



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2022-2023

Mr James Milligan MLA (Chair), Mr Andrew Braddock MLA (Deputy Chair),
Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by Peter Cain MLA on Wednesday, 24 August 2022: Daniel Ng, acting Executive Group Manager, Legislation, Policy and Programs took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript Wednesday, 24 August 2022 [PAGE 130]]

In relation to:

DR PATERSON: Yesterday we spoke to the Minister for Domestic Violence—Domestic and Family Violence, around the work—the budgeted work that was happening around multi-disciplinary approach to sexual violence. Will Legal Aid or legal lawyers be part of that—the legal side of things be part of that multi-disciplinary, sort of I guess, centre where the sort of vision is that a victim could go, and they have the raft of different supports and agencies there to help them navigate?

Mr Ng: Yes, I guess one of the initiatives is already in place. I think it is kind of being co-led by Minister Berry and the Attorney, the Health Justice Partnership to that end. So that is kind of supporting and providing that kind of right at the door service from the health facilities.

Where some of our legal services providers, so Women's Legal Centre and Legal Aid, kind of do present at health facilities to provide that kind of joined service where, you know, noting that particularly people just had children kind of might present with some really complex legal needs, but they will not be as sort of mobile to go and access, and there is some other people in the community.

So that is kind of certainly something that is on the mind of the directorate at the moment. And it is an initiative that is already in place in, I think, in that space.

DR PATERSON: But they are not explicitly, like Legal Aid is not explicitly involved in this multi-disciplinary centre, or hub, or whatever that is going to—that is being funded to—as a recommendation from the sexual assault—

Mr Ng: I would have to take that specific question on notice about whether they are particularly involved in that initiative, Dr Paterson. But yes—

DR PATERSON: Okay, thank you.

Mr Ng: —happy to do so.

SHANE RATTENBURY MLA: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows: –

In response to Recommendation 3 of the *Listen. Take action to prevent, believe and heal* report, the ACT Government is committing \$4.4 million over four years to design and pilot a Multidisciplinary Centre (MDC) in the ACT to co-locate specialist sexual violence responses and services.

The initial first step of the pilot is researching and scoping of a best practice MDC. Although funding for the pilot phase does not explicitly provide for the co-location of lawyers in the MDC pilot, the initial work will involve consideration of multidisciplinary models used in other jurisdictions, including how clients who present at MDC are linked into community legal services such as the Legal Aid Commission and Community Legal Centres.

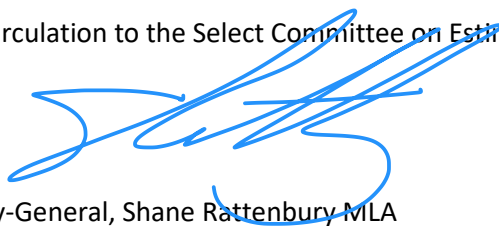
The Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) will continue to engage collaboratively with the Office for Coordinator-General of Family Safety and with the ACT’s legal assistance sector, including Legal Aid ACT, in the MDC pilot phase, to ensure the legal assistance sector’s skills and experience in establishing multi-disciplinary practices are leveraged in the MDC’s pilot and design.

JACS chairs the ACT Legal Assistance Forum (ACTLAF) and Service Planning Working Group (SPWG) meetings, which aims to collaboratively plan service delivery with the community legal assistance sector. The ACT’s legal assistance sector have extensive experience establishing multi-disciplinary practices, aimed at providing a holistic approach to address gaps in service delivery. For example, Canberra Community Law’s pioneered the Socio-Legal Practice model in the ACT, and Legal Aid ACT and Women’s Legal Centre have partnered to deliver the Health Justice Partnership clinic which operates at the Calvary Public Hospital Bruce and Child and Family Centres, to deliver legal assistance to women affected by domestic and family violence.

Through collaborative forums like ACTLAF and SPWG, JACS will continue to coordinate input and expertise from the sector to ensure a best practice MDC pilot has established warm referral pathways to legal assistance and other services, focused on achieving a holistic and trauma-informed outcome for its clients.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023

Signature:



Date:

5/9/22

By the Attorney-General, Shane Rattenbury MLA