



ACT
Government

**Government Response to the Select
Committee on Estimates 2022-23**
*Inquiry into the Appropriation Bill
2022-23 and Appropriation (Office of
the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2022-23*

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Treasurer

October 2022

Introduction

The 2022-23 Budget focuses on investing in delivery of services to Canberrans now and in the future. The priorities of the Budget are: providing high quality services to address cost of living pressures, investing in Canberra's people and places, and developing a long-term plan to deliver services and infrastructure for our growing city.

The 2022-23 Budget will deliver services and infrastructure for our growing population to ensure that the ACT remains an attractive place to live and work. Health, education services and infrastructure will be a priority area of government investment leading to a strong economy and job market. Additionally, the Government will be protecting our natural environment and expanding programs to reduce our carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuels.

The ACT economy has shown considerable resilience, outperforming expectations while faced with the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and other events, both domestic and international. The Government has invested in people and businesses through direct public sector spending.

The Government's investment priorities align with the needs of a growing population. New Census data for 2021 showed higher than forecast population growth. With international borders opening and interstate migration increasing, population growth is expected to return to its long-run 15-year average by 2024-25. The ACT currently has the lowest unemployment rate in the country at 2.7 per cent in August 2022, and underemployment is currently at historical lows.

The Government understands the need to balance the fiscal position whilst also investing in our community. The Government's fiscal strategy is designed to support businesses and individuals, strengthening our economy for the future, and providing services necessary for Canberrans as a whole.

The ACT's fiscal position has improved from the forecast in the 2021-22 Budget. The improved fiscal position is expected to continue and be lower than deficits previously estimated.

Following the ACT Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Estimates Inquiry into the *Appropriation Bill 2022-2023* and *Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2022-2023* held over 15th August to 26th August 2022, the Select Committee on Estimates has now released their report. The Government's consolidated responses to this Committee's Estimates recommendations are included below.

The Government wishes to acknowledge the role played by the Committee in scrutinising the Budget, and we have endeavoured to respond fully to the many questions asked during the Estimates process.

The Select Estimates Committee engaged the services of Pegasus Economics in undertaking an independent and detailed study of the Territory's Budget. The Pegasus Report addressed a wide range of issues relating to technical assumptions of the Budget and its outcomes. On

26 August 2022, the Government provided a response to the Chair of the Select Committee addressing the matters raised in that Report.

The Government thanks the Committee for their report, which has made 143 recommendations on budget matters on a wide range of issues across all government portfolios. In our response, the Government has:

- agreed to 18 recommendations;
- agreed in principle to 15 recommendations;
- agreed in part to three recommendations;
- acknowledged that the recommendation was part of existing Government policy in response to 45 recommendations;
- noted 60 recommendations; and
- not agreed to two recommendations.

The Government remains committed to being open and transparent in its budget reporting, ensuring that our practices strengthen the integrity and accountability of the management of the Territory's public finances. The Government's response to each of the individual recommendations of the Committees is detailed in the following pages.

Response to Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review timelines for the presentation of the ACT Budget, with consideration to the time required for committees to conduct a budget estimates process and write a report.

Government response

Noted.

The Government will consider the time required for the budget estimates process in the setting of sitting dates for 2023.

Any timing matters associated with Select Committee on Estimates processes are a matter for the Assembly and Committee to determine.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Speaker resolve the constitutional rights of committees to conduct their business so that future inquiries do not encounter the same issues that impacted the Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023.

Government response

Noted.

This is a matter for the Speaker.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Speaker authorise the use of the chamber for future public hearings for inquiries into ACT Budget Estimates and Annual and Financial Reports.

Government response

Noted.

This is a matter for the Speaker.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fund improvements to the Chamber so that it has suitable audio-visual functionality.

Government response

Noted.

The Office of the Legislative Assembly may wish to prioritise these improvements from within their existing resources.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide funding for an independent voice to advocate on behalf of migrant and refugee communities.

Government response

Noted.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

The ACT Government funds and engages with key community organisations to support, and represent a wide range of migrant and refugee communities and issues including people living in the ACT on permanent and temporary refugee and protection visas, international students, skilled and family migrants. This includes Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS); Multicultural Hub; Companion House; and LegalAID. In addition, refugee and migrant issues are raised with the ACT Government through existing and effective mechanisms including the Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Humanitarian Coordination Committee; the Multicultural Advisory Council and community budget submissions.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government considers its branding decisions to maintain apolitical public service outputs.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

All ACT Government branded campaigns are designed in line with the requirements of the *Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act 2009*, and are independently reviewed as per the Act.

Public information campaigns developed by ACT Government often have individual brands and visual aesthetics, designed to maximise audience awareness and engagement.

The Built for CBR brand is designed to make it easier for the community to recognise and keep up to date with information about ACT Government infrastructure projects and resulting travel impacts.

The Built for CBR brand is inspired by the 'Canberra' red brick, an iconic symbol of Canberra's building design history dating back to 1913. This is demonstrated in a range of earthy red tones of the colour palette, and the brick-like stacking of the 'Built for CBR' word mark.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate how to improve the effectiveness of wellbeing indicators and gender responsive budgeting and demonstrate that they are influencing budget decisions.

Government response

Noted.

In April 2021, the Government released the wellbeing data dashboard. The wellbeing dashboard will be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure measures and indicators remain useful in helping us understand the wellbeing of our people, institutions, and environment. Comprehensive data reporting is expected every two years, with the first report anticipated in 2023.

The ACT Government is actively working to ensure gender is considered in policy development and budget processes. This includes through the annual Women's Budget Statement and through wellbeing budget practices that incorporate a gender perspective in both initiative planning and in decision-making. Future work in this area will include the development and promotion of supporting resources for directorates to assist in considering gender in Wellbeing Impact Assessments, as a deliverable under Action 5.2 of the *Second Action Plan of the ACT Women's Plan 2016-26*¹.

Wellbeing Impact Assessments are a requirement for budget proposals and support Government decision-making processes through ensuring that proposals before Government consider the impacts of initiatives on the wellbeing of our community, institutions, and environment.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government encourage the use of the Gender Impact Analysis Tool.

¹ ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026/Second Action Plan 2020-22:
<https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/women/womens-plan-2016-26/second-action-plan-2020-22>

Government response

Existing Government policy.

A gender impact analysis tool was developed as an action under the *First Action Plan 2017-2019* under the *ACT Women's Plan 2016-26*. This tool is available to directorates to use in their policy and project planning.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government record and report against how many times directorate staff seek support and training in using the gender assessment tool and which agencies seek support.

Government response

Noted.

The ACT Government will continue to incorporate a gender perspective in initiative planning and decision-making through implementation of the Wellbeing Framework, including Wellbeing Impact Assessments.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government track objective measures like the gender pay gap and employment pay gap as part of the gender responsive budgeting measures.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The wellbeing dashboard currently includes measures where data is disaggregated by gender, where the data is available. Looking forward, the wellbeing dashboard will continue to be developed so that the wellbeing of specific groups can be analysed, including understanding wellbeing based on gender and expanding the number of measures where the data can be disaggregated. The ACT Government will work with the community in building these profiles, including considering the intersectional issues relevant to such analysis. The upcoming engagement process to develop the Third Action Plan under the *ACT Women's Plan 2016-26* will present an opportunity to explore with the community how the government can further its maturity in considering gender impacts within the budget process.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider providing in future budgets the FTE projections by directorate and agency for each year of the forward estimates (Appendix K).

Government response

Noted.

The Government proactively considers the presentation of information and appropriateness of budget paper content each year.

The Government does not currently forecast agency full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing over the forward estimates period. However, in each Budget the Government publishes employee expenses by directorate for the entire forward estimates period. This approach is consistent with almost all other jurisdictions including the Commonwealth. An exception is South Australia, which presents FTE estimates across the forward estimates but notes that:

“... The FTE profiles shown are notional and are based on current funding levels across the forward estimates. Chief executives have the flexibility to deliver government services in the manner that best suits the needs of the business. As a result, the actual level of FTEs over the forward estimates may vary”.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should review its position on tiered payroll taxation as the previous work into the subject is a decade old.

