



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Public Service

Reference: Public Accounts 2:25pm-3:25pm Mr Barr, Chief Minister Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Hearing: 12 FEB 2025

In relation to: Disability

Question received: 17 FEB 2025

Answer Due: 24 FEB 2025

- Which parts of government are over-performing and which are underperforming when it comes to employing people with disability?
- What proportion of ACT Public Servants are making use of their entitlement to volunteer leave? Which is the top performing directorate or agency when it comes to volunteer leave uptake, and which is the lowest performing?
- Public interest disclosures
 - Can you provide a year-by-year summary of the level of utilisation of our Public Interest Disclosure Act by ACT public servants over the past 10 years?
 - How does the frequency of public interest disclosures in the ACT compare with other states and territories?
 - The QLD and Victorian Governments have suggested establishing government-based legal support services for prospective whistleblowers. The NSW Government is considering something similar. Is the ACT Government considering providing a legal support service for prospective ACT Public Service whistleblowers?
 - The NSW Government recently established a dedicated function within the NSW Ombudsman to support public interest disclosures. Is the ACT Government considering establishing a stronger institutional framework to support public interest disclosures from within the ACT Public Service?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Which parts of government are over-performing and which are underperforming when it comes to employing people with disability?

The 2023 ACTPS Employee Survey showed 7% of respondents identified as people with disability. Directorate level disability employment information is published in the ACT State of the Service Report. The 2023-24 edition of the report is accessible at:

https://www.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/2617941/State-of-the-Service-Report-2023-24.pdf

What proportion of ACT Public Servants are making use of their entitlement to volunteer leave? Which is the top performing directorate or agency when it comes to volunteer leave uptake, and which is the lowest performing?

Human resources data indicates that during the 2024 calendar year, there were 1,978 hours of volunteering leave accessed by ACT public servants. The directorate level experience is described in the table below:

Directorate	Hours Taken	Number of Instances
Canberra Health Services	666	49
Canberra Institute of Technology	66	2
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	188	22
Community Services Directorate	220	24
Education Directorate	319	22
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate	152	26
Health Directorate	110	34
Infrastructure Canberra	22	3
Justice and Community Safety Directorate	161	15
Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate	75	4
Grand Total	1978	201

Public interest disclosures:

Can you provide a year-by-year summary of the level of utilisation of our Public Interest Disclosure Act by ACT public servants over the past 10 years?

Section 45 of the [Public Interest Disclosure Act](#) establishes a comprehensive annual reporting regime for public interest disclosures, including information about the number of referrals and how those matters are managed by the Integrity Commission.

The reporting is provided in ACT Integrity Commission annual reports, accessible at <https://www.integrity.act.gov.au/publications/annual-reports>.

How does the frequency of public interest disclosures in the ACT compare with other states and territories?

Interjurisdictional data is not readily comparable. The 2023 report of the independent review of the Public Interest Disclosure Act, conducted by Mr Ian Govey AM, highlighted definitional and other inconsistencies across jurisdictions.

The QLD and Victorian Governments have suggested establishing government-based legal support services for prospective whistleblowers. The NSW Government is considering something similar. Is the ACT Government considering providing a legal support service for prospective ACT Public Service whistleblowers?

The ACT Government Solicitor does not currently provide legal assistance for whistleblowers under the PID Act framework.

The NSW Government recently established a dedicated function within the NSW Ombudsman to support public interest disclosures. Is the ACT Government considering establishing a stronger institutional framework to support public interest disclosures from within the ACT Public Service?

The ACT Government is considering a range of recommendations from the 2023 report of the independent review of the Public Interest Disclosure Act, conducted by Mr Ian Govey AM. The Government response to that report is accessible here: <https://www.act.gov.au/open/review-of-the-acts-integrity-commission-act-2018>.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration

Signature:



Date:

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By the Minister for Public Service, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA