

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Our community groups and many community facilities rely on our community centres and facilities for their regular activities. The Greens want to support these groups to have buildings that are energy efficient, comfortable and affordable for community organisations to run.

Many Government owned buildings that are leased to community organisations are in urgent need of upgrades to improve energy efficiency. These buildings are often cold in winter and hot in summer, which leads to high energy bills for occupants and low thermal comfort. The Government's Zero Emissions Loan Fund is available to support upgrades to Government owned facilities, but is only suitable for projects that have a return on investment through reduced energy bills. Energy bills for buildings that are leased to community organisations are paid by the organisation, therefore there is no return to Government through reduced energy bills. The Greens and the community are concerned that these projects are not eligible for funding through this Loan Fund.

Some community organisations have their own facilities that require extensive heating and cooling of large spaces, are inefficient and expensive to run, and these costs are only increased by climate change impacts such as heat waves and smoke.

THAT'S WHY THE ACT GREENS WILL IMPROVE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND REDUCE RUNNING COSTS OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED COMMUNITY BUILDINGS AS WELL AS INVESTING IN NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES, BY:

1. Establishing a \$1 million annual grant stream as part of the Zero Emissions Government Fund to fund upgrades to Government owned buildings that are leased to community organisations
2. Establishing a \$2 million annual upgrade fund for community owned buildings that are used by the public
3. Facilitating tenants to make upgrades to the property where appropriate by streamlining procedures for approval
4. Building a new community multipurpose centre in Gungahlin

1. ESTABLISH A DEDICATED \$1 MILLION GRANT STREAM FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES UPGRADES

The [Zero Emissions Government Fund](#) provides interest free loans to Government agencies to support emissions reduction projects. The focus is on projects that cut emissions from natural gas and transport. Energy bill savings are used to repay loans, continually replenishing the Fund. At present, this Fund is not applicable to Government buildings that are leased to tenants due to the energy bills being paid by the community organisation rather than by Government, meaning there is no payback for Government through reduced energy bills.

To address this, we will establish a \$1 million per year grant stream which will provide grants for upgrading Government buildings that are leased to community organisations. The funding will be delivered as a grant and no repayment will be required.

This will enable much needed upgrades to Government buildings that are occupied by community organisations, helping to reduce emissions and operations costs for the organisations.

2. ESTABLISHING A \$2 MILLION ANNUAL UPGRADE FUND FOR COMMUNITY OWNED BUILDINGS THAT ARE USED BY THE PUBLIC

The Greens know the value of community-owned facilities that are accessible to the public as learning and training centres, event venues and meeting spaces. The Greens will establish an annual \$2 million upgrade fund to enable community organisations to apply for funding to upgrade non-government owned buildings that are used by the public such as scout and guide halls.

The fund will take the form of grants and no-interest loans for community organisations, to undertake upgrades to their buildings which will reduce their bills and improve environmental outcomes or better support social inclusion and accessibility, by constructing gender neutral toilets or change room facilities. The fund will stimulate investment in improvements to community owned facilities improving their amenity for the use and enjoyment of all Canberrans.

3. FACILITATING TENANTS TO MAKE UPGRADES TO PROPERTIES

At present it can be difficult for community organisations that are leasing government buildings through ACT Property Group to make minor upgrades, such as painting or replacing the carpet. We will work with community sector tenants to address the government procedures and other barriers to enable minor upgrades where appropriate to allow

community groups to have modern and comfortable accommodation for their community activities.

4. BUILD A NEW COMMUNITY MULTIPURPOSE CENTRE IN GUNG AHLIN

Given the growing population in Gungahlin the Greens want a new community centre to provide a space for organisations and community members to meet and hold activities.

We know the Gungahlin community has long called for more community centre space, especially the many multicultural community groups, and we understand the importance of having more places available for our community to meet.

Noting that there are diverse unmet needs in Gungahlin, the Greens will undertake a scoping study to establish the community needs to determine what should be included in a new multipurpose community centre in Gungahlin, and will invest in constructing a centre to meet these needs in the next term of Assembly.

OTHER RELEVANT INITIATIVES

The initiatives in this package are in addition to a range of measures for community facilities that have been announced in other initiatives. These include:

- [A new community facility for Woden](#): Building a new multi-purpose indoor sports centre, combined with community meeting rooms, in the Woden Town Centre
- [Clubs for the Community](#):
 - Creating a network of pokie-free community clubs across Canberra by offering financial support and incentives for pokie-free venues, to create more spaces for our community to gather
 - Establishing a \$5 million Community Facilities and Clubs Environmental Upgrade fund
- [A Gender Led Recovery](#): Building and/or repurposing community spaces across Canberra to ensure sufficient access to meet the needs of women's led groups in the ACT.
- [Properly funding the Arts](#): Establishing a \$1.5 million fund to support upgrades to community arts venues and facilities.
- [Neighbourhood Democracy](#): Enabling community members to decide how to allocate funds within their suburbs for facilities and upgrades that the community feels needs attention.
- [Education](#): Improving community use of school halls for public use with standard rates of hire.