

Report to the Public Accounts Committee

Performance Audit Recommendations Observations (2024) - 2022 audits

February 2025

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Auditor-General Report No.1 of 2022
Management of Detainee Mental Health Services in the Alexander
Maconochie Centre¹
(2 March 2022)

Auditee

The auditees for this audit were the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and ACT Corrective Services in the Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

Audit Objective

The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of mental health services within the AMC.

Summary

The Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) is the ACT's only adult prison. It houses sentenced and remand detainees of all genders.

The AMC's operating philosophy is to meet:

... the objectives of the 'healthy prison' concept under the four pillars of 'Safety', 'Respect and Dignity', 'Purposeful Activity' and 'Rehabilitation and Release Planning'.

To assist with the achievement of this objective, detainees within the AMC are provided with a range of health services that are delivered via a shared care arrangement between ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) and Canberra Health Services (CHS).

The audit considered the effectiveness of the delivery of mental health services to detainees within the AMC.

Government response²

Ms Emma Davidson MLA, Minister for Justice Health, tabled the ACT Government's response to the Performance Audit Report on 2 August 2022.

¹ [Report No. 1 of 2022 - Management of Detainee Mental Health Services in the Alexander Maconochie Centre \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.act.gov.au/act/government/audits-and-reports/auditor-general-reports/2022/1)

² [Auditor-General-Report-No.-1-Management-of-Detainee-Mental-Health-Services-in-the-Alexander-Maconochie-Centre-Government-Response.pdf \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.act.gov.au/act/government/audits-and-reports/auditor-general-reports/2022/1/Auditor-General-Report-No.-1-Management-of-Detainee-Mental-Health-Services-in-the-Alexander-Maconochie-Centre-Government-Response.pdf)

Recommendation 1 – Strategic planning

<p>Canberra Health Services should, in conjunction with the ACT Health Directorate, develop a Clinical Services Plan for the delivery of mental health services in the Alexander Maconochie Centre. This plan, developed in partnership with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, and other relevant stakeholders, should include explicit embedding of culturally responsive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>It is recognised there is a need to identify and document current and future health and wellbeing outcomes for the delivery of mental health services within the AMC. This aligns to the Territory Wide Health Services Plan and Closing the Gap initiatives, and can be implemented from within existing resources.</i></p> <p><i>A Clinical Services Plan (CSP) will strengthen the purpose of the Health Advisory Group and provide the membership with key responsibilities. A CSP will highlight the interagency complexities and dynamism and will inform current and future Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).</i></p> <p><i>Implementation: 30 June 2023</i></p> <p><i>CHS will develop a CSP in partnership with JACS, ACT Health and Winnunga.</i></p>		
Annual Report (CHS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>CHS is progressing work with key interagency stakeholders, including ACT Corrective Services and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service and Community Services, to ensure that the delivery of mental health services in the Alexander Maconochie Centre is clearly outlined.</i></p> <p><i>CHS expect to finalise this work before the end of 2023.</i></p> <p><u>2023-24 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>The CHS Audit and Risk Committee reviewed actions undertaken to meet this recommendation at its September 2023 meeting and endorsed the recommendation as complete.</i></p> <p><i>The committee endorsed the ACT Detainee Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028. The ACT Detainee Health and Wellbeing Strategy was developed in partnership with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, ACT Corrective Services and ACTHD.</i></p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation, and an intention to develop a Clinical Services Plan with service partners at the AMC.</p> <p>CHS' <i>Annual Report 2023-24</i> identifies that the implementation of the recommendation is complete through the development of an <i>ACT Detainee Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028</i>. The response implies that there is 'explicit embedding of culturally responsive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' through the involvement of Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services.</p>		

Recommendation 2 – Record keeping system

<p>Canberra Health Services should ensure its record keeping system provides the functionality to extract key information, such as demographic and service need data, that supports effective resource planning.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>Canberra Health Services (CHS) recognises the benefits of strengthening the functionality of their record keeping systems and acknowledges there are opportunities for improvements in this space.</i></p> <p><i>A new record keeping system, Digital Health Record (DHR), is currently in the development stages, with Go-Live planned for November 2022.</i></p> <p><i>It is anticipated that the DHR will strengthen CHS' record keeping capabilities, and in turn provide functionality to extract key information that can be used for service and resource planning.</i></p>		

Justice Health Services are liaising with the vendor for specific modifications required to address this recommendation.

Note: other service providers may not be able to contribute to DHR.

Implementation: November 2022

The DHR is a CHS initiative.

Annual Report (CHS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p>The implementation of the DHR has allowed users to extract specific key information and data from the system. CHS generate reports that support effective resource planning at the AMC and staff have trained in the use of the system.</p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation, and an intention for the Digital Health Record to serve as the means by which this is achieved. CHS' <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> identifies that the Digital Health Record has been implemented and allows 'users to extract specific key information and data from the system'.</p> <p>The extent to which the Digital Health Record has 'the functionality to extract key information, such as demographic and service need data, that supports effective resource planning' is likely to be the subject of future audit activity.</p>		

Recommendation 3 – Provision of psychological services to detainees

In order to demonstrate that the requirements of section 53 of the *Corrections Management Act 2007* are met, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate should:

- a) define what an 'equivalent standard of health care to that available to other people in the ACT' means in practice; and
- b) ensure the provision of psychological services to detainees meets this standard.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
<p>Access to public mental health services both within and external to the AMC will vary over time according to available resources and demand. Detainees are afforded sound and effective care, including psychological services. The referral pathways within the AMC for psychological services are like those within the community. This includes self-referrals and stepped care models.</p> <p>In addition, there are a number of KPIs that both JACS and CHS use to ensure the care provided is safe and high-quality. Detainees identified as 'At Risk' will be triaged within two hours, clinically managed detainees received a psychiatrist review every three months, and detainees on involuntary treatment orders are reviewed by a health professional every two weeks.</p> <p>The National Mental Health Commission has commenced a project reviewing the 2006 National Statement of Forensic Mental Health Principles. A principle under review being 'equivalence to the non offender'. The review will provide further opportunity to consider how equivalency in mental health care for detainees can be expressed, measured and monitored.</p> <p>Further, the ACT Supreme Court decision <i>Brown v Director-General of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate [2021] ACTSC 320</i> which found that the provision of health services does not need to be 'identical in form or substance with a service which might be provided in the community' to meet the standard set out in s53. Noting that the decision is subject to an appeal at this time of writing, this finding shows that in the context, and the outcome of that appeal will be considered in responding to this recommendation.</p> <p>If gaps are identified as part of this exploration, JACS and CHS will work collaboratively to address these. Additional resourcing, if required, will be subject to ACT Government budget processes.</p> <p>Implementation: 30 June 2023</p> <p>Following completion of the review of the 2006 National Statement of Forensic Mental Health Principles, JACS, in conjunction with CHS, will consider how equivalency in mental health care for detainees can be expressed, measured, and monitored.</p>		
Annual Report (JACS)	Last Reported Status	Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

ACTCS and Canberra Health Service (CHS) are providing care to detainees using a stepped care framework which considers need and demand at each level, including tracking waiting times based on clinical acuity. This is equivalent to the standard of health care available to people in the broader community. The ACTCS aspect of this recommendation is therefore complete.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement-in-principle with the recommendation and an intention to use a forthcoming National Mental Health Commission project to 'provide further opportunity to consider how equivalency in mental health care for detainees can be expressed, measured and monitored'. The intention for JACS to work with CHS to 'consider how equivalency in mental health care for detainees can be expressed, measured, and monitored' following the completion of this review might have been expected to yield useful information to progress this recommendation.

JACS' Annual Report 2022-23 does not provide any insights into how the National Mental Health Commission project has impacted or influenced practice.

Recommendation 4 – Training for Custodial Officers in the Crisis Support Unit

ACT Corrective Services, in conjunction with Canberra Health Services, should:

- a) develop and deliver a training package that assists Custodial Officers to provide effective management and support to detainees with mental health conditions. This should be supported by the development of a refresher training package for Custodial Officers to be delivered at regular intervals; and
- b) develop and deliver a training package for those staff working within the Crisis Support Unit and provide these staff with ongoing supervision and support.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed-in-principle

a) There is a current training package – in both mandatory training and refresher forms.

b) Suicide and self-harm (SASH) training encompasses identification and management of those at-risk of suicide and self-harm. The training is delivered by CHS to new recruits and all Correctional Officers through mandatory refresher training schedules. CHS additionally deliver a broader training session on mental health to new Officer recruits.

CHS and ACTCS will collaboratively review the current training package and update elements as required whilst maintaining the commitment to deliver the training as scheduled to avoid any lapse in currency for Officers. The review will consider the inclusion of broader elements of identification and management of those with mental health conditions to supplement the SASH training. Additional resourcing, if required, will be subject to ACT Government budget processes.

Due to agility in rostering, training will be prioritised to any staff identified to regularly work in the Crisis Support Unit and correctional managers. As is the case currently with SASH training regular refresher training will be maintained for all Correctional Officers noting any of them could work in an area.

Implementation: 31 December 2023

CHS and JACS will collaboratively review the current SASH training package and update elements as required.

Annual Report (JACS)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

ACTCS elements for Recommendation 4 have been completed. Actions taken to address the recommendation included a range of courses that support identification of the signs and symptoms of mental distress and build communication skills in staff to provide effective management and support to detainees with mental health conditions. Training is provided to all custodial staff as any custodial officer may be posted to the CSU.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement-in-principle with the recommendation and an intention for CHS and ACTCS to ‘collaboratively review the current training package and update elements as required’. The response identified an intention to ‘consider the inclusion of broader elements of identification and management of those with mental health conditions’.

JACS’ *Annual Report 2022-23* does not provide specific insights into the outcomes or impact of the collaborative review that CHS and ACTCS was to take in relation to the training material.

Recommendation 5 – Establishment of shared care arrangements

Canberra Health Services and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate should jointly:

- a) establish and document the shared care arrangements for detainees with mental health conditions; and
- b) develop a Service Level Agreement.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
<p>a) Both JACS and CHS have developed and documented their provision of services through individual models of care. The shared care arrangements between JACS and CHS have been established for some time, however it is recognised that these need to be documented.</p> <p>b) The JACS and CHS Arrangements document is currently being updated. The shared care arrangements that are already established and operational between JACS and CHS will be included as part of the Arrangements schedule. CHS and JACS will work collaboratively to develop a schedule to the arrangements that outlines agency interface of each model of care for the provision of mental health services in the AMC. Additional resourcing, if required, will be subject to ACT Government budget processes.</p> <p><i>Implementation: 31 December 2022</i></p> <p>a) JACS and CHS will both update their Model of Care documents to highlight agency interface.</p> <p>b) The Arrangements document, including the accompanying schedules will be developed and consulted on by 31 December 2022.</p>		

Annual Report (CHS and JACS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p>Canberra Health Services</p> <p>CHS have developed shared care arrangements for detainees with mental health conditions and finalised the Service Level Agreement.</p> <p>Justice and Community Safety Directorate</p> <p>A Service Level Agreement has been finalised and will be signed shortly. CHS has developed a shared care plan document for detainees under the multiagency Intensive Case Management Group (ICMG). This will be endorsed by the ICMG. Documentation will be shared with the Detainee Health and Wellbeing Oversight Committee (formerly Health Advisory Group) once endorsed.</p> <p><u>2023-24 Annual Report:</u></p> <p>Justice and Community Safety Directorate</p> <p>ACTCS has established and documented the shared care arrangements for detainees with mental health conditions in the Services and Interventions Unit Model of Care. Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services (MHJHADS) have a complementary Model of Care and the divide of services is agreed between the two agencies. Processes are in place to enable referral of detainees between the services. A Service Level Agreement, which was signed 24 July 2023, outlines overarching governance arrangements in relation to service provision for mental health.</p>		

Auditor-General’s Observation
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement-in-principle with the recommendation and an acknowledgement that ‘shared care arrangements between JACS and CHS have been established for some time [but] that these need to be documented’. The response also identifies an intention for JACS and CHS to ‘work collaboratively to develop a schedule to the arrangements that outlines agency interface of each model of care for the provision of mental health services in the AMC’.</p> <p>The agencies’ annual reports indicate that the shared care arrangements have been formally documented through a Service Level Agreement, which has been finalised. JACS’ <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> provides further insights into how the documentation is to be shared with the Detainee Health and</p>

Wellbeing Oversight Committee, and the *Annual Report 2023-24* provides further insights on the governance arrangements between the two agencies documented in the Service Level Agreement.

