



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Public
Accounts and Administration

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submission number: 03

Submitter: Hepatitis ACT

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**Submission to the Legislative Assembly Inquiry into the Public Sector
(Closing the Gap)
Legislation Amendment Bill 2025**

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Introduction

Hepatitis ACT is the leading community organisation providing education, testing, support and advocacy for people affected by or at risk of viral hepatitis and liver disease in the ACT. Our mission is to eliminate viral hepatitis and promote better liver health through harm reduction, testing, treatment access and community education.

As an organisation, we work closely with communities disproportionately affected by health inequities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We therefore strongly support the passage of the Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation Amendment Bill 2025.

Why This Bill Matters

- **Delivering on commitments:** The ACT Government is a signatory to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Reviews by the Productivity Commission and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led coalition have both found governments are failing to deliver on promised reforms.
- **Addressing inequity:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans continue to experience poorer outcomes across health, education, housing, justice and employment. These inequities are also reflected in higher rates of hepatitis B and other chronic conditions.
- **Shared responsibility:** Too often, the burden of progressing Closing the Gap falls on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves. This Bill ensures that responsibility is shared across the whole of government.
- **Leadership opportunity:** By legislating Closing the Gap commitments, the ACT can become the first jurisdiction in Australia to enshrine systemic accountability into law.

Why "Business as Usual" Isn't Enough

- Current approaches have not shifted outcomes at the scale needed.
- Without embedding obligations into legislation, accountability risks remaining fragmented and inconsistent across government.
- "Business as usual" approaches continue to produce the same inequities. Transformation is required, and this Bill is the mechanism to deliver it.

Recommendations

Hepatitis ACT recommends that -

1. **The Bill is passed without delay**, embedding the Government's Closing the Gap commitments in law.
2. **Implementation is led in genuine partnership** with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.
3. **Accountability mechanisms are transparent and enforceable**, including regular public reporting on progress.
4. **Adequate resources accompany the legislation**, ensuring agencies can meet their obligations.

Conclusion

Hepatitis ACT believes this Bill is essential to moving from aspirational commitments to systemic, enforceable reform. It offers the ACT a chance to demonstrate real leadership and to honour the community's call, after the 2023 Voice referendum, for meaningful and lasting change.

We strongly urge Members of the Legislative Assembly to support the Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation Amendment Bill 2025.