



Legislative Assembly for the ACT

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2007-2008

Appropriation Bill 2007-2008

AUGUST 2007

Volume 1 - Report

Committee Membership

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Resolution of Appointment and terms of reference

On 3 May 2007, the Legislative Assembly resolved that:

- 1) A Select Committee on Estimates 2007-2008 be appointed to examine the expenditure proposals contained in the Appropriation Bill 2007-2008 and any revenue estimates proposed by the Government in the 2007-2008 Budget;
- 2) The Committee be composed of:
 - a) two Members to be nominated by the Government;
 - b) two Members to be nominated by the Opposition; and
 - c) one Member to be nominated by the Crossbench;
to be notified in writing to the Speaker by 4 p.m. today;
- 3) The Committee report by 21 August 2007;
- 4) If the Assembly is not sitting when the Committee has completed its inquiry the Committee may send its report to the Speaker or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publishing and circulation;
- 4A) The Committee Chair shall be held by a Government Member; and
- 5) The foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee considers that the ACT Government should formalise the provision of documentation to the Estimates Committee by providing to it on its establishment an indexed set of submissions, in order that the Committee is able to make the best possible preparation for the hearings.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the Committee and its secretariat with full sets of the budget documents as soon as they are tabled in the Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION 3

1.14 The Committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly, when determining the sitting pattern each year, formally commit a period of time for the consideration of Estimates by a Select Committee.

RECOMMENDATION 4

1.15 The Committee recommends that the Treasurer of the day ensure that he or she is available for the Committee's first day of public hearings with the Executive.

RECOMMENDATION 5

1.19 The Committee recommends that the *Handbook for ACT Government Officials on Participation in Assembly and Other Inquiries* be widely publicised once it is amended, including being provided to every public servant in hard copy as part of their induction kit.

RECOMMENDATION 6

1.21 The Committee recommends that the budget papers be indexed for ease of accessibility to readers.

RECOMMENDATION 7

2.21 The Committee recommends that the Standing Committee on Health and Disability Committee give consideration to the conduct of an inquiry into certain public housing issues, including the meaning of the term 'security of tenure' within the community and the housing sector.

RECOMMENDATION 8

3.15 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make a six monthly report to the Legislative Assembly setting out unbudgeted revenue receipts.

RECOMMENDATION 9

3.20 The Committee recommends that future budgets articulate the framework used to apply triple bottom line principles.

RECOMMENDATION 10

3.22 The Committee recommends that the Auditor-General undertake a review of progress in relation to triple bottom line reporting, extending the review to include triple bottom line budgeting.

RECOMMENDATION 11

3.34 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government immediately seek to enter into agreements with other jurisdictions to provide reciprocity for senior's card travel concessions.

RECOMMENDATION 12

3.65 The committee recommends that the report on superannuation investment policy be tabled in the Assembly by the last sitting day in August.

RECOMMENDATION 13

3.90 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government outline its future plans for the Information and Communications Technology, space science, biotechnology, public administration, environment industries and other industries outlined in the Economic White Paper.

RECOMMENDATION 14

4.10 The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister provide to the Legislative Assembly an update on the future of the Narrabundah long stay caravan park.

RECOMMENDATION 15

4.19 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review its funding for music events to ensure that organisations such as Music ACT, which maximise the involvement of community members receive funding consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 16

5.20 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase the level of resourcing to the Office of the Public Advocate.

RECOMMENDATION 17

5.30 The Committee recommends that accountability indicators for the Office of Regulatory Services be reviewed, with a view to ensuring that they are more comprehensive. In particular, they should include complaints about mortgage services and the level of compliance with workers' compensation regulatory schemes.

RECOMMENDATION 18

5.32 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government maintain a watching brief on the finance industry in regard to mortgage defaulting.

RECOMMENDATION 19

5.39 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table in the Legislative Assembly a progress report which includes: a) an analysis of the original design and construction costs; b) what facilities will be available at opening and the cost thereof; c) an itemisation of which facilities have been deferred/excluded from the contract and the costings related to those facilities; and d) any additional capital works which might be required for any other facilities planned for future construction.

RECOMMENDATION 20

5.40 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table in the Legislative Assembly by the end of September a report on the range of recreation facilities, together with an outline of research undertaken about the decisions surrounding those facilities. The report should also include any health and wellbeing plans.

RECOMMENDATION 21

5.44 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government proceed with the acquisition and installation of an updated data system as a matter of urgency.

RECOMMENDATION 22

5.49 The Committee recommends that better data about the types of matters funded and the profile of recipients be made available.

RECOMMENDATION 23

5.51 The Committee recommends that the output class 1.2, 'In-house legal payments' be renamed 'In-house services.'

RECOMMENDATION 24

6.9 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide a detailed explanation for the delays in relocation of all elements of emergency services to the Fairbairn site.

RECOMMENDATION 25

6.18 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, undertake an independent review of the procurement process for the purchase and implementation of Firelink.

RECOMMENDATION 26

6.21 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that ambulance officers and paramedics are fully trained and equipped to deal with these contingencies.

RECOMMENDATION 27

6.29 The Estimates Committee notes that the AFP is currently reviewing the policy around police ranks and recommends that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services table a copy of final ranking structure for ACT Policing.

RECOMMENDATION 28

7.6 The Committee recommends that the Auditor-General investigate whole of government economic costs and gains incurred by the school closures and amalgamations.

RECOMMENDATION 29

7.30 The Committee recommends that the ACT budget allocation for non-government education appear in output class 2 within the Department of Education and Training's section of Budget Paper No 4.

RECOMMENDATION 30

7.31 The Committee recommends that Commonwealth funding for government and non-government schools be separately itemised in the budget papers.

RECOMMENDATION 31

7.32 The Committee recommends that figures be provided by national average and the average for all States and Territories in relation to non-government school funding.

RECOMMENDATION 32

7.53 The Committee recommends that there is a commitment by the ACT Government to maintain funding for the Weston campus while all future options for this site are evaluated.

RECOMMENDATION 33

8.25 The Committee recommends that the ACT Human Rights Commissioner be asked to examine the Memorandum of Understanding between Mental Health ACT and the AFP to ensure it accords with the ACT's Human Rights Act.

RECOMMENDATION 34

8.54 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider making alternative breast screening capabilities more widely available.

RECOMMENDATION 35

8.57 The Committee recommends that Health ACT review the composition of output classes 1.3 to 1.7 with a view to making them more streamlined.

RECOMMENDATION 36

9.9 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Housing table in the Legislative Assembly a bi-annual report on the progress of major housing projects.

RECOMMENDATION 37

9.16 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Housing clarify the meaning of the term 'security of tenure' and communicate clearly to tenants its implications for their tenancies, ensuring that all tenants are consulted in regard to the changes and no tenant is disadvantaged by the changes.

RECOMMENDATION 38

9.17 The Committee further recommends that the Government make public any cost/benefit analysis which has informed its proposed changes to security of tenure.

RECOMMENDATION 39

9.21 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide to the Legislative Assembly an outline of the debt management measures or provide details of debt management actions, including how those measures will decrease debt.

RECOMMENDATION 40

9.27 The Committee recommends that a roundtable be established, comprising representatives of ACTCOSS, the Tenants' Union and other relevant organisations with representatives of ACT Housing and the Minister, to determine guidelines and protocols for consultation on issues of mutual concern.

RECOMMENDATION 41

9.28 The Committee recommends that the new Joint Champions group be representative of public housing tenants and be resourced to liaise with housing tenants and conduct action research on issues important to tenants to inform ACT Housing policies and practices.

RECOMMENDATION 42

9.44 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health provide to the Assembly a report of the processes involved in the identification of required therapy services and the implementation of treatment services, including an outline of the interaction with Therapy ACT in relation to those matters.

RECOMMENDATION 43

9.69 The Committee recommends that the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services ensures that the work of the Community Engagement Unit continues and that best practice methods of community engagement be followed by Government across all departments.

RECOMMENDATION 44

10.6 The Committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment table in the Assembly the plans and priorities for projects funded under the national water strategy program.

RECOMMENDATION 45

10.7 The Committee recommends that the national water strategy program be extended throughout the urban areas of the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 46

10.20 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake an evaluation of the contractual arrangement with Adshel.

RECOMMENDATION 47

10.21 The Committee recommends that the criteria for placement of bus shelters prioritise the needs of ACTION bus patrons .

RECOMMENDATION 48

10.22 The Committee recommends that the Government examines advertising initiatives which offsets the cost of ACTION to the community.

RECOMMENDATION 49

10.29 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expedite the installation of CCTV cameras on all ACTION buses and at all interchanges to enhance the safety of transport officers and passengers.

RECOMMENDATION 50

10.41 The Committee recommends that all shopping centre upgrades be implemented with full community participation.

RECOMMENDATION 51

10.42 The Committee recommends that the library services at the ACT Legislative Assembly remain at least at current capacity and that there is no further reduction in remaining community library services.

RECOMMENDATION 52

10.44 The Committee recommends that that the ACT Government expedite the construction of the new Tharwa bridge.

RECOMMENDATION 53

10.45 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government present to Legislative Assembly a comprehensive capital works strategy, including a five year road plan and associated asset management strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 54

10.48 That, the ACT Government agrees to implement strategies jointly with the community to ensure the maintenance of sports grounds

RECOMMENDATION 55

10.49 That the ACT Government provides details of the criteria by which applications for particular sports grounds for exemption from stage 4 water restrictions will be assessed.

RECOMMENDATION 56

10.51 That the ACT Government agrees to reinstate grants for sporting and recreation organisations to the quantum of grants provided in 2005.

RECOMMENDATION 57

10.52 That the ACT Government agrees to provide a level of financial assistance to ACT Academy of Sport athletes that is appropriate to the circumstances of each athlete.

RECOMMENDATION 58

10.54 That the ACT Government reinstates the accountability indicator relating to the number of athletes offered scholarships at the ACT Academy of Sport.

RECOMMENDATION 59

10.57 The Committee recommends that the changes to ACT Tourism announced in the 2006-2007 budget be reviewed in relation to the impacts on the industry, prior to the preparation of the next budget, with a view to re-establishing ACT Tourism as a statutory authority.

RECOMMENDATION 60

10.58 The Committee recommends that funding for tourism be disaggregated to a more detailed level, that is that funding for major projects be specifically identified in future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 61

11.11 The Committee recommends that the government table in the Legislative Assembly a progress report on the processes and timelines leading to the draft variation to the Territory Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 62

11.38 The Committee recommends that public housing and affordable housing constitute a reasonable percentage of the Eastlake development.

RECOMMENDATION 63

11.39 The Committee recommends that, if redevelopment of the Causeway must proceed, the residents be consulted and rehoused in a way that maintains the community identity and cohesiveness, and if possible, that rehousing be on the current site.

RECOMMENDATION 64

12.8 The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister's Department report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the status of recommendations in Auditor-General's reports tabled in the preceding financial year.

RECOMMENDATION 65

12.9 The Committee recommends that the report to the Legislative Assembly form part of the Chief Minister's Department's Annual Report.

RECOMMENDATION 66

12.10 The Committee recommends that the report to the Legislative Assembly contain the following information – a) the acceptability of recommendations to the Government; b) for recommendations acceptable to the Government, whether the recommendations have been implemented; c) if recommendations have not been implemented, an indication of their implementation date.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Select Committee on Estimates 2007 was established on 3 May 2007 to inquire into the expenditure proposals contained in the Appropriation Bill 2007-2008 and the revenue estimates proposed by the Government in the 2007-2008 Budget.
- 1.2 The Committee is required to report to the Assembly on or before Tuesday, 21 August 2007.
- 1.3 The tabling of the Appropriation Bill 2007-2008 follows the practice set last year of introducing the bill in June preparatory to the budget debate in August.
- 1.4 The Committee reiterates a view expressed in earlier reports that, in a small unicameral parliament such as the ACT Legislative Assembly, the Estimates scrutiny process is vital in enhancing transparency of government decision making and accountability of the Executive. The Committee considers that this year's Estimates Inquiry has contributed to the ongoing scrutiny of the Executive and increasing appropriate probity in the expenditure of public funds.

Conduct of the Inquiry

- 1.5 At the outset of the inquiry, the Committee sought the views of a number of community groups and associations who appeared at public hearings held on 15 and 25 June.
- 1.6 In total, 14 stakeholder organisations gave evidence before the Committee. A list of the community representatives appearing as witnesses before the Committee is at Appendix A. A list of submissions, papers and exhibits received during the inquiry is at Appendix B.
- 1.7 Twelve days of public hearings were scheduled between 15 June and 3 July 2007 to allow the Committee to review all portfolio output areas. All Ministers appeared before the Committee and all output classes were dealt

with in the scheduled time, with no ministers being required to reappear on the spillover days.

- 1.8 Transcripts from all hearings are available from the Hansard section of the Legislative Assembly website.¹ Answers to questions on notice are published in the committee pages of the Legislative Assembly website.²

Stakeholder submissions

- 1.9 During the initial phases of budget development many interested groups provide submissions to the government. These submissions are then provided to the Estimates Committee, usually following a committee request. Each year committees request the submissions and each year the Government provides them. However, the Committee considers that these submissions should be provided automatically to the Committee, immediately following its establishment and as a formal part of the estimates committee process.
- 1.10 Because the Committee uses the stakeholder submissions to inform itself about the issues of concern to those groups and to decide which groups to invite to public hearing, it is appropriate that the Committee have early access to those submissions, both from an administrative effectiveness perspective and to give to the groups invited adequate notice of attendance at a public hearing.
- 1.11 Further, this year the Committee did not receive all submissions made to the government. This omission was discovered by accident when both COTA and the Conservation Council of the ACT tabled their submissions to Government during the estimates hearings.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee considers that the ACT Government should formalise the provision of documentation to the Estimates Committee by providing to it on its establishment an indexed set of submissions, in order that the Committee is able to make the best possible preparation for the hearings.

¹ Legislative Assembly for the ACT website - Hansard: <<http://www.hansard.act.gov.au/start.htm>>

² Legislative Assembly for the ACT website – Committee Office:
<http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/committees/index1.asp?committee=75>

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the Committee and its secretariat with full sets of the budget documents as soon as they are tabled in the Assembly.

Sitting pattern and Estimates dates

- 1.12 The Committee notes that, initially, the Treasurer was not available for the first day of public hearings, although he did subsequently make himself available. The Committee notes that, for the last two years, the Estimates period has been listed on the Assembly calendar and that ministers offices are advised each year by the Committee Office during February of the need to keep ministerial diaries clear for the period of Estimates. The Committee further notes that the detailed program can only be determined following the tabling of the Budget papers.
- 1.13 In order to ensure greater certainty around the Estimates process, the Committee considers that the Estimates period should be formally set out as part of the sitting pattern each year. Further, the Committee considers that it is incumbent on the Treasurer to make himself available for the initial hearing with the Executive. The Committee notes that it has been the practice to hear from stakeholder groups prior to the initial hearing with the Executive.

RECOMMENDATION 3

- 1.14 **The Committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly, when determining the sitting pattern each year, formally commit a period of time for the consideration of Estimates by a Select Committee.**

RECOMMENDATION 4

- 1.15 **The Committee recommends that the Treasurer of the day ensure that he or she is available for the Committee's first day of public hearings with the Executive.**

Questions on notice

- 1.16 Adopting the same procedure as in 2006, Members, including non Committee Members, were able to submit questions on notice but only once the output

class had been considered at a public hearing. In total, 441 questions on notice were processed, slightly more than the 436 processed in 2006.

Government officials and policy questions

- 1.17 There are few legitimate exemptions from providing information to parliamentary committees. The policy exemption is very limited specifying that:

A department officer shall not be asked to give *opinions* on matters of policy, and shall be given reasonable opportunity to refer questions asked of him or her to superior officers or to the appropriate Minister.³

- 1.18 Awareness of the rights and responsibilities of government officials providing information to, and appearing as witnesses before, Legislative Assembly Committees is an essential requirement, particularly for more senior officials. Obligations of officials to Assembly committees are outlined in the *Handbook for ACT Government Officials on Participation in Assembly and Other Inquiries*.⁴ The Committee is aware that this Handbook is currently being updated. A Whole of Government message is only part of the dissemination strategy which should be employed. In particular, the Committee considers that once it is finalised it should be printed and provided to every public servant in hard copy as part of the essential "tools of their trade".

RECOMMENDATION 5

- 1.19 **The Committee recommends that the *Handbook for ACT Government Officials on Participation in Assembly and Other Inquiries* be widely publicised once it is amended, including being provided to every public servant in hard copy as part of their induction kit.**

Format of budget papers

- 1.20 The Committee recognises that the preparation of the budget papers is a complex task and will not necessarily be in a consistent format from year to

³ House of Representatives Practice, p 654 and see <http://www.pmc.gov.au/guidelines>

⁴ This document is at <http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/about/publications.shtml>

year. However, the Committee would like the budget papers to be more accessible to readers.

RECOMMENDATION 6

- 1.21 **The Committee recommends that the budget papers be indexed for ease of accessibility to readers.**

Conduct of ministers at committee hearings

- 1.22 The Committee is concerned about the conduct of the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services during some of the hearings. At times the Minister was less than respectful to certain members of the Committee during questioning. The Committee reminds Ministers that, under the Ministerial Code of Conduct, Ministers have an obligation to 'recognise the importance of full and true disclosure and accountability to the Parliament' as well as having respect for persons.⁵
- 1.23 Further, the Code of Conduct states that, 'in the discharge of his or her public duties, a Minister will not dishonestly or recklessly attack the reputation of any other person'.⁶ During the hearings of 26 June 2007, the Committee considers that the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Mr Hargreaves, failed to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct in his dealings with the Estimates Committee.

Appreciation

- 1.24 The Committee thanks everyone involved in the organisation and participation in the Inquiry, including the Ministers, ministerial staff and their officials, the Hansard officers, the Committee Office and other ACT Legislative Assembly Secretariat officers and the community and other stakeholder groups.

⁵ Code of Conduct for Ministers, February 2004, p 3

⁶ Code of Conduct for Ministers, February 2004, p 3

2 INTEREST GROUPS

2.1 The Committee heard from 14 community groups and associations during public hearings on 15 and 25 June. Key issues raised during these hearings are discussed below in the following general groupings:

- community service groups;
- environmental groups;
- employee groups; and
- business development groups.

Stakeholder comment

2.2 The Committee met with peak organisations, community service groups and other interest groups and organisations in public hearings on 15 June and 25 June. While these groups represented a broad cross-section of the community, common concerns regarding the viability of the community sector, housing issues for low-income and marginalised groups, and mental health issues were raised with the Committee. These issues are discussed in more detail below, followed by a summary of the key points of concern raised by the individual groups.

General issues

Community sector viability

2.3 The Government has a stated commitment in the Social Plan and Social Compact to assisting the disadvantaged in our community. The budget papers state:

The government is committed to helping the most vulnerable members of the community and believes the best way to do this is by tackling the causes of poverty and exclusion.⁷

⁷ Budget Paper No 2, p 31

- 2.4 However, some groups who appeared before the Committee felt that budget allocations this year, while welcome, did not restore the cuts made in previous years and particularly in 2006.⁸ The community groups felt that there was an ongoing impact on their ability to provide adequate services to those in need as a result of the previous year's funding cuts. Some community groups argued that the 3.75 per cent indexation for community grants fell short of addressing the problems faced by the sector.⁹
- 2.5 Staffing is a major difficulty facing the sector. With limited capacity to compete with the wages and conditions offered by larger organisations, the private sector and the public service, the sector faces a continued struggle to retain staff. Related to this, skill shortages in the sector are a major concern and continue to increase. Although the Government established the ACT Skills Commission to address the problem of skills shortages generally, concern was raised as to whether this initiative would adequately address problems in the community sector with no community sector representation currently on the Commission.¹⁰
- 2.6 The need for more resources for professional development and training of staff and volunteers was raised as an area requiring immediate attention.
- 2.7 Community organisations expressed disappointment that no funding was allocated to implement the recommendations made in the 2006 report of the Community Sector Taskforce, *'Towards a Sustainable Community Services Sector in the ACT'*, which considered a range of industrial relations matters identified as impacting on the community sector.¹¹ These matters included: funding; conditions of employment; recruitment and retention; occupational health and safety; and industrial relations advice.
- 2.8 The community sector was keen to see progress on this issue, suggesting that implementing some of the low cost recommendations would go some way to

⁸ See for example, ACTCOSS Snapshot of the 2006-07 ACT Budget, June 2006
<http://www.actcoss.org.au/publications>

⁹ Budget Paper No 3, p 58

¹⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 17

¹¹ *Towards a Sustainable Community Service Sector in the ACT*, Report of the Community Sector Taskforce, March 2006

supporting the work of the community sector.¹² For example, establishing a system of portable long service leave across the community sector would help the sector to attract and maintain staff.¹³

- 2.9 The community sector relies heavily on volunteers for much of its service delivery. However, numbers of volunteers are declining, as indicated by the 2006 ABS Census figures. Volunteering ACT suggested that the ACT Government has a role in encouraging volunteers by increasing funding for the infrastructure that enables them to operate.¹⁴ As Lifeline noted '[p]roviding the Lifeline service is not possible without our volunteers'.¹⁵

Indexation factors

- 2.10 The Committee notes that the ACT adjusts certain charges in relation to increases in wage-price indexation as opposed to the Consumer Price Index [CPI], whereas grants to community organisations are indexed according to the CPI. The wage-price indexation rate is currently higher than the CPI indexation rate. By using the former mechanism, the ACT Government is able to raise charges generally at a higher rate than the CPI but keeps funding for the community sector indexed in line with the CPI and currently at a lower rate than if funding was increased in line with wage-price indexation. It could be argued that this discrepancy in indexation rates at present disadvantages not only those on fixed incomes, but also community groups, which are also required to pay many government charges. However, the Committee notes that Budget Paper sets out the indexation factors governing community sector funding is indexed at 3.75 per cent, higher than the CPI and just below the wage price indexation of 4.0 per cent.¹⁶ The impact on community groups could therefore be overstated.

¹² Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 21

¹³ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 35

¹⁴ Volunteering ACT Submission, p. 2

¹⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 65

¹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 58

Housing

- 2.11 While the community sector welcomed the Government's Affordable Housing Strategy aimed at moderate-income earners, it will be some time for the strategy to have an impact.
- 2.12 Notwithstanding the ACT's targeted housing policy, of greater concern is affordable and appropriate housing for low-income families in the ACT, and particularly for those more vulnerable members of the community including: homeless people; indigenous people; people with a mental illness; young people; and the elderly in public housing or in the private rental market.¹⁷ The Committee was advised that these people have little hope of achieving home ownership and struggle to compete in the tight rental market; public and community housing being their best options.
- 2.13 With Housing ACT policy now targeting those most in need, the Committee expressed concern for the situation of middle income earners, who, under the former arrangements, would have qualified for public housing. Because they are not on a priority list it is likely that it will take longer for these people to receive an allocation.
- 2.14 A major issue for the sector were the significant cuts in last year's budget to the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services. The Committee was advised that funding levels were not restored in this year's budget and SAAP services were failing to meet the demand of those in housing crisis:
- We know we are turning away three out of every four adults who knock on the door looking for assistance.¹⁸
- 2.15 Lifeline, which runs the Canberra Emergency Accommodation Service, advised there was nowhere to refer clients to in housing crisis.¹⁹ While ACTCOSS also expressed concern for the lack of crisis accommodation, they

¹⁷ Issues for these groups were raised by ACTCOSS, Youth Coalition of the ACT, Havelock Housing Association, Council on the Ageing and ACT Mental Health Consumer Network

¹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 16

¹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 64

welcomed Housing ACT's transitional housing program, designed to move people out of crisis accommodation at an earlier stage and thereby easing the pressure on those services.²⁰

- 2.16 Security of tenure for public housing tenants was also raised as a concern by some groups. The community view expressed to the Committee was that public housing should not be considered to be 'welfare housing' and that housing should be provided for the lifetime of the tenant.²¹ Concern was also expressed that some Housing ACT tenants, deemed to have an over-allocation of bedrooms/space, have recently been notified about relocation to smaller properties. This possible relocation had caused considerable angst and confusion for long-term residents, many of whom are elderly.
- 2.17 In evidence, the Minister for Housing assured the Committee that Housing ACT residents would not be forcibly relocated.²² The Minister advised the Committee that:

Housing ACT will be going out with some further information about that to all of our tenants in the particularly near future—I would say in a week or so. That will be in the form of a letter from me and some pamphletary [sic] around what the issue is for them".²³

- 2.18 The Minister also advised the Committee that draft guidelines were being developed and would be circulated for community consultation.²⁴
- 2.19 The Minister did comment that one of the issues for determination related to a definition of security of tenure:

Both [ACTCOSS and Shelter ACT] organisations were very well represented at the housing summit that we had at the end of 2005. Both of those organisations indicated their understanding of the definition of security of tenure, which was the attachment of somebody to bricks and mortar regardless of circumstances, regardless of need and regardless of

²⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, pp 20-21

²¹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 38 [see also ACT Shelter, pp 11 – 12 and ACTCOSS pp 15 -16]

²² Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 385

²³ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 385

²⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, pp 385 - 386

other people on the list waiting for such a property. Both of those organisations, however, at the end of the summit, acknowledged that there was not a shared definition of what security of tenure was all about. Was it, for example, a guarantee of bricks and mortar, or was it a guarantee of support within a system? ²⁵

- 2.20 The Committee considers that this threshold issue is one which must be resolved prior to any further development of a security of tenure policy. Such a policy is essential for Housing ACT tenants as they have a right to know the basis for the continuation or termination of their occupancy. A common understanding of the meaning of the term security of tenure is needed to underpin Housing ACT's policy development and will inform tenants and potential tenants about the basis of their occupancy of public housing.

RECOMMENDATION 7

- 2.21 **The Committee recommends that the Standing Committee on Health and Disability Committee give consideration to the conduct of an inquiry into certain public housing issues, including the meaning of the term 'security of tenure' within the community and the housing sector.**

Mental Health

- 2.22 The government has committed to raise spending on mental health to 12% of the overall health budget by 2012. This target was welcomed by community groups.²⁶
- 2.23 There was also considerable support for the increase in mental health funding, with the Mental Health Consumer Coalition commenting that they would like to see more of the increased funding "going into the community sector to build capacity and to provide services such as home-based support, rehabilitation and sub-acute care".²⁷ While specific support was expressed for the adult step-

²⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 384

²⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 57

²⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 57

up step-down facility, some community groups questioned how such a facility would be developed and managed.²⁸

- 2.24 Lifeline felt there was little attention directed towards those with mild to moderate emergent mental health issues. More government support for counselling services to assist this group of people to deal with their situation could prevent escalation into acute episodes that required further interventions.²⁹
- 2.25 The ACT Mental Health Care Consumer Network was disappointed that they did not receive the funding requested to enable their service to successfully advocate on behalf of mental health consumers particularly in the current legislation review.³⁰

Individual groups

ACT Shelter Inc

- 2.26 ACT Shelter is the independent peak organisation representing the housing needs of low to moderate income earners in the ACT, providing advice to Housing ACT and other key stakeholders.
- 2.27 The Committee noted that funding to ACT Shelter was cut by half in the 2006 - 2007 budget. Notwithstanding this cut, the Committee was advised that contractual obligations were reduced by only one third. With only one paid employee ACT Shelter was forced to cancel a series of regular forums and now operates on a part-time basis.³¹
- 2.28 ACT Shelter advised that voluntary work by management committee members and non- recurrent project funding for the employment of a consultant, have helped ACT Shelter to continue to deliver services in the short

²⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 18

²⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, pp 64 - 65

³⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, pp 55

³¹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 9 -10

term, but ACT Shelter cautioned that this operational method is not sustainable in the longer term.³²

Havelock Housing Association Inc (ACT)

- 2.29 Havelock Housing Association provides accommodation to a range of clients including students, the disadvantaged and people with mental health issues. The organisation expressed concern about its future and long term viability.
- 2.30 With Ainslie Village being turned into a community housing model, Havelock Housing Association expressed concern for the current tenants who will require ongoing support. Such support had previously been provided on-site by Centacare, before its departure earlier this year. While Havelock supports the move to community housing, the organisation fears that many tenants will be left with little or no support during the transition period.³³
- 2.31 Havelock also suggested that the impending closure of the Currong Apartments, which houses up to 150 students, will leave students without accommodation unless alternative sites are provided. Havelock Housing informed the Committee that they have been working on some ideas to develop alternative sites and have been in discussions with the Minister's office.³⁴
- 2.32 The closure of Havelock House was also cause for concern for the organisation. The building is reaching the end of its economic life and the model of 'clustered housing' is no longer seen as an a workable model.³⁵

ACTCOSS

- 2.33 ACTCOSS raised a number of areas where they considered that this year's budget provided insufficient funding or no additional funding. These included:
- the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP);

³² Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, pp 4 – 14.

