



ACT
Government

Commissioning for Outcomes

Investment Plan

ACT Seniors Card Program

May 2024

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Feedback

We welcomed comment on the detail contained within this investment plan, with a consultation window open for the period 19 February 2024 to 1 March 2024.

We received two responses which addressed the following areas and resulted in no substantial change to the investment plan:

- Ensuring the integrity of the ACT Seniors Card Program in relation to complaints handling and quality control. The investment plan requires the Supplier to demonstrate their complaints handling capability and the need for quality control measures on available program benefits through reporting mechanisms. The establishment of the reference group will also provide an avenue for such issues to be discussed.
- The importance of the ACT Government and the Supplier working together to support enhancements and improvements to the ACT Seniors Card Program. The establishment of the reference group will support key stakeholders to come together on a regular basis to support this work. This will be embedded in the Agreement.
- The challenge to enhance the ACT Seniors Card Program without additional budget investment. This is noted, with the intent of the reference group to support discussion across ACT Government to assist in working through solutions.

Introduction

The ACT Seniors Card Program is part of an Australia-wide scheme that recognises the valuable contribution of older people in their local community.

Permanent residents of Australia residing in the ACT, aged 60 years or over, who work less than 20 hours per week in paid employment can apply for an ACT Seniors Card.

The ACT Seniors Card is issued free of charge and provides access to savings on a range of goods and services provided by participating businesses and the ACT Government.

The ACT Government is committed to a new way of working with the community to deliver the ACT Seniors Card Program (“the Program”). This new way of working forms part of the [ACT Commissioning Roadmap](#).

Commissioning contains six phases: Discover, Strategise, Design, Invest, Deliver and Integrate. For the Program, our journey to date has been through the first three phases. Collectively, these phases are called Commissioning engagement.

The Community Services Directorate and the community worked closely throughout a Commissioning engagement process which occurred from November 2022 to June 2023. The process involved an independent review of the Program, a survey of over 3,000 Seniors Card holders and a design workshop with ACT Government, community sector stakeholders, the local business community and members of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing. This work has shaped a proposed pilot of the Program, which will be outlined in this Investment Plan.

We are now embarking on phase 4: Invest, drawing on findings and insights from Commissioning engagement to inform how the ACT Government will allocate funding and resources for the Program over a two-year pilot (from 1 July 2024). The ACT Government will seek to recontract the existing Supplier to pilot a series of specifications and parameters drawn from the findings and outcomes of the Commissioning process.

Consistent with the principles of Commissioning, this Investment Plan provides clear and transparent direction to the community on the proposed investment approach for the immediate future. Accordingly, this Investment Plan outlines the expectations for the delivery of the Program under a new agreement. These expectations reflect community need identified through Commissioning, as well as the future needs of cardholders.

An application will be sought from the existing Supplier to deliver services under the pilot which will be assessed by the ACT Government.



Figure 1: Commissioning cycle

The Commissioning process, which differs to traditional procurement processes, provides a range of options for a refreshed outcomes framework, service models and arrangements, key performance indicators, needs and gaps, identified cohorts and service system enhancements.

Our authorising environment

The ACT Seniors Card is part of an Australia-wide scheme. The program is run at a State and Territory level. However, decisions on some aspects of the program, such as branding, require agreement of all States and Territories.

Commissioning of the ACT Seniors Card Program

As part of the Commissioning process, a comprehensive Program review was undertaken.

A YourSay survey of over 3,000 people formed a major part of the findings that informed the review. A standalone [listening report](#) on the survey was released in April 2023.

The [final report](#) of the Program review (“the review”) was released in April 2023. The report details findings of the review across the following:

- cardholder experience, including awareness
- administration
- partnership with ACT Government
- digital transformation, and
- resourcing.

A design workshop was held in June 2023 with community, business and government stakeholders to consider and refine findings from the review for the design of the Program. A [listening report](#) from this workshop was released in July 2023.

Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-2024

The Age-Friendly City Plan is the ACT Government’s statement of commitment and strategic policy framework to support Canberra as an age-friendly city for older people. The delivery of the Program is key to Canberra being an age-friendly city.

Invest approach

The ACT Government proposes to establish a pilot with the current Supplier to pilot and test findings from the Commissioning process.

This is a new contract arrangement to try, test and learn from delivery of new specifications developed through commissioning.

The current Supplier will be required to lodge an application against the new service model.

Term of the Agreement

The term of the agreement is for a fixed term of two years, commencing 1 July 2024.

The agreement includes built-in annual reviews to consider and revise aspects of the Program delivery, partnership with ACT Government and available funding.

