

Document Category: Ministerial Briefs

Title of document: Chief Minister Question Time Briefs February 2021

Description of the information:

These Question Time Briefs contain some information the release of which would be contrary to the public interest. This information includes details of commercial in confidence arrangements between the ACT Government and the sporting organisations. This information is not available for the reasons outlined below.

Decision

I have decided to redact some of the information contained in these Question Time Briefs. This decision has been made under sections 24(2)(b) and (c) of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016 (FOI Act)* on the basis that it is contrary to the public interest to disclose.

Statement of reasons

In reaching my access decision, I have taken the FOI Act into account:

Sections 24(2)(b) and (c) allow for the Decision to be withheld on the basis that:

- the disclosure would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest under the test set out in section 17.

Public Interest Test – Section 17

The FOI Act has a presumption in favour of disclosure. As a decision maker I am required to decide where, on balance, public interest lies. As part of this process, I must consider factors favouring disclosure and nondisclosure.

Section 17(1) of the Act sets out the test, to be applied to determine whether disclosure of information would be contrary to the public interest. These factors are found in subsection 17(2) and schedule 2 of the Act.

Factors favouring disclosure (Schedule 2 section 2.1)

Taking into consideration the information contained in the Question Time Briefs, I have identified that the following public interest factors in favour of disclosure are relevant to determine if release of the information is within the ‘public interest’:

(a) disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to do the following:

(i) promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government’s accountability.

(ii) contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest.

I consider that release of the Question Time Briefs may contribute to open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government’s accountability and contribute to informed debate on matters of public interest. I consider there is a public interest in the subject of these briefs, and I am satisfied that its release would increase transparency and accountability of the government.

Factors favouring non-disclosure (Schedule 2 section 2.2)

As required in the public interest test set out in section 17 of the Act, I have also identified the following public interest factors in favour of nondisclosure that I believe are relevant to determine if release of the information is within the 'public interest':

(a) *disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to do any of the following:*

(xi) *prejudice trade secrets, business affairs or research of an agency or person.*

Having reviewed the Question Time Briefs and noting the matters that are covered, I am satisfied that the release of the redacted information relating to the sporting organisations could reasonably be expected to prejudice the business affairs of the organisations. This factor carries significant weight when considered against the factors in favour of disclosure.

Having applied the test outlined in sections 17 of the Act, I have decided to release the Question Time Briefs with some information relating to the business affairs of the organisations redacted. On balance, the majority of the information in the Question Time Briefs should be released, however I consider the information on the specific business affairs of each sporting organisation is contrary to the public interest information.

Authorised By:



Heather Johnston
Information Officer

3 March 2026

Chief Minister
Question Time Briefs
February 2021

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1	4	Return of International Students to Canberra	Full	n/a
2	6	Strategic Infrastructure Projects (UNSW and AIE) – Talking Points	Full	n/a
3	10	Priority Investment Program	Full	n/a
4	13	Elite Sport Performance Fee Agreements	Partial	Sch2.2(a)(xi)
5	17	Major ACT Government Events During Autumn 2021	Full	n/a
6	19	2020-21 Budget	Full	n/a
7	23	2020-21 Infrastructure Investment Program	Full	n/a
8	25	COVID Pandemic – Economic Survival Measure Applications	Full	n/a
9	33	Economic Outlook	Full	n/a
10	38	Revenue Outlook	Full	n/a
11	41	Rates Relief	Full	n/a
12	43	Commercial Rates Assistance	Full	n/a
13	46	ACT Public Service Professional Standards Unit – Investigation Timeframes	Full	n/a
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This information is released under Section 23(a)(i) of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* which requires the release of specified documents over five years old. Due to the age of the information being released it may not reflect current legislation or Government policy and phone numbers and webpages mentioned may not still be current.

CM2021/675

Portfolio/s: Chief Minister

Economic Development

Return of International Students to Canberra

Talking points:

- The ACT Government remains committed to the return of international students when it is safe to do so.
- Canberra based universities are estimating there are a maximum 5,300 international students offshore seeking to return or commence studies in Canberra in 2021.
- Many students are continuing their enrolment and remaining engaged with their studies online, until they are able to return in person. Applications and acceptance numbers over the summer period were reported slightly higher than previous years.
- The Australian National University and the University of Canberra are developing a proposal for the return of international students.
- The ACT Government is working closely with the Australian Government in order to ensure that any proposal is consistent with the agreed protocols and the national objectives to return Australians from overseas.

Key Information

- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, international education was Canberra's largest export, valued at \$1 billion by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2019.
- The ACT's Student Return Plan is currently being developed by ANU and UC.
- If the ACT's Student Return Plan is agreed by the ACT Government and the Australian Government, returns will begin with pilot flights to test the overall reliability of the arrangements. The pilot flights will be evaluated and if appropriate, could gradually give way to the broader return of international students.

Background Information

- Then federal Minister for Education, Dan Tehan, wrote to states and territories on 6 November 2020 to provide the Commonwealth Government with plans for the return of international students by 30 November 2020.
- However, on 13 November 2020, the Prime Minister indicated that only student pilots would be permitted to proceed, while the Government prioritised the return of Australian citizens and permanent residents.
- You wrote to the Prime Minister on 9 December 2020 proposing a pathway that would allow for the return of international students alongside the return of Australian residents. The Prime Minister replied to your letter later that month

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Cleared for public release by: Deputy Director-General
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Lead Directorate: Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development
TRIM Ref: CM21/4243

QUESTION TIME BRIEF

advising that returning Australians remains the priority, with international student returns scheduled for discussion at National Cabinet in February 2021.

- Federal Education Minister Tudge has also indicated in recent media that the vaccines will be an important factor and consideration in return efforts.

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CM2021/675

Portfolio/s: Economic Development

Strategic Infrastructure Projects (UNSW and AIE) - Talking points:

University of New South Wales Canberra City Campus

- On 5 March 2020, the ACT Government and UNSW announced the establishment of the new UNSW Canberra City Campus on the existing Parkes carpark on Constitution Avenue and on the adjacent Reid CIT Campus site.
- UNSW will establish a world-class research, education and innovation campus over a 15 year period, facilitating innovation and growth in the defence and security industries. The Campus will provide critical stimulus activity during construction and beyond, in support of our economy's recovery from the impacts of COVID-19.
- This new campus is expected to generate 2,000 jobs; attract 6,000 local, national and international students to the Territory; and bring up to \$3 billion in economic benefit for the ACT economy.
- The ACT Government will maintain oversight and approval of the project under a Precinct Deed with UNSW.
- Investment by the ACT Government to support this development includes:
 - approximately eight hectares of land in the city's south-east;
 - the full cost of remediation of contamination on the site; and
 - a \$25 million cash contribution, paid by instalments as key milestones are delivered (including delivery of a master plan, beginning of construction and attainment of staff and student numbers).
- UNSW Canberra is currently developing a master plan, in consultation with the community and stakeholders. The master plan will be submitted for endorsement by the National Capital Authority and approval by the ACT Government.
- CIT will continue to operate at its Reid campus until new CIT facilities are delivered and operational in Woden. UNSW and CIT will continue to develop their collaborative relationship both on site in Reid and beyond.

Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE) redevelopment proposal

- The ACT Government and the AIE agreed on the terms of a direct sale of part of Block 1 Section 13 Watson (Canberra Technology Park).
- AIE's development on the site will see investment of around \$200 million in new construction, through ten stages over 20 years, consolidating AIE's Global Headquarters in Canberra and delivering a specialised, boutique, world-class education and training facility, including accommodation for up to 600 students.

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- The economic potential of AIE's new campus is expected to be in excess of \$276 million in GSP, attracting over 2,000 students and providing around 250 jobs (administrative, teaching, student support, research and visual effects) by 2040.
- AIE is now consulting the community on its Future Intentions Plan and vision for the revitalisation of the campus. That plan must be approved by the Territory prior to the sale of land being finalised.
- The Territory will retain the current oval and associated green space. TCCS is currently investigating upgrade options for the green space and will progress further engagement with the community about the nature and scale of proposed upgrades.
- The Government will demolish the current buildings, which are known to contain residual asbestos. The timing of site demolition and remediation will take into account AIE's need to maintain business continuity on the site.

Key Information

University of New South Wales Canberra City Campus

- The ACT Government will retain two hectares within the precinct for future use. Boundaries will be finalised as part of the master planning process.
- On 15 July 2020 *The Canberra Times* reported UNSW has announced it will cut 493 full time jobs in 2021, in response to a budget shortfall arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. UNSW Canberra has advised operations at the Australian Defence Force Academy have been excluded from the scope of the cutbacks.

UNSW community consultation

- UNSW's initial community engagement took place from March to May 2020.
- UNSW's engagement strategy comprises a mix of online and web-based forums, information sessions and feedback services, as well as through local media, letterbox drops, and continued engagement with relevant stakeholders (including the Reid Residents' Association and St John's), and individual representation.
- UNSW's second phase of community consultation on its Draft Master Plan commenced on 29 January 2021 and is open until 1 March 2021.
- Following completion UNSW will release outcomes of this community engagement process, and there will be ongoing opportunities for the community to have input throughout the planning and design process. UNSW's Canberra City Campus website provides information on how the community can provide input to the Master Plan, accessible online at <https://canberra.unsw.edu.au/have-your-say/>.

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Reid Early Childhood Centre

- Reid Early Childhood Centre is located on the grounds of Reid CIT under a sub-lease with CIT. The most recent sub-lease was scheduled to expire at the end of December 2020. With the knowledge that Reid CIT will relocate to new facilities at Woden, Reid Early Childhood Centre was likely to cease operations.
- Reid CIT has now renewed Reid Early Childhood Centre's sub-lease for a further three years. This is a positive and mutually beneficial outcome, providing certainty to Reid Early Childhood Centre that it can continue student enrolments and consider its future options.
- It is unlikely that UNSW Canberra City Campus will incorporate the Reid Early Childhood Centre in its development, and the ACT Government is not requiring it to do so.

Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE) redevelopment proposal

- Block 1 Section 13 Watson is 5.7 hectares and is zoned as a 'Community Facility Zone'. 'Educational Facility' is a permitted use under the Community Facility zoning, with student accommodation permissible as an associated use.
- The redevelopment does not propose any changes to the site's classification as a Community Facility Zone, and will need to meet current requirements of the zoning, including in relation to building heights.

