

2010

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL
SERVICES
REPORT NO 3**

REPORT ON ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2008-2009

**Presented by
Mr Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister**

Government Response

Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services Report No 3 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2008-2009

Introduction

The Annual Reports of All ACT Government agencies are referred to the Standing Committees of the ACT Legislative Assembly for examination and report.

The Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services reviewed annual reports for:

- ACT Health; and
- Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.

The Committee made eight recommendations.

Response to Committee Recommendations

Recommendation 1

2.11 The Committee recommends that future Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) annual reports include additional information about respite care services, with particular attention to ACT Government centre-based respite services, and the type and amount of flexible respite that is provided.

Government Response

Noted.

Disability ACT already provides information in the Annual Report (Output 1.1 Statement of Performance) on ACT Government centre-based respite services, and the amount of flexible respite that is provided. Additional information can be provided in the Analysis of Agency Performance to include details of the type of flexible respite provided.

Recommendation 2

2.20 The Committee recommends that data collected under the Disability Services National Minimum Data Set relating to unmet need, be included in future DHCS annual reports.

Government Response

Agreed.

However, the measurement of unmet need is not part of the National Minimum Data Set collection. The ACT measures the unmet need of Disability ACT existing clients through the addition of two questions in the ACT National Minimum Data Set service user forms. These forms are completed by clients or their carers who are receiving services.

The main question Disability ACT uses for capturing unmet need of its existing clients is: 'Has this service user/carer requested more support for this service type than they are currently receiving'. This question has set responses for Yes, No and Unknown. An additional question aims to capture the number of hours of unmet need requested. This question is phrased: 'How many additional hours per week, if any, has the service user/carer requested but is not currently receiving?'.

This information can be included in future DHCS annual reports however it is impractical to rely on this data for the definitive measure of unmet need within the disability sector.

Recommendation 3

2.23 The Committee recommends that DHCS promotes the benefits of using the registration of interest form to families with children with a disability, and to proactively seek registrations of interest from all high school children with a disability, to assist the department in the planning and provision of post-school and accommodation support options, to meet the future needs of these students.

Government Response

Noted.

Disability ACT promotes the Registration of Interest in a range of fora including on its website, at community information events, in information packs provided to school leavers who have a disability and may be seeking a level of formal support from Disability ACT after leaving school. The Registration of Interest is promoted to community agencies and government services as a way of registering current or future unmet need.

Recommendation 4

2.41 The Committee recommends that future DHCS annual reports include more information about the grant program under which funding is provided, in the summary of grants section of the report.

Government Response

Agreed.

Recommendation 5

2.50 The Committee recommends that DHCS review the need for specific funding for the Elder Abuse Program at the end of the 2009–2010 financial year, based on the level of service demand experienced by ACT Disability Aged and Carer Advocacy Service.

Government Response

Noted.

DHCS is engaged with a range of stakeholders through the Elder Abuse Prevention Network. Any consideration of specific funding for the Elder Abuse Prevention Program would need to take into account existing services and be based on available information across the range of service providers about levels of service demand, including data to be collected in 2010-11.

Recommendation 6

2.77 The Committee recommends that Housing ACT provide more information, in future annual reports, about the success or otherwise of evictions and conditional orders, and more information about the strategies used to assist tenants who are experiencing problems.

Government Response

Agreed.

Housing ACT will provide information on evictions, provide the numbers of tribunal orders in relation to antisocial behaviour sought and obtained, and provide information about strategies used to support tenants who are experiencing problems.

Recommendation 7

3.10 The Committee recommends that ACT Health enhance the RADAR program for the elderly to reduce the number of presentations to the emergency departments and to ease the stress on elderly patients by avoiding an unnecessary emergency department presentation.

Government Response

Noted.

The RADAR (Rapid Assessment of the Deteriorating At Risk) Older Person Service received significant staff enhancement in the 2009-10 financial year. This included the addition of enhanced Specialist Geriatrician staffing, an additional Registered Nurse, a Social Worker and an Occupational Therapist.

RADAR, whilst still achieving excellent outcomes for referred patients in preventing avoidable hospital admissions, is not receiving the number of referrals that would support further staffing enhancements at this time. RADAR are currently working with the Division of General Practice to enhance referral numbers, as well as developing pathways for increased involvement in the TCH Emergency Department.

RADAR are also working with Community Health's CAPAC (Community Acute & Post-Acute Care) program and TCH's HITH (Hospital in the Home) program to identify ways in which the three programs can better work together to provide services for older people that avoid an acute admission or reduce the length of stay for an acute admission. It is envisaged that this work will lead to a greater availability of the service to older people in their homes, including Residential Aged Care facilities, without a current need for enhanced staffing.

Recommendation 8

3.31 The Committee recommends that ACT Health, in the 'external scrutiny' section of its annual report, provide more accurate reporting on relevant inquiries by Legislative Assembly Committees concerning the operation of the agency, and information on the implementation of Assembly committee recommendations that have been accepted by the Government of the day.

Government Response**Noted.**

ACT Health will monitor closely the recommendations made by Standing Committees of the Legislative Assembly and provide comment on each recommendation that relates to the operation of the agency. This will include information relating to the recommendations that have been accepted by the Government.