



**Government Response
to the Report of the
Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015
on the
*Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2014-2015 and
the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative
Assembly) Bill 2014-2015***

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Treasurer
August 2014**

INTRODUCTION

The ACT faces significant economic challenges ahead as a result of the Commonwealth Government's fiscal consolidation and a reduction in Commonwealth health funding to the Territory. In response to this, the ACT Government has chosen not to impose harsh austerity policies to return the Budget to balance sooner. Instead the Government has chosen in the 2014-15 Budget to invest in Canberra and its future.

To support our community through this challenging period, the Government is investing in reforms and programs that will help Canberra maintain growth in our economy. Record levels of funding will be provided for health, education and community services. This investment will support jobs, provide essential services and facilities, and provide for the transformational infrastructure required for the future.

The Government is committed to providing high quality and accessible services, helping our community, and maintaining a safer community. The 2014-15 Budget investment in Canberra will maintain the city's status as one of the most liveable cities in the world.

The Government advised the Committee of its intention to amend the *Appropriation Bill 2014-2015* on 15 July 2014 as a result of the revised *Administrative Arrangements 2014 (No 1)* which came into effect on 7 July 2014. Details were finalised in early August and a copy of the amended Bill and the updated Budget Statements were provided to the Chair of the Committee on 4 August 2014.

The Select Committee on Estimates presented its Report on the inquiry into the *Appropriation Bill 2014-2015 and the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2014-2015* on 5 August 2014.

The Government respects and values the crucial role played by the Select Committee on Estimates in scrutinising the proposed expenditures in the Budget and has endeavoured to respond fully to the questions asked of it during the Estimates process.

The Government notes that the Committee sought external advice on the Territory's Budget from the Centre for International Economics. This Review of the Budget provides some important observations.

The Review notes that, overall, the economic forecasts contained in the Budget are reasonable, and the assumptions upon which the forecasts are based are in line with recent trends and other market forecasts.

In terms of key economic variables, the Gross State Product, State Final Demand and Employment Growth forecasts are considered to be reasonable and justified, taking into account the Commonwealth Government's fiscal consolidation.

The Review considers the revenue projections contained in the 2014-15 Budget to be generally efficient and stable, although it notes that the reforms to parking fines and payroll tax harmonisation raise uncertainty around the revenue forecasts.

The Review states that the continued implementation of the taxation reform package will assist in improving the stability of taxation income in the forward periods and reduce risks associated with central revenue forecasts.

The Review notes that the savings contained in the 2014-15 Budget are lower than in the 2013-14 Budget and primarily arise from the expanded use of digital and online technology for service delivery and internal organisation.

The Review considers the capital works program to be stimulatory to workforce participation and reinforces that capital works expenditure should be justified on the basis of a project's value, outputs and outcomes.

The Government welcomes the findings of the Review and considers that its broadly positive tone is reflective of the Government's efforts to implement prudent fiscal management strategies and deliver economically and socially responsible budgets.

The Government remains committed to open, transparent and accountable practices, and will endeavour to provide additional information to support policy decisions and processes where that information is available.

The Government thanks the Committee for its Report. The Committee has provided a report with 138 recommendations on a wide range of issues across all Government portfolios.

In its response, the Government has:

- agreed to 42 recommendations;
- agreed in principle to 13 recommendations;
- agreed in part to 11 recommendations;
- noted 60 recommendations; and
- not agreed to 12 recommendations.

While the Government has agreed to about half of the recommendations, it is concerned at the significant number of recommendations which have either sought to increase expenditure or which would impose unnecessary red tape through additional reporting and reviews, were the Government to agree to them.

These recommendations seek to impose additional reporting requirements, either in terms of providing ad hoc reports to the Legislative Assembly, or undertaking work that would extend beyond normal day-to-day activities. The Government will continue to engage and consult with the community, the Assembly and other stakeholders, and will report on these deliberations through established mechanisms. Current reporting requirements are considered to provide the right balance in terms of content and timing, and the Government is therefore reluctant to agree to undertake additional reporting and reviews which are likely to divert staff from performing core service delivery across the Territory.

Even taking a cautious interpretation to the Report suggests that around 70 of the Committee's recommendations – or 50 per cent of the total number – would, if adopted by Government, worsen the Territory's bottom line. A rough approximation of this cost is \$32 million. Around \$30 million would be spent on new initiatives, additional funding or revenue forgone while the other \$2 million would be incurred through ad hoc reporting to the Assembly, or undertaking additional studies or reviews.

In a period of tight economic uncertainty, additional expenditure of this magnitude, particularly if these additional activities divert public servants from their core activities or effectively amount to additional red tape, is difficult to justify. The Government is therefore not supporting these types of recommendations.

The Government has provided a response to each of the recommendations of the Committee, and these are set out below.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the shortfall in emergency housing and report by last sitting day of November 2014.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government has committed to undertake an evaluation of the impact of significant policy/service delivery and funding reforms to the ACT specialist homelessness service system since 2009. This review will provide analysis of whether resourcing of the components of the system continuum (prevention/early intervention through to maintenance) are adequate. The Community Services Directorate (CSD) is currently finalising the Terms of Reference with the sector.

The evaluation findings will be used to inform future homelessness service delivery in the ACT in the light of reduced and uncertain Government funding associated with the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), which expired in June 2014, and the review of funding of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) which the Commonwealth will undertake in 2014-15.

The timeframe for completion of the evaluation is March 2015. The ACT Government will continue to develop a range of responses to the complex issues associated with people experiencing homelessness, including the supply and demand for emergency housing. The Government will continue to engage with the community sector, the Assembly and the broader community on its housing policies.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Assembly by the last sitting day of 2014 how it will address the issue of Aboriginal homelessness in the ACT.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government, led by CSD, is committed to working with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB) to build housing capacity in the local community and to develop long term options around the delivery of housing and homelessness services. In addition, \$187,841 has been identified in the 2014-15 Budget for allocation against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific programs.

The new ATSIEB will convene for two meetings in 2014. The incoming ATSIEB will require one briefing session on the issues and a subsequent meeting to approve programs. The Government will continue to engage with the community sector, the Assembly and the broader community on its housing policies.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate and detail to the Assembly by the last sitting day of October 2014 the true extent of housing stress and homelessness amongst university students in the ACT.

Government Response

Noted.

The extent of housing stress and homelessness amongst university students was investigated in detail as part of the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs' Inquiry into the Accommodation Needs of Tertiary Education Students in the ACT in 2012. While the Government does not consider that additional studies would provide significant new insights at this time, it will provide an updated response to the committee's recommendations to the Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report to the Assembly by the last sitting day of 2014 on factors affecting older women at risk/in housing crisis in the ACT.

Government Response

Noted.

On 1 August 2014, ACT Shelter launched the Home truths: *Older Women's Housing Vulnerability in the ACT*. The report raises awareness of homelessness risk among older women in the ACT. The Office for Women, in partnership with Housing ACT, will examine the recommendations of the report to improve the response to the housing and support requirements of older women in the ACT. The Government will continue to engage with the community sector, the Assembly and the broader community on its housing policies.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Assembly, by the last sitting day of October 2014, how it will address the structural drivers in the housing market causing housing to be unaffordable in the ACT.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The Government's Affordable Housing Action Plan (AHAP) has extensively detailed the structural drivers of housing affordability and how the Government is responding. This includes increasing the supply of land, tax reforms, lowered duties, expanded concessions and increasing community housing in the ACT. Housing affordability has improved, particularly in the rental market where prices are cooling and very low vacancy rates of recent years are easing.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends that the Government fund a review into the demand for public housing to determine the drivers for this demand.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government is continually reviewing the demand for all housing types, including and especially public housing, in the ACT. The drivers of demand are complex and the ACT Government is seeking to address the drivers of both demand and supply that are within its jurisdiction.

