



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMY AND GENDER AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY
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Submission Coversheet

Inquiry into ACT Budget 2020–21

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Inquiry into ACT Budget 2020-21

CPSU SUBMISSION

9 MARCH 2021

Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality and Standing
Committee on Public Accounts
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020,
Canberra ACT 2601

By email: LACommitteeEGEE@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

As one of the largest unions in the ACT Public Service (ACTPS), the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) is committed to providing a strong voice for our members in key public policy and political debates. We welcome the opportunity to provide a submission to this Inquiry into the ACT Budget 2020-21.

Our three key priorities for the ACT Budget

The ACT Government should be a model employer and lead the country in best practice approaches to insourcing privatised arrangements and promoting secure work within the public sector. Given the strong election commitments made by Labor and the Greens in 2020, this should be prioritised in the next Budget.

There remain ongoing issues that ACT Government needs to address before it can lead the nation in progressive delivery public services and workplace practices. The CPSU has identified the following three issues as needing to be addressed with the utmost urgency:

- Ensuring public services are in public hands;
- Guaranteeing secure work; and
- Providing fair and competitive remuneration increases to ACT public servants

Public services in public hands

A key commitment made by the ACT Government was to legislate to keep public services in public hands by preventing the outsourcing, privatisation or contracting out of ACT Government Public Services to the private or not-for-profit community.¹ The legislated framework is to be introduced by the end of 2021 and would ensure a

¹ ACT Labor (2020, 6 September). No-Privatisation Guarantee Under A Re-Elected Labor Government. Retrieved from <https://www.actlabor.org.au/blog/act-election-announcements/no-privatisation-guarantee-under-a-re-elected-labor-government/>

public interest test is applied before privatisation, pay and conditions are maintained and ongoing public accountability and transparency are guaranteed.²

Maintaining public services in public hands also involves bringing outsourced public services back in-house. There is the extensive use of outsourcing by the ACT public sector. This includes, but is not limited to, healthcare providers (such as Little Company of Mary and Aspen medical), contracts for services such as HR and Management investigation (such as HBA Consulting and Mercer), the use of contractors for ongoing government works (such as Lack Group and CityWide) or the ongoing use of labour hire employees (such as Hayes and Adecco). The CPSU notes the ACT Government has begun the process by insourcing school cleaners in-house but there is much more to do.³

Secure work

Recognising the critical role that ACTPS employees play in delivering services to Canberrans, the CPSU believes the ACTPS should have the best staff possible. Not only do ACT public servants deliver services for Canberrans, but they are also employed for their ability to develop, create, critically analyse, and implement policy and process.

Critical to this is security of employment which has a history of lacking across the ACTPS. Insecure work has transaction costs such as additional recruitment and training costs, the premium paid to labour hire companies and the increased expense of using contractors. A lack of job security also leads to turnover and the loss of corporate, reduced security of information and accountability, a reduction in the quality of services, and lower staff morale.

There is a common perception but inaccurate perception that insecure work is not an issue in the public sector. Over a fifth of ACTPS workers are in insecure jobs. While inroads have been made to transfer insecure workers to more secure forms of employment, additional insecure work has been created since this issue was originally raised in 2017. The outcome is a relevantly stable number of insecure workers in the ACTPS over a long period of time though there was a slight improvement in the last financial year.

Figure 1 Employment Modes (Proportion of total workforce based on headcount)

Type	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Perm	77.90%	77.60%	77.40%	77.60%	76.70%	75.90%	76.10%	76%	78.1
Temp	15.30%	15.30%	15.60%	15.90%	16.80%	17.40%	17.30%	17.20%	16.5
Casual	6.80%	7.10%	7.10%	6.50%	6.50%	6.80%	6.60%	6.80%	5.4

The Insecure Work Taskforce established by the ACT Government was an important first step in addressing insecure work in the ACTPS to enable agreed outcomes, however, much more needs to be done to increase the transitioning of labour hire, non-ongoing and casual staff into permanent ACTPS employment.

