



**Government Response  
to the Report of the  
Select Committee on Estimates 2010-2011  
on the inquiry into the  
Appropriation Bill 2010-2011**

June 2010  
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Treasurer



## INTRODUCTION

The Select Committee on Estimates presented its Report on the Appropriation Bill 2010-2011 on Tuesday, 22 June 2010.

The Government thanks the Committee for its Report on the Appropriation Bill 2010-2011. The Committee has provided a report with 47 recommendations on a wide range of issues.

In its response, the Government has:

- agreed to 19 recommendations;
- agreed in principle to 4 recommendations;
- agreed in part to 1 recommendations;
- noted 17 recommendations; and
- not agreed to 6 recommendations.

The Government welcomes the efforts of the Select Committee to improve the efficiency and efficacy of the process which has led to a more focussed Report in comparison to the previous years.

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

Regrettably, this year the Government was unable to answer some of the questions within the mandated five day period. This was due simply to the volume and scope of the questions which in some cases sought levels of detail which are not routinely collected by Government.

In this regard, the Government is concerned at the nature and scope of a number of Questions on Notice which arose from this year's estimates process. The level of detail being sought through some questions imposes a disproportionate burden on the resources of ACT agencies diverting them away from their core business – to serve the people of the Territory.

In making this comment, the Government is mindful that the main report by the Committee itself recognises this as an issue. The Government welcomes the approach taken by the Committee to review the overall Estimates process and examine ways in the process can be improved in the future.

The Government has provided a response to each of the recommendations of the Committee. The Government is disappointed some Members of the Committee did not engage with the deliberations of the Committee in its Report. The Government does not consider it worthwhile to respond to each of the individual recommendations in the Dissenting Report by Messrs Seselja and Smyth. Nevertheless, has provided a broad response to the Report.

The Government notes the Committee has again sought external advice on the Territory's Budget. The ACIL Tasman Review of the Budget provides some pleasing observations.

The Review endorses the approach of ACT Treasury in using demand to gauge the strength of the ACT economy and notes that the forecast of State Final Demand in the Budget 'appears reasonable'.

The Review considers that the forecasts of employment growth, Consumer Price Index growth and Wage Price Index growth in the Budget 'appear reasonable'.

The Review considers that the long-term projections used in the ACT Budget 'appear reasonable'.

The Review notes that 'in 2010-11 and the forward estimates there is nothing that appears unusual about the revenue forecasts'.

The Review notes:

*'.....the influence of the Australian Government on the ACT economy makes the task of making forecasts for the ACT economy extremely difficult'.*

While the Government is generally pleased with the analysis, it notes the consultants have raised some concerns around:

- the long term fiscal sustainability of the Territory if the high level of 2010-11 capital works program were to continue into the future (Pages 6 and 7); and
- the feasibility of the goal of achieving a modest surplus of around 1½ per cent of the budget by 2015-16 (Page 10).

The Government considers it important to clarify some of the premises and the underlying information on which consultants had drawn these conclusions.

The Government considers it is unreasonable to assume the current level of capital works expenditure will continue without proper consideration of the benefits of the investment, and the Territory's balance sheet capacity to fund the investment. Such considerations are indeed made in every Budget. The Government also notes the consultants have recognised that financing of capital works through debt is reasonable if the benefits are realised over time.

In relation to the achievability of the level of surplus projected for 2015-16 under the Government's Budget Plan, the consultants have raised two points. First, on the expenditure side, growing the expenditure at the rate of 4½ per cent, the consultants suggest the underlying expenditure would be around \$50 million higher than that required to achieve the level of surplus. It appears the consultants have not taken into account the unallocated savings which the Budget Papers clearly highlight as being required to be found in the future years under the Budget Plan. Those savings are, properly, not incorporated in the published forward estimates.

Second, the consultants suggest there is a real risk the assumed revenue growth of 5¼ per cent will not be achieved in 2014-15 and 2015-16 unless revenues are increased

beyond those currently budgeted. The consultants have sought to analyse some of the underlying revenue lines in this regards.