Government response

Noted.

The Government is not currently considering introducing a tiered payroll tax.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government collect and publish data on the economic impact of the arts in the ACT.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Data regarding the arts ecosystem in the ACT including employment as a main job, revenue generated from live performances and arts tourism visitation is available on the artsACT website, and is updated as data becomes available. The Government will also seek to leverage national research and data collection to enhance information on the economic impact of the arts in the ACT.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government commit ongoing funding to the 'Recognising Significant Women through Public Art' initiative.

Government response

Noted.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

As part of Australia's Arts Capital: Arts, Culture and Creative Policy Action Plan, the Government has committed to developing a Public Art Strategy for the ACT in 2023-24 that will foster and grow the ACT Government's public art collection to reflect the diversity of human identity and experience, with women and Traditional Custodians holding pride of place in future works, both as subjects and creators, as well as support the visibility of the collection.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, through Access Canberra, explore an outreach service for vulnerable Canberrans.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Access Canberra has already implemented a number of improved services over the past year to support vulnerable members of the community including partnering with the Council on the Ageing for bookable appointments from the Dickson Service Centre, implementation of a training program for Service Centre staff specific to supporting customers living with dementia, and recent budget funding for extra Concierge staff at each Shopfront to assist those Canberrans who may have additional requirements in order to transact their business.

Access Canberra will continue to explore options to improve services for vulnerable Canberrans as we continue to evolve our service delivery model. This research work will include the consideration of how an outreach service would fit into our other service delivery model.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with schools to examine processes for toxic waste disposal.

Government response

Not agreed.

The processes for toxic waste disposal are established through national scale policies, formalised through the ACT regulatory framework. The National Waste Policy Strategy 11² is to “manage and regulate chemicals and wastes throughout their lifecycle to minimise environmental and human health impacts and meet Australia’s national and international obligations”.

It would be inconsistent with the agreed national policy and international commitments for the ACT to explore alternative arrangements with schools.

The ACT Government already has arrangements in place for the safe disposal of toxic waste, in line with legislative obligations.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government demonstrate planning which balances short-term demand for skills with long-term demand, and how they are affected by Government objectives such as the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

In April 2022, the ACT Government released *Skilled to Succeed: Skills and workforce agenda for the ACT*³. The ACT Government will work with industry to develop action plans that focus on longer-term skills needs into the future. This includes a specific focus on renewable energy and technology.

Further, the ACT Skills Needs List is updated each financial year to inform the scope of vocational education and training qualifications subsidised by the ACT Government. This update is informed by extensive consultation with industry to ensure Government investment is best directed towards occupations that are currently in-demand and align with the needs of our local industries.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government re-introduce the accountability indicators for the Skilled Migration Output Class and to report on these in the annual reports.

Government response

Noted.

² National Waste Policy Less Waste, More Resources 2018:

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-waste-policy-2018.pdf>

³ACT Government plan *Skilled to Succeed: Skills and workforce agenda for the ACT*:

https://www.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1992990/Skilled-to-Succeed.pdf

The ACT Government reports on the accountability indicators in the annual report that relate to the ACT Government's skilled migration responsibilities: skilled independent nomination and average processing time for applications across migration streams.

The Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs is responsible for the total number of migrants to the ACT and employer-sponsored visas. The ACT Government does not report on Commonwealth Department performance.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish the details of JobTrainer in its annual reports, with specific reference to overall cost to the Government, number of additional enrolments due to the program, and number of completions.

Government response

Noted.

JobTrainer is a short-term initiative delivered in partnership with the Australian Government and will conclude on 30 June 2023. Outcomes of the program will be released following its conclusion.

Information about JobTrainer enrolments and funding is reported in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate annual report.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government identify for clarity the funding allocated for each area of Skilled Capital and User Choice within the budget and report on how this is distributed between CIT and Independent RTOs in the Annual Reports.

Government response

Noted.

The ACT Government will explore improving the quality and utility of reporting on funded training initiatives, while seeking to protect commercial-in-confidence information of funded training providers.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government include direct links to Independent RTOs on its Study Canberra Website as part of its review.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Study Canberra website was updated to include a link to <https://myskills.gov.au/>, which outlines available courses delivered by all registered training organisations within the ACT.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, whilst awaiting the ACT Integrity Commission report into the CIT consultancy contracts, ensures that governance arrangements for all future CIT procurement decisions are fit for purpose.

Government response

Noted.

The ACT Government awaits the Report and will consider the recommendations once received.

The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) as a Territory entity is subject to the requirements of the *Government Procurement Act 2001* and *Government Procurement Regulations 2007*. Certain procurement proposals must be referred to the Government Procurement Board who reviews and provides advice in relation to the proposal.

A Direction was issued, effective 20 August 2022, for CIT to demonstrate effective financial management of resources and consider advice provided by the Government Procurement Board.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government focus on supporting vulnerable students who have not been in employment prior to graduating their course, in terms of achieving employment after graduating.

Government response

Agreed.

Skilled to Succeed: Skills and Workforce Agenda for the ACT prioritises inclusive skills development and supporting all Canberrans – including vulnerable cohorts – to engage in lifelong learning and have opportunities to join, re-enter or stay connected to the workforce.

Negotiations are currently underway on the proposed 12 month agreement for Fee Free TAFE.

The proposal recognises the central role of TAFE in the VET sector in the delivery of quality training for vulnerable learners and industry.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government support women in construction to ensure safe workplaces, women are encouraged to enter teaching roles, and diversity for work placement, and encourage female participation in teaching staff.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government supports women in construction through the Field Officer Program that promotes the trades to women and girls to encourage them to pursue apprenticeships, and also supports new apprentices early on in their apprenticeship.

CIT also promotes vocational education to women. CIT experienced an increase in female apprentices in 2021, especially in areas where women are under-represented. In 2021 there were 262 female apprenticeship enrolments – an increase of 33 per cent for the same period in 2020. In terms of non-traditional female trades of construction, carpentry, plumbing and metal fabrication, there were 111 female apprenticeship enrolments in 2021, an overall increase of 40.1 per cent from 2020.

CIT currently supports the National Association for Women in Construction (NAWIC) through sponsorship, working with NAWIC to offer women students in construction scholarships at CIT and CIT actively participates in the NAWIC Education Committee.

CIT is creating a supportive and welcoming environment on campus by giving women the opportunity to secure meaningful employment outcomes. The increase in women training in male-dominated areas is being supported by strong female role models in CIT's teaching staff. Over half of CIT's workforce and two thirds of CIT managers are women, giving women a strong voice in the CIT community.

A key objective of the ACT Government is to improve employment and social outcomes in the construction industry through the inclusion of diversity targets in each construction contract. As part of the CIT Woden Campus Project there is a 15 per cent stretch target for participation of women in the design and construction of the development. To this aim, the Project will offer 15 new school-based apprenticeships for girls and 15 new apprenticeships for women.

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide its plan for future indoor sports facilities across the ACT and allocate funding in the 2023-2024 Budget for indoor sports.

Government response

Noted.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reports timeframes for the Ice Rink Complex and indicate:

- **when details of the confirmed site will be released;**
- **whether the facility will be a joint venture with external parties and sporting groups;**
- **details of who will be responsible for the management and maintenance; and**
- **a timeframe for when budget allocations will be made and report back to the Assembly.**

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The ACT Government is currently in negotiation with Cruachan Investments Pty Ltd and will be in a position to provide an update on the project once the negotiation process has concluded.

Recommendation 27

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government advise:

- **the extent of the proposed feasibility study to determine the parameters for a new pool, featuring a dive pool, in the Stromlo Leisure Centre complex;**
- **the extent of consultations that have already taken place with key interest groups about new or additional pool facilities; and**
- **the likely timeframe for the study, timelines for consideration of the results by government and the allocation of any budget funding for the expansion of current pool facilities and report back to the Assembly.**

Government response

Agreed.

The ACT Government will provide feedback on the progress of the dive pool feasibility study including proposed scope, consultation and project timelines as the process progresses past the initialisation phase.