Recommendation 6 – Oversight of Winnunga service delivery arrangements and funding

To improve the oversight of ACT Government service arrangements with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, ACT Health, in partnership with Canberra Health Services and Winnunga, should establish arrangements for the improved oversight of services described under the Winnunga funding agreement that are provided in the Alexander Maconochie Centre.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
<p><i>The provision of health services in the AMC by Winnunga is central to providing safe, high quality and culturally appropriate health care in the AMC with the appropriate level of assurance. The ACT Government supports ACT Health, CHS (Justice Health) and JACS (ACT CS) will work collaboratively to provide the appropriate level of assurance of the service arrangements with Winnunga to provide services at the AMC. Additional resourcing, if required, will be subject to ACT Government budget processes.</i></p> <p><i>Implementation: 30 June 2023</i></p> <p><i>Providing the appropriate level of assurance of ACT Government service arrangements with Winnunga will be solely explored by ACT Health, and not CHS. Approaches to strengthen interagency partnerships and co-design of health service delivery, however, will be further explored by JACS, CHS and ACT Health.</i></p>		

Annual Report (Health and CHS)	Last Reported Status	Not Reported
Not reported.		

Auditor-General's Observation
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement-in-principle with the recommendation and an implementation date of 30 June 2023. There is little information on how this is intended to be pursued and achieved.</p> <p>Neither ACT Health or CHS has reported on the implementation of the recommendation. By not reporting progress on this recommendation in annual reports, there is no visibility with respect to how ACT Government agencies have implemented the recommendation.</p>

Recommendation 7 – Custodial Mental Health Services Operational Guide

Canberra Health Services should finalise the draft Custodial Mental Health Services Operational Guide.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>Canberra Health Services has completed the Custodial Mental Health Services Operational Guide draft and following the finalisation of the ACT Government Response to the Report, this will be circulated for consultation with key stakeholders.</i></p> <p><i>Implementation: 31 December 2022</i></p> <p><i>CHS will align the Custodial Mental Health Operational Guide to the Justice Health Strategy, which is due for finalisation by December 2022.</i></p>		

Annual Report (CHS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>CHS endorsed the Custodial Mental Health – Adult Operational Guideline and we have uploaded it to the CHS Policy Register.</i></p>		

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and an intention for the Operational Guide to align with the Justice Health Strategy and for this to be completed by 31 December 2022.

CHS' *Annual Report 2022-23* indicated that the Guidelines have been finalised.

Recommendation 8 – Health Advisory Group’s Terms of Reference

Canberra Health Services and ACT Corrective Services should review and update the Health Advisory Group Terms of Reference.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
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ACT Government recognises the need to strengthen governance of health service delivery within the AMC and is supportive of reinvigorating the Health Advisory Group’s function and purpose.

To support this and provide an inclusive forum for partnership and co-design, the current membership will be reviewed, invitations will be extended to service providers with whom it has agreements, communication linkages between governance groups will be established and the Terms of Reference (TOR) will be updated to reflect these changes.

The Health Advisory Group will provide clinical governance for health services within the AMC, including the provision of mental health services. This includes supporting the development of the CSP, developing further KPI’s to monitor outcome measures and quality and safety, maintaining the risk register.

The re-established Health Advisory Group will initially concentrate on establishing roles and responsibilities within AMC with a focus on clarity between clinical and non-clinical roles. An additional responsibility of the Health Advisory Group will be facilitating the sharing of key information. This includes a top-down approach to teams within the AMC, and a bottom-up approach for the escalation of any matters to agency Executives.

These changes will be implemented from within existing CHS resources.

Implementation: 30 September 2022

JACS and CHS will partner to reinvigorate the TOR.

Annual Report (CHS and JACS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
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2022-23 Annual Report:

Canberra Health Services

CHS have re-established the Health Advisory Group as the Detainee Health and Wellbeing Oversight Committee. The first meeting took place on 23 November 2022 and CHS have reviewed the Terms of Reference.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

The revised Terms of Reference for the Detainee Health and Wellbeing Oversight Committee (formally Health Advisory Group) will be tabled at the Oversight Agencies Collaborative Forum scheduled for 25 July 2023.

2023-24 Annual Report:

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

The Co-Chairs of the Health Advisory Committee (Commissioner, ACTCS and Executive Director, MHJHADS) have worked with Winnunga to review and update the Committee’s Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR strengthened governance arrangements for the committee and address the key issues raised in the Auditor-General’s report.

Auditor-General’s Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and an intention for this to be completed by 30 September 2022.

The agencies’ annual reports indicate implementation of the recommendation is complete.

Recommendation 9 – Linkages between governance groups

ACT Corrective Services and Canberra Health Services should establish clear reporting lines that provide communication linkages between current governance groups.		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p>ACT Government recognises and supports the need to establish and document clear reporting lines that provide communication linkages between current governance groups. In addition to reinvigorating the Health Advisory Group purpose and function, CHS, JACS and ACTHD and Winnunga will identify governance pathways within their respective agencies that will support information reporting and escalation of issues from the Health Advisory Group. These reporting lines will also be outlined in the Health Advisory Group Terms of Reference and captured in the JACS and CHS Arrangements schedule.</p> <p>These changes will be implemented from within existing CHS resources.</p> <p>Implementation: 30 September 2022</p> <p>To ensure the Health Advisory Group Terms of Reference captures these reporting lines, implementation of this recommendation will need to align to the timeframe of Recommendation 8.</p>		
Annual Report (JACS and CHS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p>Canberra Health Services</p> <p>CHS have re-established the Health Advisory Group as the Detainee Health and Wellbeing Oversight Committee. The first meeting took place on 23 November 2022 and CHS have reviewed the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Justice and Community Safety Directorate</p> <p>An Inter-agency Governance Structure has been endorsed by the Detainee Health and Wellbeing Oversight Committee (formerly Health Advisory Group). Revised reporting lines and communication linkages will be tabled for agreement at the Oversight Agencies Collaborative Forum scheduled for 25 July 2023.</p> <p><u>2023-24 Annual Report:</u></p> <p>Justice and Community Safety Directorate</p> <p>The governance structure has been set up to ensure that the relevant business units are working jointly regarding detainee mental health and complex needs. The introduction of this structure is driving efficiency and consistency in information sharing and positive delivery outcomes.</p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation, and an intention to establish the revised reporting lines by 30 September 2022.</p> <p>JACS' annual reports have provided more information than CHS' <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> on actions to be taken in relation to linkages and reporting lines and communication between groups. The agencies' annual reports indicate implementation of the recommendation is complete.</p>		

Recommendation 10 – Key Performance Indicators

<p>Canberra Health Services and ACT Corrective Services should develop, and report against, key performance indicators that measure:</p> <p>a) access to mental health treatment options; and</p> <p>b) the delivery of mental health services within AMC.</p> <p>Additionally, Canberra Health Services should report against a performance measure that relates to the development of release plans.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle

a) KPIs that currently measure access to mental health treatment options include:

- i) 'At Risk' referrals are triaged within two hours;
- ii) Clinically managed detainees receive a psychiatrist review every three months;
- iii) Detainees on an involuntary treatment order are reviewed by a health professional every two weeks;
- iv) Number of referrals received is reviewed and measured; and
- v) Wait times between referral and response is measured.

b) KPIs that currently measure delivery of mental health services within the AMC include:

- i) 5% of all mental health care plans are audited annually for quality assurance It is acknowledged development of further.

KPIs would strengthen the safety and quality of mental health services within the AMC, and additionally provide accurate information regarding service demand and resource requirements. The Health Advisory Group would be best placed to develop and monitor these additional KPIs.

The Health Advisory Group will also consider aligning the outcome measures and KPIs within the AMC to those of the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

The Integrated Offender Management Framework will be implemented in 2022. This model of holistic offender management will provide appropriate induction assessments, case and sentence planning including input from CHS on clinical elements of care and release planning and include effective release planning. A collaborative approach to shared clients such as those with mental health conditions is a priority element of the release plan for both agencies.

CHS refers to the 'release planning' as 'discharge planning' due to the clinical nature of services provided, and work has commenced to develop discharge plans for detainees. Additional resourcing, if required, will be subject to ACT Government budget processes.

Implementation: 30 June 2023

The Health Advisory Group TOR is due to be updated by 30 September 2022. This timeframe will allow establishment of the new membership prior to developing further KPIs.

Annual Report (CHS and JACS)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

Canberra Health Services

CHS and ACTCS have developed key performance indicators which the ACTCS/JHS/WNAHCS Governance Committee endorsed at their meeting in April 2023. CHS and ACTCS presented the KPIs to the Detainee Health and Wellbeing Oversight Committee in July 2023 which the committee endorsed.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Key Performance Indicators have been developed and approved by the Detainee Health and Wellbeing Oversight Committee (formerly Health Advisory Group). Reporting against the KPIs has commenced.

2023-24 Annual Report:

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

KPIs were developed and endorsed by the Governance Committee on 5 September 2023.

Formal reporting on the KPIs will occur each quarter, via the Governance Committee.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement-in-principle with the recommendation. However, there is little information on how implementation was intended to be pursued and achieved, apart from an intention for the Health Advisory Group to 'consider aligning the outcome measures and KPIs within the AMC to those of the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards'.

The agencies' annual reports, nevertheless, indicate KPIs have been developed and endorsed by the Detainee Health and Wellbeing Oversight Committee and that implementation is complete. However, only JACS indicates that the Directorate would formally conduct quarterly reporting on the KPI.

Recommendation 11 – Suicide Vulnerability Assessment Tool

Canberra Health Services should have the Suicide Vulnerability Assessment Tool, used during the induction assessment process, validated by ACT Health for use in a prison environment.		
Government Response	Reported Status	Noted
<p><i>ACT Government agree that a validated suicide assessment tool for use in a custodial setting is vital for the effective screening of detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm. CHS are currently transitioning from the Suicide Vulnerability Assessment Tool (SVAT) to the Connecting with People (CwP) SAFETool. As part of CHS core business, the implementation will be evaluated through usual safety and quality processes.</i></p> <p><i>Implementation: N/A</i></p>		
Annual Report (CHS)	Last Reported Status	Not Reported
Not reported.		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated that the recommendation was 'Noted'. The response indicated that the Suicide Vulnerability Assessment Tool will no longer be used, thereby removing the apparent premise of the recommendation. The premise behind the recommendation (that whatever tool is used be validated for use in a prison environment) nevertheless remains. Further information on the applicability of the <i>Connecting with People (CwP) SAFETool</i> in a prison environment would be useful.</p> <p>CHS' annual reports have not provided any further information.</p>		

Recommendation 12 – Custodial Officers mental health identification training and guidance material

To improve the timely identification of mental health issues in detainees by Custodial Officers, ACT Corrective Services should provide:		
<p>a) on-going mental health identification training to Custodial Officers;</p> <p>b) guidance material that identifies the warning signs for psychiatric and psychological illness; and</p> <p>c) guidance material that details the referral process for those detainees not considered at-risk.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>a) Refer to Recommendation 4 rationale as it also covers this recommendation.</i></p> <p><i>b) and c) It is acknowledged that guidance material in identifying warning signs for psychiatric and psychological illness and detailing the referral process for those detainees not considered at-risk would be beneficial for ACTCS Custodial Officers. These materials will be developed by CHS and they will be made available developed and made available as part of the review of the training package with subject matter experts.</i></p> <p><i>These changes will be implemented from within existing resources.</i></p> <p><i>Implementation: 30 June 2023</i></p>		
Annual Report (JACS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>ACTCS elements for Recommendation 12 have been completed. Actions to address the recommendation included the introduction of training in possible signs and symptoms that may suggest people are in distress or in poor mental health and how to make appropriate referrals to services and supports, including guidance material about how to make a referral.</i></p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		

The ACT Government response indicated agreement-in-principle with the recommendation and that the approach outlined for Recommendation 4 was relevant to part (a). The response also indicated an acknowledgement that parts (b) and (c) would be addressed through the forthcoming review of training material that was identified in response to Recommendation 4.

JACS' *Annual Report 2022-23* identified that the recommendation has been implemented, including new training and guidance documents for Custodial Officers.

Recommendation 13 – Self-referral pathway for detainees

ACT Corrective Services should develop clear guidance material for detainees that details the self-referral pathways for mental health concerns.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed

At present, there is a handbook that outlines the referral pathways and detainees are advised of these on reception to the facility. JACS recognises the need to strengthen visibility of self-referral pathways and access to information sources, such as the previously mentioned handbook and will consider other communication methods such as videos.