² Community and Public Sector Union (2020, 6 September). ACT workers save services from privatisation. Retrieved from <https://www.cpsu.org.au/content/act-workers-save-services-privatisation>

³ Katie Burgess (2019, 16 April). School cleaning to be brought in-house. Canberra Times. Retrieved from <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6047972/school-cleaning-to-be-brought-in-house/>

One of the most prevalent issues that leads to the creation of insecure work is the provision of tied funding grants, by ACT Treasury to ACT Government Directorates. This is a process that is embedded in the ACT Budget, providing no certainty of longer-term funding for the staff needed. This must be urgently addressed.

Fair and competitive remuneration

Wage stagnation is a problem across the country, affecting living standards. The Commonwealth Budget predicts that inflation will be higher than average wages over the next two years, meaning real wage cuts for Australians.

The public sector is one of the largest employers in the ACT and decisions by governments have a macroeconomic effect. RBA Governor Phillip Lowe explaining to Parliament that “caps on wages growth in public sectors right across the country are another factor contributing to the subdued wage outcomes.”⁴

Given the absolute failure of the Commonwealth Government to bargain in good faith and offer real wage increases, it is essential that the ACT Government steps up. To this end, in light of the current economic climate and the uncertainty of the future, the ACT Government must show leadership in the economic

rebuild of the ACT. Central to this is delivering a real wage increase. Increasing public sector wages is an effective means to increase wages across the economy. Economist Saul Eslake recommended that governments should adjust the approach it takes to wages negotiations with its own employees as a means of addressing low wages.⁵

Studies have shown there are economic benefits from increased public sector pay, boosting economic growth and creating additional jobs.⁶ Cutting real wages of public servants, as some other jurisdictions have done, will only cause economic pain, multiplier effects leading to job losses in the wider economy.⁷ Recent research suggests that consumer spending by public servants will create 1.79 direct jobs for every \$1 million spent, more than the 0.97 direct jobs created by spending on construction.⁸ It will encourage private sector investment by strengthening consumer confidence. It is basic economics that real wages increases are beneficial.

It also provides an opportunity for ACT Government to provide a more competitive offer to attract the best talent from the APS. The lower super guarantee for ACT Government employees also makes it a less attractive employer than the Commonwealth Government. With both seeking to attract and retain employees in the same geographic labour market, it is to the detriment of the ACTPS. This must also be addressed.

⁴ Phillip Lowe (2019, 9 August) ‘Opening Statement to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics’ . Reserve Bank of Australia, <https://www.rba.gov.au/speeches/2019/sp-gov-2019-08-09.html>

⁵ Saul Eslake (2017, 4 October). Is faster profit growth essential for a pick-up in wages growth? The Conversation. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/is-faster-profit-growth-essential-for-a-pick-up-in-wages-growth-83819>

⁶ Troy Henderson and Jim Stanford (2017, July) False Economies: Unintended Consequences of Public Sector Wage Restraint. Centre for Future Work. p.15

⁷ <https://australiainstitute.org.au/post/nsw-public-sector-pay-cut-to-cost-1100-jobs-and-harm-regional-economies/>

⁸ Richard Dennis (2020, 1 June). NSW Public Sector Pay Cut to Cost 1,100 Jobs and Harm Regional Economies. The Australia Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.tai.org.au/content/nsw-public-sector-pay-cut-cost-1100-jobs-and-harm-regional-economies>.

The CPSU is calling on the Government to commit to provide a salary increase of 3.5% per annum, as well as gradually increasing the superannuation contributions until it reaches 15.4 per cent and guarantee this by including it as a common term in enterprise agreements in the next round of bargaining.

Our 2020-21 ACT Budget submission

The CPSU provided a 2020-21 ACT Budget submission to the ACT Government in October 2019. Our submission made twelve recommendations and called for the ACT Government to:

- Reduce insecure work arrangements in the ACTPS;
- Provide additional funds to address resource pressures in ACTPS agencies;
- Recognise the importance of “back office” support functions; and
- Provide adequate superannuation contributions to ensure the ACTPS remains an employer of choice.

A copy of our 2020-21 ACT Budget submission has been attached as Appendix A.