³³ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 40

³⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 41

³⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 41

- Indigenous issues particularly aimed at improving outcomes in education and reducing representation in the criminal justice system;
 - viability of the community sector [previously discussed];
 - public transport concerns particularly for those living in the outer suburbs.³⁶
- 2.34 ACTCOSS suggested that the ACT government's concession program was not sufficient to keep pace with the rising prices for utilities causing further hardship to those people on limited incomes.³⁷
- 2.35 The long term commitment to disability access was questioned. ACTCOSS argued that initiatives highlighted in the budget, such as the increase in accessible buses and facilities for non-government schools, were short term measures with decreasing funding in the outyears.³⁸

Youth Coalition of the ACT

- 2.36 As with ACTCOSS, the Youth Coalition was generally concerned about the viability of the community sector and the lack of initiatives and funding in the budget to address this problem.³⁹
- 2.37 Housing for young people was raised as a major issue. The Youth Coalition noted that the initiatives addressing public housing in this year's budget did not include the needs of young people. One suggestion to address this issue was for Housing ACT to modify its eligibility criteria to address the barriers faced by young people when accessing public housing.⁴⁰
- 2.38 While the Youth Coalition welcomed the funding provided for mental health, it suggested that more direct funding to address concerns in relation to young people and mental health problems could have been provided. A budget bid by the Youth Coalition to conduct a review of ACT mental health facilities for young people had been rejected.⁴¹ It was suggested that an adolescent

³⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, pp 16 - 23

³⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 21

³⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 18

³⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, pp 34 - 35

⁴⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 36

⁴¹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, pp 37 - 38

inpatient facility was 'desperately needed' in the ACT as currently children and adolescents were required to travel to Sydney for assessment and care.⁴²

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network

- 2.39 ACT Mental Health Consumer Network is the advocacy body for mental health consumers in the ACT. The Network is the key community sector partner for ACT Health, with respect to consumer participation.
- 2.40 The Government has a commitment to consumers and carers being involved in the planning, development and evaluation of mental health services by the development of a framework for consumer participation across Mental Health ACT and by initiating the development of a framework for ACT Health.⁴³ However, the Network feels that the commitment has not been underpinned by resources, advising that their bid for additional funding to enable more effective participation in consultations regarding mental health, had been rejected.⁴⁴
- 2.41 The Network also suggested that indigenous, and culturally and linguistically diverse people, had been overlooked in the budget. People with mental health issues in these communities have difficulty accessing culturally appropriate services.⁴⁵

HealthCare Consumers Association of the ACT

- 2.42 The HealthCare Consumer Association was pleased to see funds provided for mental health services, rehabilitation and aged care, chronic condition management and dental health services.
- 2.43 However, the Association felt that, rather than consider a third hospital, future health care needs would be better catered for by networking current health facilities to share patient information, providing more step-down facilities, regional type hospital facilities, opening GP plus clinics, and specialist outpatient clinics.

⁴² Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 37

⁴³ Standard three of the National Mental Health Standards

⁴⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 55

⁴⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 57

2.44 The Association was concerned that the incremental increases in current services would not adequately address the expected increase in demand for health services by an increasing and ageing population.⁴⁶

Council on the Ageing

2.45 With only one specific allocation of money for ageing, \$10.4 million to boost aged care and rehabilitation services, COTA was pleased to see other initiatives, particularly in the area of health, that addressed identified gaps in aged care and the dental health program.

2.46 COTA noted that the housing issue for older people in the private rental market is "quite dire". COTA advised that, while ACT Housing responded well to people who fitted their criteria, it was the people who fell short of meeting the criteria who are faced with high rents and uncertainty of their tenancy in the private rental market.⁴⁷

2.47 Other areas of concern raised by COTA included:

- access to community facilities for older people with mobility issues;
- community transport needs; and
- employment for people aged over 55.

Lifeline Canberra

2.48 Lifeline advised the Committee that their services are stretched. They receive approximately one third of their operating costs from the government, with the remainder coming from fundraising events to the tune of \$400,000.⁴⁸

2.49 Lifeline reported that they will be increasing their crisis counselling lines from three to five as they have been successful in recruiting and retaining more volunteers. However, they also suggested that urgent assistance was required to employ more full-time staff to provide support and administrative

⁴⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, pp 44 - 48

⁴⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 61

⁴⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 66

arrangements as well as the supervision capability required to manage volunteers.⁴⁹

- 2.50 Lifeline reported that meeting ongoing costs, such as rent and wages, presented ongoing challenges to community organisations, that increases linked to the CPI Index generally did not cover. A particular concern was the 17% increase to electricity costs:

We run power 24 hours a day just with lights, heating and cooling for our telephone counsellors. So we would expect a fairly big hit on that. I don't believe that indexation is going to cover the costs.⁵⁰

The Conservation Council

- 2.51 The Conservation Council is Canberra's peak non-government environment organisation representing the interests of over 30 community and conservation organisations in the ACT and Region as well as the broader environmental interests of all the citizens of the ACT. The Council's mission is to achieve the highest quality environment for Canberra and the surrounding region.
- 2.52 The environment receives approximately 3.6 per cent of the overall ACT Budget, although natural conservation areas make up 60 per cent of Territory land. As Canberra expands the potential impact on the natural environment increases. The Conservation Council proposed a levy on rates to provide additional funding for the environment.⁵¹
- 2.53 With transport currently contributing around 25% of greenhouse emissions for the ACT, the Council suggested that the Government could do more to encourage Canberrans to utilise the public transport system.⁵² While the addition of 18 new compressed natural gas [CNG] buses would help address the shortage of buses, the Council stressed to the Committee that more work

⁴⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 67

⁵⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 67

⁵¹ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007 p 609

⁵² Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007 p 609

was required to progress the implementation of the *Sustainable Transport Plan for the ACT*.⁵³

2.54 Other areas of concern raised by the Council included:

- water conservation;
- management of the nature conservation estate;
- improving the cycle network;
- lack of funding for the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment.⁵⁴

Association of Independent Schools

2.55 With over 40 per cent of school enrolments in the ACT in non-government schools (independent & Catholic) the Association of Independent Schools supports parents' right to diversity of choice for their child's education.

2.56 The Association had sought increased funding from the ACT Government for:

- professional development in the new curriculum for independent school teachers;
- increased funding for students with disabilities; and
- capital support for independent schools.

2.57 The Association believes that the present ACT Government has failed to provide funding to keep up with the increasing cost of education.

2.58 Another area of concern to the Association was the funding levels provided for children with special needs in independent schools. Children with special needs receive funding in non-government schools based on the Student Centred Appraisal of Need [SCAN]. This funding tool was developed to provide a consistent approach to determining educational needs of individual students with special needs, so that additional resources to support students with a disability can be allocated to schools on an equitable basis.⁵⁵

⁵³ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June, p 609

⁵⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007 pp 608-610

⁵⁵ Student Centred Appraisal of Need Booklet for Parents, Carers and Staff, Education and Training, January 2006

2.59 The Association further argued that independent schools could not offer special needs support in years 11 and 12 unless specific [SCAN] funding is available. While 'providing increased access for students with disabilities in non-government schools' is stated as a Department of Education and Training priority for 2007 - 2008⁵⁶, the Association for Independent Schools argued that the level of funding was inadequate to meet the need.⁵⁷

Save Our Schools

2.60 Save Our Schools [SOS] suggested that the budget negates the financial rationale provided by the ACT Government last year for the school closures. SOS believed that the savings to the education department were overestimated and did not include costs to other government departments in implementing the 'Towards 2020' program.

2.61 Also of significant concern to SOS was the estimated up to 2000 children who will travel longer distances to schools, thereby facing increased safety risks, particularly in relation to having to cross major roads.⁵⁸

The Property Council (ACT Division)

2.62 The Property Council [ACT Division] provides advocacy, information, networking, communications and professional development services.

2.63 The Council expressed a high degree of concern that the ACT Treasury appeared to persistently underestimate the amount of revenue from stamp duty.⁵⁹ This issue is considered further in Chapter Three.

2.64 The Council was disappointed that no tax relief had been provided for residential property investors, with the Council describing current levels of land tax being 'extraordinarily high'. The Council argued that, from figures provided by the national office of the Property Council, land tax on the unimproved capital value [UCV] of a block of land is significantly higher in

⁵⁶ Budget paper No 4, p 357

⁵⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 30

⁵⁸ Question on notice, E07-040

⁵⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007 p 2

the ACT than for the other states and territory.⁶⁰ The Council believes this contributes to the low level of investment in residential housing in the ACT:

The returns are lousy, and that has a flow-on effect in terms of the availability and stock level of investment residential housing in the territory. The returns from other sorts of investments are significantly greater elsewhere in Australia.⁶¹

- 2.65 The Committee notes that investment in residential property in the ACT comprises 30 per cent of the entire residential market, 19.8 per cent is private investment and 9.2 per cent is ACT Government investment.⁶²

Transport Workers Union (TWU)

- 2.66 The Transport Workers Union raised two major areas of concern with the committee:

- ACT Ambulance Service;
- Action buses.

ACT Ambulance Service

- 2.67 While the TWU was pleased with the provision of an additional 16 crew for the ambulance service, they noted that there was no specific funding allocation for the sought after reclassification of ACT Ambulance Service paramedics, from a technical to professional officer stream, which was currently being negotiated. The TWU argues that the level of skill and ability of ACT paramedics contributes to overall savings in the health budget.⁶³
- 2.68 The Committee notes that negotiations are underway for the new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement [EBA] but is also mindful of the fact that, given that the negotiations are not concluded, the Government may not be in a position to allocate funding for this purpose.

⁶⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007 p 2

⁶¹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 3

⁶² Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends*, Table 2.8 Housing, ACT Summary, 1996-2006

⁶³ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007 p 32

ACTION buses

- 2.69 Increasing public awareness about timetable changes was raised as a key priority by the union, given that bus drivers bear the brunt of commuter frustrations. The TWU confirmed that ACT bus drivers were consulted regarding timetable changes, but suggested that more consultation and greater involvement would have been beneficial.
- 2.70 Another issue raised by the Committee was that of the safety of bus drivers, in particular at interchanges.⁶⁴ This issue is dealt with in Chapter 10.

⁶⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007 p 30

3 TREASURER

3.1 The Department of Treasury provides strategic financial and economic policy advice to the Government with the aim of promoting the Territory's financial position and economic management.⁶⁵

3.2 The Treasury portfolio includes the following output classes:

- economic management;
- financial management;
- revenue management;
- ACTEW Corporation;
- home loan portfolio;
- Shared Services Centre, which includes INTACT, Procurement support services, human resource services and finance services;
- Superannuation Provision Account; and
- The Territory Banking Account, which includes the following independent authorities:
 - ACT Gambling and Racing Commission,
 - ACT Insurance Authority,
 - ACTTAB,
 - the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission,
 - Exhibition Park Corporation; and
 - Rhodium Asset Solutions.

3.3 The Treasurer met with the Committee on 18 June to consider Output Class 1 and ACTEW Corporation and on 26 and 27 June to consider the remainder of the portfolio. Only Rhodium Asset Solutions was dealt with on 27 June.

3.4 The Treasury portfolio oversees the strategic financial and economic management of the Territory. One of its major objectives is to ensure the

⁶⁵ Budget Paper No 4, p 67

accountability and transparency of Government expenditure.

Financial and economic management

3.5 The quantum of the ACT's budget for 2007 – 2008 is:

- total revenue of \$3.033 billion;⁶⁶
- total expenditure of \$3.0190 billion.⁶⁷

3.6 The major issue for consideration by the Committee included the turnaround from the harsh 2006-2007 budget and the surplus predicted for the 2007-2008 budget, including criticisms of the accuracy of the budget predictions. Other issues pursued were:

- the questioning of the necessity for the school closures in the previous financial year; and
- the scope and progress of program/efficiency reviews.

Quantum of forecast surplus

3.7 One threshold issue raised principally by the Property Council was the accuracy of the forecast budget surplus⁶⁸. According to the budget documentation, the surplus was estimated to be \$103 million.⁶⁹ However, the Property Council was highly critical of the Government, arguing that this was overly conservative and that the surplus was likely to be much greater than \$103 million and possibly in the order of \$200 million.⁷⁰ The Property Council argued:

Basically, what we are seeing is additional revenue coming from the property sector to support more spending by government. We think, as I said, the estimate of a surplus of \$100 million-odd which is projected in the current budget will turn, in fact, into a surplus of well in excess of \$200 million, unless the drought comes in and they can't pull the \$70 million out of ACTEW . But

⁶⁶ Budget Paper No 3, p 31

⁶⁷ Budget Paper No 3, p 54

⁶⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 1

⁶⁹ Budget Paper No 3, p 3

⁷⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 2

the indications are that it might be breaking. If that is the case, the \$100 million surplus which is projected will become \$200 million.

3.8 Concerns were further expressed that the propensity to underestimate revenue has been consistent over the past five years or so.⁷¹

3.9 As noted in the previous Estimates Committee report, the ACT budget is now presented in accordance with the Government Finance Statistics (GFS) standard in measuring its budget operating position. This is the standard by which all Australian governments measure their budgets. Under GFS treatment, land sales, as one-off asset sales, cannot be used to support operating expenditure and are therefore not included in revenue estimates. In relation to the level of receipts generally, the Chief Minister stated:

That is the reason and the justification or explanation for some of the differences— one-off land sales, significantly enhanced commercial activity, and the strength of the economy: the economy is booming; when the economy booms, government's receipts increase.⁷²

3.10 The Acting CEO of Treasury had this to say about the ACT's budget estimates:

Just in relation to the last five years, it is worth while remembering that some of the figures that we would be looking at include a number of the AAS accrual lines, so over the last five years there will be around \$360 million worth that is accumulative of market gains from superannuation investments, around \$140 million of increased land revenue, and also around \$100 million worth of investments due to asset revaluations et cetera.

There have been some large items over the last years which impact on our performance every financial year—largely non-cash items. Some of those are incredibly difficult to predict and lead to some of the reasons why we have changed our accounting system. It is quite difficult to look at the last five years and say, around those huge overestimations, that they are due on our tax lines, because a lot of them actually do not relate to our tax lines: they relate to things like performance of our investments on equities markets et cetera.

The tax lines were significantly underestimated in 2002-03. Those were times of unprecedented growth in the property market. All treasuries across the whole of Australia predicted a much more moderate level of growth; they predicted that, coming off the GST, there would be cooling down in the housing market instead of an incredible heating up of the housing market. In

⁷¹ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 2

⁷² Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 74

2004-05 we overestimated our tax revenues rather than underestimated—so it went the other way for us.

We have had a look at the accuracy of our revenue forecasts in line with standard statistical analyses. They lie within usual tolerance limits for our major tax lines. For example, over the last four years the mean percentage error was around 1.9 % on our fines, around 0.4 % on our fees and around 2.5 on our commonwealth payments. These are all within standard statistical ranges. Obviously, some of the areas where we are having those variations sit on our payroll lines and our conveyance lines, and they are our two largest lines.

What we do in relation to our forecast is to forecast based on long-term averages and take into account what is actually happening in the market where we have information et cetera. In times when the market is moving upwards, we will probably slightly underestimate, because we do not pick for the market to turn. If the market turns and we are predicting up, we will all of a sudden be basing a budget on revenue forecasts that were well in excess of what we are going to have, so we do not try and predict those turns in the market.

When you look back at the historical performance of, particularly, our revenue forecasts, then, once you take out all of the large accrual non-cash items—which are very difficult to forecast and in many senses do not contribute to the cash that a government has to pay or a cash position for any financial year—I think you will see that we have been reasonably in line with what could be expected.⁷³

- 3.11 The Committee notes that estimates of revenue can be difficult to predict, with many factors outside the control of government being brought to bear on any economy, thereby necessitating a conservative approach to estimates of revenue and expenditure.⁷⁴ Such factors include, but are not limited to, the general state of the economy and stability or otherwise of interest rates, international factors, employment rates and stock market rises and falls. These are all elements over which the Government has little or no control, but which can affect a small economy such as the ACT's, in a significant way.
- 3.12 Given the necessity for a generally conservative approach to the difficult task of estimating government receipts and the factors that have impacted on the

⁷³ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2006, pp 77-78

⁷⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2006, p 78

level of receipts over the past several years, the Committee considers that the criticisms levelled at the turnaround from the previous budget and accuracy of the predicted surplus are not borne out. However, this also means that the Government cannot take sole credit for the healthy state of the ACT's finances, given that the factors which make estimates of revenue difficult to predict with certainty have, in this instance, delivered to the ACT a situation where, generally speaking, higher than anticipated revenues have been consistently received over a period of years.⁷⁵

- 3.13 In Budget Paper No 4 [BP4] the Government sets out its objective to bring the budget into surplus without land sales receipts. The Treasurer expanded on the rationale for this objective:

For the sustainable future we need to do that. We cannot go on, year after year, as we have, on a prayer and a hope that our superannuation investments will return above long-term averages or that every year will be a booming year in relation to land sales. There will be years that will not be. We have experienced them in the past and we will experience them in the future. Our investments will not return that extra dividend. Land sale receipts will decline over time. They must.

In 30 or so years time—it will happen incrementally—a government will face a situation in which they will not have the capacity to rely on land sales because the population will peak and flatten and there will not be the level of land sales there currently is. We need now to do what we have done, to begin to wean governments off an expectation that budgets can be balanced year after year after year on the basis of that perhaps above average return on superannuation and exceptional land sale receipts. That is the underlying philosophy. All the measures we have taken have been taken to ensure, essentially, that our revenue raising meets our expenditures. It is a simple equation.⁷⁶

- 3.14 The Committee considers that, given the extent of unbudgeted revenue over the last few years and the consequential impact on the ability to estimate revenue, it would be informative to have more regular reports on revenues.

⁷⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 78

⁷⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, pp 95-96

RECOMMENDATION 8

- 3.15 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make a six monthly report to the Legislative Assembly setting out unbudgeted revenue receipts.**

Triple bottom line reporting

- 3.16 Triple Bottom Line (TBL) reporting is a mechanism for organisations to demonstrate they have strategies for sustainable growth. TBL:

...focuses on decision-making and reporting which explicitly considers an organisation's economic, environmental and social performance. As such, TBL can be seen as both as an internal management tool, and an external reporting framework.⁷⁷

- 3.17 The Committee inquired into the application of TBL reporting in the budget. The Treasury officials advised that it was in the performance measures:

The triple bottom line framework is actually developed through the performance measures that are in the budget. So you will find that the performance measures listed throughout the budget provide a lot of that information, not just on the financial aspects but also on the objectives that each department is trying to do. That change has been in the budget for a number of years.⁷⁸

- 3.18 The Committee was concerned that there was no visible evidence that social, environmental as well as economic objectives were applied to the Budget. However, the Department explained that with TBL reporting, which focused on all three elements, social, environmental and financial, it was not possible to bring those three elements together into a single bottom line number, rather it was 'actually getting that information out there and making sure that people have that information'.⁷⁹

- 3.19 The Department further stated:

⁷⁷ Dept of Environment and Heritage, *Triple Bottom Line Reporting in Australia*, 2003, p 3

⁷⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 90

⁷⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 91

I think there are a number of things to keep in mind here. One is that in looking at triple bottom line in the budget context what you are actually talking about is a much broader thing than just the reporting on triple bottom line. What you are actually looking at is more a change in decision-making processes and making sure that information is incorporated into the decisions the government makes when it makes its budget decisions and when it makes its broad policy decisions.⁸⁰

RECOMMENDATION 9

3.20 **The Committee recommends that future budgets articulate the framework used to apply triple bottom line principles.**

3.21 The Auditor-General noted that:

About two or three years ago there was a commitment to progress triple bottom line reporting. Two years ago, when the government introduced strategic indicators, I believe that was a starting point for providing agencies with the opportunity to report on performance indicators which are not necessarily economic or financial-related. These are social performance indicators and also environmental performance indicators. However, in this budget I did not see further progress made on that line of progress that you would expect the government to continue to get to the improved or final product of sustainable reporting.

I think that the ACT could fall behind progress made in other jurisdictions because other jurisdictions, and internationally too, are certainly trying to include more reporting on a holistic level.⁸¹

RECOMMENDATION 10

3.22 **The Committee recommends that the Auditor-General undertake a review of progress in relation to triple bottom line reporting, extending the review to include triple bottom line budgeting.**

Presentation of staff numbers

3.23 The Committee notes that agencies are now presenting staff numbers in terms of 'full time equivalents' [FTE]. The Committee supports the expression of staff

⁸⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 92

⁸¹ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, pp 126-127

numbers in terms of FTE in the budget. It expects that this will be the pattern for future budgets, and that agencies will be consistent across the ACT in using FTE for describing staff numbers.

School closures

- 3.24 Given the seemingly healthy state of the ACT economy, the necessity for the school closures in the previous budget year was questioned. In response, the Treasurer stated:

...a significant part of the rationale of the decision in relation to schools and school closures was to address a serious issue facing the territory in relation to the maintenance of infrastructure that was far in excess of demand or requirement. It is simply not credible for any government to maintain over 30 % of capacity in any infrastructure—be it schools or something else.⁸²

- 3.25 The Treasurer went on to state that there was a real need to invest heavily in the public school system in order that it remain a viable alternative, that the decisions taken in the previous year were driven by a need to overhaul a system that was increasingly failing to meet the expectations of the community:

We have now refined our needs, understood them, restructured the system, looked to the future and invested heavily, with a determination to return public education in the territory to its rightful place as the system of first choice for the people of Canberra.⁸³

- 3.26 The Government has consistently maintained that school closures were necessary to ensure that recurrent expenditure in the foreseeable future was targeted in the best possible way and that any gains from one-off land sales should not be used as a basis for funding recurrent expenditure.⁸⁴

Third party property scheme

- 3.27 The Treasurer advised the Committee that the ACT was close to finalising its amended third party property scheme. The Scheme is to be modelled on the

⁸² Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 76

⁸³ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 76

⁸⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 76

lines of NSW and Queensland schemes, with the specific objectives of commencing rehabilitation earlier and streamlining the litigation process, to reduce costs.

Public sector efficiency gains and the functional review

- 3.28 In response to a direct request from the Committee, the Chief Minister again declined to provide the Committee with a copy of the Functional Review undertaken in 2006 on the grounds of cabinet confidentiality. Following from the functional review and ongoing efficiency reviews, the Committee queried the programs to be targeted, where scope for efficiency gains was identified and implementation progress.
- 3.29 The Committee was advised that in 2006-2007 the program reviewed was housing affordability while disability services was currently being reviewed. It was also noted that the reviews were not always efficiency reviews, but program reviews which may result in increased expenditure.⁸⁵
- 3.30 In relation to a further query about potential problems with Shared Services centres in other states the Treasurer advised that:
- ...the creation and establishment of the Shared Services Centre is on track and that the budget estimates incorporated in last year's budget are being met, and we have every expectation and anticipate that they will be met for this year. My advice is that in the coming financial year the establishment of the Shared Services Centre will generate savings of \$20 million.⁸⁶

Increased taxation revenue

- 3.31 In response to concerns about the forecast increase in taxation revenue, from \$737 million to \$820 million, the consequential increase to be paid by households and the impact of any increase on households on fixed incomes, the Treasurer detailed the sources of the increase income and the impact on each household in relation to the range of revenue measures impacting on each household:

⁸⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 98

⁸⁶ Transcript of evidence, 18 June 2007, p 99

The range of revenue measures impacting on all households is: general rates, the fire and emergency services levy, the water abstraction charge and the utilities network. As to the utilities network facilities tax, the estimated impact in 2006-07 was \$234 and the full year impact potentially as a result of the utilities network facilities tax is \$379, an increase over the year of \$145.⁸⁷

- 3.32 It was noted that the ACT adjusts certain charges in relation to increases in wage-price indexation as opposed to the Consumer Price Index [CPI]. This method has the potential to discriminate against people on fixed incomes. In response to this concern, the Treasurer advised:

...governments in the delivery of services are met with the real cost of the delivery of the service, and the real cost is reflected, as much as anything, in wages. I think the position that the ACT government has taken in relation to this is reasonable. The fact that we have indexed increases in charges by wage price rather than the CPI is a simple reflection of the cost to government of the delivery of the service...⁸⁸

Seniors card

- 3.33 Despite the stated support of the ACT Government for a nationwide reciprocity scheme, the Committee notes that State Governments across Australia have been unable to reach an agreement. The previous Minister for Ageing, Katy Gallagher MLA, indicated that this was due to the reticence of New South Wales and Queensland. Given the willingness of some other jurisdictions, the ACT Government should seek to enter into agreements with these jurisdictions as a matter of priority.

RECOMMENDATION 11

- 3.34 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government immediately seek to enter into agreements with other jurisdictions to provide reciprocity for senior's card travel concessions.**

⁸⁷ Transcript of evidence, 18 June 2007, p 103

⁸⁸ Transcript of evidence, 18 June 2007, p 104

Other matters

- 3.35 The Treasurer/Treasury officials advised:
- the Chief Executive/Under Treasurer position was to be finalised within the next few weeks;
 - there were no plans to re-introduce quarterly capital works reports; and
 - in response to concerns about the delivery of SAAP services, the Treasurer advised that while there had been a reduction in the administration of SAAP, there had been no reduction in services.
- 3.36 The Committee also explored the following matters:
- objections to assessments and reviews of decisions in relation to for example, property valuations and payroll tax;
 - reduction in services such as the closure of the Griffith library;
 - breakdown of the numbers of public servants separating from the ACT in 2006-2007; and
 - deferral of stamp duty for first home owners.

ACTEW Corporation

- 3.37 ACTEW Corporation appeared before the Committee on 18 and 25 June 2007. Issues pursued with ACTEW Corporation included:
- preparation for the impact of Stage 4 water restrictions and maximising the efficiency of the existing water supply system;
 - the "future water options" project; and
 - environmental water flows.

Stage 4 Water restrictions and the water supply

- 3.38 The Committee welcomed the news that, as a result of recent rains, Stage 4 water restrictions had been deferred. Further, the Committee was advised that, as water consumption had been well below targets over the cooler months, there was scope for negotiating with some parties, such as car washes, exemptions from the restrictions under stage 4. However, the Committee was advised that the precise nature and criteria for exemptions would not be able to be determined until all proposals had been received and ACTEW was able

to determine the quantum of requests for exemptions in terms of water consumption. ACTEW advised that it expected to receive applications within the next couple of weeks.⁸⁹

3.39 The Committee notes that options to maximise the current water supply system include:

- ⊖ Maximising the use of the Murrumbidgee;
- ⊖ Maximising the output from the Fyshwick plant;
- ⊖ Use of the Tantangara Dam in the medium and long term.⁹⁰

3.40 ACTEW also advised that the variation in costs for the Lower Cotter Dam and the Tennent Dam had been revised upwards to \$150 million and \$300 million from their original estimates of \$120 million and \$250 million respectively, to allow for uncertainties in the project, including the scarcity of project employees; the figures were best estimates.⁹¹

Future water options

3.41 ACTEW has finalised a Future Water Options 2006 Annual Review of Planning Variables for Water Supply and Demand Assessment and provided a report on that project to the Government. The report is available on ACTEW's website.

3.42 ACTEW commissioned ACTEWAGL to undertake the Review at a cost of \$3.4 million, the cost of which was passed on to consumers.⁹² The Committee considers that this is a very considerable sum and was concerned that one review project, ie the Future Water Options project, could cost such a significant amount of money.

3.43 ACTEW provided advice in terms of the procurement process and a breakdown of the funds expended on this project in response to a request from the Committee.⁹³

⁸⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, pp 118-119

⁹⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, pp 119-120

⁹¹ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 121

⁹² Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 122

⁹³ Correspondence, ACTEW to Committee, 15 August 2007

- 3.44 The Committee recognises the significance of the water issue and the necessity to undertake comprehensive and wide-ranging assessments of capacity and future needs. However, the Committee considers that the expenditure of such a significant sum of money on one project, particularly when the project is being undertaken by a corporation in which ACTEW has a significant share, requires strict reporting and accountability procedures as well as rigorous contractual arrangements.

Environmental water flows

- 3.45 In response to questions on the quantity of water released for environmental water flows, the head of ACTEW advised:

There has been a lot of debate about the impact of environmental flows and what it would have meant for our current water situation. I am on public record as having said that our situation now would not be significantly different if we had not had environmental flows.⁹⁴

- 3.46 Mr Costello further advised:

Environmental flows were brought in in 1999. The system of guidelines at that time, as I think Mr Smyth said the other day, was a good system of guidelines. But, like all systems, they are reviewed. That was part of the original proposals, and they were reviewed. After that review, the system of environmental releases was tightened up quite a bit, particularly in times of drought, and we have applied those new guidelines ever since.⁹⁵

- 3.47 The Committee notes that there appears to be some public confusion about environmental water flows and suggests the ACTEW might consider better public information on environmental water flows.

Annual profits

- 3.48 The Committee noted that ACTEW 's estimated profit outcome for 2006-07 was \$63.114 million, with an estimated profit outcome for 2007-08 being \$73.386 million, an increase of \$10.72 million, or 16 per cent. The Committee asked how the estimate was arrived at and what it comprised.

⁹⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 555

⁹⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 555

3.49 ACTEW advised that:

- the water restrictions had impacted to the extent of a decrease of \$10 million in revenue;
- going to Stage 4 water restrictions would impact to the extent of approximately \$40 million;
- most of their profits did not come from water, with more than half the profits in the next year estimated to come from the joint venture.⁹⁶

Home loan portfolio

3.50 The Home Loan portfolio is responsible for the administration of home loans, which were in earlier years granted by the Commissioner for ACT Housing to assist low income households in purchasing their government house. All ACT Government home buyer lending ceased in 1996, and the current objective of the area was to administer the outstanding home loans appropriately.⁹⁷

3.51 In response to a suggestion that this function could be outsourced to the private sector, the Committee was advised that the Government had determined that it was more value for money for this function to be held within government in order that the number of outstanding loans in the portfolio could be driven down.⁹⁸

3.52 The Department further advised that there were no unsecured loans at present, that all remaining loans had a significant equity base, although there were approximately six shortfall loans, where the properties had been sold in the past and the amount received for the property did not fully cover the loan. Those latter loans were being repaid gradually.⁹⁹

Shared Services Centre

3.53 The Shared Services Centre provides information and communication technology, procurement, publishing and records services, as well as tactical

⁹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 556

⁹⁷ Budget Paper No 4, p 93

⁹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 618

⁹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 618

and transactional human resource and financial services to ACT Government departments and agencies.¹⁰⁰ The services are consolidated to generate economies of scale through standardised and streamlined processes.

