INTERIM REPORT 4

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

AUGUST 2020

1 CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

1.1 On 2 April 2020, the Legislative Assembly for the ACT established a select committee to consider and report to the Assembly on any matter relating to the ACT Government's health and financial response and any other matter relating to the COVID-19 Pandemic as it relates to the ACT.

1.2 The resolution establishing the *Select Committee on the COVID-19 pandemic response* (the Committee) can be found in Appendix E. Three sets of amendments were made to this resolution of appointment over the course of the inquiry in order to clarify ministerial appearances before the Committee and to change the final reporting date for the Committee.

1.3 Due to the ongoing health emergency caused by COVID-19, the Committee has had to adopt a number of unique operating practices when compared to Assembly committees convened prior to 2020.

1.4 The most significant change relates to clause 4(c) of the resolution establishing the Committee, which stipulates that 'hearings are held virtually or via teleconference only'.[1]

1.5 On 2 April 2020, the Assembly amended Standing Order 229B, to allow committees to conduct meetings completely by virtual means.[2] Prior to this change, while virtual committee meetings were allowed, the Chair or Deputy Chair, together with the Secretary, were required to be physically present to conduct the meeting.

1.6 To comply with the resolution and to minimise potential dangers related to COVID-19, the Committee agreed to conduct all private meetings and all public hearings of the Committee virtually.

1.7 To facilitate the conducting of virtual private meetings and public hearings, the Committee decided to use the Zoom platform. While the Assembly had no previous experience with live-streaming committee proceedings conducted virtually, within one week of this decision being made, the Assembly's technical staff were able to deliver a system to achieve this outcome.

1.8 On 9, 16, 17 and 23 April 2020 the Committee conducted hearings via Zoom. Several days prior to their appearance at the hearings on 16 and 17 April, the Committee was informed that representatives of the ACT Government would only participate in Zoom

[1] *Minutes of Proceedings*, No. 129, 2 April 2020, p. 1919.
[2] *Minutes of Proceedings*, No. 129, 2 April 2020, p. 1920.

hearings through dial-in, as opposed to appearing via video link-up, due to alleged security concerns with the Zoom platform.

1.9 In response, the Committee agreed to hold all future hearings with ACT Government personnel via Webex, while continuing to use Zoom for private meetings and public hearings with non-ACT Government witnesses.

1.10 To enable the Committee to conduct ongoing scrutiny of the ACT Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to remain informed about the impacts of this situation on the Canberra community, the Committee decided to conduct weekly public hearings alternating between government witnesses one week and community sector witnesses the following week.

1.11 Given that all Committee proceedings have been conducted virtually, the Committee also decided to make use of collaborative platforms to manage its work. This allowed real-time compiling and updating of Committee documents during virtual meetings and smoother collaboration between Members.

1.12 This interim report draws on public hearings held on 3 July, 9 July, 16 July, 24 July, 31 July, 14 August, and 21 August 2020 as well as submissions received. Transcripts from the hearings are available at: https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees/committees/select_committees/select-committee-on-the-covid-19-response#tab1509618-2id

1.13 The Committee has heard evidence from 188 witnesses, with some witnesses appearing multiple times. Full details of witnesses who have appeared to date are available in Appendix A of this report.

1.14 To support the Committee's ongoing scrutiny role and to allow the community a channel to engage with the Committee, the Committee adopted an open submission process. The Committee has received 23 submissions to date. The full list of submissions are available in Appendix B and all submissions are available on the inquiry webpage: https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees/committees/select_committees/select-committee-on-the-covid-19-response#tab1509618-3id

1.15 Appendix C contains a complete list of the questions taken on notice and questions on notice to date. Answers to these questions are provided on the inquiry webpage: https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees/committees/select_committees/select-committee-on-the-covid-19-response#tab1509618-5id

1.16 The Committee released its first interim report on 15 May 2020; its second interim report on 29 May 2020 and third interim report on 2 July 2020. A complete list of the recommendations contained in these reports is summarised at Appendix D.