ACT COVID-19 Recovery Initiatives

The CPSU welcomed the Jobs for Canberrans program, in which the ACT Government stepped in and employed workers that the Federal government had left behind. While these jobs were temporary, they undertook critical work for the community.

In 2020, the CPSU also welcomed the ACT Government’s COVID Leave policy. This policy allowed ACT public servants to take leave when they had been tested for COVID, instructed to isolate or if they were a vulnerable worker that couldn’t present to the workplace and their work did not allow them to work from home. This policy gave ACT public servants confidence that getting tested for COVID or following a direction to self-isolate would not affect their employment.

CPSU also welcomes ACT Government’s moves during the pandemic to have staff work from home. The CPSU notes that this has been a very successful demonstration that ACTPS can work from home. On top

of this, our members and some directorates have reported that there was increased efficiency. Moving forward, the ACT Government recognising working from home is a critical part of any flexible, Activity Based Work or work from anywhere policy.

Bullying and harassment

Bullying and harassment, as well as poor workplace culture in some directorates continues to be an issue in the ACTPS.

The CPSU raised many of its concerns in its submission to the 2018 Independent Review into ACT Health Culture and Wellbeing including the importance of adequate training and support, the role of insecure work arrangements and encouraging the use of joint selection panels for recruitment processes.

While the CPSU appreciates these issues will not change overnight, it is important that the Government take active measures to ensure that the ACTPS is a safe and healthy workplace.

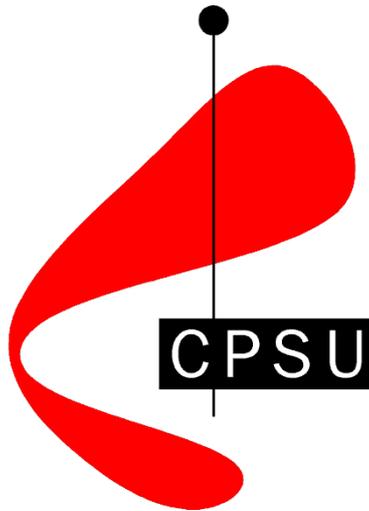
The CPSU is happy to provide information on the matters raised in this submission and supplementary information on other relevant issues.

For further information, please contact Brenton Higgins, Lead Organiser via email brenton.higgins@cpsu.org.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Madeline". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Madeline Northam
Regional Secretary



**CPSU (PSU Group) Submission:
2020-21 ACT Budget**

Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate

October 2019

Summary of Recommendations

1. Increase the transitioning of labour hire, non ongoing and casual staff into permanent ACTPS employment.
2. Reduce the amount spent on third party consultants in the ACTPS
3. Where the Insecure Work Taskforce identifies a critical need, provide additional funding to ensure a transition from insecure work arrangements to permanency.
4. Fund an additional 30 FTE for the independent WorkSafeACT with appropriate staffing and regulatory capacity.
5. Provide additional funds to the Canberra Health Services and other directorates where appropriate to implement the recommendations of the Health Professionals Review.
6. Provide specific funding for intelligence unit and additional youth workers at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre
7. Provide additional funding for 30 correctional officers at the Alexander Maconochie Centre to better manage pressures from overcrowding.
8. Review structural and governance arrangements at the EPA and provide funding for additional staff.
9. Provide additional funds to the Construction Regulator for an additional 10 building inspectors to enforce strengthened building regulations.
10. Rule out funding additional work by cutting back office functions that are already under resourced.
11. Involve and consult with staff in decision making processes to address existing and growing pressures on public services.
12. ACT Government guarantees their employer superannuation contributions will continue to rise by 0.5 per annum for employees to eventually reach 15.5 per cent.

Overview

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) PSU Group is an active and progressive union committed to providing a strong voice for our members in key public policy and political debates. As the largest union in the ACT Public Service (ACTPS), the CPSU welcomes the opportunity to participate in the 2020 21 ACT Budget Consultation.