The Commonwealth Government has indicated that it will undertake a review of funding of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) in 2014-15. Considerable work has already been undertaken by the ACT Government under the Affordable Housing Action Plan and Targeted Assistance Strategy examining issues of housing affordability and cost of living pressures for people on low incomes. Implementation of both of these reports is ongoing.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government tell the Assembly before the Budget debate begins why it has not acted upon its review of the Emergency Financial and Material Aid Program and that it immediately increases the Budget from \$315,000 to \$410,000 for Kippax Uniting Care.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

Current Emergency Material and Financial Aid (EMFA) contracts are in place until 30 June 2015. CSD has agreed to undertake a review of these programs as part of a wider consideration of the provision of emergency relief, food assistance and financial counselling in the ACT.

Funding levels will be considered as part of future Budget processes. The ACT Government has not been able to act on the review as the *Issues Paper on the Provision of Financial Counselling, Food Assistance and Emergency Relief in the ACT* is in the process of being finalised. It is anticipated that the issues paper will be released in late August 2014.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Committee recommends a review of the Emergency Financial and Material Aid program to ascertain current funding needs and areas of stress within the program.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Community Services Directorate is finalising an *Issues Paper on the Provision of Financial Counselling, Food Assistance and Emergency Relief in the ACT*.

The issues paper provides an overview of emergency relief, food assistance and financial counselling services provided in the ACT; identifies the impact of reduced funding to Commonwealth Government programs announced in the 2014-15 Federal Budget; and considers the changes in need and demand as a result of this reduced funding.

The issues paper sets out a number of guiding principles and poses questions to facilitate discussion on what should be the priority areas for ACT Government investment, given competing priorities and the role of the Commonwealth Government.

It is anticipated that the issues paper will be released in late August 2014. It will be distributed for targeted consultation to current affected service providers and relevant peak bodies. The outcomes of this targeted consultation will be considered and will inform the next steps in the policy review process.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake consultation with the community sector including a call for submissions, a series of meetings in a variety of formats, as well as using social media, with regard to its review of concessions, prior to the decision being made.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Review of the Concession Program is currently being scoped, with the Terms of Reference and the consultation approach being developed. Consultation will be undertaken about options to improve the Program's administration, equity and financial sustainability and better support for community need. A range of consultation formats will be used.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Committee recommends the review of administration fees for part-year motor-vehicle registration in cases of financial hardship.

Government Response

Noted.

The 2014-15 Budget has reduced the burden of administrative fees for part-year registrations. From 1 September 2014 the new short term vehicle registration fee will be reduced from \$25 to \$15.

In addition, concessional arrangements already apply to registration fees for pensioners, health care card holders (unemployed), and repatriation health care card holders.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government champion the cause of national and interstate recognition of seniors' cards in the appropriate national forum.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Commonwealth Government withdrew from the National Partnership Agreement on Certain Concessions for Pensioners and Seniors' Card Holders on 1 July 2014. The lack of a national agreement means decisions on the recognition of interstate Seniors' Cards remains a policy decision of each state and territory government. The ACT Government will continue to increase awareness of the impacts of terminating this agreement in intergovernmental forums as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government address the lack of footpaths and footpath maintenance particularly in the older suburbs of the ACT.

Government Response

Noted.

Footpaths in all Canberra suburbs require ongoing maintenance and upgrading over time to ensure Canberrans, particularly older residents, are able to use them for transport, recreation and exercise. The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS) uses a detailed system of investigation, reporting and prioritisation to decide on annual maintenance schedules and upgrade programs, analysing factors such as usage rates and safety.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fund Stage 2 of the Belconnen Arts Centre as a priority in the 2014-2015 Budget.

Government Response

Noted.

This is a matter for future Budget consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fund the Belconnen Foreshore redevelopment as a priority in the 2014-2015 Budget.

Government Response

Noted.

The majority of Lake Ginninderra foreshore was upgraded between 2003 and 2013 with the exception of detailed design and construction of the lake wall and promenade on the shoreline of the Belconnen Arts Centre. Construction works for this area will be complex and technical, involving work in water and large areas of fill.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government research and publish the financial risks of its fossil fuel investments including modelling of what the ACT's potential investments output could be post-divestment.

Government Response

Noted.

The future of fossil fuels in the global energy mix is a complicated issue and is subject to a vast number of variables, in addition to the broader issues of economic growth, including future carbon constraints, technology developments in fossil fuels or clean energy sources, changing global energy flows, and the current and future diversity of a company's business activities, assets and revenues.

The Government understands the future investment risk potential posed by investment exposure to fossil fuels, as well as the ongoing investment risk with all share investment exposures, regardless of the particular industry, sector or business activity.

The investment framework focuses on an ongoing environmental, social and governance (ESG) risk assessment in regards to investments. The integration of ESG risks using a structured research and analysis methodology framework underpins the construction of the shares component of the investment portfolio and means that companies that are assessed as having potentially high and unsuitable ESG risks will not be held.

The current financial investment approach, and the Government's broader public policy objectives and actions for reducing its reliance on fossil fuels, is the appropriate response to this challenging global issue at this time. This issue will be under ongoing observation.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the ACT Arts Fund with a view to an immediate increase of base funding of \$500,000 and further consideration of increases in line with the growth of the arts sector.

Government Response

Noted.

This is a matter for future Budget consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase 'One-Off Arts funding' back to \$1.1 million and maintain funding in out years.

Government Response

Noted.

This is a matter for future Budget consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fund and conduct an economic analysis of the value of the arts and cultural sector to the ACT economy and Budget with the analysis including: financial, social, creative, and reputational benefits.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) has already started work on an audit of the economic impact of the arts sector on the ACT economy.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish a full-time Arts Officer embedded in the Education Directorate.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The Education and Training Directorate (ETD) has existing established structures to facilitate and support arts education in ACT public schools.

ETD also works in partnership with a range of arts organisations and stakeholders, including artsACT, to enhance arts education in ACT schools.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government create a long-term arts strategy with particular focus on funding of the sector, facilities development, increasing participation, developing events, and cultural tourism.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Arts Policy Framework is a long-term strategy which is regularly reviewed to ensure it is meeting the needs of the ACT arts sector. The recent Administrative Arrangements moved Arts into CMTEDD alongside events and tourism, allowing for better linkages between arts functions across government.

RECOMMENDATION 21

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in October 2014 how it will fund the ACT's component of the Second Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

The Minister for Women has agreed to extend the timeframe to launch the 2nd Implementation Plan (IP) of the ACT Violence against Women and Children Strategy to February 2015.

The ACT will progress proposed actions which align with the 2013-16 second Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children 2010-22.

It is envisaged that the majority of actions under the 2nd IP will be progressed through existing programs and/or funding and any additional funding will be made available through the Budget process and reported in CSD's Annual Report.

RECOMMENDATION 22

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the availability and need for adult ESL education for women, with a particular focus on places and funding, child-care and any other support required with a view to increasing participation and report to the Assembly by November 2014.

Government Response

Noted.

ETD, along with the Canberra Institute of Technology, will consider the availability and need for adult ESL education for adult women. This information will be considered in developing ETD and CIT funded initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The Committee recommends that in regard to land release in the ACT that the ACT Government return to one third Land Development Agency (LDA)/one third joint venture/one third private development.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government published a revised Indicative Land Release Program in June 2014. While the revised program does not specify the method of land release, the program includes a number of mini-englobo land releases ranging in size from 300 to 400 dwelling sites each.

The ACT Government is working with peak industry bodies (HIA and MBA) in order to create packages of land release that are tailored to current markets requirements. For example, the recent successful sale of the first superlot in Coombs has resulted in this year's release schedule including further superlot offerings for the building and development industry.

RECOMMENDATION 24

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review land release in the ACT to ensure that greater housing affordability is achieved and a reasonable return to the Government from the sale of this asset, and report to the Assembly by the last sitting day of March 2015.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

The Government reviews the land release program on a regular basis to ensure greater housing affordability, a reasonable return on its sale as well as maintaining stability in the market. As a result of the volume of land released in recent years, the upward pressure on house prices and rents has eased and housing affordability is improving. In the rental market, vacancy rates are increasing and average rents are easing. In addition to land release, there are a range of affordable housing initiatives that will continue to result in further improvements in housing affordability.