1.17 These interim reports and Government Responses to these reports are available at: https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees/committees/select_committees/select-committee-on-the-covid-19-response#tab1509618-7id

2 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

2.1 The Committee's previous reports have been based on feedback from the community. These community concerns have not gone away and there have been calls for a number of the recommendations to be acted on. [3]

Recommendation 1

2.2 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure they action all recommendations that the Committee has presented in its previous interim reports.

HEALTH

2.3 The Committee notes that there is a significant backlog of elective surgeries resulting from restrictions on the ability to conduct non-emergency procedures applied in anticipation of a large spike in virus cases. Restrictions on the delivery of elective surgery were lifted on 21 April 2020 and the Minister for Health has informed the Committee that the "Territory has now reopened to 100 per cent elective surgery capacity". [4]

2.4 The Committee notes that there is considerable pressure on the hospital system caused by the COVID-19 induced backlog and that the number of patients awaiting surgery appears to be increasing. It is likely that it will take 12 to 18 months to clear that backlog with a 15% increase in activity, and it will require a significant increase in staff capacity. [5]

Recommendation 2

2.5 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health and their successor, regularly update the Assembly and the community on the progress of Canberra Health Services in addressing the backlog of elective surgery.

[3] Advocacy for Inclusion, *Submission 21,* pp. 1-2.
[4] *Answer to Question Taken on Notice No. 30*, answered 13 July 2020.
[5] *Answer to Question Taken on Notice No. 30*, answered 13 July 2020.

2.6 During the hearing on 24 July 2020, the Committee explored a request from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Australian Society of Anaesthetists for the ACT to consider pre-emptively testing elective surgery patients for COVID-19. This had been suggested as a means of addressing the safety of elective surgery, ensuring the ongoing viability of elective surgery and ensuring the safety of the workforce. [6]

2.7 The Committee also discussed, with the Minister for Health and officials, research that showed the surgery on COVID-19 positive patients could lead to very high mortality rates. During this discussion some officials expressed doubt about the data and the Minister and officials outlined a number of reasons why Canberra Health Services was not presently adopting the suggested course of action. [7]

2.8 The Minister informed the Committee that as part of the actions that the ACT were adopting, they were developing new advice for patients about the need to ensure that they remain COVID-19 free in preparation for surgery. The Committee was told that they would be provided with the advice once it had been consulted on and finalised. [8] To date that advice has not been received.

Recommendation 3

2.9 The Committee recommends that Canberra Health Services as a matter of priority complete and circulate the COVID-safe advice to elective surgery patients.

Recommendation 4

2.10 The Committee recommends that Canberra Health Services provide that advice to the Committee or its successor as soon as it becomes available.

Recommendation 5

2.11 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health and Canberra Health Services explore with Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Australian Society of Anaesthetists further timely and effective COVID-19 screening for pre-operative patients.

2.12 The Committee heard that the take-up of telehealth has enabled people to get the medical assistance they require without needing to leave the house. Of note was the

[6] Mrs Vicky Dunne MLA, *Transcript of Evidence,* 24 July 2020, p. 509.

[7] Ms Bernadette McDonald, *Transcript of Evidence,* 24 July 2020, p. 510; Professor Imogen Mitchell, *Transcript of Evidence,* 24 July 2020, pp. 510-511.

[8] Mr Dave Peffer, *Transcript of Evidence,* 24 July 2020, p. 512.

level of accessibility this provided for people with a disability and those with mobility issues.[9]

Recommendation 6

2.13 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government advocate to the Commonwealth Government that telehealth services are made available indefinitely.

MENTAL HEALTH

2.14 The Committee heard from many organisations about the mental health impacts of COVID-19.[10]

2.15 During the hearing on 31 July 2020, the Committee heard from Simon Viereck of Mental Health Community Coalition ACT (MHCC),[11] who indicated that they had observed:

> …in terms of change in demand for mental health services, a pattern that reflects what you might expect around a major emergency—an initial dropping off in demand and a more rapid increase later on.[12]

2.16 He noted that whilst the public health response appeared comprehensive and thorough, he felt the 'focus was very much on hospital and government health services.' He believed that this:

> …left NGO health services in the early stages very much lacking the information and guidance that they needed. They were really making it up as they went along, in terms of the choices that they had to make.[13]

2.17 Mr Viereck asserted that:

> We need to have in place a framework to understand how we identify the vulnerable groups and reach out to them quickly, and what tools we need in order to quickly distribute information et cetera. That is a piece of work that we believe still needs to be done. We have to make sure that it does not fall off the agenda again, when things do not seem to be as urgent anymore.[14]

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[9] Mx C Moore, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 July 2020, p. 475.