Our submission outlines the need for ACT Government should prioritise investing in the capacity of ACTPS to meet the needs and expectations of Canberrans. Specific areas requiring attention in the 2020 21 Budget include:

1. Reducing insecure work arrangements in the ACTPS;
2. Providing additional funds to address resource pressures in ACTPS agencies;
3. Recognising the importance of “back office” support functions; and
4. Providing adequate superannuation contributions to ensure the ACTPS remains an employer of choice.

Ensuring secure employment in the ACTPS

Insecure workers have less job security, fewer entitlements and as a result are less satisfied with their position. This has flow on consequences for many areas of their lives such as the ability to plan, eligibility for loans, and retirement incomes. Insecure work arrangements create undue pressure and stress on workers.

There is a common perception that insecure work is not an issue in the public sector. This is not an accurate view. Insecure work continues to be a significant issue in the ACTPS with the 2018 19 ACT State of the Service report showing that 24.0 per cent of all ACTPS employees were engaged on a “non ongoing” basis, classified as either temporary or casual.¹

Figure 1 Employment Modes (Proportion of total workforce based on headcount)

Type	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Permanent	77.9%	77.6%	77.4%	77.6%	76.7%	75.9%	76.1%	76%
Temporary	15.3%	15.3%	15.6%	15.9%	16.8%	17.4%	17.3%	17.2%
Casual	6.8%	7.1%	7.1%	6.5%	6.5%	6.8%	6.6%	6.8%

Source: Previous ACT State of the Service Reports

The extent of “non ongoing” employment varies significantly across the ACTPS. Figure 2 shows the proportion of non ongoing staff in each Directorate.

Figure 2 Number of non-ongoing (temporary and casual) FTE staff by Directorate²

	Non-ongoing	Proportion
Canberra Health Service	1,626.30	25.3%
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development	344.60	14.4%
ACT Insurance Authority	1.50	9.0%
Community Services	158.30	17.6%
Education	1,456.10	24.4%
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	164.30	25.4%
Health	75.70	14.0%
Justice and Community Safety	227.60	12.5%
Transport Canberra and City Services	261.40	14.2%

The use of insecure work arrangements in the ACT Government is regulated through legislation and commitments in enterprise agreements. *The Public Sector Management Act 1994* (the PSM Act), which regulates employment arrangements in the ACTPS, specifies that

¹ ACT Public Service Head of Service (2018, October) ACT State of the Service Report 2017 18 ACT Government

² ACT Public Service Head of Service (2018, October) ACT State of the Service Report 2017 18 ACT Government

the ACTPS “may employ the person for a fixed term of— (a) less than 12 months; or (b) if the head of service consults the principal union about the need for the temporary employment— less than 5 years.”³ Section A2.2 of the ACT Government Administrative and Related Classifications Enterprise Agreement 2018 2021 also outlines the only circumstances whereby temporary employment may be utilised by the ACT Government as follows:

*In order to promote permanent employment and job security for employees, the ACTPS will endeavour to minimise the use of temporary and casual employment. The ACTPS agrees to the use of temporary employees only where there is no officer available with the expertise, skills or qualifications required for the duties to be performed or the assistance of a temporary nature is required for the performance of urgent or specialised work within a particular business unit of the ACTPS and it is not practical in the circumstances to use the services of an existing officer.*⁴

But while there are some circumstances in which there is a legitimate need for the engagement of employees on a temporary basis, the current use of these arrangements in ACT Government goes far beyond what is acceptable under the PSM Act and enterprise agreement.

The CPSU’s most recent 2017 18 *What Women Want* survey found that of 15.1% of ACTPS women who are currently acting in a higher position, 28.5% had acted in the position for more than a year. This, along with the significant proportion of non ongoing staff in the ACTPS, raises questions as to whether they were actually temporary roles and also, in many circumstances, how they met the criteria outlined under section A2.2 of the employment agreement.

The claimed benefits of using insecure work are not without their costs. Even though “flexibility” and “efficiency” are cited as reasons for using insecure arrangements, there are transaction costs such as additional recruitment and training costs, the premium paid to labour hire companies and the increased expense of using contractors. This does not include the longer term costs to the capacity and capability of the public sector include the loss of corporate knowledge and business continuity, reduced security of information and accountability, a reduction in the quality of services, and lower staff morale.