- 3.54 Questioning focused on the savings to be generated by shared services. It was noted that Budget Paper 4 referred to \$20 million in savings. The Department clarified that this would be across a full financial year, but that for the financial year 2006-2007, '\$7 million savings in ICT, \$4 million savings in ACT Procurement Solutions and, ...\$3 million savings in finance and HR' were achieved¹⁰¹, a total of \$12.3 million which had been achieved in the 2006-2007 financial year.¹⁰²
- 3.55 In relation to ongoing savings, the Department advised that the savings had already been harvested by the Department of Treasury, which had taken those savings out of agency budgets.¹⁰³ The specific savings included a reduction in InTACT costs of approximately \$1,200 per PC. This had been achieved through initiative such as:
- negotiating a better deal on Microsoft licensing of almost \$1.2 million a year;
 - purchasing rather than leasing hardware and extending the life of the hardware.¹⁰⁴
- 3.56 In relation to staffing numbers and savings, the Department advised:
- We estimated with the shift of staff across from agencies, from HR and finance specifically into shared services, that we would make about a 10 per cent reduction, and that equates to about 65 staff over a two-year period.¹⁰⁵
- 3.57 In response to a question about how contracts that are developed with the community sector are put in place through shared services, the Department advised:

¹⁰⁰ Budget Paper No 4, p 101

¹⁰¹ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 622

¹⁰² Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 630

¹⁰³ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 623

¹⁰⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 624

¹⁰⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 624

What is happening there—and it is consistent across the whole of ACT Procurement Solutions operations as a part of the shared services centre—is that we actually assist the agencies with a lot of the technical procurement systems, the contract formation and items like that. It is still the agencies who are responsible for the content of that, in deciding who—which community organisations, for example—the territory enters into these arrangements with, and the amount of money and the actual services that are going to be provided....

... From the community service perspective, they will still have their direct dealings with the people in the agencies; a lot of the back office support is being provided by my staff.¹⁰⁶

- 3.58 In response to concerns that attempts at shared services had not been successful in other areas, the Government claimed to be able to differentiate the ACT situation from the less successful attempt by the WA Government to implement a shared services operation, citing the small size of the ACT and the relative homogeneity and centralisation of service provision and providers.¹⁰⁷

Superannuation Provision Account

- 3.59 The Superannuation Provision Account [SPA] was established in 1991 to fund future unfunded employer superannuation obligations for its employees who are members of the Australian Government's Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme and Public Sector Superannuation Scheme, defined benefit schemes. Treasury assists the Government to effectively manage the defined benefit employer superannuation liabilities of the Territory. This includes the responsibility for the management of the investment funds set aside to meet the defined benefit employer superannuation liabilities of the Territory.¹⁰⁸
- 3.60 The SPA does not hold employee contributions or employer productivity contributions, which are paid direct to Comsuper as they accrue. The funds held in SPA are invested with external institutional investment managers.

¹⁰⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 627

¹⁰⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 626

¹⁰⁸ Budget Paper No 4, p 125

Treasury utilises the services of an investment adviser, an actuary and the Investment Advisory Board to provide advice in respect of the superannuation assets and liabilities of the Territory.¹⁰⁹

- 3.61 The Department advised that the ACT splits its investment strategy into 40 per cent passive investment, with 50 per cent being actively managed¹¹⁰, ie where the fund manager sets out to try and improve upon the general market returns. Ten per cent is held in cash reserves. The Department advised:

We have investment managers in the different classes of investments that we look after, and that includes Australian equities. If you have got page 140 in front of you, you will see that we have three active managers: Perpetual, Ausbil Dexia and Renaissance. In the international equities class, we have two active managers: Alliance Bernstein and Wellington. Then we have a property manager, AMP, and finally a private equity manager, Wilshire Australia.¹¹¹

- 3.62 The Government instigated a review of superannuation investment policy, with a view to determining policy changes the government might adopt in order to assess prospects for environmentally socially responsible investment. The Committee sought assurance that, in relation to the review of the application of environmental, social and governance issues to territory investment practices that, as a consequence, there would be no prospect of the level of returns on funds being jeopardised, nor additional money having to be put aside for the full funding of super liabilities as a consequence of any change in investment policy.¹¹²
- 3.63 The Treasurer advised that it was not his intention to adopt a policy that reduced the return on our superannuation investments and that he would await the provision of the report before taking further action.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Budget Paper No 4, p 125

¹¹⁰ Email advice to Committee, 11 August 2007

¹¹¹ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 637

¹¹² Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 640

¹¹³ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 640

- 3.64 While the Treasurer indicated that the report was to be made publicly available, the Committee notes that it has not been released to date, despite it being provided to the Treasurer in May 2007.

RECOMMENDATION 12

- 3.65 **The committee recommends that the report on superannuation investment policy be tabled in the Assembly by the last sitting day in August.**

Territory Banking Account

- 3.66 The Territory Banking Account [TBA] manages the surplus cash balances of the Government and invests funds through external investment managers within known cash flow requirements and established investment policies. The TBA provides services to Government including financial asset and liability management through the establishment of investment and borrowing policies and objectives, and the coordination and implementation of investment and borrowing activities.¹¹⁴
- 3.67 The committee has no comment to make on the issues explored around:
- loans to the LDA and their move to a more commercial footing;
 - co-ordination between staff in the TBA unit and SPA unit;
 - the regularity of the review of the investment performance of the institutional funds managers contract.

ACT Gambling and Racing Commission

- 3.68 The ACT Gambling and Racing Commission is an independent statutory authority to control, supervise and regulate gambling and racing activities in the Territory. The responsibilities of the Commission incorporate the ongoing development and implementation of an integrated regulatory framework for all gambling activity in the ACT. The Commission also monitors and funds research into the social effects of gambling and of problem gambling.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Budget Paper No 4, p 137

¹¹⁵ Budget Paper No 4, p 419

3.69 In response to questions on gambling revenue in the ACT, the Commission advised:

I guess the budget papers will give you an idea of the tax revenues. Our annual report publishes a range of statistics in relation to gaming. That is probably your best source. Also, our annual community contributions report, which deals with gaming machines only, provides a fair break-up of the detail on the level of activity and actually gives it on a venue basis as well.¹¹⁶

3.70 In relation to trends in gambling revenue, following the introduction of blanket smoking bans in enclosed spaces, the Commission advised that there had been approximately a 10 per cent decrease in revenue, which was less than the impact in other states.¹¹⁷

3.71 Revenue from ticket lotteries was advised to include:

- taxes on ticket sales – 26-28 per cent from NSW Lotteries and 30 per cent from Tattersalls; and
- unclaimed prizes of around \$300,000 per annum from Tattersalls from ticket sales in the ACT which are rebated to the ACT.¹¹⁸

ACT Insurance Authority

3.72 The ACT Insurance Authority:

- is the insurer of Territory risks and takes out insurance for Territory risks with other entities;
- settles claims in relation to Territory risks;
- takes action for realising, enforcing, assigning or extinguishing rights against third parties arising out of the Territory's business;
- develops and promotes practices for the management of Territory risks;
- advises the Treasurer about insurance and the management of Territory risks; and

¹¹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 648

¹¹⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 649

¹¹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 651

▫ administers the Default Insurance Fund.¹¹⁹

3.73 The major issue for consideration was the review of compulsory third-party insurance in the ACT. The Authority advised:

The ACT CTP scheme has been around for many years. The underpinning legislation has not been significantly amended since 1948. Since that time, there has been a rapid advance in all different manner of inputs that go to understanding the concepts behind statutory insurance—compulsory third-party and things like that—motor vehicle design, governance, prudential regulation, and health outcomes and things of that nature.

From the insurance perspective, as a technical statutory insurance product, the abiding themes that insurers brought to the table were consistency and certainty—and that the legislation as it presently stood did not provide them with that...

The proposal to the government—which in principle the government has accepted—is this: insurer licensing, regulation and premium regulation provisions, which the ACT will be asked to enact, will be identical with the provisions that apply in New South Wales under the compulsory third-party legislation in that state. And as far as claims management is concerned—and claims processing controls, legislative controls—we will be asking the government to adopt the Queensland compulsory third-party scheme provisions in that regard.

The relevance of Queensland is twofold. First, it is more aligned with the philosophy in the ACT about victims, claims, benefits and things like that. In addition, it is pretty much consistent with the claims procedures that we already have in the Wrongs Act for normal tort claims. So it is not a quantum leap; it is merely an incremental change which will make life a bit easier for lawyers in adjusting to the scheme.

In addition, six out of the seven insurers who offer product in New South Wales offer product in Queensland. Our objective is that the regulatory side will be controllable under New South Wales principles and the claims side under Queensland principles; the barriers to entry for future entrants will be

¹¹⁹ Budget Paper No 4, p 429

lowered; and, hopefully, we will get better premiums, better outcomes and a more streamlined administration of the scheme.¹²⁰

- 3.74 The principle of early intervention leading to better health outcomes was emphasised.¹²¹ The Committee noted that the largest compensation claims are due to litigation against medical providers.
- 3.75 So far as the general approach to insurance for government was concerned, the Authority advised that:
- ⇒ the balance for government is to decide on how much risk is acceptable for the government to take on board and how much it should pay to have somebody take away the remaining risk;
 - ⇒ because of their tax base governments can afford to take on much larger levels of risk than say households;
 - ⇒ the ACT's insurance regime is designed to try and cover off those catastrophic losses but at the same time not spend too much on premiums.¹²²
- 3.76 In relation to the impact the catastrophic losses from the 2003 bushfires, the Authority advised:
- ⇒ the Authority has managed to keep excesses at or around the same level that existed prior to the bushfires;
 - ⇒ the most significant change is to the cap on public liability, which was \$5 million in aggregate in any one year and which is now capped at \$5 million excess for each and every public liability claim.¹²³
- 3.77 The Committee noted that the Authority appeared to have no risk management plan with regard to climate change.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, pp 653-5

¹²¹ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 655

¹²² Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 658

¹²³ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, pp 658-9

¹²⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p

ACTTAB Limited

- 3.78 ACTTAB's principal objective is to maintain and grow its share of the national gaming and wagering market.¹²⁵
- 3.79 While the Committee heard evidence from ACTAB Limited there were no issues of note to be raised in the report.
- 3.80 However, the Committee notes that ACTAB had expressed concern in relation to losing market share to the Internet and other forms of gambling. ACTAB therefore, places emphasis on good customer relations and sponsoring community events such as Sunday in the Park.¹²⁶

Exhibition Park Corporation

- 3.81 Exhibition Park Corporation is a statutory body, established to manage, develop and maintain a multi-purpose exhibition and event centre [EPIC] of national standard for the ACT community and region.¹²⁷
- 3.82 In relation to proposed plans for expansion, the Corporation advised:

The Exhibition Park Corporation has currently before the ACT government a proposal to increase the land holding at Exhibition Park by the possible granting of block 751 Gungahlin. We have been assured by the government that consideration of this and a decision will be given to us within the next quarter and that will enable us then to decide finally what we are going to do with the progression of the venue, be it expanding facilities into the additional land or reconfiguring the current land holdings.¹²⁸

Rhodium Asset Solutions Limited

- 3.83 Rhodium Asset Solutions Limited provides fleet management services to the ACT Government, private and Australian Government agencies.¹²⁹ Rhodium is

¹²⁵ Budget Paper No 4, p 455

¹²⁶ ???

¹²⁷ Budget Paper No 4, p 499

¹²⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 665

¹²⁹ Budget Paper No 4, p 589

a discontinued agency, with a sale to the private sector imminent but not finalised, as anticipated, prior to the end of the financial year. The financial statements contained in Budget Paper No 4 reflect the Government's then intention to finalise the sale prior to the end of the financial year, but must be read with caution as the figures contained in the budget paper were such as to ensure that negotiations not yet finalised were not compromised. The financial statements were adjusted to take account of the sale process:

As a result, Rhodium's assets and liabilities have been removed to reflect the sale of the company as a going concern. This adjustment has been reflected as an expense in Rhodium's Operating Result, Hence, the operating loss shown for the company in 2006-2007 reflects this transaction, rather than an underlying loss on operations.¹³⁰

- 3.84 The Committee explored the impact on the Territory arising from problems with the operation of Rhodium and were advised that the \$5.75 million anticipated loss had been updated to a slight operating profit.¹³¹
- 3.85 The Committee also queried whether the part sale of Rhodium was considered and was advised that the optimum way to progress the sale was to sell Rhodium as a going concern, with its private sector business and the ACT government fleet contract, which is what had been offered to the market.¹³²
- 3.86 In response to questioning on whether the Chief Minister or previous fellow shareholders had at any time either formally or informally given Rhodium, its CEO or any of its directors any guidance as to the broad strategic direction Rhodium would take, the Treasurer stated:

The Treasurer has ministerial responsibility for Rhodium and essentially takes the lead on issues relating to Rhodium. In the time of most significance to Rhodium I have been Treasurer now for just over a year. In relation to issues around Rhodium's future and strategic direction, the previous Treasurer was the shareholder with day-to-day ministerial responsibility for Rhodium.

Having said that, as a shareholder of Rhodium I was engaged and in receipt of advice from Treasury in relation to the management of Rhodium. I also received briefings from Rhodium and, yes, I have received and held wide-ranging

¹³⁰ Budget Paper No 4, p 589

¹³¹ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 851

¹³² Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 852

discussions with the chairman and board of Rhodium in relation to its strategic direction.¹³³

- 3.87 The Chief Minister, responding to a request for an assurance that local dealers would be given preference for Rhodium's business following its sale, declined to comment on a matter which was the subject of a current tender process.¹³⁴
- 3.88 In relation to concerns about the propriety of actions of the Rhodium Board, the Chief Minister stated:

I have always responded very positively to the way in which Bob Samarcq and the board responded to issues in relation to the activities of the then CEO. I believe the board acted entirely appropriately in relation to the significant issues of concern—appropriately, which means, I think, in a timely fashion. This now is some history. I would have to go back as I do not have a full recollection, but my recollection at the time, my strong memory now and my strong, continuing view is that the board acted in an exemplary manner on becoming aware of the issues of significant concern that have beset Rhodium. I personally have no concerns.¹³⁵

Business and industry development

- 3.89 Output Class 2, business and industry development, provides programs, initiatives and business policy advice to support strategic business and industry development in the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 13

- 3.90 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government outline its future plans for the Information and Communications Technology, space science, biotechnology, public administration, environment industries and other industries outlined in the Economic White Paper.**

¹³³ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 853

¹³⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 854

¹³⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 855

4 ACT EXECUTIVE

4.1 The ACT Executive comprises the Chief Minister and other ministers appointed by the Chief Minister. The ACT Executive has powers under the *Australian Capital Territory (Self Government) Act 1988* to govern the Territory and execute and maintain enactments and laws. Strategic priorities for the budget period include 'setting government policies and implementing strategies to support the delivery of those policies'.¹³⁶

4.2 Major issues canvassed by the committee included:

- increased staff to support the Executive and human resources issues in the Chief Minister's Department [CMD], including the appointment to the Chief Executive position in CMD;
- community inclusion board;
- Narrabundah long stay caravan park compensation payments;
- communications strategies; and
- arts funding.

Staffing issues

4.3 The Chief Minister, in response to repeated questioning about the timeframe for the engagement of the Chief Executive and consequences of the delay in making the appointment, emphasised that, in order that budget preparation proceed as smoothly as possible, he had decided to delay action on an appointment. He stated:

... the time lines for the engagement of the new chief executive of the Chief Minister's Department and of the Treasury were set by me to meet my priorities, and that is not a matter for speculation or comment by one of my officials.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Budget Paper No 4, p 19

¹³⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 745

- 4.4 The appointment of a new Chief Executive for CMD was canvassed with the Treasurer and is considered in Chapter Three of this report.
- 4.5 In response to questioning in relation to additional staffing numbers, the Chief Minister advised that the extra funding was necessary to support an increasing workload and the increasing complexity of issues faced by the governments.¹³⁸

These will be staff provided for the assistance of ministers in pursuance of their duties and responsibilities.¹³⁹

Community inclusion board

- 4.6 The Community Inclusion Board [CIB], an initiative of The Canberra Social Plan, exists within the Chief Minister's Department and provides high-level social policy advice to the ACT Government on the causes of, and remedies for, poverty and social exclusion in the community. In response to concerns expressed by the Committee about the work of the Board, the Chief Minister advised:

The ACT Community Inclusion Board is no longer involved in the detailed assessment of grant applications in the way that it was. It has changed as a result of representations made to me by Ms Lin Hatfield Dodds when she assumed the chairmanship of the ACT Community Inclusion Board. She approached me about a change of direction and focus for the board. She felt that the involvement of the board in the detailed assessment of grant applications was distracting the board from what she regarded as a higher-level priority: the provision of advice to government on issues around inclusion, not so much the administration of a funding scheme.¹⁴⁰

- 4.7 The Chief Minister further advised that the Board was 'a dedicated source of external expertise for the government on issues of community inclusion or social policy'.¹⁴¹ The Chief Minister agreed with the Committee that the CIB's public profile needed to be raised.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 738

¹³⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 739

¹⁴⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, pp 755-756

¹⁴¹ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 756

¹⁴² Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 751

Narrabundah long stay caravan park rental and compensation payments

- 4.8 In relation to questions about the tenure for the residents at the Narrabundah Caravan park and finalisation of the proposed land swap deal, the Department advised:

The detailed arrangements for the tenure are subject to a recent agreement that has been agreed by Dytin—as all agreements with the tenants have to be. Housing ACT has all of the details of the agreement. Essentially, they have until, I think, next February, which is when the agreement with Dytin was to be completed—when the lease from Dytin to the ACT at this stage expires...I spoke to Mr Zivko in Croatia recently, and to his lawyers, about the fact that the national capital plan is to be amended. There will be a variation to the territory plan to cover that contingency so that the residents have all the assurances they need. Mr Zivko is returning to Australia in the near future, and we have agreed to meet soon after he returns.¹⁴³

- 4.9 The Committee notes that the transaction has been a complex one, involving the ACT Government, the Commonwealth and the owner of the caravan park. Nevertheless the Committee congratulates the ACT Government for intervening to prevent the loss of approximately 200 affordable homes.

RECOMMENDATION 14

- 4.10 **The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister provide to the Legislative Assembly an update on the future of the Narrabundah long stay caravan park.**

Communication strategies

- 4.11 The Committee examined the Chief Minister on a number of communication strategies, including:
- ☐ The development and distribution to every Canberra household of a whole-of-government newsletter at a total cost of approximately \$67,000 or 42 cents per copy;

¹⁴³ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 757

- The cost of advertisements in the Canberra Times advertising the ACT Budget.
- 4.12 The Chief Minister took the latter matter on notice. The response provided the following information:
- known advertising campaigns at the time of the hearings include a Medicare change of address campaign budgeted at \$240,000 over two years and a counter-terrorism public information campaign, budgeted at \$225,000 over four years. Both of these campaigns were the subject of successful budget bids. No other campaigns have been planned at this stage;
 - the current campaign communicating the 2007-08 Budget cost \$117,164 (pre-GST).¹⁴⁴
- 4.13 Other matters pursued included:
- the Live in Canberra campaign;
 - preliminary coordination of the Centenary of Canberra celebrations; and
 - the Medicare campaign.
- 4.14 The Medicare campaign is being undertaken to ensure that people who move to the ACT change their address for Medicare purposes. The desirability of doing so relates to the basis for the determination of population statistics, which is undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] and on which the Commonwealth Grants Commission relies for its determination of annual special purpose payments. The implications for grants funding received by the ACT were stated as follows:

The bottom-line implication of that, let alone the implications in relation to planning, for instance around land release, is that that has cost us around \$10 million a year in grants which we did not receive from the commonwealth—because our population, as revealed on 4 or 5 June, is in fact 5,700 higher than the grants commission, most particularly, had assessed it to be. That was worth \$10½ million in this financial year which we did not receive, and \$10½ million next year which we would not have received but which we now will.

¹⁴⁴ Question on notice, E07-136

In a situation where we have just forgone tens of millions of dollars in commonwealth grants, we believe that it would be sensible for us to expend a couple of hundred thousand dollars—I think it is a great investment if, for every person that registers, you can get an additional rightful fund from the commonwealth in relation to grants¹⁴⁵

- 4.15 The Committee was critical of the spending of \$117,000 on an advertising campaign to promote the budget. The Committee considers that such expenditure items should be transparent and fully accountable to the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Arts funding

- 4.16 Funding for the:
- ANU Institute of the Arts – the Canberra School of Art and the School of Music;
 - the establishment of a sinking fund for the maintenance of public art, which had not previously existed;
 - Belconnen Arts and Cultural Centre
- 4.17 In response to a question on notice, the Committee was advised that the ACT Government provides \$1.3 million in funding to the ANU's School of Music for community-based music activities.¹⁴⁶
- 4.18 The Committee notes that the funding to ANU makes up the bulk of funding for music-related activities in the ACT, with \$650 000 provided for key music organisations and over \$200 000 to one-off music projects. However, the Committee notes that Music ACT, a live music advocacy group identified by the ACT Government as a key contributor to a viable live music scene in Canberra, has received no government funding or support.

¹⁴⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 767

¹⁴⁶ Question on Notice E07-296

RECOMMENDATION 15

- 4.19 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review its funding for music events to ensure that organisations such as Music ACT, which maximise the involvement of community members receive funding consideration.**
- 4.20 The Committee questioned the Minister about its consultation with Woden Community Council in relation to public art works, given that Woden Town Centre has been long neglected in the provision of arts facilities and public artwork.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 784

5 JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

5.1 The Department of Justice and Community Safety seeks to maintain a fair, safe and peaceful community in the ACT. Its services aim to maintain the rule of law, the Westminster style of democratic government, and the appreciation of human rights in the relationship between government and the community; protect and preserve life, property and the environment, provide for effective and cohesive emergency management of the State Emergency Service, Fire Brigade and Rural Fire Service; and implement and enforce legislation covering regulatory functions of government.¹⁴⁸

5.2 The Justice and Community Safety portfolio includes the following output classes:

- Justice services;
- Corrective services;
- Courts and tribunals;
- Legal aid commission;
- Independent competition and regulatory commission;
- Public trustee for the ACT.

Victims of crime program

5.3 There are two primary mechanisms to provide assistance to victims of crime. The Victims of Crime Assistance League, a community based organisation, attracts a funding grant in the ensuing financial year of \$166,000. This is an annual grant and, in line with other community grants, is indexed to the CPI.

5.4 Additional assistance in the order of \$500,000 has been provided to a court based victims assistance program. The Minister advised that the additional expenditure would be raised through a fee on court-imposed fines and traffic infringement notices with the exception of parking infringement notices. The fund is to be administered by the Victims of Crime Coordinator, with the

¹⁴⁸ Budget Paper No 4, p 231

primary focus on improving counselling and support for victims of crime in a timely manner.¹⁴⁹

- 5.5 The Minister further advised that the rationale for the hypothecated funding system stemmed from the principle that those who breach the law at a particular threshold pay for the support provided to the people who are victims of people who breach the law.¹⁵⁰
- 5.6 The Minister also advised that the expanded use of hypothecated charges might be explored further over the ensuing 12 months.¹⁵¹

CCTV network

- 5.7 The Committee notes the funding of a feasibility study into the ACT's CCTV network of \$245,000 this coming financial year and \$105,000 after that.¹⁵² The study is to determine the cost of expanding the network, identify the extent to which the public and private networks might be linked and to identify priority sites:

We are looking at measures to improve the coverage of the security camera network in the interchanges—that will be done as part of this feasibility study—and in other parts of the town centres. We will also be looking at other areas in the town centres in Woden, Belconnen, Gungahlin and Tuggeranong.

It is not just the interchanges; it is also the other areas of high people gathering, mass gathering and people movement. We will also look at potential for further expansion at Manuka Oval and Canberra stadium—and also at EPIC, at Exhibition Park in Mitchell. Those are all areas that will be subject to further consideration—along with expansion in the city centre itself. The city centre coverage is limited to a particular area; the feasibility study will allow us to fully understand the scope and the potential cost of an expansion. That will allow the government to make some decisions in next year's budget about what sort of expansion can be funded.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 155

¹⁵⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 157

¹⁵¹ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 157

¹⁵² Budget Paper No 3, p 108

¹⁵³ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 160

5.8 In response to questioning and concerns about the lack of money identified in the out years, the Minister confirmed that there would be expansion of the network.¹⁵⁴ He stated:

There is a committee of cabinet that meets regularly to oversight and monitor these matters specifically and to receive reports from respective agencies, both ACT and, where appropriate, external agencies, on security issues facing the Canberra community. CCTV is considered to be an important tool, one that we want to expand... In my view, there is no doubt that we will see further expansion in the coming budget and budgets after that. But it is important to note as well that it is a normal part of the budget process that feasibility is the first step before you move to committing public funds for construction. In that respect, it is no different from any other capital works activity.¹⁵⁵

5.9 The Minister identified priority sites for immediate installation as Canberra Stadium, Manuka Oval and the Jolimont Centre. While the bus interchanges already had a level of security surveillance in place, the Minister acknowledged that, while it was not optimal, the work that the government was now doing was to identify how surveillance at the interchanges could be improved.¹⁵⁶

Human Rights Commission

5.10 The new Human Rights Commission has absorbed the functions of the former ACT Human Rights Office and the Community and Health Services Complaints Commissioner's Office, as well as having new functions in the area of disability services, and in relation to children and young people.

5.11 The Commission promotes the human rights and welfare of people living in the ACT and was established to provide an independent, fair and accessible one-stop shop for complaints of unlawful discrimination, and complaints regarding health services, services for older people, disability services and services for children and young people, as well as facilitating service

¹⁵⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 159

¹⁵⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, pp 161-162

¹⁵⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 160

improvement and developing awareness in government and the community about human rights.¹⁵⁷

- 5.12 The Committee focused its questioning on the challenges which had arisen as a result of combining the previously disparate functions into one office. The Human Rights Commissioner advised:

I think the commission has been operating well. The commissioners have definitely got a commitment to human rights and we have been working as best we can. There has been a slight challenge in joint consideration of complaints, and we are still working on that. An example would be that some health complaints have a discrimination aspect and it is very difficult to have a joint process. At the moment it is more a parallel process and, of course, they end in different areas. Our complaints end in the discrimination tribunal if they are not resolved and with various medical boards with a health complaint. That is still work in progress, I think, but we are gaining more experience the more often we do that.¹⁵⁸

- 5.13 In relation to staffing the Committee was advised:

- There would ultimately be a full time complement of 20.6 staff, including the 3 commissioners;
- A Secretary/Manager had recently been appointed and this position had assumed much of the administrative workload previously the responsibility of the commissioners.

- 5.14 The Committee expressed concern about the workload of the Commissioner for Children and Young People. The Committee was advised that recruitment action was currently taking place, but that in terms of complaints received, the Commissioner advised:

The issues that have come up for me so far in relation to children and young people have all been fairly public ones, focused on issues of bullying, violence. In terms of complaints received, at the moment there has been very little formal complaint in relation to children and young people. There have been two formal complaints, both relating to the provision of education services, that I have had to date.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.hrc.act.gov.au/>

¹⁵⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 167

¹⁵⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 166

Legislative drafting

- 5.15 Increased funding in output class 1.2 was explained to be for workplace relations and in-sourcing of legal advice in the government solicitor's office, which previously may have been undertaken externally:

The increased funding is for additional legal staff, to bring in some additional expertise in relation to workplace relations itself, which was an area of work that, by and large, my office was not undertaking, and also to better centralise within my own office work that previously was spread out through the different practice areas in my office. People were doing that work at the cost of other work that they were more specialised in. It was to centralise it within my office and to more effectively deliver those services for government as a whole. Previously a number of agencies outsourced it to private law firms on an ad hoc basis, which led to a lack of consistency of outcomes, a lack of regard for whole-of-government outcomes and some quite significant expense. That underpinned the budget initiative which has led to this resourcing proposal.¹⁶⁰

- 5.16 The Committee also noted the increased funding for the upgrade and maintenance of the Legislation Register.

Office of the Public Advocate

- 5.17 The Public Advocate ACT has a range of statutory functions and powers with respect to children and young people, and adults with a mental illness or impaired decision making ability, who require protection from abuse, exploitation or neglect. The Office has responsibilities to promote, and individually represent, the best interests of people who are not able to protect or represent their own interests.
- 5.18 While the Office is quite a small operation, the Public Advocate, in response to questioning from the Committee, advised that increasing demand and complexity across the board for their particular client group was contributing to the need for more resources, including staff.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 177

¹⁶¹ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 188

- 5.19 The Committee is concerned that there appear to be insufficient resources for the Public Advocate to undertake the full range of statutory responsibilities appropriately.

