

CANBERRA

# VitalSigns<sup>®</sup>

2018

TAKING THE PULSE OF OUR COMMUNITY



Hands  
Across  
Canberra  
Your Community Foundation



THE  
SNOW  
FOUNDATION



# Overview

## WHAT IS CANBERRA'S VITAL SIGNS?

**Vital Signs Canberra 2018 is a community-led research initiative that explores key themes of health, education and employment, housing and belonging. Vital Signs is a global research methodology designed to help identify a community's successes and challenges.**

## HANDS ACROSS CANBERRA AND THE SNOW FOUNDATION

**Hands Across Canberra in partnership with The Snow Foundation is launching Vital Signs Canberra. These two leading organisations are focused on supporting disadvantaged people and have engaged deeply with the Canberra community with this lens of disadvantage in mind to deliver Vital Signs Canberra 2018.**

**Vital Signs will assist with raising awareness of the strengths and challenges within our community by identifying trends, priorities and opportunities. It aims to create the incentive to build community action and help decide where to focus attention and resources to have the greatest impact.**

Vital Signs Canberra 2018 provides a snapshot of our unique city, grounded in data and local knowledge focused on our four themes of Health, Education and Employment, Housing and Belonging. It provides an insight into our community and has uncovered very different realities for many people across the city:

- We have a median age of 34, we also have the fastest growing population of people over the age of 65 in Australia.
- We have the highest median disposable household income in Australia, yet many people live in poverty.
- Nearly 70% own their own home, yet buying is becoming less affordable, and the ACT is experiencing a severe shortage of rental properties with less than 1% of properties available.
- We are the most physically active Australians, yet obesity is the 3rd largest contributor to disease burden in the city and mental health is a growing issue.
- While we are a highly educated workforce and have high numbers of students receiving a year 12 certificate, we also have challenges making educational achievement a reality for disadvantaged or minority groups.
- We believe that diversity strengthens our community. Discrimination complaints are decreasing however disability and race top the list of complaints to the ACT Human Rights Commission.

## CANBERRA IS UNIQUE

As the capital city of Australia, Canberra is home to a range of national, cultural, research, political and government institutions, as well as more than 100 embassies and high commissions. For two decades we have hosted events that bring many elements of our community together, including the largest multicultural festival and the largest springtime festival in Australia. Our community attracts people from around the nation and the world, but receives low numbers of migrants and refugees.

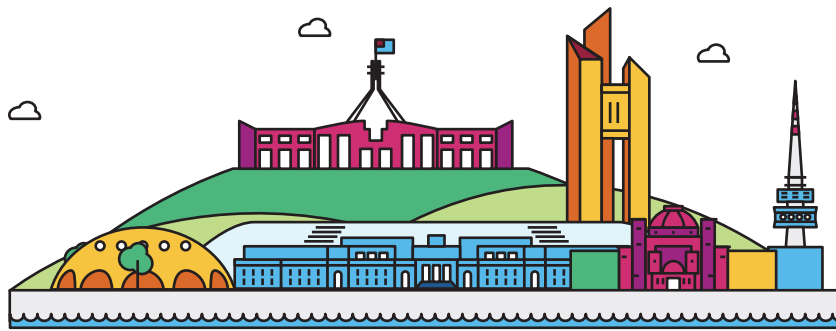
Canberrans are more likely to volunteer their time and donate more than the rest of Australia. In 2016, the Sustainable Cities Index ranked Canberra number 18 in the world and the number 1 sustainable city in Australia. We were the first jurisdiction in Australia to legislate human rights and had the highest percentage of people voting in favour of same-sex marriage.

Canberra is undergoing significant redevelopment to improve urban life and create new suburbs to accommodate our growing population. We expect to reach 500,000 residents by 2030.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. We wish to acknowledge and pay respect to their continuing culture and the contributions their elders past, present and future make to the life of this city and region.