Recommendation 28

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government upgrade the sports facilities roadmap to a comprehensive sports facilities management plan to ensure that maintenance of existing facilities and establishment of new facilities meets community need.

Government response

Noted.

The Committee recommendation will be considered during the finalisation of related strategic infrastructure planning documentation.

Recommendation 29

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government prioritise funding for the commencement of the build of the Phillip enclosed oval in the 2023-2024 Budget.

Government response

Noted.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government hold the owner of the Phillip Pool to account to its lease conditions to open the pool for the summer of 2022-23.

Government response

Noted.

The lessee sought further relief from the requirement to open the pool for the 2022-23 summer season, but this request was not supported by the independent Planning and Land Authority. Previous concessions granted were linked to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. The operator is currently understood to be repairing the pool and aiming to have it open by the end of 2022. In regard to the operator's lease compliance, the ACT Government is monitoring the progress of the pool recommissioning.

Recommendation 31

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures the Motor Accident Insurance Scheme is supportive of distressed families by expediting the process to access claims.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Motor Accident Injuries Scheme provides support to a greater range of people through being a no-fault scheme. It streamlined the process for people to get support in the event of injuries from a motor accident, including the payment of funeral benefits where a death occurs. There is earlier and more comprehensive support than existed under the previous scheme. In addition, the Motor Accident Injuries Commission established the Defined Benefits Information Service (provided by CARE Inc) to provide information and assistance to people who need help to navigate the scheme. The Commission continues to work with agencies across government to address any information barriers injured persons and their families experience in making an application.

Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consult broadly with the community on the Stromlo Forest Park Master Plan and any proposed developments in relation to Stromlo Forest Park.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The National Arboretum Canberra and Stromlo Forest Park (SFP) Branch established the Stromlo Stakeholder Consultative Committee (SSCC), who meet quarterly, to provide the opportunity for SFP user groups to comment on the implementation of Master Plan projects and other developments as they arise.

The SSCC currently comprises of eight key groups across different sporting interests, including: ACT Equestrian Association; AusCycling; Canberra Off Road Cycling; Indigenous Marathon Foundation; Pedal Power; Triathlon ACT; We Ride; and YMCA Canberra Running Club. Further consultation will be undertaken as projects are implemented to ensure contrasting viewpoints are considered. SFP stakeholders are welcome to contact existing SSCC groups to have their current and future concerns relayed to SFP management at quarterly meetings, and/or general feedback can be sent to stromloforestpark@act.gov.au.

Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase funding for ACT Archives to proactively digitise records for access by the community.

Government response

Noted.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 34

The Committee recommends that ICON Water examine reasons for the MIB contamination and how to supply long-term high-quality drinking water.

Government response

Agreed.

Icon Water acknowledges the importance of the 2-Methylisoborneol (MIB) contamination recommendation made by the Estimates Committee. Icon Water's response comes in two parts, as outlined below.

Examination of Reasons for MIB

Icon Water has entered into early discussions with the ANU on conducting MIB research. Icon Water aims to understand in greater detail the occurrence, distribution and prevalence of MIB in source drinking water where it has been recorded across the globe (and particularly Australia). It is expected that this first round of research will provide the basis to conduct further detailed examination on MIB where it may help inform Icon Water's future forecasts of occurrences and improve Icon Water's responses to detection of MIB, should it reoccur in the future.

Operations Delivering Quality Drinking Water

Icon Water has placed a high priority on preparing a response to MIB detection operationally while still following water source selection guidelines and preserving water security. Icon Water has conducted high level analysis of the short, medium and long term MIB treatment responses taking into consideration the time to implement, cost and treatment effectiveness to inform future MIB event responses in the Cotter River catchment. Icon Water will continue to monitor the source water for MIB. Recent testing has shown that the MIB prevalence has reduced in concentration in the source water, namely the Bendora reservoir where it was detected first in July 2022.

Recommendation 35

The Committee recommends that ICON Water should provide as part of the recorded message on known issues a pathway option to leave customer feedback.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

Icon Water's telephony system does not have functionality to provide a pathway option for a customer to leave feedback. However, a telephony upgrade is scheduled to occur during the latter part of the 2023-24 financial year and into the 2024-25 financial year. It is possible that this functionality may become available with an upgrade to a more contemporary version of the system.

Recommendation 36

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government look to improve its offering of fountains and water features through the City Renewal Authority.

Government response

Noted

The Government recognises the value of water as an urban landscape element. The City Renewal Authority will continue to consider opportunities to integrate water features to its place making projects. Considerations will include:

- whether it is appropriate to the proposed use and desired amenity for the particular site; and
- if it is within available resourcing to both build and maintain them as public assets.

Recommendation 37

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to improve transparency on kangaroo cull programs particularly in relation to methodology and data.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

There is a dedicated webpage on kangaroo management, including a conservation cull. The website includes information on methodology. Data on the number of animals included in a cull is made available each year once completed.

Recommendation 38

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that wombats are located and either relocated or culled before any SLA development in new suburbs in the ACT, with particular urgent attention to be given to the current suburb development in the Molonglo Valley.

Existing Government policy.

All new developments require ecological surveys prior to being approved by the Planning Authority. Prior to commencement of any development work, management plans are put in place for contractors to relocate any wildlife, as required.

Recommendation 39

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a strategy for wombat removal from all future green field sites.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Strategies already exist within Environmental Impact Statements, Development Applications, and Construction Environmental Management Plans to ensure that the presence of wildlife is assessed, and appropriate management measures are in place.

Recommendation 40

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures in its Housing ACT surveys that there is a question about tenants' satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the service—and if dissatisfied, why.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

Housing ACT currently captures tenant satisfaction with service provision in annual surveys which also allow tenants the ability to express the reason(s) for their satisfaction rating using free text. For those surveys managed by Housing ACT every two years (as opposed to the national tenant survey distributed in alternative years), modifications will be made to further categorise the primary reason for satisfaction while still including the opportunity for tenants to express in free text their views and reasoning.

Recommendation 41

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that ACT Public Housing letters, sent to tenants, include due dates/deadline information, where applicable.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Housing ACT currently provides timeframes and deadlines, if applicable, in its correspondence to tenants.

Recommendation 42

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that housing programs publish key milestones, including expected completion dates, to allow evaluation of program achievements.

Government response

Noted.

Information about housing programs is published in annual reports, including accountability indicators.

Recommendation 43

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish an annual detailed financial breakdown of how the WAC is expended.

Government response

Noted.

The Water Abstraction Charge is part of the Government's consolidated revenue and not hypothecated. Expenditure of consolidated revenue is set out in the ACT Budget.

The ACT Government reports annually to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) on water related expenditure, noting that the Water Abstraction Charge is designed to reflect the value of water rather and does not directly correlate to water expenditure. The ACCC publish outcomes annually in a water monitoring report.

Recommendation 44

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should publish the share of revenue from WAC that comes from NSW vs ACT and where it is expended each year.

Government response

Noted.

The Office of Water and Treasury will jointly review the feasibility and options of publishing revenue from the WAC.

Recommendation 45

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish an annual ACT Water Report.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government already publishes on an annual basis a Report Card on the implementation of the ACT Water Strategy. The 2021-22 report is currently being prepared for publishing.

Recommendation 46

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate the appropriateness of plants in the floating wetlands, to ensure they do not return nutrients to the water if they die off.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Water quality plants growing in constructed wetlands should periodically be harvested and removed to either landfill or recycling to maximise the removal of nutrient pollution from our waterways. The Healthy Waterways program is developing a harvesting regime for the wetlands.

Recommendation 47

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide updates on how the EV strategy is contributing to achieving the ACT Government's emissions reduction targets.

Government response

Agreed.

The ACT Government will evaluate and then report on this to ensure efficacy and gain lessons learned to inform future policies and programs. The Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) Indicator Dashboard⁴ provides monthly updates on ZEV sales growth in the ACT, and information on emissions reduction stemming from the reduction in petrol use in the ACT can be found in the annual *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report*⁵.

Recommendation 48

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government discuss with the automotive industry, their ability to meet the requirement to only supply new electric powered vehicles in the ACT by 2035.