AIE community consultation

- Government, through EPSDD, is working with AIE to establish in more detail how it intends to develop the site, including facilitating regular engagement with the National Capital Design Review Panel (NCDRP).
- AIE is preparing a Future Intentions Plan (FIP), in consultation with the community, setting out its development intentions for the land. The FIP must be approved by the Territory prior to the sale of land being finalised and prior to lodgement of a Development Application for the first stage of development.
- AIE commenced its first stage of community engagement on the FIP on 30 November 2020 and is delivering on-going community consultation activities through February and March 2021. AIE is also presenting the FIP to the NCDRP, in parallel with community engagement, to seek independent and expert design guidance.
- Details of AIE's community consultation, including surveys and community engagement presentations, are available online at <https://community.aie.edu.au/consultation/>.

Site demolition and remediation

- The Government will demolish the current buildings, which are known to contain residual asbestos. The timing of site demolition and remediation will take into account AIE's need to maintain business continuity on the site.

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- EPSDD has lodged a Development Application (DA) for the first stage of demolition, which includes the surface car park near the corner of Phillip Avenue and Windeyer Street. A second DA has been submitted for a small building, known as the Band Hall. The Band Hall is being considered for inclusion as part of the first stage of demolition at the request of AIE.
- The ongoing use of the buildings on site is managed in accordance with an Asbestos Management Plan and a regular survey of the buildings is conducted as part of monitoring and managing their current use. Site demolition and remediation will be undertaken securely and safely according to normal protocols.

Background Information

University of New South Wales Canberra City Campus

- Prior to the impacts of COVID-19, international education services were the Territory's leading export worth over \$1 billion annually, with the broader tertiary education and research sector contributing \$3.3 billion to the Territory economy and employing approximately 20,000 people.

Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE) redevelopment proposal

- AIE delivers world-class training and qualifications in 3D animation, video game creation, visual effects creation, CGI animation and games programming.
- AIE leases the site from the ACT Government and has been a tenant of Canberra Technology Park site since 1996.

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Economic Development

TRIM Ref: CM21/7814

CM2021/675

Portfolio/s: Economic Development

cc to Assistant Minister for Economic Development

PRIORITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Talking points:

- Talent, knowledge and infrastructure within the ACT's tertiary education and research sector are primary drivers attracting investment into Canberra.
- The Priority Investment Program (PIP) provided \$9.75 million over three years in the 2018-19 budget to facilitate collaboration and, through matched funding, activate these assets to create long term wealth and wellbeing through economic diversification and growth in jobs.
- In 2018-19, \$5.2 million was committed to five projects across agri-technology, renewable energy, space and cybersecurity sectors.
- In 2019-20, \$2.1 million was committed to three projects across the space and biodiversity and biosecurity sectors.
- Considering the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the economy, the 2020-21 PIP funding round, which is the third round, is focused on jobs and economic recovery. A total of \$1 million is available in this round to support projects that will contribute to economic recovery and creation of jobs in the priority sectors of the ACT's economy.
- The ACT Government has established the Future Jobs Fund. This fund is designed to implement the Government's election and policy commitments to support economic recovery in the ACT, with a focus on the higher education and research sector and creating future jobs in growth industries.

Key Information

- \$2.165 million is allocated in the 2020-21 budget to achieve these commitments, prioritising projects that protect or create new jobs in our universities and private sector.
- 22 expressions of interest were received under the 2020-21 Priority Investment Program Jobs and Economic Recovery round with six being shortlisted and invited to submit a detailed business case. Business case submissions closed at midnight on Tuesday 16 February 2021 and are currently being assessed for funding suitability.

Projects funded under the 2019-20 round include:

Biodiversity and Biosecurity

- Announced on 28 January 2021, the **\$1.2 million** grant is to enable DART Pty Ltd, collaborate with ANU and UC to establish a cloud-based biodiversity and biosecurity data storage and analysis platform to enable wider research and commercial applications.

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Economic Development
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Space

- **\$300,000** to establish the Spacecraft Detector Characterisation Facility, which will enhance the ANU Space Testing Facility and secure the ANU and Canberra businesses opportunities in the supply chain of the global infrared detector industry for space applications. The new capability has a wide application in defence, agriculture, mineralogical surveys, health (pollen and air quality monitoring) and natural hazard management (bushfire and water quality).

Space Innovation Lab (Not public - Under contract negotiation)

- **\$600,000** to enable UNSW Canberra start-up, Space Services Australia, to develop software capability address the main cause of failure in miniature space systems (ranging from a 10 per cent dead-on-arrival and up to 50 per cent partial systems failure). This approach complements the physical systems testing capability at Mt Stromlo's Advanced Instrumentation Testing Centre which tests physical, structural and environmental integrity of space hardware.

The 2018-19 PIP projects :

Renewable energy sector

- **\$1.5 million** to fund the establishment of the Distributed Energy Resources Laboratory at the ANU. This Lab will provide industry and researchers with an interface with the energy grid to test devices, get data about how energy networks function and enable training and teaching. It will also test distributed energy resources such as solar panels, batteries, wind generating units, smart meters and model and measure demand loads on each through a real time network.

Space and Spatial Technology

- **\$800,000** to establish the Quantum Optical Ground Station at Mt Stromlo. The high speed, encrypted, optical communications capability will enable the Territory's participation in global communications networks and attract international business and world leading research groups for quantum optical communications to space.
- **\$1 million** to support Skykraft, a UNSW Canberra spin off, to collaborate with multinational space companies to develop and launch smallsat constellations for space-based global services, a capability of considerable global export potential.

Agri-technology

- **\$1.3 million** to enable the ANU/CSIRO Centre for Entrepreneurial Agri-Technology to broaden the scope of its industry engagement and research translation and become fully self-sufficient within a three-year period. The Centre's vision is to strengthen, transform and diversify Canberra into a regional, national and global hub for transformational agriculture.

Cybersecurity

- **\$600,000** to support the Canberra node of Austcyber to advance ACT's cyber security industry capabilities.

Background Information

Cleared as complete and accurate:	16/02/2021	
Cleared for public release by:	Executive Group Manager	
Contact Officer name:	Jenny Priest	Ext: 72070
Lead Directorate:	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development	
TRIM Ref:	CM21/4244	

- **\$9.75 million** was allocated to the PIP in the 2018-19 budget. Most of this funding was committed or expended over two rounds. A total of \$8.3 million was committed to nine projects across the space, renewable energy, cybersecurity, agri-technology and biosecurity and biodiversity sectors.
- A total of \$1 million is available for the 2020-21 PIP Jobs and Economic Recovery round. From a total of 22 expressions of interest received in the first stage of the process, six were shortlisted to prepare full business cases. The independent assessment panel is being convened to assess the business cases before making recommendations for approval of successful respondents.

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CM2021/675

Portfolio/s: Economic Development

ISSUE: ELITE SPORT PERFORMANCE FEE AGREEMENTS

Talking points:

- The Territory provides support for the Raiders, Brumbies, Giants, Capitals and Canberra United under formalised agreements. This support recognises the important contribution these teams make to the ACT community, including sports promotion and development, sponsor returns and match day visitation.
- All 2020-21 competitions of teams engaged under a Performance Fee Agreement (PFA) are affected due to global actions to limit the spread of COVID-19, including playing sport in closed stadiums (no spectators), postponement of sporting events and travel restrictions across borders.

Raiders

- The long term Raiders agreement expired in December 2019. A new agreement was not finalised and executed prior to the impact of COVID-19. As a result, a short-term 12 month extension was agreed for the delivery of matches in a revised 2020 NRL competition.
- This agreement expired in December 2020. A further 12-month extension to the agreement has been executed. This will support the Raiders participation in the 2021 NRL competition.

Brumbies

- The Brumbies current agreement expired December 2020. Discussions regarding a new agreement are ongoing and expected to be finalised in the coming weeks. Due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and international border closures, the Brumbies will compete in a domestic competition (Super Rugby AU) and Trans-Tasman competition (Australian and NZ Super Rugby teams) in 2021..

Giants AFL

- The Giants AFL agreement expires in December 2021, however, due to no games being played in Canberra during the 2020 AFL Premiership season, an extension of the current agreement by an additional year has been agreed. A Deed of Variation has been executed to acknowledge

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this extension. The Giants are scheduled to play three home matches at Manuka Oval in 2021.

Capitals

- The Canberra Capitals current agreement expires on 30 June 2021. The entire 2020-21 WNBL season was played in QLD (no matches in Canberra). Discussions regarding any ongoing agreement are yet to begin.

Canberra United

- The 2020-21 W-League season is currently underway . The Canberra United agreement ends in June 2021. Discussions regarding any ongoing agreement are yet to begin.

Cricket

- Following discussions with Cricket Australia, Canberra hosted a competition hub for BBL matches in 2020-21 including Finals matches. The Territory paid no acquisition fee for this content, with only the execution of a Venue Hire Agreement (VHA) required. Two Men's International matches (ODI and T20 format) were also played in Canberra between Australia and India, under VHA only, with no acquisition fee payable.

Key Information

- Each team receives a different level of support based on a number of variable factors including: seasonal structure, sponsor returns (brand exposure) and importantly, the potential revenue capacity of their respective playing venues.
- All agreements require delivery to the Territory of annual research that provides data in these key areas.
- Matches played by the Raiders, Brumbies and Giants at Territory-owned venues provides a valuable revenue stream to support facility sustainability.
- The ACT Government will continue to work with each team to provide a level of recurrent funding, to optimise returns on the Territory's investment, but also to support strategic commitments such as facility or stadia investment that can support their ongoing sustainability.
- Attachment A provides an overview of each current PFA (for 2020-21).

Background Information

- Nil.

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Performance Fee Agreement funding (2020-21) and overview per team

Sch2.2(a)(xi)	TERM	Sch2.2(a)(xi)
	1 Jan 2016 to 31 Dec 2020	
	Expired in Dec 2020. Finalisation of a 12- month agreement extension pending.	
	Executed April 2020 to 31 Dec 2020	
	Expired in Dec 2020. Finalisation of a 12- month agreement extension pending. .	
	Executed Feb 2012 to 31 Dec 2022	
	12-month agreement extension granted due to no	

Sch2.2(a)(xi)

matches played in
Canberra in 2020.