RECOMMENDATION 16

- 5.20 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase the level of resourcing to the Office of the Public Advocate.**

ACT Electoral Commission

- 5.21 The ACT Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority with the responsibility for the conduct of elections and referenda for the ACT Legislative Assembly and for the provision of electoral advice.
- 5.22 In response to a question about accountability indicators, the Electoral Commissioner advised that the Department [JACS] had rationalised the accountability indicators some years previously, taking the view that the indicators that relate to the Commission are those things that happen during an Assembly election time and those indicators only appear in budget papers following an ACT election. The Commissioner further advised that the Commission reports more fully in its annual report to cover the apparent lack of accountability indicators in the budget papers, given that while elections only occur once every four years, the work of the Commission is far broader than that one election and that much preparation goes into the next election, commencing from the conclusion of the previous one and includes holding elections for organisations on a fee for service basis.
- 5.23 The Electoral Commissioner listed on a number of initiatives for the upcoming election:
- The provision of more electronic voting facilities at pre-poll voting centres;
 - replacing printed electoral rolls with personal digital assistants;

Essential Services Consumer Tribunal, the Consumer and Trader Tribunal, and the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission.¹⁶⁵

- 5.28 In response to a question on changes to performance measures, the Committee was advised that the basis for assessing performance had changed, that a different approach was needed given that there had been a fundamental change in the way the business was being delivered:

When we first collected these statistics the Registrar-General's Office was a freestanding organisation with a set base of costs that applied to the products that it produces. Now it is only part of a much larger amalgamated organisation and it is not possible to directly compare the costs of what was formerly the Registrar General's Office because it is now not a freestanding office that has its own costs applicable only to business registrations and births, deaths and marriages. They are now amalgamated with a series of other functions so that you cannot simply identify the costs of the Registrar-General's Office in isolation from the costs of the rest of the Office of Regulatory Services. It is no longer a freestanding unit with its own separately identified cost base.¹⁶⁶

- 5.29 The Committee considers that the accountability indicators for the Office of Regulatory Services are insufficient and need to be more comprehensive.

RECOMMENDATION 17

- 5.30 **The Committee recommends that accountability indicators for the Office of Regulatory Services be reviewed, with a view to ensuring that they are more comprehensive. In particular, they should include complaints about mortgage services and the level of compliance with workers' compensation regulatory schemes.**
- 5.31 In response to a question on notice about complaints about mortgage providers, the Committee was informed that there have been seven complaints against credit providers/finance brokers and that of these complaints, one provider was the subject of five of these, and one finance broker was being prosecuted for not being licensed. The Committee was advised that the Commissioner for Fair Trading can suspend registration for those legal entities convicted of an offence.

¹⁶⁵ 2007-2008 Budget paper No 4, p 236

¹⁶⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 201

RECOMMENDATION 18

- 5.32 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government maintain a watching brief on the finance industry in regard to mortgage defaulting.**

ACT Corrective Services

- 5.33 The Committee focused on questions about the progress of the prison project, projections about prisoner numbers and costs of the project, including costs per prisoner.
- 5.34 The Minister advised:
- The estimated budget and expenditure per annum on prisoners and remand and sentenced prisoners in NSW prisons was subject to some variation, given that prisoner numbers fluctuate significantly and are generally difficult to predict;
 - The Alexander Maconochie Centre was on track for completion in mid-2008, albeit without the quiet area and gymnasium.
- 5.35 In response to a question in relation to the construction of the health facility and the finalisation of the health plan, the Minister confirmed that the health plan had informed the design of the medical facilities. He further stated:
- The physical space that is being signed off on and is under construction has been agreed between health and corrections, and that enables us to proceed with construction while the detail of medical services is in its final stages of deliberation.¹⁶⁷
- 5.36 In response to a suggestion that projected prisoner numbers were being overstated the Committee was advised:
- We had projected the number of beds required on opening as being 220. You would think that, as of today, we may fall short of that, but you would need to be pretty brave to put your hand on your heart and say that it is definitely going to happen. Those of us who operate the facilities would, of course, always like to have as many beds as we think the government can afford to

¹⁶⁷ Transcript of evidence, 19 June 2007, p 207

give us, to give us more flexibility and so on. But at this point, given 300 beds and given our projection of 220, I would think that come this time next year—and this is only a guess—we would be looking at opening up with something less than 220 prisoners... But it is only a guess. It is very difficult to pin it down. The variables include what the courts are doing.¹⁶⁸

- 5.37 The Committee was also concerned that the cost per bed appeared to have increased markedly. The number of beds in the facility had been reduced from 374 to 300, which in broad terms would mean that the cost per bed had increased from \$340,000 to about \$425,000. The Minister responded that there had been no blow-out in the project cost, although he did acknowledge that there were going to be fewer beds:

Yes, we are delivering fewer beds than we originally anticipated. The reasons for that are not poor financial management on the government's part; they are increased construction costs associated with the ACT construction market. The cost of materials and labour has increased significantly since the budget allocation was first made. Therefore, the government had two options: one was to reduce the scale of the project; the second was to increase the appropriation.¹⁶⁹

- 5.38 The Committee was further advised that operational costs remained as estimated at \$20 million, a figure which was based on the staffing that is required to run the facility and the services to be provided. The costings are to be further refined closer to the opening date, but ' it is a figure which is pretty much comparable to what we outlay now in New South Wales and what we outlay now at the Belconnen Remand Centre and the Symonston Temporary Remand Centre'.¹⁷⁰

RECOMMENDATION 19

- 5.39 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table in the Legislative Assembly a progress report which includes: a) an analysis of the original design and construction costs; b) what facilities will be**

¹⁶⁸ Transcript of evidence, 19 June 2007, pp 209 - 210

¹⁶⁹ Transcript of evidence, 19 June 2007, p 212

¹⁷⁰ Transcript of evidence, 19 June 2007, p 213

available at opening and the cost thereof; c) an itemisation of which facilities have been deferred/excluded from the contract and the costings related to those facilities; and d) any additional capital works which might be required for any other facilities planned for future construction.

RECOMMENDATION 20

5.40 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table in the Legislative Assembly by the end of September a report on the range of recreation facilities, together with an outline of research undertaken about the decisions surrounding those facilities. The report should also include any health and wellbeing plans.**

5.41 Other issues canvassed included:

- ⊖ Community service orders;
- ⊖ Prisoner tracking systems;
- ⊖ ACT prison project sustainability plan;
- ⊖ Some aspects of the physical design of the prison.

ACT courts and tribunals

5.42 The Committee considered the following issues:

- ⊖ Capital upgrades to court buildings, including to the security system in the Supreme Court;
- ⊖ Independence of judicial officers;
- ⊖ Accountability indicators and the difficulty of meeting targets
- ⊖ Parking voucher system.

5.43 The Committee notes that it appears that the data system in the courts is still not sufficient. The Committee considers that a better data system is required to enable the courts to provide appropriate information on cases, including bail applications.

RECOMMENDATION 21

5.44 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government proceed with the acquisition and installation of an updated data system as a matter of urgency.**

5.45 During the hearing, the Attorney General indicated that the Government intended to conduct a review of the Coroner's Act, but that it would not be supporting the establishment of an independent courts authority.¹⁷¹

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission

5.46 The Committee questioned the ICRC on pricing arrangements for retail electricity customers, particularly in relation to the recently announced price rises. The Committee was concerned about the extent to which social and environmental impacts were a factor for consideration in price setting. The ICRC advised that s 20 of the ICRC Act required the Commission to take into consideration a range of issues including social and environmental impacts.

5.47 While the ICRC was able to justify electricity price rises in economic terms, the Committee considered that they failed to explain to what extent social factors, especially the impact of the rises on people on fixed or low incomes, was a consideration in determining the final price rise.

Legal Aid Commission

5.48 The Committee explored a number of issues with the ACT Legal Aid Commissioner, including the profile of legal aid recipients and the types of grant made.

RECOMMENDATION 22

5.49 **The Committee recommends that better data about the types of matters funded and the profile of recipients be made available.**

¹⁷¹ Transcript of Evidence, 19 June 2007, p 226

5.50 The Legal Aid Commission's output class 1.2 is titled 'In-house legal payments', which includes all legal expenses which are not a direct payment to external legal practitioners.

RECOMMENDATION 23

5.51 **The Committee recommends that the output class 1.2, 'In-house legal payments' be renamed 'In-house services.'**

Other organisations

5.52 The Committee also spoke with the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Public Trustee and has no comment on their evidence.

6 POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

- 6.1 Following the functional review of 2006 and the re-organisation of certain agencies, emergency services, previously a statutory authority, is now an agency within the justice and community safety portfolio.
- 6.2 The ACT receives police services under a contract arrangement with the Australian Federal Police [AFP] pursuant to the ACT Self Government Act and the AFP Act.

Emergency services

- 6.3 The portfolio elements relating to emergency services comprise:
- protection and preservation of life, property and the environment;
 - effective and cohesive emergency management of the State Emergency Service, Ambulance Service, Fire Brigade and Rural Fire Service [RFS].¹⁷²
- 6.4 Major issues pursued included:
- relocation of all elements of emergency services to Fairbairn;
 - ambulance and paramedic services;
 - volunteer fire brigade matters;
 - emergency services Information and Computer Technology [ICT] matters;
 - and
 - the Firelink communications system.

Relocation of Emergency Services to Fairbairn

- 6.5 The Government has previously announced a decision to relocate all elements of Emergency Services to a site owned by the Capital Airport Group at Fairbairn. To date, only the RFS headquarters and some training elements are have been located on that site. The Minister attributed the delay to:

¹⁷² Budget paper No 4, p 231

... issues relat[ing] primarily to the detailed negotiations that ESA have to undertake with the Capital Airport Group, who are the owners of the land and the buildings proposed to be relocated to. The government is looking closely at the costs associated with that relocation—what will be our obligations in relation to the fit- out, repair and maintenance of what are extremely old buildings...

We also need to secure appropriate and sufficient information from the Capital Airport Group about the state of those buildings, in particular issues around some substances in the buildings that may have been a cause of concern, such as asbestos.¹⁷³

6.6 The Minister further stated that:

The ESA has undertaken a comprehensive look at all of the basing options for the headquarters. That will be the subject of final consideration by government in the next couple of months to allow the project to proceed.¹⁷⁴

6.7 While the Minister defended the decision to relocate the ESA to Fairbairn, arguing that it had given the RFS premises which it had previously not had access to at the Curtin location, he was cautious about committing to a final move to Fairbairn by the remainder of the Emergency Services elements. The Minister suggested that there were issues around cost, the condition of the buildings and the optimal outcome for the Territory. He did, however, state that, ultimately, it was the Government's objective to have all the agencies in one location.¹⁷⁵

6.8 In relation to rental paid for the site, the Minister advised that rental had been paid on all buildings on the site for only 'a couple of months' while rental had been paid on the building occupied by the RFS since occupation.

RECOMMENDATION 24

6.9 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide a detailed explanation for the delays in relocation of all elements of emergency services to the Fairbairn site.**

¹⁷³ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 307

¹⁷⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 307

¹⁷⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 308

Volunteer fire brigades

- 6.10 Following the functional review, the ESA became an agency within the Department of Justice and Community Safety and underwent a significant re-structure, headed by a Commissioner and two Deputy Commissioners, one responsible for emergency management, including the fire brigade, SES and RFS and one responsible for ambulance and support functions.
- 6.11 The volunteer fire brigades earlier this year expressed concern at the re-structure, arguing that having all three emergency services reporting to one deputy commissioner was problematic. A large number of volunteer firefighters then handed in their resignations from their captain/deputy captain positions as a protest.
- 6.12 The Committee pursued this matter with the Minister and his officials, who advised:

The particular concerns expressed by the brigades and the volunteer brigades, being the RFS, have been identified and we have dealt with them. The outcome is that we will continue with the structure, as proposed. We will review the structure pre the fire season and also next June. That is the current proposal that we have agreed to make sure that the structure is actually delivering on what both parties want, and that is an operational system which is effective and which seeks to ensure that community safety is protected. So we have reached agreement on the structure going forward as it is, but we have put in place some proper review mechanisms.¹⁷⁶

- 6.13 The Commissioner further advised that the operational command and management, as set out in the Emergency Services Act, remained unchanged, as was the role of the chief officers, who were to be called 'deputy commissioners', who would have direct autonomy to manage incidents according to the legislation.¹⁷⁷ The Minister stated that he had been notified that all resignations had now been withdrawn.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 320

¹⁷⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 321

¹⁷⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 317

- 6.14 The Minister did not accept the assertion that, by channelling the line of responsibility through JACS, the Government had set the organisation back to pre 2003 'with the same elongated bureaucratised chain of command'¹⁷⁹ and had lessened the responsiveness of the ESA.

Information and Computer Technology projects

- 6.15 In relation to questioning about funding for FireLink and the ongoing implementation of that project, the Minister advised that the Government was reviewing all Emergency Services ICT projects:

...as a consequence of decisions made by budget cabinet last year to do with the integration of ESA as part of the broader justice portfolio, the government agreed to do a complete examination of all of the ESA's ICT projects. That includes FireLink, it includes TRN, and it includes a range of other projects that are underway or have been implemented...¹⁸⁰

- 6.16 The Minister advised at the hearing that he was awaiting final advice from that review as to the continuing deployment of those networks. The Committee notes the media release of 13 July 2007, in which the Minister announced that the ESA would not be persisting with the Firelink system as it was 'unsuitable for the ESA's ongoing operations'. The Minister directly criticised the procurement decision of the Agency, stating in the media release that:

There has been significant inadequacies scoping and management [sic] by ESA in the past developing the program.¹⁸¹

- 6.17 The Committee has concerns about the communications infrastructure within the emergency services agency. The Committee notes that this is under review.

¹⁷⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 321

¹⁸⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 324

¹⁸¹ Media Release, ESA and ACT Government, *Firelink system withdrawn from operation*, 13 July 2007

RECOMMENDATION 25

- 6.18 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, undertake an independent review of the procurement process for the purchase and implementation of Firelink.**

Ambulance services

- 6.19 The Committee notes with approval the expenditure on the provision of four new ambulances. In response to questioning from the Committee on whether money had been set aside for the outcome of the enterprise bargaining negotiations, including the possible restructure of ambulance officers and paramedics into the health professional class, the Minister responded that it was not possible to disclose specific amounts prior to the finalisation of negotiations, but that the Government was negotiating in good faith.¹⁸²
- 6.20 The Committee further notes that out of 185 pregnancy related incidents attended by ambulance officers, 12 resulted in out of hospital births.

RECOMMENDATION 26

- 6.21 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that ambulance officers and paramedics are fully trained and equipped to deal with these contingencies.**

ACT Policing

- 6.22 Police services are contracted from the Australian Federal Police [AFP], with payments being made to ACT Policing, a branch of the AFP, for the provision of police services to the ACT community. The services include the protection of persons and property, crime prevention and detection, maintaining peace and good order and the enforcement of ACT laws.¹⁸³ The quantum of the budget for 2007-2008 is \$117,280 million.¹⁸⁴
- 6.23 The major issues canvassed by the Committee included:

¹⁸² Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 305

¹⁸³ Budget paper No 4, p 238

¹⁸⁴ Budget paper No 4, p 238

- Police numbers and recruitment;
- Crime statistics and targets/performance indicators;
- Prioritisation and application of resources.

Police numbers and recruitment

6.24 The Committee welcomes the provision of additional funding in the budget for the second tranche of recruitment of 44 additional police officers in the ACT, bringing the numbers of additional police funded since 2004 to 107.¹⁸⁵

6.25 In relation to questions about the nature of the additional police numbers, the Chief Police Officer [CPO] advised:

In fact, they will all be front-line police officers. They will all be bolstering our general duties police officer strengths at police stations. They will be contributing to increasing our average patrol strengths from 10 officers plus a supervising sergeant to 12 plus a supervising sergeant for each station for each shift. Which means, effectively, when all that is in place, that at any one time there will be an extra four patrol cars on the streets of Canberra fully crewed.¹⁸⁶

6.26 The Committee was interested in assessing how many additional police were actually operational as a result of the increased funding. The CPO advised that recruitment was an ongoing process, that resignations and retirements created vacancies that also had to be filled; there was therefore a constant recruiting process in place. This meant that it was not simply a matter of identifying specific additional numbers but that it was more useful to look at full time equivalents [FTE], that the best approach to estimating numbers was to 'look at the average over time and come in as close as we can to the FTE'.¹⁸⁷ He further advised:

...in preparation for the increase of 43 plus the attrition that I have just mentioned, we currently have four recruit courses of new members for ACT Policing specifically in the police college at Barton. Their numbers total 71. We also have scheduled at this point in time a further six courses that will

¹⁸⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 304

¹⁸⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 332

¹⁸⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 334

commence from next month progressively through till February, and we are negotiating with AFP learning and development for more courses in anticipation of making sure that by the end of the financial year we come on target to the new FTE, including the 43 that government has funded.¹⁸⁸

6.27 The Committee was advised that, while establishment numbers were 829, actual establishment was 827, of which 620 were sworn officers. The additional numbers of police funded over the previous two budgets would mean an additional four vehicles at any one time on the road by June 2008.¹⁸⁹

6.28 In terms of attracting applicants to join the AFP and ACT Policing in particular, the Committee was advised that the AFP currently had over 3,000 unsolicited applications to join the AFP from all over Australia. While the majority of these were likely to be for the national side of the AFP, ACT Policing was nonetheless desirable:

If you join the ACT Police you know you are within a geographical area, plus, as personal circumstances change, there is the opportunity to move into the other forms of policing that you describe, including international work. So it is a very attractive. I think we benefit over the states in that the national side of the AFP is an attractant. Some people choose to come to ACT Policing because they like the sort of work that we do here—the general grassroots of policing, I guess—but they know that there is that opportunity in time to move into other parts of the AFP, some of which are quite attractive.¹⁹⁰

RECOMMENDATION 27

6.29 **The Estimates Committee notes that the AFP is currently reviewing the policy around police ranks and recommends that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services table a copy of final ranking structure for ACT Policing.**

¹⁸⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 334

¹⁸⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, pp 354-5

¹⁹⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 337

Police workforce profile

- 6.30 Again, the issue of retention of experienced staff was an issue for the Committee. The CPO advised that ACT Policing:
- was experiencing a slight increase in the cadre of officers in the four to seven-year experience group;
 - ACT Policing had just completed a round of promotions to band 8, which is the top band of sergeant, with some consequential promotions to sergeant;
 - 43 constables had been promoted to senior constables.¹⁹¹
- 6.31 The CPO was positive in his outlook for ACT Policing, stating:

Insofar as the overall experience level in policing in the ACT is concerned, I believe—and this is my professional opinion—that it is manageable. We have a relatively young work force but I regard that as a positive because these are very enthusiastic, very committed mature people. They are not straight out of high school. The average age is well into their mid to late-20s and they have had previous life experience, which is invaluable. And that is right across the board in Australian policing.¹⁹²

Crime statistics and performance indicators

- 6.32 The budget papers contain strategic indicators for a safe community and state:

Although neither the Department nor the ACT Government can control all of the factors that impact community safety, this can be measured by examining the level of crime against people and property and whether the justice system deals with offenders in a way that reduces the risk of further offending.¹⁹³

- 6.33 Level of crime against the person is measured by the number of offences against the person reported or becoming known per 100,000 population. Similarly, the level of crime against property is the number of offences against property reported or becoming known per 100,000 population. The targets for

¹⁹¹ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 335

¹⁹² Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 335

¹⁹³ Budget Paper No 4, p 239

these indicators are set against the average level of crime reported or becoming known to police in the preceding three years.¹⁹⁴

- 6.34 In relation to a question about the refinement of the indicators to establish specific targets, and whether this meant categories of crime would be deleted or changed, the Department advised that:

There isn't any intention to take categories of crime out of the targets. What the last sentence is referring to is that in the medium term a desirable objective is to establish some targets that can be used to measure actual reductions in the level of crime. But as Mr Hughes has indicated, the whole business of the relationship between policing and crime prevention is not a completely straightforward one. In some areas of crime the numbers of police available won't have any impact at all on the sorts of things that Mr Hughes has referred to. In others, increasing numbers of police will sometimes increase the level of reporting of crime and so there will be an appearance that crime, at least crime that is measured by what becomes known to police, may appear to increase. But in measuring the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system you will nevertheless have achieved outcomes that ensure that crime comes to the attention of police and is brought to the authorities in the justice system... So the reason that indicator is at the moment set against the average level of crime reported or becoming known is because that is an indicator that we can establish with a reasonable degree of precision. But over time we will look at whether we can refine that indicator so that it is establishing targets that are about what we think we can achieve by way of levels of reduction of crime.¹⁹⁵

- 6.35 The Committee queried some target figures, particularly in relation to motor vehicle thefts, the target for which had seemingly increased by several hundred thefts. The Department responded:

I am advised that we put out a correction to those figures in last year's budget papers because they had been incorrectly calculated. I do not have that correction with me but I will confirm with you on notice what the basis for that was... It is because the calculation of the figures was on a cumulative

¹⁹⁴ Budget Paper No 4, pp 239-40

¹⁹⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, pp 333 - 4

basis rather than on a linear basis. The figures in this year's report are the correct figures.¹⁹⁶

6.36 The Committee was also concerned about response times for police called out to incidents. The Minister advised the following:

- There are four priority categories and two levels within each of those categories;
- the most urgent responses are for priority 1, with the first tier being responded to within eight minutes and the second within 12 minutes. ACT Policing meet the first tier and only just fall short of the second tier;
- for priority 2, the response is within 20 minutes for the first tier, the target is 60 or more per cent, with a result to date of 76.9 per cent;
- for priority 2, the response is within 30 minutes for the second tier, a 95 per cent or more achievement, and the current year-to-date figure is 86.5 per cent¹⁹⁷
- priority 3 and priority 4 response times were not meeting targets.¹⁹⁸

Area police stations and staffing

6.37 In relation to the upgrade of area police stations, the Committee was advised that \$1.2 million in funding had been allocated to do the forward design for a new Belconnen police station, preparatory to the erection of a new building located near the Winchester Centre. The Committee was also keen to know about plans for a permanent police presence at Gungahlin and was advised:

There is a 24-hour police coverage of Gungahlin. At certain hours of the day that coverage is provided by the office at Gungahlin and other times it is provided from the mother station at Belconnen. Increasing the presence of numbers in the station itself is not necessarily going to give any real extra coverage, because that is all done quite effectively from Belconnen.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 331

¹⁹⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 354

¹⁹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 362

¹⁹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 340

6.38 The Committee was also advised that the city watch house operations had been the subject of review, to be released during the following week. The review conducted an assessment of every aspect of watch-house policies, practices and procedures²⁰⁰ and was released on 26 June 2007. The CPO advised:

There are some options to consider in respect of the staffing arrangements. We are looking internally at the rostering practices in the watch-house at the moment. Commander Close is managing that process. We are trying to ensure that the coverage is appropriate for the work that the watch-house does.²⁰¹

6.39 In elaborating on how staffing arrangements are determined, the Minister advised:

It is important to stress that what the joint study concluded was about the number of additional officers that were required for ACT Policing to meet the requirements of ACT Policing and policing the ACT. Where those officers were to be deployed is a matter for ACT Policing. The government does not allocate funding and then say, "This money is for traffic, this money is for investigations, this money is for the watch-house," and so on. We do not do that. We allocate the total numbers; we fund the total numbers. It is an operational decision for the CPO and his team to decide how that is carved up.²⁰²

6.40 The Committee commends Minister Corbell on his decision to release a number of policing reviews and commencing to act on their recommendations.

²⁰⁰ AFP media release, 26 June 2007

²⁰¹ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 341

²⁰² Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 341

7 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 7.1 The Department of Education and Training provides school education and training services for residents of the ACT and surrounding communities. Departmental services include the provision of government school education; registration of non-government schools, registration for home education; planning and co-ordination of vocational education and training [VET], and the provision of preschool and early intervention education programs.²⁰³
- 7.2 The Education and Training portfolio comprises the following Output Classes:
- government school education;
 - non-Government education
 - vocational education and training
 - Canberra Institute of Technology;
 - CIT Solutions Pty Ltd; and
 - Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority.
- 7.3 The Department of Education and Training [DET] undertakes the delivery of government school education and preschool and early intervention education services, the registration of non-government schools and home education, and the planning and provision of vocational education and training.

Government School Education

- 7.4 Major issues pursued included:
- school closures;
 - teacher numbers;
 - student movements;
 - P-2 schools
 - bullying and violence in schools
 - accountability indicators for literacy and numeracy;

²⁰³ Budget Paper No 4, p 357

▫ capital works funding and achievement gaps

School closures

7.5 The committee questioned the Minister about equity ramifications of the 2020 plan and was informed that these had been taken into account. The Committee also asked whether in light of the budget surplus, the decisions were in hindsight necessary.

RECOMMENDATION 28

7.6 **The Committee recommends that the Auditor-General investigate whole of government economic costs and gains incurred by the school closures and amalgamations.**

Teacher numbers

7.7 The Minister advised, as a result of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, the following impacts on teacher numbers in government schools:

...as a result of the EBA there was a decrease of 43 teachers in colleges and high schools—22 in high schools and 21 in colleges as a result of the productivity offsets, as arbitrated by the private arbiter through the last EBA round—and that the practical effect in terms of staffing in schools as a result of the EBA was a decrease of 21 positions in colleges and 22 in high schools. So we have 17 high schools and 22 fewer positions...²⁰⁴

7.8 In relation to questions around the Government's election commitment for funding of \$12 million in 2004 for the provision of pastoral care, student support and student welfare in government high schools, the Minister advised that the commitment related to the creation of a student support program for high schools with additional resources of at least two full-time professional staff to address pastoral care, student support and student welfare.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, p 254

²⁰⁵ Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, p 255

Student movements

7.9 The issue of the transfer of students from the government to the non-government school sector was of interest to the Committee. The Department advised:

During 2006 we had nearly 35 per cent of students move to another ACT government school; around 10 per cent moved to a non-government school; 31 per cent moved to another school outside the ACT; and about seven per cent left the school for employment reasons.²⁰⁶

7.10 The Department further advised that a survey was being developed to explore the reasons for student movements:

That survey will capture information on the sector that the child has moved to, the reasons for moving, the basis on which that decision was made by the parent or carer and suggestions and improvements to government school education that they see from a parental perspective.²⁰⁷

7.11 The scope of the survey is to encompass students who have left an ACT government school, excluding:

- those who left a school that was closed at the end of 2006 or proposed to be closed in 2007-08; and
- Year 12 students.

7.12 The Committee also pursued issues around support for students who had been required to transfer to another school. Specific areas canvassed included:

- Financial assistance to students to cover such items as school uniforms and bus passes; and
- Monitoring during the transition process through individual transition plans overseen by individual principals.

²⁰⁶ Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, p 256

²⁰⁷ Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, p 256

Use of Hall and Tharwa school buildings

7.13 Questions around the future use of school buildings, especially those at Hall and Tharwa were put to the Minister, with the suggestion that some of the school buildings, several of which were heritage listed, could continue to be used for some form of education.

7.14 The Minister advised, in relation to the building at Tharwa, that it was being used as a pre-school facility and therefore remained a government asset. However, in relation to other buildings, he responded that the general policy applicable to assets surplus to requirements applied, ie:

As the buildings are government assets, if they are no longer required for a school, we will make a determination of appropriate use. That process is being handled by the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Mr Hargreaves. As the properties are surplus to the education department's requirements, they are transferred to the property group within the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, and Minister Hargreaves has announced a consultation process around the future use of those sites.²⁰⁸

P-2 schools

7.15 Concern was expressed about the move to the provision of P-2 schools and the impact on such schools as Narrabundah, with a large indigenous population. The Minister advised that the provision of P-2 schools, which provided a small school environment for the early years, in five locations around Canberra would be a positive addition to the diversity of the public education system, especially for those parents who had concerns about larger schools.²⁰⁹

7.16 The department official set out the policy and development framework around these schools:

...each of these sites will act as regional hubs providing integrated services for children nought to eight. They are underpinned by a great wealth of evidence and research evidence about building the

²⁰⁸ Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, p 264

²⁰⁹ Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, p 266

foundation for the future. They look at improving transitions for children and families between home and settings in those early years. They help to build strong families and communities. They support vulnerable children and families and use a whole-of-government approach to link and deliver services to children and families.

... In the ACT we need to remember that each setting is going to be unique. As the minister has outlined, the O'Connor cooperative is a particular setting. We need to ensure that each school will be unique and provide a mix of services that is responsive to the local community and setting.²¹⁰

Bullying in schools

7.17 The incidence of bullying in schools was also a concern. The Committee queried the Minister about the statistics collected on incidents:

- what kinds of statistics were collected,
- what statistics were reported; and
- where were these statistics reported.

7.18 The Minister detailed some statistics which had been collated for the preceding financial year and also the reporting framework which had been introduced. In relation to statistics, he further advised that from 1 June 2006 to 31 May 2007 there were 59 incidents in ACT government schools. He stated:

...there is a requirement for principals within schools to telephone the school director immediately when a critical incident occurs within an ACT school, to report that incident and to follow that up with a written report to the education department within 24 hours...I have sought to strengthen those reporting frameworks...by requiring principals to consult with the directors of schools in relation to the reporting of those incidents and whether or not they are ones that should be reported to the police.²¹¹

²¹⁰ Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, p 266

²¹¹ Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, pp 267-8

7.19 He further advised that a process of auditing all schools for compliance with the policies was in place.

7.20 In relation to the particular circumstances when police might be called to a school, the Minister advised:

There are obviously, under the criminal law, a variety of situations whereby police are required to be involved, and schools will comply with the law as regards those issues. I suppose the point you are homing in on, and this is a difficult aspect, is that at some point someone has to make a judgment call about what constitutes a level of violence. It could well be that people's interpretations will differ on that, and there is a human element in this. That is why I think it is important that the processes involve an elevation to the directors of schools to involve the department in a higher level way than was previously the case.