The CPSU is also concerned about the use of third party consultants in the ACTPS. According to Tenders ACT, the ACT Government executed \$34 million in consultancy contracts in the 2018 19 financial year. While consultants may be necessary where there is a clear lack of internal technical expertise, it is unclear why consultants are necessary for tasks such as

³ *The Public Sector Management Act 1994* Division 5.8 Temporary Work

⁴ Section A2.2, ACT Public Sector Administrative and Related Classifications Enterprise Agreement 2013 2017

Administrative Reviews, Investigations and Related Services when the ACTPS has the capacity to do this.⁵

To address the extent of insecure work in the ACTPS and strengthen its capacity and capability, action needs to be taken to ensure that insecure workers have access to fair and reasonable entitlements and that the services that the ACTPS provides to the community are not affected by a reliance on insecure workers. The establishment of the Insecure Work Taskforce by the ACT Government was an important first step in addressing insecure work in the ACTPS to enable agreed outcomes, however, much more needs to be done. The ACT Government must provide funding to ensure a transition to permanency for insecure workers identified as doing critical work.

Recommendation:

Increase the transitioning of labour hire, non ongoing and casual staff into permanent ACTPS employment.

Reduce the amount spent on third party consultants in the ACTPS.

Where the Insecure Work Taskforce identifies a critical need, provide additional funding to ensure a transition from insecure work arrangements to permanency.

A well-resourced public service that delivers for our community

The ACTPS works hard every day to deliver the services and support that Canberrans rely on the ACTPS. There are increasing pressures and expectations on the ACTPS employees whose job it is to deliver public services to the community and implement public policy. Increased workloads without additional resourcing have diminished the capacity of the ACTPS to serve the community. A properly resourced public service is needed to meet the Canberra community's needs and expectations.

This submission specifically highlights the need for additional resourcing in WorkSafe, the Canberra Health Service, Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, the Alexander Maconochie Centre, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Construction Occupations Registrar.

⁵ ACT Government (2015) Pane P24506 Tenders ACT Retr eved from https://tenders.act.gov.au/ets/contract/y_ew_do?d=11164

WorkSafe

The CPSU acknowledges that the ACT Government made WorkSafe a genuinely independent authority earlier this year to allow it the autonomy to focus on enforcing occupational health and safety regulations including of the ACT Government as an employer.⁶

It is essential that WorkSafe is properly resourced to enable it to have proper regulatory oversight of occupational health and safety. Without adequate staffing levels, it will be difficult for WorkSafe to be the strong deterrent needed to ensure employers provide safe working environments into line with legal requirements and the expectations of Canberrans.

Health Professionals Review

During the negotiations of the Health Professionals Enterprise Agreement 2018 2021, the parties to the agreement agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the Health Professional (HP) classification. HP's include health practitioners such as pharmacists, psychology, Occupational Therapists, perfusionists, medical imagists and many other allied health professionals.

The Review will consider whether one classification is still relevant or whether the classification systems used for HP's needs to be expanded to account for new profession based classifications. One of the factors in deciding this will be the pay rates and conditions put in place to attract and retain certain health professions, which will likely have a cost imposition. As to not affect the delivery of services delivered to the ACT community, these costs will need to be met by additional funding in the ACT budget.

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre

The CPSU has long been concerned about inadequate resourcing and understaffing at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. The CPSU notes that understaffing at Bimberi was flagged as an issue by the ACT Human Rights Commission's *Investigation Report into Bimberi Youth Justice Centre 2019*. The Review stated that:

At a broader level, maintaining appropriate staffing levels over time, and with fluctuating numbers of young people at Bimberi, remains a significant challenge, but it is key to a functional and human rights compliant youth justice centre. Insufficient staffing contributed to serious systemic issues in Bimberi in the review period, including a dramatic increase in lockdowns. This in turn resulted in reduced access to education and programs, leading to frustration for young people, and increased risk of staff injury and burnout. It is not acceptable for young people to be continually