Dec 2017 to 30 June
2021

Executed 20 Dec
2017 to 30 June 2021

Executed 4 April
2018 to 31 Dec 2021

**12-month
agreement extension
(noting impact of
COVID-19).**

Sch2.2(a)(xi)

CM2021/677

Portfolio/s: Tourism

Assistant Minister for Economic Development

Major ACT Government Events during Autumn 2021

Talking points:

- With current public health restrictions, major ACT Government events scheduled for the autumn period in 2021 cannot proceed in their usual format. The health and safety of our community must continue to be our number one priority.
- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT Government has sought to develop innovative methods for connecting Canberrans through events in a COVID-safe manner. This planning work has been supported by the release of the ACT's COVID Safe Event Protocol, and has also involved consultation with a wide range of key stakeholders – including the Office of the Chief Health Officer.
- **The National Multicultural Festival**, originally scheduled for February 2021, has been cancelled. Held in Canberra's city centre, the Festival typically attracts crowds in excess of 200,000 over three days.
- While it was previously hoped that the Festival could run in the latter half of 2021, COVID-19 has presented a number of ongoing challenges.
- Shifting focus to 2022 will help organisers keep the Festival as close as possible to the look, feel and spirit that attendees and participants are accustomed to.
- The decision to cancel the 2021 Festival was announced on 17 February 2021 by the ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Tara Cheyne MLA.
- **The Enlighten Festival** will proceed as scheduled from 26 February to 14 March 2021. The Enlighten Illuminations precinct in the Parliamentary Triangle is an expansive site that is conducive to social distancing, with precinct access controls (e.g. timed ticketing and security) to be implemented to control potential higher crowd density areas.
- Consistent with AHPPC advice, the Enlighten Main Stage entertainment area will not be delivered. Main Stage entertainment will instead be replaced with smaller stages across defined precincts, multiplying performance opportunities for local artists.

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- Nine Entertainment (organisers of the Night Noodle Markets) has announced that it is not able to safely proceed with that event alongside the Enlighten Festival this year.
- However, other Enlighten Festival events will adapt well to the implementation of COVID Safe measures, including Lights! Canberra! Action!, the Canberra Balloon Spectacular, Symphony in the Park and Canberra Day celebrations.

Key Information

- Widespread event cancellations and postponements have had serious financial implications for event organisers and suppliers.
- In the absence of mass public gatherings, a primary objective has been to continue delivering the benefits of events – but in new ways – while also contributing to the economic security of artists, vendors, suppliers and contractors.
- The ACT’s COVID Safe Event Protocol was released on 22 September 2020. The Protocol was developed to provide further information for event organisers on the types of events that can take place while COVID-19 restrictions remain in place.
- The Protocol document continues to be updated and reissued when public health directions allow.

Background Information

- Events ACT is responsible for delivering celebrations for the Enlighten Festival (incorporating Illuminations, Lights!Canberra!Action!, the Canberra Balloon Spectacular, Symphony in the Park and Canberra Day celebrations).
- The Community Services Directorate (CSD) is responsible for delivery of the National Multicultural Festival.
- Events make a strong contribution to the ACT economy, have social and community benefits, enhance Canberra’s image and reputation, and assist with realising the ACT’s tourism potential.

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ISSUE: 2020-21 Budget
Talking points

- The General Government Sector (GGS) Headline Net Operating Balance (HNOB) is forecast to be in deficit by \$603.1 million in 2020-21. This deficit is \$306.5 million lower than the forecast published in the August 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update (EFU), primarily as a result of higher GST revenue and a stronger than expected housing market resulting in higher dividends and income tax equivalents from the Suburban Land Agency.
- On 10 September 2020, the ACT AAA long-term and A1+ short-term local currency credit ratings were reaffirmed by S&P Global Ratings. S&P Global Ratings also maintained the negative long-term rating outlook for the Territory.

Key Information
General Government Sector headline net operating balance

	Budget Review	Audited Outcome	Estimate	Projections		
	2019-20 \$m	2019-20 \$m	2020-21 \$m	2021-22 \$m	2022-23 \$m	2023-24 \$m
Revenue	5,768.3	5,604.9	5,981.1	6,171.9	6,330.5	6,560.1
Expenses	6,226.6	6,517.6	6,749.7	6,839.1	6,941.8	7,148.2
Superannuation return adjustment	202.8	231.5	165.6	192.4	205.3	219.0
HEADLINE NET OPERATING BALANCE	-255.6	-681.1	-603.1	-474.7	-406.0	-369.1
Net cash from operating activities	108.3	-104.5	-219.8	22.5	295.6	404.2
Net debt (excluding superannuation)	3,075.5	3,296.7	4,665.0	5,960.6	6,926.7	7,658.6
Net financial liabilities	7,654.7	12,003.2	9,301.8	10,559.7	11,744.9	12,670.2

- The increase in net financial liabilities of \$4,348.5 billion in the 2019-20 audited outcome compared to the 2019-20 Budget Review is largely due to an increase in the superannuation liability. The valuation increase due to the use of a lower discount rate of 1.73 per cent at 30 June 2020, compared to the forecast long-term discount rate of 5 per cent.

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Cleared by: Stephen Miners	Deputy Under Treasurer	Ext: 70571
Contact Officer name	Wilhelmina Blount	Ext: 70835
Lead Directorate:	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development	
Cleared for release	Yes	
Information Officer name:	Natasha Bourke	
TRIM Ref:	CM2021/463	

Summary of movements in the General Government Sector Headline Net Operating Balance

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
August 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update	-909,543	-670,218	-451,953	-399,728
Revenue				
Policy decisions	-4,912	5,497	7,690	3,951
Technical adjustments	406,054	280,385	119,081	142,946
Expenses				
Policy decisions	-96,218	-62,211	-27,023	-25,534
Technical adjustments	7,607	-36,896	-63,087	-100,661
Superannuation return adjustment	-6,068	8,697	9,287	9,918
2020-21 Budget	-603,080	-474,746	-406,005	-369,108

Total revenue in 2020-21 is expected to be \$401.1 million higher than forecast in the August 2020 EFU and \$960.7 million higher over the four years to 2023-24. Significant movements in forecast revenue in 2020-21 and over forward estimates include:

- an increase in dividends and income tax equivalents of \$234.4 million (\$200.6 million over four years) largely due to higher returns expected to be received from the Suburban Land Agency reflecting strong sales activity and forecasts for 2020-21;
- an increase in GST revenue of \$76.9 million (\$338 million over four years) due to an upward revision to the GST pool driven by a sharp rebound in household consumption nationally;
- an increase in taxation revenue of \$49.1 million in 2020-21 largely due to stronger residential conveyance duty and payroll tax as a result of more positive economic activity and employment, and a less significant impact than previously expected on gambling taxes from social distancing measures. An additional \$105.8 million own-source taxation revenue is expected over four years reflecting upward revisions to all major revenue lines other than payroll tax and general rates;
- higher other Commonwealth grants revenue of \$45.5 million (\$291 million over four years), partially offset by higher expenses of \$89.9 million due to the impact of on-passing National Partnership and Specific Purpose Payments to agencies. An additional \$97.1 million is forecast to be received as capital funding for roads; and
- additional investment returns for the Superannuation and Territory Banking Accounts of \$70.9 million over four years largely due to a stronger than expected investment market.

Total expenses in 2020-21 are expected to be \$88.6 million higher than forecast in the August 2020 EFU and \$404.1 million over the four years to 2023-24. Significant movements in expenses in 2020-21 and over the forward estimates include:

- additional funding for initiatives of \$96.2 million in 2020-21 (\$211.0 million over four years). Further information on these initiatives can be found in Fiscal Strategy and Policy Decisions (Chapter 3.2);

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- an increase in expenses associated with Commonwealth grants of \$31.1 million (\$89.9 million over four years); and
- revised funding profiles and rollovers of prior year funding for initiatives of \$9.1 million in 2020-21.

These increases are partially offset by a decrease in expenses for the Territory Banking Account largely due to lower interest costs on outstanding borrowings.

Key Balance Sheet Measures

General Government Sector net debt (excluding superannuation)

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	Audited Outcome	Budget	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Economic and Fiscal Update	3,310.8	4,730.6	6,068.3	6,942.4	7,709.4
2020-21 Budget	3,296.7	4,665.0	5,960.6	6,926.7	7,658.6
Net debt to GSP (%)	7.9	10.9	13.4	14.9	15.7

- Compared to the EFU estimate of 11.1 per cent, General Government Sector net debt as a percentage of Gross State Product is expected to be 10.9 per cent at 30 June 2021.

General Government Sector net financial liabilities

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	Audited Outcome	Budget	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Economic and Fiscal Update	12,025.1	9,530.8	10,847.1	11,945.3	12,832.4
2020-21 Budget	12,003.2	9,301.8	10,559.7	11,744.9	12,670.2
Net financial liabilities to GSP (%)	28.9	21.7	23.7	25.2	26.0

- Compared to the Economic and Fiscal Update estimate of 22.3 per cent in 2020-21, General Government Sector net financial liabilities as a percentage of Gross State Product are now expected to be 21.7 per cent. This decrease is largely driven by higher dividend payments from the Suburban Land Agency and an upward revision to the GST pool.

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General Government Sector net worth

	2019-20 Audited Outcome \$m	2020-21 Budget \$m	2021-22 Estimate \$m	2022-23 Estimate \$m	2023-24 Estimate \$m
Economic and Fiscal Update	13,110.3	16,158.2	15,449.6	14,881.4	14,382.2
2020-21 Budget	13,030.3	16,628.9	15,971.4	15,343.1	14,837.2
Net worth to GSP (%)	31.4	38.7	35.8	33.0	30.5

- The ACT has positive net worth in 2020-21 equivalent to 38.7 per cent of Gross State Product. Net worth has improved compared to the EFU estimate largely due to the impacts described above and upwards revaluations of the Territory's asset in the 2019-20 audited outcome.