The previous policy essentially left it entirely in the hands of principals and/or deputy principals to make a judgement call. I think it is important that we have in place a process now that requires the immediate contacting of the director of schools by telephone to advise of an incident...

I think it is important, as I say, that we have in place the policies and procedures that enable a higher level of departmental involvement to ensure a greater consistency in response. One of the things that have been identified throughout this process is that, by leaving matters to individual schools, we were getting inconsistent responses...

But it is important that there is that higher level involvement. This policy addresses that particular issue and requires principals to raise the issue immediately with the director of schools—we have three: southern, central and northern—and then to provide a written report within 24 hours. That puts in place a greater degree of accountability than was there previously.²¹²

Accountability indicators for literacy and numeracy

7.21 There was some concern about the lowering of accountability indicators in literacy and numeracy, particularly for indigenous students. The Minister

²¹² Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, p 271

explained that not all targets had been lowered, that the underlying basis for the methodology... for the changes of targets is around looking at a five-year analysis of trends in each of those performance indicators'²¹³.

- 7.22 The Minister further advised that the Commonwealth had agreed to fund the development of national benchmarks for literacy and numeracy, in order to determine benchmarks and to assess achievement against the national benchmark.

Achievement gaps and capital works funding

- 7.23 In response to questioning about injection of capital funds and how that related to addressing gaps in achievement between high and low achieving students and between students from high and low socioeconomic status backgrounds, the Minister stated to the Committee that:
- ⇒ investment in quality infrastructure and quality learning environments had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning;²¹⁴
 - ⇒ a number of researchers—for example, Professor Brian Caldwell and Greg Whitby from the Catholic Education Office—had called for greater investment in school infrastructure to make schools more suitable for teaching and learning in the 21st century;²¹⁵
 - ⇒ funding was being allocated for a new performing arts centre for Lyneham High School to underpin the continued growth of their music program.²¹⁶
- 7.24 The Minister also advised that Belconnen High School had requested a new gymnasium, stating:

There is a lot of evidence that links the quality of physical education programs with improved academic performance, and particularly in engaging students, boys in particular, at the high school level who might be prone to underachievement. Quality physical education programs—and there

²¹³ Transcript of evidence, 20 June 2007, p 272

²¹⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 275

²¹⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 276

²¹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 277

is significant evidence of this both in Australia and overseas—have a very positive impact in terms of improving academic performance.²¹⁷

- 7.25 The Minister also emphasised that the budget contained the largest ever amount of recurrent funding for public schools in the history of the ACT.²¹⁸
- 7.26 In relation to non capital works initiatives, the Minister advised that there had been an extension of the secondary bursaries scheme, to expand into years 7 and 10.

Government special education

- 7.27 The degree of the interaction/co-operation between Therapy ACT and the Department of Education in the delivery of services to children identified as 'special needs' was an issue for the Committee. The Minister advised that, while Therapy ACT provided services across a wider band than early intervention ones, they also came into the early intervention units and helped identify referrals for medical assistance.²¹⁹

Amalgamation of pre-schools with primary schools

- 7.28 Some concern was expressed over the closure of stand alone pre-schools as part of the school re-structure program. The Minister responded by saying:

You have to make a balanced decision about how many buildings you will operate, and about the effectiveness and the quality of the education programs that you can offer stretched across that many sites. It was overwhelmingly clear that the quality of preschool education was suffering because it was being spread so thinly across so many sites. On average, the recurrent savings each year for a preschool site are \$26,000. That money is now available and has been reinvested in preschool education in the territory.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 277

²¹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 20 June 2007, p 276

²¹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 511

²²⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 514

Non-Government education funding

7.29 Budget Paper no 4 shows figures which are not indicative of the total funding for non-government education in the ACT.²²¹ The Committee sought clarification of the figures and the Minister advised that the total funding amount of \$40.5 million had been allocated in the budget. The revenue and expenses for non-government school grants appear as part of the territorial statements on page 386 of Budget Paper No 4 and do not appear with other budget amounts in the Department of Education and Training's section. The Committee considers that the unavailability of these figures within this section is unhelpful and unnecessarily confusing. The Committee therefore considers that the budgeted amount for non-government schools should be included within the Education and Training section of BP4 for accessibility and transparency purposes.

RECOMMENDATION 29

7.30 **The Committee recommends that the ACT budget allocation for non-government education appear in output class 2 within the Department of Education and Training's section of Budget Paper No 4.**

RECOMMENDATION 30

7.31 **The Committee recommends that Commonwealth funding for government and non-government schools be separately itemised in the budget papers.**

RECOMMENDATION 31

7.32 **The Committee recommends that figures be provided by national average and the average for all States and Territories in relation to non-government school funding.**

²²¹ Budget paper No 4, p 361

- 7.33 In response to a question about the composition of the \$143 million estimated outcome for 2006-2007 and \$162 million for 2007-2008²²², for grants to non-government schools, the Department advised that the figure comprised \$40.5 million this year from the ACT government and \$122.5 million from the Commonwealth.²²³
- 7.34 The Minister also advised that, while it was not possible to target Commonwealth grant funds, the government did have the ability through targeted grants programs to seek particular outcomes in the non-government sector. As an example, the proposed budget contained an additional \$1 million to provide additional support in the non-government sector for students with a disability.²²⁴
- 7.35 The Committee also explored the issue of proportionate increases to school funding, from the Commonwealth, the ACT Government and parents. It was suggested that, in relation to one particular school:
- It may not be absolutely typical, but the long and short of it is that for this school over the period 1999-2007 commonwealth grants have increased 62 per cent, ACT grants have increased 30 per cent and parent contributions to the school have increased 100 per cent..²²⁵
- 7.36 The Minister responded that, in 1996-97 Commonwealth funding to non-government schools was \$46,668,000 and under the 2007-08 budget, it had risen to \$122,570,000—a 163 per cent increase in funding for non-government schools, while over the same period funding from the Commonwealth for government schools increased from a base of \$27 million in 1996-97 up to \$42 million in 2007-08.²²⁶

²²² Budget Paper No 4, p 386

²²³ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 486

²²⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 486

²²⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 494

²²⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, pp 494-5

Vocational education and training

- 7.37 The Education Department provides planning, funding, managing and reporting services for VET opportunities, programs and initiatives in the ACT, including the setting of strategies and policies for the VET and higher education sectors. Registration and monitoring services are conducted for VET providers and private higher education providers. VET is planned in consultation with industry and community groups to predict industry trends and identify the future training requirements of the ACT.²²⁷
- 7.38 Major issues considered included:
- The Breakthrough 500 program
 - Industry links
 - Skills Commission
 - Year 12 vocational college
 - Industry Training Advisory Boards

Breakthrough 500 program

- 7.39 The Minister advised that the Breakthrough 500 program was a target to achieve 500 new Australian school-based apprenticeships in 2007 to 'offer students the opportunity to achieve a nationally recognised vocational qualification by combining paid work and training as part of their education'.²²⁸
- 7.40 The Minister noted that the program offered significant advantages in that they provided industry specific skills, thereby enhancing their employability. A further advantage was providing students who otherwise might have left school early with an incentive to continue their studies and to achieve a senior secondary certificate.²²⁹

²²⁷ Budget paper No 4, p 362

²²⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 518

²²⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 518

7.41 The Committee was generally concerned about the issue of skills shortages and government initiatives to tackle these, specifically initiatives to engage with industry to predict industry trends and identify future training needs. The Minister advised the Committee that:

I think the industry advisory practices that are in place now are very useful and provide that direct advice to government, and that is being backed by additional resources in this year's budget.²³⁰

7.42 The additional resources included:

- ⇒ legislative change around industry involvement in the CIT advisory board,
- ⇒ additional funding through this year's budget for user choice training, involving an injection in the order of \$6.2 million over the next four years;
- ⇒ \$1.5 million per annum will be available for vocational education and training grants.²³¹

Industry Training Advisory Boards

7.43 The Department confirmed that Industry Training Advisory Boards [ITABs] had been retained, but that there was also a body called the ACT Industry Training Advisory Association [ACTITAA] which was established to provide direct industry advice back to the ITABs. A tender had been called for, 'seeking of a group of people to provide that direct industry advice as well as consult with other stakeholders like community groups, indigenous groups and other equity groups'.²³²

7.44 The department advised that \$250,000 per annum had been allocated for the sourcing of industry advice, but no funding went to the six ITABs, which were in the areas of building and construction; hospitality and tourism; community services and health; transport, distribution and utilities.²³³

²³⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 519

²³¹ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 519

²³² Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 521

²³³ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 531

Skills Commission

- 7.45 The Department advised that it had met with the Skills Commission on three occasions since the Commission's inception in October 2006, that five working groups had been established, each of which was undertaking a range of research in order develop recommendations for consideration.²³⁴
- 7.46 The Committee understands that the Skills Commission will be reported on in the Chief Minister's annual report, as well as an interim report being provided to the ACT Government shortly. Once this report has been tabled the Committee considers that the composition of the Skills Commission might be revisited.

Year 12 vocational college

- 7.47 The Committee was interested in the what would be involved in the development of a year 12 vocational college in the territory. The Minister advised it would be a collaborative arrangement, involving multiple delivery sites:

It wouldn't be a new building. Looking along the lines of a VET equivalent to the ANU secondary college perhaps in the broadest terms would be how I would describe that, but it would clearly involve working with the CIT and pulling together a range of programs that are available already within our college system.²³⁵

- 7.48 In relation to this matter, the Department advised:

...all our colleges are registered training organisations to begin with and, indeed, run a series of VET courses, with the opportunity for students to obtain dual accreditation. In fact, for this year we are anticipating that about 63 per cent of our year 12 students going through will come out with a VET qualification. That is very high. If you look at the statistics, they have been very encouraging over the last number of years for those who are going on to

²³⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 526

²³⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 531

year 12 but using the college system and coming out with dual qualifications.²³⁶

- 7.49 The Committee was advised that approximately 63% of students complete year 12 with a VET qualification in both the government and non-government sectors:

...many of them choose to finish with a VET qualification as well as their year 12 qualification. It enables students to go along the VET path and they can re-enter later. I know that the CIT also has provision for the completion of the year 12 certificate. So the boundaries between what were traditionally post-compulsory settings and indeed the institution of schooling, I think we are giving a good crack at breaking those down from a student point of view by allowing that flexibility.²³⁷

Canberra Institute of Technology [CIT]

- 7.50 The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) reports directly to the Minister and provides vocational education and training services within the ACT. At the outset the Minister mentioned to the Committee that for 2006 the CIT achieved all of its major performance targets.²³⁸ The Committee explored a number of areas of operation, focusing on:

- the future of the Weston campus;
- the CIT master plan; and
- staffing levels

Future of the Weston campus

- 7.51 In relation to the future of the Weston campus and of horticulture and related trades, the Minister advised that funding of \$1 million had been provided for a feasibility study into the possible relocation of the Weston campus to the Bruce campus.²³⁹ The Minister further advised that matters for consideration included:

²³⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 532

²³⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 533

²³⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 535

²³⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 535

- level of student support services that can be delivered at the Bruce site as compared to the Weston site; and
- the issue of the condition of the infrastructure and the ageing of the Weston facilities.²⁴⁰

7.52 The proportion of the \$1 million to be devoted to the feasibility study vis-à-vis the design had yet to be precisely determined.²⁴¹ The process comprises:

- appointment of a project manager, who will be a member of CIT staff to work on the project full time;
- discussions with staff, firstly, at Weston then with staff across all the campuses, as part of the master planning exercise at Reid; and
- writing to those stakeholders who are involved and have an interest in our operations at Weston, including industry and community groups, many of which we already have a strong association with in CIT's existing operations.²⁴²

RECOMMENDATION 32

7.53 **The Committee recommends that there is a commitment by the ACT Government to maintain funding for the Weston campus while all future options for this site are evaluated.**

7.54 In terms of the future 'master plan' for the location of CIT training, the CIT advised:

What we are looking at for the future would be to have our headquarters at Reid, to continue to deliver from our Woden campus and the Bruce campus, and then to have a presence associated with the new Gungahlin college. We already have a small presence, through our flexible learning centre in the arts centre, in Tuggeranong, but the minister has raised the possibility of us having some form of presence, potentially with the University of Canberra, on a redeveloped Kambah site.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 535

²⁴¹ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 536

²⁴² Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 537

²⁴³ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 538 Please note that the Fyshwick site is also part of the future plan [p 539]

7.55 The Minister further advised:

Lahz, Nimmo, Spackman and Mossop are undertaking that master planning exercise for us. They will have that work completed in August-September. We will then have to give further consideration as to how then we want to proceed. I think it is fair to say that the site at Reid on Constitution Avenue is just a fantastic site. The changes to the Griffin legacy planning enable us to look at redevelopment of some of the buildings, possible new buildings on site, car parking, student accommodation and, most importantly, the possibility of opening up some of our training facilities with public access, in the right sort of way, onto Constitution Avenue.

The Minister has mentioned the links with St John's. We are in discussions with them. They are also doing a master planning exercise, looking at water capture and having some jointness, if you like, in terms of the design, pedestrian flows through from one site to another and so on. So I think it is a particularly exciting possibility for us to reinforce Reid as the centre of CIT operations into the future.²⁴⁴

Staffing levels

7.56 The Committee noted that staffing levels had decreased by 15 from the previous year.²⁴⁵ The Committee queried the reason for this, given the importance of training people with skills in vocational education. The Minister responded that, as part of the EBA, there was a reduction in the number of casual teaching positions, comprising:

- nine FTE positions, which could amount to 18-20 actual casual positions;
- three positions linked to productivity efficiencies; and
- three positions which were no longer required after an internal reorganisation.²⁴⁶

7.57 The Committee is concerned that the EBA requires staff reductions at a time when the ACT is suffering skills shortages.

²⁴⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, p 550

²⁴⁵ Budget Paper No 4, p 466

²⁴⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 22 June 2007, pp 539-40

8 HEALTH

8.1 ACT Health plans, provides and purchases community based health services, major trauma and tertiary health care, managing public health risks and promoting health and early care interventions.²⁴⁷

8.2 The Committee met with the Minister for Health and officials from ACT Health on 29 June and discussed the following output classes:

- acute care
- mental health services
- community health services
- public health services
- cancer services
- aged care and rehabilitation services
- early intervention and prevention.

8.3 The committee notes that health costs in the ACT have been growing at an average rate of more than 10 per cent per annum, due, in part, to the ageing population but also to the high costs of maintaining a skilled workforce and keeping abreast of new medical procedures and technologies.²⁴⁸

8.4 The Minister informed the Committee that the overall budget for ACT Health this year would exceed \$800 million. Some of the major areas targeted include:

- increased access to elective surgery
- increasing hospital or acute care beds
- mental health initiatives
- chronic disease management
- capital expenditure such as new car park at the Canberra Hospital [TCH].

²⁴⁷ Budget paper No 4, p 151

²⁴⁸ Budget Paper No 3, p 21

8.5 The Minister also informed the Committee of the government's commitment to rein in some of the costs. With growth for this year's budget in dollar terms, down from 6.4 per cent to 5.1 per cent, ACT Health would be relying heavily on the measures that are underway to improve the overall efficiency of the health system.²⁴⁹

Hospital Services

8.6 Acute care, including inpatient, outpatient and emergency department services are provided, by the government, through The Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital with the key strategic priority being the delivery of "timely access to effective and safe hospital care services".²⁵⁰ Areas of concern raised by the Committee are outlined below.

8.7 The Committee noted that reducing waiting lists and waiting times for elective surgery was a key priority, concern was expressed for the 30 per cent of patients who did not receive their treatment on time.²⁵¹

8.8 The Committee inquired about the strategic indicator that looks at the number of unexpected re-admissions to hospital within 28 days of discharge. The Committee was advised that, while both hospitals were performing well in this area, a number of strategies had been implemented to reduce hospital acquired infection, an increasing cause of re-admissions.²⁵²

8.9 The Committee questioned the reduction in employment figures between 2006 – 2007 and 2007 – 2008. The Committee was advised that the revised figures reflected a move from reporting on a head count basis to a full-time equivalent basis. The Committee was further advised that that there had been a 7.1 per cent increase in the number of FTE nurses with a separation rate of 7.6 per cent.²⁵³

8.10 In addition, the Committee was concerned about the working conditions and morale of nurses, particularly in the emergency departments. The Minister

²⁴⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 964

²⁵⁰ Budget Paper 4, p 153

²⁵¹ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 966

²⁵² Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 969

²⁵³ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 981 - 983

advised that the medical assessment and planning unit had been established in a bid to relieve some of the pressure, by working with the complex cases that present at emergency departments.²⁵⁴

- 8.11 The Committee was pleased to note the new patient administration system had been fully implemented.²⁵⁵
- 8.12 The Committee noted that the ACT per-patient costs were the highest in Australia, at around 20 per cent above the national benchmark. The Minister agreed that this figure was too high and that ACT Health had set a target to come within 10 per cent of the benchmark within the next five years. The Minister advised that the higher costs were mainly due to salaries.²⁵⁶
- 8.13 The Committee was interested in the ACT Government's involvement in the recent report *Caring for Our Health*, signed off by state and territory health ministers. The Minister informed the Committee that officers from ACT Health took part in the work and provided information. The report was intended to provide information on where health dollars are spent. One of the issues highlighted in the report was that the shift in resourcing to private health insurance had not eased the burden on public hospitals.²⁵⁷
- 8.14 The Committee was advised that the ACT is currently in arbitration with NSW over cross-border agreement, which provides payment for the treatment of NSW residents in ACT hospitals. The Committee sought assurance from the Minister that the ACT would receive full payment from NSW. The Committee was advised that investment in NSW regional hospitals around Queanbeyan and the South Coast may help to control/limit the flow of cross-border patients.²⁵⁸ However, the Committee notes that 30 to 40 per cent of cancer patients come from NSW which must impact on ACT health costs. This

²⁵⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 972 - 973

²⁵⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 977

²⁵⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 979

²⁵⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 986 - 987

²⁵⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 990 - 991

element of ACT health costs should be prominent in the cross-border agreement.²⁵⁹

- 8.15 The Committee was concerned, that despite the considerable funding allocations, the services provided through the emergency departments and elective surgery waiting times rated extremely poorly against other jurisdictions. The Minister accepted there was further work to be done, particularly in the area of improving efficiencies in the emergency departments.²⁶⁰ The Committee was also concerned that bulk billing rates in the ACT, at around 52%, were still well below the national average of around 74%, further impacting on emergency departments.²⁶¹
- 8.16 The Committee questioned why there was not more outsourcing of services to the private sector to reduce waiting times. The Committee was advised that the private sector is used, when appropriate, to clear long waits particularly for 'low urgency and relatively simple procedures' and that, while the private sector provided assistance, it was not always readily available or in a position to do the work.²⁶²
- 8.17 The Committee questioned the costs of surgery in the private sector compared with Canberra Hospital [TCH]. The Committee was advised that, as a major trauma centre, elective surgery can be interrupted when emergency cases are brought in. Despite such pressures, the Committee was informed the cost of the bulk of the elective surgery performed at TCH is lower than in the private sector.²⁶³
- 8.18 The Committee also explored the movement of hospital discharge planning from the Link team in Community Health to the hospitals. The Committee was advised that the intention was to improve reporting and clinical accountability

²⁵⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1033

²⁶⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 970 - 971

²⁶¹ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 990

²⁶² Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 996

²⁶³ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 996

and health outcomes, with the remaining staff on the Link team to continue to provide rapid response and after-hours community nursing services.²⁶⁴

- 8.19 In relation to the potential to deliver acute care services in patients' homes, the Committee was further advised that 4 per cent of acute bed days reported for hospitals were provided in people's homes through the Hospital-in-the-Home program. The Government indicated that it continually considers new models of care, such as delivery of acute mental and other health services in patients' homes.²⁶⁵
- 8.20 The Committee acknowledges the fine work done by Calvary Hospital and Canberra Hospital to bring down costs.

Mental Health

- 8.21 Working with its community partners, Mental Health ACT provides integrated and responsive mental health services; including hospital-based specialist services, supported accommodation services and community based responses.²⁶⁶
- 8.22 An amount of \$12.6 million has been allocated for improved mental health services over four years to go towards community supported accommodation as alternatives to hospitalisation. Such initiatives include an adult step-up step-down facility; enhanced access to community mental-health care; additional qualified and skilled staff; and greater in-patient capacity.²⁶⁷
- 8.23 The Committee noted that, while there was \$1.2 million in the budget for planning for the *High Secure Mental Health Inpatient Unit* there was no further budget allocation in the outyears for the actual building of the unit.²⁶⁸
- 8.24 Recognising that police involvement may be required when dealing with mental health patients, the Committee was explored the memorandum of understanding [MOU] between Mental Health ACT and the AFP. The

²⁶⁴ Question on Notice E07-125

²⁶⁵ Question on Notice E07-127

²⁶⁶ Budget paper No 4, p 153

²⁶⁷ Budget paper No 3, p 38

²⁶⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1000

Committee was advised that the MOU sets out the roles and responsibilities between Mental Health ACT, TCH and the AFP. Police receive some training through ACT Mental Health and some through their own resources. To ensure that the MOU accorded with the ACT Bill of Rights the Committee suggested that it should be reviewed by the ACT Human Rights Commissioner.²⁶⁹

RECOMMENDATION 33

8.25 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Human Rights Commissioner be asked to examine the Memorandum of Understanding between Mental Health ACT and the AFP to ensure it accords with the ACT's Human Rights Act.**

8.26 With a specific allocation for a 24 hour adult step-up step-down facility the Committee was interested in the detail of how this was to be developed and managed. The Committee was advised that while no final decisions had yet been made, it was intended that the facility would be managed by a community organisation. The Committee noted that funds allocated in last year's budget for a 24 hour step-up step-down facility for young people proved to be insufficient and required top-up funding this year.²⁷⁰

8.27 While the Youth Coalition of the ACT applauded the commitment by the ACT Government to spend up to 12 per cent of the health budget on mental health, they did plead for an adolescent in-patient unit which was not currently being considered.²⁷¹ On this matter, the Minister for Health suggested that the demand was not yet sufficient to prioritise that facility but that it was an issue for consideration in the future.²⁷²

Accountability measures

8.28 The Committee questioned why the accountability indicators measuring "percentage of clients with outcome measures completed" was so low. The Committee was informed that a range of factors impacted on this data

²⁶⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 1002 - 1003

²⁷⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1003

²⁷¹ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 37

²⁷² Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1004

gathering from technical issues to staff practice. As the data is used to support clinical processes as well as feeding into national minimum data sets, the Committee feels that accuracy is a priority.²⁷³

- 8.29 There is a workforce shortage in mental health nurses and the Department has taken a number of steps to address this matter. These include undertaking discussions with the University of Canberra [UC], regarding the provision of post graduate qualifications in mental health nursing, a desirable objective for the longer term. With the current shortage of nursing staff, the Committee questioned the department's ability to deliver on the budget initiative aimed at providing more mental health nurses in the emergency department at TCH.²⁷⁴

Appropriate housing for people with a mental illness

- 8.30 The Committee was advised that:

- there is an MOU between the departments of Health and Housing, with regular quarterly meetings being held;²⁷⁵ and
- mental health representation is also now included in the weekly group meetings that deal with priority housing and training initiatives are shared across the agencies.²⁷⁶

- 8.31 The Committee discussed housing for people with a mental illness and was advised that this remains a concern, despite Housing ACT's allocation system which prioritises people with complex needs.

Mental health proportion of the health budget

- 8.32 The Committee was advised that by the end of this budget year, funding for mental health would be at about eight per cent of the overall health budget. National mental health groups have been calling for governments to commit 12 per cent of health budgets to mental health care. The perception in the community is that the ACT government has committed to this target.²⁷⁷ In

²⁷³ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1006

²⁷⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 1006 - 1007

²⁷⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1012

²⁷⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1008

²⁷⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 15 June 2007, p 37

evidence to the Committee, the Minister advised that the ACT government has committed to achieving between nine per cent and 12 per cent by 2012. The Minister conceded that reaching the 12 per cent target would require significant growth in the overall health budget, but that the investment in the in-patient facility was a step in the right direction.²⁷⁸

8.33 In response to a Committee request about the Minister's overarching vision for mental health services delivered in the ACT, the Minister advised:

....my view about mental health would be a co-ordinated, community-based approach to managing people with a mental illness with appropriate clinical and acute supports in place, should that be required. I think there is agreement around that...

If I had to sum it up, that would be my view in a nutshell—that we manage people's mental wellness in the community with appropriate community supports and providers. People recover in the community. That is where they live: in the community. It is only certain periods of time when most people need to access more acute types of supports and services. That is the system that we are well on target to putting in place. But I have to say that I would like to see some streamlining of services, particularly in the community sector. But, again, that is very hard to achieve.²⁷⁹

Community Health Services

8.34 Community Health provides a range of community based health services in a number of settings across the ACT including health promotion and clinical programs such as women's and youth health; alcohol and drug services; dental services; corrections health and Aboriginal liaison and interpreter services.

8.35 The Committee raised a number of issues in this output area including:

- the availability of childcare at the residential detoxification centre, Arcadia House;
- the health promotion fund in relation to the disbanding of the health promotion board and the use of a peer review panel that reports directly to the chief health officer;
- allocations for the dental health program; and

²⁷⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 1008 - 1009

²⁷⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 10100

- the proportion of community funding allocation that goes to TCH [ie allied health program]
- waiting lists for community health services.

- 8.36 The Committee was interested in the proposed expansion of the current youth health services located in Civic to Belconnen, Gungahlin and Tuggeranong. The Committee was advised that the funding allocation would go to tender and that, as there was no capital works allocation it was expected that the new program would use existing buildings.²⁸⁰ The Committee felt that further consultation with the sector, at this time, would have been appropriate.
- 8.37 The Committee inquired into the waiting lists for referrals to community-based health services, such as social workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and nutritionists, and was told that these were not able to be reported on until late calendar year 2008, due to delays in changing business and systems processes to enable accurate collection of the data.

Public Health Services

- 8.38 Public health services provide high quality healthcare and community services to the ACT and surrounding region including the monitoring of prevention, early intervention and integrated care services.
- 8.39 The Committee sought clarification on the programs and services provided by this output class. The Committee was assured that the provision of public health services takes an integrated approach in looking at the population's overall health. It includes:
- the fall prevention program which includes public education and nutrition, health promotion and grants programs;
 - sexual health and family planning;
 - immunisation program;
 - health protection;
 - communicable diseases and control of notifiable diseases;
 - environmental health including food inspectors; and

²⁸⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 1012 - 1013

- health promotion grants [Healthpact].
- 8.40 Having clarified the objectives and services provided by this output class, the Committee was interested to know how the department monitored the effectiveness of the programs. The Committee was advised that the Population Health Research Centre, which conducts research and evaluation, was within this division and that the main vehicle for reporting to the people of the ACT was through the Chief Health Officer's biennial report.²⁸¹
- 8.41 The Committee explored what programs were aimed at trying to deter young people from taking up smoking and also suggested that gender disaggregated data on this subject would be of interest in the budget papers. Other concerns raised in relation to young people smoking included:
- what the Minister was doing in relation to the banning smoking at the Canberra Stadium; and
 - why the figures for young smokers in ACT were higher than the national average.²⁸²
- 8.42 The Committee sought more information about the number of girls/women who were still regular smokers compared to boys/men and were advised that the data indicated that smoking rates had decreased significantly over a decade.
- 8.43 The Committee inquired into why the budget made no new allocation to Indigenous health and was told that the ACT Government was committed to implementing the ATSI Health and Family Wellbeing Plan 2006-2011, *A New Way*.
- 8.44 The Committee also asked whether the Government was planning to provide a specialised health team to deliver a range of services to ATSI prisoners as proposed by the Poroch report and was advised that the corrections health plan was under consultation at present and would need to be agreed across Government soon.²⁸³

²⁸¹ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1028

²⁸² Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 1030 - 1032

²⁸³ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1023

- 8.45 The Committee asked about funding in the Early Intervention and Prevention programs to target children in danger of becoming obese and was advised that in the previous year's budget a four year child healthy weight surveillance system was funded, the 'Go for 2 & 5' campaign, which would continue as would a number of other programs for healthy eating and play.