Risk assessment in the evaluation of the application includes, but is not limited to:

- risks associated with an applicant's response against any assessment criteria
- risks on the submitted pricing model and any associated assumptions, and
- strategies for management of the risks identified by the applicant.

Funding

Commissioning offers an opportunity to try, test and learn in developing new service delivery improvements. A funded pilot will inform future delivery and/or funding arrangements.

Funding for the pilot term will remain as per current funding levels, plus indexation.

The assessment team will review the application and recommend suitability within the available funds to the Delegate.

The application received will be assessed to determine delivery of cardholder needs and value for money. To demonstrate this need and value, the organisation is encouraged to consider a flexible model that responds to cardholder needs and to consider how this can be described in the application. Should a response be found unsuccessful, the ACT Government reserves the right to reissue through alternative investment approaches.

Information on the application process, timing, funding, reporting and assessment criteria are referenced within the Appendix.

Themes

The Commissioning engagement process revealed several themes which are expected to be addressed through the application:

- (a) **Valuing older Canberrans** – the Program is an important way to recognise and value older Canberrans and support their connection, participation, and inclusion in the community.
- (b) **Awareness of and access to benefits** – use of and access to Program benefits is highly reliant on awareness and visibility of the full-range of benefits, including government concessions and point-of-sale collateral at participating business.
- (c) **Tailoring application and access for diverse cohorts** – the majority of cardholders find the application process to be accessible and easy, however, there remain concerns that additional support to apply may be needed for some cohorts.
- (d) **The value of benefits** – this is critical to the integrity and utility of the Program. Benefits which are valuable and unique to Seniors Card holders are held in high regard, as opposed to discounts which may be easily available through other means. Cardholders want businesses to be transparent about contingencies on discounts, such as availability on certain days or at certain times.
- (e) **Active and visible business engagement** – visible and high-profile business engagement in the Program is valued by cardholders. Likewise, businesses are keen to advertise and promote their involvement in the Program through point-of-sale signage and other visibility collateral.
- (f) **Easy access to transport** – the current combined MyWay Seniors Card is viewed as a challenge by some cardholders. For example, the MyWay card expires after two years of non-use, which can create an administrative burden for cardholders. Transport is also the most highly valued benefit offered through the Program.
- (g) **Eligibility** – the Program review gave rise to a number of eligibility considerations which require further examination, including lowering the eligibility age for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and reviewing the efficacy and suitability of the 20-hour work benchmark.
- (h) **Cohesive partnerships** – the Program relies on strong partnerships across the government, community and business sectors for its delivery. The Program also relies on cohesion within and across ACT Government directorates holding responsibility for elements of the Program. There is a need for a forum to support collaboration between the ACT Government and the Supplier.
- (i) **Future proofing** – sixty per cent of cardholders would find a digital option of the Seniors Card useful. This was underlined by a need to retain a physical, non-digital option. Digitisation of the Seniors Card should be considered in the context of ACT Government digital transformation projects.
- (j) **Safeguarding data** – hand-in-hand with digital transformation is the need to develop a long-term approach to a centralised database with data sharing capabilities. Ensuring ownership and access to the Program’s database within ACT Government will also support digital transformation. Database upgrades also create opportunities to enhance access to online and digital benefits for cardholders.
- (k) **Resourcing** – the review identified the need for further exploration of existing resourcing arrangements for the Program. The pilot will be an opportunity to identify areas where additional resourcing may be required.

The pilot will facilitate government and the sector to continue working closely to identify needs and gaps as they emerge to inform service planning and provision.

The application will require consideration and demonstration of the relevant themes in the proposed service model.

Program elements for proposed pilot

This section provides information on service elements or specifications identified as important during Commissioning engagement. These specifications should be considered in a proposed program delivery model.

Responsiveness and understanding of the needs of older Canberrans

The Program will include:

- (a) a strong commitment to working with, for and alongside older people, including through services and programs.
- (b) expertise and capability to respond to the diverse needs of older Canberrans, including people who may need additional support and people experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of marginalisation and disadvantage.
- (c) market research capability to gauge and respond to the needs, feedback, and input of older people.
- (d) complaints handling capability to develop and maintain systems to receive and resolve complaints related to the Program.
- (e) communications, marketing and promotions capability to continue to uplift the visibility, awareness and engagement in the Program among individual cardholders and potential cardholders.
- (f) proactive involvement of cardholders, through volunteering, participation and other engagement opportunities.