Borrowings – Principal outstanding

	2019-20 Audited Outcome \$m	2020-21 Budget \$m	2021-22 Estimate \$m	2022-23 Estimate \$m	2023-24 Estimate \$m
Total Territory					
Market borrowings	7,017.0	8,166.6	10,156.5	10,515.3	11,894.7
Historic Commonwealth Loans	108.3	98.3	90.0	81.6	73.2
Leases	1,060.1	1,318.5	1,309.4	1,275.2	1,230.5
Total	8,185.4	9,583.4	11,555.8	11,872.0	13,198.3

- The estimated increase in total Territory borrowing since the 2019-20 Budget is primarily supporting the Government's fiscal response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the reduction in revenue flowing from the impact of COVID-19 and the associated restrictions on activity.

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2020-21 Infrastructure Investment Program

Talking points:

- The Government will invest \$914 million in infrastructure and capital projects in 2020-21 and \$4.3 billion from 2020-21 to 2023-24. This represents our largest-ever Infrastructure Investment Program.
- The \$4.3 billion program includes \$2.6 billion of allocated capital works and \$1.7 billion of infrastructure investment provisions.

Table 1: Summary of 2020-21 ACT Infrastructure Investment Program

	2020-21 \$ million	2021-22 \$ million	2022-23 \$ million	2023-24 \$ million	Total \$ million
New capital works	156	253	217	155	781
Works-in-progress	668	539	264	75	1,546
Better Infrastructure Fund	88	60	63	65	277
Total allocated works	912	852	544	295	2,603
Infrastructure investment provisions	1	435	569	695	1,700
Total Infrastructure Investment Program	914	1,287	1,113	990	4,304
Capital Works Reserve and offsetting provision	150	-150	0	0	0

- Significant projects by priority area are outlined below (n.b. projects listed below include those with both allocated and provisioned works but the priority area allocated funding amounts are exclusive of provisions):
- **Health infrastructure** (\$347 million of allocated capital works over four years)
 - the expansion, upgrade and refurbishment of the Canberra Hospital;
 - the expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children;
 - aligning ACT Health core IT system with the Digital Health Strategy; and
 - upgrading and maintaining ACT Health assets.
- **Education infrastructure** (\$615 million of allocated capital works over four years)
 - developing a new East Gungahlin high school in Kenny and a new North Gungahlin high school in Taylor;
 - delivering a new primary school at Throsby and building a P-6 and 7-10 school campus in Molonglo;

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- expanding Amaroo School Senior campus, the Margaret Hendry Primary School and the Franklin Early Childhood School;
- modernising Campbell Primary School; and
- delivering the Woden CIT campus and a new Woden Interchange.
- **Transport infrastructure** (\$558 million of allocated capital works over four years)
 - progressing Light Rail Stage 2, including the design and approvals for raising London Circuit to allow connection with light rail;
 - upgrading Monaro Highway and enhancing existing road networks;
 - duplicating Athllon Drive and William Hovell Drive; and
 - constructing the last portion of John Gorton Drive, including a bridge across the Molonglo River.
- **Public Housing** (\$105 million of allocated capital works over four years)
 - growing and renewing more public housing; and
 - building a second Common Ground at Dickson.
- **Environmental Sustainability** (\$87 million allocated capital works over four years)
 - a range of environmental measures to enhance infrastructure that supports management of our waste, lakes and waterways, urban forests and our natural space; and
 - the Big Canberra Battery (to deliver at least 250 megawatts of new 'large-scale' battery storage system capacity across the ACT).
- The 2020-21 Infrastructure Investment Program includes a future works provision of \$67 million in 2021-22, \$74 million in 2022-23 and \$80 million in 2023-24. In addition, projects with significant amounts of provisioned funding (many of these are listed above) include:
 - Building Light Rail to Woden and raising London Circuit;
 - The Canberra Hospital Expansion Project;
 - Growing and renewing more public housing;
 - Monaro Highway upgrades;
 - Funding for the construction of a new high school in Taylor and the expansion of Margaret Hendry primary school; and
 - The Big Canberra Battery.

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COVID pandemic – Economic Survival Measure Applications**Talking points:**

- The Government's COVID-19 initiative suite formed the largest economic support package in the Territory's history, significantly eclipsing measures announced during the Global Financial Crisis.
- To keep pace with evolving events, the Government's response has been multi-staged and targeted. The 2020-21 Budget includes the extension of a range of initiatives, as well as new initiatives, to ensure that Canberrans and local businesses continue to receive support:
- On 2 December, the ACT transitioned to Stage 4 of [Canberra's Recovery Plan](#). The changes have helped businesses welcome back more patrons over the summer and Christmas period, acknowledging that some level of restriction is still essential to keep Canberra COVID safe. Additional changes were made at 12pm on Friday 11 December 2020 to allow nightclubs to reopen.
- From 11.59pm Friday 12 February 2021, travel restrictions are in place for anyone coming to the ACT from COVID-19 affected areas of Victoria. Residents/travellers should consult the ACT Government's COVID-19 update page (<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>) for the most current information.
- On 17 February, the Minister for Health extended the ACT Public Health Emergency for 90 days, effective until 18 May 2021.
- ACT Health continues to undertake detailed daily analyses of COVID-19 circumstances and incidents.

Key Information*2020-21 Budget- Public health initiatives*

- **COVID-19 Public Health Response** - \$63 million over 2020-21 and 2021-22 to continue the COVID-19 response through the next phase of the pandemic in the coming 12 months (funded through a cost sharing arrangement between the Commonwealth and the Territory).
- **COVID-19 Public Health Response – Vaccination Program** - \$19 million in expenses and \$4.5 million in capital over four years (funded through a cost sharing arrangement between the Commonwealth and the Territory).

2020-21 Budget - Extended economic support initiatives

- **ACT Hardship Fund** – extension until 30 June 2021.

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- **Choose CBR program** - \$2 million for second round of the Choose CBR digital voucher program.
- **Commercial rates – rental relief and owner-occupier rebate scheme – extension** until 31 January 2021 to align with the current end date for the National Cabinet Mandatory Code of Conduct. This initiative supports businesses significantly affected by COVID-19 by providing rates rebates to landlords who reduce rents for affected business tenants as well as affected owner-operators.
- **Canberra Relief Network (CRN) extension** - \$52,000 for the Canberra Relief Network to allow it to continue to operate until the end of 2020-21 at Exhibition Park in Canberra.
- **Cultural Facilities Corporation – extension of financial support** – \$1 million in 2020-21 (in addition to the \$2.5 million provided as part of the August 2020 EFU).
- **Fee reduction – 15 month waiver for food business registration and outdoor dining fees; and reducing liquor licensing fees by 50 per cent for an additional 12 months** – extension of the food business registration fee waiver provided as part of the COVID-19 Economic Survival Package for a further year until 31 March 2022. The outdoor dining permit fee waiver will also be extended for a further year until 30 June 2022. The Government will also reduce liquor licencing fees by 50 per cent for one year from 1 April 2021 for “on liquor” and “general liquor” licensed venues.
- **Gaming Machine Authorisation Surrender Incentive** – extension until 30 June 2021.
- **Jobs for Canberra Fund – expansion** - \$1 million for the extension of short-term contracts for critical positions currently supported through the Jobs for Canberrans Fund.
- **Lease Variation Charge remission – extension** until 30 June 2021 at a reduced rate of 25 per cent where there an application to enter the LVC deferred payment scheme is received by 30 June 2021 and construction commences by 30 September 2021.
- **Marketing Canberra as a COVID-safe destination for domestic travellers** - \$3.5 million over three years.
- **Payroll tax exemptions for new apprentices and trainees – extension** until 30 June 2021. This provides a payroll tax exemption for wages paid to new apprentices or trainees employed after 1 August 2020.
- **Payroll tax – interest-free hardship deferrals for businesses with payroll under \$10 million – extension** until 30 June 2021.
- **Payroll tax – waiver of payroll tax for severely impacted business operations - extension** until 30 June 2021. This provides assistance for businesses that are unable to operate due to ACT Government health-related restrictions, and case-by-case waivers for those that can only operate on a very limited basis

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- **Phase 3 – Expansion of minor capital works projects** - \$10 million for Phase 3 of the Fast-track infrastructure program.
- **Rental relief – ACT Government properties – extension** until 30 June 2021 for tenants who can demonstrate that they remain severely affected by COVID-19.
- **Residential tenancy relief** - extension until 30 June 2021. To date, this has provided land tax and rates rebates to almost 950 residential landlords who have reduced rent charged by at least 25 per cent for tenants impacted by COVID-19.

2020-21 Budget - New economic support initiatives

- **Office of the Co-ordinator General for the Whole of Government (Non-Health Response to COVID-19)** – until 30 June 2021.
- **Continuing Government Services – Compensating for loss of own-source revenue due to COVID-19** - \$22.090 million in 2020-21 (majority Transport Canberra Operations but also other areas of TCCS and CMTEDD).
- **Pools Support Package** – Funding in 2020-21 (NFP) to support pool operators able to demonstrate losses due to COVID-19.

Existing initiatives not extended:

- **Assistance to ride share, hire car and taxi industries** – assistance not extended beyond 31 March 2021.
- **Commercial rates hardship deferrals** – assistance not extended beyond 31 March 2021 – the Revenue Commissioner would, however, be able to provide case-by-case assessments.
- **Fee waivers for sportsgrounds** – assistance not extended beyond 31 March 2021.
- **One-year waiver for other business fees** (infection control licencing, beauty therapists, tattoo parlours etc) – assistance not extended beyond 31 March 2021.
- **Payroll tax deferral for the construction industry** – assistance not extended past 31 December 2020.
- **Utilities (Network Facilities) Tax** – assistance not extended beyond 31 March 2021.