Implementation: 30 June 2023

Annual Report (JACS)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

Recommendation 13 was addressed with the implementation of the model of care - supports and interventions unit which has recently been updated for more robust streamlined processes to cater to the mental health needs of the detainees. ACTCS recognises the need to strengthen visibility of self-referral pathways and access to information via various accessible sources.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and a 'need to strengthen visibility of self-referral pathways and access to information sources' along with an intention to 'consider other communication mechanisms such as videos'. However, there is little information on how this was intended to be pursued and achieved.

JACS' *Annual Report 2022-23* identified that the recommendation has been implemented but reiterates there is a 'need to strengthen visibility of self-referral pathways and access to information via various accessible sources'. It is not clear how this is expected to be achieved.

Recommendation 14 – Collaborative Care Plans

Canberra Health Services should improve the comprehensiveness of Collaborative Care Plans for all detainees with psychiatric risk ratings.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed

CHS acknowledges this feedback and welcomes the opportunity to improve the comprehensiveness of Collaborative Care Plans for all detainees with psychiatric risk ratings. This type of quality improvement project aligns to the CHS Strategic Plan and will be supported by the Justice Health Strategy. This project will be implemented from within existing resources.

Implementation: 31 December 2022

Annual Report (CHS)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

We undertook an initial audit of completed care plans in November 2022. We submitted a Statement of Assurance and supporting evidence to the CHS Audit and Risk Committee which the committee endorsed.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and ‘welcomes the opportunity to improve the comprehensiveness of Collaborative Care Plans for all detainees with psychiatric risk ratings’. However, there is little information on how this is intended to be pursued and achieved.

CHS’ *Annual Report 2022-23* was not clear on what action taken to ‘improve the comprehensiveness of Collaborative Care Plans’.

Recommendation 15 – High-Risk Assessment Team meetings

Canberra Health Services and ACT Corrective Services should ensure that:

- a) sufficient detail is recorded in meeting minutes of the High-Risk Assessment Team to support subsequent decisions and actions; and
- b) a process is established and documented that ensures advice is sought from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander health professional regarding at-risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed

a) ACTCS and CHS acknowledge this feedback and welcome the opportunity to enhance the details captured in the High-Risk Assessment Team (HRAT) meeting minutes. High-Risk Assessment Team meetings occur each business day and is a forum for multi-agency decision and intervention planning for detainees at risk of suicide or self-harm. Meeting attendees will guide the meeting secretariat in identifying and recording key points that will support subsequent decisions and actions.

b) There is a recognised opportunity to create an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Worker role as these positions have been of great benefit in other jurisdictions. While feasibility and creation of this role is undertaken, seeking advice regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees will be incorporated into the High-Risk Assessment Team meeting functions.

These changes will be implemented from within existing resources.

Implementation: 30 June 2023

Annual Report (CHS and JACS)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

Canberra Health Services

CHS and ACTCS continue to progress. This work will include review of the detail outlined in meeting minutes of the High-Risk Assessment Team and establishing and documenting a process that ensures advice is sought from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander health professional regarding at-risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

ACTCS staff have completed minute writing training and a meeting format and membership audit has been undertaken to identify opportunities to improve meeting processes, including opportunities to incorporate an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Worker role. ACTCS aim to close the recommendation by 31 October 2023.

2023-24 Annual Report:

Canberra Health Services

The CHS Audit and Risk Committee reviewed actions undertaken to meet this recommendation at its November 2023 meeting and endorsed the recommendation as complete.

Actions undertaken:

a) Audit completed of HRAT minutes and recommendations made and tabled at Governance Meeting on 5 September 2023. As a result of the audit, the HRAT meeting template has been updated and a consistent minute has been appointed.

b) Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALOs) are invited to HRAT meetings to provide input. ALO attendance at HRAT meetings is documented in HRAT Terms of Reference. ALO contribution to meetings is recorded under 'other stakeholders' in HRAT meeting template.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Changes have been made to the way minutes are recorded for the High-Risk Assessment Team (HRAT) meetings. Additionally, the Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALO) provide input from the perspective of the cultural factors that need to be considered for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. The role of ALO's in the assessment process is documented as a part of the HRAT ToR.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation. The response indicates an intention to 'create an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Worker role' but that there will be a process whereby 'feasibility and creation of this role is undertaken'.

The agencies' annual reports indicate that action was taken to improve the quality of High-Risk Assessment Team documentation. Both agencies have reported obtaining input from Aboriginal Liaison Officers as part of the meeting process, but there is no further information on the creation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Worker role. There is no indication as to whether the role will be created or not.

Recommendation 16 – Operational guide for delivery of treatment outside Custodial Mental Health

Canberra Health Services should develop an operational guide that details the operational and clinical procedures to be undertaken for detainees who fall outside the criteria for treatment by the Custodial Mental Health team.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed-in-principle

Currently, the JACS Model of Care document supports and guides the delivery of treatment for detainees to fall outside the criteria for the CHS custodial mental health team. It is important to note that emotional distress does not equate to a mental illness, and while detainees may experience emotional distress, it does not mean they are mentally ill.

It would not be appropriate for CHS to develop an operational guide for services that are outside their scope of service delivery or governance; however, CHS and JACS will work collaboratively to identify and resolve any gaps in current documentation and delivery. ACTCS draft model of care is currently being consulted on and finalised.

Implementation: 31 December 2022

Annual Report (CHS)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

The endorsed Custodial Mental Health - Adult Operational Guideline incorporates referral pathways for people who fall outside the criteria for treatment by the Custodial Mental Health team. CHS submitted a Statement of Assurance and supporting evidence to the CHS Audit and Risk Committee for consideration in May 2023 which the committee endorsed.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement in principle with the recommendation but noted that there was no intention to 'develop an operational guide for services that are outside their scope of service delivery or governance'. The response indicated an intention for CHS and JACS to 'work collaboratively to identify and resolve any gaps in current documentation and delivery'.

CHS' Annual Report 2022-23 identified that implementation of the recommendation was complete, but it is not clear what action has been taken to 'work collaboratively to identify and resolve any gaps in current documentation and delivery'.

Recommendation 17 – Aboriginal Liaison Officer numbers

Canberra Health Services should undertake an assessment of the number of Aboriginal Liaison Officers required to meet service needs, including support during the induction process, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees and recruit to this number.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed-in-principle

ACTCS Policy requires inductions and assessments have an Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO) present. This policy is being reviewed amongst other induction and assessment policies to ensure the needs of detainees are assessed and met appropriately.

Detainees within the AMC who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander receive a cultural induction and assessment from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services team within the first week of their induction. In addition, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peer support detainee will see newly inducted detainees [who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] within the first 24 hours of their reception.

The CHS Operational Guide is still being finalised, however the process 'offer and refer', outlines the expectation that every detainee who identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is referred to an ALO and seen within seven days.

While ALOs are not clinical team members, they do support and assist detainees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees account for approximately one third of the total population within the AMC, CHS is committed to enhancing the availability of culturally appropriate and safe support to detainees.

It is anticipated the creation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health worker role will strengthen the interface between clinical and culturally appropriate care and engagement. CHS and JACS recognise the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health workers and the creation of this role will be explored further through the implementation of recommendation 15.

Additional resourcing, if required, will be subject to ACT Government budget processes.

Implementation: 31 December 2022

Noting feasibility and creation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health worker roles will be explored through recommendation 15, CHS will consider ways to enhance culturally appropriate support and services within the AMC.

Annual Report (CHS)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

CHS continues to progress work in relation to Recommendation 17. CHS have completed initial consultation and we are due to complete this recommendation by the end of 2023.

2023-24 Annual Report:

The CHS Audit and Risk Committee reviewed actions undertaken to meet this recommendation at its November 2023 meeting and endorsed the recommendation as complete. Actions undertaken: a) Introducing annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health assessments cofacilitated by Justice Health Services (JHS) Nursing and ALO. b) Introducing the ALO as a member of the complex care and mental health multidisciplinary team and the intensive case management forums. c) JHS Primary Health Operational Procedure is currently in development and will elaborate on the scope, role and resourcing requirements of Health ALOs within the AMC setting. d) JHS has also taken into consideration work being undertaken by the Executive Director of Allied Health on appropriate resourcing of ALOs across CHS more broadly, which will provide further clarity on the number of ALOs required at AMC to meet service needs.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement in principle with the recommendation. In doing so it noted that the policy by which 'inductions and assessments have an Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO) present' is being reviewed. The audit report highlighted the risk of culturally insensitive and inappropriate treatment being provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees because 'only 0.6 FTE of a FTE ALO from CHS [was] available to assist Custodial Mental Health to provide services to those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees who are not receiving treatment from Winnunga'.

The response identified that the 'creation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health worker role will strengthen the interface between clinical and culturally appropriate care and engagement' and that this is being pursued through Recommendation 15. This is likely to be of assistance, but the key finding of the audit report was the ongoing need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to provide support.

CHS' Annual Report 2023-24 identified a range of actions and initiatives taken to implement the recommendation and that its implementation is complete. The response indicates that the Directorate is incorporating further input from ALOs to provide support instead of creating an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Worker role.

The annual report notes 'JHS has also taken into consideration work being undertaken by the Executive Director of Allied Health on appropriate resourcing of ALOs across CHS more broadly, which will provide further clarity on the number of ALOs required at AMC to meet service needs'. The outcomes of this exercise, and whether it has addressed the limited availability of ALOs, which was a key issue highlighted in the performance audit report, is unclear.

Recommendation 18 – Trauma informed care

<p>Canberra Health Services should introduce trauma informed frameworks to inform governance, clinical and operational processes. This should include the development and implementation of trauma-informed care training for delivery to all clinical staff within Forensic Mental Health Services and Custodial Officers within ACT Corrective Services.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
<p><i>Trauma informed care training is already a part of the training calendar for CHS, however due to COVID-19 restrictions and the temporary suspension of face-to-face training, this module was not available.</i></p> <p><i>It is recognised that training compliance and up-take could be strengthened by adapting the mandatory training requirements to include trauma informed care modules.</i></p> <p><i>A two-day training course covering trauma aware practices, facilitated by Blue Knot has been delivered to the ACTCS Offender Reintegration team including the clinician teams. It is worthy to note that trauma informed care is a clinical specialty and therefore not appropriate for correctional officers. However, training in trauma aware practices would be appropriate for inclusion in the mental health training packages that are currently under review (refer to Recommendation 4).</i></p> <p><i>Additional resourcing, if required, will be subject to ACT Government budget processes.</i></p> <p><i>Implementation: 31 December 2022</i></p>		
Annual Report (CHS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>Staff attended Trauma Informed Care training with the Blue Knot Foundation in April 2023. CHS have incorporated 1-day training into the Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol & Drug Services (MHJHADS) essential education program for all clinical staff which was recently endorsed by the MHJHADS Workforce Development Committee. CHS submitted a Statement of Assurance and supporting evidence to the CHS Audit and Risk Committee for consideration in May 2023 which the committee endorsed.</i></p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement in principle with the recommendation and that 'trauma informed care training is already a part of the training calendar for CHS'. The response also identified that 'training compliance and up-take could be strengthened by adapting the mandatory training requirements to include trauma informed care modules'.</p> <p>CHS' <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> subsequently identified that training has been incorporated into the essential education program for all MHJHADS staff and that implementation of the recommendation is complete.</p>		

Recommendation 19 – Release planning

<p>Canberra Health Services should develop release planning guidance material that covers all detainees with mental health care plans that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) describes the process for release planning; b) details what information should be contained in a release plan; c) establishes a consultation process with ACT Corrective Services when planning release for those detainees receiving mental health treatment from ACT Corrective Services clinical staff; and d) establishes a consultation process with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (or other service providers where necessary) when planning the release of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees. 		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>a) Release planning, or discharge planning, is something all agencies can partner to explore and co-design. CHS clinically managed clients have a care plan and will receive a discharge plan to ensure mental health care and servicing continues in the community. This is not feasible for many detainees</i></p>		

who may transit through the prison system on a short length of time, require no mental health assistance or refuse mental health care. In these cases, there will not be a mental health care plan established.

b) A CHS discharge planning procedure has been developed – it is currently in draft form pending consultation with relevant agency and service providers.

c) The release plan under the IOM framework will be responsive to a detainee’s specific needs for reintegration to the community. These procedures will outline the processes for release planning, and detail what information should be contained in a release plan or discharge plan.

d) These procedures will also establish the recommended consultation processes. While the release planning for sentenced detainees can be undertaken, it is important to note that it can be difficult to document the release plan for detainees held on remand. Additional resourcing, if required, will be subject to ACT Government budget processes.