# Our Canberra:



**415,900**  
Population

**34**  
Median age

## AGE



**19+%**  
Children  
0-14 years



**14%**  
Youth  
15-24 years



**54%**  
Adults  
25-64 years



**13%**  
Senior Citizens  
65+ years

## MULTICULTURAL

**180**  
Nationalities

**26%**  
born overseas  
**1.7%**  
of migrants coming  
to Australia

**24%**  
speak a  
language other  
than English  
at home

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

**16,900**  
people have a sexual  
orientation other  
than heterosexual

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

**1.8%**  
Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander people

## DISABILITY

**16%**  
people live  
with disability

**5%**  
people live with  
a profound or  
severe disability

## RELIGION

**45%** Christian **37%** No religion **9%** Other religion

## INCOME

**\$1,297**  
median weekly income after tax  
compared with \$877 for Australia



## POVERTY

**9%**  
are living in poverty  
of whom 25% are children

# VITAL SIGNS CANBERRA SCORE CARD

## HEALTH



**What we can celebrate**  
Australia's most  
physically active city.



**What we need to improve**  
Rates of overweight/  
obese residents, and  
poor mental health.

## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT



**What we can celebrate**  
Highest average  
education, low  
unemployment,  
highest wages.



**What we need to improve**  
Education equity and  
underemployment.

## HOUSING



**What we can celebrate**  
A high percentage of  
homeowners.



**What we need to improve**  
Housing affordability,  
rental stress,  
homelessness  
especially among  
older women, youth  
and children.

## BELONGING



**What we can celebrate**  
Highest levels of  
volunteering and giving.  
High social, cultural and  
sports participation.



**What we need to improve**  
Consider increasing  
numbers of new  
migrants and refugees.



# Health

## Key Messages and Trends

- Canberrans are more physically active than other Australians; however obesity remains a major issue in the ACT.
- Unlike most health issues, mental illness has a disproportionate affect on young people.
- Canberra has the lowest bulk-billing rate in Australia.
- A high proportion of people living with disability are low-income earners making access to medical and dental attention a challenge.

## HEALTHY LIVING

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

91.4% participated in sport or physical activity in the last 12 months, above the national participation rate of 89.8%.

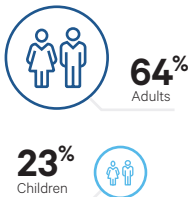
46% of older persons were meeting the national guidelines for adequate physical activity.

91.4%



### OVERWEIGHT/OBESITY

Obesity is the 3rd largest contributor to disease burden. 64% of adults, which is close to the national average of 63%, and 23% of children are either overweight or obese.



### ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

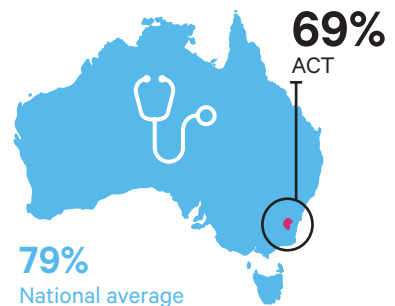
Between 2013 and 2016 there was a significant decrease in daily drinking from 6.6% to 3.6%, in comparison to a slight decline across Australia.



## ACCESS

### GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

The ACT has the lowest bulk-billing rate in Australia at 69% compared to the national average of 79%.



### REFUGEES

The ACT is the best performer when it comes to providing hospital and primary health care services to people seeking asylum.



## MENTAL HEALTH

76,000

Residents are affected by mental illness every year.

11,000  
5,000  
4,000

have an anxiety disorder  
have an affective disorder  
have a substance use disorder



### YOUTH

75% of all mental illness manifests by the age of 25.



### WOMEN

Of the 506 hospitalisations reported for self-harm in 2015-16, 76% were females.



### MEN

Men are three times more likely to commit suicide than women in the ACT.



### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

3x AS LIKELY

Almost one-third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 18 reported having high or very high levels of psychological distress. They are nearly three times as likely to experience these high levels of distress as non-Indigenous people.

### TRANSGENDER



Around 77% of transgender youth have been diagnosed with anxiety or depression.

79% of transgender youth have self-harmed and 42% have attempted suicide.

## DISABILITY

Over a quarter of people with a disability over the age of 15 years were in the bottom 40% of income earners compared to 12% of people with no reported disability.



## DEMENTIA

An estimated 4,400 people are living with dementia. Half of the people who lived in permanent residential aged care had a diagnosis of dementia.

4,400  
living with  
dementia



# Education and Employment

## Key Messages and Trends

- Canberra has a high performing education system and high completion rates.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Canberra have high completion rates and outperform their national peers in NAPLAN testing.
- Canberra has a highly educated workforce and low unemployment.
- The impact of a student's socioeconomic background on educational achievement is high in the ACT.
- Canberra has the highest new business growth in Australia.
- The unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is half the national figure.

## EDUCATION

### CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

At 55% the ACT has the highest proportion of children (0-12 years) attending child care services, compared with nationally 52% [and the trend is upwards].



