



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMY AND GENDER AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY
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Submission Cover sheet

Inquiry into Unpaid Work

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Inner South Canberra Community Council

Secretary

Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality

LACommitteeEGEE@parliament.act.gov.au

Inquiry into unpaid work: submission from the ISCCC

1. The Inner South Canberra Community Council (ISCCC) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on unpaid work. We respond to the terms of reference below.

2. The ISCCC recommends that the Government should:

- i) ensure adequate funding of community associations and organisations in recognition of their work in parks and their role as a link between government and the community;
- ii) make better use of community associations and organisations to foster community, build resilience and well-being and communicate information; and
- iii) encourage understanding within Canberra of:
 - the role of community associations and organisations
 - the value of community associations and organisations to our economy
 - the value of proper, transparent and objective community consultation
 - appropriate funding of community associations and organisations

with a view to enabling fruitful discussions and co-operation to improve well-being and budget outcomes.

3. The ISCCC responds to the terms of reference of the inquiry below. We address:

1. The economic contribution of unpaid work including volunteering
2. How non-paid work is captured in the ACT's well-being budget
4. Opportunities to support recognition of unpaid work in the ACT
5. Challenges faced by unpaid workers in the ACT

6. Other related matters

A particular challenge in Canberra

4. The ACT government fulfils both state and local government responsibilities. The ACT population is now 478,800. The size of the ACT is small but there are parts that are densely populated. The table below shows the average population serviced by local councils in Australia in 2017.

Table A – average population served by a local council in 2017

State/Territory	Area by sq km	Number of councils	Population: State/Territory	Average number of people served by each council
NSW	801,150	131	8,800,00	67,176
Queensland	1.727 million	77	4,500,000	58,442
South Australia	983,482	74	1,717,000	22,202
Tasmania	68,401	59	519,050	8,797
Victoria	227,444	79	6,244,227	79,481
Western Aust	2.646 million	137	2,567,788	18,743
NT	1.42 million	18	245,049	13,614
ACT	2,358	1	406,048	406,048

5. In addition, the ACT has proportional representation, so no one member is responsible for an area. This increases the need for a properly functioning framework for local consultation. The eight member organisations of the ISCCC are in two electorates – Kurrajong and Murrumbidgee. Members of the Assembly representing Murrumbidgee liaise with community councils in Woden Valley, Weston Creek, Molonglo, Tuggeranong and the Inner South. While Denman Prospect is being developed, communities in the Inner South are celebrating their first 100 years.

The economic contribution of unpaid work including volunteering

6. Members of the ISCCC undertake significant unpaid work in parks and gardens. For example, the GNCA supports six parks in its area. Volunteers meet regularly to weed, plant and eradicate weeds. They work with the government to ensure that the parks function as welcome places for rest and recreation for residents. Similarly, members of the Old Narrabundah Community Council support the continuing administration and maintenance of the Narrabundah Tennis Courts and Community Gardens, volunteering their

time to ensure the continued viability of their local public and social assets. They do this because they understand the value of these spaces in building community morale, and demonstrating to fellow residents that their community is valued and cared for. We could offer more examples from across the Inner South of Canberra.

7. In Australia, unpaid work is 14% of GDP. It is valued at \$7.56 billion in social production and has a figure of \$287.86 billion. People over 65 are significant contributors in the ACT and this accords with the Australian experience. Social production comes from unpaid contributions to society through various activities. Social production is important because it's the glue that holds society together. It's an essential element of a wellbeing economy – an economy that prioritises an inclusive, holistic, and balanced approach to social and economic progress.

How non-paid work is captured in the ACT's well-being budget

8. The ACT's 2023-4 budget is said to invest in the well-being of Canberrans with the aim of strengthening the community at a time when the city is growing and changing. Many Canberrans live alone. Many have come here from interstate or overseas. Community organisations and associations help develop the community, particularly through demonstrating that fellow residents care about the community in which they live.

9. The ISCCC welcomes this inquiry into how that contribution is captured in the budget and suggests: the continued (small) funding of community organisations associations; discussions with them; and recognition of their role through attendance at events, non-disparagement and understanding based on facts.

Opportunities to support recognition of unpaid work in the ACT

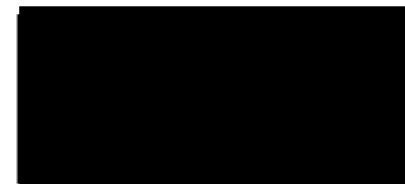
10. It would be helpful if the government and members of the Legislative Assembly recognised local community associations and organisations by: alerting them to developments affecting the local community; consulting with them about proposals for change in the local area; and otherwise showing respect for their input. For example, when it was announced that Griffith was to receive a walk-in health centre, the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith contacted the Griffith Narrabundah Community Association and walked possible sites with them. This allowed the local community group to explain the proposal to its community, including local businesses and residents. The Minister for Heritage, Rebecca Vassarotti, has walked through Telopea Park with local residents listening to their ideas.

Challenges faced by unpaid workers in the ACT

11. Preconceptions can result in bias in decision making, and reliance on preconceptions has increased through the prevalence of social media. Opinions may be formed about organisations without up-to-date and accurate information.

Related matters

12. Australia's population is growing older, with an increase in median age from 32.7 in 1999 to 38.5 in 2022. Those aged over 65 have increased during the same period from 11% in 1999 to 17% in 2022. The median age in Canberra is 35.6 which is the second lowest of any Australian capital. A demographic shift is occurring. While older Australians often have more free time to devote to volunteering activity, they also have strong links within the community through their membership of local organisations and their own families, which may span three or four generations. The prevalence of older people in community organisations can lead to some pejorative comment from those wishing to downplay the value and relevance of those organisations. At the same time, older Australians may need more help to take advantage of opportunities presented for voluntary organisations by the digital economy.



Colin Walters
President
ISCCC

15 May 2024