Implementation: 30 June 2023

Annual Report (CHS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
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2022-23 Annual Report:

CHS continues to progress work in relation to Recommendation 19. CHS have developed a Release Planning Guideline for Custodial Mental Health and commenced internal consultation.

2023-24 Annual Report:

The CHS Audit and Risk Committee reviewed actions undertaken to meet this recommendation at its November 2023 meeting and endorsed the recommendation as complete. The committee endorsed the Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Services (MHJHADS) Custodial Mental Health—Adult Release Planning Business Rule.

Auditor-General’s Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that a draft ‘CHS discharge planning procedure has been developed – it is currently in draft form pending consultation with relevant agency and service providers’. The response indicated that CHS clinically managed clients ‘will receive a discharge plan’ but that ‘this is not feasible for many detainees who may transit through the prison system on a short length of time, require no mental health assistance or refuse mental health care’ and there are difficulties associated with this approach ‘for detainees held on remand’.

CHS’ Annual Report 2023-24 notes the development of Mental Health, Justice Health, Alcohol and Drug Services (MHJHADS) Custodial Mental Health—Adult Release Planning Business Rule and that action on the recommendation is complete.

Auditor-General Report No.2 of 2022

Fraud Prevention³

(3 March 2022)

Auditee

The auditees for this audit were the Community Services Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, and Access Canberra in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

Audit Objective

The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the fraud prevention activity in a selection of ACT Government agencies.

Summary

Fraud in the public sector takes resources away from the services on which the public depend and undermines the integrity of government.

In the last five years there have been 131 allegations of fraud being perpetrated by ACT public servants, of which 42 were substantiated. While the cost of fraud to the ACT Public Service is unknown, these acts damage the ACT community's trust in the integrity of the ACT Public Service and its capacity to effectively protect public resources.

The Commonwealth Fraud Prevention Centre, in the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, advises that fraud is often underestimated and unchecked in government and can be a costly and challenging problem to address. The Centre also advises that prevention measures are the most cost-effective way to limit the size and impact of an organisation's fraud risk.

This audit considers the fraud prevention measures of three ACT Government agencies: Community Services Directorate (CSD), Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) and Access Canberra (Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD)). It considers fraud prevention planning and monitoring, the management of conflicts of interest and the provision of training and related fraud awareness activities.

Government response⁴

Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister, tabled the ACT Government's response to the Performance Audit Report on 1 July 2022.

³ [Report No. 2 of 2022 - Fraud Prevention \(act.gov.au\)](#)

⁴ [Government-Response-to-ACT-Auditor-General-Fraud-Prevention-Report.pdf](#)

Recommendation 1 – Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plans and reporting

CMTEDD should provide clarity on the purpose of Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plans and the requirements for annual reporting of fraud and corruption issues. This may be achieved through the current review of the *ACTPS Integrity Policy* (2010), which is scheduled for completion in early 2022.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
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The ACT Government agrees with the Auditor-General's recommendation.

The ACT Government understands that CMTEDD has already undertaken a review and revised the ACTPS Integrity Framework and the ACTPS Integrity Governance Policy. The revised ACTPS Integrity Framework and ACTPS Integrity Governance Policy was issued to all staff on 23 May 2022 and addresses fraud and corruption prevention plans, and the requirements for annual reporting of fraud and corruption issues.

As stated in the ACTPS Integrity Framework, each agency is required to appoint an individual as the Senior Executive Responsible for Business Integrity Risk (SERBIR). The SERBIR has primary responsibility for the implementation of the Integrity Framework, risk management and reporting of integrity and fraud and corruption prevention.

Under Part 2.3 of the Public Sector Management Standards 2006, agencies are required to develop and implement a Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan which forms part of the agencies' formal risk assessment. The agencies' respective Audit and Risk Committee has oversight over the effectiveness of the integrity arrangements. The ACTPS Integrity Governance Policy provides further information as to what is required in a Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan. Directors-General (DGs) and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) must ensure the Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan is assessed and reviewed every two years. There are also reporting requirements in the Annual Report Directions, whereby agencies must provide information on fraud prevention policies and practices and fraud detection strategies including the number of reports or allegations of fraud or corruption received and investigated during the year.

Annual Report (CMTEDD)	Last Reported Status	Complete
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2022-23 Annual Report:

CMTEDD has undertaken a review and revised the ACTPS Integrity Framework and the ACTPS Integrity Governance Policy. The revised ACTPS Integrity Framework and ACTPS Integrity Governance Policy was issued to all staff on 23 May 2022 and addresses fraud and corruption prevention plans, and the requirements for annual reporting of fraud and corruption issues.

As stated in the ACTPS Integrity Framework, each agency is required to appoint an individual as the Senior Executive Responsible for Business Integrity Risk (SERBIR). The SERBIR has primary responsibility for the implementation of the Integrity Framework, risk management and reporting of integrity and fraud and corruption prevention.

In accordance with Section 113(1)(a) of the Public Sector Management Standards 2016, agencies are required to develop and implement a Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan which forms part of the agencies' formal risk assessment. The agencies' respective Audit and Risk Committees have oversight over the effectiveness of the integrity arrangements. The ACTPS Integrity Governance Policy provides further information as to what is required in a Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan.

Directors-General and Chief Executive Officers must ensure the Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan is assessed and reviewed every two years. There are also reporting requirements in the Annual Report Directions, whereby agencies must provide information on fraud prevention policies and practices and fraud detection strategies including the number of reports or allegations of fraud or corruption received and investigated during the year.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and identified that it had been addressed through the *ACTPS Integrity Governance Policy* that was released in May 2022. A review of the Policy shows that it continues to require agencies to develop a plan 'based upon a recent identification and assessment of the risks to the directorate/agency and ... deal with those risks in priority order'. The Policy continues to require an operational response to identified fraud and corruption risks (refer to page 6 of the Policy). These requirements are broadly similar to what was in place in the previous *ACTPS Integrity Policy* (2010), albeit with some changes.

In practice, agencies did not develop and promulgate plans that clearly and closely identified actions to be taken in response to identified fraud and corruption risks. The audit found 'the three agencies' Plans predominantly contain information about legislation and policies, processes and procedures and roles and responsibilities. The agencies' Plans did not specifically identify fraud and corruption risks, nor did they identify time-bound action items that would address specific risks. The Plans were not accompanied by an implementation or action strategy or specific statements that would drive prevention activities such as times, dates and targets for deliverables'.

CMTEDD's *Annual Report 2022-23* does not provide any further insight into actions taken in relation to the recommendation.

The ACT Government response has reiterated the requirement for Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plans to continue to have an operational response that identifies actions against identified fraud and corruption risks. The extent to which agencies meet this requirement going forwards may be of future interest.

Recommendation 2 – Conflict of interest registers

CMTEDD should provide guidance to ACT government agencies on requirements for the documentation and recording of conflict of interest declarations.

The guidance should address:

- a) whether conflict of interest declarations are expected to be recorded in a centralised register in the agency; and
- b) if they are, the circumstances in which the information in the register is to be used and for what purpose.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
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The ACT Government agrees in-principle with the Auditor-General's recommendation.

The Conflict of Interest Policy was updated in June 2021 by CMTEDD and is next due for review in June 2023. The Auditor-General's recommendation will be considered in the next review to provide centralised guidance for the documentation and recording of conflict-of-interest declarations.

The ACT Government understands several agencies already utilise a central conflict of interest register to good effect. The ACT Government notes there are considerations when determining whether an agency is to use a centralised register to record conflicts of interest. This includes ensuring staff privacy is maintained and access to the central register is strictly limited to a need-to-know basis. In addition, some staff may feel uncomfortable releasing personal information to a central register when it may be irrelevant to their typical day-to-day duties, and unlikely to ever be called upon – this may be particularly true for smaller organisations.

Alternatively, this issue could be resolved through situationally specific or one-off conflict checks – for example, a recruitment round. In this scenario, an agency may find it more efficient, and secure for privacy purposes to record conflicts of interest with the documentation for that process.

Annual Report (CMTEDD)	Last Reported Status	In progress
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2022-23 Annual Report:

The Conflict-of-Interest Policy was updated in June 2021 and is now due for review (from June/July 2023). The recommendation will be considered in the course of the review.

There are considerations when determining whether an agency is to use a centralised register to record conflicts of interest. This includes ensuring staff privacy or whether issues could be better resolved through situationally specific or one-off conflict checks – for example, a recruitment round. Conflict of interest declarations are routine for recruitment panels to complete. In this scenario, an agency may find it more efficient, and secure for privacy purposes to record conflicts of interest with the documentation for that process.

2023-24 Annual Report:

The Conflict-of-Interest Policy is under review.

There are considerations when determining whether an agency is to use a centralised register to record conflicts of interest. This includes ensuring staff privacy or whether issues could be better resolved through situationally specific or one-off conflict checks - for example, a recruitment round. Conflict of interest declarations are routine for recruitment panels to complete. In this scenario, an agency may find it more efficient, and secure for privacy purposes to record conflicts of interest with the documentation for that process.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement-in-principle with the recommendation and an intention for the recommendation to be considered as part of a review of the *ACTPS Conflict of Interest Policy*.

CMTEDD's *Annual Report 2023-24* identifies that action on the recommendation is still in progress.

Recommendation 3 – Mandatory reporting of conflicts of interest

Where not already in place, ACT Government agencies should require all recruitment panel members to complete a conflict of interest declaration form when participating in a recruitment, including that they have no known actual or potential conflicts of interest.		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>The ACT Government agrees with the Auditor-General's recommendation.</i></p> <p><i>The Conflict of Interest Policy requires all members on a recruitment panel to complete a conflict of interest declaration form to ensure that all perceived, potential, or actual conflicts of interest are disclosed. The completed forms must be documented and disclosed to the delegate and any other panel members. Following the disclosure, it is then decided whether the affected employee should stand aside from the process or from consideration of that particular application.</i></p>		
Annual Report (CMTEDD, CSD, Education and TCCS)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p>Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate</p> <p><i>Conflict of interest declarations are routine for recruitment panels to complete. Recruitment panel members are requested to complete conflict of interest declarations when taking part in a recruitment process.</i></p> <p>Education Directorate</p> <p><i>People and Performance are in discussions with Shared Services to develop an online conflict of interest form for all recruitment panels across the Directorate.</i></p> <p><u>2023-24 Annual Report:</u></p> <p>Education Directorate</p> <p><i>OneGov Service Centre has been amended to reflect the Conflict of Interest form must be completed by all Directorate panel members. Internal communications have also been updated to include a link to the form. HR Advice was published to Directorate staff in ACT Education News update - 20 February 24.</i></p> <p>CSD and TCCS did not report on this recommendation.</p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and identified that the <i>ACTPS Conflict of Interest Policy (2021)</i> required this. The audit found that recruitment policies in CMTEDD and TCCS required panel members to positively report whether they did (or did not) have a conflict of interest, while CSD's policy only required panel members to report if they did have a conflict of interest. The audit recommendation was aimed at fostering a positive reporting obligation for all panel members across all directorates and agencies.</p> <p>By not reporting against this recommendation it was unclear whether CSD has recognised the risks associated with the issues identified in the report that the recommendation was seeking to address.</p> <p>Education's <i>Annual Report 2023-24</i> highlighted a system-fix to the OneGov Service Centre, which is likely to assist in addressing the risks associated with conflicts of interest in recruitment.</p>		

Recommendation 4 – Fraud and corruption induction training

Where not already in place, ACT Government agencies should:		
<p>a) provide mandatory induction training about the nature and risks of fraud and corruption and relevant ACT Public Service and agency policies. The training should be delivered with reference to examples and scenarios relevant to the business of the agency; and</p> <p>b) keep timely and accurate records of the number of staff completing the mandatory induction training.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed

The ACT Government agrees with the Auditor-General's recommendation.

All new starters to the ACT Government must be made aware and educated about fraud and corruption through an induction process.

The ACT Government understands the additional burden this may put on smaller ACT Government agencies that already undertake annual all-staff fraud and corruption education processes that facilitate discussion as an agency – which is beneficial and goes to meeting the objective of all staff being aware of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to fraud and corruption prevention. In these circumstances, smaller agencies may benefit from utilising online learning modules already developed by CMTEDD to educate new starters.