Budget-related media announcements with COVID-19 association:

- Fast-tracking infrastructure to create jobs ([17 February](#))
- ACT prepared for arrival of first vaccine ([15 February](#))
- Improved labour market supporting ACT economic recovery ([8 February](#))
- Mental health programs supporting Canberrans in need ([3 February](#))
- Expanding homelessness and housing services ([29 January](#))
- Boost for COVID-19 health response and health services ([27 January](#))

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Earlier announcements

- **Business Support** - The Commercial Tenancies Relief, which was initiated to support local businesses and commercial property landlords affected by COVID-19, will come to an end as planned on 31 January 2021. ([22 January](#))
- **Business Support** – The Government will invest a further \$2 million in the ‘More Than’ campaign over the next three years, making it the largest-ever domestic destination marketing campaign in the Territory’s history. The ACT Government will also launch a \$1.5 million ACT COVID-Safe Tourism Co-investment Program to help the industry recover. ([20 January](#))
- **Households** – the Productivity Commission has released the first set of data as part of the 2021 *Report on Government Services*, demonstrating that the ACT continues to perform above the national average in many areas, including: access to public and community housing, and was the first jurisdiction to fully transition to the NDIS.
 - In 2019-20, total funding to homelessness services increased four per cent to \$25.7 million, which included funding to respond to the impact of COVID-19.
 - We have also established an Accommodation Support Fund to provide both emergency and long-term accommodation for men, women and children impacted by COVID-19. ([20 January](#))

Background Information

Revenue assistance measures as at 18 February 2021		
RATES AND LAND TAX	No. applications	No. processed
Residential rates hardship deferral (for 12 months)	429	366
Commercial rates hardship deferral (extended until June 2021)	145	145
Residential land tax relief for a reduction in tenant rent	978	774
Commercial rates relief for reduction in tenant rent - Landlords – 433, Owner-occupiers –87, AUV above \$2m – 38	558	426
PAYROLL TAX		
Payroll tax hardship deferral (extended until June 2021)	292	292
Payroll tax waiver for prohibited venues and activities.	428	120
Payroll tax deferral for construction industry for 6 months	31	31
Payroll tax deferral for 12 months for business with Australia wide wages of less than \$10m (payment due July 2022)	93	69
HOMEBUILDER		
- The HomeBuilder grant is available to eligible owner-occupiers (including first home buyers) with a grant of \$25,000 for contracts entered into between 4 June and 31 December 2020, and a grant of \$15,000 for contracts entered into between 1 January and 31 March 2021 - New Builds – 1,542, Renovations – 564	2,106	83
STAMP DUTY CONCESSION FOR OWNER OCCUPIERS		
Duty concession for owner occupiers - Owner-occupiers (land) –378, (unit \$500k-\$750k) – 135, (unit <\$500k) - 80	593	526

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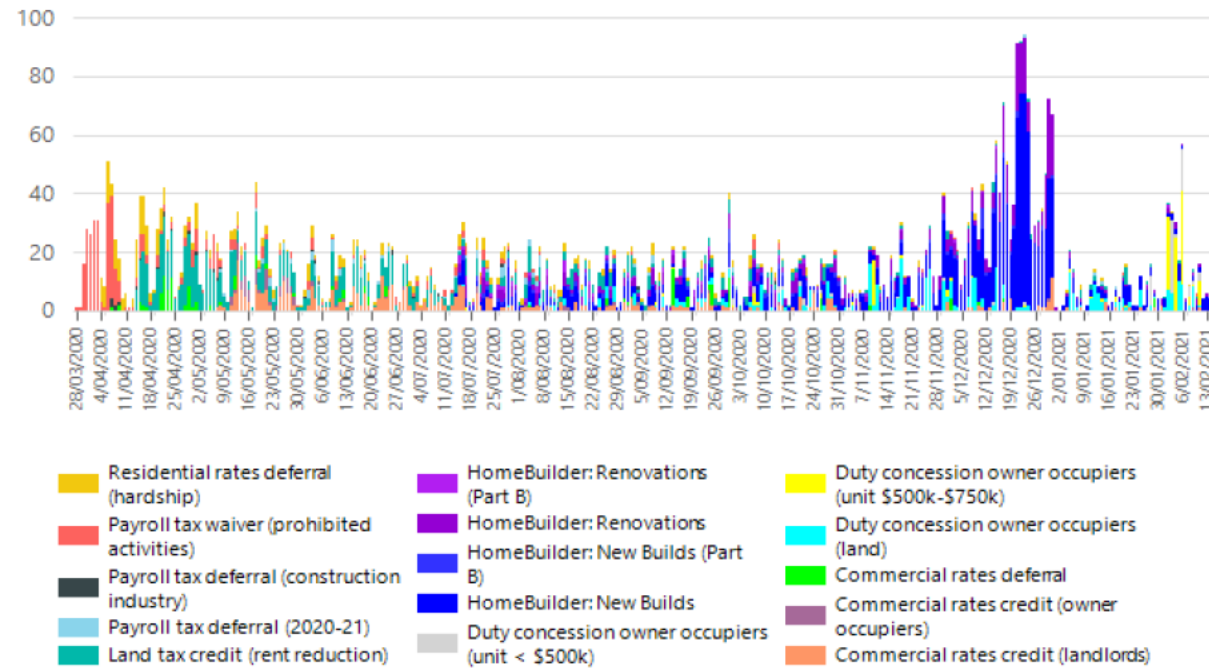
- ***Jobs for Canberrans Key statistics (as at 17 February, 2021)***
 - 3,951 applicants have applied for 8,628 positions (some applicants have applied more than once).
 - Total number of staff employed: 569 (total jobs funded: 597)
 - Top categories of employment:
 - Cleaning Services Officer 1: 224
 - Building Services Officer 1: 107
 - Admin Services Officer 2: 73
 - General Services Officer 3-4: 70
 - Hiring by directorate:
 - Education: 334
 - TCCS: 124
 - CMTEDD: 60
 - EPSDD: 33
 - Employee gender split: female: 45 per cent, male: 55 per cent.
 - Casual workforce focus: 52 per cent of staff employed on part-time basis, 26 per cent on casual basis, 22 per cent full-time (numbers rounded).
 - Spend to date on salaries for employees: \$14.83 million.
- ***Fast-track program – Phase 2 summary at Attachment A (A3 powerpoint slide – last update for program data: 25 November)***
- ***Various links associated with Commonwealth and ACT Government responses***
 - **Commonwealth responses:**
 - Commonwealth MYEFO (17 December)
 - [MYEFO documentation](#)
 - Commonwealth Budget (6 October)
 - [Budget Papers](#)
 - Commonwealth Economic and Fiscal Update
 - [Full report](#)
 - [Media release](#)

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- [Fact sheet](#)
- *Economic-related initiatives*
 - [Overview website \(JobKeeper, HomeBuilder etc\)](#)
- *Health-related initiatives*
 - [Overview website \(see 'What we are doing now' section for specific programs\)](#)
- **ACT responses:**
 - [ACT 2020-21 Budget](#)
 - [August 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update](#)
 - [ACT Jobs and Recovery Plan](#)
 - [2020 Pre-Election Budget Update](#)
- **COVID Specific:**
 - [Fast-Track program](#)
 - [Jobs for Canberrans](#)
 - [Supporting local businesses and the economy](#)
 - [Families and households](#)
 - [Keeping Canberrans employed](#)
 - [Supporting the community sector](#)
 - [Supporting healthcare](#)
 - [ACT Health dashboard](#)
 - [Confirmed case information](#)
 - [Canberra's Recovery Plan \(full page\) – latest plan update: 9 December](#)
 - [Community Recovery Roadmap](#)
 - [Economic Recovery Roadmap](#)

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Economic Survival Measure Applications



Economic Survival Revenue Measure Summary Table

Support Measure Name	Total Approvals (value)
Residential rates hardship deferral for 12 months	366 (\$1,487,120)
Duty concession for owner occupiers of new properties	526 (\$5,206,385)
Residential land tax credit (for rent reduction)	774 (\$820,339)
Commercial rates hardship deferral to March 2021	145 (\$15,974,783)
Commercial rates credit (for rent reduction)	426 (\$2,828,594)
Payroll tax hardship deferral to March 2021	292 (\$4,262,260)
Payroll tax deferral for 2020-21	69 (\$16,495,497)
Payroll tax deferral (construction industry)	31 (\$1,653,210)
Payroll tax waiver (prohibited activities)	120 (\$7,612,828)
HomeBuilder (New Builds – 1,542; Renovations 564)	2,106 applications
Lease variation charge 50% remission	36

Automatic Economic Survival Measures	Key statistics / beneficiary details
Commercial - One-off \$750 rebate for utilities bill for small business customers	7,000 small businesses
Food business registration and liquor licensing fees (including off-licence) - one-year fee waiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2916 registered food businesses 749 liquor licence holders
Freezing 2020-21 vehicle registration at 2019-20 levels	Approximately 327,000 light vehicle owners and 12,230 motorbikes owners.
Infection control licence fees (beauty therapists, nail salons, tattoo parlours) - 12 month waiver	598 establishments
One-year freeze on growth of Fire and Emergency Services Levy	6,500 commercial properties
Outdoor dining fees - one-year fee waiver	241 venues
Rebate of fixed water and sewerage charges for community clubs	Around 50 clubs/licensed premises
Rebate of the 2019-20 fixed charge of \$2622 (AUVs below \$2 million)	6,055 commercial properties
Reduce City Centre Marketing and Improvements levy payments by 50 per cent	633 commercial properties
Residential - One-off \$200 rebate to recipients of the utilities concession	27,000 utilities concession recipients
Residential rates rebate of \$150 in 2020-21	160,000 households/taxpayers
Waiver of hire car/ride share and all government leased taxi plate (including wheelchair accessible taxis) fees	2,407 drivers/plate owners

‘Screwdriver-ready’ project implementation – PHASE 2 (2020-21 financial year)

A total of \$35 million has been allocated to the Fast Track Program.

\$22.8 million was spent in 2019-20 under Phase 1. A total of 1,569 personnel were employed for that phase.

Overview – reporting period ending 25 November

Agency	Total Stimulus Allocation \$'000	Spent to date \$'000	Percentage spent	Persons engaged via agency contracts
Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate	3,903	1,104	26	11
Education Directorate	1,854	165	9	23
Justice and Community Safety Directorate	1,658	680	41	44
Canberra Health Services	1,050	744	71	TBC
ACT Housing	1,000	6	1	TBC
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	815	134	16	16
ACT Integrity Commission	625	625	100	51
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate	610	227	37	7
ACT Health Directorate	550	0	0	11
TOTALS^	12,065	3,595	30	163

Notes:

^: underspends/savings from Phase 1 have been rolled into Phase 2. Any agency overspending its allocation must meet that overspend from its own reserves.