Oncology Services

- 8.46 Capital Region Cancer Service provides a range of screening, assessment, diagnostic, treatment and palliative care services in inpatient, outpatient and community settings.
- 8.47 The Committee was advised that demand for cancer services had been increasing for several years and was expected to continue to do so over the next five years. The number of people living with cancer in the community is also expected to increase over the next five to ten years. While additional funding had been allocated to employ more staff to manage the increase, staff shortages were a concern, particularly in palliative care. The Committee was advised that the Capital Region Cancer Service was confident of attracting and retaining appropriate staff and providing more in-house training.²⁸⁴

Aged Care and Rehabilitation

- 8.48 The Committee questioned how discharge planning would be improved to minimise the likelihood of re-admissions. The Committee was advised that improvements had been made by linking patients to community based services and developing partnerships with general practitioners.²⁸⁵
- 8.49 The Committee was informed that the reason cited for being below target in 2006 – 2007 for non-admitted occasions for service for aged care and rehabilitation has now been rectified with the recruitment of rehabilitation staff specialists.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 1033 - 1034

²⁸⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1037

²⁸⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1037

8.50 The Committee questioned officials about reasons for the delay in the completion of the sub-acute facility at the Calvary Hospital. The Committee was advised that:

There were just simply a range of delays due to competing priorities for a range of contractors, particularly involved in the finishing trades. This was at a time of a major building boom in Canberra. That did cause some difficulties in finishing the project off.²⁸⁷

8.51 The Committee queried how the increased funding for aged care and rehabilitation services would be spent. The Committee was advised the funds would go towards:

- ⇒ ensuring the new sub-acute facility was well resourced to cope with the increased demand;
- ⇒ the conversion of post-acute care beds to sub-acute care beds;
- ⇒ enhancing community-based services such as a rapid assessment service to support GPs; and
- ⇒ offering a mobile service that will visit patients in their homes and in residential care facilities.²⁸⁸

Early Intervention and Prevention

8.52 Early intervention and prevention aims to prevent health care conditions that result in major acute or chronic health care burdens on the community. This includes things such as:

- ⇒ reducing the level of youth smoking;
- ⇒ screening for breast cancer and cervical abnormalities;
- ⇒ maintaining immunisation rates for children;
- ⇒ providing screening services for children entering substitute and kinship care; and
- ⇒ providing hearing screening for newborns.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1038

²⁸⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, pp 1038 - 1039

²⁸⁹ Budget Paper No 4, pp 156 - 157

8.53 The Committee congratulated the Minister on the success of reducing waiting times for breast cancer screening but questioned the availability of alternative methods of screening for breast cancer. The Committee was advised that alternative methods for screening will be made available.²⁹⁰

RECOMMENDATION 34

8.54 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider making alternative breast screening capabilities more widely available.**

8.55 While the Committee noted the rate of 92 per cent for child immunisations it questioned why this could not be increased to full capacity. The Committee was advised that there are many reasons that prevent some children from being immunised but that 92 per cent was among the best immunisation rates in Australia.²⁹¹

8.56 The Committee notes a crossover of service provision particularly in output classes 1.3 – 1.7. As many of these initiatives and services fall within the scope of primary health care, the Committee considers that Health ACT should review the output classes for future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 35

8.57 **The Committee recommends that Health ACT review the composition of output classes 1.3 to 1.7 with a view to making them more streamlined.**

²⁹⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2007, p 1042

²⁹¹ Transcript of Evidence, p 1043

9 DISABILITY, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES; CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES; MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

- 9.1 The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services has responsibility for a wide range of programs. The Department's responsibilities include: people with a disability, social housing, children and young people, families, therapy services, carers; carers; women; ageing, multicultural affairs; volunteering; community services and facilities; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; homelessness and concessions.²⁹²
- 9.2 The Minister for Housing and officials met with the Committee on 21 June 2007, while the Minister for Disability and Community Services and officials met with the Committee on 28 June 2007.
- 9.3 The Minister for Multicultural Affairs is Mr Hargreaves, while Mr Stanhope has responsibility for Indigenous Affairs. Mr Hargreaves appeared before the Estimates Committee on Thursday, 21 June to respond to questions as Minister for Multicultural Affairs, while Mr Stanhope appeared before the Committee on Monday, 25 June for consideration of indigenous issues, both within Output Class 3.2.

Housing

- 9.4 Housing ACT's principal objective is to provide those people in the community subject to housing stress and social and financial disadvantage with safe, affordable and appropriate housing that responds to their individual

²⁹² Budget Paper No 4, p 193

circumstances and needs.²⁹³ The sole output class, 'social housing services', requires the provision and management of public housing tenancy and properties and provision of support and resources to community housing providers.²⁹⁴

9.5 Major issues canvassed included:

- Housing ACT's maintenance and property management – total facilities management;
- shared equity purchase schemes;
- security of tenure in public housing;
- resources for advocacy by community housing groups; and
- management of rental income debt levels.

Facilities management

9.6 The Department advised:

- the total facility management contract had been in place for almost two years at 1 July;
- the contract was a significant change from the previous contract, with approximately 11 key performance areas that were assessed in terms of managing the contract;
- some of the specific performance measures related to the condition of the property and tenant satisfaction, measured independently.²⁹⁵

9.7 The Committee was advised that there had been a significant improvement in tenant satisfaction with maintenance services, there being about a four per cent increase. The Department had also seen significant improvement in terms of the overall efficiency of the work being undertaken, including how some of the work between Housing ACT and the total facility management company, Spotless was managed.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Budget Paper No 4, p 337

²⁹⁴ Budget Paper No 4, p 339

²⁹⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 371

²⁹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 371

- 9.8 The Department also advised that planned maintenance as opposed to reactive maintenance had increased as a proportion of expenditure.

RECOMMENDATION 36

- 9.9 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for Housing table in the Legislative Assembly a bi-annual report on the progress of major housing projects.**

Shared equity purchase schemes

- 9.10 Questions were asked around the proposed shared equity purchase scheme initiative, being jointly developed with CMD, and in which Housing ACT will undertake to a proportion of the equity in the house while the tenant purchases the remainder through finance from a commercial institution²⁹⁷:

...the intent is that we would be providing our tenants with the capacity for them to purchase 60 or 80 per cent of the property while we retain the 20 per cent and allow them over time to grow their equity as either their mortgage repayments reduce or their financial capacity grows.²⁹⁸

- 9.11 Concerns about such schemes include:
- ☐ Maintenance of income scheme and the outcomes if income falls;
 - ☐ The proportion of equity and capital growth to be retained by Housing ACT.
- 9.12 The Department advised that, over time, tenants would be able to purchase a greater equity share from Housing ACT, that it was not intended that the outcome would be 'an unreasonable, unbalanced share of capital gain that some of the private shared equity products have'²⁹⁹.

²⁹⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 381

²⁹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, pp 381- 2

²⁹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 381

Security of tenure

- 9.13 The Committee questioned the minister about security of tenure and what that meant specifically. There was debate about the definition of the term and an apparent shift in meaning. The issue partly arose around correspondence to public housing tenants, which had alarmed a number of them by giving them the impression that they may be re-located if the housing in which they were currently accommodated did not reflect their current needs.³⁰⁰ The Committee notes that residents whose income exceeds \$80 000 for two or more years may be in danger of losing their public housing allocation.
- 9.14 The Minister advised that:
- ⇒ There were some thousands of tenants who occupied properties over entitlement and 651 people in the system who were under entitlement who needed more appropriate housing³⁰¹;
 - ⇒ There was to be no compulsion for people to re-locate, that the Department was looking to have a conversation with people who resided in properties 'over entitlement';
 - ⇒ The re-assessment was an opportunity to provide more appropriate accommodation for people who were, for example, perhaps ageing and needed a different kind of accommodation or where people who had been provided with accommodation for a disabled person and no longer required it. This would free up accommodation for those who were 'under allocated'.³⁰²
- 9.15 The Minister emphasised that no-one would be forced to leave their accommodation and he further advised that he would write to all tenants clarifying the situation.³⁰³

³⁰⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, pp 383-4

³⁰¹ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 384

³⁰² Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 385

³⁰³ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 385

RECOMMENDATION 37

- 9.16 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for Housing clarify the meaning of the term 'security of tenure' and communicate clearly to tenants its implications for their tenancies, ensuring that all tenants are consulted in regard to the changes and no tenant is disadvantaged by the changes.**

RECOMMENDATION 38

- 9.17 **The Committee further recommends that the Government make public any cost/benefit analysis which has informed its proposed changes to security of tenure.**

Management of rental income debt levels

- 9.18 The Department advised that the current level of debt for housing is about \$1.2 million, which represented under two per cent of total rental revenue, ' a good result in comparison with other businesses in the economy'³⁰⁴. However, in response to claims that this figure had increased from \$1 million, the Minister responded that the initiatives in place were ameliorating the debt level.³⁰⁵
- 9.19 The Department advised that the a number of actions were being taken to manage debt levels and to support departmental officers dealing with tenants in debt. The responsibility lies with the housing managers to contact the tenant and to make an arrangement for the amount to be repaid as soon as a debt becomes apparent. Housing ACT had undertaken certain initiatives to directly support staff to effectively assist tenants.
- 9.20 Housing ACT also has a service purchase agreement with CARE credit and debt, where CARE firstly, assists tenants to make realistic budgets, which include: repayment of their debt; not getting into greater debt; and repayment of other debts, not just housing debt. Also, CARE provides training to housing managers in how to assist our tenants to deal with debt.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 392

³⁰⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 392

³⁰⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 393

RECOMMENDATION 39

- 9.21 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide to the Legislative Assembly an outline of the debt management measures or provide details of debt management actions, including how those measures will decrease debt.**

Housing advocacy and tenant participation

- 9.22 The Minister for Housing indicated that he had little regard to the major advocacy group on behalf of people in public housing or in difficult housing circumstances, referring to ACT Shelter as 'that magic daytime branch of the Greens party'³⁰⁷. The Minister also expressed a desire for one peak group, but later acknowledged appeared to be a need for a specific tenancy union:

I guess I am trying to say to you, quite openly, that there should be only one peak body. Industries can do it themselves. If Shelter is acknowledged by the sector as being the voice of that sector, perhaps we should acknowledge it as the peak body. I am sure ACTCOSS would be delighted to hear that. In a place as small as the ACT, I do not see why you need a number of peak groups. Just because an organisation is a collective of organisations coming together does not necessarily mean that they represent a whole sector. If there is competition between Shelter and ACTCOSS about who is going to be head honcho, they can go and sort it out.³⁰⁸

- 9.23 The Committee notes that, while the Minister continued to deride the work of Shelter, the funds allocated to the Coalition of Community Housing Organisations of the ACT [CHOAT], which has ceased operation because it could not perform its functions on \$65 000 per annum, have been allocated to supplement the similar grant to Shelter.
- 9.24 The Committee was interested in the way that ACT Housing consulted tenants and heard their concerns, and was told that the Joint Champions group was a standing committee to provide advice about the provision of services. The Joint Champions would be consulted on issues related to security of tenure.

³⁰⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 383

³⁰⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 405

- 9.25 When asked if participants in the Joint Champions group had been asked how they felt about their ability to contribute, the Committee was advised that, while they did not have a decision making role, 'we really do need them'. The Minister indicated that an advertisement would be placed in newspapers asking for people to put their names forward, and a new group would be formed by selection.³⁰⁹
- 9.26 The Committee expresses concern at the amount of information and time contributed by community groups to government processes which is not acknowledged by government.

RECOMMENDATION 40

- 9.27 **The Committee recommends that a roundtable be established, comprising representatives of ACTCOSS, the Tenants' Union and other relevant organisations with representatives of ACT Housing and the Minister, to determine guidelines and protocols for consultation on issues of mutual concern.**

RECOMMENDATION 41

- 9.28 **The Committee recommends that the new Joint Champions group be representative of public housing tenants and be resourced to liaise with housing tenants and conduct action research on issues important to tenants to inform ACT Housing policies and practices.**

³⁰⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 386

10 DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES; CHILDREN YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

10.1 The output classes considered within this portfolio comprise:

- Disability and therapy services
- Early intervention programs
- Children, youth and family services
- Community development and policy.

Disability services

10.2 Services provided through this output class include accommodation support, community access, community support, and respite care.³¹⁰

10.3 Budget allocations for disability include:

- \$15.754 million over four years for increased accommodation, respite and other services for children, young people and adults with serious intellectual and physical disabilities;
- \$4.3 million to expand the public housing portfolio, which is proposed will have a positive impact for people with disabilities, and
- \$1 million over two years to improve disabled access in non-government schools.³¹¹

10.4 The Committee was advised that the additional funding in this year's budget resulted from research conducted in the ACT which identified areas where there was an increasing need not being met. This includes more people surviving illnesses and needing ongoing care and ageing parents/carers who are no longer able to care for their adult children with disabilities.³¹²

³¹⁰ Budget Paper No 4, p 196

³¹¹ Budget Paper No 2, p 31

³¹² Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 862

- 10.5 The Committee inquired into the progress of recommendations arising from the Gallop report, the report of the Board of Inquiry into Disability Services.³¹³ The Committee was advised that significant improvements that had been made to disability services since 2002, including: a stronger focus on risk management; service reviews every three months; improved staffing standards; and an increase in funds for training.³¹⁴
- 10.6 The Committee noted that the Commonwealth/State disability agreement was yet to be signed and was advised that negotiations were still under way. The Minister informed the Committee of a perceived funding inequity with the agreement as the ACT gets seventeen cents in the dollar compared to forty-three cents in the dollar going to South Australia.³¹⁵
- 10.7 A particular area of concern related to the desirability of removing younger people from residential aged care. The Committee was advised that a joint program with the Commonwealth had been underway since earlier this year. The ACT currently has approximately 54 people under 65 years of age in this category, with priority being given to those under 50 years of age.³¹⁶
- 10.8 The Committee noted that advocates in the disability community sector cite housing and accommodation issues as one of the major reasons for contact from clients. The Committee pursued the issue with Disability ACT and ACT Housing to satisfy themselves that people with disabilities have access to appropriate accommodation and support throughout their tenancy.³¹⁷
- 10.9 The Committee queried whether the reduction in staff numbers impacted on the delivery of services. The Department advised that staff reductions were mainly administrative and resulted from the commencement of the shared services operation and the streamlining of Disability ACT's contract work.³¹⁸

³¹³ Gallop J, *Board of Inquiry into Disability Services*, 2001

³¹⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 857 - 859

³¹⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 862

³¹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 868

³¹⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 876 - 880

³¹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 881

Therapy Services

- 10.10 Therapy services provide for children with delays in development from birth to eight, and for children, young people and adults with disabilities.
- 10.11 The Committee raised a number of concerns in relation to the provision of services for children diagnosed on the autism spectrum, particularly as there was no new funding allocation in this year's budget. The Committee was advised that there was no specific allocation for children diagnosed with autism, but that children with autism benefit from the general disability funding and are included in the services provided through Therapy ACT and Disability ACT.³¹⁹
- 10.12 The Committee questioned the need for the rise in average hourly cost of therapy to an individual or group in the target for 2007-2008, given the estimated outcome in 2006-2007 was below the original target set for that year. The Committee was advised that the increase resulted from indexation costs of administration and salaries; the figure reflected increased costs.³²⁰ On a positive note, the Department advised that staff retention levels had improved:
- ...over the last few years, the ability of Therapy ACT to attract and retain staff has increased significantly. We have a much smaller turnover than we used to. Certainly in terms of psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists, Therapy ACT has been fully staffed for the last two years...³²¹
- 10.13 The Committee was concerned about delays that clients might experience while waiting for pre-assessment diagnostic services required by Therapy ACT and the number of people going to the private sector to avoid delays. Officials reported that while there is a waiting list – up to six months for those with articulation problems – a triage system is utilised, based on need.
- 10.14 The Committee was advised that more treatment now occurred in groups, enabled by the new premises, and achieving efficiencies because a number of

³¹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 891

³²⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 892

³²¹ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 893

clients can be dealt with by one therapist. The Committee was informed that Therapy ACT also deals with adults with autism although this is a very small percentage of the client group as a whole.³²²

- 10.15 The Committee was also concerned about a lack of clarity in relation to early intervention for children who are identified as being in need of therapy.

RECOMMENDATION 42

- 10.16 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health provide to the Assembly a report of the processes involved in the identification of required therapy services and the implementation of treatment services, including an outline of the interaction with Therapy ACT in relation to those matters.**

Early Intervention

- 10.17 Major issues canvassed in the early intervention program included:
- ⊖ Early intervention care for parents with drug addictions, who have dependent children;
 - ⊖ The Turnaround Program;
 - ⊖ Youth detention centre;
 - ⊖ Care and protection services.
- 10.18 The Department advised that they had placed significant emphasis on early intervention services over the year to increase their interaction with the family support sector as a whole, that they believed that 'working to link families that we are notified about into support services is one of the single biggest and most important changes we need to make'³²³. The major initiatives included:
- ⊖ the integrated family support project, where 10 non-government organisations which provide family support, work with the Department of Disability, Health and Community Services and the Department of Education in a 'wraparound approach for families that we are very concerned about',³²⁴

³²² Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 899

³²³ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 903

³²⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 902

- ⊖ this project was being mirrored in work with nought to five-year-olds, with families at risk, through the Child and Family Centres;
- ⊖ placement of a child protection worker in both the Child and Family Centres;
- ⊖ working closely with Health and Education departments on an indigenous family support service;
- ⊖ staff training initiatives.³²⁵

10.19 The Committee questioned the Minister about union advertising in show bags for National Youth Week, asking whether the Minister or departmental officials were aware that stickers advertising trade unions were going to be included in those show bags.³²⁶

10.20 The Minister advised:

I am not sure about departmental officials. I certainly was not aware. I do not get down to the detail about what is put into show bags. I think the arrangement was that the people that were presenting workshops at the conference, which is where the show bags were given out, were invited or allowed to put material into the show bags. UnionsACT had been invited there by, I believe, the young people who had organised the conference, and that is how that arrangement was struck....the department's role in the youth conference, because it is organised by young people for young people, is really to allow the young people to facilitate that day. So unless it was something that was offensive or illegal, I cannot see really a role for the department in approving or not approving something going into show bags.³²⁷

The Turnaround Program

10.21 The Turnaround Program, with capacity for approximately 20 clients, is a service model based on the wraparound approach from the United States, which is

³²⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 902

³²⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 916

³²⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 916

typically used for 'high complex young people' in out-of-home care systems, in disability systems and in education systems.³²⁸ The Department noted:

...there are four case co-ordinators with a team leader. The clients tend to be young people who are referred by child protection or juvenile justice services, although the range of government and non-government agencies can refer those children and young people. So they will have a range of complex issues, including perhaps drug and alcohol services. They may have been abused and neglected. They may have been in Quamby, for example, and often disengaged with the school system...³²⁹

10.22 The Department further advised that the program had been running for approximately three years, with outcomes being achieved at two levels:

It is about individual change for the young people and their families, but it is also about services and changes. So where we identify gaps in the service systems, we are keen to try to address them. Probably the best example of that is some of the work we have done with education, where young people entering the program will be allocated a link teacher, and they will work with a turnaround staff member and the other key stakeholders to try to get that young person back into the school system or provide some alternative education. That has been one of the areas I think we have been most successful with, because some of these young people have been quite disengaged with their schools.³³⁰

10.23 The Department commented on the governance and outcome of the program as follows:

- the establishment of a referral assessment panel, which accepts young people into the program and reviews them on exit;
- the panel comprises about 12 government and non-government agencies; and
- approximately 30 young people, who stay about 18 months on average, have progressed through the program in the three years; and

³²⁸ Wraparound is based on 10 principles, which includes things like individualised planning, flexible funding, flexible service approach, community-based services, strengths perspective, child and family focused, outcomes evaluated and their cultural competence.

³²⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 923-4

³³⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 924

- young people exit once there is a sense that they have achieved the goals that they have set, be it a Year 10 Certificate or maintaining stable accommodation.³³¹

Youth detention centre

- 10.24 In relation to increased costs of the youth detention centre at Mitchell, anticipated to be completed in the following year, the Committee was advised that these mainly related to the cost of the site at Mitchell, which had not been chosen at the time of the original budget bid and which was more expensive than originally planned for, as a result of:
- requiring the extension of both hydraulic services—stormwater, water supply and sewer—and electrical and telephony systems to the site;
 - it was an area that was part of a rural lease, so some work was necessary to excise the work, replacement of access and overland flow provisions; and
 - because it was a greenfield site, there were some planning requirements for landscaping beyond the extent of the site itself in order to soften the visual impact of the facility.³³²
- 10.25 The Department added that, while the original cost plan made some provision for escalation, it did not anticipate the significant rises in building material and construction labour costs over the period.³³³
- 10.26 The Department described the physical security of the facility as:

The new youth justice facility will have a secure perimeter on the basis that a high level of confidence from the operating staff in the secure perimeter will allow more flexibility in the way in which young people are managed within the facility. It will be the same three-zoned perimeter security system that will be used in the adult facility. It will include a five-metre-high external fence, which will, in all likelihood, include some sort of movement detector, either picking up sound waves or movement in the fence itself, to know when someone has touched or is climbing the fence. There will then be an exclusion zone six metres wide which will allow for

³³¹ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 924

³³² Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 925

³³³ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 925

some sort of volumetric sensing devices to be put in that sphere. Then there will be a lower 2.4-metre, 2.5-metre-high fence that marks the inner zone.

That will be, as the minister rightly said, energised.³³⁴

10.27 In relation to training for detainees at the facility, the Department advised that, given the importance of assessing the needs of the young people coming into Quamby to determine where their skills lie and what will work to transition them back into the community, the following actions had been undertaken:

- ⇒ working with Education and the CIT to establish a tripartite agreement to give clarity around the courses that will be provided;
- ⇒ a focus on issues like numeracy and literacy and making those links back to schools or other appropriate training programs, given the reality that most young people are there for fairly short periods;
- ⇒ establishment of a commercial kitchen to train young people and give them some skills.³³⁵

10.28 Other issues canvassed by the Committee in this area included:

- ⇒ the adoption of recommendations of the Human Rights Commissioner in planning of the Centre;
- ⇒ recruitment and training of appropriate staff;
- ⇒ consultations with bodies such as the Youth Coalition of the ACT, Winnunga, the Office of the Public Advocate, the Official Visitor, the Children's Commissioner and Disability Commissioner, the Human Rights Commissioner and the Human Rights Unit.³³⁶

10.29 The Committee questioned the Minister about the education program at the new centre and also at Quamby where programs could be disrupted when there was inadequate support staff for the teachers. The Committee was advised that officials were unaware of this situation.³³⁷

³³⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 925

³³⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 926

³³⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 928

³³⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 934

10.30 In relation to children at risk, the committee notes that safety plans are now being prepared for children performing self-damaging behaviour.³³⁸

Care and protection services

10.31 Major issues canvassed included:

- matters relating to the anticipated Children and Young People's Bill;
- tenancy surveys; and
- community sector support.

10.32 The Minister advised that the Children and Young People's Bill was anticipated to be introduced 'within a number of weeks'.

10.33 In relation to sentencing provisions in the bill, the Department advised:

The extent to which that occurs is currently the subject of discussion between the agencies. The issue that we are very keen on is the fact that, as all the UN conventions and all the human rights law across the world indicate, you apply a different lens to children and young people. Even if the provisions are the same, you would want the judiciary, the prosecutors and the police to be applying a different principle in terms of the way they applied that law, even if it was the same law, to children and young people. You want it to be very rehabilitative; you want it child-focused; and you want a child development focus. That would be much different from what you would necessarily find in the adult system.³³⁹

10.34 The Minister reiterated her commitment to having all laws relating to young people within a single piece of legislation.³⁴⁰

10.35 The Department noted that simplification of the legislation did not amount to shortening the bill; however:

One of the comments that we have got back from quite a number of groups on the basis of the exposure draft is that the current bill is much easier to navigate than the current act. The fact that the index is long may cause

³³⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 934

³³⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 931

³⁴⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 931

concern for some people, but for others it means that they can find exactly what they want very quickly.³⁴¹

10.36 The Department advised the Committee that they were participating in a pathways project to look at national indicators, which is about updating the way child protection indicators operate and are measured.³⁴²

10.37 Staffing issues pursued included the overseas recruitment program and retention rates from that program as well as staffing levels and recruitment activity.

Tenancy surveys

10.38 The Committee pursued questions around the annual survey of tenant satisfaction with management of community facilities, with a satisfaction level of consistently 80 per cent. The Minister and Department advised:

- there are 39 general community facilities, which comprise regional community services, community halls and community rooms and 39 childcare facilities; and
- the survey essentially asks about 30 questions which independently test a series of matters relating to the nature of the relationship between community facility managers and the Department.³⁴³

10.39 In relation to the annual survey of the managers in SAAP, homelessness services and the community services program, the Committee was advised that the satisfaction level this year was 92 per cent.³⁴⁴

10.40 In response to a question from the committee on transitional housing for women and their children fleeing domestic violence, the Committee was advised that a new set of arrangements had been instituted in the previous year and the use of 20 ACT Housing properties otherwise awaiting redevelopment have had positive effects.³⁴⁵

³⁴¹ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 933

³⁴² Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 934

³⁴³ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 945

³⁴⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 946

³⁴⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 956

RECOMMENDATION 43

- 10.41 **The Committee recommends that the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services ensures that the work of the Community Engagement Unit continues and that best practice methods of community engagement be followed by Government across all departments.**

Community sector support

- 10.42 The Committee was advised that the community grants program and community inclusion fund were to be consolidated into one program called the Community, Sport, Support and Infrastructure Fund, which could be accessed through the grants portal. Recommendations were made by a committee headed by Lyn Hatfield Dodds, who is currently the Chair of the Community Inclusion Board.³⁴⁶
- 10.43 The Committee asked about progress on delivering on the Community Sector Task Force, which reported early in 2006. The Minister advised that issues of most interest to the sector included pay equity and portability of conditions, including long service leave, with preliminary discussions having been held with key stakeholders. The Minister identified that each of these issues would come at a significant cost to government.³⁴⁷
- 10.44 The Committee also pursued issues around funding of common support services for community groups and was advised:

So I have been talking to the sector about better systems across IT, across administration, across HR, where there are opportunities through efficiencies. Some of this task force report is okay and looks at the wages issue, which is really important. But, at the same time, it just cannot be an add-on without questioning efficiencies as well. As you know, like with most things in the ACT, we already fund at a higher rate than nationally. So we already have more money than other jurisdictions going out of the bucket to community organisations. So part of the question has to be whether there are efficiencies that we can deliver within budget whilst

³⁴⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, pp 949-950

³⁴⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 951

looking at these additional requests that come every year as well and the issue of how we deal with wages in the community sector.³⁴⁸

- 10.45 The Committee inquired about community engagement work being undertaken by the department and which resulted in the development of the Community Engagement Manual. The Committee was advised that the manual continued to be distributed across government.³⁴⁹
- 10.46 A number of cost saving measures were discussed, including the provision of shared administrative services, as these are a great impost on community organisations.

Multicultural affairs and indigenous affairs

- 10.47 Output class 3.2, Community Affairs, covers the provision of support and policy development activities, including multicultural affairs, ageing, the status of women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs.³⁵⁰ This section deals with multicultural affairs and indigenous affairs.

Multicultural affairs

Al Grassby statue

- 10.48 In response to a question about the expenditure of \$75,000 on a statue of the former Minister for Immigration and Commissioner for Community Relations, the Minister advised:

...the amount of money was not a specific allocation; it was money from the construction cost of the centre. That centre came in on time and under budget. The money that paid for that statue came from the budget for that centre.³⁵¹

- 10.49 The Minister advised that the idea for the sculpture was his own and once the project had been completed and come in on time and under budget, with

³⁴⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 952

³⁴⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 28 June 2007, p 949

³⁵⁰ Budget Paper No 4, pp 198 and 206

³⁵¹ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 419

funds available it had been decided to commission a sculpture. The idea had been floated at a multicultural forum and no expressions of negativity had been received at that forum, which prompted the Minister to ask the Department to make the arrangements to commission the sculpture.³⁵²

Indigenous affairs

10.50 The Government had set aside \$200 000 a year for an indigenous representative body, however, the ultimate structure of that body had not been determined. The Minister advised:

There has been broad discussion around a range of models that might be utilised in the ACT to ensure this very significant and, I believe, reasonable level of self-determination for indigenous people within the Australian Capital Territory...this particular initiative for an indigenous elected body in the Australian Capital Territory is very much a response to the fact that ATSIC and ATSIC regional councils were abolished three years ago and that there is not now a cohesive or acknowledged indigenous representative organisation anywhere in Australia, let alone in each of the regions.³⁵³

10.51 The Minister further advised:

...the additional funding provided in this year's budget, combined with the funding provided last year, will, we hope, within this financial year allow the establishment of this body.³⁵⁴

Forums for the planning and development of indigenous services

10.52 The Department advised that, over the course of financial year 2007-08, it hoped to gain the input of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander [ADTI] people into the policy process through a number of initiatives to assist with policy development and service provision. These initiatives included:

³⁵² Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p ?? [start at 419]

³⁵³ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, pp 590--1

³⁵⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 591

- youth forums to get children and young people who have been involved in the care and protection and juvenile justice systems to gather and to discuss the issues as they see them;
- planning for an indigenous out-of-home-care conference in August this year; and
- following that forum a cultural gathering, which will involve the indigenous community as well as service providers and government agencies.³⁵⁵

Funding to Yarramundi Reach

10.53 The Department advised, in relation to \$120 000 in funding to Yarramundi Reach, that:

[The facility] is managed by a group, the Birrigai association. Can I just say that over the last three years there has been a level of activity. I must say that it has not been to the level that we would expect in terms of its cultural programs, but that is being built on and we are looking to address that. However, the facility has been used, and it has been used quite extensively in terms of a meeting place. Conferencing and circle sentencing take place there, and some services are delivered from there as well. It has been quite a successful model. However, we will be doing much better on the cultural side. What we are aiming to do is to see if we can create a facility that is quite dynamic in the cultural sense and to bring the broader community to that facility.

It is early days. These things do not happen overnight and it is hard work. It takes the cooperation of both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community ...But I think it has the potential—certainly with the location and the will that is there, and the imagination and creativity of many in the indigenous community—to create something that will be quite spectacular in the not too distant future.³⁵⁶

10.54 While the Department acknowledged that the grants had been acquitted appropriately and met their requirements, there was clearly some concern that there was scope for enhanced activity. The Department advised that it was

³⁵⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, pp 592-3

³⁵⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 598

looking to free up the management group from day-to-day repairs or maintenance and have that group concentrate on the program of cultural activity and community engagement.³⁵⁷

10.55 Other indigenous issues canvassed with the Minister included:

- indigenous specific schooling
- maintenance of the public housing stock so that indigenous people in such areas as Narrabundah are able to maintain their support networks.

