelessness.

The ACT Homelessness Strategy

Released the ACT Homelessness Strategy

In April 2004, the ACT Government released the ACT Homelessness Strategy “*Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness*”.

The strategy provides a blueprint for a fully integrated response to homelessness, and follows extensive consultation between government agencies, services providers, homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. *Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness* outlines provision for more accommodation options, more outreach options and support services tailored to people’s specific requirements and targets the causes and effects of homelessness.

\$13.4 m over 4 years to address homelessness.

Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness is underpinned by an additional \$13.4m over four years. In November 2003, the first specific allocations from these monies were announced, as follows:

Allocated funding to services for couples, families and single men.

- Canberra Emergency Accommodation Service – \$265,000 to provide overnight and short term accommodation for people experiencing a housing crisis, including the provision of on-site vans and motel rooms; and \$158 000 to assist couples access short and long-term accommodation.
- \$80,000 for enhanced outreach services to support people recently homeless, or coming out of a crisis service, as they settle into a long-term home.
- \$70,000 for a service for single men exiting the criminal justice system;
- \$150,000 for a single men’s service; and
- \$750,000 for five services for homeless families (\$150,000 each), including services for women with accompanying children.

New supported accommodation for mothers and their babies

In 2003, \$50,000 was provided to for Karinya House to provide Erin House, a short to medium term accommodation service assisting up to three mothers and their babies for up to 12 months.

New crisis accommodation for single men.

In November 2003, a new service for homeless men at the Ainslie Village was launched. The Centacare Crisis Accommodation Service provides supported accommodation for up to seven single men experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.

In December 2003, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service opened Diynamal Migay – the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SAAP funded service in the ACT and will provide supported accommodation for six young Indigenous women aged 12-17 years. The service is funded by the ACT Government and Aboriginal Hostels Limited.

New supported accommodation for young Indigenous women

In 2004 the ACT Government tendered for the following services to be funded over four years:

- the resourcing and development of crisis services, such as refuges (\$248,000 in 2003-04, \$.85m over four years);
- outreach services (\$191,000 in 2003-04, \$1.57m over four years), including an additional outreach service to provide support to women as they transition from homelessness;
- additional support for people in refuges, and for those leaving refuges to maintain new tenancies (\$320,000 in 2003-04, \$652,000 over four years);
- research on appropriate services for homeless youth (\$20,000 in 2003-04, \$80,000 over four years);
- accommodation for families (\$250,000 in 2003-04, \$6.57m over four years);
- accommodation for single men with complex needs (\$1m over four years);
- accommodation for men leaving the justice system (\$169,000 in 2003-04,

\$575,000 over four years).

Future Challenges

- Delivering the Homelessness Strategy initiatives through expanded supported accommodation, support services and outreach services.
 - Ensuring an agreed integrated approach to homelessness between government and the community sector in terms of policy, funding and operational requirements.
 - Ensuring the rights of people who are homeless are recognised and respected and that mechanisms are established to ensure these rights are realised.
 - Improving access to appropriate housing and housing assistance
 - Supporting and driving innovation and excellence
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<h2>Glossary & Acronyms</h2>	
ACTPLA	ACT Planning and Land Authority.
Affordable Housing Taskforce	A Taskforce established by the Government to investigate affordable housing issues in the ACT and provide recommendations. The Affordable Housing Taskforce Report was handed to the ACT Government in December 2002.
Affordable Housing	For the purposes of its work, the Affordable Housing Taskforce defined people as needing affordable housing if they are in the lowest 40 % of income earners in Australia, and pay <u>more than</u> 30 % of their income in rent or mortgage repayments.
ARHP	Aboriginal Rental Housing Program.
CAP	Crisis Accommodation Program.
CCHOACT	Coalition of Community Housing Organisations of the ACT.
CHC	Community Housing Canberra.
CMD”	Chief Minister’s Department (ACT).
CORHAP	Community Organisation Rental Housing Assistance Program.
CSHA	Commonwealth State Housing Agreement.
DHCS	Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (ACT).
FaCS	Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services.
PRHAP	Public Rental Housing Assistance Program.
RA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance.
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

Further Information

Housing People Building Communities, and the reports and responses referred to in this document are available from the Department's website at www.dhcs.act.gov.au, by calling 02 6205 0250 or by emailing DHCS.Media@act.gov.au.

 <p>dhcs ACT department of disability, housing & community services</p>	<p>Authorised by Sandra Lambert, Chief Executive, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, 12 Moore Street Canberra City ACT 2601</p>
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