Economic Outlook**Talking points:****Economic growth**

- The recent performance of the ACT economy has been stronger than expected at the time of the August Economic and Fiscal Update. The ACT's economic growth of 2.4 per cent in 2019-20 was the second highest of all jurisdictions.
- The 2020-21 Budget incorporates substantial upgrades to growth and revenue and significant improvements in the labour market.
 - This positive outcome reflects the combination of ACT's highly effective public health response to the pandemic, substantial policy stimulus implemented in the ACT and nationally, and our resilient business and community sectors.
 - The ACT's secure public sector base has also provided a significant economic buffer, offsetting the large declines in private sector activity.
- The ACT economy is forecast to grow by 2 per cent in 2020-21, a significant upgrade from expectations in the Economic and Fiscal Update.
 - Public expenditure remains a key driver of economic growth in 2020-21 and 2021-22, due to COVID-19 related health response spending, social benefit transfers to households, and stimulus programs for households and businesses.
 - Household consumption is expected to drive the initial recovery in private sector economic activity.
 - Although confidence had improved, ongoing market uncertainty stemming from intermittent COVID-19 outbreaks may see businesses delaying investment decisions until demand has picked up for a sustained period.
 - Exports are expected to detract from GSP growth in 2020-21 due to the closure of international borders, which will have the most significant impact on education and tourism services exports.
- GSP is expected to increase steadily by 2¾ per cent in 2021-22 and 2022-23, before further recovering in 2023-24 to grow by around 3 per cent.
- However, the level of GSP is still expected to remain lower than was anticipated at the time of the 2019-20 Budget Review prior to the pandemic, although the outlook is more positive than was anticipated at the time of the EFU.

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- This is largely due to significant reductions in population growth as a result of international border restrictions.
 - The ACT's population growth rate is expected to slow to a record low of $\frac{1}{4}$ of a per cent over 2020-21 and 2021-22, primarily due to a large forecast decline in net overseas migration.
 - For the first time on record net overseas migration is expected to be negative and population growth will mostly reflecting natural increase out to 2022-23.
 - Around 19,200 fewer people are expected to call Canberra home than was forecast at the time of the 2019-20 Budget Review.

Labour Market

- The labour market in the ACT is expected to continue to recover with employment to grow by 4 per cent in 2020-21, compared with the $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent fall expected at the time of the EFU.
 - In January 2021, there were 234,000 employed people, up 1,700 (0.7 per cent) from the level a year ago, but down by 2 per cent from the previous month.
 - While there were around the same number of employed people in December 2020 as in March 2020 prior to the pandemic, the monthly reduction in employment in January 2021 means reported employment is now 4,700 employed people below the level in March 2020.
 - However, monthly labour force data is even more volatile than usual at present and the March quarter 2021 data will provide a better reflection of labour market conditions.
 - The ACT's unemployment rate also increased by 0.7 per cent to 4.4 per cent, but our underemployment rate fell by 0.3 per cent to 5.7 per cent in January 2021. Despite the volatility in monthly outcomes, unemployment in the ACT remains the lowest of all jurisdictions. Our participation rate of 71.2 per cent is the second highest of all jurisdictions.
- Employment growth is then expected to slow to around $\frac{1}{2}$ of a per cent in 2021-22 before stabilising at around $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent in 2023-24.
 - Relatively subdued employment growth reflects the international border restrictions that have caused a significant disruption to net overseas migration and lowered population growth projections.

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Cleared for release	Yes	
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TRIM Ref:	CM2021/463	

Inflation

- The Consumer Price Index is forecast to grow by 3 per cent in 2020-21, unchanged from the Economic and Fiscal Update.
 - The CPI increased strongly by 2.3 per cent in the September quarter 2020, and 0.8 per cent in the December quarter 2020, largely reflecting one-off effects following policy changes relating to the pandemic, for example, free childcare and the subsequent reintroduction of childcare fees.
 - Subdued inflation of 1¼ in 2021-22, gradually increasing to 1¾ by 2023-24 is expected going forward as the one-off price impacts of the pandemic ease.
- The Wage Price Index is also forecast to remain subdued, growing at around 1½ per cent in 2020-21, with growth already having moderated to 1.4 per cent over the year to the September quarter 2020.
 - Wage growth is expected to gradually increase to 1¾ per cent in 2021-22 and 2022-23 and 2 per cent in 2023-24, on the back of expected continued low unemployment, and a moderate tightening in the labour market.

Background Information

- As the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remain uncertain, the estimates presented in the Budget reflect a baseline scenario derived from a plausible set of assumptions.
 - Table 1 below provides the economic parameter forecasts for the ACT under the baseline scenario.
- Uncertainty regarding the evolution of the pandemic makes it difficult to provide a definitive quantitative assessment of the balance of risks around the baseline forecasts.
- However, consistent with the approach taken for the August 2020 EFU the Budget presents a range within which scenarios may fall on the upside and downside depending on changes to key assumption.

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Table 1: Economic parameters, 2020-21 Budget, baseline forecasts, percentage change

	Actual	Forecast		Projections	
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
ACT					
Gross State Product ¹	2.4	2 (-1½)	2¾ (4)	2¾ (3½)	3 (3¾)
State Final Demand ^{1,2}	3.1	3¾	2¾	2	2¾
Employment ³	0.5	4 (-¾)	½ (3¾)	1 (2½)	1¾ (2)
Wage Price Index ^{3,4}	2.0	1½ (1½)	1¾ (1¾)	1¾ (2)	2 (2)
Consumer Price Index ³	-0.6	3 (3)	1¾ (1¾)	1½ (1½)	1¾ (1¾)
Population ³	1.1	¾ (1)	¾ (1¾)	¾ (1½)	1 (1¾)
Australia					
Gross Domestic Product ^{1,2,5}	-0.2	¾ (-1½)	3½ (4¾)	2½ (2¾)	2¾ (3)

Sources: ABS Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product; Australian National Accounts: State Account; Labour Force, Australia; Wage Price Index, Australia; Consumer Price Index, Australia; National, State and Territory Populations; Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate; 2020-21 Commonwealth Budget; and Commonwealth Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2020-21.

Notes: Forecasts and projections are rounded to a ¼ of a percentage point, reflecting an appropriate level of accuracy in forecasting economic parameters. Numbers in brackets are the estimates published in the 2020 Pre-Election Budget Update.

1. Real values.
2. Year average basis.
3. Through the year growth.
4. Total hourly rates of pay, excluding bonuses.
5. These are the Commonwealth Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2020-21 forecasts. Comparisons in brackets are to the 2020-21 Commonwealth Budget forecasts.

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Economic Indicator Summary, ACT and Australia

Statistics shown are the latest available as at 18 February 2021



Indicator	Unit	Frequency	Latest Period	Australian Capital Territory			Australia		
				Latest Estimate	Change from Previous Period	Over the year ⁵	Latest Estimate	Change from Previous Period	Over the year ⁵
ECONOMIC GROWTH									
Gross State Product ¹ (CVM)	\$m	Annual	2019-20	40,902	2.4%	n.a.	1,947,805	-0.2%	n.a.
International Trade in Services									
Services exports	\$m	Annual	2019-20	2,144	-7.5%	n.a.	92,321	-5.1%	n.a.
Services imports	\$m	Annual	2019-20	2,630	0.4%	n.a.	87,370	-14.1%	n.a.
Service Trade Balance (surplus+/-deficit-)	\$m	Annual	2019-20	-486	n.a.	n.a.	4,951	n.a.	n.a.
RBA Cash Rate	%	Monthly	Dec-20	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.1%	0.0ppts	-0.65ppts
Retail Trade ²	\$m	Monthly	Dec-20	585	-1.6%	12.5%	30,369	-4.1%	9.6%
State Final Demand² (CVM)									
Consumption									
— Government	\$m	Quarterly	Sep-20	6,791	0.5%	11.8%	103,794	1.4%	7.8%
— Households	\$m	Quarterly	Sep-20	4,756	8.7%	-3.7%	253,648	7.9%	-6.5%
Investment									
— Public	\$m	Quarterly	Sep-20	829	4.4%	0.0%	25,622	0.3%	-0.2%
— Private	\$m	Quarterly	Sep-20	1,407	-11.4%	-4.1%	80,332	-0.2%	-7.7%
Total State Final Demand	\$m	Quarterly	Sep-20	13,783	2.0%	3.6%	463,396	4.5%	-3.5%
LABOUR MARKET									
Job Vacancies (ACT³ AUS²)									
Public sector	'000	Quarterly	Nov-20	1.9	-1.2%	-22.4%	25.6	16.9%	4.9%
Private sector	'000	Quarterly	Nov-20	6.0	62.1%	13.9%	228.8	24.1%	12.9%
Total Job Vacancies	'000	Quarterly	Nov-20	7.9	40.4%	2.3%	254.4	23.4%	12.1%
Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings (AWOTE)									
Public sector (ACT ³ AUS ²)	\$	Bi-annually	May-20	2,058	0.9%	4.0%	1,851	2.3%	3.5%
Private sector (ACT ³ AUS ²)	\$	Bi-annually	May-20	1,622	1.2%	-1.4%	1,674	3.5%	4.9%
Total ⁴	\$	Bi-annually	May-20	1,864	2.0%	2.9%	1,714	3.3%	4.8%
Estimated Resident Population ³	Number	Quarterly	June-20	431,114	0.3%	1.1%	25,687,041	0.1%	1.3%
Labour Force (ACT² AUS²)									
Unemployment rate	%	Monthly	Jan-21	4.4	0.7ppts	1.5ppts	6.4	-0.2ppts	1.1ppts
Unemployed persons	'000	Monthly	Jan-21	10.7	1.5	3.7	877.6	-34.3	156.0
Employed persons	'000	Monthly	Jan-21	234.0	-4.8	1.7	12,939.9	29.1	-45.6
Employment growth	%	Monthly	Jan-21		-2.0	0.7		0.2	-0.4
Participation rate	%	Monthly	Jan-21	71.2	-1.0ppts	1.1ppts	66.1	-0.1ppts	0.1ppts
Wage Price Index (ACT³ AUS²)									
Private sector	Index	Quarterly	Sep-20	133.6	0.7%	1.5%	133.4	0.1%	1.2%
Public sector	Index	Quarterly	Sep-20	132.7	0.3%	1.4%	138.3	0.2%	1.8%
Total Wage Price Index	Index	Quarterly	Sep-20	133.3	0.5%	1.4%	134.5	0.1%	1.4%
PRICES									
Consumer Price Index — All Groups ³	Index	Quarterly	Dec-20	116.3	0.8%	1.1%	117.2	0.9%	0.9%
HOUSING MARKET									
Building Approvals (ACT³ AUS²)									
Residential approvals	Number	Monthly	Dec-20	469	-12.2%	-34.3%	19,537	10.9%	22.8%
Building Activity²									
Dwelling unit commencements	Number	Quarterly	Sep-20	721	-43.1%	-7.6%	42,545	-0.8%	3.5%
Construction Work Done (CVM)²									
Residential Building Work Done	\$m	Quarterly	Sep-20	509	-2.7%	6.6%	17,220	-1.0%	-8.9%
Housing Finance for Owner Occupiers⁶									
New loans ³	Number	Monthly	Dec-20	1,138	13.7%	24.9%	46,655	10.2%	38.8%
Value of new loans ²	\$m	Monthly	Dec-20	490	14.2%	32.6%	19,936	8.7%	38.9%
Housing Finance for Investors⁶									
New investor loans ³	Number	Monthly	Dec-20	374	13.0%	23.8%	13,582	12.6%	7.6%
Value of new investor loans ²	\$m	Monthly	Dec-20	155	3.2%	20.7%	6,071	8.2%	10.9%
Canberra Residential Property Price⁷									
Established houses ⁸	Index	Quarterly	Sep-20	137.7	0.9%	6.2%	148.6	1.0%	5.0%
Attached dwellings ⁹	Index	Quarterly	Sep-20	107.7	0.8%	1.8%	132.3	0.3%	3.1%
All residential dwellings	Index	Quarterly	Sep-20	130.3	0.9%	5.0%	144.3	0.8%	4.5%