[10] The organisations included Mental Health Community Coalition ACT (MHCC), Lifeline, Youth Coalition, ACTCOSS, Women's Centre for Health matters and Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT).

[11] MHCC is the peak body for community-managed NGO mental health service providers in the ACT.

[12] Mr Simon Viereck, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 535.

[13] Mr Simon Viereck, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 535.

[14] Mr Simon Viereck, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 537.

2.18 Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT) and the Women's Centre for Health Matters identified the impacts of the pandemic on emotional wellbeing and talked about the need to be able to respond appropriately and the value of NGOs in that process.[15]

2.19 Both MEIACT and the Perinatal Wellbeing Centre told the Committee they were concerned that the demand would continue to increase and that they may not be able to continue to meet demand for their services unless they were provided with ongoing funds.[16]

2.20 Lifeline told the Committee about the difficulty of functioning as an NGO where only 4 per cent of their funding is government and fund raising and commercial training activities have almost completely stopped.[17]

2.21 In giving evidence about the increase in demand for their services, Lifeline indicated that in the ACT, geographically, there has been 'an increase of 22 per cent in the number of Canberrans picking up the phone to ask for help.'[18]

2.22 Lifeline expressed great concern about the increase in matters requiring emergency intervention:

> Most notably, we have had a 129 per cent increase in emergency interventions, this time this year versus this time last year. That is, essentially, crises in terms of suicide, child safety and domestic violence. That is where we have had to engage the emergency services to deploy to the individuals as soon as possible to secure their safety.[19]

2.23 In terms of calls not requiring an emergency intervention, Lifeline indicated that:

> Immediate safety issues have increased by eight per cent. Again, we are looking at March to June 2019 to March to June 2020. We have put in place 28 per cent more safety plans. That is, essentially, someone that is not at immediate risk and does not require immediate emergency intervention, but someone that we can contact for safety—to ring us back in five minutes, five hours or every day, just to check in and make sure that they are tracking okay. So the increase there has been in the hundreds of individuals.[20]

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[15] Ms Marcia Williams, *Transcript of Evidence,* 9 July 2020, p. 468; Mrs Heidi Prowse, *Transcript of Evidence,* 24 July 2020, p. 504.

[16] Ms Marcia Williams, *Transcript of Evidence,* 9 July 2020, p. 465; Mrs Heidi Prowse, *Transcript of Evidence,* 24 July 2020, p. 505.

[17] Ms Carrie Leeson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 540.

[18] Ms Carrie Leeson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 541.

[19] Ms Carrie Leeson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 541.

[20] Ms Carrie Leeson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 541.

2.24 Lifeline also informed the Committee that the cumulative impact of the COVID-19 emergency on top of the preceding crises of the bushfires, storms and smoke was prevalent in the issues discussed with callers:

> With financial issues, there has been a 44 per cent increase in those ringing up to discuss financial distress in relation to COVID, most likely bushfires, and the storms and the smoke as well. We have seen that economic impact in Canberra, as well as around the country. The number one reason people tend to call Lifeline is due to family and relationship breakdowns. We have seen a seven per cent increase in that, year on year. We have seen a 23 per cent increase in those struggling with mental illness or mental health concerns. There are increases on every front, which is not common year on year. You tend to see a fluctuation in different areas.[21]

2.25 In amongst all these figures, Lifeline told the Committee that the most 'remarkable' statistic was actually the increase in calls about community issues:

> This time last year we had around 17 Canberra callers ring up specifically to talk about a Canberra community issue. That was higher when we had Mr Fluffy et cetera, so it was a relatively quiet year on the community issues front. In the last four months we have had 885 Canberrans ringing up—a 520 per cent increase, essentially—to discuss this community issue. That obviously flows on from bushfires through to hail and smoke, and on to COVID.[22]

2.26 In conclusion, they told the Committee that they expected all these increases to continue over the 'next few years.'[23]

Recommendation 7

2.27 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the NGO sector to increase capacity to respond to those experiencing stress and anxiety and focus on emotional and psychological wellbeing of community members as the pandemic progresses and in the longer term.