The Government already provides information to the Assembly through budget processes and annual reporting and does not agree to provide a further report to the Assembly by March 2015.

RECOMMENDATION 25

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the application of the Lease Variation Charge with a view to achieving the development target of 50 per cent greenfields and 50 per cent urban renewal development.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The Government recently reviewed the application of the Lease Variation Charge (LVC) and decided to increase the remission rate for a two year period until 6 March 2016. This measure is one of a package of initiatives designed to provide confidence and economic stimulus for the ACT building and construction industry, and is aimed at encouraging urban renewal development.

The Government will continue to monitor the impact of the Lease Variation Charge as one of the factors affecting property development in the ACT. However, as the LVC only applies to urban infill, it is not seen as an appropriate mechanism to encourage one form of development over another.

RECOMMENDATION 26

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government address extension of time issues by waiving fees for all pre-2010 commercial land purchases.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The government recently reviewed the application of Extension of Time (EOT) fees and considered a range of options for reducing these fees. It was subsequently agreed all EOT debt which were incurred for the period 1 July 2012 to 31 March 2014 would be waived, and that the EOT fees regime would be reduced and simplified moving forward.

These measures will result in a substantial reduction of EOT fees and their impact on building activity will be monitored closely. EOT fees are an important tool for the government to uphold community expectations that leased land will be developed and not remain vacant for extended periods of time. The government does not agree that any further reductions in EOT debt is warranted at this stage.

RECOMMENDATION 27

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of October 2014 how it will address and fund the issue of youth and young people's mental health in our education system particularly detailing the cross-sectoral approach that will be undertaken.

Government Response

Noted.

The approach to address mental health issues in students is guided by the Primary Prevention and Early Intervention triangle model.

- Universal strategies are for all students and include MindMatters and KidsMatter Primary. Schools (Public, Catholic and Independent) are supported to take on these whole school approaches to mental health through grants. School staff are trained and supported by Principal Australia Institute staff (who are funded via Beyond Blue and the Commonwealth Government).
- Selected strategies are for particular groups of students who may be at risk of mental health issues. Examples of this are: ETD supports Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT) via funding of its booklet (Hang On To This, HOTT) which is used in secondary school (Public, Catholic and Independent) sessions facilitated by MIEACT volunteers. These sessions aim to break down mental health stigmatisation and encourage help seeking behaviour with students. The Australian Foundation for Mental Health Research's (AFFIRM) Youth Ambassador Program trains secondary students to engage in leadership activities to raise awareness of mental health issues with their peers. Secondary schools from all sectors participate in this program.

Targeted strategies are for individual students who may have mental health issues. Schools have access to school counsellors who can work directly with students or provide referral to appropriate government or community agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 28

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government initiate an independent review of the closure of youth centres and its replacement outreach program to determine the effectiveness of the changes and report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of February 2015.

Government Response

Noted.

CSD has commissioned the Australian Catholic University, Institute of Child Protection Studies to complete a formal evaluation of the Child, Youth and Family Services Program. This will include evaluation of the effectiveness of the program from 2011 to date and inform the future procurement of Services Agreements in this area. As part of the evaluation, the effectiveness of Youth Engagement activities will be explicitly considered. It is envisaged that this work will be completed by late 2014.

RECOMMENDATION 29

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government restore the funding model to support growth in the performance audit function as factored into the Audit Office's 2012–13 Budget.

Government Response

Not agreed.

In the 2012-13 Budget, the Government provided the Auditor-General's Office with additional funding of \$0.250 million per annum to enable the performance audit program to be expanded from an average of six performance audits per year to seven. The Government considers that this additional capacity provides the Auditor-General with sufficient flexibility to prioritise areas of need and thereby maximise the benefits they provide.

RECOMMENDATION 30

The Committee recommends that ACT Government directorates and agencies ensure recordkeeping procedures and guidance material address the business activities specific to their operations.

Government Response

Noted.

ACT Government directorates and agencies, through adherence to the *Territory Records ACT 2002*, are required to have approved records management programs.

RECOMMENDATION 31

The Committee recommends that ACT Government directorates and agencies ensure implementation of a systematic approach, including conducting internal audits, to formally and regularly monitor and review their recordkeeping practices, systems, policies and procedures.

Government Response

Noted.

ACT Government directorates and agencies, through adherence to the *Territory Records ACT 2002*, are required to formally and regularly monitor and review their recordkeeping practices, systems and procedures.

RECOMMENDATION 32

The Committee recommends that ACT Government remind all ACT Government directorates and agencies of the importance of good records management to the functioning of the ACT Public Service.

Government Response

Agreed.

ACT Government directorates and agencies are required to adhere to the *Territory Records ACT 2002* and, through processes already established by the Territory Records Office, will be reminded of their legislative requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 33

The Committee recommends that ACT Government ensure that all ACT Public Servants keep accurate records of key decisions, discussions and events and that these records are easily retrievable when required.

Government Response

Noted.

The Territory Records Act 2002 requires agencies to make and keep full and accurate records of their activities, and the Territory Records Office provides a number of tools to support agencies in complying with the Act.

RECOMMENDATION 34

The Committee recommends that all submitters of all Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs) receive a written advice of the action taken and outcome of their PIDs.

Government Response

Agreed.

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* already includes the requirement to keep people who submit PIDs informed of any investigation activities or outcomes in relation to the matters they have raised.

RECOMMENDATION 35

The Committee recommends that an appropriation line designating the Office of the ACT Ombudsman as a separate entity be included in the Budget portfolio statements in the 2015-2016 Budget and henceforth. The appropriation line should ideally be located in the Portfolio Budget Statement containing the Office of the Legislative Assembly and Officers of the Legislative Assembly and include appropriate accountability measures.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The ACT Ombudsman is an independent statutory officer who investigates complaints about the administrative actions of ACT Government agencies as well as complaints against ACT Policing. However, the Ombudsman is not a separate entity per se as this role is discharged by the Commonwealth Ombudsman under a Services Agreement. The Government therefore considers it more appropriate for performance and accountability measures to continue to be included in the Agreement rather than disclosed as part of the Budget. The level of funding is also determined under the Agreement, which is currently administered by CMTEDD.

The Government does, however, undertake to consider an alternative approach to enhance transparency which would involve the separate identification of the estimated amount to be paid out under the Services Agreement in the CMTEDD Budget Statements.

RECOMMENDATION 36

The Committee recommends that the Office of the Legislative Assembly's community engagement and outreach program be continued and, if possible, be expanded.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government provides funding to the Office of the Legislative Assembly (OLA), and the Speaker and the Clerk determine how this amount is to be allocated, having regard to the OLA's legislative obligations and priorities. The Government is therefore of the view that any changes to the funding for this program is a matter for the OLA.

RECOMMENDATION 37

The Committee recommends that the Office of the Legislative Assembly give due consideration to holding an Open Day prior to any reconfiguration of the Assembly building should the proposed changes to the size of the Assembly proceed.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government provides funding to the Office of the Legislative Assembly (OLA), and the Speaker and the Clerk determine how this amount is to be allocated, having regard to the OLA's legislative obligations and priorities. The Government is therefore of the view that any decision to hold an Open Day is a matter for the OLA.

RECOMMENDATION 38

The Committee recommends that the ACT Legislative Assembly provide a research facility for Members along the lines currently provided by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library to Federal Members of the Commonwealth Parliament.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government provides funding to the Office of the Legislative Assembly (OLA), and the Speaker and the Clerk determine how this amount is to be allocated, having regard to the OLA's legislative obligations and priorities. The Government is therefore of the view that any decision to provide a research facility for Members is a matter for the OLA.

RECOMMENDATION 39

The Committee recommends that the ACT Legislative Assembly investigate purchasing a research facility for Members from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government provides funding to the Office of the Legislative Assembly (OLA), and the Speaker and the Clerk determine how this amount is to be allocated, having regard to the OLA's legislative obligations and priorities. The Government is therefore of the view that any decision to purchase a research facility for Members from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library is a matter for the OLA.