The Government considers the assumption on revenue growth (which is an assumption and not a projection) is quite reasonable in view of the long run growth of aggregate revenues, although it is possible that individual revenue lines may grow at differing rates.

# RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendation 1

**The Committee recommends that the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures investigate and advise the Assembly on:**

- **the effectiveness of the select committee model; and**
- **the adequacy of procedural guidelines for estimates inquires and whether amendments to standing orders or a more detailed referral motion are warranted in the future.**

### Government Response

Noted.

This is a matter for the Legislative Assembly.

## Recommendation 2

**The Committee recommends that the Treasurer table in the Assembly a report into why the Change of Use Charge was incorrectly applied and what steps have been taken to correct the error.**

### Government Response

Agreed.

The Government will advise the Legislative Assembly on the outcome of the review currently being undertaken by the internal auditors.

Steps have already been taken to rectify the arrangements (response to Question Taken on Notice Q10-104 refers).

The Chief Planning Executive, Mr Neil Savery, wrote to the Australian Valuation Office on 30 April 2010 instructing them to ensure, with immediate effect, that site by site market valuations are undertaken in accordance with the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, for the purposes of determining the Change of Use Charges applicable for dual occupancy, townhouse and unit developments.

Potential revenue increases from the rectification are incorporated into the 2010-11 Budget estimates.

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Committee recommends that an evaluation of the impacts of the Change of Use Charge be undertaken as part of the codification of the Change of Use Charge process to ensure that it does not create an unreasonable barrier to urban densification.**

#### Government Response

Agreed.

A full evaluation of the impacts of the codification of Change of Use Charge is included in the project work plan.

Two rounds of community consultations have been held, which have provided opportunities for stakeholders to highlight potential impacts, apart from providing input and suggestions for reform. The final report from consultants will include the outcomes of the community consultation, a cost benefit analysis and a regulatory impact statement.

In addition, further economic analysis and specific quantitative modelling is underway to examine the economic impact of codification on the Territory.

The Government will consider these reports later in the year, along with advice and analysis from Treasury on implementation options for codification.

### **Recommendation 4**

**The Committee recommends that a thorough Triple Bottom Line analysis be undertaken for each of the expenditure items and especially for infrastructure projects contained in the budget.**

#### Government Response

Noted.

The Government's evaluation and decision making processes already take into account the economic, social and environmental impacts for all new major policy proposals.

## **Recommendation 5**

**The Committee recommends that, together with the Triple Bottom Line analysis, a thorough plan for the implementation of all major infrastructure projects be provided with the Budget Papers so that Members can be confident that the money will be appropriately spent in the required timeframe.**

### Government Response

Not agreed.

While implementation plans are developed for major infrastructure projects, it is not practicable or cost efficient to provide them as part of the Budget Papers.

## **Recommendation 6**

**The Committee recommends that improved accountability indicators be developed for each agency that include expenditure on specific plans that are administered by agencies; for example, items undertaken from ‘*Weathering the Change*’ within DECCEW. Where appropriate, other accountability or oversight agency findings such as Auditor-General recommendations should be included in the accountability indicators.**

### Government Response

Noted.

Improvement of performance indicators is an ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The Committee should note the implementation of Auditor-General’s recommendations, if agreed by Government, are provided in annual reports. Further, Auditor-General recommendations are not always considered as activities that are suitable to be cast as performance measures.

The Department of Treasury undertakes regular reviews of accountability indicators and in doing so, takes into account specific and whole-of-government plans such as *Weathering the Change* and related action plans.



## **Recommendation 7**

**The Committee recommends that Budget Papers provide more evidence about the scope of each accountability indicator by:**

- **providing details about the sample size and participation rates for base surveys conducted to establish a measure against which the indicator can be assessed; and**
- **distinguishing the tangible variations in the services or outputs through which the objectives of an administrative unit in relation to a particular indicator are progressed.**

### Government Response

Not agreed.

