



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Select Committee on the Fiscal
Sustainability of the ACT

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Submission number: 020

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From: [Richard](#)
To: [LA Committee - Fiscal](#)
Subject: ACT Finances and the Alexander Maconochie Centre
Date: Wednesday, 4 March 2026 11:22:40 AM

Dear Mr Eslake,

I am writing to provide input for your review of the Australian Capital Territory's financial sustainability. I only recently became aware of this review through this week's media coverage, and I apologise for the late submission.

As a volunteer with the prison ministry at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), I wish to highlight the importance of the ACT Government meeting its legal obligations regarding detainee welfare and chaplaincy services.

The ACT has legislated a commitment to the "healthy prison concept," which includes pillars of safety, respect, purposeful activity, and rehabilitation. This includes providing for the religious, spiritual, and cultural needs of detainees through access to ministers, religious services, and chaplaincy guidance.

However, current observations suggest that funding cuts have led to a significant reduction in these essential activities, including:

- Reduced Gym and Training Programs: Diminished opportunities for purposeful activity.
- Defunded Chaplaincy: Funding for paid chaplaincy services was discontinued on 4 November 2025.

Previously, part-time chaplains played a vital role in organising multi-faith access, serving as welfare officers for new arrivals, and coordinating cultural and commemorative events. These efforts directly addressed the ACT Healthy Prison Review's primary recommendation: the urgent implementation of a "structured day of purposeful activity."

While I recognise the need for fiscal discipline, the removal of paid chaplains raises concerns regarding whether the ACT Government is meeting its legal requirements and duty of care. Furthermore, if the intention is to rely on volunteers to fill these roles, it is unclear if they will receive the necessary training or access to AMC resources to be effective.

Thank you for considering this submission as part of your review.

I have talked with the ACT Minister for Corrections, but I haven't

received any information.

Best regards,

Richard

Richard Scott