### EQUITY



The impact of a student's socioeconomic background on achievement was significantly higher in the ACT than other Australian jurisdictions (placing it as low equity).

### CHILDCARE

20% of children do not have access to structured education between the ages of 1-4.



### YEAR 12 NUMBERS AND CERTIFICATES

In 2016-17 93% of Year 10 students proceeded to public secondary college education and 88% achieved an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students 86% proceeded to public secondary college and 73% received an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.



### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL NAPLAN PERFORMANCE

The ACT was highest or equal highest in the country in 19 out of the 20 areas tested in NAPLAN. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students outperformed their respective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander averages in each discipline.

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

During the first half of 2018, 14,055 international students were studying in the ACT, which was 2% of international students in Australia.



## EMPLOYMENT

### HIGHLY EDUCATED WORKFORCE

43% of people employed hold a Bachelor degree or higher compared with 31% nationally. 78% of people aged 15-64 years have a Year 12 Certificate (or equivalent) compared with 64% nationally.

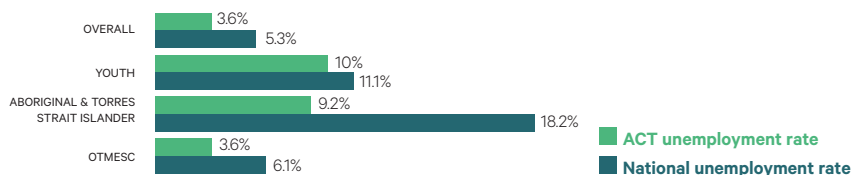


### UNDEREMPLOYMENT

The underemployment rate is 5.4% compared to 8.5% nationally, and the underutilisation rate (unemployed and underemployed) is 9.1% compared to 13.9% nationally.

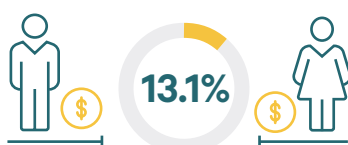
### UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate for the ACT is 36% compared to 5.3% nationally. The youth unemployment rate is 10% compared to 11.1% nationally. ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples unemployment rate is 9.2% compared to 18.2% nationally, and the unemployment rate for people born in Other than Main English Speaking Countries is 36% compared to 6.1% nationally.



### GENDER PAY GAP

The ACT's gender pay gap stood at 13.1% in May 2018 up from 12.4% a year earlier. The national figure for May 2018 was 14.6%.



### BUSINESS OWNERSHIP / ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The ACT experienced the strongest growth in new business in the financial year to 2016-17 with 4.5%, the Australian average was 3.1%.





# Housing

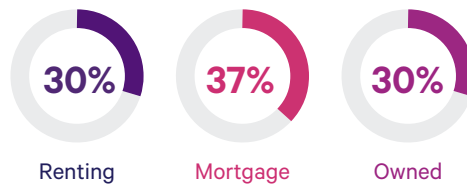
## Key Messages and Trends

- Renting in Canberra is becoming more unaffordable. There is a significant shortage of available rental properties in the market.
- Nearly half of Canberrans receiving government rental support are in rental stress.
- Homelessness remains an issue in Canberra with young people and older women facing particular challenges.
- Canberra is seeing a significant increase in rough sleepers.
- Buying a house is becoming less affordable for many people.
- Over half of female home owners who leave their home due to domestic violence become homeless in 12 months.

### HOUSING STRESS

#### RENTER OR OWNER

Nearly 30% are renting which has increased since 2011. 37% have a mortgage (which is higher than the Australian average at 34%), and 30% own their home outright.



#### RENT

Of those Canberrans receiving Commonwealth Rental Assistance, 48% are in rental stress (i.e. paying more than 30% of their income on rent). 22% are spending more than 50% of their income on rent – the highest proportion in Australia.



Canberra has 34% of low income households in rental stress, which has been increasing since 2009/10.

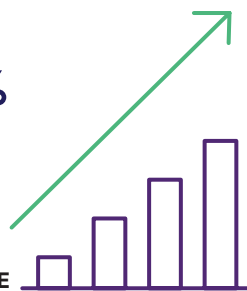
**34%**  
Rental stress



Canberra has had the highest annual rental increase at 4.5% behind Hobart at 10.7%.