The Government considers the intent and objective of this recommendation is met by the performance indicators being auditable under the *Financial Management Act 1996* and reported in the Annual Financial Statements.

The current Budget Papers already allow the reader to identify variations in funding by output class and in the corresponding accountability indicators through the inclusion of indicator targets and estimated outcomes for the current financial year, as well as the budget year.

## **Recommendation 8**

**The Committee recommends that in addition to reporting on work towards achieving zero net carbon emissions, all departments be required to undertake energy efficiency audits and work to a set carbon budget that sets out timeframes for reductions and does not allow for offsetting.**

### Government Response

Agreed in part.

The draft Sustainable Energy Policy released in December 2009 included ‘Outcome 6: ACT Government Carbon Neutrality’. The draft policy stated that by 2020, the ACT Government will aim to be carbon neutral. An ACT Government Carbon Neutral Framework will be a key action in *Weathering the Change Action Plan 2* to be released in 2010-11.

The Government is examining the development of carbon budgets through the development of the Government’s Carbon Neutral framework which will also set out strategies for reducing emissions and potentially offsetting residual emissions (those that can not be reduced by direct action).

The framework will identify cost-effective approaches including:

- whole-of-government strategies, for example in accommodation, procurement and fleet management;
- sectoral strategies, for example for hospitals, schools and emergency services; and
- agency specific strategies, for example the implementation of resource management plans and staff engagement.

This work will build on the existing work undertaken by the Department of the Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water to support agencies in the development of Resource Management Plans, as set out in Action Plan 1 of *Weathering the Change*.

The Government does currently undertake energy audits in government owned buildings. In 2010, for example, energy audits will be undertaken in 82 public schools as a step towards achieving the Government's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2017 in all ACT schools.

### **Recommendation 9**

**The Committee recommends that strategic indicators clearly identify departmental commitment to the various environmental, economic and social plans in place.**

#### Government Response

Agreed.

The Government will continue to improve the development of agency strategic indicators as part of the annual budget process. Strategic indicators aim to measure performance against long-term strategic objectives and outcomes which have an impact on the community, which include environmental, economic and/or social factors. Ideally, this information will be focussed on and consistent with Government priorities of most relevance to the particular department.

### **Recommendation 10**

**The Committee recommends that information in the Budget Papers relating to programs and expenditure items be expanded to include a reconciliation between:**

- (i) base distribution level of funding (or general component of base operating funding); and**
- (ii) where applicable, variances against the Budget allocation, including the relative allocation of additional funds and the impact of a discontinuation of funds against the funding base level.**

#### Government Response

Not agreed.

The Government's current budgeting practices are based on output and outcome budgeting. Program budgeting is generally a discontinued practice since the financial management reforms of the mid to late 1990's.

The Budget Papers provide significant details in relation to expenditure. This includes estimated projections and budgeted outcomes against output classes, change to costs of outputs, and a range of performance indicators by output, appropriation tables, capital works tables, financial statements, including output class statements where relevant, and individual initiative descriptions.

The budget documentation of the ACT is of a high standard and is in line with the practices adopted by other jurisdictions.

### **Recommendation 11**

**The Committee recommends that future Budget Papers include key agency workforce employment and diversity data either under the present employment level section or in a new section. Key agency workforce employment and diversity data to include:**

- (i) employment profile, including FTEs by agency, employment status (ongoing, non-ongoing, full time, part time, casual) and employment status by gender and classification level;**
- (ii) retention, separation and engagement rates by agency; and**
- (iii) equity and diversity representation by EEO groups—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) employment and employment of people with a disability.**

#### Government Response

Not agreed.

It is more appropriate for this level of detail to be reported against actual outcomes, rather than estimates and forecasts.