⁶ Rache Stephen Smith (2019, 15 August) WorkSafe ACT to become an independent entity ACT Government Retrieved from https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/nform/act_government_media_releases/rache_stephen_smith_media_releases/2019/worksafe_act_to_become_an_independent_entity

locked down, or for staff to be placed at risk of occupational violence due to inadequate staff numbers. While these issues have been resolved in the short term through additional recruitment rounds, there is a need for a comprehensive and transparent plan and adequate resourcing to maintain staffing levels. Shift duration and flexibility for staff with family and other responsibilities must also be considered in this planning process.⁷

The Review recommended that the Community Services Directorate review staffing arrangements at Bimberi and develop and fully resource a long term staffing strategy to ensure adequate staffing to meet the needs of fluctuating numbers of young people at Bimberi. This review should consider how staff can be better supported and should include consultation with staff regarding changes to shift length.

The Government response to that recommendation was to agree, stating that a Recruitment Strategy is being developed to ensure a regular and ongoing recruitment process and to reduce the impact of staffing fluctuations on the management of the Centre and that a review of shift lengths, including consultation with staff, will be undertaken.⁸

The CPSU has previously advocated for minimum permanent staffing levels but our calls had been ignored.⁹ We continue to advocate for the ACT Government to commit to providing additional staff, not merely a strategy and review. The CPSU recommends that ACT Government commit to providing specific funding for intelligence unit and additional youth workers at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

Finally, given a number of serious events that have occurred in both AMC and the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre; as well as both policy and legislative restrictions respectively that prevent the use of strip searches unless there are serious mitigating circumstances; the CPSU is calling on the Government to urgently invest and install additional body scanners. These Body scanners should be located at the AMC, the CTU court cells, and at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

Use of body scanners will provide both Bimberi officers and Correctional officers with the tools necessary to know that detainees or young people are not secreteting either contrabands, weapons or illicit substances on their body. Not only will this provide a safer

⁷ ACT Human Rights Commission (December 2018) Commission report at invited Review of Allegations Regarding Bimberi Youth Justice Centre Report of the ACT Disability and Community Services Commission and ACT Human Rights Commission Retrieved from https://hrc.act.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/190329_Bimberi_Review_Exec_Summary_Recommendations_without_addendum.pdf

⁸ Community Services Directorate (2019, June) ACT Government Response: ACT Human Rights Commission – Commission report at invited Review of Allegations regarding Bimberi Youth Justice Centre Report Retrieved from https://hrc.act.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ACT_Government_Response_HRC_Review_Bimberi.pdf

⁹ Peter Brewer (2019, 18 April) Report reveals 'cease and desist' and 'long hours of boredom' in Bimberi lockdowns Canberra Times Retrieved from <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6060131/report-reveals-cease-and-desist-and-long-hours-of-boredom-in-bimberi-lockdowns/>

environment for staff, detainees and young people; but it will allow these searches to occur in a manner that meets the community expectations and is non-invasive.

Alexander Maconochie Centre

The Alexander Maconochie Centre has reached and exceeds its design capacity, the overcrowding placing an enormous strain on services, staff and detainees and also placing staff at risk.¹⁰ The ACT Inspector of Correctional Services found that there are staffing issues resulting in unacceptable lock-ins of detainees during normal unlock hours. The Inspector has stated that *“there is a limit as to how many bodies can be crammed into the AMC before conditions became intolerable and/or dangerous to detainees and staff, and the basic human rights of both are put at risk.”*¹¹

The overcrowding has reached a point where the ACT Government announced it was building a separate 80 bed minimum security prison – or ‘reintegration centre’ in the 2019–20 Budget, however, the increased capacity is not expected until 2021 and the ACT has the fastest growing prison population in the country.¹²

The ACT Government previously stated in the 2019–20 Budget that it would be delivering more custodial staff and additional services to ensure a safe and secure environment for the increased number of detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre.¹³ The CPSU recommends the ACT Government commit to the provision of an additional 30 correctional officers to help better manage the pressures from the overcrowded facility.