⁴ Indicator dashboard: <https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/transport-and-travel/cars-and-vehicles>

⁵ Inventory Report: <https://www.climatechoices.act.gov.au/policy-programs/act-greenhouse-gas-emissions-inventory-reports>

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Consultations have begun with the automotive retail sector on the transition to 100 per cent zero emissions vehicles' sales.

Recommendation 49

The Committee recommends that the Government fully fund the implementation and ongoing support for the ACT Disability Strategy and include the indicative costs associated with this in future budgets, as separate line items within the Health or Disability budgets.

Government response

Noted.

The *ACT Disability Strategy and First Action Plan* will be launched next year.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 50

The Committee recommends that the Government table the ACT Disability Strategy listening report in the Assembly on completion.

Government response

Agreed.

The ACT Disability Strategy Listening Report will be published in December 2022 around *International Day of People with Disability* held annually on 3 December 2022.

Recommendation 51

The Committee recommends that the Government identify in future budgets all funding allocations for community service organisations and individual advocacy groups provided within the disability sector.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government annually releases all funding provided to organisations and individual advocacy groups within the disability sector.

Recommendation 52

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continues to work with the community sector on a long-term solution in respect to the Community Sector Indexation formula.

Government response

Agreed.

The Government is currently considering its response to the *Counting the Costs* report⁶ into community sector sustainability which makes a recommendation on a change to the community sector indexation formula. The Government recognises that indexation is one of the strategies that contributes to sustainability of the community sector. Over the past two years, Treasury has adjusted the indexation rate to reflect decisions of the Fair Work Commission. The Community Services Directorate intends to work with Treasury and other stakeholders to understand implications of any changes to the formula and how it is applied across the sector.

Recommendation 53

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report on the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who access or participate in Family Group Conferencing.

Government response

Not agreed.

Data on the actual number of families who access or participate in Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is currently reported. This cannot be reported on as a percentage due to:

- Difficulties collecting data on the number of families involved in Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS), due to the complexity of defining a family, especially where children and young people may have shared custody arrangements.
- FGC can be offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families across the spectrum of CYPS service provision from early intervention to Out of Home Care. For this reason, the cohort eligible at a point in time cannot be quantified.

Recommendation 54

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish achievements towards Welcoming Cities Advanced Status.

⁶ACT Council of Social Service - Counting the Costs: Sustainable funding for the ACT community services sector: https://www.actcoss.org.au/sites/default/files/public/publications/2021-report-Counting-the-Costs_1.pdf

Government response

Agreed.

The ACT Government will submit agreed achievements as evidence against the Welcoming Cities Standard for assessment by Welcoming Australia for Advanced level accreditation. The achievements submitted will be made publicly available on the Community Services Directorate website. Case studies of inclusive practices will also be promoted.

Recommendation 55

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with local stakeholders on new programs to be funded in upcoming budgets to support seniors.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government will continue to work with key stakeholders, including the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing, to determine priority areas for investment to support older Canberrans.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 56

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government improve the reporting of the Age-Friendly City Plan so that a formal update is provided on each action listed in the plan.

Government response

Noted.

The Age-Friendly City Plan has a monitoring process embedded. This is supported via an annual statement in the Assembly and the tabling of progress reports, which detail progress against each action within the Plan. These reports note the status of each action, including progress to date and process and timeframe for completion. Progress reports are also published online via the Community Services Directorate website.

Recommendation 57

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake research into the potential criminalisation of coercive control in the ACT.

Government response

Noted.

In 2022, the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence was provided with advice from the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) on the feasibility of criminalising coercive control as a standalone offence in the ACT. Although the ACT currently does not have a standalone offence of coercive control, there are a number of ways ACT criminal law can be used to address this behaviour.

In January 2022, the DVPC provided the Minister with this advice and the ACT Government's response is guided by the DVPC's recommendations. This emphasised that coercive control is inextricably linked with domestic and family violence and while criminalising coercive control may improve support options available for victim-survivors and build awareness of this abuse, it may also result in unintentional harms for victim-survivors from diverse and historically marginalised communities, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The advice also recognised the importance of non-legislative reforms such as education and training in responding to coercive control.

The ACT Government will continue to engage with the community and monitor the responses of other jurisdictions to this issue, as well as implement other responses to coercive control, such as implementing the DFV Risk Assessment and Management Framework to improve community and sector understanding.

Recommendation 58

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government prioritise a community education campaign around recent amendments to the Crimes Act regarding affirmative consent.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The *Listen, Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal Report*⁷ recommended that this law reform be accompanied by community education measures and the government has agreed.

Recommendation 59

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to prioritise the delivery of agreed recommendations of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee.

⁷ Listen, Take Action Report:

https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1915332/CSD_SAPR_approved_WCAG_plus.pdf

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Government will continue prioritisation of the recommendations from the *Listen, Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal Report*. The commitment to prioritise these recommendations was outlined in the Government Response to the report and a progress update is expected to be made annually to the Legislative Assembly through a Ministerial Statement.

Recommendation 60

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report back to the Assembly on progress of the pilot service to support children (5-12 years) and mothers who have been victims of domestic and family violence.

Government response

Agreed.

The Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence reports annually to the Legislative Assembly through the Safer Families Ministerial Statement. The Statement will include reporting on the progress of the pilot service for children and mothers with experiences of domestic and family violence.

Recommendation 61

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report to the Assembly on the Return to Work Program.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Community Services Directorate reports publicly on the program annually in its annual report. The report details the number of individual grants issued in the year and the dollar amount spent.

Recommendation 62

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake detailed economic rental market analysis of the proposed minimum rental standards on the rental supply, rental prices, energy efficiency standards and energy costs in the ACT.

Government response

Noted.

The minimum energy efficiency standard for rental properties was informed by analysis undertaken in a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) and extensive consultation with the community and key stakeholders, including insulation and electrical industry organisations, during two rounds of consultation in April-May and November-December 2021.

A detailed work plan for the monitoring and evaluation of activities to track the effects of the introduction of the standards on the ACT rental sector, insulation industry and electrical contractors has been prepared. monitoring and evaluation activities will also focus on household experiences including changes in energy use and costs.

Recommendation 63

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with ACT gambling venues to implement the bet and load limits of poker machines in the ACT.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government has been actively consulting the club industry and gambling harm advocates through the Community Clubs Ministerial Advisory Committee, as well as independently, to ensure these views are considered in the implementation of this initiative. The ACT Government is committed to continuing to work with industry on the rollout of this measure.

Recommendation 64

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a 10–15-year vision for the future of poker machines in the ACT to provide clarity to the community.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government is actively considering future vision for the club industry in the context of delivering its current electronic gaming machine reform agenda.

Recommendation 65

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with every club group and individual club to ensure that reporting on the Gambling Incident Register is consistent across clubs in line with the legislation, in particular around reporting on red flag behaviours.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Gambling and Racing Commission regularly engages with club groups and individual clubs to provide training on Gambling Contact Officer roles and responsibilities. This program includes the advice on how to report on gambling incidents in the ACT Gambling Exclusion Database.

Every club in the ACT that has gaming machines in the venue must have a Gambling Contact Officer and the club must ensure that their Gambling Contact Officer undertakes annual training in accordance with the *Gambling and Racing Control (Code of Practice) Regulation 2002*.

The Commission will liaise with a licensee where its reporting appears to indicate lack of understanding of the reporting requirements, including where incident reports seem low.

Recommendation 66

The Committee recommends that the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission publicly report data that is collected (as directed by legislation) from gambling venues in the ACT (including from the Gambling Incident Register, self-exclusion data).

Government response

Agreed in part.

The Gambling and Racing Commission already publishes some data collected from gaming venues such as gaming machine trading scheme statistics. The Commission will consider what further relevant data on self-exclusion can be published, subject to privacy considerations.