[21] Ms Carrie Leeson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 542.
[22] Ms Carrie Leeson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 542.
[23] Ms Carrie Leeson, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, p. 542.

Recommendation 8

2.28 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase funding to the NGO sector to enable them to respond to those experiencing stress and anxiety and focus on emotional and psychological wellbeing of community members as the pandemic progresses and in the longer term.

Recommendation 9

2.29 The Committee recommends that that the ACT Government take steps to engage with the Commonwealth Government to extend the current capabilities of mental health plans, including expanding the number of free psychologist and counsellor sessions that can be accessed.

Recommendation 10

2.30 The Committee recommends that that the ACT Government work with other governments and providers to ensure that all medical institutions have the capability to grant mental health plans through telehealth for young people who cannot attend in person.

Recommendation 11

2.31 The Committee recommends that that the ACT Government consider a campaign to encourage young people to reach out for help when they need it and encourage safe spaces where young people can reach out for help.

Recommendation 12

2.32 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make a commitment to increase mental health funding year on year, particularly for youth mental health.

RESTRICTIONS AND BORDER CLOSURES

2.33 The Committee acknowledges that at this time mask wearing in the ACT is not mandatory and only advisable in situations where an individual is ill and social distancing is impossible. However, it noted the strict rules in Victoria; the changing

advice in NSW; and the advisory statements put out by Woolworths in relation to its stores in the ACT, and believes that the website needs to display clearer advice on the criteria for mask use.

Recommendation 13

2.34 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide clear and transparent advice on the COVID-19 website on why mask use is not currently recommended and the circumstances that would need to occur for the official position on that to change.

2.35 The Committee also acknowledges that a hard border closure between the ACT and NSW is a highly impractical and unlikely proposition, however, notes that a 'regional border closure' is being considered should the need arise. This would have significant impacts on ACT and regional communities and the Committee believes that the website needs to display clearer advice as to the circumstances that would need to exist in order to trigger such a 'closure.'

Recommendation 14

2.36 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide clear and transparent advice on the COVID-19 website on why there is not a 'regional border closure' and the circumstances that would need to occur for that to ever be seriously considered.

2.37 The Committee recognises that there have been a number of issues relating to the geographical location of the ACT, in that it is effectively an island inside NSW. In particular, there were many anecdotes provided to the Committee about confusion in relation to which rules do and don't apply and when they do and don't apply.

2.38 The Committee also noted concerns about what many thought were unnecessary restrictions on movements, highlighted by the recent difficulties that Canberra residents had encountered when trying to return to Canberra from Victoria, via NSW, by road.

Recommendation 15

2.39 The Committee recommends that ACT Government establishes on-going liaison protocols to work with NSW to manage the COVID-19 restrictions.

EMPLOYMENT

2.40 During the hearing on 21 August 2020, the Committee heard evidence from the Chief Minister about the impacts of COVID-19 on ACT jobs. He told the Committee that in the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions unemployment grew fastest for women and young people, particularly as these cohorts of the community tended to be employed in jobs, such as hospitality, that cannot be done from home.[24]

2.41 However, in further evidence the Chief Minister told the Committee that there had been a shift in the unemployment trend, in line with a relaxation in restrictions, with most women now back at work. He indicated that the level of unemployment is now worse for males and for those in the 15-24 age bracket.[25]

Recommendation 16

2.42 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider providing additional financial assistance to ensure students returning to Canberra to attend university, who are not able to find jobs, can access the support they need.

AT-RISK GROUPS

2.43 The Committee heard from several organisations in relation to their concerns about how different groups are being treated during the pandemic.[26]

2.44 In particular, there were concerns about the treatment of disabled and aged people. The ACT Disability Aged Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS) in their submission to the inquiry told the Committee that:

> In emergency situations, **human rights should predominate**, and the emphasis should be on ensuring equitable access to and quality of support.
>
> Despite the ongoing and concerted efforts of many: we do not think that human rights have been successfully and consistently upheld for all in the ACT during COVID-19.[27]

[24] Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 21 August 2020.