RECOMMENDATION 40

The Committee recommends that the Manager of the Committee Support Office should not be a Secretary of a Standing or Select Committee.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government is of the view that this recommendation is a matter for the OLA to consider.

RECOMMENDATION 41

The Committee recommends that resources be provided to the Committee Support Office to allow for an additional Committee Secretary, thereby allowing the Manager of the Office to be unencumbered by also being a Committee Secretary.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government provides funding to the Office of the Legislative Assembly (OLA), and the Speaker and the Clerk determine how this amount is to be allocated, having regard to the OLA's legislative obligations and priorities. The Government is therefore of the view that any decision to provide additional resources to the Committee Support Office is a matter for the OLA.

RECOMMENDATION 42

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should prioritise the finalisation of assets it deems suitable for leveraging under the Commonwealth Government Asset Recycling Initiative and henceforth bring forward asset sale proposals, and report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of September 2014.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

The ACT Government agrees that the ACT should prioritise the finalisation of assets for leveraging under the Commonwealth Government Asset Recycling Initiative, noting that the funding pool for the Initiative will be allocated on a first-come, first served basis. However, the development of a schedule of asset sales and infrastructure investment will be subject to negotiations between the ACT and the Commonwealth Government. Accordingly, it would not be appropriate to commit to a specific approach to the ACT's participation in the Commonwealth Initiative in advance of these negotiations. It is therefore not feasible to agree to a September 2014 timeframe.

The Government will, however, seek to publish details of any proposed asset sales before those asset sales occur.

RECOMMENDATION 43

The Committee recommends that in future Budgets, the material presented in portfolio budget statements be aggregated in Budget Paper Number 4.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The decision to produce portfolio Budget Statements was made by the Government to enhance accountability and return ownership of budget documentation to individual directorates and agencies. The Government will, however, continue to identify ways of improving the readability and accessibility of budget documentation.

RECOMMENDATION 44

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reinstate the UPF (Uniform Presentation Format) net operating balance line to the current table 2, 'General Government Sector Headline Net Operating Balance'.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The Government reviewed all budget overview tables as part of the 2014-15 Budget and added or removed details to enhance transparency or improve the focus of each individual table. In relation to the General Government Sector Headline Net Operating Balance table, the Government concluded that the UPF line was confusing and irrelevant for the purposes of that table (on the basis that its focus is on the Headline Net Operating Balance) and also decided that key financial ratios should be included as reference points to the Government's main financial measure. The Government notes that UPF data continues to be reported in the General Government Sector (GGS) Operating Statement which has been moved, together with the other GGS financial statements, into the body of Budget Paper No. 3 rather than attached as an appendix as in previous years.

RECOMMENDATION 45

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly how the expected \$4.7 billion in debt is to be repaid and over what period.

Government Response

Noted.

The annual budget papers provide details of the Government's budget outlook and fiscal strategy. The Government considers that its debt levels are prudent and appropriate at this point and will continue to manage them carefully.

RECOMMENDATION 46

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail more clearly in the Budget Papers the total level of debt.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government reviews the content of Budget Paper disclosures on an annual basis.

RECOMMENDATION 47

The Committee recommends that, after the preferred tenderer has been selected and before any contracts are signed for each project funded from the Capital Provision Account, the ACT Government table a cost-benefit analysis and expected total cost for each project in the Assembly.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

The Government already publishes a wealth of information about individual projects in the Budget Papers. This information is primarily captured in the Infrastructure and Capital Chapter of Budget Paper No. 3, which provides data in relation to both new and ongoing projects. In the 2014-15 Budget, for example, the construction costs of new projects are shown in Table 5.4.4. and physical completion dates are provided in individual agency's tables. Once a project funded from the Capital Provision Account is at the stage where an estimated cost can be appropriated as part of the budget, those details will be disclosed in a similar fashion.

The Government does not consider that tabling a cost benefit analysis for each project will enhance transparency as the decision-making process for capital projects is not limited to cost-benefit analyses alone, but also takes into account a range of information, including commercial in confidence data. The Government will always actively protect the commercial interests of the Territory and will not pre-release sensitive information, as this may lead to higher cost outcomes for the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 48

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government use the terminology 'motor vehicle crash' or 'road crash' and not 'accident'.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

The Government agrees that in relation to road safety activities the terms 'road crash', 'motor vehicle crash' and 'crash' should be used in preference to the term 'accident'. This is already the practice for the vast majority of cases.

However, in relation to terminology used regarding the Compulsory Third-Party Insurance Scheme and Lifetime Care and Support Scheme, the Government will continue to refer to motor accidents as this is the terminology used in the *Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Act 2008* and the *Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Act 2014*.

RECOMMENDATION 49

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make the review of the *Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission Act 1997* publicly available.

Government Response

Agreed.

A review of the *Independent Competition and Regulatory Act 1997* will be undertaken as part of a broader review by the ACT Government of the water and sewerage pricing framework. This review will consider a number of issues raised by the Auditor-General in her 2014 performance audit of the water and sewerage process. The review will seek public submissions and the final report of this review, including any proposed changes to the *Independent Competition and Regulatory Act 1997*, will be made publicly available.

RECOMMENDATION 50

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report half-yearly on the progress of the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Lifetime Care and Support Fund is a directorate for the purposes of the *Financial Management Act 1996*. As such it is required to prepare a half-yearly Statement of Performance for tabling in the Assembly. Apart from the required Statement of Performance reporting, the CMTEDD Annual Report will contain information on the performance of the Scheme. Given the reporting requirements already in place, the Government considers that any additional reporting would be unnecessary red tape.

RECOMMENDATION 51

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake analysis of the underlying causes of bullying in the ACT Public Service and establish an ACT Public Service-wide framework to address these issues.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

Public sector conduct, including bullying issues, is intended to be a particular focus for a new independent commissioner (as per Recommendation 68). Accordingly, while the Government is committed to managing and investigating complaints of bullying, there will need to be discussions with the new commissioner around his or her planned program of work in relation to this issue.

There is already an ACT public service-wide framework to address bullying issues that consists of:

- the Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) framework and accompanying guide to prevention and management of work bullying which is currently being reviewed and updated; and

- investigations provisions in the ACT public sector enterprise agreements, which were reviewed in the last eight months during the negotiations for the recently signed agreements.

RECOMMENDATION 52

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, building upon the ACTPS Code of Conduct and the RED Framework, put in place a comprehensive whole-of-government bullying strategy.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The guide to prevention and management of work bullying contains the whole-of-government bullying strategy and is currently being reviewed.

RECOMMENDATION 53

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish a register to monitor the incidence and progress on addressing bullying at all levels across the ACT Public Service (ACTPS).

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The State of the Service Report - and the commissioner for public administration annual report previously – provides data on the number of bullying complaints and how they are handled. Further initiatives to monitor the incidence and handling of bullying complaints are being considered during the review of the RED framework discussed with the independent commissioner.

RECOMMENDATION 54

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government put in place a standard training regime for all ACT Public Service (ACTPS) directorates and agencies on bullying.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

Training on the RED framework, which includes bullying, is provided through Shared Services, and has been customised for specific workplaces by larger directorates such as Health. Training requirements are being considered during the review of the RED framework.

RECOMMENDATION 55

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the application of restorative justice practice in addressing bullying in the ACT Public Service (ACTPS).

Government Response

Agreed.

The application of restorative justice practice will be considered during the review of the RED framework.

RECOMMENDATION 56

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government either: (a) does not commence the Payroll Tax Amendment Bill until 1 July 2015; or (b) or moves an amendment to grandfather all existing contracts from the new payroll tax regime.

Government Response

Noted.

The *Payroll Tax Amendment Bill 2014* removes the 'genuine employer' exemption from the *Payroll Tax Act 2011*. The ACT is the only jurisdiction that has the 'genuine employer' exemption. Removing this exemption will bring the ACT into line with other jurisdictions. Addressing such anomalies in our tax legislation is an important component of providing the Government with a secure revenue base in order to fund essential services.