Recommendation 67

The Committee recommends that the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission revise and clearly define strategic objectives and accountability objectives in future papers to include clear objectives to reduce harm.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Gambling and Racing Commission's strategic objectives are clearly set out in its Statement of Intent, with Strategic Objective 1 being 'To Take Meaningful Action to Prevent Gambling Harm' with a public health approach to prevent and reduce gambling harm through a combination of strategies including:

- effective research to build the body of knowledge;
- strengthening community action to prevent gambling harm through supporting educative and gambling harm awareness resources for the entire Canberra community and organising gambling harm awareness activities;

- partnering with gambling venues to deliver safer settings such as providing and supporting the ACT's gambling exclusion scheme and quality staff training to prevent harm including delivery of consistent information about self-exclusion options and available support services for people at risk, public health messages, and safer gambling environments; and
- strengthening community access to a range of resources and support services for people experiencing gambling harm including funding of counselling and relapse prevention services, funding gambling harm awareness courses for non-gambling specific community sector worker gambling harm awareness activities and the provision of support for people at risk.

The Commission's accountability indicators are also listed in the Statement of Intent and include strategic indicators that are clinical and other measures of gambling harm, as well as an accountability indicator measuring evidence informed activities undertaken to prevent and reduce gambling harm.

Recommendation 68

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate why women appear to be self-excluding from gambling venues at far less the rate of men, and allocate funding to enable women equal opportunity to self-exclude.

Government response

Agreed in part.

The Gambling and Racing Commission will examine self-exclusion data and seek to identify whether women face barriers that are preventing them from self-excluding.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 69

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide in-venue information, in a range of languages, to inform people harmed by gambling who do not speak English that materials are available in their language on-line and how to access these.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

This recommendation has already been agreed to by the ACT Government through the Government Response to Recommendation 10 of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's report *Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-21*.

The ACT Gambling Support Service (1800 858 858) also provides cultural and linguistic diverse (CALD) services which are funded by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission.

The below text is taken from the Government Response to this recommendation:

The government acknowledges the need to provide information that is accessible for different CALD groups.

The ACT Gambling and Racing Commission will work with the ACT Gambling Support Service in liaising with the CALD community about any need for, and development of, culturally appropriate materials.

Gambling Help Online also offers gambling help information in a range of languages. The Commission contributes funding for this service, and it is promoted both on the Commission's website and gambling harm materials.

Recommendation 70

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government in its development of any smoke and heat relief legislation strongly consider the potential for harm in this proposal in encouraging individuals in times of great stress to enter clubs that are providers of gambling and alcohol products.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Heat and Smoke Refuge Working Group established under the Community Clubs Ministerial Advisory Committee is actively considering how to minimise gaming and alcohol related harm that may arise from clubs providing refuge and will provide advice to Government.

Recommendation 71

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the racing industry through the MOU to determine a long-term trajectory for Canberra's racing codes to become self-sufficient.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Government has committed to working with the industry through the Joint Racing Industry and Government Committee to identify long-term opportunities for financial self-sufficiency (Memorandum of Understanding⁸, page 7).

Recommendation 72

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government clarify via a public statement who is involved in the negotiations of the Racing MOU.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Memorandum of Understanding is available publicly online and identifies the parties to the agreement, including the ACT Government, the Canberra Racing Club and the Canberra Harness Racing Club (Memorandum of Understanding, page 12).

Recommendation 73

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expand the forensic psychologist service at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) to the management case unit to provide group guidance on dealing with difficult clients.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Auditor-General released a report in March 2022 titled *Management of Detainee Mental Health Services in the Alexander Maconochie Centre*. That report made a number of recommendations in relation to detainee mental health service provision, particularly in relation to planning the delivery of mental health services between Canberra Health Services (Justice Health) and ACT Corrective Services. In implementing the Government response to that report, the parties will work together to consider the psychological services model at the AMC.

Recommendation 74

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish a timeline for the construction of the Reintegration Centre.

Government response

Noted.

⁸ Memorandum of Understanding: <https://www.justice.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-07/Racing%20Memorandum%20of%20Understanding.pdf>

ACT Corrective Services is working to optimise the utilisation of the existing Transitional Release Centre. Work is also underway to assess the current and future infrastructure needs of the Alexander Maconochie Centre. Both of these will inform future budget outcomes regarding the Centre.

Recommendation 75

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government prioritise resources to finding a quality tenderer for the provision of education at the AMC.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

ACT Corrective Services remains committed to finding a suitable education provider or providers as a priority and will work with Procurement ACT to enhance the education service offering and delivery while ensuring value for money.

Recommendation 76

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the new provider to ensure the new offering is aligned with skills shortages or industries in demand.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

ACT Corrective Services undertook a review of education and training needs in 2021. The outcomes of that review have informed the Statement of Requirements for the procurement of education services. ACT Corrective Services also maintains contact with Skills Canberra to assist in updating and identifying priority skills.

Recommendation 77

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase addiction counselling at the AMC.

Government response

Noted.

Plans for the phased transition to a smoke-free Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) include harm-minimisation programs such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy, counselling and psychological support.

Staff, detainees and other stakeholders will be engaged to support a consultative planning process to ensure the transition to a smoke-free AMC is smooth and effective.

Recommendation 78

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures it meets legislative requirements in the *Corrections Management Act 2007* and the *Human Rights Act 2004* in respect to accommodating sentenced and unsentenced detainees.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Since its inception, remand and sentenced detainees have been managed in a mixed custodial setting within the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). The separation of remanded and sentenced detainees remains a challenge due to the high numbers of remand detainees and the complexities of managing a range of detainee cohorts in a single facility. In response to previous recommendations regarding the separation of these cohorts, amendment of section 44 of the *Corrections Management Act 2007* are being considered; however, such amendment is complex and requires careful consideration of human rights.

While the design and cohorts within the AMC do not allow for complete separation to occur, ACT Corrective Services continues to manage accommodation placements in accordance with the *Placement & Shared Cell Policy 2020*, which provides instruction on the management of all detainee accommodation placements in the AMC, and the *Remand Detainees Policy 2019*, which requires management of remandees to be different from sentenced detainees, as far as practicable. Further review of these policies will be scheduled following any changes in the *Corrections Management Act 2007*.

Recommendation 79

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase FTE funding to the ACT Inspector of Correctional Services to ensure they can comply with their legislated requirements of oversight particularly as the workload of critical incidents has increased significantly.

Government response

Noted.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 80

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct an independent review of recruitment practices to ensure they are fit for purpose and don't discriminate against women applying for the ACT Fire and Rescue Service.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

Recruitment practices are covered as part of the *ACT Fire & Rescue Enterprise Agreement 2020-2024*. Any consideration of an independent review would, under the agreement, require the engagement of the United Firefighters Union.

Recommendation 81

The Committee recommends that the Government table the report from the University of Canberra research study on PTSD for Emergency Services Personnel in the Assembly when it is completed.

Government response

Noted.

The research study to examine the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Recovery, Resilience, Teamwork, and Skills Program has been commissioned by the ADF and, therefore, the ACT Government does not have the authority to share its contents.

Recommendation 82

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provides the detail of its progress on the Joint Emergency Services Centre in Gungahlin within their annual reports.

Government response

Agreed.

Updates will be provided in Justice and Community Safety Directorate annual reports.

Recommendation 83

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the use of spit hoods by ACT Policing.

Government response

Noted.

The operational use of a spit hood is governed by the Australian Federal Police Commissioner's Order 3 on Operational Safety⁹.

The ACT Government has been advised that the AFP Operational Safety Committee will undertake an internal review into the use of spit hoods.

Recommendation 84

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct an independent review of bail and sentencing outcomes in the ACT and table the report in the Assembly.

Government response

Noted.

The ACT Government agrees with the Committee that bail and sentencing laws are important issues for the Canberra community and is actively considering these issues. The ACT Government is committed to ensuring that sentencing and bail laws continue to meet community expectations.

To support this objective, the ACT Government has announced that it will establish a Law and Sentencing Advisory Council. The new body will advise the Government on areas of potential law reform, as well as provide expert advice on sentencing. It is intended that the new Council will conduct and publish research, undertake community and stakeholder consultation, and make recommendations to Government on opportunities to update ACT legislation which it has been referred for consideration. The ACT Government also welcomes the Inquiry into Dangerous Driving announced by the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety. The terms of reference for the Inquiry including examining the sentencing regime for dangerous driving in the ACT.