Annual Report (CMTEDD, CSD, Education and TCCS)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

All new starters to the ACTPS are required to undertake induction training. Each directorate is responsible for providing core learning to their staff, of which fraud and ethics should be part.

Additional integrity and workplace behaviour training is presented to the graduate and vocational employment cohorts as part of their induction. This training is facilitated by the Professional Standards Unit and is also available by request across the ACTPS.

CMTEDD has relevant e-learning modules which track the number of staff completing the training.

CSD, Education and TCCS did not report on this recommendation.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with this recommendation and noted that informing new employees of fraud and corruption is a requirement of the induction process. The audit recommendation was based on observations that not all new starters had completed mandatory induction training across the agencies and that records associated with the completion of training were sometimes incomplete.

The annual reports of CSD, Education and TCCS did not address the recommendation.

Recommendation 5 – Agency staff surveys

Where not already in place, ACT Government agencies should undertake staff surveys that collect information about the level of staff awareness of their fraud and corruption reporting obligations and the reporting channels they should use, as well as staff perceptions of the integrity of agency senior leadership. This information should be used to benchmark staff awareness levels and inform priorities for fraud and corruption prevention activities.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed-in-principle

The ACT Government agrees in-principle with the Auditor-General's recommendation.

Several ACT Government agencies currently conduct staff surveys that include questions on fraud and integrity. This creates the opportunity to use the results to benchmark and improve staff awareness levels and to inform activities for fraud and corruption prevention. As detailed in the government's response to recommendation six, the government is conscious that multiple surveys can lead to survey fatigue – this can be countered through coordination and guidance on when and how surveys are conducted if individual agencies wish to survey their staff.

The ACT Government notes that surveys may not be appropriate for smaller agencies where the survey results may identify individual staff members. In these circumstances, the ACT Government understands that other mechanisms, such as training and education, may be a preferable option to improve staff awareness of reporting obligations and understand the perception of the integrity of the particular agency's senior leadership.

Annual Report (CMTEDD, CSD, Education and TCCS)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate

The ACTPS Employee Survey, delivered in March 2023, included questions relating to corruption. Select results and analysis of the whole of ACT Public Service outcomes will be published in the 2022-23 State of the Service Report. The ACTPS Employee Survey will be delivered every two years. Annual Reports are published in October each year.

Education Directorate

Questions that explore staff fraud and corruption knowledge and opinions of senior leadership integrity are asked in the biennial ACTPS Employee Survey. These questions seek a perception rating from respondents.

They are:

- Senior leaders within ACT Education operate with a high level of integrity, and
- I have a good understanding of my obligations and the policies and procedures ACT Education has in place for reporting fraud and corruption.

As these questions were asked of non-school based staff only in the March 2023 Employee Survey, work is currently progressing to consider inclusion of these questions in the School Satisfaction and Climate Survey This will ensure there is coverage on these questions, and reliable data, across the whole Directorate.

Results from the 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey for our non-school based staff are anticipated to be received in June 2023.

2023-24 Annual Report:

Education Directorate

The level of staff awareness of fraud and reporting obligations and perceptions of the integrity of senior leadership are now gauged in both the annual School Satisfaction and Climate Survey (covering school-based staff) and the biennial ACT Employee Survey (covering non-school based staff).

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement-in-principle with the recommendation and notes that 'several ... agencies currently conduct staff surveys that include questions on fraud and integrity'. The ACT Government response does not otherwise indicate any further action to be taken in response to this recommendation.

Education Directorate annual reports highlighted actions and initiatives in place to address the recommendation.

The annual reports of CSD and TCCS did not address the recommendation.

Recommendation 6 – Whole-of-government staff survey

CMTEDD should:

- a) conduct a regular ACT Public Service survey that includes questions relating to fraud and corruption and integrity-related risks; and
- b) publicly report on the results of these surveys.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed

The ACT Government agrees with the Auditor-General's recommendation.

ACT Government agencies actively participate in whole-of-government surveys such as the ACT Public Service survey in relation to fraud and corruption and integrity related risks. It is understood that results from whole-of-government surveys are of limited benefit to smaller agencies as their results are not reported due to its sample size.

The ACT Government is conscious that, coupled with recommendation five, there is a risk that staff could suffer from survey fatigue and supply answers and data that is not an accurate reflection of the actual state of the service. To counter this, should an ACT Government agency wish to survey their staff on fraud and awareness, there should be consultation amongst ACT Government agencies to coordinate survey efforts to avoid duplication.

The ACT Government recognises that individual agencies and Directorates may wish to undertake their own staff surveys to gauge staff understanding of specific fraud and corruption risks to that agency or Directorate, that may not be covered in a whole of sector survey.

Annual Report (CMTEDD)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

The ACTPS Employee Survey, delivered in March 2023, included questions relating to corruption. Select results and analysis of the whole of ACT Public Service outcomes will be published in the 2022-23 State of the Service Report. The ACTPS Employee Survey will be delivered every two years. Annual Reports are published in October each year.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and noted that 'ACT Government agencies actively participate in whole-of-government surveys such as the ACT Public Service survey in relation to fraud and corruption and integrity related risks'. The response is not specific about what further actions are being taken in relation to the implementation of this recommendation.

CMTEDD's *Annual Report 2022-23* highlights the role of the bi-annual *ACTPS Employee Survey* in addressing this recommendation.

Auditor-General Report No.3 of 2022

ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme⁵

(14 June 2022)

Auditee

The auditee for this audit was the ACT Revenue Office in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

Audit Objective

The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme.

Summary

The ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme is part of the ACT Government's Concessions Program. The Scheme aims to provide subsidised taxi fares to permanent ACT residents with a severe or profound activity limitation which prevents them from using public transport.

The audit considered the activities of the ACT Revenue Office in managing the Scheme, including consideration of:

- the governance arrangements in place to administer the Scheme;
- processes to receive and assess applications for membership; and
- the management and monitoring of the Scheme usage by members.

Government response⁶

Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Treasurer, tabled the ACT Government's response to the Performance Audit Report on 13 October 2022.

⁵ [Report No.3 of 2022 - ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme](#)

⁶ [Auditor-Generals-Report-No.-3-2022-ACT-Taxi-Subsidy-Scheme-Government-Response.PDF](#)

Recommendation 1 – Scheme purpose and objectives

<p>The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should:</p> <p>a) review and clearly articulate the purpose and objectives of the Scheme; and</p> <p>b) use this as a basis for identifying a policy for, and principles associated with, subsidy amounts and subsidy caps.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
<p><i>We do not accept the Report's conclusion that the planning and delivery of the Scheme is hampered by a lack of clarity and specificity with respect to the purpose and objectives of the Scheme.</i></p> <p>a) <i>The Scheme contributes to achieve the broader aim of improving affordability of essential services for residents of the ACT in need of assistance. It provides subsidised taxi fares to permanent ACT residents with a severe or profound activity limitation which prevents them from using public transport. In terms of its coverage and breadth, the Scheme is broadly consistent with other jurisdictions.</i></p> <p><i>The ACT Government is undertaking a separate review of the maximum regulated taxi fares and regulation, this will take into consideration the adequacy of taxi fare subsidies. This separate review will also consider how a range of objectives are being achieved in the taxi industry, including the accessibility and inclusion objectives and the availability of Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) services. In order to better inform the community, public documents that are available on the Revenue Office website will describe the eligibility requirements and operating method with more clarity as suggested in recommendation 1(a).</i></p> <p><i>We are aware that feedback has been received from the Disability Strategy consultation which may inform any additional work to communicate the guidance associated with the Scheme.</i></p> <p>b) <i>The Government considers the subsidy levels are adequate and consistent with other jurisdictions and are appropriate for most purposes. Over 80 per cent of trips were below the subsidy cap in 2020-21. Commute distances are fairly uniform in ACT, given the location of the suburbs and key service providers.</i></p> <p><i>There is limited evidence that the current ACT cap is having an adverse impact. However, there may be a small number of individual users that require higher levels of subsidy for specific purposes such as to access unique essential services. The Government may consider these individual needs further, as part of the feedback received for the ACT Disability Strategy.</i></p>		
Annual Report (CMTEDD)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p>a) <i>The ACT Revenue Office and Access Canberra websites clearly articulate the purpose and objectives of the Scheme.</i></p> <p>b) <i>CMTEDD considered the appropriateness of the subsidy levels and caps in 2022-23, which informed changes announced in the 2023-24 Budget.</i></p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated in-principle agreement with the recommendation. In doing so, however, it also noted disagreement with the audit conclusion that there is 'a lack of clarity and specificity with respect to the purpose and objectives of the Scheme'.</p> <p>The ACT Government response indicates an intention to review 'the maximum regulated taxi fares and regulation [which will] take into consideration the adequacy of taxi fare subsidies'. The ACT Government response also indicates 'there may be a small number of individual users that require higher levels of subsidy for specific purposes [and that] the Government may consider these individual needs further, as part of the feedback received for the ACT Disability Strategy'. These are useful actions that may result in changes to subsidy amounts and subsidy caps (part b of the recommendation). The Audit Office considers this would be better achieved with a clearer articulation of the purpose and objectives of the Scheme (part a of the recommendation).</p> <p>CMTEDD's <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> identifies no action was taken in relation to part (a) of the recommendation. CMTEDD's <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> does not provide insight into what changes were made following the 2022-23 review.</p>		

Recommendation 2 – Review and evaluation

<p>The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should periodically review and evaluate the operation of the Scheme. The review should assess the operation of the Scheme against its identified purpose and objectives and be informed by qualitative and quantitative data that is collected in relation to the operation of the Scheme.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>The Government agrees to review and evaluate the operational documentation currently in use.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Government will review the operation of the Scheme periodically subject to available resources and other policy priorities.</i> • <i>ACT Revenue Office is transitioning the administration of the Scheme onto a new workflow management platform and has reengineered aspects of the administrative processes. The operating manuals will be updated at the completion of this process.</i> • <i>The quantitative data of membership details and Cabcharge information (trip duration, trip cost, smart card etc.) will be helpful in identifying any inconsistency in the scheme's operation. Provision for recording appropriate locational descriptions may be considered to ensure better usage of the Scheme and avoid any misuse.</i> • <i>ACT Revenue Office will incorporate a survey or feedback form into the member renewal process (in every 3 years) in order to collect the qualitative information.</i> • <i>The ACT Revenue Office is currently developing a fraud minimisation strategy with the provider, focussing on driver behaviour, using the expertise of the provider from across multiple jurisdictions. This will lead to stronger protection of Scheme members from fraudulent driver activity claiming incorrect trips or subsidy amounts against their membership. This will include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>an investigation by ACT Policing of driver's behaviour and activity, and</i> ○ <i>a compliance exercise matching TSS claims data with Wheelchair Access Taxi data and follow up investigations of trips that were identified as potentially suspect.</i> 		
Annual Report (CMTEDD)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p>CMTEDD reviewed and evaluated the operation of the Scheme in 2022-23, leading to changes announced in the 2023-24 Budget.</p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation. It identified an intention to review the administration of the Scheme (e.g. by reviewing operational documentation and operational manuals) and the outputs and outcomes of the Scheme (e.g. by reviewing quantitative data of membership and Scheme usage and qualitative data through surveys of Scheme users). The response was not clear with respect to when these reviews will occur.</p> <p>CMTEDD's <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> does not provide insight into how the Scheme was 'reviewed and evaluated' and what changes were made following this review.</p>		

Recommendation 3 – Policy and procedural guidance

<p>The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should review and update the policy and procedural guidance associated with the Scheme.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>The policy and procedural guidance to administer the Scheme is clearly defined in the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme Policy Paper (the Policy Paper) and intended to accomplish the Scheme's stated objective. The Government agrees that a periodic review of the Policy Paper may be helpful for further improvement in managing the Scheme. We are aware that feedback has been received from the Disability Strategy consultation which may inform any additional work to communicate the guidance associated with the Scheme.</i></p>		
Annual Report (CMTEDD)	Last Reported Status	Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

New procedures will be finalised, and necessary associated guidance materials updated by 31 March 2024.

2023-24 Annual Report:

The ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme policy and procedural guidance materials have been updated.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation. It identified an intention to review the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme Policy Paper (the Policy Paper). The Audit Office notes that the audit report identified the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme Internal Operating Procedures Manual (the Procedures Manual) was particularly problematic by having outdated roles and responsibilities. This should also be reviewed and updated.