The Government has listened to industry's concerns regarding the implementation timeframes and financial impact of the change. The legislation will be amended to reflect a later commencement date than 1 July 2014, with the Government to move an amendment for the Bill to commence on 1 January 2015. This will remove retrospectivity from the amendment bill and provide more time for industry to accommodate the necessary changes. Further, this amended start date will reduce the financial impact of the change on affected contractors, in that the application of payroll tax will only be applied for half of the 2014-15 financial year.

The grandfathering of existing contracts would introduce administrative complexity for the ACT Revenue Office and industry in administering multiple arrangements for different contractors. It would add to, rather than remove, the uncertainty and inequities that this amendment is intended to address. Further, there is a strong possibility that existing contractual arrangements could continue for periods of greater than 12 months – if roll over options within contracts are utilised – hence extending the grandfathering option for an uncertain period with the potential of significantly reducing revenue from the measure.

RECOMMENDATION 57

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly the Government's timeframe for the repayment of debt held by ACTEW Corporation.

Government Response

Noted.

The annual budget papers provide details of the Government's budget outlook and fiscal strategy. The Government considers that its debt levels are prudent and appropriate at this point and will continue to manage them carefully.

RECOMMENDATION 58

The Committee recommends that following the agreement of the debt strategy by the ACTEW Corporation Board, the ACT Government inform the Legislative Assembly of the Strategy within four sitting days of the conclusion of the agreement.

Government Response

Noted.

The level of information that can be provided in relation to the debt strategy will be determined by the ACTEW Board depending on relevant commercial considerations.

RECOMMENDATION 59

The Committee recommends that following any resolution on the ACTEWAGL debt facility on the ActewAGL debt facility that the Shareholders detail to the Legislative Assembly the effect of such decisions for ACTEW Corporation.

Government Response

Noted.

The level of information to be provided regarding the establishment of a new debt facility for ActewAGL and its impact on ACTEW Corporation will depend on relevant commercial considerations.

RECOMMENDATION 60

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that principal agency owners of major capital works projects consult with the ACT Insurance Authority prior to the commencement of the project to ensure the Territory is properly indemnified against the risks involved.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Authority is available to assist agency owners of major capital works projects with guidance on the adequacy of insurance cover.

RECOMMENDATION 61

The Committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly refer the sale process of ACTTAB Ltd to the ACT Auditor-General to consider a review of the sale.

Government Response

Noted.

It is a matter for the Auditor-General to decide whether to review the sale of ACTTAB.

RECOMMENDATION 62

The Committee recommends that on the first sitting day following the sale of ACTTAB Limited the Government detail to the Legislative Assembly consequential and transitional arrangements for employees and the racing industry post the sale.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government's media release announcing the sale of ACTTAB dated 30 July 2014 included information on transitional arrangements for ACTTAB employees and the racing industry.

The Media Release noted that Tabcorp has agreed to offer employment to all existing ACTTAB staff. Staff will be offered similar and no less favourable terms than those that currently apply with full recognition of prior service being carried over. It also states that Contractual arrangements with Tabcorp ensure that the racing industry is guaranteed an amount of at least \$300,000 (indexed by CPI) for race and other sponsorships from Tabcorp for at least ten years.

Please refer to the Government response to Recommendation 134 for future information in relation to the future of the racing industry.

RECOMMENDATION 63

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider options for the retraining of any ACTTAB Limited employee who may lose their job as a consequence of the sale of ACTTAB Limited.

Government Response

Agreed.

From the outset of the commencement of the sale process ACTTAB engaged a professional Human Relations firm who have been working closely with staff to help prepare them for pursuing new career opportunities including transitioning workshops, career counselling and individual assistance to staff.

RECOMMENDATION 64

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table in the Legislative Assembly the result of the review of the Home Loan portfolio within four sitting days of receipt by the Government.

Government Response

Noted.

Following the receipt of the report by the Government, the report will be released on the Revenue Office website.

RECOMMENDATION 65

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table in the Legislative Assembly, after the preferred tenderer has been selected, the final cost-benefit analysis, the estimated total cost to the ACT, and the delivery model for the Capital Metro project prior to the signing of any construction projects.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

Following consideration of a final business case, should the Government commit to this project, it will be engaged in a commercial in confidence procurement process until contractual commitment has been reached with a light rail delivery partner. It would be inappropriate to table commercial in confidence information during a procurement process.

The Government will seek to release as much information as possible prior to its consideration of the project's final business case in the coming months. The Government will, however, actively seek to protect the commercial interests of the Territory, and will not expose any sensitive information until project arrangements have been finalised. Failure to do so may lead to higher cost outcomes for the Territory.

It is anticipated that certain details of agreed arrangements will be able to be made publicly available after an agreement has been reached between the Government and a light rail delivery partner.

Post contract close, further details can be released.

RECOMMENDATION 66

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government inform the Legislative Assembly on the actions it has taken to address the "Mr Fluffy" homes asbestos contamination issue and update the Assembly on a quarterly basis until the matter is resolved.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Chief Minister presented a Ministerial Statement on 5 August 2014.

RECOMMENDATION 67

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to make representations to the Commonwealth Government on behalf of the Territory and seek Federal Government assistance to help remediate Mr Fluffy homes.

Government Response

Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION 68

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government give consideration to establishing an independent Public Service Commissioner, for whom functions should include (i) developing and providing expertise in dealing with bullying matters; and (ii) centrally tracking, monitoring and reporting on the incidence of bullying in the ACTPS.

Government Response

Noted.

The draft Public Sector Management Bill creates such a position with the functions specified in the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 69

The Committee recommends that child-safety gates be installed at the Pod Playground.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government will consider this proposal in the context of other priorities for minor works required at the National Arboretum Canberra.

RECOMMENDATION 70

The Committee recommends that, when determined, the National Arboretum Scientific Research committee's program of research be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Committee's role is to provide advice, direction and coordination of research efforts to ensure that activities undertaken contribute to the Arboretum's objectives.

RECOMMENDATION 71

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish an output entitled 'Higher Education', and develop strategic objectives and accountability indicators for the output.

Government Response

Noted.

While policy responsibility for higher education rests with the Commonwealth Government, the ACT Government is committed to supporting growth in the higher education sector and continues to engage closely with the Territory's tertiary institutions to that effect. Given that the Commonwealth Government is currently considering reforms to the higher education sector and federalism arrangements which may see a shift in roles and responsibilities between Commonwealth and state governments, the ACT Government will develop appropriate strategic objectives and accountability indicators for the higher education portfolio.

RECOMMENDATION 72

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish an output entitled 'Regional Development' and develop strategic objectives and accountability indicators for the output.

Government Response

Noted.

The Regional Development portfolio includes developing our relationship with local, state and federal entities. The ACT Government's strategic objectives are to strengthen links with the surrounding region, drive better services, economic growth and opportunity and recognise the ACT and south east NSW as a coherent region. The Government will review whether these need to be included in a specific regional development output or as part of the Chief Minister's outputs.

RECOMMENDATION 73

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide further information to ensure that there is public consultation on all aspects of the Capital Metro project, so as to ensure it is viable, provides value for money, and meets the needs of the ACT community.

Government Response

Agreed.

Capital Metro Agency is currently undertaking a community consultation process regarding elements of the light rail project.

Capital Metro will engage with stakeholders throughout the project's procurement phase.

Following presentation of the final business case, Cabinet will consider the public release of information for the project. The project's business case will consider various financial, economic and other aspects of the project.

RECOMMENDATION 74

The Committee recommends that accountability indicators in relation to satisfaction with Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate customer services for Output 1.1 Construction and Services be broken down into factors such as timeliness and decision-making, in order to improve accountability.

Government Response

Agreed.

Additional indicators in relation to customer satisfaction will be developed as part of the 2015-16 Budget process.