This data is published by either the Commissioner for Public Administration in the Workforce Profile or Agency Annual Reports. The Government provides an estimated number of full time employees in Budget Paper No. 4. Expanding on the table to provide projected outcomes against these demographic groups presents inherent difficulties and would require agencies to speculate on the type/status of candidates that may be employed or recruited in the forthcoming year.

## **Recommendation 12**

**The Committee recommends that an analysis be undertaken to identify the economic risks associated with the effects of climate change and the potential impact of these risks on the ACT, and that annual updates be provided with each Budget.**

### Government Response

Noted.

The economic effects of climate change have been described and analysed in a number of publicly released reports including the *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change*, the *Report of the Task Force on Emissions Trading* by the Commonwealth Government Prime Ministerial Task Group on Emission Trading and the *Garnaut Climate Change Review* by Professor Ross Garnaut.

A key feature of all three reports is that the effects of climate change need to be assessed over the long term. This contrasts with the time horizon incorporated in each annual budget which is one budget year and three outyears.

*Action Plan 2* of the Government's Climate Change Strategy, *Weathering the Change* will examine the economic, social and environmental risks of climate change as well as the opportunities available through responding to the impacts of climate change.

As indicated above, the Government undertakes triple bottom line analysis and is further developing the assessment framework for consideration of Government policies, programs, projects and initiatives.

The Government is committed to monitoring the ongoing impacts of climate change and responding appropriately.

## **Recommendation 13**

**The Committee recommends that the Treasurer inform the ACT Legislative Assembly on the progress of winding up Totalcare Industries Limited, in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001, by the end of the 2010 calendar year.**

### Government Response

Agreed.

The Treasurer will provide a statement about the status of Totalcare Industries Limited to the Legislative Assembly by the end of the 2010 calendar year.

## **Recommendation 14**

**The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health provide the Assembly with quarterly updates about the National Health and Hospitals Network negotiations with the Australian Government.**

### Government Response

Agreed, noting the level of detail provided will be governed by the usual expectations of confidentiality surrounding intergovernmental negotiations.

## **Recommendation 15**

**The Committee recommends that the ACT Government build growth funding into the formula for mental health funding which is consistent with the reported growth in national mental health demand.**

### Government Response

Agreed-in-principle.

This Government has a strong track record in increasing funding for mental health. The Government has demonstrated responsiveness to demand and will continue to do so. While having medium to longer term objectives in relation to mental health as a percentage of total health expenditure and the proportion of that expenditure delivered in the community sector, the experience is that a fixed annual increase is not the most appropriate approach. While the growth in national mental local health demand is a useful reference, the Government makes annual decisions based on local need and priority and will continue to do so. It should be noted that this Government has made strong commitments to mental health expenditure including community sector agencies, purpose built facilities such as the secure mental health service, the mental health assessment unit at TCH, the young adult mental health service and the new adult mental health inpatient unit, all of which are articulated in the ACT Strategic Plan for Mental Health Services.

## **Recommendation 16**

**The Committee recommends that the percentage of overall mental health funding allocated to community organisations be reported in the annual Budget Papers.**

### Government Response

Agreed.

## **Recommendation 17**

**The Committee recommends that the next ACT Government review of the interstate patient travel scheme is approached with a view to meeting real costs and providing an appropriate level of assistance where required.**

### Government Response

Noted.

The Commonwealth Government is currently working collaboratively with all States and Territories towards a harmonisation of the schemes to ensure equity in access for all Australians. ACT reimbursement rates are equivalent to, or above those paid by most other States or Territories under similar schemes.

The Commonwealth Government provides policy principles for States and Territories. Administrative Principle 1, states that the schemes should provide a subsidy for travel and accommodation expenses to assist with access to specialist medical care.

A ceiling against real cost recovery will always be required to ensure the Government funds are being appropriately expended.

The ACT Interstate Patient Travel Assistance Scheme (IPTAS) annually reviews the guidelines, eligibility criteria, and the levels of reimbursement payable under the scheme. From 1 July 2010, CPI indexation will be applied to all re-imbusement rates.