CMTEDD's *Annual Report 2023-24* indicates that the documentation has been updated and implementation of the recommendation is complete.

Recommendation 4 – Application form accessibility

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate should explore opportunities to make the application forms associated with the Scheme web-based and able to be completed on-line.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed

We agree this has the potential to improve the easy operation of the Scheme. The ACT Revenue Office has already commenced a program of work to include an online solution for applying in the Scheme.

Annual Report (CMTEDD)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

CMTEDD has commenced work to improve the Scheme's application process through the availability of an online editable form.

2023-24 Annual Report:

A new editable, on-line application form has been developed and published on the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme website.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation, and that 'a program of work to include an online solution for applying to the Scheme' has already been commenced.

CMTEDD's *Annual Report 2023-24* indicates that the application form has been updated and implementation of the recommendation is complete.

Auditor-General Report No.4 of 2022
Governance Arrangements for the Planning of Services for Parkwood,
Ginninderry⁷
(29 June 2022)

Auditee

The primary auditee for this audit was the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

Audit Objective

The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the Territory's governance arrangements for the planning of services for Parkwood.

Summary

In 2016 the ACT Government entered into a joint venture agreement for the residential development of up to 11,500 dwellings as part of the Ginninderry development in West Belconnen. Ginninderry includes a component over the border in New South Wales, called Parkwood. Parkwood is approximately one hour's drive from Yass and is only accessible from the ACT as it is bounded on two sides by bodies of water.

Planning for, and implementing, land development across two jurisdictions necessarily creates challenges in the delivery of infrastructure, and State and Territory and municipal services.

This audit considers how effectively the cross-border governance arrangements entered into by the ACT Government support the Territory to plan for services in Parkwood. It focuses on the accountability mechanisms and performance monitoring tools contained in the ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration (ACT-NSW MOU for Regional Collaboration) and the Parkwood Urban Release Area Governance Framework (Parkwood Governance Framework). It also considers how these two arrangements have been implemented and supported by the ACT Government.

Government response⁸

Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister, tabled the ACT Government's response to the Performance Audit Report on 20 October 2022.

⁷ [Report No.4 of 2022 - Governance arrangements for the planning of services for Parkwood, Ginninderry \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.act.gov.au)

⁸ [Report-4-2022-of-the-ACT-Auditor-General-Governance-for-the-planning-of-services-for-Parkwood,-Ginninderry-Government-Response.pdf](#)

Recommendation 1 – Planning for Parkwood

<p>CMTEDD should re-convene the Parkwood Steering Committee and work with the members to agree and deliver a work program each year. The work program should document the priority tasks and timelines for the Committee to effectively deliver on its objectives in advance of the Ginninderry development reaching the NSW border.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>The Parkwood Steering Committee (Steering Committee) was established under the ACT-NSW MoU and includes the ACT and NSW Governments and the YVC. The purpose of the group is to progress agreement on the preferred governance mechanism and service delivery model for Parkwood. While the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate recognises its position as Chair of this Committee, it is a tripartite body of the ACT and NSW Governments and the YVC, with all parties taking a degree of responsibility for the progress of work. The Government acknowledges that work to agree a cross-border service delivery model for the Parkwood development has not significantly progressed since 2021; however, that this pace of work was deliberate and occurred as a consequence of two factors:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. the parties to the Parkwood Steering Committee agreeing that the option of moving the ACT/NSW border, to remove the need for cross-border service development, should be separately explored by the ACT and NSW Governments before significant resources are committed to developing a detailed cross-border servicing model; and</i> <i>2. simultaneously, the progress of the Committee slowed during 2021 due to the need for all parties to reprioritise resources to respond to significant cross-border issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period the ACT Government's first priority in the regional portfolio was to work closely with the NSW Government, including the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner's Office, and the local governments of the Canberra Region – including through the Canberra Region Joint Organisation – to provide clear information to cross-border communities on the impacts of COVID in a cross-border context. These impacts manifested in a myriad of ways, but included cross-border travel and movement restrictions, workforce issues and cross-border medical matters. This urgent reprioritisation of the priority focus areas of the ACTNSW cross-border relationship resulted in an effective pause to a range of crossborder initiatives, including work to support the Parkwood development.</i> <p><i>The Parkwood Steering Committee has reconvened and met on two occasions since receiving the Report, on Wednesday 20 July 2022 and on Tuesday 20 September 2022. It is anticipated that meetings will continue to occur at a similar frequency into the future. The ACT Government continues to work through this forum to agree a work plan to effectively deliver on its objectives in relation to the Parkwood development.</i></p>		
Annual Report (CMTEDD)	Last Reported Status	Not Reported
<p>Not reported.</p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation, and that the Parkwood Steering Committee had reconvened since the audit was tabled and met twice. The ACT Government response indicates that 'meetings will continue to occur at a similar frequency into the future.</p> <p>By not reporting progress on this recommendation in CMTEDD's 2022-23 and 2023-24 annual reports, there is no visibility with respect to how the Directorate has implemented the recommendation, including with respect to visibility over a work program of activities.</p>		

Recommendation 2 – Service delivery models

<p>CMTEDD should review and endorse and/or revise the service delivery options developed through the Cross Border Agency Forums in 2013, 2016 and 2019, and documented in the <i>Parkwood Planning Proposal: Services and Infrastructure Report</i> (2017). There is merit in progressing this in parallel with considerations about the border move as the move may not occur.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Noted

The ACT Government notes that the Parkwood Planning Proposal: Services and Infrastructure Report (2017) was developed by the Riverview Group in consultation with the ACT and NSW Governments through a cross-border forum required by the NSW Government. The ACT Government further notes that the base case options have not been tested, nor formally considered or endorsed by the ACT Government.

The ACT Government recognises forward planning and risk management activities in relation to the service delivery model for Parkwood are necessary. The ACT Government notes this recommendation of the Report; however, as it goes to a proposed item of work for CMTEDD, rather than to the supporting governance framework, it is unclear how this recommendation relates to the audit’s objective to assess the effectiveness of the Territory’s governance arrangements in relation to the delivery of services in Parkwood.

The Government also notes that a decision to make the Cross Border Agency Forum material a significant area of focus of the Parkwood Steering Committee is subject to consensus agreement of the Committee, not a matter for unilateral decision by the ACT.

Despite this, the ACT Government notes that work on this issue had commenced prior to August 2021, but with the decision taken by the Steering Committee to pursue the option of an ACT/NSW border move before considering other service delivery options, efforts in this area were paused.

Further, a change in NSW Premier in 2021 delayed commencement of the investigation of the most efficient path forward in moving the border. The ACT Government has recently received approval from the NSW Premier to re-open discussions regarding the border move.

The option to proceed by developing cross border delivery options in parallel with border relocation considerations will be further discussed by the Steering Committee; however, the Government notes that resolving the issue of a border move is, in fact, a necessary prerequisite to making significant progress on any service planning.

In addition, the ACT Government recognises that achieving a border move would negate the need for the Parkwood Framework and associated Steering Committee, as the establishment of services in the new estate would be managed as required by relevant ACT Government directorates.

Annual Report (CMTEDD)	Last Reported Status	Not Reported
Not reported.		
Auditor-General’s Observation		
The ACT Government response noted the recommendation. The ACT Government response indicated that the recommendation, as proposed, is not going to be actioned.		

Auditor-General Report No.5 of 2022

Procurement and Contracting Activities for the Acton Waterfront Project⁹

(16 September 2022)

Auditees

The auditee for this audit was the City Renewal Authority.

Audit Objective

The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of ACT Government agencies' procurement and contracting activities for the Acton Waterfront Project.

Summary

The Acton Waterfront Project involves the reclamation of approximately three hectares of lake-bed from Lake Burley Griffin's West Basin and the creation of a similar-sized area of high-quality public realm along the foreshore. The public realm improvements will facilitate the development of an area of approximately five hectares for mixed residential and commercial use adjacent to the foreshore. The exact location and size of the development area is dependent ultimately on the engineering solution adopted for overcoming the barrier which is currently presented by Parkes Way.

In 2014 the Acton Waterfront Project was identified as an important and necessary activity that should precede phased land release that was to commence by 2018-19. The Acton Waterfront Project was one of a number of high-profile City to the Lake projects that were being considered at the time, including the Australia Forum, an aquatic centre and a city stadium. No public commitment to Light Rail Stage 2 (or 2A) had been made at that time.

In late 2014 the Land Development Agency issued a Request for Tender (RFT) for a contractor to undertake an estimated five hectares of public realm works for the purpose of the Acton Waterfront Project. The construction work was expected to cost \$28 million and be completed by October 2016.

The local civil engineering firm Chincivil Pty Ltd (Chincivil) won the tender. By the time the contract was executed eleven months later, the project's scope had been reduced to the creation of a small urban park of approximately one hectare at the south-eastern end of the waterfront and two new signalised intersections on Commonwealth Avenue. The revised project at the time of contract execution was expected to cost \$9 million with the park to be completed by November 2016.

By February 2018 two thirds of the revised scope of works identified in the executed contract had been completed for a Contract Price that had increased to \$13.6 million. Further work not within the scope of the executed contract but within the scope of the original RFT has since been agreed and by September 2020 the Contract Price had increased to \$46.8 million for what is approximately two thirds of the works identified in the original RFT.

This audit considers ACT Government agencies' management and administration of the procurement and contracting activities for the Acton Waterfront Project for the period 2014 to 2020. The audit seeks to assist a wider understanding of how the construction of the Acton Waterfront Project has

⁹ [Report. No. 05 of 2022 - Procurement and contracting activities for the Acton Waterfront Project](#)

been procured and assesses whether the agencies' administration of the procurement has been effective. It does not assess whether the project's overall outcome represents value for money for the ACT Government and community.

Government response¹⁰

Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister, tabled the ACT Government's response to the Performance Audit Report on 7 February 2023.

¹⁰ [List A-G-Report-No-5-Procurement-and-Contracting-Activities-for-the-Acton-Waterfront-Govt-Response.pdf](#)

Recommendation 1 – Public interest in the Acton Waterfront Project

<p>The City Renewal Authority should improve the level of information publicly available in relation to the procurement and contractual arrangements for the Acton Waterfront Project by ensuring:</p> <p>a) a complete account is available of the original procurement intentions (based on the RFT) as well as the Contract that eventuates; and</p> <p>b) all subsequent variations are clearly identified and reported, including an explanation of their purpose.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>The Authority will review and update information on its website and/or other ACT Government websites to ensure key facts from the commencement of the Acton Waterfront Project to 2022 are displayed. Moving forward, the Authority will ensure that any, and all, subsequent variations are appropriately described on the ACT Contracts Register and the Authority's website.</i></p>		
Annual Report (CRA)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>Project Information is up to date on the following websites:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Renewal Authority • YourSay • Built for CBR <p><i>ACT Procurement (on the Authority's behalf) published updated variation information on the Contracts Register in August 2023.</i></p>		
Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that 'key facts from the commencement of the Acton Waterfront Project to 2022 [will be] displayed on websites and that 'any, and all, subsequent variations are appropriately described on the ACT Contracts Register and the Authority's website'.</p> <p>CRA's <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> asserts the websites are up to date and that implementation of the recommendation is complete.</p>		

Recommendation 2 – Variations and Provisional Sum processes

<p>The City Renewal Authority Board should review its processes and controls for the management of Provisional Sums and the making of contract variations.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>Following the appointment of Chincivil for the GCS 3 work package in April 2020, the Authority entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Major Projects Canberra (MPC) in November 2020, in relation to supporting the delivery of the capital works program including the Acton Waterfront Project. This is consistent with infrastructure procurement processes undertaken by other parts of the ACT Government. The Authority and MPC established a formal relationship via a memorandum of understanding for MPC to manage the procurement and contract management of the Authority's capital works program, with the Authority remaining the delegate for its program of works and retaining ultimate accountability for that program of works.</i></p> <p><i>An ACT Government Contract Management Guide (the Guide) is currently under development by Procurement ACT. The Authority will ensure compliance with the requirements and better practice guidance established in the Guide when it is released.</i></p>		
Annual Report (CRA)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p>		

The Memorandum of Understanding with MPC continues in operation. The Authority is awaiting the release of whole-of-government contract management guidance to adopt into its processes. This has not yet been released. The Authority released its own simplified contract management guidance for staff expected in July 2023. The item is closed for tracking pending release of the contract management guide from ACT Procurement.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that the CRA and Major Projects Canberra have since 'established a formal relationship via a memorandum of understanding for MPC to manage the procurement and contract management of the Authority's capital works program, with the Authority remaining the delegate for its program of works and retaining ultimate accountability for that program of works'. This indicates that responsibility for future contract management practices will rest with Major Projects Canberra.