Finally, given a number of serious events that have occurred in both AMC and the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre; as well as both policy and legislative restrictions respectively that prevent the use of strip searches unless there are serious mitigating circumstances; the CPSU is calling on the Government to urgently invest and install additional body scanners. These Body scanners should be located at the AMC, the CTU court cells, and at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

Use of body scanners will provide both Bimberi officers and Correctional officers with the tools necessary to know that detainees or young people are not secreting either contrabands, weapons or illicit substances on their body. Not only will this provide a safer

¹⁰ Peter Brewer (2019, 15 Apr) Canberra prison overcrowded, and makeshift weapons an issue says union Canberra Times Retrieved from <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6006679/canberras-vo-at-prison-overcrowded-short-of-staff-and-inmates-making-sh-vs-out-of-tuna-cans/?cs=14225>

¹¹ ACT Inspector of Correctional Services (2019), Report of a review of the care and management of remandees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre, Canberra Retrieved from https://www.cs.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/1322126/10346_ACT_CS_Care_and_Management_of_Remandees_Feb_2019_FA_tagged.pdf

¹² Blake Foden (2019, 28 Apr) ACT records fastest growth in prisoner numbers after near doubling Canberra Times Retrieved from <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6088716/near-doubling-gives-act-fastest-growing-prison-population/>

¹³ Gyns Quan (2019, 4 June) ACT Budget 2019: \$35 million to build minimum security prison plus funds for staff, bail support R o t A C T Retrieved from <https://the.rotaact.com/act-budget-2019-35-million-to-build-minimum-security-prison-plus-funds-for-staff-bail-support/305679>

environment for staff, detainees and young people; but it will allow these searches to occur in a manner that meets the community expectations and is non-invasive,

Environmental Protection Agency

Regulatory functions relating to the protection of our environment is a critical function of government. Reports of increasing numbers of complaints but far fewer fines and one prosecution than in previous years when it was under the Environment Directorate.¹⁴ Unless our regulators are properly resourced, Canberra's status as a clean, safe and liveable city is at risk.

As with WorkSafe, the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) need more resources and greater independence from Access Canberra. Access Canberra's approach to regulation may be appropriate for the regulation of lower risk issues, is not appropriate for the protection of our environment. A review that examines whether the EPA should return to the Environment Directorate should occur.

Construction Occupation Registrar

Building quality issues continues to be a major issue in the ACT. The CPSU notes that ACT legislative inquiry into building quality heard a lack of experience in building multi units has contributed to defects in Canberra over the past 15 years.¹⁵

While the CPSU notes that 2019-20 Budget included eight new building inspectors and some additional compliance officers,¹⁶ to conduct up to an extra 1,000 site inspections, work started on 1,137 new dwellings in the three months to June 2019.¹⁷

The strengthening of regulations, as announced in September,¹⁸ require additional resources available to the Construction Occupations Registrar to investigate and enforce these strengthened building regulations.

¹⁴ F nbar O Ma on (2019, 16 August) ACT Environmenta Protect on Agency data: Two years, near y 6000 comp a nts, on y s x f nes Canberra T mes Retr eved from <https://www.canberratmes.com.au/story/6324162/envronment-protect-on-agency-has-had-6000-compa-nts-but-ssued-far-far-fewer-f-nes/>

¹⁵ Lucy B anden (2019, 7 September) Demand down for newer apartments Canberra T mes Retr eved from <https://www.canberratmes.com.au/story/6372239/demand-down-for-newer-apartments/>

¹⁶ B ake Foden (2019, 26 May) Extra 1000 nspect ons per year as government steps up crackdown on dodgy bu ders, deve pers Canberra T mes Retr eved from <https://www.canberratmes.com.au/story/6161141/new-nspectors-to-crack-down-on-dodgy-bu-ders/>

¹⁷ Dan Jerv s Bardy (2019, 11 October) Apartment construct on sp ke masks Canberra hous ng s ump Retr eved from <https://www.canberratmes.com.au/story/6431913/apartment-construct-on-sp-ke-masks-canberra-hous-ng-s-ump/>