Business stakeholder management

The Program will require:

- (a) strong connections with the business sector to recruit and retain business partners.
- (b) strong negotiation skills to achieve high value, meaningful, impactful and relevant discounts for cardholders.
- (c) a strategy to achieve Program benefits in specific sectors of particular interest to cardholders, including:
 - i. essentials, such as supermarket chains
 - ii. utilities
 - iii. transport options outside of the public transport system
 - iv. health and medical
 - v. legal services, and
 - vi. cultural facilities.
- (d) communications, marketing and promotions capability to continue to support a strong visual Program identity among participating businesses.
- (e) regular quality control measures on available benefits.

Cross-sectoral partnership and collaboration

The Program will require:

- (a) strong partnerships with a diversity of Government stakeholders to achieve:
 - i. a well-managed transition of the dual Seniors Card and MyWay card through pending ticketing reforms, and
 - ii. a streamlined and well-managed upgrade of the Program database and transition to a digital card.
- (b) strong collaboration skills to work with relevant community organisations to lift the profile of and awareness of the Program for eligible older Canberrans.

Digital capability

The Program will require understanding of digital creation, problem solving and innovation to collaborate on and support required database upgrades and a transition to a digital option for the Seniors Card.

Promotions and communications

The Program will include marketing and information distribution to the business community and older demographics, with a view to raise awareness and access to benefits available through the Program.



CASE STUDY

The journey to digital – NSW Seniors Card

The NSW Government launched a digital version of their Seniors Card in April 2022. The digital card has served as a pilot for digital cards across NSW Government more broadly.

The digital option is additional to, rather than a replacement of the physical NSW Seniors Card.

The digital card is built into the Service NSW app and account. The account and data from the digital card is linked to an individual's MyServiceNSW account, forming part of a seamless, one-stop-shop digital experience for NSW residents.

As of October 2023, there were 206,849 people who had opted into the digital Seniors Card.

Current vs Future service provision

The current program is delivered by Council on the Ageing (COTA) ACT and the pilot program also is proposed to be delivered by COTA ACT. A major proposed change for the pilot will see reporting shift from output reporting to outcome reporting aligned to the ACT Wellbeing Domains. This approach helps demonstrate how investment and delivery in the Program supports the wellbeing of older Canberrans rather than an emphasis on the operations of Program. These changes in approach will be delivered within the existing resources allocated for the program.

Table 1: ACT Seniors Card Program – Shift from outputs to outcomes

| Current outputs | Pilot outcomes by ACT Wellbeing Domains |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Program, including the ACT Seniors Card Information Service and promote awareness of the Program to older Canberrans, their families, carers, community organisations and service providers. • Ensure the total number of Seniors Card holders each year is maintained (where reasonable). • Produce and print a new Seniors Card Directory by 31 October every two (2) years, as well as making a copy of the directory available online. • Implement measures to make it easier for Seniors Card holders to access discounts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living standards – having the financial resources to live life well. • Access and connectivity – getting around to places we value and accessing the services we need. • Social connection – being connected with family, friends and community. |

Indicative outcomes and indicators

Indicative outcomes

The ACT Government will enter into an agreement focused on achieving outcomes for cardholders.

Drawing on insights from Commissioning engagement, a suite of indicative outcomes have been identified, as identified in [Table 2](#).

Drawing on insights from Commissioning engagement a suite of Indicative Performance Indicators has been identified, from which the most suitable and relevant indicators to a service model may be selected to measure service in a way that suits its objectives and nature of service.

Table 2: ACT Seniors Card Program – Indicative outcomes and key performance indicators

| ACT Wellbeing Outcome | Program outcome | Indicators |
|--|--|--|
| Living standards – having the financial resources to live life well. | <p>Cardholders have access to discounts at businesses which older Canberrans have identified as relevant and highly valued.</p> <p>Discounts are meaningful (that is at least 5% or of equivalent value) and, ideally, are uniquely available to Seniors Card holders.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytics data to understand online engagement with the ACT Seniors Card Discount Directory. • Data on distribution of printed Seniors Card directory. • Number and % of participating businesses that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ supermarket chains, utilities ○ transport operators ○ health and medical businesses ○ legal services, and ○ cultural facilities. • Number and % of participating businesses providing a discount of 5% or more (or of equivalent value). |

| ACT Wellbeing Outcome | Program outcome | Indicators |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Access and connectivity – getting around to places we value and accessing the services we need</p> | <p>Cardholders are aware of the benefits available to them under the Program and supported with information to enable effective use of the Program.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardholders report, via annual survey, high levels of awareness of the benefits available through the Program. |
| | <p>Business partners have access to and use online and physical Seniors Card collateral and branding.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of participating businesses using Program collateral. • Cardholders report, via annual survey, high levels of brand recognition and Program visibility. |
| | <p>Increased digital capability within the Program.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of partnership with ACT Government to increase the digital presence of the Program through database upgrades. • Evidence of partnership with ACT Government to progress a digital card option. |
| <p>Social connection – being connected with family, friends and community</p> | <p>Cardholders have access to transport and business discounts which support greater social and community connection.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardholders report, via annual survey, the Program supports their social and community connection. • Evidence of partnership with ACT Government in relation to transport ticketing reforms. |