Recommendation 85

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government appropriately fund the taskforce 'Operation Toric' to address the issue of car thefts in the ACT, and report progress on the taskforce to the Assembly.

Government response

Noted.

Operation TORIC (targeting of recidivism in Canberra) is a taskforce within ACT Policing with dedicated existing resources from the Proactive Intervention and Diversion Team, Road Policing, General Duties, Specialist Operations and Intelligence Teams.

⁹ Order 3 on Operational Safety: <https://www.afp.gov.au/sites/default/files/PDF/IPS/18122019-CommissionersOrderonOperationalSafetyCO3.pdf>

The aim is to focus on the identification of recidivist dangerous drivers, including fail to stop offenders who engage in driving behaviours that place the community and ACT Policing members at great risk. By stopping these offenders, there is the expectation that other crimes, including car thefts and burglaries, may reduce.

Since the commencement of the operation in August 2022 and as at 4 October 2022, investigators have arrested 78 offenders and laid 225 charges for offences including aggravated dangerous driving; driving at police; taking motor vehicle without consent; drug driving and firearm offences. Of those charged, 25 were on bail for other offences, 8 were on Good Behaviour Orders and 2 were on Intensive Corrections Orders.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 86

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government police numbers continue to be increased in the ACT.

Government response

Noted.

ACT Policing's workforce continues to welcome new members, delivering on the ACT Government's commitment to grow police numbers across Canberra.

In the 2019-20 Budget, the ACT Government allocated \$33.9 million over four years for more staff and a new Police Services Model. This is the single largest investment in ACT Policing in the past decade and is delivering a more visible, proactive and connected police service. The new Police Services Model has a greater focus on preventing and disrupting crime, tackling organised crime, enhancing service for the most vulnerable and diverting people from the justice system when possible.

The ACT Government will continue to invest in ACT Policing and work closely with its members to ensure ACT Policing is adequately resourced to undertake its policing activities in the ACT.

Recommendation 87

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the investment in police resources, both accommodation and sworn police officers (particularly those operating under the Police Services Model), is distributed appropriately across the ACT and consider a new police station in the Molonglo Valley.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

In consultation with the ACT Government, ACT Policing is transitioning to a community-focused, proactive model of policing under the Police Services Model, to ensure the ongoing safety of the Canberra community.

ACT Government is committed to working with ACT Policing to provide fit for purpose accommodation, including police stations, in the most appropriate locations to support service demands and operational delivery needs, as part of a long-term strategic roadmap for accommodation that aligns with the Police Services Model.

While police stations will always be a part of the police ecosystem, ACT Policing officers are able to provide an enhanced on road response due to being equipped with communication tools and technology, noting future scalability will always be required.

ACT Policing's deployment of resources is flexible and responds to emerging priorities in the ACT. During periods where certain types of crime peak, ACT Policing resources are redirected to address these. Canberra's condensed geographical nature enables officers to move across the territory quickly with police regularly undertaking duties in different patrol zones when resources are required.

Recommendation 88

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the ACT Police 131 444 number is adequately resourced to ensure that calls are taken in timeframes that would align with community expectations.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

ACT Policing's Communications Team strives to answer every call in a timely manner and to ensure all callers are afforded the opportunity to speak with police.

Calls for police assistance must be prioritised and triaged. Emergency Triple Zero calls are always taken first, with calls for 131 444 and Crime Stoppers answered and triaged after that.

ACT Policing continues to explore a range of technical upgrades to community reporting channels for minor incidents, and are implementing online reporting to supplement current methods. This is anticipated to complement, not replace, ACT Policing's engagement and physical presence at crime scenes.

ACT Policing will always maintain Triple Zero and 131 444 police assistance phone lines and the ACT community continue to be able to report crime in person at their local police station.

Recommendation 89

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government progress criminal legislative reform, in particular, with respect to 'trespass' in a motor vehicle.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The ACT Government is consulting with key stakeholders, including ACT Policing and the Director of Public Prosecutions, on the proposal for law reform to address trespass in motor vehicles.

Recommendation 90

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider increasing legal aid funding to expand the Legal Aid College Lawyer Program and evaluate the benefits of the Legal Aid lawyers in schools program.

Government response

Noted.

The ACT Government currently funds the Lawyers in ACT Colleges program. The program was funded in the 2021-22 Budget after a successful pilot.

Recommendation 91

The Committee recommends that the Public Trustee and Guardian continue to rollout the CRM as expeditiously as possible.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Five modules of the Public Trustee and Guardian's Customer Relation Management system have been delivered. Two further modules for estate administration and financial management activities are currently under development with anticipated completion in 2023.

Recommendation 92

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide annual updates to the Assembly on the number of additional teachers employed against the recruitment targets as covered in the Teacher Shortage Taskforce Final report.

Government response

Agreed.

The ACT Government will provide an annual update on the number of additional teachers employed against the recruitment targets at the end of each financial year through the Education Directorate annual report.

Recommendation 93

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish detailed plans to address teacher shortages.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

On 22 August 2022, the ACT Government's Teacher Shortage Taskforce has delivered its recommendations into how the system can best respond to workforce challenges across our public schools. The ACT Government has committed to provide to the Assembly a clear plan to address the teaching shortage by the first sitting of 2023.

Recommendation 94

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government annually update the Assembly on progress of the use of inbuilt relief teachers across all schools to support schools in managing teacher absences.

Government response

Agreed.

The *Teacher Shortage Taskforce - Final Report*¹⁰ developed between the Government and the Australian Education Union encourages the use of in-built relief. The Government will provide updates to the Assembly on the implementation of the report.

Recommendation 95

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report to the Assembly on any exceptions to the Education Directorate and Australian Education Union (AEU) Class Sizes Policy and Class Sizes Procedures.

Government response

Noted.

¹⁰ Taskforce report: https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/2060664/Teacher-Shortage-Taskforce-Report.pdf

The class size policy and procedures specify that variations are negotiated at the school level to meet the operational and industrial operations of the school.

Recommendation 96

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that in the event of any incidents of serious violence occurring in ACT schools, that the Minister is briefed immediately.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government's focus in the event of any incident of serious violence in ACT schools is to ensure all the necessary supports and actions are taken to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved. The Minister is notified as soon as is practicable.

Recommendation 97

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider in new schools and school modernisation projects the importance of after-school care facilities and spaces, including access to kitchen facilities.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government notes school planning already considers the provision of Out of Hours Care in established and new schools in accordance with the Education Directorate Infrastructure Specifications design documents. This includes access to an office, kitchen facilities and dedicated storage.

Recommendation 98

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider in new schools and school modernisation projects the importance of community spaces and facilities.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government notes guidance on safe and supportive environments and the design of new or refurbishment of existing schools is supported through the Education Directorate infrastructure specifications design documents which references the requirement to provide access to community spaces and facilities within schools.

Recommendation 99

The committee recommends that the ACT Government provide a forward plan for new facilities, and workforce requirements to meet the future needs for ACT early education.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government is currently planning for universal access to three year old preschool, which will include planning for facilities and workforce requirements to meet the future needs for ACT early education.

Recommendation 100

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work to ensure that drug limits in the Drug of Dependence legislation and regulations are below Commonwealth trafficking amounts.

Government response

Noted.

All proposed small quantities eligible for a simple drug offence notice and significantly reduced maximum penalties are below the Commonwealth trafficking thresholds, except for MDMA (ecstasy). The intention is to ensure the small quantities reflect consumption and purchasing patterns and are consistent across different drugs. The proposed quantities draw on data from the Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System, the Illicit Drugs Reporting System (2021 and 2020) and the University of New South Wales Drug Policy Modelling Program and were developed in consultation with ACT Policing.

Commonwealth law explicitly allows for states and territories to make their own laws on drug diversion. The ACT trafficable quantities for several drugs are already considerably higher than the equivalent Commonwealth trafficable quantities. No changes to ACT trafficable quantities are proposed in the Bill or amendments. Should the Bill be passed, the Government will monitor the impact of the changes and the legislation will be reviewed. This will include consideration of the drugs and quantities eligible for reduced penalties.