## **Recommendation 18**

**The Committee recommends that the ACT Government use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population projections and data collection project to develop accountability indicators for service delivery, particularly in the areas of health, disability, housing, corrections and education and training.**

### Government Response

Noted.

The Government is committed to use this data where practicable, as well as other relevant information sources, to develop appropriate accountability indicators.

## **Recommendation 19**

**The Committee recommends that the accountability indicators for Arts policy, advice and programs be refined to provide better indication of the services or outputs through which the goals or objectives of a particular indicator are progressed.**

### Government Response

Agreed.

artsACT has commenced a more detailed approach for reporting against the accountability indicators.

## **Recommendation 20**

**The Committee recommends that further work be undertaken into the economic opportunities and prospects and appropriate strategic direction for the ACT economy to achieve zero net emissions by 2050 and annual updates be provided as a separate chapter in each budget paper.**

### Government Response

Noted.

In May 2009, the Government agreed that the ACT adopt a longer-term visionary goal of zero net greenhouse gas emissions. The Government decided on a target of zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2060.

The Government has committed to legislating interim targets on the pathway to zero net emissions, and to bringing forward the development and release of *Weathering the Change Action Plan 2*, which will discuss the opportunities and strategic direction for the ACT economy to achieve zero net emissions.

In addition, the Chief Minister's Department and the Department of the Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water have been collaborating on the development of a framework for a clean economy. This work will be further informed by *Weathering the Change Action Plan 2*, the final energy policy and the outcomes of the Government's consideration of the expanded Feed-in Tariff.

The Government will provide updates where appropriate in the Sustainability Chapter of the Budget Papers.

## **Recommendation 21**

**The Committee recommends that a feasibility study be conducted to investigate the establishment of a methane harvesting facility at the West Belconnen landfill site.**

### Government Response

Noted.

The West Belconnen former landfill site presently has an installed capacity of 1MW. This comprehensive collection system has been in place at West Belconnen Landfill for over 10 years. The site infrastructure was installed and is managed by Energy Developments Limited who presently pay a royalty to the Territory.

The amount of methane extracted at the site has been reducing in recent years due to the waste drying out from the current drought and the ageing of the wastes.

## **Recommendation 22**

**The Committee recommends that carbon emission reductions resulting from the methane mining electricity generation operations be credited in future against the zero emissions target.**

### Government Response

Agreed.

Landfill and waste emissions in the ACT are sourced from the National Greenhouse Gas Accounts compiled by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE). The DCCEE contacts ACT Government representatives (ACT NoWaste) to update the accounts with the latest landfill figures annually. Methane mining electricity generation operations will be included in future ACT Greenhouse Gas Inventories.

## **Recommendation 23**

**The Committee recommends that the Government provide the Assembly with detailed information, including a timeline, about the proposed relocation of the RSPCA, by the last sitting day in 2010.**

### Government Response

Noted.

Senior Officers within the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) have met with the RSPCA-ACT and held discussions in relation to potential requirements. Timelines are yet to be determined. Once options and issues are identified they will be provided to Government for consideration.



## **Recommendation 24**

**The Committee recommends that more detail be incorporated into ACTION accountability indicators so that measures undertaken to progress sustainable transport objectives can be assessed.**

### Government Response

Agreed.

Most of ACTION's current indicators are commonly measured by the bus industry. However, it is ACTION's intention to review these indicators and the way they are measured to ensure that targets remain relevant to the Government's sustainable transport goals and each can be easily measured with improved data for future budgets.

## **Recommendation 25**

**The Committee recommends that accountability indicators for the Office of Transport should provide more detail about the various outputs through which sustainable transport objectives are being progressed.**

### Government Response

Agreed-in-principle.

This will be considered as the Transport for Canberra Program Plan is implemented.

## **Recommendation 26**

**The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate the potential energy and financial savings of moving the ACT Government ICT system to 'thin client' and 'virtualisation' technologies.**

### Government Response

Noted.