In developing a proposal, you will be requested to consider and identify the relevant outcomes in your proposed service model and how they are applicable. The above outcomes are a guide only and can be tailored to suit your proposed service model.

When developing a proposal, you will be requested to consider and identify the relevant indicators in your proposed service model and how they are applicable.

Key outcomes from the engagement process

The extensive community engagement through the Commissioning process reflects a high-level of community interest and investment in the Program. Several key outcomes from this engagement are proposed to be tested through the pilot as program enhancement and/or system improvement initiatives.

Table 3: ACT Seniors Card Program – Key outcomes

| Change | Existing policy or service delivery | What changes will be tested through the pilot? |
|---|--|---|
| Awareness and visibility <i>Program enhancement</i> | <p>The current Agreement requires promotion of the Program to older people, their families, carers, community organisations and services providers. It also requires promotion of Program business partners.</p> | <p>The pilot is proposed to ensure specific promotion and awareness raising initiatives related to the benefits available through the Program. This will include increased levels of promotion to be undertaken by the ACT Government. This will be captured through a specific indicator on benefit awareness. The future Agreement will include specific performance measures on business use of Program branding and visibility in the community. This responds to the recommendation from the Program review to increase promotion and education about the Program.</p> |
| Quality of benefits <i>Program enhancement</i> | <p>The current Agreement requires an annual 5% increase in the number of Program business partners, though is silent on the sectors of business and types of discounts. The Program's business participation guide requires businesses to offer a minimum 5% discount, however this is not reflected in the Agreement.</p> | <p>The pilot is proposed to include a new focus on the quality of Program benefits. With a focus on specific sectors identified by cardholders as being of high value and importance, this seeks to increase the focus on quality over quantity and will likely involve a reduced focus on the increases in the number of business partners currently required under the Agreement. The future Agreement also includes a quality control on discounts, with reporting required on discount levels. This responds to the recommendation from the Program review to redesign benefits to provide additional value for members and participating businesses.</p> |

| Change | Existing policy or service delivery | What changes will be tested through the pilot? |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Future proofing <i>Program enhancement and system improvement</i></p> | <p>There is currently no digital card option. Sixty per cent of cardholders surveyed would like a digital card option.</p> | <p>The pilot is proposed to include an objective of developing a digital card option and boosting the digital presence of the Program through database upgrades. This additional digital capability increases capacity to support online and digital discount access for cardholders. The ACT Government acknowledges this will require additional resourcing, and will be subject to future budget funding considerations.</p> <p>This responds to recommendations from the Program review to develop a strategy to digitise the Program and develop a long-term approach to managing the Program's data.</p> |
| <p>Eligibility <i>Program enhancement</i></p> | <p>Current Program eligibility requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being 60 years or older • Permanent residency, and • Working less than 20 hours a week in the paid workforce. | <p>The ACT Government will review the following identified areas of Program eligibility over the next Agreement term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowering the age of eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seniors • Allowing alternative methods for proof of age or other requirements to accommodate for special circumstances, and • Removing the requirement for older Canberrans to work 20 hours or less per week. <p>This responds to the recommendation from the Program review to review these identified areas of eligibility.</p> |

| Change | Existing policy or service delivery | What changes will be tested through the pilot? |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Program governance – Collaboration and partnership <i>System improvement</i></p> | <p>The current Agreement requires the ACT Government and the Supplier to work together. There is currently no formal governance structure to support collaboration for the benefit of the Program across and between parties.</p> | <p>The ACT Government will establish a reference group consisting of key ACT Government stakeholders (with responsibility for aspects of the Program) and the Supplier. Participation in the reference group will be embedded in the Agreement.</p> <p>This responds to the recommendation from the Program review to improve touchpoints with the Supplier and ACT Government stakeholders to reinforce a collaborative environment.</p> |
| <p>Member engagement <i>Program enhancement and system improvement</i></p> | <p>The current Agreement requires the Supplier to resolve complaints from cardholders with respect to the Program. Currently, cardholder involvement and engagement is through a complaints management and resolution framework.</p> | <p>The pilot is proposed to require annual surveying of cardholders meaningfully engage with and shape the Program.</p> <p>This is in line with the Commissioning approach to foreground the views and experiences of people using services and programs.</p> |

Partnership with ACT Government

The ACT Government will use the pilot to test the recommendations identified through the review of the Program. This will be done in collaboration and partnership with the Supplier.