Notes

1) Gross Domestic Product for Australia. 2) Seasonally adjusted data. 3) Original data. 4) Trend data. 5) Over the year is the percentage change from same period of the previous year. 6) Excludes refinancing. 7) This data is sourced from the ABS Residential Property Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities. 8) Established houses refer to detached residential dwellings. 9) Attached dwellings include flats, units and apartments, and semi-detached, row and terrace houses.

Abbreviations & notations

CVM = Chain Volume Measure; n.a. = Not applicable; ppts = Percentage points

Economic indicators for the Australian Capital Territory can be found at <http://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/snapshot>

Executive Branch Manager: David Hedley (6205 9121) | Macroeconomic and Federal Financial Relations Branch

Revenue Outlook**Talking points:**

- The economic and employment effects of the pandemic, along with Government revenue initiatives to support the community and business through the pandemic, have had a significant impact on both own source and GST revenue.
- However, as economic and employment conditions have improved more quickly than expected, estimates of total *general government sector* revenue have been upgraded by around \$813.8 million since *EFU* over the three years to 2022-23.
 - Nonetheless, total *general government sector* revenue remains lower by around \$867.9 million over the three years to 2022-23 since the *2019-20 Budget Review* prior to the pandemic.¹
- *Own-source taxation* revenue was upgraded by around \$105.8 million since *EFU* over the four years to 2023-24. Despite the upgrade, own-source tax revenue is still expected to be \$512.7 million lower over the four years to 2023-24 than estimated in the *2019-20 Budget Review* prior to the pandemic.
- *GST* revenue was upgraded by around \$338 million since *EFU* over the four years to 2023-24, although this is still lower than forecast in the *2019-20 Budget Review*. This upgrade is largely driven by an upward revision of \$18 billion to the GST pool.
- Commonwealth grants contributed strongly to higher total General Government Sector revenue, adding an additional \$291 million since *EFU* over the four years to 2023-24. This is primarily due to the Commonwealth's contribution to the costs of the COVID-19 public health response and to infrastructure investment to support the economic recovery from the pandemic.
- Land sales revenue, which flows through to General Government Sector revenue as dividends and income tax equivalents, has also made a significant contribution to the more positive revenue outlook. In 2020-21, dividends and income tax equivalents from the Suburban Land Agency are expected to be \$438.5 million and in 2021-22 are expected to be \$157.4 million.
- Contributed Assets are estimated to be \$157 million in 2020-21 and are forecast to increase to \$220.5 million in 2021-22. Gains from contributed assets rose markedly in

¹ For Commonwealth payments it is only possible to compare the three years to 2022-23 with the 2019-20 Budget Review as projections for 2023-24 were not available at that time.

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2021-22 reflecting the transfer of infrastructure assets, such as roads and sewerage, associated with increased land sales in 2020-21.

Key Information

- *Own-source taxation* revenue is forecast to be around \$105.8 million higher since EFU over the four years to 2023-24, but revenue remains \$512.7 million lower over the four years to 2023-24 relative to forecasts in the *2019-20 Budget Review*.
 - Payroll tax revenue was revised down by around \$14.8 million since EFU over the four years to 2023-24 and is \$251 million lower over the four years to 2023-24 relative to forecasts at the time of the *2019-20 Budget Review*.
 - General rates revenue is unchanged from EFU but is around \$93 million lower over the four years to 2023-24 relative to forecasts at the time of the *2019-20 Budget Review*.
 - Land tax revenue is expected to be \$4.4 million higher since EFU over the four years to 2023-24, but is around \$15.5 million lower over the four years to 2023-24 relative to forecasts at the time of the *2019-20 Budget Review*.

Table 3.5.1: General Government Sector revenue

	2019-20 Budget Review \$'000	2019-20 Audited outcome \$'000	2020-21 Revised estimate \$'000	2021-22 Revised estimate \$'000	2022-23 Revised estimate \$'000	2023-24 Revised estimate \$'000
Own source taxation	2,035,837	1,949,207	1,987,230	2,156,238	2,269,753	2,390,173
Goods and Services Tax ¹	1,356,410	1,239,910	1,221,537	1,300,627	1,380,095	1,441,559
Commonwealth grants	1,031,471	1,123,497	1,158,195	1,244,883	1,240,798	1,273,534
Sales of goods and services	583,552	546,992	561,693	602,108	621,838	636,926
Investment revenue	209,597	234,986	218,819	235,565	243,930	252,194
Dividend and income tax equivalents	224,454	157,661	486,739	216,301	127,083	206,342
Gains from contributed assets	136,480	182,098	156,997	220,470	242,834	156,091
Other revenue	190,508	170,596	189,866	195,682	204,178	203,315
Total	5,768,309	5,604,947	5,981,076	6,171,874	6,330,509	6,560,134

Note:

1. The Commonwealth Government's Final Budget Outcome released on 25 September 2020 (after the 2019-20 audited outcome was finalised) records GST for 2019-20 (in thousands) at \$1,239,024.

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Table 3.5.2: Own-source taxation revenue

	2019-20 Budget Review \$'000	2019-20 Audited outcome \$'000	2020-21 Revised estimate \$'000	2021-22 Revised estimate \$'000	2022-23 Revised estimate \$'000	2023-24 Revised estimate \$'000
General tax						
Payroll Tax	582,476	561,775	563,507	606,910	653,035	702,666
Tax waivers	2,317	-	9,636	4,497	2,337	2,384
Commercial general rates	211,013	210,422	219,019	241,320	255,794	270,980
Residential (unit titled) general rates	82,113	87,358	91,314	108,267	117,294	126,825
Residential (non-unit titled) and rural general rates	305,945	299,498	304,210	335,980	351,734	368,139
Land tax	150,945	143,378	147,404	158,720	168,945	177,331
Total general tax	1,334,809	1,302,430	1,335,090	1,455,694	1,549,139	1,648,325
Duties						
Commercial conveyances	73,538	47,664	55,687	61,258	66,386	70,906
Residential conveyances	176,366	149,694	160,921	186,853	190,806	196,099
Motor vehicle registrations and transfers	33,464	36,427	31,500	32,603	32,961	33,653
Total duties	283,368	233,785	248,108	280,714	290,153	300,658
Gambling taxes						
Tabcorp licence fee	1,101	1,087	1,129	1,159	1,186	1,216
Gaming tax	34,993	27,135	35,823	40,576	40,715	40,859
Casino tax	2,710	2,012	2,750	2,840	2,911	2,984
Interstate lotteries	15,874	14,828	13,342	15,010	17,095	17,522
Betting Operations Tax	8,980	11,458	14,370	15,232	16,146	17,115
Total gambling taxes	63,658	56,521	67,414	74,817	78,053	79,696
Other taxes						
Motor Vehicle Registration ¹	149,600	155,739	150,688	153,408	156,164	159,066
Ambulance Levy	25,603	23,937	24,117	24,418	24,723	25,094
Lease Variation Charge	23,207	23,208	22,044	23,736	24,948	27,220
Utilities (Network Facilities) Tax	42,368	41,342	42,160	43,088	44,081	45,205
Fire and Emergency Service Levy	87,374	86,679	87,770	89,720	91,690	93,940
City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy	2,340	2,150	1,085	2,170	2,170	2,170
Energy Industry Levy	3,530	3,392	3,754	3,373	3,432	3,499
Lifetime Care and Support Levy ²	15,080	15,145	-	-	-	-
Safer Families Levy	4,900	4,879	5,000	5,100	5,200	5,300
Total other taxes	354,002	356,471	336,618	345,013	352,408	361,494
Total taxation	2,035,837	1,949,207	1,987,230	2,156,238	2,269,753	2,390,173

Notes: Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

- From 2020-21, Motor Vehicle Registration fees will no longer include revenue from the 'ACT Compulsory Third-Party Insurance Regulator Levy' as this levy was replaced by a new levy called 'Motor Accident Injuries Levy' on 1 February 2020. The new levy will be reported under 'Sales of goods and services'.
- From 2020-21, the Lifetime Care and Support Levy will be reported under 'Other current revenue'.