InTACT has recognised the potential energy and financial savings of moving the Government ICT system to 'thin client' and 'virtualisation' technologies and is actively engaged with agencies across government to utilise these technologies wherever possible.

## **Recommendation 27**

**The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training develop accountability indicators which can measure the views of the principle users of public education services – students and parents/carers.**

### Government Response

Agreed-in-principle.

Development of national measures of satisfaction are currently being considered by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. The Government will be seeking to report satisfaction in the future using nationally consistent data, and will consider including these national measures as accountability indicators once they have been produced and made available in future budgets.

In the interim, the Government will continue to report on public education satisfaction levels through existing strategic and accountability indicators.

## **Recommendation 28**

**The Committee recommends that future Budget Papers include accountability measures and outcome targets for the Productivity Places Program.**

### Government Response

Agreed.

## **Recommendation 29**

**The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training and Corrections ACT partner to ensure the provision of the adult education and vocational training packages which best establish opportunities for the restoration of detainees of the Alexander Maconochie Centre back into the community.**

### Government Response

Agreed.

Corrective Services ACT and the Department of Education and Training will work together regarding the provision of appropriate cost effective adult education and vocational training packages for detainees.

### **Recommendation 30**

**The Committee recommends that the Human Rights Commission be provided with adequate funds to meet the following operational requirements and objectives:**

- **Commissioner's obligations in relation to the national health professional regulation scheme;**
- **Human rights inspections of Bimberi, Alexander Maconochie Centre and the Psychiatric Services Unit;**
- **Implementation of the child safe, child friendly initiative.**

#### Government Response

Noted.

The Government will consider the funding needs of the Human Rights Commission in future budget processes in light of emerging priorities across the broad range of ACT Government services.

### **Recommendation 31**

**The Committee recommends that the Minister advise the Assembly, via a Ministerial statement, on the outcomes of the review of WorkSafe ACT.**

#### Government Response

Agreed.

The Attorney General will make a statement to the Legislative Assembly following the 12 month review of the implementation of recent work safety reforms.

### **Recommendation 32**

**The Committee recommends that in future Budget Papers more information is provided to enable performance within the JACS portfolio to be assessed against strategic and accountability indicators, and for trends over time to be assessed.**

#### Government Response

Agreed.

The Department of Justice and Community Safety will report against its new suite of strategic indicators for the first time in its 2009-10 Annual Report. The 2009-10 results will be incorporated in future Budget Papers for comparative purposes.

### **Recommendation 33**

**The Committee recommends that accountability indicators for the Department of Justice and Community Safety under output class 2.1 (Corrective Services) be expanded to include the collection of data about recidivism specific to the Alexander Maconochie Centre.**

#### Government Response

Agreed-in-principle.

Consideration will be given to development of one or more appropriate accountability indicators during 2010-11 for future budgets.

### **Recommendation 34**

**The Committee recommends the establishment of a strategic indicator for the Department of Justice and Community Safety to monitor the following:**

- **The proportion of sentenced prisoners who are repatriated from New South Wales**
- **The number of first time prisoners repatriated at the Alexander Maconochie Centre**

#### Government Response

Not agreed.

It is not clear how the additional strategic indicators proposed would assist in determining whether the Government's objectives for the ACT Corrections system are being achieved.

### **Recommendation 35**

**The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expand the availability of post-school options and pathways for people with a disability, including working with vocationally orientated organisations.**

#### Government Response

Noted.

Over the past three years Disability ACT has established a range of support options to assist individuals and families to access a broader range of information, engage in longer term planning and link to generic services in the community.

Disability ACT currently funds two formal support models for school leavers who are not able to undertake full time employment or further study, or access Australian Government employment and support services. These include:

1. Transitional Pre vocational Support – available for up to three years, this service (delivered by House with No Steps) can assist people who have the capacity to participate in vocational activities such as employment, volunteering, further education, and training, but who are not ready, or not able to do so without additional support; and
2. Ongoing Community Access Services – which assists school leavers to maintain and further develop their artistic and recreational learning, life skills, to use community facilities and to participate in community events.

