



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

ELIZABETH KIKKERT: To ask the Minister for Corrections

[Ref: Corrections, 76]

Hearing Date: Tuesday, 25 July 2023

In relation to: Justice Health, Budget Statement C - Output 1.2

(1) In 2019, the Inspector noted that the planned expansion of the clinic would have met the then current numbers of detainees, but not if numbers were to rise higher. Are those same plans the ones that Minister Gentleman claimed were complete in his Ministerial statement in June 2023?

(a) If so, why was it decided to expand it only to the point where numbers were then currently at rather than expand it to take into account future growth and surge needs?

(2) Given the Covid pandemic was a health crisis, why was this health centre expansion delayed?

(3) Was there sufficient funding for expansion in the budget between 2020 and 2023?

(4) Is there sufficient space around Hume Health Centre for an expansion to meet the demands of AMC growing detainees?

MICK GENTLEMAN: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

(1) Yes, in the Ministerial Statement for the tabling of the Government Response to the Healthy Prison Review 2022 (HPR22) in June 2023 it was noted that recommendation 14 of HPR22 was closed. This recommendation was in relation to the refurbishment and expansion of the Hume Health Centre.

a. The population of the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) fluctuates over time and ACT Correctional Services continues to consider safe and secure options to best manage the number of detainees in the AMC. It is important to note the AMC has a total design capacity of 444 beds in all units (excluding management unit, crisis support unit and admissions) with the average daily detainee population of 389 in 2021/22.

The works to expand the Hume Health Centre included making the space more fit for purpose and reconfiguration of the space to include additional treatment rooms as well as an additional waiting room space to allow for a larger number of detainees to be in the waiting area at any one time.

(2) The Hume Health Centre expansion was delayed due to COVID-19 and the challenges of undertaking building works on a site with a vulnerable population. Scheduling conflicts with other major site works occurring at the AMC also impacted timelines.

However, work continued throughout the pandemic with preliminary works for the repurposing of the administration space in the Hume Health Centre commencing in November 2021. Completion of the construction occurred in August 2022.

- (3) In the period between 2020 and 2023 the scope of works for the Hume Health Centre was refined to align with the needs of Justice Health, the consumers and to align to the available budget. The available budget had been impacted by larger costs during the initial stages of the project, including the new Building J (that relocated staff out of the Health Centre such that administration space could be repurposed for clinical spaces), costs to stage the works in such a way that minimised operational impact on the facility, and was then further impacted by increases in material costs during and post COVID-19.
- (4) Examination of the need for an expanded Hume Health Centre and/or delivery of health services via other means (satellite clinics, telehealth etc) will be undertaken as part of the broader master planning for the AMC. Development of this master plan was funded in the 23/24 Budget and will inform the longer-term infrastructure requirements for AMC including planning for the Reintegration Precinct.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature:



Date: 7/8/2023

By the Minister for Corrections, Mick Gentleman MLA