³⁵⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 599

11 DEPARTMENT OF TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES

- 11.1 The Department of Territory and Municipal Services [TAMS] delivers a range of services to the Canberra community, including public transport; libraries; shopfronts and online services; ranger services; linen and plant nursery services. The Department is responsible for the development and maintenance of infrastructure, including roads, bridges, footpaths.³⁵⁸ The office of Tourism also sits within the Department.
- 11.2 The other major focus of the Department's operation is:
- the responsibility of the Department to ensure that sustainability principles are embedded into its decision-making processes, particularly in relation to the provision of infrastructure and services to the community; and
 - the development of policies and programs to ensure more sustainable use of water and energy.³⁵⁹
- 11.3 The Department appeared before the Committee on three occasions. The first was on Monday, 25 June, with Minister Stanhope as Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change to discuss Output Classes 1.3 and 1.5. The Department next appeared later in the week, on Tuesday, 26 June 2007 with Minister Hargreaves, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, to consider Output Classes 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4, as well as public transport issues [ACTION buses]. The third occasion was with Minister Barr on 2 July 2007, to consider output class 1.6, sport and recreation and output class 2.2 tourism and events.

Environment, water and climate change

- 11.4 The Committee was interested in sustainability policies and programs, particularly the joint ACT-Commonwealth funded sustainability programs. In

³⁵⁸ Budget Paper No 4, p 279

³⁵⁹ Budget Paper No 4, p 279

response to the Committee's query on the national water strategy, the Department advised:

The NHT program is a program designed to improve natural resource management outcomes. It is a joint commonwealth-territory program. It is administered by a joint steering committee on which I represent the territory. It allocates funds to community-based projects largely, and some projects that the territory operates also. The national action plan for water quality and salinity is a similar type of program, administered through the same joint steering committee, which is obviously based on water quality issues and, in other parts of Australia, salinity issues, which are not such a problem in the ACT. The national water fund project is a project to retrofit wetlands and more water sensitive urban design of the stormwater systems around Canberra.³⁶⁰

- 11.5 In relation to the last mentioned program, the Department further advised that the David Street wetlands project was one example, where the intention was to store in wetlands water which can be used for irrigation to replace the use of potable water.³⁶¹

RECOMMENDATION 44

- 11.6 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment table in the Assembly the plans and priorities for projects funded under the national water strategy program.**

RECOMMENDATION 45

- 11.7 **The Committee recommends that the national water strategy program be extended throughout the urban areas of the ACT.**

- 11.8 The Minister noted:

The ACT government has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the National Water Commission to seek to trap, store and reuse three gegalitres of water by 2015 through rehabilitation of existing stormwater drains and watercourses throughout the territory. The work is currently

³⁶⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 573

³⁶¹ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 573

being developed. No decisions have been made, though at this stage it is quite likely that the first of these projects will involve the construction of major dams and wetlands adjacent to Flemington Road at a cost of around \$4 million, which would allow us to irrigate or meet 80 per cent of the needs of the Canberra Racecourse, EPIC, Yowani Country Club and the other major user in the area, the Canberra Paceway.³⁶²

...It is anticipated that when the project is completed there will be three gigalitres of storage capacity available, which is more than the entire use of potable water for irrigation purposes throughout the territory at the moment. But these decisions haven't yet been made. The feasibility and planning work is currently underway. This is a \$17 million project, \$7 million of which will be provided by the ACT government and \$10 million will be provided by the commonwealth through the National Water Commission.³⁶³

Draft climate change strategy

11.9 The Minister advised that the draft climate change strategy was in its final stages, it had been considered already by Cabinet and would go back to Cabinet for further consideration, prior to its release within the next few weeks.³⁶⁴

11.10 The Committee was advised that the draft strategy was the result of much consultation, including an inter-departmental committee process:

... this strategy has been developed both in consultation with the community and across government. We have had a committee set up across government to ensure that there is input across agencies. We followed the normal procedures whereby drafts are circulated through the existing government process to ensure that all agencies have input.³⁶⁵

³⁶² Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 573

³⁶³ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 574

³⁶⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 576

³⁶⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 575

- 11.11 The Committee notes that the draft climate change strategy was in its final stages more than one year after consultation on the discussion papers ended.
- 11.12 In response to questioning about lowering of benchmarks in 2007 instead of waiting until 2012, the Acting Chief Minister advised:

The ACT Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme was introduced in January 2005 in conjunction with NSW who introduced their scheme a year earlier. The Legislative Assembly agreed at the time of the passage of the enabling *Electricity (Greenhouse Emissions) Act 2004* that consistency with surrounding NSW was a critical issue both to provide regulatory certainty and to prevent industry taking advantage of possible loopholes caused by disparate targets and penalty regimes between jurisdictions. In line with best international practise at the time, per capita targets were adopted.

It was the intention to review the appropriateness of the post-2007 targets in light of outcomes of the previous years. However, this review was overtaken by the agreement between State and Territory governments to develop a National Emissions Trading Scheme (NETS) that would incorporate all other existing schemes. To facilitate this transfer it was agreed between jurisdictions that significant changes would not be made to existing schemes while the transitional arrangements to NETS are being finalised.³⁶⁶

Albert Hall

- 11.13 The Committee raised the issue of the deteriorating condition of the Albert Hall and whether the deterioration has impacted on the heritage value of the site. The Minister advised

The Albert Hall and its management, as a result of its heritage status, present some unique challenges to the territory. We accept that. For 11 years now the Albert Hall has been privately managed under contract... That arrangement provides for the payment of an annual fee to the territory and it requires that the contractor undertake minor repairs to the fabric to ensure that it can be utilised.

... over this last year the Albert Hall was utilised by the community on 25 occasions out of 352 days. I think that goes to the heart of the issue which all governments have struggled with in relation to the Albert Hall. There is a strong desire that this most iconic heritage building be preserved and remain

a building that reflects its place within the heritage, the history and the development of the Australian Capital Territory. But it represents a very significant challenge in terms of its upkeep and its maintenance vis-à-vis its utility.³⁶⁷

11.14 The Minister further advised that alternative venues were favoured over the Albert Hall, stating:

I am not sure that this government or any government should be in the business of running a commercial venue, as it is envisaged by many that we might, in relation to the Albert Hall.³⁶⁸

11.15 The Committee notes that this building is an iconic one, of significance to the community.

11.16 The Minister agreed with the proposition that the government may be required to fund the restoration of the property, prior to a new management arrangement, given the inability of a private sector operator to recoup costs. The Minister stated:

...that is the discussion that I am currently having. The government is certainly reconsidering the options potentially available in relation to the maintenance, restoration and future use and management of the Albert Hall.³⁶⁹

11.17 The Minister noted that in relation to the application for listing of the Albert Hall on the National Heritage Register, the listing would be 'significant symbolically in relation to the message it sends to both this community and to the Commonwealth in relation to our joint management responsibilities'³⁷⁰.

³⁶⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 585

³⁶⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 587

³⁶⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 587

³⁷⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 25 June 2007, p 588

Municipal services

ACTION buses

- 11.18 In response to concerns about security on buses the Minister advised the following measures to address security concerns, outside direct relationships with the police:
- We have got a union management liaison committee to facilitate discussions with drivers and transport officers;
 - Prosecution of offenders as a deterrent;
 - Installation of CCTV in all buses in FY 2007-2008 at an average cost of approximately \$5,500 per bus;
 - The installation of depot infrastructure to support the CCTV in buses;
 - Increased CCTV coverage in the bus interchanges
 - Increased staffing presence at interchanges;
 - The provision of security training for staff.³⁷¹
- 11.19 The ACT has negotiated a contract with a private company, Adshel, whereby the company will erect bus shelters at no cost to the ACT, with a view to gaining advertising revenue from the shelters – 'it is the sale of the advertising space that actually pays for the bus shelters to be built and located'.³⁷² The Minister advised that erection of shelters had been delayed as planning approval for each of the shelters was required. The Minister also noted that:

...at sites yet to be determined, and that is that where a particular site is chosen by Adshel as being advantageous to their advertising imperative, let us say it is on a major road but there sits already a concrete one, they will move that concrete one at their own expense to a location determined by TAMS. So we are in the negotiation stage around the approval process for the locations because if, for example, ACTPLA do not approve it, then we have to find another one.³⁷³

³⁷¹ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, pp 671-2

³⁷² Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 673

³⁷³ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 673

RECOMMENDATION 46

11.20 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake an evaluation of the contractual arrangement with Adshel.**

RECOMMENDATION 47

11.21 **The Committee recommends that the criteria for placement of bus shelters prioritise the needs of ACTION bus patrons.**

RECOMMENDATION 48

11.22 **The Committee recommends that the Government examines advertising initiatives which offsets the cost of ACTION to the community.**

11.23 The Committee was also concerned about staff conditions of service following the rationalisation which resulted in ACTION being placed under the umbrella of TAMS, and what the outcome was for ACTION call centre staff, ie

- Whether they were transferred to the Julia Ross employment agency and contracted to Canberra Connect;
- Whether they had lost entitlements as a result of this compulsory transfer, if that was what it was³⁷⁴;
- Whether any redundancies had been offered to ex-ACTION call centre staff.³⁷⁵

11.24 The Minister took all questions relating to this matter on notice. The Minister responded fully to the questions, advising:

The majority of staff employed by ACTION, at its Call Centre, were employed on a short term casual basis. The number of hours worked and duties performed varied between staff members, and varied from week to week based operational requirements and staff shift preferences.

ACTION decided to not operate its own call centre and did not renew the casual employment contracts of casual Call Centre staff. These casual

³⁷⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 720

³⁷⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 727

employees were advised that employment may be available with the Canberra Connect call centre through an employment agency.

Canberra Connect has a panel of three recruitment agency providers who were engaged through a tender process in accordance with the ACT Public Service Procurement guidelines. Each ex-ACTION casual employee was advised of the three agency providers.

There is a difference between the rate paid by ACTION and the rate paid under the Clerks (ACT) Award 1985. The difference in the rate of pay also reflects the wider range of duties performed by ACTION employees compared to staff working in the Canberra Connect Call Centre.

No permanent ACTION Call Centre employees were made redundant. One Bus Driver working in the Call Centre, as part of his return to work program, has accepted a VR.³⁷⁶

11.25 The Committee also explored the following questions in relation to ACTION:

- the availability of printed timetables at bus stops;
- the average number of school students travelling daily by bus in 2006 and 2007 and whether there was any impact on the need for additional bus services as a result of school closures;
- finalisation of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement for ACTION employees; and
- the strategy for replacement of the ageing fleet of buses.

11.26 The Committee notes the current review being undertaken into ACTION bus services.

11.27 The Committee reminds the ACT Government, specifically Minister Hargreaves, about its 2006 promise to implement adequate security cameras on all buses. This promise was not yet been fulfilled with only 87 buses fitted with security cameras to date. The Government has been vague with detail on a strategy to implement adequate CCTV security coverage at all ACT bus interchanges.

³⁷⁶

Question on notice, E07-410

11.28 To alleviate the risk of criminal acts against bus drivers, transport officers and commuters, which have been on the increase recently, the Committee considers that the installation of CCTV cameras on buses be proceeded with as a priority.

RECOMMENDATION 49

11.29 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expedite the installation of CCTV cameras on all ACTION buses and at all interchanges to enhance the safety of transport officers and passengers.**

Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre

11.30 The Committee raised issues around the re-letting of the recycling contract at the Mugga Lane tip, noting that the new provider, Aussie Junk, will pay ACT NOWaste \$60 000 for a five-year period, while Revolve managed the facility for a number of years, paying the equivalent of \$90 000 a year for the previous five years, including the provision of two employees for Thiess. The Minister advised:

The Thiess contract at the landfill came to a conclusion. Revolve was a subcontractor to Thiess, so their involvement also came to a conclusion. The territory decided to put out a tender for the operation of reuse, recycle and landfill operations at the Mugga Lane landfill. That tender was going out to all or part, depending on which was going to be the best deal for the territory. It was quite possible that, if the tender was competitive, the operator of the landfill in total could have taken the whole lot. But it turned out that that was not so...

...what happened, in fact, was that NOWaste developed the criteria for Procurement Solutions to advertise and evaluate and award the tender, and that is what they did.³⁷⁷

11.31 The Department clarified that, in relation to the Thiess/Revolve arrangements that:

³⁷⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 675

In terms of the resource recovery operations under which Revolve were a subcontractor to Thiess Services, which currently run the landfill at Mugga Lane, there were nil payments from Thiess to the territory for those services. The services are such that the public's dropping off of reusable items free of charge to the raiseables facility at Mugga Lane generates significant revenue. That revenue is used by the operator, effectively, to run an operation there not only to resell those goods and materials but, hopefully, to do repair, refurbishment, value add and generate more employment.

The arrangements you have referred to in terms of Thiess with Revolve were negotiated directly between Revolve and Thiess. The territory was not a party to that. That is a specific subcontract from Thiess to Revolve. We are not privy to all the details and financial arrangements within that. However, I believe that is the \$90,000 and two staff that you have referred to there.³⁷⁸

11.32 The Department further advised:

... in the tender process, in the pricing schedule, we made it quite clear that the territory was not seeking revenue positive contractual arrangements for the reusable operations. In fact, the pricing schedule effectively had the territory paying the contractor or a cost neutral arrangement and the preamble in the tender documentation made it quite clear that the territory did not want payments to the territory for the rights to occupy the facility. What we wanted was repair, refurbishment, value adding, increased resource recovery, increased employment, et cetera.³⁷⁹

11.33 In terms of costs to the Territory for ongoing maintenance, the Committee was advised that the routine maintenance was part the raiseables contract, however, any costs associated with structural or major-type asset maintenance, such as car park resealing or structural damage to the buildings, would be the responsibility of the Territory.³⁸⁰

11.34 While the Committee notes the Minister's response as to why waste management was put out to tender, the Committee still has concerns about how the matter has been handled.

³⁷⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 677

³⁷⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 677

³⁸⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 677

- 11.35 The Minister was also questioned about his awareness the hot rock composting system in operation at ANU. While the Minister commended ANU for its progressive approach to waste management, he would not confirm that the ACT Government would be following suit.

Gungahlin Drive Extension

- 11.36 The Committee requested information on an additional amount of \$4 million for the Gungahlin Drive Extension, which is to take another 18 months to complete. The Minister advised:

This amount of money, the \$4 million into the Gungahlin Drive extension, is a contingency fund. This is where we have unforeseen price increases in materials and/or labour that we incur along the way. You might remember when we were talking about the original cost—when it was about, if my memory serves me correctly, \$108 million to \$112 million, somewhere around that figure—we talked about the delay that the legal action caused in terms of the monetary impact, disregarding for a second the road, just the contract. The impact of that delay cost us about \$20 million and the \$20 million had a significant component in it for the increase in the price of diesel... In the event of there being a significant price rise without changing the scope of works, then that money is available, already appropriated for³⁸¹

Development of Sub-Regional Fire Management Plans

- 11.37 In relation to \$150,000, allocated for the development of sub-regional fire management plans, the Department advised that the plans were a new initiative and part of the response to the coronial report, that they were a link between the strategic bushfire management plan and the annual bushfire operations plan.³⁸²
- 11.38 The Department further advised that, unlike the annual bushfire operations plan, the sub-regional management plans were more long term and likely to be reviewed on a three to five-year cycle.³⁸³

³⁸¹ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 705

³⁸² Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 710

³⁸³ Transcript of Evidence, 26 June 2007, p 711

11.39 The Committee inquired as to which fire trails were being upgraded and which were not to be followed through and was advised:

1. The Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) identifies a large number of proposed fire trail upgrades and construction of new fire trails. During the 2006/07 financial year the Government constructed two of these proposed trails in Namadgi National Park (ie Burnt Hill Fire Trail and Grassy Creek Diversion Fire Trail) and has been undertaking assessments/investigations related to a further five proposed trails as follows:

- Long Flat Diversion (Namadgi National Park);
- Bullen Range Fire Trail (Bullen Range Nature Reserve);
- Stockyard Spur & Link Fire Trails (Namadgi National Park);
- Orroral Tors Fire Trail (Namadgi National Park); and
- Spencers Fire Trail (Namadgi National Park).

The Government will continue investigations in 2007/08 including those related to upgrading Mt Franklin and Cotter Hut Roads in Namadgi National Park.

2. Until assessments/investigations are finalised the Government is not in a position to advise on which of the proposed fire trails will not be constructed.

3. A consultant was engaged in 2005/06 to assess the engineering feasibility of each of the proposed trails. This assessment identified that the trails were feasible from an engineering perspective. A second consultant was engaged in 2006/07 to undertake more detailed assessments and prepare, if a decision was made to proceed with the trails, documentation for the submission of Development Applications and Preliminary Assessments (first stage of environmental impact assessment).³⁸⁴

Other issues

11.40 The Committee also canvassed the following issues:

- shopping centre upgrades and the scheduled upgrade program;
- review of ACT and Assembly library services;
- tree strategic asset management plan;
- the condition of the Tharwa bridge;
- traffic congestion at the airport;

- capital works improvements to the Lake Ginninderra foreshore, Emu Inlet and adjacent public open space areas, refurbishment works at the Belconnen skate park and adjacent foreshore area, public artwork and a small jetty at John Knight Park foreshore;
- tree planting in the Molonglo corridor; and
- environmentally sustainable maintenance practices.

Shopping centre upgrades

RECOMMENDATION 50

- 11.41 **The Committee recommends that all shopping centre upgrades be implemented with full community participation.**

ACT library services

RECOMMENDATION 51

- 11.42 **The Committee recommends that the library services at the ACT Legislative Assembly remain at least at current capacity and that there is no further reduction in remaining community library services.**

Tree strategy

- 11.43 The Committee was informed of the process by which trees were identified for removal and received assurances that plant species chosen for public land would be consistent with the water sensitive urban design guidelines.³⁸⁵

Tharwa bridge

RECOMMENDATION 52

- 11.44 **The Committee recommends that that the ACT Government expedite the construction of the new Tharwa bridge.**

³⁸⁵ Question on Notice, E07-044 and E07-050

*Capital works***RECOMMENDATION 53**

- 11.45 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government present to Legislative Assembly a comprehensive capital works strategy, including a five year road plan and associated asset management strategy.**

Sport and recreation

- 11.46 Output class 1.6 is the development of programs, policies and legislation, and provision of grants, education and training opportunities to maintain and improve the capabilities of the sport and recreation sector. It also includes management and maintenance of sportsgrounds and facilities and the provision of support services to high performance athletes in the ACT.³⁸⁶

Sports Grounds

- 11.47 The Committee notes that, where when there was a possibility that sports grounds would be subject to stage 4 water restrictions. ACTEW undertook to develop criteria by which applications for exemption from the restrictions would be assessed. With the deferral of stage 4 restrictions, it is still important that proposals be developed to ensure that criteria are well publicised.

RECOMMENDATION 54

- 11.48 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government agrees to implement strategies jointly with the community to ensure the maintenance of sports grounds.**

RECOMMENDATION 55

- 11.49 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provides details of the criteria by which applications for particular sports grounds for exemption from stage 4 water restrictions will be assessed.**

³⁸⁶ Budget Paper No 4, p 284

Grants

- 11.50 Given such problems as obesity and early onset diabetes in young people, the Committee is concerned that some grants have been reduced unnecessarily, with potentially negative consequences and reduce participation in healthy activity.

RECOMMENDATION 56

- 11.51 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government agrees to reinstate grants for sporting and recreation organisations to the quantum of grants provided in 2005.**

RECOMMENDATION 57

- 11.52 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government agrees to provide a level of financial assistance to ACT Academy of Sport athletes that is appropriate to the circumstances of each athlete.**
- 11.53 The ACT Government has decided to remove a number of accountability indicators including that providing the number of athletes who have gained scholarships at the ACT Academy of Sport (ACTAS). There is no rational argument to support the loss of this indicator; the fact that it varies from year to year is no argument to support this decision.

RECOMMENDATION 58

- 11.54 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reinstates the accountability indicator relating to the number of athletes offered scholarships at the ACT Academy of Sport.**

Tourism

- 11.55 The Department of Territory and Municipal Services facilitates access to sporting and recreational activities through the management of sporting programs, venues, sports grounds and community events. Further, promotion of the ACT as preferred tourist destination is a core objective of the

Department.³⁸⁷

- 11.56 Funding under output class 2.2, tourism and events comprises \$24.838 million in the budget.³⁸⁸

RECOMMENDATION 59

- 11.57 **The Committee recommends that the changes to ACT Tourism announced in the 2006-2007 budget be reviewed in relation to the impacts on the industry, prior to the preparation of the next budget, with a view to re-establishing ACT Tourism as a statutory authority.**

RECOMMENDATION 60

- 11.58 **The Committee recommends that funding for tourism be disaggregated to a more detailed level, that is that funding for major projects be specifically identified in future budgets.**

³⁸⁷ Budget Paper No 4, p 279

³⁸⁸ Budget Paper No 4, p 285

12 PLANNING AND LAND AUTHORITY AND LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

- 12.1 The ACT Planning and Land Authority [ACTPLA] provides a planning and land system for the orderly and sustainable development of the ACT.³⁸⁹ The Authority provides for:
- professional services in strategic land planning;
 - development and building regulation [including leasehold management] with the overarching objective of promoting sustainable, attractive, safe and well-designed urban, residential and rural environments in the ACT; and
 - planning for land release.³⁹⁰
- 12.2 The Land Development Agency is established under the *Planning and Land Act 2002* to 'contribute positively to the building of vibrant communities by facilitating high quality design and built-form outcomes in its urban renewal projects and the development of greenfields, commercial and industrial land.'³⁹¹
- 12.3 The Minister responsible for ACTPLA is the Minister for Planning, Mr Barr, who appeared before the Committee on 21 June 2007. The Minister responsible for the Land Development Agency is the Chief Minister, who appeared before the Committee on this budget allocation on 27 June 2007.
- 12.4 Major issues pursued by the Committee with the Ministers included:
- planning system reform;
 - assessment of development applications;
 - rural leases;
 - DA 53 – Albert Hall redevelopment;
 - Telstra tower development at Fadden; and
 - affordable housing initiatives.

³⁸⁹ Budget Paper No 4, p 395

³⁹⁰ Budget Paper No 4, p 397

³⁹¹ Budget Paper No 4, p 517

Planning system reform

- 12.5 The amended planning system is scheduled to commence operation in October 2007. In relation to questions about planning system reform, the Minister confirmed that he had received a letter from industry:

I have received a letter from a group of industry representatives, led by the Property Council, but with a number of other organisations signing the letter. I am currently considering the issues that they have raised. I have had a number of preliminary meetings with them. I will be having a formal meeting with them next week to respond.³⁹²

- 12.6 The Minister further advised that he would be considering the matters raised in the letter, along with a number of other submissions, prior to 'an announcement in the near future'³⁹³, further stating:

I am having a meeting next Monday with each of the industry groups who have written to me. I have already met with the property council. I intend to continue consulting... We have received, I think, just over 100 submissions—103 submissions. We are considering those. I will do exactly as you said, Mr Stefaniak. It is my intention. As I have indicated there, I have the opportunity, having arrived in this portfolio two months ago, to provide a fresh set of eyes on the issues. I will work cooperatively with all of the stakeholders to get a good outcome for the territory.³⁹⁴

- 12.7 Prior to implementation of the new planning system, the budget papers set out under Strategic Indicator 2 for the output class, that there will be a comprehensive agency, industry and public education and training program'.³⁹⁵

- 12.8 The Minister advised:

I can advise the committee that ACTPLA commenced initial staff training within the organisation back in June designed to give ACTPLA staff a common general understanding of the planning reforms. Specific briefings

³⁹² Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 432

³⁹³ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 432

³⁹⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 440

³⁹⁵ Budget Paper No 4, p 399

have then been delivered by staff members to a variety of stakeholders: the MBA, HIA, property council, law society and community councils. A range of those forums have already been held. In line with the additional funding in the budget in relation to information technology and being able to deliver further information on planning through IT, the authority is developing an electronic information tool, helpfully titled "Planning Explained".³⁹⁶

- 12.9 The Committee notes concerns in relation to the consideration of environment and community groups participation in the Development Application process.

Narrabundah Long Stay Caravan Park

- 12.10 In relation to the Development Application for the Narrabundah Long Stay Caravan Park, the Committee was concerned that the process was continuing to be protracted.

RECOMMENDATION 61

- 12.11 **The Committee recommends that the government table in the Legislative Assembly a progress report on the processes and timelines leading to the draft variation to the Territory Plan.**

Assessment of development applications

- 12.12 Questions were asked around the timeframe for the assessment of development applications and target timeframes. In response to a question querying the seemingly low target set out in the accountability indicators, the Agency advised that there were a number of factors affecting the progress of development applications, not all of which were in ACTPLA's control, including:

- ⊖ The complexity of the application;
- ⊖ Lack of information on the development application itself which entailed ACTPLA obtaining that information from applicants;
- ⊖ Amendments being made to proposals for whatever reason, including preliminary advice that it may not be approved without amendment;

³⁹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 437

▫ Informal negotiations to improve the proposal.³⁹⁷

12.13 In order to streamline the process, the Agency advised that, under the amended planning process, there would be fewer development applications required and, for some categories, a simpler process.³⁹⁸

Rural leases

12.14 The Minister advised that the rural leases in the Molonglo valley had expired, that the Government intended to give just compensation to the leaseholders affected and that there were ongoing negotiations to resolve outstanding matters. He further advised that the Government remained committed to the development in the Molonglo Valley.³⁹⁹

12.15 The Department advised that there had been a long period of negotiation over some years, culminating in leaseholders being offered three-year licences as a temporary measure. These had been declined; a counter offer of a protocol had been made, which the Government had declined on legal advice and leaseholders were now required to vacate by 28 September 2007.⁴⁰⁰

12.16 The committee was advised that budget papers did not contain any amounts for compensation as there were difficulties in estimating amounts, however, Treasury were aware of the situation.⁴⁰¹

12.17 The Committee was concerned that there was no allowance for just and fair compensation for holders of rural leases in the Budget.

DA 53 – Albert Hall redevelopment

12.18 The Minister advised that DA53 was not really a matter for the ACT Government, although the Government would present a view to the NCA, which had responsibility for the re-development project:

³⁹⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 449

³⁹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 451

³⁹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 427

⁴⁰⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 428

⁴⁰¹ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 428

It really is a matter for the NCA. It is their particular draft amendment. I do not have a strong personal view one way or the other. They have a process. It is not for me to dictate to them how they will run their processes, but we will certainly—and have already, through ACTPLA—provide a view. In terms of an ACT government position, that matter is still to go before cabinet before there will be a formal position from the ACT government.⁴⁰²

12.19 The Department further advised:

At this stage the ACT government, through the ACT Planning and Land Authority, has not actually provided an official position to DA 53. During the formal consultation period which, as you know, ended and then was extended the authority, as is its role within government, sought to coordinate a whole-of-government response, particularly from those agencies most affected, like heritage, traffic and ourselves with the planning side of it.

Our response was, if you like, a holding response to the National Capital Authority that said that we had a range of concerns. In fact, our response has been included as part of the public submissions that have been made publicly available by the National Capital Authority. Some of those concerns raised related to the height of the building that had been proposed adjacent to Flynn Drive, some to heritage issues associated with the proximity of possible development to Albert Hall and certainly the traffic issues.⁴⁰³

12.20 The Committee was further advised that because this particular draft amendment raised other government issues, that it was appropriate that it go through the cabinet process and that the National Capital Authority had been advised of that course of action.⁴⁰⁴

12.21 The Committee notes that the plan to tender out the management of the Albert Hall was still unclear, as was any potential involvement of the Cultural Facilities Corporation.

⁴⁰² Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 435

⁴⁰³ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 435

⁴⁰⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 435

Telstra tower development at Fadden

12.22 Concern was expressed over the possible erection of a Telstra mobile phone tower at Fadden and ACTPLA confirmed that it had recently received an application to amend the network plan to provide for the 3G tower in that location. In response to the specific concern that the application for a 3G tower which has a study behind it on the effects of that sort of radio frequency might become an application for a NextG antenna, which has a different broadcast frequency and wattage, the Agency advised that the application would be assessed in terms of what information and documentation was provided and whether or not it is consistent with the specific proposal.⁴⁰⁵

Affordable housing initiatives

12.23 In response to a question asking what prevents the government from requiring a proportion of new residential development to be made permanently affordable housing, the Minister advised:

A public policy assessment in relation to whether that would be the best way to address housing affordability. Through the affordable housing action plan, we have made a series of commitments and policy changes aimed at addressing the spectrum of housing affordability issues. As I indicated in my opening remarks, supply-side solutions are going to be the best way to address these issues. We have in certain developments in certain areas sought, either by mandating a particular proportion of affordable housing or in collaboration with the developer, to deliver affordable housing options within a broader redevelopment or broader development process. A variety of policy solutions have been put forward. Included in that is additional money and a revolving line of credit, effectively, for community housing providers.⁴⁰⁶

12.24 The Minister further stated:

As I indicated at the beginning and as is the number one priority in the statement of planning intent, additional supply into the market is the key policy response, but it is one of many. There is additional money for public

⁴⁰⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 453

⁴⁰⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 465

housing and there is, as I say, the line of credit for community housing. There is a variety of options and policy solutions being put forward. Your one-size-fits-all approach that is indicated in the tenor of the question is appropriate in some areas, not always in others, and the government should have more than one policy response to these issues.⁴⁰⁷

Land Development Agency

12.25 The major issues canvassed with the Land Development Agency included:

- the role of the LDA in the affordable housing strategy;
- the Kama site;
- redevelopment of rural villages;
- englobo land sales.