Disability ACT and the ACT Department of Education and Training are working in partnership to improve the transitional outcomes for students with a disability as they leave school later this year. Disability ACT has met with school leavers (in 2010), their families and carers and provided information to assist their planning around the direction they want to take after they leave school. This includes identifying the personal, universal and disability-specific supports that might assist them to establish and implement their plans.

Each individual's circumstances are different. The type and level of support each person requires and subsequently receives will vary. People who require ongoing support to engage in specialist or community learning activities will have access to support to participate in a minimum 12 hours of activity per week for as long as they require. They will also have access to other formal supports including respite services, case management, income and transport subsidies as appropriate. This is in addition to any other supports that they may already be accessing, such as respite, Home and Community Care (HACC) services or small Individual Support Packages.

Disability ACT is also working with employers and community support agencies around the responses they can make to improve the transitional outcomes for students as they move from the education system into their adult life. For example:

- Disability ACT is actively supporting the ACT Social Enterprise Hub to establish inclusive employment and business opportunities for vulnerable Canberra's including those with a disability in the ACT;
- Individuals and groups can apply for funding through annual innovation and quality of life grants to develop and pilot programs and services to respond to employment opportunities; and
- Disability ACT is also currently working with Merici College to develop a program to train students from Black Mountain School in vocational employment activities.

### **Recommendation 36**

**The Committee recommends that a formula for growth funding be developed for disability services, as per health funding, and that this formula be applied to the 2011–2012 Budget process.**

#### Government Response

Noted.

The Government remains committed to providing an appropriate level of resources for disability services. There is significant work being undertaken at the national level on future arrangements for disability services, including funding. States and Territories and the Commonwealth provide funding for people with disabilities. For example, work on the National Disability Strategy involves exploration of alternative approaches to the funding and delivery of disability services, with a focus on long term care.

These approaches will have broad ranging administrative and funding implications and will need to be considered fully by jurisdictions. This work is being taken into consideration in the development of future funding options for disability services in the ACT.

Funding allocations for disability services will need to be considered in the context of competing priorities across the spectrum of other government services.

### **Recommendation 37**

**The Committee recommends that future ACT Budget Papers include the funding breakdown for the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services output 3.2 relating to community affairs.**

#### Government Response

Not agreed.

The Government considers that reporting at this level of detail would be onerous, as it is problematic to accurately apportion costs between the various function of the output, and reporting at this level of detail would significantly expand the size of the Budget Papers.

Careful consideration is given to the degree to which outputs are reported and the current representation of output 3.2 is considered appropriate. The committee should note that Annual Reports provide more detailed descriptions of the individual programs with the output.

### **Recommendation 38**

**The Committee recommends that the *Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions* be amended to require all ACT Government agencies to report against the benchmarks established through the sex disaggregated data project.**

## Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Women's Plan 2010-15 commits the ACT Government to establishing a set of benchmarks based on sex disaggregated data by June 2011. These benchmarks could then be incorporated into existing reporting requirements under the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions, with reporting to commence against the 2010-11 benchmarks in 2011-12 annual reports.

### **Recommendation 39**

**The Committee recommends that the Office of Children and Young People develop the consultancy service and the specialised therapeutic placements as a matter of priority.**

## Government Response

Agreed.

A funding agreement has been established with the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF). This organisation is currently providing regular consultation to Care and Protection and foster care agencies in relation to individual young people. In addition the ACF have provided training to care staff.

Following a tender for Out of Home Care Services a fostering agency has been selected to provide a Therapeutic Fostering Service. A funding agreement is being discussed and the agency will commence recruitment and training of the carers over the next few months.

#### **Recommendation 40**

**The Committee recommends that the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services ensure that adequate support and appropriate written information, including contact details of support services, is provided to all kinship carers who come into contact with the care and protection system.**

#### Government Response

Agreed.