The Community Services Directorate will work to join up and streamline ACT Government areas with responsibility for various aspects of Program through a Program reference group (“the reference group”), which will include membership of the Supplier.

The Community Services Directorate will work in partnership with the Supplier over the term of the Agreement to:

- ensure and enhance accessibility and ease-of-use of the Seniors Card through transport ticketing reforms
- seek additional resourcing to upgrade the Program database, transition database ownership to ACT Government and ensure appropriate and required data safeguards
- seek additional resourcing to deliver a digital version of the Seniors Card as part of the ACT digital account
- leverage resources and capacity in government to support the consumer rights of cardholders
- leverage resources and capacity in government to integrate the program with existing local business initiatives, and
- investigate the feasibility of additional ACT Government benefits for cardholders.

The Community Services Directorate will review key questions of Program eligibility over the term of the pilot.

The Community Services Directorate will monitor and evaluate outcomes from the pilot and provide advice to government regarding ongoing required resourcing for the Program.

APPENDIX

Application process

An application in response to the proposed agreement will be sought from the current Supplier. A Deed of Grant is proposed to be entered into.

All material submitted to the Community Services Directorate is provided in confidence.

Funding

Program funding for the pilot term will remain as per current funding levels, plus indexation.

Reporting

Under the conditions of the Agreement, a financial acquittal statement will be required. This is to be completed and submitted to the Community Services Directorate on or before 30 July each year of the duration of the Agreement.

An outcomes performance report against the Agreement outcomes and key performance indicators will also be required on or before 30 July each year of the duration of the Agreement.

The format of the reporting templates will be developed following consultation between both parties.

The Territory acknowledges that an organisation may receive other funding that may contribute to the total outcomes of the organisation and that your reporting covers the contribution of Territory funding.

Assessment of application

Following a pre-eligibility check, an assessment team in the Community Services Directorate will review the application and recommend suitability within the available funds to the Delegate.

The application will be reviewed by the assessment team against the selection criteria listed below.

Table 4: ACT Seniors Card Program – Criterion

| Assessable Criterion | | Weighting % |
|----------------------|---|-------------|
| Capability | <p>With reference to the <i>Program elements of proposed pilot</i> of this document, the applicant is to provide a response that demonstrates organisational and personnel skills and experiencing in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge and expertise in working with older Canberrans • business stakeholder management • cross-sectoral partnership and collaboration • digital capability, and • promotional and communications capability. <p>Please detail similar services, length of involvement, and key achievements.</p> | 25 |
| Capacity | The applicant is to demonstrate how its purpose and outcomes will align with the funding stream. Detailing: | 5 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> resources/infrastructure in place or to be established to operate in the ACT competing priorities and how they will be managed, and partnerships and collaborative arrangements. | |
| Proposed service model | The applicant is to demonstrate a proposed service model that incorporates and responds to the themes identified in this document program elements for the pilot and key outcomes from the Commissioning engagement process. | 40 |
| Key performance indicators | The applicant is to respond to the indicative outcomes and indicators. The applicants is invited to provide further Key Performance that support the outcomes identified. | 20 |
| Risk | The applicant is to provide a risk management plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify service model risks and how they will be managed, and identify and detail risk management strategies and practices of your organisation that would be applicable or relevant in the context of the service model proposed. | 5 |
| Value for money | The applicant is to detail how: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposed service model ensures that resources are allocated where they are needed most the extent to which funding is committed to direct service delivery, and the effective use of assets and other in-kind contributions that enhance service delivery. | 5 |
| Non-Weighted Criterion | | |
| Financial | The proposed funding/budget is to realistically and clearly detail funding required over a tiered approach (i.e., short, medium and long-term outcomes). | Risk assessed |

Commissioning is underpinned by collaborative, trusting and sustainable partnerships.

Relevant Territory officials will meet regularly with the successful applicant to jointly monitor the partnership to ensure the needs of cardholders and stakeholders are being met.

Either partner, at any time, is encouraged to raise any issues, discuss activities, workplans, deliverables or outcomes. Both partners will commit to raising any issues or concerns in a proactive and timely way to prevent escalation of disputes.