RECOMMENDATION 75

The Committee recommends that ESDD detail through the Minister to the Legislative Assembly the reasons for the non-achievement of the statutory time frames for development applications.

Government Response

Agreed.

Additional information in relation to non-achievement (greater than 5 per cent) of targets will be incorporated into the half yearly and annual reporting of accountability indicators to the Legislative Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION 76

The Committee recommends that the Government establish as a priority the single Nature Conservation Agency.

Government Response

Noted.

All administrative arrangements are the responsibility of the Chief Minister.

RECOMMENDATION 77

The Committee recommends that ESDD develop strategy and accountability indicators for water quality.

Government Response

Agreed.

Additional indicators in relation to water quality will be developed as part of the 2015-16 Budget process. The Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD) currently provides accountability indicators in relation to the release of the Water Quality Report.

RECOMMENDATION 78

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Sustainability and the Environment develop a plan to raise its profile in the community.

Government Response

Noted.

The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment is an independent statutory officer. These aspects of the Commissioner's functions are not a matter for the ACT Government.

RECOMMENDATION 79

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider ensuring that the funding levels of current disability service providers which do not necessarily fit the NDIS model are maintained until December 2016.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government has negotiated service funding arrangements with current disability service providers to provide them with greater certainty about their financial position. The ACT Government will continue to work with those providers which do not necessarily fit the NDIS model during the trial period.

RECOMMENDATION 80

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report half-yearly to the Legislative Assembly on the implementation of the NDIS, with particular emphasis on emerging and unmet needs.

Government Response

Agreed.

Regular reports have been and will continue to be provided to the ACT Legislative Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION 81

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake an analysis of unmet need for child and family services in the ACT and report to the Legislative Assembly on its findings by the last sitting day of March 2015.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

CSD is already undertaking this work. The Child and Family Centre Service System is currently being remodelled and aligned to the Human Services Blueprint. A key element of this alignment will be local area planning. This will include mapping service demand, demographic breakdown and the provision of services. However, the Government will not be tabling a report to the Legislative Assembly in relation to these activities.

RECOMMENDATION 82

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government include strategic objectives and accountability indicators in the 2015-2016 budget papers that reports specifically on Closing the Gap initiatives for the ACT's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents.

Government Response

Noted.

The Whole of Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement currently being developed will identify effort and the strategic outcomes that will inform future ACT Government initiatives. The Agreement will include a single reporting framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs that aligns to the 'Closing the Gap' framework.

The inclusion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body's priorities in the Agreement will guide the ACT Government's delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.

Any changes to ACT Government Strategic Objectives and Accountability Indicators will be considered once the Agreement is endorsed by Government, and will be in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

RECOMMENDATION 83

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the Capital Area Theatre Awards in regard to providing financial assistance to the Awards, as well assisting with hiring Llewellyn Hall.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

The ACT Government will work with the Canberra Area Theatre Awards to identify any available funding and support, including events funding.

RECOMMENDATION 84

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government restore ArtSound's key arts group funding and that the Government provide ArtSound and PhotoAccess the funding required to move these organisations to the Kingston arts precinct.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

ArtSound FM may choose to reapply for Key Arts Organisation funding in 2015. A study is underway into the Kingston Arts Precinct and ArtSound and PhotoAccess are being consulted on any potential move.

RECOMMENDATION 85

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue working to identify and address needs in supporting kinship carers.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Kinship Support team will continue to work with kinship carers. The Out of Home Care Strategy recommends significant changes to training and support for Kinship Carers. This Strategy will be considered by Government later in 2014.

RECOMMENDATION 86

The Committee recommends that Housing ACT give consideration to requiring that all future public housing stock be built to meet high adaptability and accessibility standards.

Government Response

Agreed.

Housing ACT already has a requirement that all new properties are built to Liveable Design Gold Standard.

RECOMMENDATION 87

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the scoping study for a new theatre facility include the possibility of establishing a national performing arts centre in the ACT.

Government Response

Agreed.

CMTEDD, in conjunction with the Cultural Facilities Corporation, will explore consideration of a performing arts facility of national status within the existing funding envelope identified for theatre studies.

RECOMMENDATION 88

The Committee recommends that the appropriate Minister(s) provide details to the Legislative Assembly as soon as possible as to the cause, extent, proposed and actual treatment and the timetable for remediation of the apparent asbestos hazard at the Birrigai centre.

Government Response

Agreed.

A copy of the draft Asbestos Survey and Management Plan for the Birrigai Outdoor School, prepared for TAMS in early 2014, will be provided to Members.

RECOMMENDATION 89

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government set out a timeline for the completion of the Belconnen High School Master Plan.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Master Plan is scheduled for completion before the end of 2014.

RECOMMENDATION 90

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake analysis of the projected need for schools infrastructure to meet increasing demand in West Belconnen and set out a timeline for the delivery of government infrastructure by March 2015.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Education and Training Directorate undertakes analysis of projected need for public schooling as part of its ongoing planning processes. This planning will continue to analyse the need for schooling in West Belconnen.

The timing of advice to Government, however, is dependent on input from estate developers, including private developers (in the case of Riverview) and the Land Development Agency.

As a result, decisions on the number, type and timing of public schools cannot be finalised by March 2015. Delivery of Government infrastructure will be part of future budget considerations.

RECOMMENDATION 91

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government collect, maintain and report annually on ACT school students' health and fitness.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government has a range of mechanisms through which it collects health data of ACT school students. ACT school students' health and fitness status is reported biennially in the Chief Health Officer's report. Annual statistics are available.

The Education and Training Directorate is working in partnership across ACT Government agencies to develop and implement programs that enhance children's health and fitness.

Action in schools is a high priority area within the Towards Zero Growth Health Weight Action Plan. Schools are already engaged with programs to improve the physical health of children such as the Walk and Ride to School Program, supporting schools canteens to provide healthy food choices and building physical activity into the school day.

The Epidemiology Section of ACT Health collects and reports on the health and fitness status of primary and secondary school aged students in the ACT through several surveys including the ACT General Health Survey (GHS), the ACT Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (ACTPANS), and the Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey (ASSAD). The GHS is conducted annually, while the ASSAD and ACTPANS are conducted every three years.

RECOMMENDATION 92

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government research and report on best practice programs to improve children's health and fitness outcomes in the ACT by the last sitting day of March 2015.

Government Response

Not agreed.

ACT Health routinely undertakes evaluation of its programs, many of which have historically been funded through the Healthy Children Initiative under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health. The Commonwealth Government ceased this Agreement on 1 July 2014 and, accordingly, funding to the underlying programs has been cut. The ACT Government is currently looking at the impacts of this loss of funding.

RECOMMENDATION 93

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase annually the variable funding component of educating students with a disability at a rate equivalent to, or greater than, the Consumer Price Index.

Government Response

Noted.

The National Education Reform Agreement (NERA) sets out funding rates. Funding for students with a disability will be in line with NERA.

RECOMMENDATION 94

The Committee recommends that where significant variations in the total cost or the government payment for outputs figures in the budget papers they should be accompanied by an explanatory note.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Government will examine this proposal during the 2015-16 Budget process.

RECOMMENDATION 95

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health update the Legislative Assembly when the detailed working figures used by the Commonwealth to derive the revised NHRA funding arrangements in its 2014-15 Budget are made available.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT has not yet received a formal response to its request for detail to explain the derivation of the figures in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 Budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 96

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health update the Legislative Assembly half-yearly on the progress of updates to the Emergency Department Information System in response to Auditor-General's Report No.6 of 2012.

Government Response

Noted.

There are only three outstanding issues in relation to the Auditor-General's report:

- a single sign-on system that reduces the time for people to log-on to the system, as a means of eliminating the need for generic passwords;
- adoption of new outcome measures for emergency department services; and
- completion of relevant documentation for the system, in term of education, training, auditing and governance.

Two of these required the implementation of the new version of the emergency department information system in order to complete the actions. The new system was implemented in late June 2014, and work is now underway to complete these actions.