Recommendation 101

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expand eligibility criteria and the number of available places for The Canberra Hospital continuity of care midwife program.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

*Maternity in Focus: The ACT Public Maternity System Plan 2022-2023*¹¹ includes a commitment to more than 50 per cent of women and pregnant people having access to the continuity model of care by 2028.

Recommendation 102

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase transparency around the ARIn public service remuneration.

Government response

Noted.

Aggregated statistics on the usage of Attraction and Retention Incentives are reported in the State of the Service Report¹², consistent with privacy principles.

Recommendation 103

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish bi-annual statements of CHS compliance with nurse-to-patient ratios.

Government response

Agreed.

Under the *ACT Public Sector Nursing and Midwifery Safe Care Staffing Framework* it is a requirement that the Health Services report their performance on Nurse-to-patient ratios monthly through the relevant Committee, which includes representation from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation ACT. Reporting on compliance by both Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce will be added to the *ACT Public Health Services Quarterly Performance Report* in 2023.

Recommendation 104

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report to the Legislative Assembly on progress to increase elective surgery capacity.

Government response

Agreed.

¹¹ Maternity in Focus Plan: [https://www.health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-06/Maternity in Focus - ACT System Plan 2022-2032.pdf](https://www.health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-06/Maternity%20in%20Focus%20-%20ACT%20System%20Plan%202022-2032.pdf)

¹² State of the Service Report: https://www.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1910106/State-of-the-Service-2020-2021-Annual-Report.pdf

The Government reports on elective surgery performance through *ACT Public Health Services Quarterly Performance Reports* and against strategic and accountability indicators in annual reports. The Minister for Health will provide an update to the Legislative Assembly on elective surgery performance, capacity and planning by the end of June 2023.

Recommendation 105

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess the impact of the Digital Health Record program on improving efficiency of elective surgery outcomes and report to the Legislative Assembly once data is available.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Digital Health Record (DHR) will go live on 12 November 2022. While implementation of the DHR may contribute to improvements in the efficiency of elective surgery, this is not an identified indicator in the benefits realisation framework. To enable sufficient time for benefits to be realised and assessed under the framework, the Minister for Health will report to the Legislative Assembly in 2024.

Recommendation 106

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government urgently move the CAMHS Southside from the Callam Offices in Woden.

Government response

Noted.

Canberra Health Services is working closely with the building landlord, ACT Property Group, to identify suitable alternative accommodation space to replace the current arrangement.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 107

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work to deliver the MyHome project in Curtin and clearly articulate to the Assembly dates for stages and progress for delivery of the project.

Government response

Noted.

The ACT Government is working to finalise the support and design approach that will facilitate community inclusion and meet needs of people with mental illness. Any relevant delivery updates including stages and progress will be provided following the agreement of the support and financial model.

Recommendation 108

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure the delivery of the Eating Disorder Rehabilitation Facility within the stated timeframes.

Government response

Noted.

The Residential Eating Disorders Centre project will be delivered within the agreed timeframe with the Commonwealth. The aim is to have the Centre delivered as soon as possible and in 2023, but market conditions will dictate that timeline.

Recommendation 109

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, through Justice Health, publish a plan for the creation of space in line with demand at the Hume Health Centre (HHC) with an aim to increase health services resources.

Government response

Noted.

ACT Corrective Services and Justice Health continue to explore accommodation needs at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) to support the demand for and effective delivery of health services.

Recommendation 110

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to actively recruit to achieve a fully staffed custodial mental health team.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Government and Canberra Health Services are continuing to actively recruit to all vacant positions in the custodial setting.

Recommendation 111

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that Dhulwa Mental Health Unit safety procedures conform to best practice.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The Government is committed to ensuring that all safety procedures are consistent and in line with best practices, this includes Dhulwa Mental Health Unit. Canberra Health Services is actively responding to a number of initiatives to ensure a safer working environment at Dhulwa. Dhulwa is currently subject to an Independent Inquiry with recommendations due by the end of 2022, it is anticipated that these recommendations will further inform best practice safety procedures and a safer working environment at Dhulwa.

Recommendation 112

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government commit increased ongoing funding to mowing resources.

Government response

Noted.

The 2022-23 Budget identified \$1.241 million in additional funding as a trial of a rapid response mowing team. Outcomes of the trial will inform future budget considerations.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 113

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government retain separate accountability indicators for community paths and cycle lanes.

Government response

Noted.

The new combined indicator as outlined in *Budget Paper H – the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate*¹³, measures the overall increase in community path network including on

¹³ TCCS Budget Statement: https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/2050742/Budget-Statements-H-TCCS.pdf

road cycle lanes, is intended to provide a complete picture as to the annual increase in the active travel network.

Recommendation 114

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct an annual audit of community paths and publish the results, and consider introducing specific measurable indicators such as:

- **state of community paths (90 percent in good condition); and**
- **maintenance of community paths (km of path repaired per annum).**

Government response

Agreed in principle.

In 2021 a major audit was conducted and used to identify defects in the community path network in addition to other public assets such as park furniture, signage, paved areas and public amenities. In practice an audit of community paths would be focused on informing renewal works and defect rectification works. This type of works is corrective and not preventative. This is due to the majority of ACT footpaths being concrete which is kept safe through defect rectification (e.g. path grinding trip hazards) or renewal works.

The maintenance approach for paths is quite different for roads where preventative maintenance is based on condition. Path inspections occur as defects are identified through Fix My Street reports or by the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate inspections. Accordingly, an annual audit is not considered necessary.

Recommendation 115

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government release the report, or a summary, based on the 2021 audit of paths in the ACT.

Government response

Noted.

The form of the audit is not in a report. It is a database that is used operationally to inform the path maintenance program. The Government will consider options to provide information on the insights from the path condition review once finalised, noting that the data is currently being analysed with the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate asset management system.

Recommendation 116

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government move the public transport services off the interim timetable and to the permanent timetable as soon as possible.

Government response

Agreed.

The ACT Government is preparing bus network improvements to be implemented for Term 1 2023.

Recommendation 117

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government insert into future Transport Canberra surveys a question that asks respondents who are dissatisfied with the public transport service – why are they dissatisfied.

Government response

Agreed.

Future customer surveys will include a question that asks respondents who are dissatisfied with the public transport service why they are dissatisfied.

Recommendation 118

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the public with information about a proposed crematorium near Callum Brae Nature Reserve, including whether the proposal includes a gas-fired or water-powered crematorium, and what the impact on the nature reserve would be, as well as what impact community concerns have had on the considerations so far.

Government response

Noted.

On 2 September 2021, a development application (DA-202138789) was lodged with the independent Planning and Land Authority (the Authority). The applicant, a private proponent, is proposing the construction of a crematorium, on Block 1, Section 3, Symonston. The documents for DA-202138789 have been made available during the public notification process.

Sections 29 and 30 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* requires the Authority to make the DA documentation available for public inspection. DA-202138789 is currently under assessment and any associated documentation will be made available on request.

The decision regarding this DA is a matter for the independent Authority. The Authority makes decisions at arm's length from Ministers and other Members of the Legislative Assembly. In

deciding the development application, the authority needs to adhere to the requirements in the *Planning and Development Act 2007* and the *Territory Plan 2008*.

Recommendation 119

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fund an expansion of the streetlight infill program.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

There is additional funding in 2022-23 to expand the infill program through the Better Infrastructure Fund and Local Road Community Infrastructure program.

Recommendation 120

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work towards ensuring that the same timeframe for broken streetlights to be fixed is applied across the ACT.

Government response

Noted.

The response times to repair broken streetlights is the same across the ACT. Repair timeframes are built into service performance measures within contracts; however, are driven by the nature and complexity of the streetlight fault rather than the location.

Recommendation 121

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government listen to community feedback and ensure that weekly rubbish collections continue for households Canberra-wide under the FOGO rollout.

Government response

Noted.

The purpose of the Food Organics and Garden Organics Pilot is to inform the design of the service for the whole-of-Canberra roll-out. Funding for the whole-of-Canberra roll-out would be subject to future budget consideration.

Recommendation 122

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide performance reporting of shrub and ground cover plantings.