Notwithstanding this intention, CRA's *Annual Report 2022-23* notes that simplified contract management guidance was provided to staff in July 2023 and that implementation of the recommendation is complete.

Recommendation 3 – Value for Money drivers

As part of its procurement and contracting practices, the City Renewal Authority should document:

- a) the key value for money drivers that a procurement proposal will rely on;
- b) the intended purpose and operation of the driver in question (e.g. a Target Construction Sum in conjunction with a Guaranteed Construction Sum, design responsibilities and an incentive clause); and
- c) the source of advice e.g. The Capital Framework or otherwise, procurement and contracting better practice, that informs the use of the value for money driver.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed

Since the appointment of Chincivil for the GCS 3 work package the Authority has worked with MPC consistent with government policy. The Authority and MPC established a formal relationship via a memorandum of understanding for MPC to manage the procurement and contract management of the Authority's capital works program. The assessment and documentation of the value for money assessment is part of this arrangement. The Authority remains the delegate for its program of capital works and retains ultimate accountability for that program of works.

The Authority and its board are comfortable that value for money has been achieved in the procurements to date.

Annual Report (CRA)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

The arrangement with MPC is still in place. The Authority documents VFM as part of its procurement practice. The Authority has not let further work to Chincivil for the Acton Waterfront project. The Authority is planning further works (stormwater and infrastructure) and will work with MPC to ensure it undertakes and documents appropriate procurement planning.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that the CRA and Major Projects Canberra have since 'established a formal relationship via a memorandum of understanding for MPC to manage the procurement and contract management of the Authority's capital works program' and that 'the assessment and documentation of the value for money assessment is part of this arrangement'. This indicates that responsibility for future contract management practices will rest with Major Projects Canberra.

CRA's *Annual Report 2022-23* noted implementation of the recommendation is complete, but that it will work with MPC on documenting VFM on future procurement projects.

Recommendation 4 – Assumption of legacy contracts

As part of due diligence following changes in administrative arrangements, ACT Government entities should conduct a risk-based assessment of the procurement and contracting arrangements supporting any legacy contracts that have been assumed by the entities. The assessment should provide:

- a) assurance over the probity of the Government entity's administrative processes relating to the procurement prior to the letting of the contract; and
- b) advice as to the remaining potential for price and time variations to the contract given the original intent of the procurement, in order to maintain the integrity of the agreed VFM consideration.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
<p><i>The Authority has no further legacy contracts to be dealt with.</i></p> <p><i>The ACT Government Contract Management Guide (the Guide) is currently under development and will provide better practice guidance and tools for the management of contracts. The purpose of the Guide is to provide a clear and standardised approach to managing and administering contracts for goods, services and works across the ACT Government. The Guide will include a requirement to undertake risk-based, due diligence activities on active procurement contracts that are transferred to Territory entities following changes in administrative arrangements.</i></p> <p><i>This due diligence may include assurance of probity relating to the contract; however, it may not always be apparent whether price or time variations are required over the remainder of a contract's life at the time of transfer of a contract to a new entity and under the Procurement Framework, value for money must be assessed at the time of exercising any future variation to a contract.</i></p>		

Annual Report (CRA)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>While the Authority had no specific contracts to apply this recommendation to, it is applying similar intent to any other arrangement the ACT Government directs it to assume responsibility for and/or implement. Inclusion of content in the Authority's procedures is dependent on the release of the whole-of-government contract management guidance from ACT Procurement.</i></p>		

Auditor-General's Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement-in-principle with the recommendation and that the 'ACT Government Contract Management Guide (the Guide) is currently under development' and that it 'will provide better practice guidance and tools for the management of contracts'. As part of the development of the Guide the ACT Government response indicated that 'the Guide will include a requirement to undertake risk-based, due diligence activities on active procurement contracts that are transferred to Territory entities following changes in administrative arrangements'.</p> <p>CRA's <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> noted implementation of the recommendation is complete and that it had no specific contracts to apply the recommendation to.</p> <p>This recommendation was not reported on in any other agencies' annual reports.</p>		

Recommendation 5 – Retendering

<p>As part of its procurement and contracting practices, the City Renewal Authority should periodically examine, particularly in advance of major variations to a contract, the merits of remaining with the incumbent versus alternative procurement options for delivery of a project. Options presented to decision makers (e.g. delegates, boards) should be accompanied by sufficient analysis to demonstrate these have been robustly investigated and assessed.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
<p><i>With the advice of MPC the Authority will ensure that decisions are well documented and provide specific advice to the Board, noting ultimate accountability in this respect resides with the Authority.</i></p>		
Annual Report (CRA)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>This situation (choosing whether to stay with an incumbent capital works contractor) has not arisen between September 2022 and June 2023.</i></p>		

Capital works contracted in this period has been with new providers, for example, Lonsdale St Works contracted to Guideline. That decision did go to the Board due to the estimated value, including analysis of risks, benefits and commentary to show how the Authority considered the intent of the Auditor-General's recommendations.

The next stage of Acton works is the subject of a new procurement process.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that 'with the advice of MPC the Authority will ensure that decisions are well documented and provide specific advice to the Board, noting ultimate accountability in this respect resides with the Authority'.

CRA's *Annual Report 2022-23* noted implementation of the recommendation is complete and that it has not needed to address the intent of this recommendation in any procurement processes since the tabling of the report.

Recommendation 6 – VFM consideration and review

As part of its procurement and contracting practices, the City Renewal Authority should, when contemplating contract variations, review and test the procurement's value for money with reference to prior consideration:

- a) during procurement planning, up to and including the market response to the RFT; and
- b) at contract execution, specifically with respect to whether any material departure has occurred due to negotiation and / or the passage of time and changing requirements.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed

Since the appointment of Chincivil for the GCS 3 work package the Authority has worked with MPC consistent with government policy. The Authority and MPC established a formal relationship via a memorandum of understanding for MPC to manage the procurement and contract management of the Authority's capital works program. The assessment and documentation of the value for money assessment is part of this arrangement. The Authority remains the delegate for its program of capital works and retains ultimate accountability for that program of works.

The Authority and its board are comfortable that value for money has been achieved in the procurements to date.

Annual Report (CRA)

Last Reported Status

Complete

2022-23 Annual Report:

There have been no major capital works contract variations in the period September 2022 to June 2023. As per comments above, the Authority will continue to consider and document VFM when considering variations and has included this in drafted contract management guidance for staff.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that 'the assessment and documentation of the value for money assessment is part of [the MoU arrangement with MPC]'.

CRA's *Annual Report 2022-23* noted implementation of the recommendation is complete and that it has not needed to address the intent of this recommendation in any procurement processes since the tabling of the report.

Recommendation 7 – Briefings and advice to decision-makers and Boards

As part of its procurement and contracting practices the City Renewal Authority should fully and completely brief decision makers, delegates and those exercising a statutory advisory responsibility (e.g. the Government Procurement Board) in order to ensure:

- a) accuracy and balance is achieved;
- b) assurances made are able to be supported with robust analysis;
- c) previously reported advice is built upon;

- d) salient facts are raised and reprised consistently; and
- e) the timing of the matters raised leaves sufficient time for decision makers, delegates and advisors to contemplate alternatives.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
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With the advice of MPC the Authority will ensure that decisions are well documented and specific advice is provided to the Board, noting ultimate accountability in this respect resides with the Authority.

The Authority will provide a series of information sessions for staff covering effective and efficient procurement and transparent contract management practices.

Annual Report (CRA)	Last Reported Status	Completed and ongoing
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2022-23 Annual Report:

Regarding documentation, the Authority is improving briefs to decision makers. An example is the brief to the Board on Lonsdale Street that included, among other things, an analysis about how the Authority considered feedback from the Government Procurement Board in forming the final proposition.

Regarding training, the Authority is considering how to bring all elements of feedback from both external and internal audit into information for staff and will provide short sessions for staff in early 2023-24. The Authority has also reviewed procurement checklists, and updated and re-issued them.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that 'decisions [will be] well documented and specific advice [will be] provided to the Board and that 'a series of information sessions [will be provided to] staff covering effective and efficient procurement and transparent contract management practices'. This is expected to assist in improving the quality of information provided to decision-makers.

CRA's *Annual Report 2022-23* noted the CRA is 'improving briefs to decision makers' and intended to 'provide short sessions for staff in early 2023-24'. The CRA noted implementation of the recommendation is complete *and* ongoing.

Auditor-General Report No.6 of 2022

ACT Childhood Healthy Eating and Active Living Programs¹¹

(9 November 2022)

Auditee

The auditees for this audit were the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services, Education Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, and the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

Audit Objective

The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of planning, management and delivery of ACT Government programs and services to support childhood healthy eating and active living.

Summary

Access to healthy eating and active living in childhood is important for healthy growth and development and lays a foundation for life-long health.

The audit considered the activities of ACT Government agencies to support childhood healthy eating and active living through:

- the establishment of comprehensive preventive health strategies;
- the effective planning for, and management of, preventive health programs; and
- the effective delivery of treatment services.

Government response¹²

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health, tabled the ACT Government's response to the Performance Audit Report on 21 March 2023.

¹¹ [ACT Childhood Healthy Eating and Active Living Programs](#)

¹² [2023-Government-response-to-AG-Report-No.7-Childhood-Healthy-Eating-Active-Living-tabled-21-March-2023.pdf](#)

Recommendation 1 – Professional learning and guidelines

<p>The ACT Health Directorate should include strategic actions for introducing or strengthening professional learning opportunities and practice guidelines about weight stigma and discrimination in the second three-year action plan for the implementation of the <i>Healthy Canberra ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020-2025</i>. The professional learning opportunities and practice guidelines should support the ACT workforce to approach issues of healthy eating, active living, body size and health sensitively and without bias, blame, discrimination or stigma.</p>		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
<p><i>The ACT Government recognises the importance of ensuring issues regarding children’s weight are addressed in an appropriate way throughout policy, program and service delivery settings. Strengthening professional learning opportunities and practice guidelines about weight stigma and discrimination requires joint action from front-line health service providers, health professional bodies and tertiary institutions across the ACT. Professional learning in public sector hospitals includes weight stigma-related information.</i></p> <p><i>The Preventive Health Plan is not the appropriate mechanism to further workforce professional development regarding non-stigmatising approaches in the treatment and management of body weight in children.</i></p> <p><i>A consistent national approach to reducing weight stigma and discrimination in the health sector is also required and will be addressed through the National Obesity Strategy 2022-2032. The ACT Government will contribute to evidence-based options for addressing weight stigma and discrimination through its membership of the National Obesity Strategy Working Group.</i></p>		
Annual Report (Health)	Last Reported Status	Complete
<p><u>2022-23 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>The Directorate has raised the need for a national approach to weight stigma and discrimination with the National Obesity Strategy Working Group.</i></p> <p><u>2023-24 Annual Report:</u></p> <p><i>The National Obesity Working Group remains committed to ensuring that the principles of the National Obesity Strategy are actioned; this includes tackling weight stigma and discrimination.</i></p>		
Auditor-General’s Observation		
<p>The ACT Government response indicated agreement in principle with the recommendation, but did not provide clarity on what actions would be specifically taken in the Territory to ‘[introduce] or [strengthen] professional learning opportunities and practice guidelines about weight stigma and discrimination’ in practice. The response did identify an undertaking to ‘contribute to evidence-based options for addressing weight stigma and discrimination through its membership of the National Obesity Strategy Working Group’.</p> <p>ACT Health’s <i>Annual Report 2022-23</i> identified it had ‘raised the need for a national approach to weight stigma and discrimination with the National Obesity Strategy Working Group’. No further information was included on what actions were being taken specifically in the Territory.</p> <p>ACT Health’s <i>Annual Report 2023-24</i> identified that implementation of the recommendation was complete, but did not provide any further information on what actions were taken specifically in the Territory.</p>		

Recommendation 2 – Planning for equity of access

<p>The ACT Health Directorate should include strategic actions in the second three-year action plan for the implementation of the <i>Healthy Canberra ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020-2025</i> with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) understanding the needs and barriers experienced by the priority population groups identified in the Plan; b) designing activities to maximise the likelihood of the identified priority population groups accessing programs and services; c) obtaining evidence for whether activities have effectively reached and met the needs of identified priority population groups; and d) ensuring the needs and barriers experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT are addressed specifically. 		
Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed

ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is conducting a targeted consultation process with community organisations and peak bodies as part of developing the next Preventive Health Action Plan (2023-2025), which will address a), b), d) and e) [sic].