In relation to outcome measures, the ACT is leading a national effort to consider possible outcome measures. This process will be completed in late 2014.

RECOMMENDATION 97

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health detail to the Legislative Assembly improvements made to the Gastroenterology and Hepatology Unit to improve administration and governance in response to Auditor-General's Report No. 4 of 2014.

Government Response

Agreed.

Substantial work has been undertaken since the completion of the field work of the Auditor-General's office for this audit. ACT Health has introduced changes to improve processes for acceptance and registration of referrals and is focusing on increasing the Gastroenterology consultants' utilisation of IT systems to triage, in an effort to streamline referral processing and booking of patients into clinics. Enhancements to the electronic referral system have also been identified and are being developed, which will improve the Gastroenterology and Hepatology Unit's visibility of their demand, enabling better management of appointment requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 98

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health detail to the Legislative Assembly how the issue of under reporting of incidents at the Canberra Hospital through the RiskMan system, as identified in Auditor-General's Report No. 4 of 2014, has been addressed.

Government Response

Agreed.

This will occur as part of the ACT Government's response to the Auditor-General's report.

RECOMMENDATION 99

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health detail to the Legislative Assembly the current scope, quantum and effectiveness of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services in the ACT.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government will consider reporting to the Legislative Assembly at an appropriate time.

RECOMMENDATION 100

The Committee recommends that the Government take all possible steps to accurately evaluate the scope, cost and timetable of all capital works projects prior to commencement.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Government notes the comments in the report in relation to the significant challenges associated with budgeting accurately for the timing of delivery of health related infrastructure. The CMTEDD has implemented The Capital Framework, designed to enhance the evaluation of the scope, cost and timing of capital works prior to any budget funding being allocated.

RECOMMENDATION 101

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase adult education regarding sufficient activity for those adults already engaged in some level of sport or fitness activity.

Government Response

Noted.

Following the cessation of the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health from 1 July 2014, funding for programs under the Healthy Workers Initiative has been cut. The ACT Government is currently looking at the impacts of this. Funding from the Healthy Canberra Grants Program to the Heart Foundation will deliver the Live Lighter campaign, targeting adults, to increase awareness around obesity and promotion of increasing physical activity and healthier eating.

RECOMMENDATION 102

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate the reintroduction of direct access to the ACT Equipment Loans Service for patients of private hospitals in the ACT.

Government Response

Noted.

The service is already available to patients discharged from private hospitals in the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 103

The Committee recommends that the Government specifically address suicide among older Canberrans in its forthcoming suicide prevention initiative.

Government Response

Agreed.

The document currently in development (the ACT Mental Health and Wellbeing (Suicide Prevention) Framework 2015-2025) is positioned at a strategic, whole of government and whole of community level. The document identifies high level goals to promote mental health and wellbeing and reduce suicide and self-harm across all age groups. Interventions for specific vulnerable groups, whether aged based, gender, ethnic groups, etc are not identified.

Following the endorsement of the above Framework, each Directorate will develop a business plan or strategic policy to address the Framework objectives. It is within these documents that interventions targeted at specific groups will be contained.

ACT Health will develop a Mental Health Services Plan that will contain strategies targeted at various higher risk groups including older people at risk of suicide.

RECOMMENDATION 104

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the type of data collected by emergency response officers and hospital emergency room staff to better assist in dealing with alcohol-related injuries and incidents in the ACT and report to the Assembly by March 2015.

Government Response

Noted.

While the Government is committed to improving data collection in relation to alcohol-related harms in other areas, the collection of additional information above current requirements in emergency situations is not supported at this time. It is important that health services, and especially ambulance paramedics and clinical staff in the hospital emergency departments, manage presentations based on clinical need and record the primary condition they are treating, not the apparent cause of the condition.

RECOMMENDATION 105

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review all proposed options for a new Supreme Court building taking into account functionality, capacity and cost, and report to the Legislative Assembly on the outcomes of the review.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The ACT Government has previously considered options for a new Supreme Court building taking into account functionality, capacity, cost, and delivery methodology. The 2014-15 Budget provides for a Public Private Partnership procurement of new ACT Court Facilities which integrates the Supreme Court with the existing Magistrates Court building.

The Public Private Partnership procurement process will consider all options and evaluate proposals in accordance with the *Government Procurement Act 2001* and the ACT Capital and Partnerships Frameworks.

The ACT Government is currently at the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase of the project.

The Request for EOI document is available from the ACT Government's procurement website http://www.procurement.act.gov.au/tenders/tender_download/open_tenders/23985.114.

RECOMMENDATION 106

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review again the question of whether to appoint a fifth Supreme Court judge.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Government keeps this matter under regular review. The ACT Government continues to work with the Chief Justice on the question of appropriate Supreme Court resourcing, including through development of a resourcing model.

RECOMMENDATION 107

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide for segregation between victims and defendants in the new Supreme Court.

Government Response

Agreed.

The new facilities will be designed and built to ensure appropriate levels of separation are provided for different categories of court user.

RECOMMENDATION 108

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make representations to the Commonwealth with a view to supporting the work of the Legal Aid Commission so that it can meet a reasonable proportion of community demand for legal representation.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Government will continue to advocate for adequate and appropriate Commonwealth support for legal assistance in the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 109

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government introduce measures to effectively address bullying, sexism and misogyny in ACT Emergency Services.

Government Response

Noted.

ACT Emergency Services takes bullying and harassment seriously and manages issues in line with the ACT Public Service Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework and the Public Sector Management Act.

In addition, in the 2014-15 Budget the Government announced the development of a 'Women in Emergency Services Strategy' and reallocated \$0.160 million for this initiative.

RECOMMENDATION 110

The Committee recommends that the relevant Minister detail to the Assembly the manner in which the Justice and Community Safety Directorate managed allegations of bullying, sexism and misogyny in the ACT Emergency Services Agency.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The JACS Directorate including the ACT Emergency Services takes bullying and harassment seriously and manages issues in line with the ACT Public Service Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework and the Public Sector Management Act.

The ACT Government's Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework can be found at:

<http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/governance/public/publications#red>

The *Public Sector Management Act 1994* can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1994-37/default.asp>

These matters are regularly reported on to the Assembly through Annual Reports Hearings.

RECOMMENDATION 111

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government's Emergency Services Agency should comply with the *Emergencies Act 2004* requirements for the upcoming version 3 Strategic Bushfire Management Plan by including in this Plan an explicit statement of all resources needed to meet the objectives of the Plan.

Government Response

Agreed.

An explicit statement of all resources needed to meet the objectives of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) is already planned to be included in version 3 of the Plan. The SBMP version 3 is expected to be released by October 2014.

RECOMMENDATION 112

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the Community Fire Units and the Farm Fire Wise Program receive adequate resources to enable them to effectively fulfil their functions.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government currently provides appropriate ongoing funding to Community Fire Units and the Farm Wise Program.

RECOMMENDATION 113

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider a telephone ordering option for the provision of library services.

Government Response

Noted.

Home Library customers can request titles through their home library volunteer. The current system allows people to request titles online or in person. Providing a phone request service for all library members would require additional staffing resources.

RECOMMENDATION 114

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the expansion of shop front services currently provided at the Civic Library.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government will consider options for extending Civic Shopfront services in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 115

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the provision of additional power sockets at all ACT libraries for recharging of electronic devices.

Government Response

Agreed.

As libraries are upgraded, additional power sockets will be added.

RECOMMENDATION 116

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the strength and speed of Wi-Fi delivered in ACT public libraries.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The WIFI network in public libraries was upgraded in December 2013. User feedback will continue to be monitored.

RECOMMENDATION 117

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review issues with line of sight on Hibberston Street, Gungahlin and report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in September 2014.

Government Response

Agreed.

A feasibility study has been completed for the intersection of Hinder and Hibberson Streets. Construction works will be considered against other priorities for future programs.

RECOMMENDATION 118

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consult on the temporary management plan for the upgrade of William Slim and Barton Highway.

Government Response

Agreed.