Government response

Noted.

The priority for the ACT Government is to provide reporting on the progress towards 30 per cent canopy cover as articulated through the *Urban Forest Strategy*.

Recommendation 123

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider a Canberra-wide maintenance program involving installing AI technology on garbage trucks to better detect potholes in suburb areas as soon as possible.

Government response

Noted.

A pilot was undertaken during 2022 which investigated the use of artificial intelligence technology mounted on a vehicle (not a garbage truck) to inform the identification of defects such as potholes. The outcome of the trial indicated some short comings in the use of this technology. The Government continues to consider opportunities to improve its strategic road maintenance program including through the use of new technology.

Roads ACT has an existing inspection and condition assessment program for the road network. This informs the annual works program.

Recommendation 124

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish the Multi-modal Network Plan when complete and provide more information to the community about what the plan is for and how it will be implemented.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The *Multimodal Network Plan* is an operational tool for transport planners which will enable improved consideration of a range of transport modes to meet the objective of an integrated transport network set out in the Transport Strategy. The ACT Government intends to release a summary of the Multimodal Network Plan. This document will help explain to the community the key objectives of the Plan and how it will be used to inform transport planning.

Recommendation 125

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government improve the active travel linkages between Gungahlin Town Centre and Yerrabi Pond as part of the Active Travel Plan.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The ACT Government recognises the value of connectivity through active travel. The Active Travel plan is currently in draft and the final plan will be informed by community consultation and feedback. The *Gungahlin Town Centre – Active Travel Feasibility Study* has recently been completed. This study will help inform future options that would improve connections between Gungahlin Town Centre and Yerrabi Pond.

Recommendation 126

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide more funding for weed management within TCCS to ensure that they are able to reach more areas.

Government response

Noted.

There is an amenity weed management program delivered by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS). City Presentation within TCCS supports a priority-based weed control program noting precedence is given to works to control weeds where they may pose a safety hazard, where they occur in high use areas, or pose a serious environmental risk. Increased funding for this program would be subject to future budget consideration.

Recommendation 127

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to work with Weston Valley Archery Club to ensure a positive outcome for the club in the expansion of the City Services Holder Depot.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

The ACT Government is already engaging with the Weston Valley Archery Club (the Club) via the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate to ensure a positive outcome. Design responses to concerns have been documented and further discussions will continue with the Club as the project moves towards the construction phase.

Recommendation 128

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate how to improve communication between Domestic Animals Services and individuals with open investigations.

Government response

Agreed.

Domestic Animal Services will review current procedures. As each investigation case is different, contact with each person involved varies.

Recommendation 129

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to work with Woden businesses to ensure that local business developments are integrated into ACT Government developments.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Stakeholder engagement has been ongoing since early 2020 with various businesses providing feedback on the project. Local businesses and stakeholders have also been invited to be part of formal feedback processes including the Community Reference Group (CRG). Engagement with local businesses will be ongoing throughout the project including meetings, regular project updates and lookaheads.

Recommendation 130

The Committee recommends that the space available for community hire in the new CIT Woden facility:

- **is suitable for live music including consideration on whether it should be a live entertainment precinct; and**
- **includes kitchen facilities which are available for community groups to prepare food for events.**

Government response

Agreed in part.

The CIT Woden Multi-Purpose Space is a large adaptable space that will be capable of supporting various functions, including music performances and public events. This space will be suitable for utilisation for some live music events. It includes an adjacent simulation kitchen. Whether the kitchen facilities may be made available for use by community groups is a matter for future

operational consideration by CIT noting its core purpose is for the delivery of high-quality education to students.

Recommendation 131

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider student safety at forefront of design and during construction of CIT campus in Woden, with further consideration being given to implement student safety plans on the campus from the outset.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Student and community safety will be a key consideration during the design and construction of the new CIT campus in Woden.

During construction, Work Health and Safety (WHS) features incorporated by Lendlease will ensure improved site safety for the general public with the provision of solid site fencing to the main works, closed circuit television (CCTV), improved signage and increased site personnel for pedestrian and vehicular traffic control. Education sessions have also been undertaken at Canberra College to explain the WHS requirements.

Security mechanisms in the design of CIT Woden will include external lighting and continuous CCTV surveillance across the Campus and Youth Foyer, as well as activated frontages to maximise passive surveillance.

Currently proposed design elements for the Youth Foyer also include: passive surveillance through the location of windows; an identifiable main entrance off the east-west boulevard; an elevated ground level terrace; and a connected pedestrian and cycle network around the perimeter of the building with clear visibility to the building entry and exit points.

The final design will reflect requirements for Safety In Design (SID) review. The SID review identifies potential risks for students and the general public travelling through the urban realm and exiting buildings, particularly at night. Design of the building and urban spaces have taken into account Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, as is required to be addressed through the Development Application. The design will also be mindful of a gender sensitive review of safety and the consideration of the vulnerable age and stresses of young adults in the review of safety in design elements throughout the design.

Recommendation 132

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government update its website for the expected completion and opening date for the CIT Woden campus.

Government response

Agreed.

The website will be updated to reflect current estimated completion and opening dates.

Recommendation 133

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government details the elements of the \$31 million expenditure for the Woden CIT Major Project within the Annual Report.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The \$31 million expenditure is appropriated for works across 3 years from 2022-23 to 2024-25. Updates against total appropriation for the project will be included in project reporting in the Major Projects Canberra Annual Reports. The Government will continue the delivery of the design and construction of the new Woden facility of the Canberra Institute of Technology and the construction of the Woden public transport interchange, including a weather protection canopy linking the new CIT Campus with the Woden public transport interchange.

Recommendation 134

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table in the Assembly, the disruption taskforce plan for managing disruption during stage 2A of light rail works, when completed.

Government response

Noted.

The community will be updated throughout different phases of the construction period on measures the Government is taking and advice to minimise disruption.

Regular updates are being provided through a number of channels such as – statements from the Minister for Transport and City Services and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and Major Projects Canberra, ACT Government websites including www.builtforcbr.act.gov.au, social media, newsletters, radio advertising, signage and targeted information sessions for business and government agencies within the city precinct.

Recommendation 135

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reviews the impact of workforce capacity limits in MPC and private industry on its ability to deliver the program of infrastructure projects.

Government response

Existing Government policy.

Workforce management in the current environment is an ongoing activity of Major Projects Canberra.

Recommendation 136

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fund OLA to provide end-of-trip facilities in the building, and upgrades to the public entrance and building signage.

Government response

Noted.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 137

The Committee recommends that the ACT Audit Office include in the 2022-23 priorities a line item for educating and raising ACT Government awareness of lessons learnt from audit reports.

Government response

Noted.

This is a matter for the ACT Auditor-General.

Recommendation 138

The Committee recommends that the ACT Audit Office consider conducting an audit on whether the ACT Government has successfully completed actions that it had agreed to undertake in response to earlier audits.

Government response

Noted.

This is a matter for the ACT Auditor-General.

Recommendation 139

The Committee recommends that the ACT Audit Office consider consulting with members on development of the forward audit program and write to all committees to seek their input.

Government response

Noted.

This is a matter for the ACT Auditor-General.

Recommendation 140

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure the ACT Integrity Commission has sufficient funding to meet its workload.

Government response

Noted.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each Budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 141

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government includes consideration of telephone intercept powers in its review of legislative reform for the ACT Integrity Commission.

Government response

Agreed.

The ACT Government agrees to incorporate provision of telecommunication intercept powers to the ACT Integrity Commission into the upcoming statutory review of the *Integrity Commission Act 2018*.

Recommendation 142

The Committee recommends that the ACT Ombudsman keep close oversight on reporting to the Reportable Conduct Scheme and potentially look at nuances in the reporting data to provide insight into gaps and strengths in reporting.

Government response

Noted.

This is a matter for the ACT Ombudsman.

Recommendation 143

The Committee recommends that the ACT Ombudsman explore ways to allow oversight of whether the lessons learned from individual complaints are actually being applied in a manner that does not disclose personal information.

Government response

Noted.

This is a matter for the ACT Ombudsman.