This issue has been addressed with the Grandparent and Kinship Carers Association. A small working group has been convened with representatives from both the Association and Care and Protection Services to progress the development of a fact sheet for grandparent and kinship carers when a child or young person enters their care. The Department is in the process of finalising a handbook for kinship and foster carers.

#### **Recommendation 41**

**The Committee recommends that the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services ensure that kinship carers are able to access foster carers training modules, should they wish to do so, until specific kinship carers training becomes available.**

#### Government Response

Agreed.

The Department is working with Kinship Carers to tailor training packages to the particular needs of carers. Kinship carers can attend foster care training programs and a number of kinship carers have attended the Foster Care National Conference.

In November 2009, two workshops were provided for Kinship Carers, one on Managing Mental Health Issues and the other on Alcohol and Drug Use and its impact on the family.

In early 2010 an Advisory Group was established to explore the development of comprehensive training programs for kinship carers.

The Advisory group has met monthly with the outcome being the provision of a series of workshops over 2010. The first workshop was held in May 2010, the Australian Childhood Foundation presented on 'Understanding and Responding to Complex Trauma'. Every Kinship Carer whose children are involved with Care and Protection Services was sent an individual invitation to attend this course.



Further workshops planned for 2010 include:

- ‘Navigating the Care and Protection System: from entering care to final orders (20 July 2010);
- ‘Guilt, grief and loss’ (20 August 2010);
- ‘Managing grief and loss in our children’ (September 2010);
- ‘Life Story Work’ (October 2010); and
- ‘Other support services in the ACT community’ (November 2010)
- Other topics will be considered following a Kinship Carers Training Needs Survey (soon to be distributed).

## **Recommendation 42**

**The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a funding formula for ACT Housing to ensure that housing maintenance funds are adequate given the changing mix of full rent and rent rebate tenants.**

### Government Response

Noted.

All revenues from public housing operations are available to manage and maintain public housing and not simply the rentals earned from tenants. This includes appropriations from government, interest, gains on the sale of properties and miscellaneous income.

There is significant work being undertaken nationally, under the auspices of Housing Ministers and involving all States and Territories, which is examining the longer term viability of public housing. It would be premature to adopt any funding formula for the sector prior to this work being completed.

## **Recommendation 43**

**The Committee recommends that the Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services provide the Legislative Assembly with a Ministerial statement on the future of crisis, public and community housing by December 2010.**

### Government Response

Agreed.

The Ministerial Statement will articulate the vision for the social and affordable housing continuum for the ACT.

#### **Recommendation 44**

**The Committee recommends that the Minister for Housing, Disability and Community Services delivers a Ministerial Statement by the last sitting day in October on the differing approaches to public and community housing utilised in all other jurisdictions and include the percentages of tenants on rebate.**

#### Government Response

Agreed.

#### **Recommendation 45**

**The Committee recommends that Housing ACT release the new draft public housing asset management strategy for consultation, by October 2010.**

#### Government Response

Noted.

The revised Public Housing Asset Management Strategy is being developed as a matter of priority within government. The Strategy is linked to broader issues associated with social housing and associated Commonwealth reforms and forms part of a wider review being conducted across government. The outcomes of this work will be released subsequent to consideration by the Government.

#### **Recommendation 46**

**The Committee recommends that an appropriate indexation be applied annually to sporting group grants.**

#### Government Response

Noted.

An increase in triennial operational assistance has been announced by the Minister for the 2011 grant round. This increase exceeds the cumulative CPI increase over the last eight years.

### **Recommendation 47**

**The Committee recommends that, when finalised, the Minister for Gaming and Racing, table in the ACT Legislative Assembly, the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission's report of the Review of the Governance Provisions in the *Gaming Machine Act 2004*.**

#### Government Response

Noted.

The Government will consider tabling of the Commission's report of the Review of the Governance Provisions in the *Gaming Machine Act 2004* once it has been received and considered by the Government.