Consultation has been undertaken as part of the works approval for this site. Traffic management staging plans were included in the documentation approved by the National Capital Authority. Prior to works beginning, TAMS will inform the general community about the impact of the proposed works.

RECOMMENDATION 119

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct a scoping study into the impact on traffic from the development of West Belconnen.

Government Response

Agreed.

Traffic studies have been undertaken as part of the suite of research and documentation that has been lodged with the Environment and Planning Directorate as part of the rezoning proposal.

RECOMMENDATION 120

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government prioritise the upgrade of major arterial roads in West Belconnen prior to the development of the Riverview site.

Government Response

Agreed.

The traffic studies referenced in Recommendation 119 above include prescription for road upgrades that will be required to accommodate increased traffic generated by the West Belconnen development, including for example, on Southern Cross Drive and Drake Brockman Drive. This material will be assessed by the Environment and Planning Directorate with reference to other relevant agencies, as part of the rezoning process.

RECOMMENDATION 121

The Committee recommends that ACT Government aggregate the cost for works to the appropriate directorates associated with Capital Metro.

Government Response

Noted.

Cost for works have been and are recognised by appropriate directorates in the budget papers.

RECOMMENDATION 122

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government define the relationship between TAMS and the Capital Metro Agency in regard to the delivery of proposed capital works associated with Capital Metro.

Government Response

Noted.

The delivery of capital works will be recognised by appropriate directorates.

The parameters of the Capital Metro scope of works will be defined ahead of the project's 'request for proposals' stage, as amended during the procurement process. Works not within the project's scope of works will not form part of the Capital Metro Agency's capital works mandate.

Capital Metro Agency maintains a relationship with other directorates through various mechanisms, including through directorate representation on the Capital Metro Project Board.

RECOMMENDATION 123

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly progress on addressing issues in relation to the Parkwood Road Recycling Estate by the last sitting day of 2014.

Government Response

Agreed.

A report will be provided to the Assembly on progress in relation to addressing issues at the Parkwood Estate before the end of the 2014 sittings.

RECOMMENDATION 124

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish a fenced playground in each district of the ACT.

Government Response

Noted.

TAMS is developing a playspace strategy which is due for completion in early 2015. The need and opportunity to fence some playgrounds will be considered as part of the strategy development.

RECOMMENDATION 125

The Committee commends the investigation of liability coverage for voluntary land management activities and calls on the TAMSD to report on the outcomes of their investigation by December 2014.

Government Response

Noted.

The framework currently exists whereby organised groups interested in contributing to the management of urban park areas can be accommodated under the same arrangement as ParkCare groups.

RECOMMENDATION 126

The Committee recommends that ACTION undertake a survey to establish the reason why some people choose not to use ACTION bus services.

Government Response

Agreed.

A research project 'Barriers to use of public transport in the ACT' is currently being considered. If it proceeds, it would be undertaken following the launch of Network 14. The project may include face-to-face and/or online research conducted by a research company and/or online research conducted through TAMS' digital channels.

Questions which attempt to get a better understanding of why people do not catch buses will also be included in other surveys to be undertaken by TAMS.

RECOMMENDATION 127

The Committee recommends that the accountability indicators as specified for the Economic Development Directorate's Output 1.1—Policy, Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery be broken down into factors—such as timeliness, decision-making etc.—for greater accountability.

Government Response

Noted.

This recommendation will be considered as part of the development of the 2015-16 Budget papers.

RECOMMENDATION 128

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop accountability indicators based on results from investment facilitation made by the Economic Development Directorate as opposed to reporting solely on the services delivered—such as value, applicable industry and whether the investment has contributed to an increase in jobs.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

CMTEDD will review all performance measures in preparation for future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 129

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to promote Canberra as a port for direct international flights and provide details to the Legislative Assembly on progress in achieving this outcome.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The primary objective of Government is to achieve the economic targets underpinning the Tourism 2020 strategy. Direct international flights should be viewed as an enabler of these economic outcomes, not an outcome in isolation. Ongoing dialogue is being fostered with key stakeholders in New Zealand and Singapore to reinforce the ACT Government's commitment to establish an aviation partnership and direct services.

RECOMMENDATION 130

The Committee recommends that the Government detail any cost of using diesel line marking on ACT ovals, including the restoration of damage caused by the use of diesel to the Legislative Assembly, by the last sitting day of October 2014.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

The annual cost of line marking sportsgrounds with diesel is estimated to be \$154,000 per annum. Remediation occurs as part of the ongoing maintenance of sports grounds undertaken by SRS, including work undertaken during the major restoration periods that occur twice yearly at the end of the summer and winter sport seasons.

Any areas specifically identified as being in any way rutted due to diesel line marking are targeted as a part of that top dressing process, principally in spring. The cost of remediation of damage caused by diesel line marking is therefore not separately identifiable within the overall restoration program and cannot be reported.

RECOMMENDATION 131

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore the feasibility of the relocation of the Canberra and Region Visitors Centre to Regatta Point—on the basis of its suitability as a central location, accessibility, parking availability, relationship with the National Capital Authority and physical linkage and proximity to major events such as Floriade, Skyfire and Enlighten, and report to the Legislative Assembly by March 2015.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

CMTEDD has commenced a joint study with the National Capital Authority (NCA). The timing for completion of that study has not yet been agreed with the NCA.

VisitCanberra is also undertaking a project to inform the future distribution of visitor information in Canberra that takes into account distribution of information through the city, including major tourism precincts, major attractions and hotels, exploring the role digital technology could play in providing a comprehensive visitor information solution for Canberra and providing recommendations on the role of the Canberra and Region Visitors Centre.

RECOMMENDATION 132

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consult with the head of the Canberra Business and Event Centre regarding the feasibility of relocating the Canberra and Region Visitors Centre to Regatta Point.

Government Response

Agreed.

CMTEDD maintains a close working relationship with the operator of the Canberra Business and Event Centre and has discussed the scope of the feasibility study.

RECOMMENDATION 133

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government strongly consider reinstating the funding that came to an end on 30 June 2014 to the Canberra Convention Bureau for knowledge and sports based activities.

Government Response

Not agreed.

This matter was considered by Government in the 2014-15 Budget process. The 2013-14 Budget committed an additional \$400,000 over four years for the Canberra Convention Bureau (CCB). The CCB has maintained the sports program for 2014-15 within its current budget.

RECOMMENDATION 134

The Committee recommends that prior to the sale of ACTTAB, the ACT Government detail in the Legislative Assembly how it will foster and protect the local racing industry in the ACT.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Minister for Racing and Gaming will provide information to the Legislative Assembly detailing the government's ongoing support to maintaining a vibrant local racing industry for the future.

RECOMMENDATION 135

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Racing and Gaming make a statement informing the ACT Legislative Assembly on the outcome of the probity checks of Aquis' suitability to operate Casino Canberra.

Government Response

Agreed.

A statement will be made once the Gambling and Racing Commission's suitability report has been received and considered by the Government.

RECOMMENDATION 136

The Committee recommends that should the completion of the probity checks of Aquis' suitability to operate the Casino Canberra be delayed beyond October 2014, the Minister for Racing and Gaming should make a statement, at the next available sitting, informing the ACT Legislative Assembly and provide an explanation for the delay.

Government Response

Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION 137

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly on the final outcomes of the collapse of Sports Alive.

Government Response

Noted.

A detailed explanation of the outcomes was already provided to the Committee during the Estimates hearings.

RECOMMENDATION 138

The Committee recommends that should the availability of the feasibility study into the co-administration and co-location of the three racing codes—Canberra Racing Club, Canberra Harness Racing Club and the Canberra Greyhound Racing Club—be delayed beyond the last sitting day in August 2014, the Minister for Racing and Gaming should make a statement informing the ACT Legislative Assembly and provide an explanation for the delay.

Government Response

Noted.

As previously agreed, the Minister for Racing and Gaming will inform the Legislative Assembly on the key outcomes from the co-location feasibility study once consultation with industry is completed and the report finalised.