**4.5%**  
Canberra

RENT  
INCREASE



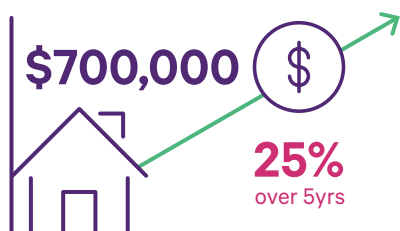
The current vacancy rate for available houses to rent in Canberra is less than 1% and this is decreasing.

**<1%**  
vacancy



#### HOUSE PRICES

The median house price is \$700,000 which has increased by 25% over the past 5 years.



Only 2.4% of houses sold in the 12 months to June 2018 transacted at a price under \$400,000.



### HOMELESSNESS

#### ROUGH SLEEPERS

In 2016 there were 54 rough sleepers, a doubling since 2011. The increase in the number of rough sleepers nationally is 20%.

**54**



#### HOMELESS SERVICES

4,585 clients sought assistance between 2016-2017 with nearly 30% being children. The proportion of older people seeking assistance increased from 11% to 17% with an 18% increase in older women.

**18%**



#### HOMELESS

The number of homeless people decreased by 8% between 2011 and 2016 to 1,600. Across Australia, the number increased by 14%.

**1,600**



#### PRIORITY HOUSING

On average, applicants for priority public housing are waiting for 207 days for a property.



#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Over half, 55%, of female home owners who leave their home because of domestic violence, become homeless in 12 months.





# Belonging

## Key Messages and Trends

- We are relatively inclusive and progressive, and believe that diversity strengthens our community.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are significantly over represented in out-of-home care.
- Canberra receives comparatively low numbers of migrants and refugees.
- Our community has strong engagement and participation in sports, culture and the arts.
- Canberrans demonstrate strong commitment to donating and to volunteering.

### COHESION

#### DIVERSITY

92% agree that it is good to have cultural diversity compared with the national average of 85%.

At 74% Canberra had the highest vote in favour of same sex marriage compared to the rest of Australia at 62% of voters.

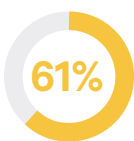


#### DISCRIMINATION

Although overall numbers of discrimination complaints to the ACT Human Rights Commission are low at 121, some 30% relate to disability and 20% relate to race, which have decreased from the previous year.

#### TRUST

Canberra has the highest proportion of people who feel they can trust most people at 61% compared to the rest of Australia at 55%.



#### CRIME RATES

In 2016-17 there was a 19% increase in reported crimes against the person. In the same period there was a 5% decrease in reported crimes against property.

#### SAFETY

56% of people feel safe walking in their neighbourhood at night.

### PARTICIPATION

#### CULTURE AND LEISURE

Canberra has the highest participation at 93% in cultural and leisure activities such as museums, art galleries, movies, concerts, public libraries compared with Australia at 87%.

### INCLUSION

#### STUDENTS

Students from the ACT had the 2nd lowest sense of belonging at school (behind the Northern Territory).

#### REFUGEES

The number of people granted a protection visa (refugee status) who resided in the ACT was 1.2% of all such grants.



#### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

28% of children in out-of-home care in the ACT are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, the second highest proportion in the country.



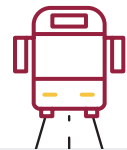
#### DISABILITY

62,000 people, 16%, live with a disability and are more likely to experience relatively poor health and lower levels of participation in education, training and employment.



#### TRANSPORT

Canberra ranked poorly for access to transport compared with other Australian cities.



### CONTRIBUTION

#### VOLUNTEERING

Almost 37% are volunteers. This is the highest rate in Australia (national average is 31%).

Canberra's youth have the highest participation in volunteering at 57% compared with youth nationally at 54%.



#### CHARITABLE GIVING

At 77% Canberra has the highest proportion of the community who donate money in Australia compared to the national average at 72%.





**Hands Across Canberra together with The Snow Foundation would like to thank the many individuals and organisations who have participated, assisted and contributed to this report.**

#### **Executive Committee**

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**Australian  
Community  
Philanthropy**

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations around the world that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. With special thanks to the Toronto Foundation for developing and sharing the Vital Signs concept. The Vital Signs logo and program is used with permission from Community Foundations of Canada. Australian Community Philanthropy manages the licensing of Vital Signs within Australia.

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If English is not your first language and you require translating and interpreting services please telephone 131 450 (within Australia).

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A summary of the data sourced for this report is available at [www.handsacrosscanberra.org.au/vital-signs](http://www.handsacrosscanberra.org.au/vital-signs)

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