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Rates Relief

Talking points:

- To support households during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government provided general rates relief to all residential ratepayers in 2020-21.
 - Every rate paying household received a \$150 rebate.
 - The tax rates for every household are lower than they would have been had the Government not stepped in to support households through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As a result, the average residential general rates bill did not increase in 2020-21.
- General rates reduced for around 110,000 of 170,000 residential properties, or around two thirds of properties, after the \$150 rebate was applied.
- The remaining approximately 60,000 residential properties had an increase either due to:
 - their land value increasing significantly relative to the ACT average land value change, or
 - being a high value block of land with a large rates bill relative to the \$150 rebate.
- Of the 60,000 residential properties with increases in general rates,
 - around 50,000 had an increase of \$100 or less, and
 - around 40,000 had an increase of \$50 or less.
- The Government has also brought forward Stage 3 of the tax reform program to 2021-22, with average general rates increasing by 3.75 per cent a year over the five years of Stage 3.
 - This is lower than during Stage 2 (prior to the COVID-19 support measures) in response to lower wage growth and business income expectations as the economy continues to recover from the pandemic.

Key Information

- The Government's commitment in relation to *average* rates keeps the connection between average unimproved land values (AUVs) and residential rates bills. This maintains fairness in the tax system, noting it will continue to use AUVs to calculate residential rates into the future.

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TRIM Ref:	CM2021/463	

Background Information

- The Government's policy for 2020-21 household rates has had the following impact:
 - More than 110,000 residential properties had a rates reduction (65 per cent of properties)
 - More than 76,000 houses (67 per cent of houses)
 - More than 34,000 units (60 per cent of units)
 - Around 24,000 residential properties had a rates increase between 0 and 1 per cent (14 per cent of properties)
 - Around 15,500 houses (14 per cent of houses)
 - Around 8,500 units (15 per cent of units)
 - Around 19,000 residential properties had a rates increase between 1 and 2 per cent (11 per cent of properties)
 - Around 13,000 houses (11 per cent of houses)
 - Around 6,000 units (11 per cent of units)
 - Around 15,000 residential properties had a rates increase between 2 and 5 per cent (9 per cent of properties)
 - Around 9,000 houses (8 per cent of houses)
 - Around 6,000 units (9 per cent of units)
 - Around 2,500 residential properties had a rates increase of 5 per cent or more (1.5 per cent of properties)
 - Around 500 houses (0.4 per cent of houses)
 - Around 2,000 units (3.6 per cent of units)

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COMMERCIAL RATES ASSISTANCE

Talking points:

- To support commercial property owners during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government provided a rebate of the commercial rates fixed charge of \$2,622 in 2019-20 for commercial properties with an average unimproved value (AUV) of less than \$2 million (90 per cent of all commercial properties) and average general rates for these properties will not increase in 2020-21.
 - In addition, under Stage 3 of tax reform, which will now commence in 2021-22, average general rates for all commercial properties will increase by 3.75 per cent per annum over the five years of Stage 3, compared with the average annual increases of 6 per cent over Stage 2.
- The ACT Government has also supported commercial tenants by offering commercial rates relief (waivers and deferrals) to landlords who provided rent relief to tenants who had been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Owner occupiers have also benefitted from this commercial rate relief.
- This commercial rates relief supported the negotiation of rent reductions between landlords and tenants under the National Code of Conduct on small to medium enterprises (SME) commercial leasing principles.
 - It was provided from 1 April 2020 until 31 January 2021 when the National Code ceased to operate in the ACT.
 - Applications for rent relief are being accepted until 31 March 2021.
- As at 18 February 2021, the Government has approved 426 applications for commercial rates relief. The vast majority of the applications approved (396) are for properties with an AUV of \$2 million or less and the remaining 30 are for properties with an AUV above \$2 million.
 - Over \$2.8 million in rates waivers have been provided to commercial property owners since April 2020.

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Key Information

Commercial Rates Assistance Measures

Waivers and deferrals linked to commercial rent relief

- The Government has supported commercial landlords who provide rent relief to their tenants and owner-operators through commercial rates waivers/deferrals, with the level of support determined by how significantly tenants have been affected by COVID-19.
- A tiered category system ensured that business tenants experiencing little to no impact continued to pay their rent, while those suffering the most financial hardship received the highest level of support.
- The three broad categories of business tenants for commercial property owners with properties with an average unimproved value (AUV) of \$2 million or below were:
 - Category 1 – Business tenants (or owner-operated properties) who had been partially or not affected.
 - No relief was provided.
 - Category 2 – Business tenants (or owner-operated properties) significantly affected (at least 30 per cent reduction in business income) but still operating.
 - Landlords with business tenants in this category, received a rebate of 25 per cent of the rent reduction provided to tenants, capped at the lower of \$5,000 per quarter (or around \$380 per week) or the total of the quarterly rates bill.
 - Owner-operated properties received a rebate of 50 per cent of the rates bill up to \$5,000 per quarter (around \$380 per week).
 - Category 3 – Business tenants (or owner operated properties) who had effectively shut-down operations (at least 80 per cent reduction in business income).
 - Landlords with business tenants in this category, received 50 per cent of the rent reduction provided to tenants as a rebate from the Government, capped at the lower of \$8,000 per quarter (or around \$615 per week) or the total of the quarterly rates bill.
 - Owner-operated properties received a rebate of 80 per cent of the rates bill up to \$8,000 per quarter (around \$615 per week).

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Lead Directorate:	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development	
Cleared for release	Yes	
Information Officer name:	Kathy Goth	Ext: 50772
TRIM Ref:	CM2021/463	

Hardship Deferral Access

- The Government provided access to hardship deferrals of rates payments for commercial property owners with no interest up to March 2021, was administered by the ACT Revenue Commissioner.
- As at 29 January 2021, 142 hardship deferrals have been granted, of over \$16 million, \$9 million of which represents charges prior to COVID-19.

Fixed Charge Rebate, Fire and Emergency Services Levy and City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy

- The Government provided a rebate of the commercial rates fixed charge of \$2,622 for commercial properties with an average unimproved value (AUV) of less than \$2 million in 2019-20 and that the Fire and Emergency Services Levy in 2020-21 has been frozen at 2019-20 levels.
 - The issuing and due date of rates notice for the 4th quarter of 2019-20 was also delayed by a month.
- The Government also reduced the City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy by 50 per cent in 2020-21, with the balance of the payment deferred until February 2021.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	19/02/2021	
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Cleared for release	Yes	
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TRIM Ref:	CM2021/463	

CM21/7297

Portfolio/s: Chief Minister

Chief Minister

ACT Public Service Professional Standards Unit - investigation timeframes

Talking points:

- During 2019-20, my office was informed of 4 disclosures received by ACT Public Sector entities which were assessed as Public Interest Disclosure matters (PIDs) under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012*. It was noted that several matters received by entities, which claimed to be PIDs, were determined after consideration by the responsible entity not to fall within the scope of disclosable conduct and addressed through means outside of the PID process.

Key Information

- During 2019-20, the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) received 65 new misconduct referrals from across the ACT Public Sector, a decrease from 85 received during the previous financial year. In addition to the new referrals, the PSU had 27 matters pending from the prior financial year.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 11/02/2021
Cleared for public release by: Deputy Director-General Ext:75397
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Lead Directorate: Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

TRIM Ref: CM21/7297

CM21/7309

Portfolio/s: Chief Minister

Chief Minister

What actions are being taken to guard against corruption in the ACT Public Service

Talking points:

ACTPS

- As noted by the Integrity Commission, the ACT Public Service has well established corruption processes in place.
- We routinely look to evolve our practices in these areas.
- All Directorates have a Fraud and Corruption Plan in place. Plans are reviewed every two years (or more frequently, if required).
- A new whole of Government conflicts of interest policy is under development. Stakeholder consultation occurred last year. The policy will be released imminently.
- All Directorates maintain conflicts of interest registers.
- All executives must make a declaration of interest on engagement, every 12 months thereafter and following a change in their circumstances.
- Directors-General have an obligation to pursue a systemic approach to integrity and are required to report on their fraud and corruption prevention plans in their annual reports.
- Public interest disclosure legislation creates opportunities for members of the service and the public to call out matters of potential fraud and corruption. Last year we had three such matters.
- In December 2020, the Probity in Procurement Guide was released. The Guide provides guidance to employees on probity and ethical behaviour in procurement processes, including the management of conflicts of interest.

CMTEDD

- CMTEDD fraud and ethics e-learning was launched in November 2019. 912 CMTEDD staff have completed this training to date.
- The CMTEDD Intranet - has a Conflict of Interest (COI) page [COI Page](#) which has an accessible copy of the [CMTEDD COI Policy](#), factsheets, advice for managers and instructions to report a COI.
- A Fraud Prevention Awareness Campaign was implemented throughout September to December 2019. Posters and face to face training was used to spread the

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message to CMTEDD staff, including a message from the Senior Executive Responsible for Business Integrity.

- The CMTEDD Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan provides the overarching policy principles to manage corruption risk and foster a culture of integrity.
- The CMTEDD Senior Executive Responsible for Business Integrity and Risk regularly meets with the Integrity Commission and this role is promoted to staff via CMTEDD Induction and Fraud Ethical Awareness eLearning and the CMTEDD intranet

Key Information

- Directors-General must include details of the implementation of fraud and corruption prevention plan in the Annual Report to the Minister.
- The Public Sector Management Act places the obligation to disclose and manage conflicts of interest on individual employees.
- All executive must make a declaration of interest on engagement, every 12 months and changes in circumstances.

Background Information

- Directors-General have an obligation to pursue a systemic approach to integrity in accordance with section 13 of the Public Sector Management Standards 2006 (repealed – relevant sections are enlivened by PSM Standards 2016).
- Section 14 of the PSM Standards 2006 provides that director-general must include details of the implementation of fraud and corruption prevention plan in the Annual Report to the Minister.
- Section 46 of the Public Sector Management Standards provides that SES members must disclose material interests. Executives are notified of their obligations in their letter of offer.
- The Probity in Procurement Guide was developed by Procurement ACT, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development and is available at https://www.procurement.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1689678/Probity-in-Procurement-Guide-December-2020-v.1.0.pdf.

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