¹⁸ Jordan Hayne (2019, 5 September) Canberra bu ders cou d face fu ther crackdowns as ACT seeks h ghest qua ty bu d ngs n Austr a ABC News Retr eved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-09-04/canberra-bu-ders-respons-be-for-defects-cou-d-face-f-nes/11475970>

Frontline services and “back office” functions – it all contributes

The additional funding must for these agencies must not be provided through cutting other parts of the ACTPS. There is a false distinction between “frontline” and “back office” staff. Constantly cutting “back office” jobs only results in fewer staff doing the same amount of work. Without an effective and efficient back office/administrative function, the ACTPS cannot provide the quality frontline services the community expects even if frontline services are protected from cuts. The ACT Government must ensure that additional funding for agencies is not funded through targeted cuts to administrative staff.

The resource pressures in the ACTPS highlighted in this submission also demonstrates the need for a workplace culture which genuinely seeks out and respects the input of ACTPS staff.

The ACT Government should strengthen its commitment to working with ACTPS employees to ensure best practice. Examples such as the Insecure Work Taskforce show what can be achieved. Properly using the knowledge and experience of the ACTPS workforce will not only improve workplace morale but also result in better, more innovative public services. ACTPS employees are uniquely placed to help improve public services and address the complex challenges Canberra faces. It will, however, require the culture of ACTPS management changing to genuinely and regularly consult staff about existing and growing pressures.

The CPSU recommends that 2020 21 Budget provides additional investment in public services to meet increasing workloads and expectations from the Canberra community. Without additional funding and staffing, further pressure will be placed on services that the community relies on.

Recommendations:

Fund an additional 30 FTE for the Work Safety Authority to ensure it has appropriate staffing and regulatory capacity.

Provide additional funds to the Canberra Health Services to implement the recommendations of the Health Professionals Review.

Provide specific funding for intelligence unit and additional youth workers at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

Review structural and governance arrangements at the EPA and provide funding for additional staff.

Provide additional funds to the Construction Regulator for an additional 10 building inspectors to enforce strengthened building regulations.

Rule out funding additional work by cutting back office functions that are already under resourced.

Involve and consult with staff in decision making processes to address existing and growing pressures on public services.

Increasing the ACT Government's superannuation contributions

Superannuation continues to be a very important issue for ACTPS employees. With an ageing population, an increased superannuation contribution guarantee is required to ensure sufficient retirement income for ACTPS employees.

The CPSU has consistently advocated for the ACT Government to increase the rate of their employer superannuation contributions. ACTPS employees will not have a sufficient retirement income if they are reliant on a stagnant 10.5 per cent ACT Government superannuation contribution.

The lower super guarantee for ACT Government employees also makes it a less attractive employer than the Commonwealth Government. With both seeking to attract and retain employees in the same geographic labour market, it is to the detriment of the ACTPS.

The Commonwealth Government's decision to delay the increased superannuation contribution has only made it more difficult for people to have an adequate retirement income. The ACT Government should take a leadership role and continue matching the previous Federal Labor Government's commitment to increasing employer superannuation contributions to ensure it remains an employer of choice.

The CPSU notes that the ACT Government previously entered a Deed of Agreement with unions committing to the previous federal ALP Government's timetable of raising superannuation. This Deed ensured that that superannuation rose to 10.5 per cent during the life of the current enterprise agreement.

The ACT Government should commit to continue increasing the superannuation contributions provided to ACTPS workers beyond 11.5% in 1 July 2020 until it reaches 15.5 per cent and guarantee this by including it as a common term in enterprise agreements in the next round of bargaining.

The inclusion of this guaranteed amount in the enterprise agreement is important. Given the 2006 07 ACT Budget unilaterally reduced the employer contribution rate for new starters from a minimum 15.4 per cent to 9 per cent, a Deed of Agreement does not sufficiently

protect superannuation entitlements. Federal enterprise bargaining agreements include the specific 15.5 per cent and the ACTPS should follow suit and include it in future ACTPS agreements.

Recommendation:

ACT Government guarantees their employer superannuation contributions will continue to rise by 0.5 per annum for employees to eventually reach 15.5 per cent.