[25] Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 21 August 2020.

[26] Mr Robert Altamore, *Transcript of Evidence,* 25 June 2020, pp. 412-416; Mx C Moore, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 July 2020, pp. 475-477; Ms Julie Tongs OAM, *Transcript of Evidence,* 16 July 2020, p. 488; Mrs Heidi Prowse, *Transcript of Evidence,* 24 July 2020, p. 503; Mr Simon Viereck, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 31 July 2020, pp. 535-536.

[27] ADACAS, *Submission 23*, p. 1.

Recommendation 17

2.45 The Committee recommends that that in its response to COVID-19 the ACT Government considers the different needs of different groups in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and any other relevant factors.

Recommendation 18

2.46 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should ensure that the human rights of all members of the community are considered so that there is equitable access to appropriate and quality support.

2.47 The Committee also heard from Winnunga Nimmityjah. They highlighted the fact that a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people already have high levels of chronic disease and are therefore a significantly at-risk group.[28]

2.48 They told the Committee that Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who are 50 years of age are classed as elderly because of the life expectancy gap. Winnunga Nimmityjah indicated that they have been able to provide a dedicated COVID-19 testing site for this cohort, however, these factors are top of mind when they are dealing with their clients.[29]

Recommendation 19

2.49 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are a particularly at-risk group and ensure this is a consideration when determining where to focus further resources as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses.

EDUCATION

2.50 The Committee agrees with the assessment by ACT Council of Social Service Inc.(ACTCOSS) that:

> …the COVID-19 pandemic has been extremely disruptive to the normal provision of education. We also acknowledge that the ACT Government

[28] Ms Julie Tongs OAM, *Transcript of Evidence,* 16 July 2020, p. 486.
[29] Ms Julie Tongs OAM, *Transcript of Evidence,* 16 July 2020, p. 487.

worked hard to transition its services to meet social distancing requirements including through online learning.[30]

2.51 However, the Committee, and ACTCOSS, noted that the Education Directorate were requesting that devices, given to children to manage online learning, be returned.[31]

2.52 The Committee is concerned that the return of these devices may result in children not having the online access they need to continue their education into the future, particularly if there is a need to return to online learning.

Recommendation 20

2.53 The Committee recommends that the ACT Education Directorate assess the needs of students before requesting the return of any electronic devices such as Chrome Books and other internet access devices.

2.54 The Committee heard conflicting evidence in relation to whether online schooling had impacted on students' learning. Whilst they believe that individual schools and teachers are doing their utmost the Committee are of the view that it is unavoidable that some students will have been negatively affected as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, whether that be due to changes in lesson availability and delivery or by inequitable access to learning resources.[32]

Recommendation 21

2.55 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government improve support to schools to ensure students have not been disproportionately disadvantaged by online schooling, including providing access to free tutors for students who may have fallen behind or who attend traditionally disadvantaged schools.

Recommendation 22

2.56 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government engage with local universities to ensure that the potential disadvantage faced by both year 11 and 12 students will not affect university placements.

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[30] ACTCOSS, *Submission 14*, p. 4.

[31] ACTCOSS *Submission 14*, p. 5.

[32] Mr Martin Watson, *Transcript of Evidence,* 14 May 2020, pp. 191-192; Ms Katy Haire, *Transcript of Evidence,* 14 May 2020, p. 192; Mr Ross Fox, *Transcript of Evidence,* 22 May 2020, p. 209.

YOUTH SERVICES

2.57 During the hearing on 21 August 2020, Dr Justin Barker from the Youth Coalition, informed the Committee that young people aged 18 – 29 have been under a lot more stress since the pandemic began.[33]

2.58 In line with evidence given by the Chef Minister later that day, he told the Committee that young people are finding it difficult to enter the workforce and to keep employment where they have it.[34]

2.59 Dr Barker also indicated that things were getting difficult for young people in terms of obtaining an education, leaving home and becoming independent and that this was affecting their mental health.