Evaluation and monitoring processes for the Preventive Health Plan collect data on reach to priority population groups and assess the effectiveness of interventions where possible and appropriate, addressing c).

Implementation: Government agreement to release Preventative Health Action Plan before end of 2023.

Annual Report (Health)	Last Reported Status	Complete
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2022-23 Annual Report:

A comprehensive community consultation process is occurring throughout May to July 2023.

Evaluation and monitoring processes for the Preventive Health Plan are currently being refined.

The next Preventive Health Action Plan is due for release by end 2023.

2023-24 Annual Report:

The Preventive Health Plan's second action plan was released in December 2023 in accordance with the agreed action. The Plan is available online at: [ACT Preventive Health Plan](#).

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that it would be informed by community consultation and existing data collection processes. The extent to which these will lead to relevant strategic actions in the second three-year action plan is not clear.

ACT Health's *Annual Report 2023-24* identifies that the implementation of the recommendation is complete 'in accordance with the agreed action'. There is no information as to whether the 'agreed action' has addressed the issues identified in the recommendation.

Recommendation 3 – Strategic monitoring and reporting

The ACT Health Directorate should improve monitoring and reporting for the *Healthy Canberra ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020-2025* by:

- a) ensuring annual activity reports include all programs and services delivered by ACT Government agencies that contribute to the priorities, objectives and strategic actions of the *Healthy Canberra ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020-2025*; and
- b) reporting progress against specific performance measures or targets, to provide evidence of what works and evidence for the comparative value of different activities.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
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The Preventive Health Plan Cross-Directorate Working Group oversees the development, implementation and evaluation of the Preventive Health Plan.

Each Directorate is responsible for reporting activities and evaluating outcomes included in the plan to the ACT Health Directorate. The Directorate requires identification of targets and activity reports for all relevant programs/services included in the Preventive Health Plan.

Implementation: Government agreement to release Preventative Health Action Plan before end of 2023.

Annual Report (Health)	Last Reported Status	Complete
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2022-23 Annual Report:

The Preventive Health Plan Cross-Directorate Working Group is currently participating in the consultation process to inform the actions in the next Preventive Health Action Plan.

2023-24 Annual Report:

The Preventive Health Plan's second action plan was released in December 2023 in accordance with the agreed action. The Plan is available online at: [ACT Preventive Health Plan](#).

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement in principle with the recommendation, but was not clear on specific actions to be taken. It is not clear what actions would be taken to improve the quality of reporting associated with the *Healthy Canberra ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020-2025*, which was the intent of the recommendation.

ACT Health's *Annual Report 2023-24* identifies that implementation of the recommendation is complete 'in accordance with the agreed action'. There is no information as to whether the 'agreed action' has addressed the issues identified in the recommendation.

Recommendation 4 – Evaluating school active travel programs

The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate should, as part of its forthcoming evaluation of school active travel programs, review the impact of the programs on different cohorts of children, including the most disadvantaged and at-risk student cohorts. As part of the evaluation, the Directorate should measure the number of children travelling actively to school, both before and after program interventions.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed

Transport Canberra and City Services has commenced an evaluation of its school active travel programs. Through the evaluation, Transport Canberra and City Services will address the impact of programs on different cohorts of children, including disadvantaged student cohorts. Transport Canberra and City Services will also consider how the future active travel program implementation can be tailored to better support disadvantaged student cohorts.

Implementation: School active travel programs evaluation report expected June 2023.

Annual Report (TCCS)

Last Reported Status

Not Reported

Not reported.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that the evaluation had already commenced and would address the elements of the recommendation.

TCCS' *Annual Reports 2022-23* and *2023-24* did not report on the implementation of the recommendation. It is not clear what the outcome of the review was, or what the implications were for the directorate's school active travel programs.

Recommendation 5 – School Crossing Supervisors

If the School Crossing Supervisors program is continued beyond 2022, then the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate should:

- a) review allocation of school crossing supervisors to crossings and schools; and
- b) publish information about the allocation process and selection criteria.

Government Response

Reported Status

Agreed-in-principle

Transport Canberra and City Services is currently undertaking an evaluation of its active travel programs, including the School Crossing Supervisor program. Through the evaluation, Transport Canberra and City Services will assess feedback about the current school crossing supervisor locations to determine if these locations need to be reassessed. Transport Canberra and City Services will re-publish information about the allocation process and selection criteria on the Transport Canberra website.

Implementation:

- *School active travel programs evaluation report expected June 2023.*
- *School crossing supervisors allocation and selection criteria republished on Transport Canberra website January 2023.*

Annual Report (TCCS)

Last Reported Status

Not Reported

Not reported.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and that the evaluation had already commenced and would address the elements of the recommendation.

TCCS' *Annual Reports 2022-23* and *2023-24* did not report on the implementation of the recommendation. It is not clear what the outcome of the review was, or what the implications were for the directorate's school active travel programs.

Recommendation 6 – Food relief and financial support for active living

The ACT Health Directorate should, in consultation with responsible ACT Government agencies and community organisations, include strategic actions in the second three-year action plan for the *Healthy Canberra ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020-2025* for addressing poverty and food insecurity in the ACT that consider:

- a) ongoing measurement of poverty and food insecurity in the ACT;
- b) provision and/or co-ordination of food relief and financial supports for active living; and
- c) provisions of accessible, coordinated and current information about food and financial relief options supporting childhood healthy eating and active living.

Government Response	Reported Status	Not Agreed
<p><i>The provision of food relief and financial supports for active living are out of scope for the Preventive Health Plan.</i></p> <p><i>A range of relevant initiatives are already being undertaken by ACT Government Directorates.</i></p> <p><i>The Community Services Directorate currently provides funding to community organisations for the provision of emergency material and financial aid, financial counselling, food assistance and a no interest loan program.</i></p> <p><i>The 2021-22 Budget included funding of \$475,000 over 4 years to consider long term solutions for food sustainability across Canberra beyond COVID-19. This work, led by VolunteeringACT, supports a community-led model to provide a more streamlined and needs-driven response to food security. It includes a food relief database and the establishment of a cross-sectoral Food and Emergency Relief Network to share resources, ideas and best practice approaches.</i></p> <p><i>The ACT Government continues to invest in the sport and recreation sector through direct support for programs, projects and facilities that create participation opportunities and may reduce the end cost of access. The Government has increased targeted support through the Future of Education Equity Fund and an investment (\$75,000 p.a. for three years) in Every Chance to Play (which provides targeted support for sport registration).</i></p> <p><i>The Government has committed \$1.6m over three years to support children's participation in sport emerging post-COVID19. This will support six organisations to deliver on-ground activities that support a diversity of participation opportunities. Funded programs will commence roll out in 2023.</i></p> <p><i>The ACT Health Directorate is undertaking research to better identify and measure the prevalence and underpinning social determinants of household food insecurity in the ACT. This strategic action is already included in the Preventive Health Plan.</i></p> <p><i>Implementation: Government agreement to release Preventative Health Action Plan before end of 2023.</i></p>		

Annual Report (Health)	Last Reported Status	Not Reported
Not reported.		

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response explicitly identified that the recommendation was not agreed to.

ACT Health's *Annual Reports 2022-23* and *2023-24* did not report on the recommendation.

Recommendation 7 – Kindergarten Health Check

The ACT Health Directorate should evaluate the eating, activity, weight, height and Body Mass Index components of the Kindergarten Health Check. The evaluation should consider:

- whether the method of collecting data about the size of children’s bodies and reporting this to families is consistent with better practice;
- whether the information provided is accessible and culturally safe for families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- whether the information provided has unintended negative consequences for either the child or family, such as increased body dissatisfaction, risky dietary restriction or disordered eating;
- whether the information provided effectively supports families to safely increase healthy eating or active living; and
- whether the information provided effectively supports families to access appropriate healthcare.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed-in-principle
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ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services will continue to investigate links between the ACT Kindergarten Health Check (ACTKHC) and the provision of healthcare services for 0-17 year-olds as part of addressing both recommendations 7 and 8.

The current ACTKHC data collection methods have been reviewed by the Academic Unit of General Practice in conjunction with Australian National University and are consistent with international best practice.

The risk of negative consequences needs to be balanced by a duty of care to inform and minimise the risks of obesity and overweight which are significant. The ACT Health Directorate Research Ethics Committee has determined that on balance it is better to measure and address childhood overweight and obesity early to minimise the significant longer-term health and psychosocial impacts of overweight and obesity.

Implementation: Options for an ACT Kindergarten Health Check evaluation expected to be scoped by June 2023.

Annual Report (Health)	Last Reported Status	In progress
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2022-23 Annual Report:

The Directorate has completed a Kindergarten Health Check evaluation plan and is awaiting funding to enable the completion of the evaluation.

2023-24 Annual Report:

The Directorate has completed a fully costed Kindergarten Health Check evaluation plan and is seeking internal and external funding sources to enable the completion of the full evaluation. Consideration of the program evaluation is ongoing, including who will conduct it, how it will be done, how much it will cost, and whether a co-funded series of collaborative research sub-studies is feasible. Further details will be available at a later date.

Auditor-General’s Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement in principle with the recommendation and an intention to identify options for an evaluation of the Kindergarten Health Check by June 2023. In doing so, the response identified challenges associated with the Health Check process and outcomes being sought.

ACT Health’s *Annual Report 2022-23* identified the evaluation plan had been prepared and funding was being sought for its completion. ACT Health’s *Annual Report 2023-24* indicates the recommendation is still in progress as funding is sought.

Recommendation 8 – Evaluating community need for treatment services

Canberra Health Services should evaluate community need for multidisciplinary healthcare services for children aged 0 to 17 years-old with atypical eating and activity behaviours, atypical weight gain and associated health concerns, to address the risks of unmet demand and incomplete service delivery present in current service design. Options for addressing these risks should be presented for government consideration.

Government Response	Reported Status	Agreed
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Canberra Health Services will evaluate community need for multidisciplinary healthcare services for children aged 0-17 years and provide evidenced-based options to address current service gaps. The options will be developed in partnership with ACT Health Directorate and presented for the

Government's consideration. All options will be informed by key policies and strategies including Best Start for Canberra's Children: The First 1000 Days Strategy, Preventive Health Plan, National Obesity Strategy 2022-2032 and the Australian Early Development Census National Report 2021. Any changes to treatment services would be subject to future government funding decisions.

Implementation: Evaluation of community need and provision of options for consideration by June 2023.

Annual Report (CHS)	Last Reported Status	In progress
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2022-23 Annual Report:

The Healthy Eating and Living report indicated that the existing Community Nutrition and Paediatric Obesity Management programs at CHS are under resourced and cannot adequately support children with atypical eating behaviours and atypical weight gain. The Committee recommended that CHS address these gaps in service delivery through investment in the development of a new MoC providing services for pregnant women and their children through education, early intervention and prevention. CHS included expansion of the existing paediatric weight management program in the Paediatric Services Expansion 2023-2023 business case. Recent funding obtained will provide an expansion of the existing paediatric weight management program, SKIP for the 4 to 12-year-old cohort.

2023-24 Annual Report:

Funding was obtained to provide an expansion of the existing paediatric weight management program, School Kids Intervention Program (SKIP) for the 4 to 12-year-old cohort. This increased the program's clinical capacity by 50 per cent from February 2024, with families able to access the service on the southside of Canberra as well as the existing northside service.

Auditor-General's Observation

The ACT Government response indicated agreement with the recommendation and an intention to 'evaluate community need for multidisciplinary healthcare services for children aged 0-17 years and provide evidenced-based options to address current service gaps'.

CHS' Annual Report 2022-23 noted that implementation of the recommendation is in progress. In doing so it identified a range of actions undertaken, including:

- development of a new Model of Care 'providing services for pregnant women and their children through education, early intervention and prevention';
- expansion of the existing paediatric weight management program in the Paediatric Services Expansion 2023-2023 business case; and
- an expansion of the SKIP Program.

CHS' Annual Report 2023-24 indicates that funding was obtained to expand the SKIP Program and that the implementation of the recommendation continues.