

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 11

26 September 2025

Question No. 656

Shane Rattenbury MLA: To ask the Treasurer

Can the Minister provide a comparison, including funding provided for the Rent Relief Fund in 2024-2025, of ACT Government expenditure on cost-of-living relief measures targeted specifically to support low-income and other vulnerable households between the 2024-25 and 2025-26 ACT Budgets, including (a) a comparison of the total ACT Government expenditure (\$) across all such measures in 2024-2025 and in 2025-2026, (b) a comparison of the maximum annual amount (\$) of each concession, rebate, or other such support provided to eligible individuals/households in 2024-2025 and in 2025-2026, (c) any such measures provided in 2024-2025 that were not provided in 2025-2026 and vice versa and (d) any changes in eligibility to each concession, rebate, or other support between 2024-2025 and 2025-2026.

CHRIS STEEL MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The Government does not currently have a complete classification of cost-of-living measures carried out by all directorates and other agencies. It is therefore not possible to provide the total expenditure for cost-of-living relief measures currently delivered by the Government targeted specifically to support low-income and other vulnerable households in the 2024-25 and 2025-26 ACT Budgets. Similarly, it is not possible to comprehensively answer parts (b), (c) or (d) of the question. Answering these questions would require a whole of government report on assistance measures, requiring significant time and staff resources to compile.

The 2024-25 and 2025-26 Budget Cost of Living chapters include a list of some budget initiatives which provide cost-of-living relief. Budget initiatives are not a good measure of the effectiveness and adequacy of cost-of-living support provide by the Government, as they are only a partial indicator of the change in support in the budget year and not the total support provided by the Government. In the 2024-25 *Budget Outlook* (page 181), this included:

- providing an Electricity, Gas and Water Rebate (formerly the Utilities Concession) of \$800 to eligible recipients in 2024-25 (approximately 43,800 households);
- providing a one-off payment of \$250 to apprentices and trainees, who tend to earn just above the threshold to qualify for Commonwealth financial assistance but are still lower income earners relative to others in Canberra with a lower level of assets or savings;

- extending the Rent Relief Fund to assist those experiencing rental stress or financial hardship for a further year or until funds are expended;
- increasing access to stamp duty concessions for first home buyers;
- increasing the Future of Education Equity Fund in 2024 for families with financial hardship impacting access to and engagement in the education system for ACT students;
- increasing the value of vouchers available through the Utilities Hardship Fund;
- providing additional funding for community organisations, including Roundabout Canberra, Scouts ACT, Fearless Women and Women’s Health Matters to ensure their ongoing delivery of essential services to vulnerable Canberrans;
- increasing funding support for emergency material, financial aid programs and food relief services; and
- increasing assistance through the Taxi Subsidy Scheme.

In the 2025-26 *Budget Outlook* (page 151), this included:

- permanently increasing the Electricity, Gas and Water Rebate to \$800 for eligible recipients in 2025-26 (around 40,000 households);
- providing a one-off payment of \$250 to all ACT apprentices and trainees living in the ACT and an additional \$250 to first-year apprentices and trainees;
- a \$150 registration fee reduction for light trailers and caravans weighing 4.5 tonnes or less when fully loaded;
- increasing stamp duty concessions for first home buyers, pensioners and people with disability;
- a free school camp at Birrigai Outdoor School for primary school students at ACT public schools;
- an expansion of the Future of Education Equity fund in the 2025 school year to support an additional 1,000 students; and
- establishing a Food Bank Fund to support Canberrans facing financial stress and food insecurity.

The expenditure associated with each of these budget initiatives can be found in Chapter 3.2 (Investing in the Wellbeing of Canberrans) of the respective budget.

The Cost of Living chapters also include information on concessions relating to government taxes and fees, as well as some other support provided by government, summarised in the table below. This is not a comprehensive summary of all government measures which assist with cost of living.

Assistance measure	Expenditure 2024-25 \$'000	Expenditure 2025-26 \$'000	Maximum 2024-25	Maximum 2025-26	Changes in eligibility
Electricity, Gas and Water Rebate	24,900	32,800	\$800	\$800	Nil
General rates and police, fire and emergency services rebates	11,000	11,400	\$848	\$865	Nil

Apprentice and Trainee payment	620	1,700	\$250	\$500	First year apprentices are eligible to \$500.
Spectacles Subsidy Scheme	1,800	1,900	\$200 per two years	\$200 per two years	Nil
Taxi Subsidy Scheme	3,900	4,000	\$38,003	\$39,284	Nil
Motor vehicle registration concessions	13,800	14,000	Unlimited	Unlimited	Nil
Driver licence concessions	1,100	1,100	Unlimited	Unlimited	Nil
Public transport concessions	7,000	7,100	Unlimited	Unlimited	Nil

Notes:

1. Expenditure estimates are based on available data at the time of the 2025-26 Budget.
2. The maximum benefits under the Taxi Subsidy Scheme are based on the cap on trip subsidy and cap on number of subsidised trips. These are theoretical maximums and are significantly more than most users receive.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.

Chris Steel MLA
Treasurer

Date: 14/10/25

This response required 2hrs 55mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$363.49.