2.60 The ACT Youth Advisory Council provided a submission to the Committee which concurred with Dr Barker's evidence and identified five key issues. These included:

- education;
- mental health services;
- access to services;
- employment; and
- housing, rent and homelessness.[35]

Recommendation 23

2.61 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, in its COVID-19 pandemic response, include targeted programs and improve access to services for young people, particularly in the areas of education; mental health; employment; housing; rental affordability and homelessness.

Recommendation 24

2.62 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government create a resource to assist young people to access services and assistance, across different services categories.

[33] Dr Justin Barker, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 21 August 2020.

[34] Dr Justin Barker, *Proof Transcript of Evidence,* 21 August 2020.

[35] ACT Youth Advisory Council, *Submission 20,* p. 2.

DISABILITY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

2.63 The Committee heard from Women With Disabilities ACT (WWDACT) who informed the Committee that they had undertaken a survey to assess the needs of women* and girls affected by disability in the ACT and region during the COVID-19 pandemic.[36] The outcomes of this survey were included in the report *"The Responsibility has Fallen on Us" Perspectives on the impact of COVID-19 on Women* and Girls with Disabilities in the ACT and Region*.

2.64 The Committee draws the ACT Government's attention to this report.

2.65 This report highlighted that the main concerns for Women and Girls, Feminine Identifying & Non-binary People with Disabilities in the ACT included:

- the lack of accessible communications from ACT Health:
- the need for information specifically for the disability community; and
- the need for financial assistance for people with disabilities who are facing increased costs of living due to delivery costs, product shortages, increased medication costs, and increased service costs.[37]

Recommendation 25

2.66 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should dedicate funding toward disability services and related organisations so they may prioritise education, resources and training for people with disabilities on preparedness for emergency medical situations.

Recommendation 26

2.67 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that there are disability access and inclusion plans for all of Canberra Health Services across ACT Health.

2.68 In their evidence to the Committee, the WWDACT suggested that funding be considered for initiatives that work at the interface of disability and domestic and family violence—for example, the training up of existing services.[38]

2.69 The YWCA Canberra drew the Committee's attention to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic on the level of domestic violence. They told the Committee that there is a

[36] WWDACT uses women* to refer to women, girls, feminine identifying and non-binary people with disabilities.

[37] WWDACT, "*The Responsibility has Fallen on Us" Perspectives on the impact of COVID-19 on Women* and Girls with Disabilities in the ACT and Region*, https://d35ohva3c1yycw.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/06110218/WWDACT-Covid-19-Report-FINAL2.pdf, accessed 22 August 2020.

[38] Mx C Moore, *Transcript of Evidence,* 9 July 2020. p. 475.

need for governments at all levels to fund specialist women's domestic and family violence services to make sure legal systems prioritise women and children's safety and ensure access to support for women whose visa status or disability make them particularly at risk.[39]

Recommendation 27

2.70 The Committee recommends the ACT Government ensure that dedicated funding for trained disability advocates is available to support people with disability. This includes trained advocates to work with existing domestic and family violence services so they have the capacity to provide accessible and appropriate supports to women with disabilities experiencing violence.

2.71 The Committee noted that there had been some changes to ACT Magistrate Court practices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which included the cessation of face-to-face support services.

2.72 The Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) submission found some adjustments were needed for both staff and clients. In particular, they highlighted the benefits of clients being able to apply for protection orders remotely and suggested that this option for applicants be continued after the COVID-19 pandemic.[40]

2.73 However, they also highlighted the barriers and risks to safety experienced by clients from minority groups and vulnerable members of the community in accessing the courts remotely, due to lack of IT access, low literacy levels or the inability to have conversations over the phone while living with a perpetrator.[41]

2.74 DVCS told the Committee that there was also some confusion about the new practices being employed by the ACT Magistrates Court due to COVID-19 restrictions. In order to promote safety and accessibility it was suggested to the Committee that there needs to be

> …a focus on communication by the ACT Magistrate's Court to offenders, victims and to the community more broadly that provides easily accessible information.[42]

2.75 The DVCS submission also highlighted a significant increase in the successful number of applications for Defendants applying for bail or to request to vary their bail

[39] Ms Cara Jacobs, *Transcript of Evidence,* 9 July 2020. p. 457.
[40] Domestic Violence Crisis Service, *Submission 24,* p. 3.
[41] Domestic Violence Crisis Service, *Submission 24,* p. 3.
[42] Domestic Violence Crisis Service, *Submission 24,* p. 3.