Role of the LDA in the affordable housing strategy

12.26 The LDA advised the following strategies in response to the government's requirements for affordable housing:

- The Agency has undertaken a program to accelerate land release, which will involve a variety of land coming forward to the market progressively over the next period of time to assist in meeting the numbers that the government is keen to see with respect to land supply;
- about 15 per cent of the blocks will target house and land packages priced in the range of \$200,000 to \$300,000;
- 120 dwelling sites being provided for community housing, scheduled to occur on an annual basis.

The Kama site

12.27 In relation to the site for a dedicated indigenous-specific drug and alcohol services facility on the old Kama lease, the Committee questioned the processes relating to the reservation of that site for such a facility and the fact that the area of the site was significant, that removal of the site from the land

⁴⁰⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 465

sales program would result in the loss of revenue for the ACT Government, that there may have been more appropriate sites for such a facility.

- 12.28 The Chief Minister advised that, due to his intervention, TAMS had requested that the lease and development conditions of the land management agreement be put on hold, that it was an attractive proposition for the development of the proposed facility as there was existing government owned infrastructure, but that it was one of a number of options for consideration.⁴⁰⁸ He further stated:

The process we entered into was to determine whether or not Kama, in ACT government ownership, should remain in ACT government ownership on the basis that it might be a suitable site for an indigenous drug rehabilitation facility.⁴⁰⁹

- 12.29 The Chief Minister affirmed his right to intervene in any land sale:

But I think any government has the right at any time prior to a public contractually based process to determine a use for any piece of land—in advance of a legal or public process where tenders are being called for. A government has the right. I have the right to walk out of here today and announce that the sale of section 63 will not proceed. I could walk out of this room now, within my rights, and say section 63 will not be sold.⁴¹⁰

- 12.30 The Committee requests that the Chief Minister advise the Legislative Assembly, about details of any consultation with the indigenous community about the site of the healing farm.

Redevelopment of the rural villages

- 12.31 The Chief Minister advised that, in relation to the redevelopment of the rural villages:

☐ significant progress was evident with the redevelopment of Stromlo, between Weston Creek and Molonglo, with construction having commenced and proceeding apace⁴¹¹;

⁴⁰⁸ Transcript of evidence, 27 June 2007, pp 802-3

⁴⁰⁹ Transcript of evidence, 27 June 2007, p 803

⁴¹⁰ Transcript of evidence, 27 June 2007, p 814

⁴¹¹ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 817

in relation to Uriarra, the developer—the Village Building Co again—is at the point where approvals have been granted.

12.32 The Chief Minister advised that those residents of Pierces Creek who would not be able to return to Pierces Creek had been offered housing at Uriarra, while residents of Stromlo would be returning to Stromlo.⁴¹²

12.33 The Committee was pleased to hear that the first residents would be returning to Stromlo before Christmas and that building at Uriarra would commence within the ensuing month. Nonetheless the Committee expressed concern that the planning process and other approvals required had delayed the redevelopment of the villages and repatriation of the people who lost their homes in the 2003 bush fire.⁴¹³

Englobo land sales

12.34 The committee raised the issue of *englobo* land sales and what advantages might accrue, either for the taxpayer or the home purchaser. The Chief Minister advised that *englobo* land sales had been undertaken as something which the industry had pushed for:

Industry insists that a level of competition, a single englobo release will enhance our capacity to bring land to the market quickly and, through normal market responses, to a degree of competition that will potentially have some impact on affordability, on land and house prices, and at the same time maintain the quality of outcome that is a feature of the last five years within the territory.⁴¹⁴

12.35 The Chief Minister further advised that, given the industry's vehement claims that it will match, if not exceed, standards established by the LDA, if the results are not adequate then the policy will be under review:

⁴¹² Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 817

⁴¹³ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, pp 817 - 818

⁴¹⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 824

The challenge is to engender some competition, impact on affordability and maintain quality, and I am not sure that any of those three outcomes are negotiable.⁴¹⁵

East Lake

- 12.36 The Committee was interested to hear that the projected East Lake development would be a national example of best practice sustainable urban design.⁴¹⁶ This funding will establish a partnership between the ACT Government and CSIRO to make East Lake a national example of best practice in sustainable urban development:

There are opportunities to apply sustainability principles throughout East Lake and to showcase the incorporation of leading edge sustainability principles at demonstration project sites. This project will embrace social, economic and environmental sustainability principles, technologies, and practices.⁴¹⁷

- 12.37 The Committee was advised that public housing would be incorporated in the development, and that the Causeway and its residents would be considered in the overall context of the future of the area.⁴¹⁸

RECOMMENDATION 62

- 12.38 **The Committee recommends that public housing and affordable housing constitute a reasonable percentage of the Eastlake development.**

RECOMMENDATION 63

- 12.39 **The Committee recommends that, if redevelopment of the Causeway must proceed, the residents be consulted and rehoused in a way that maintains the community identity and cohesiveness, and if possible, that rehousing be on the current site.**

⁴¹⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 27 June 2007, p 824

⁴¹⁶ Transcript of Evidence,

⁴¹⁷ Transcript of Evidence,

⁴¹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 21 June 2007, p 465 and Question on notice E07-322

13 ACT AUDITOR-GENERAL; ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

ACT Auditor-General

13.1 Major issues pursued with the Auditor-General were:

- Staffing matters;
- Effectiveness of the audit function;
- ACT records management.

Staffing matters

13.2 The Auditor-General advised the Committee that:

- Fewer performance audits than planned would be completed owing to the difficulty of recruiting skilled, experienced auditors;
- Currently staff turnover was running at 30%;
- Lack of funding was not necessarily the issue – more it was the high demand for auditing skills;
- The Audit Office's strategy at the moment was not actually to recruit auditors, but to recruit people with broad skills and knowledge and train them as auditors.

13.3 While a 13 per cent increase in staffing was budgeted for, those additional staff would comprise mainly auditors, but also staff engaged on other functions, such as advisory services to agencies.

Effectiveness of the audit function

13.4 The effectiveness of the audit function. The Auditor-General also advised that the AO had done follow-up audits to assess government's implementation of performance audit recommendations. She stated :

The results varied quite a lot from department to department. I think Dr Foskey mentioned before that some audits, such as the waiting list audit, get more attention from the department, and the same applies to courts

administration. Partly this is because a committee has held an inquiry into what are identified as significant issues. That gives the issues more attention and hence gives departments more incentive to implement audit recommendations.

In other departments there was a serious lack of attention to recommendations, especially to whole-of-government issues. When we do cross-agency performance audits normally the recommendations are very much at a whole-of-government level, whether it is for travelling arrangements or leave management of rec leave and sick leave. They are not focused on one department but focused on whole-of-government— and agencies tend not to pay attention.⁴¹⁹

- 13.5 The Auditor-General also expressed concern that the Government had not progressed triple bottom line reporting [sustainability reporting]:

Two years ago, when the government introduced a strategic indicator, I believe that was a starting point for providing agencies with the opportunity to report on performance indicators which are not necessarily economic or financial-related. It is also a performance indicator and also an environmental performance indicator. However, in the budget I did not see further progress made on that line of progress that you would expect the government to continue to get to the improved or final product of sustainable reporting.⁴²⁰

- 13.6 In response to questions on record keeping in the public sector, the Auditor-General advised:

Certainly in recent audits it became clear to us that documentation and record keeping were among the main issues faced by government departments. Whether or not it is credit card information or IT project information, there was a lack of proper record keeping. Our potential performance audits for the next year include an audit on the implementation of the three years old legislation on record management. We believe that

⁴¹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, pp 66-67

⁴²⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, pp 60-61

that is a problem and we will do a performance audit on that at some time in the future.⁴²¹

- 13.7 The Committee is concerned that, especially in relation to whole-of-government matters, there appears to be a lack of leadership and management of the process once the Audit report is tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The Committee considers that it is not the Auditor-General's place to 'police' the implementation of recommendations once Attorney-General's reports are tabled. Rather, the Committee is firmly of the view that the Chief Minister's Department must undertake more of a leadership role, particularly in the implementation of audit recommendations with a whole-of-government focus.

RECOMMENDATION 64

- 13.8 **The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister's Department report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the status of recommendations in Auditor-General's reports tabled in the preceding financial year.**

RECOMMENDATION 65

- 13.9 **The Committee recommends that the report to the Legislative Assembly form part of the Chief Minister's Department's Annual Report.**

RECOMMENDATION 66

- 13.10 **The Committee recommends that the report to the Legislative Assembly contain the following information – a) the acceptability of recommendations to the Government; b) for recommendations acceptable to the Government, whether the recommendations have been implemented; c) if recommendations have not been implemented, an indication of their implementation date.**

⁴²¹ Transcript of Evidence, 18 June 2007, p 63

ACT Legislative Assembly Secretariat

- 13.11 The ACT Legislative Assembly Secretariat provides business and procedural advice and support services to the Legislative Assembly, including:
- Procedural advice and research services to Members and their staff through the Chamber Support and Committee Offices;
 - Business and policy advice and support relating to payroll, personnel, accounting, members' entitlements, building and operations management and corporate governance,
 - Hansard recording and transcription services, IT support and advice, and broadcasting services; and
 - Communicating and promoting the roles and functions of the Assembly to the community and Government agencies.⁴²²
- 13.12 The Secretariat is funded for 39 FTE staff in the budget, which totals \$11,138 million for 2007- 2008.
- 13.13 Major issues canvassed with the Assembly included:
- Progress of security upgrade work
 - Staffing issues
 - The future of the Assembly library.
- 13.14 In relation to security upgrade work, the Committee is concerned at the redesigned front entrance, and in particular, about the area for the attendants. The Committee considers that some of the glass panels could be removed from the attendants' area for the enhanced comfort of the occupants.
- 13.15 The Committee has no other comment to make on the Secretariat allocation or the programs funded.

Mick Gentleman MLA

20 August 2007

APPENDIX A: Hearings and Witnesses

15 June 2007

Community Groups

Property Council of Australia, ACT Division

Tony Hedley, President

Chris Wheeler, Council Member

ACT Shelter Inc

Angela Seymour, Acting Executive Officer

ACT Council of Social Service Inc

Ara Cresswell, Director,

Jacqueline Phillips, Policy Officer,

Llewellyn Reynders, Manager, Policy and Communications

Association of Independent Schools of the ACT

David Garratt, Executive Representative

Jeremy Irvine, Executive Director

Lifeline Canberra

Marie Bennett, Executive Director

Transport Workers' Union

Benjamin Sweaney, Official

Youth Coalition of the ACT

Luke Bo'sher, Policy Officer

Meredith Hunter, Director

Havelock Housing Association Inc (ACT)

Loc Luu, Chief Executive Officer, Havelock Housing Association Inc (ACT)

Kel O'Neill, Consultant and former board member

Save our Schools

Trevor Cobbold, Spokesperson

Ian Morgan, Member

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network

Simon Viereck, Executive Officer

Jane Williams, Deputy Chair

Council on the Ageing [ACT]

Paul Flint, Executive Director

Healthcare Consumers Association of the ACT Inc

Russell McGowan, President

18 June 2007

Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change, Minister for the Arts

Department of Treasury

Megan Smithies, A/g Chief Executive (Under Treasurer)

Graeme Dowell, Commissioner for ACT Revenue, Revenue Management Division (ACT Revenue Office)

Neil Bulless, A/g Executive Director, Finance and Budget Division

Floyd Kennedy, A/g Director, Finance and Budget Division, Budget Management and Analysis Branch

Kirsten Thompson, Director, Finance and Budget Division, Budget Strategy and Reporting Branch

Mark Kwiatkowski, Director, Finance and Budget Division, Project Management

David Morgan, A/g Senior Manager, Finance and Budget Division, Budget Strategy and Reporting Branch

Lisa Holmes, A/g Director, Finance and Budget Division, Accounting Branch

Michael Vanderheide, Head, Shared Services

John Robertson, Executive Director, Procurement Solutions

Roger Broughton, Executive Director, Investment and Economics Division

Jason McNamara, Director, Economics Branch, Investment and Economics Division

Tom McDonald, Director, Legal and Insurance Policy Unit, Investment and Economics Division

Patrick McAuliffe, Manager, Central Financing Unit, Investment and Economics Division

Khalid Ahmed, Executive Director, Policy Coordination and Development Division

Stephen Miners, Director, Policy Coordination and Development Division

ACTEW Corporation Ltd

Michael Costello, Managing Director

Ross Knee, Principal Strategic Planner

Kerry McIlwraith, Chief Finance Officer

Simon Wallace, Chief Accounting Officer

Simon Webber, Technical Manager

Chris Webb, Deputy Project Director, Water2WATER

Marlene Stolt, Corporate Communications Manager

Auditor General's Office

Tu Pham, Auditor-General

Rod Nicholas, Director, Performance Audits and Corporate Services

Bernie Sheville, Director, Financial Audits

Wayne Berry MLA, Speaker

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory Secretariat

Tom Duncan, Clerk, Office of the Clerk

Max Kiermaier, Deputy Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms

Ian Duckworth, Manager, Corporate Services

Robina Jaffray, Manager, Committee Office

Russell Lutton, Manager, Hansard and Communications

David Skinner, Manager, Strategy and Parliamentary Education

Valeria Szychowska, Manager, Assembly IT

19 June 2007

Simon Corbell, Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Department of Justice and Community Safety

Renee Leon, Chief Executive

Robert Carter, Deputy Chief Executive

Steven Goggs, Deputy Chief Executive

Moira Crowhust, Chief Finance Officer, Strategic Finance

Rob Gadsdon, Finance Manager, Strategic Finance

Sandra Kennedy, Finance Manager, Strategic Finance

Peter Garrisson, Chief Solicitor, ACT Government Solicitor

John Clifford, Parliamentary Counsel, ACT Parliamentary Counsel's Office

Phil Joyce, Executive Director, Strategic Planning and Support

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

Richard Refshauge, Director of Public Prosecutions

Office of Regulatory Services

Brett Phillips, Executive Director

Jon Quiggin, Senior Director, Compliance

Danielle Krajina, A/g Registrar General

Steven Hart, Acting Occupational Health & Safety Commissioner, ACT Workcover within ORS

James Ryan, Executive Director, ACT Corrective Services

John Paget, Deputy Director and Director ACT Prison Project, ACT Corrective Services

Michael Johnson, Court Administrator, ACT Courts and Tribunals Administration

Human Rights Commission

Helen Watchirs, ACT Human Rights and Discrimination Commissioner

Linda Crebbin, Commissioner for Disability & Community Services, Commissioner for Children & Young People

Phillip Moss, Health Services Commissioner

ACT Electoral Commission

Phillip Green, Electoral Commissioner

Legal Aid Commission of the ACT

Andrew Crockett, Chief Executive

Peter Bayliss, Finance Manager

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission

John Logan, Principal Policy Adviser

Susan Faulbaum, Manager

Public Trustee for the ACT

Andrew Taylor, Public Trustee

Doug Gillespie, Deputy Public Trustee

Public Advocate of the ACT

Anita Phillips, Public Advocate

20 June 2007

Andrew Barr, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Planning, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Minister for Industrial Relations

Department of Education and Training

Michele Bruniges, Chief Executive

Janet Davy, Deputy Chief Executive

Craig Curry, Executive Director

Rob Donnelly, Director, Finance and Facilities

Matthew Hardy, Director, Measurement, Monitoring and Reporting

John Hare, Director, Governance, Regulation and Risk

Wayne Chandler, Director, Schools Northern Canberra

Joanne Howard, Director, Schools Central Canberra

Carol Harris, Director, Schools Southern Canberra

Kathy Melsom, Director, Student Services

Trish Wilks, Director, Curriculum Support and Professional Learning

Michael Bateman, Director, Human Resources

Jocelyn Vasey, Acting Director, Training and Tertiary Education

Simon Corbell, Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Department of Justice and Community Safety

Gregor Manson, Commissioner, Emergency Services Agency

David Foot, Deputy Commissioner, Emergency Services Agency

Renee Leon, Chief Executive

Robert Carter, Deputy Chief Executive

Moira Crowhurst, Chief Finance Officer, Strategic Finance

Sandra Kennedy, Finance Manager, Strategic Finance

Conrad Barr, Acting Chief Officer, ACT Fire Brigade

ACT Policing

Hughes, Mr Andy, Chief Police Officer

Close, Ms Leanne, Deputy Chief Police Officer

McDonald, Mr Brian, Acting Deputy Chief Police Officer

Issa, Mr Eddie, Acting Director Corporate Services

Funnell, Mr Lachlan, Coordinator Finance

21 June 2007

John Hargreaves, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Department of Housing and Community Services

Martin Hehir, Deputy Chief Executive

Maureen Sheehan, Executive Director, Housing

David Collett, Director, Strategic Asset Management

Pauline Brown, Director, Housing ACT

Adam Stankevicius, Director, Government Strategy and Community Policy

Ian Hubbard, Director, Finance Office for Multicultural Affairs

Nic Manikis, Director

Kate Scandrett, Senior Manager

Andrew Barr, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Planning, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Minister for Industrial Relations

ACT Planning and Land Authority

Neil Savery, Chief Planning Executive

Jacqui Lavis, Deputy Chief Planning Executive, Planning Services Branch

Ben Ponton, Director, Development Services Branch

John Meyer, Director, Client Services Branch

Adrian Walsh, Manager, Corporate and Human Resources, Client Services Branch

Peter Wurfel, Chief Finance Officer, Corporate Resources, Client Services Branch

Vic Smorhun, Manager, Communications and Government Services, Client Services Branch

Anthony Howatson, Acting Chief Finance Officer, Corporate Resources, Client Services Branch

22 June 2007

Andrew Barr, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Planning, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Minister for Industrial Relations

Department of Education and Training

Michele Bruniges, Chief Executive

Janet Davy, Deputy Chief Executive

Craig Curry, Executive Director

Rob Donnelly, Director, Finance and Facilities

Matthew Hardy, Director, Measurement, Monitoring and Reporting

John Hare, Director, Governance, Regulation and Risk

Wayne Chandler, Director, Schools Northern Canberra

Joanne Howard, Director, Schools Central Canberra

Carol Harris, Director, Schools Southern Canberra

Kathy Melsom, Director, Student Services

Trish Wilks, Director, Curriculum Support and Professional Learning

Michael Bateman, Director, Human Resources

Jocelyn Vasey, Acting Director, Training and Tertiary Education

Canberra Institute of Technology

Colin Adrian, Chief Executive

Leanne Cover, General Manager, Office of the Chief Executive

Peter Kowald, Division Corporate Services

ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority

Gary Guy, Chief Executive Officer

25 June 2007

Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change, Minister for the Arts

ACTEW Corporation Ltd

Michael Costello, Managing Director

Ross Knee, Principal Strategic Planner

Kerry McIlwraith, Chief Finance Officer

Simon Wallace, Chief Accounting Officer

Simon Webber, Technical Manager

Gary Bickford, Project Director, Water2WATER

Chris Webb, Deputy Project Director, Water2WATER

Marlene Stolt, Corporate Communications Manager

Department of Territory and Municipal Services

Mike Zissler, Chief Executive, Office of the Chief Executive

Phillip Tardif, Executive Director, Office of the Chief Executive,
Government Policy and Legislative Coordination

Hamish McNulty, Executive Director, Environment and Recreation

Peter Ottesen, Director, Environment and Recreation, Sustainability Policy and Programs

Bob Neil, Director, Environment and Recreation, Environment Protection and Heritage

David Butt, Director, Environment and Recreation, Energy and Water Policy

Russel Watkinson, Director, Environment and Recreation, Parks, Conservation and Lands

Susanna Kiemann, Director, Office of the Chief Executive, Strategic Finance

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Martin Hehir, Deputy Chief Executive

Maureen Sheehan, Executive Director, Housing ACT

Nic Manikis, Director

Adam Stankevicius, Director, Government Strategy and Community Policy

Ian Hubbard, Director, Finance

Neil Harwood, Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services,
Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra

Trish Harrup, Director

26 June 2007

Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change, Minister for the Arts

Department of Treasury

Mega Smithies, Chief Executive (Under Treasurer)

Graeme Dowell, Commissioner for ACT Revenue, Revenue Management Division
(ACT Revenue Office)

Neil Bulless, A/g Executive Director, Finance and Budget Division

Floyd Kennedy, A/g Director, Finance and Budget Division, Budget Management
and Analysis Branch

Kirsten Thompson, Director, Finance and Budget Division, Budget Strategy and
Reporting Branch

Mark Kwiatkowski, Director, Finance and Budget Division, Project Management

David Morgan, A/g Senior Manager, Finance and Budget Division, Budget Strategy
and Reporting Branch

Lisa Holmes, A/g Director, Finance and Budget Division, Accounting Branch

Michael Vanderheide, Head, Shared Services Centre

John Robertson, Executive Director, ACT Procurement Solutions

Roger Broughton, Executive Director, Investment and Economics Division

Jason McNamara, Director, Economics Branch, Investment and Economics Division

Tom McDonald, Director, Legal and Insurance Policy Unit, Investment and Economics Division

Patrick McAuliffe, Manager, Central Financing Unit, Investment and Economics Division

Khalid Ahmed, Executive Director, Policy Coordination and Development Division

Stephen Miners, Director, Policy Coordination and Development Division

Michael Chisnall, General Manager, InTACT, Shared Services Centre

Ross Burton, Chief Financial Officer, Shared Services Centre

Anne Thomas, Executive Director, HR Services, Shared Services Centre

Phil Hextell, Executive Director, Finance Services, Shared Services Centre

ACT Insurance Authority

Peter Matthews, General Manager

Gambling and Racing Commission

Greg Jones, Chief Executive

Ron Leonard, Finance Officer

ACTTAB Ltd

Tony Curtis, Chief Executive

Simon Wheeler, Executive Manager, Corporate Services

Rhodium Asset Solutions Ltd

Ken Moore, Chief Executive Officer

Andrew Fleming, Senior Manager, Finance and Corporate Services

Mark Thomas, Senior Leasing Manager

Exhibition Park Corporation

Tony Sadler, General Manager, Exhibition Park Corporation

John Hargreaves, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Department of Territory and Municipal Services

Mike Zissler, Chief Executive, Office of the Chief Executive

Philip Tardif, Executive Director, Office of the Chief Executive, Government Policy and Legislative Co-ordination

Hamish McNulty, Executive Director, Environment and Recreation

Russell Watkinson, Director, Parks, Conservation and Lands, Environment and Recreation

Peter Ottesen, Director, Sustainability Policy and Programs, Environment and Recreation

Chris Horsey, Manager, Sustainability Policy and Programs, Environment and Recreation, ACT No Waste

Rosemary Kennedy, Executive Director, Community and Infrastructure Services

Karen Greenland, General Manager, Road Transport, Office of Transport, Community and Infrastructure Services

Ian Hickson, Director, Roads ACT, Office of Transport, Community and Infrastructure Services

Tony Gill, Executive Director, Enterprise Services

Brian MacDonald, Manager, ACTION, Enterprise Services

Susanna Kiemann, Office of the Chief Executive, Strategic Finance

27 June 2007

Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change, Minister for the Arts

Chief Minister's Department

Pam Davoren, Acting Chief Executive

Penny Farnsworth, Director, Social Policy and Implementation, Policy Division

Philip Dorling, Acting Director - Cabinet and Intergovernmental Relations, Policy Division

Ken Douglas, Acting Director, Economic, Regional and Planning, Policy Division

Catherine Hudson, Deputy Chief Executive, Governance and Commissioner for Public Administration, Governance Division

Gary Williamson, Director, Public Sector Management Group, Governance Division

David Dawes, Deputy Chief Executive, Business and Projects, Business and Projects Division

George Tomlins, Executive Director, Strategic Priorities, Business and Projects Division

Philip Mitchell, Executive Director, Priority Projects, Business and Projects Division

Katherine Maloney, Manager, Communications, Arts, Communications, Events and Protocol

Simon Kinsmore, Manager, Live in Canberra, Communications, Arts, Communications, Events and Protocol

Sue Hall, Director, Corporate Management, Policy Division

Kate Nesor, Chief Finance Officer, Policy Division

John Stanwell, Director, artsACT

Dianne Ireland, Senior Events Manager, Special Events Unit

Ian Cox, Director, Business and Industry Development, Business and Projects Division, Business and Economic Development

Dita Hunt, Senior Manager, Enterprise Development, Business and Projects Division, Business and Economic Development

Ross McKay, Aged Accommodation Case Manager

Cultural Facilities Corporation

Harriet Elvin, Chief Executive Officer

John Wicks, Chief Financial Officer

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Martin Hehir, Deputy Chief Executive

Bronwen Overton-Clarke, Executive Director, Policy and Organisational Services

Judith Therkelsen, Senior Manager, Office for Ageing

Adam Stankevicius, Director, Governance, Strategy and Community Policy

Ian Hubbard, Director, Finance and Budget

Land Development Agency

Anne Skewes, Chief Executive Officer

Jenny Morison, LDA Board Deputy Chair

Matthew Kelly, Financial Controller, Corporate and Finance

Rhodium Asset Solutions Ltd

Ken Moore, Chief Executive Officer

Department of Treasury

Neil Bulless, Acting Executive Director, Finance and Budget Division

28 June 2007

*Katy Gallagher, Minister for Health, Minister for Children and Young People
Minister for Disability and Community Services, Minister for Women*

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Sandra Lambert, Chief Executive

Martin Hehir, Deputy Chief Executive

Lois Ford, Executive Director, Disability ACT

Maureen Sheehan, Acting Executive Director

Andrew Whale, Director, Disability ACT

Bronwen Overton-Clarke, Executive Director, Policy and Organisational Services

Meredith Whitten, Director, Advocacy Review and Quality

Rosalie Hardy, Senior Manager, Therapy ACT

Helen Pappas, Manager, Child and Family Centres

Adam Stankevicius, Director, Government Strategy and Community

Ian Hubbard, Director, Finance

David Collett, Director of Assets

Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

Sandra Lambert, Chief Executive, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Martin Hehir, Deputy Chief Executive, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Lou Denley, Executive Director

Frank Duggan, Director, Care and Protection

Jenny Kitchin, Director, Early Intervention

Neil Harwood, Director, ATSI Services

Paul Wyles, Director, Client and Adolescence Services

Bronwen Overton-Clarke, Executive Director, Policy and Organisational Services

Adam Stankevicius, Director, Government Strategy and Community

Ian Hubbard, Director, Finance

Office for Women

Sandra Lambert, Chief Executive, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Martin Hehir, Deputy Chief Executive, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Anna Fieldhouse, Manager, Office for Women

Adam Stankevicius, Director, Government Strategy and Community

Ian Hubbard, Director, Finance

29 June 2007

Katy Gallagher, Minister for Health, Minister for Children and Young People, Minister for Disability and Community Services, Minister for Women

ACT Health

Mark Cormack, Chief Executive

Ian Thompson, Deputy Chief Executive, Clinical Operations

Peggy Brown, Director and Chief Psychiatrist, Mental Health ACT

Megan Cahill, Executive Director, Government Relations and Planning

Judi Childs, Executive Director, Human Resource Management Branch
Deborah Cole, Chief Executive Director, Calvary Public Hospital
Paul Dugdale, Chief Health Officer, Population Health Division
Ron Foster, Chief Finance Officer, Financial and Risk Management Branch
Jenelle Reading, General Manager, Community Health
Owen Smalley, Chief Information Officer, Information Services Branch
Bill Stone, General Manager, the Canberra Hospital
Linda Trompf, Acting Executive Director, Policy

2 July 2007

Andrew Barr, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Planning, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Minister for Industrial Relations

Department of Territory and Municipal Services

Mike Zissler, Chief Executive
Susanna Kiemann, Director, Strategic Finance, Office of the Chief Executive
Tony Gill, Acting Executive Director, Enterprise Services
Ian Hill, Acting General Manager, Australian Capital Tourism
Chris Sanchez, Senior Business Manager, Australian Capital Tourism
Neale Guthrie, Group General Manager, Territory Venues and Events
Hamish McNulty, Executive Director, Environment and Recreation
Sue Marriage, Director, Sport and Recreation Services
Rebecca Kelley, Deputy Director, Sport and Recreation Services
Geoff Roberts, Registrar, Public Authorities and Territory Owned Corporations Unit

Chief Minister's Department

Pam Davoren, Acting Chief Executive
Cathy Hudson, Deputy Chief Executive, Governance Division
Liesl Centenera, Director, Office of Industrial Relations, Governance Division
Mark McCabe, Senior Manager, Workplace Injury Performance, Governance Division

Tanya Saad, Senior Manager, Asbestos, Governance Division

Kate Nesar, Chief Finance Officer, Policy Division

ACT Construction Industry and Contract Cleaning Industry Long Service Boards

Geoff Roberts, Registrar

ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority

Gary Guy, Chief Executive Officer

Office of the Commissioner for the Environment

Darro Stinson, Commissioner

APPENDIX B: Submissions

SUBMISSION LIST

No.	Organisation / Name	Date received	Date authorised for Publication
1	Save our Schools	15/06/07	22/06/07
2	Association of Independent Schools ACT	15/06/07	15/06/07
3	Havelock Housing Association Inc	15/06/07	22/06/07
4	ACT Mental Health Consumer Network	15/06/07	22/06/07
5	Lifeline	15/06/07	22/06/07
6	Conservation Council of the SE Region and Canberra	25/06/07	25/06/07
7	Volunteering ACT	03/07/07	20/08/07