



# Giving Youth a Sporting Chance

Canberra**liberals**

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# Giving Youth a Sporting Chance

## Through our Police and Citizens Youth Clubs

**A Canberra Liberal Government will construct a new Police and Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) building in Gungahlin and provide funding to enhance the PCYC facilities in Erindale and Charnwood.**

Gungahlin is home to Canberra's fastest growing youth population. In coming years there will be challenges in providing sufficient recreational outlets for the youth population in this area.

The Canberra Liberal investment in the PCYC will enable the service to expand their activities to assist youth, particularly those who are at risk of lapsing into, or continuing, criminal activity.

The PCYC provides great opportunities for young people to experience a range of activities that they otherwise could not afford to participate in, as an alternative to engaging in risky behaviour on the streets. The PCYC programs include activities like boxing, aikido, circuit classes, rockwall climbing, skating and wrestling.

The PCYC provides some very practical services including youth holiday programs and self defence classes which help to deal with bullying in schools. The PCYC reserves places for referred youth at risk to provide them with the opportunity to participate in mainstream activities at no cost and to help break down barriers between young people and the police.

## The Need for New Investment in PCYCs

The Canberra Liberal investment in the PCYC centres is an important contribution to crime prevention.

The PCYC runs youth facilities which provide a home to innovative activities for young people, in an environment that fosters youth participation. The PCYC promotes:

- active physical and social programs which are good for the health and mental wellbeing of young people;
- advice, advocacy and case work to help young people who are in trouble; and
- positive friendly relationships between police and young people.

There is a high demand for the services provided by the PCYC, however financial constraints and the lack of facilities are limiting the programs and activities the PCYC can deliver.

## *Charnwood PCYC*

The new injection of funding will help secure a long-term future for the Ginninderra PCYC at Charnwood which suffers from a lack of resources. Just two years after its move from Turner, there are almost 600 members at the relocated PCYC. The Charnwood location puts the PCYC in the geographic area it is needed most, with ample space for its diversified activities. But what is lacking however is the funding required to see the facility achieve its potential.

## *Erindale PCYC*

The Erindale facility requires maintenance and new heating, to make it an even more attractive place for youth, particularly in winter. The Erindale PCYC has over 1,100 members including over 700 junior members.

## *Gungahlin PCYC*

A Canberra Liberal Government will provide the funding needed to establish a PCYC in Gungahlin. Gungahlin is the fastest growth town centre in Canberra. With a future population of 100,000, this town centre will have a large and growing youth population. This is the one part of Canberra that has seen a surge in school construction, while the Stanhope Government has been closing schools elsewhere.

The growth in Gungahlin's youth population should be accompanied by a growth in relevant recreational and support services.

The new Gungahlin PCYC will be staffed by a locally-based Centre Manager, a Sports and Activities Officer, plus a mixture of paid and voluntary coaches. The service will also be supported by the ReLink Youth Workers and the other sport and police liaison staff who operate across the service.

## **New Investment where it is Needed Most**

Currently the main income source for the PCYC is a grant income of \$400,000, received from the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, through their Youth Services Program.

A Canberra Liberal Government will commence planning and construction of the Gungahlin facility in 2009, with an appropriate site to be chosen in consultation with the Gungahlin community.

New equipment will be delivered at existing facilities in Erindale and Charnwood over the next 18 months. Additional ongoing grant support will be phased in over the next four years, including support for the new Gungahlin facility.

This support will help ensure that the Charnwood service has a secure future. West Belconnen is an area with high levels of social disadvantage and there is a strong need for activities to help disadvantaged youths in this area.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Capital - Construction of Gungahlin PCYC	300	2600		
Capital – Additional heating, equipment and fitout for Gungahlin PCYC	300	400	300	
Additional Grant support for staffing and operating costs (including heating).	100	300	600	600

## Background – the Police and Citizens Youth Club

Since 1957 the Police have been operating outreach services in Canberra to help young people at risk. The premises in Turner were built in 1960 when many of the young people of the city lived much closer to the city centre. This was followed by a second facility in Erindale (Wanniassa) in 1987, to meet the needs of the growing youth population in Tuggeranong Valley.

Recently the Turner facility has been closed and the future of the site remains uncertain. Canberra's population and urban spread have both grown a lot since 1983 and there is an emerging need for PCYC services in the new growth region of Gungahlin. These services should be extended to where they are needed most.

The primary focus of PCYC services is to provide fun, safe and engaging activities for youths who may be at risk of lapsing into, or continuing, criminal activity. The recreational activities run at the Centres help young people to develop socially and to understand some of the disciplines required for a successful life.

Most importantly the PCYC encourages young people recognise the values that they live by in some of the choices they make. The PCYC values underpin all activities sponsored by the organisation. The PCYC values include respect; self-respect; excellence; trust; accountability; commitment and diversity.

The Crime Prevention team at ACT Policing staffs the PCYC with sworn and unsworn members. The PCYC is supported by the RecLINK program which conducts outreach to youths at risk in juvenile detention, youth centres, refuges and schools. RecLINK helps to direct young people into the PCYC programs, to assist them to develop positive relationships, new skills and purposeful lives.