conditions.[43] Whilst it was understood that many were given bail with intensive conditions to so as to mitigate safety concerns in remand facilities, it often increased safety concerns for victims. DVCS indicated to the Committee that:

> Multiple offenders applied for bail several times during COVID-19 and named COVID-19 as the reason to be released. DVCS were advised by clients that the defendant in the matter who was subject to probation and parole conditions was not being monitored and subjected to compliance checks, which had significant safety impacts.[44]

2.76 The extensive backlog of cases has also had an effect. The Committee were informed that this meant many matters were either repeatedly adjourned or heard on the same day in the same courtroom as a multitude of other matters. This meant applicants and respondents were often outside the same courtroom and being called in at the same time. The Committee were told the impact of these delays and proximity to perpetrators 'on victim's sense of safety, emotional wellbeing and capacity to engage in the process is considerable.'[45]

Recommendation 28

2.77 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government and the Courts work with service providers, such as DVCS and the Women's Legal Centre to develop ways to:

- **reduce or remove barriers for applicant and victim to access the Courts remotely;**
- **ensure accessible information is available about legal processes and the supports on offer for applicants, respondents, victims and perpetrators of domestic violence;**
- **ensure measures are taken to adequately assess and prioritise the safety of those impacted by domestic violence;**
- **mitigate the impacts on victims, perpetrators, applicants and respondents of delayed court hearings and the issues encountered in monitoring probation, parole and bail conditions under COVID-19 restrictions.**

HOUSING, RENT AND HOMELESSNESS

2.78 The Committee notes that in the early stages of the inquiry the Committee heard evidence in relation to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on housing affordability and homelessness, particularly the increased need for housing support triggered in part by COVID-19 pandemic related job losses.

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[43] Domestic Violence Crisis Service, *Submission 24,* p. 3.
[44] Domestic Violence Crisis Service, *Submission 24,* p. 3.
[45] Domestic Violence Crisis Service, *Submission 24,* p. 4.

2.79 Many of the witnesses appearing before the committee spoke highly of the crisis supports that have been put in place to support those who are or are at risk of homelessness.[46] Whilst it was acknowledged that the additional funds provided to the sector have enabled them to appropriately house and support those in need, there were concerns about where their clients would end up if there were no safe and secure longer-term options.[47]

Recommendation 29

2.80 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government action all previous recommendations, in relation to housing and homelessness, so as to provide relief and certainty for those in need of appropriate housing and support.

Recommendation 30

2.81 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government extends COVID-19 related assistance to tenants and landlords both residential and commercial for at least until a couple of months following the end of the ACT COVID-19 public health emergency declaration.

Recommendation 31

2.82 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should direct stimulus investment towards social and public housing to address chronic community shortages of affordable housing.

Recommendation 32

2.83 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should invest in in women's specialist homelessness services and culturally sensitive housing solutions for First Nations communities.

[46] Mr Richard Griffiths OAM, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May 2020, p. 116; Mr Travis Gilbert, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May 2020, pp. 125-126; Mr Andrew Hannan, *Transcript of Evidence,* 23 April 2020, p. 43; Mr Jeremy Halcrow, *Transcript of Evidence,* 23 April 2020, p. 72.

[47] Mr Travis Gilbert, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May 2020, pp. 127-128; Mr Charlie Faulder, *Transcript of Evidence,* 8 May 2020, p. 132; Mr Jeremy Halcrow, *Transcript of Evidence,* 23 April 2020, p. 72.

Recommendation 33

2.84 The Committee recommends the ACT Government explore options to provide support and payments to young people who may not be able to pay rent and other housing related costs.

2.85 Evidence provided to the Committee during its hearing on 9 July 2020, by Beryl Women Inc., highlighted the experience of a woman, seeking accommodation support for herself and her seven children, who had been refused support by OneLink.

2.86 Whilst Beryl Women Inc. indicated that they, and ultimately DVCS, managed to find her accommodation they told the Committee they were informed by OneLink that, despite the high domestic violence risk, ACT women were the priority:

> Because [the woman] came from another state and she had supports in that state, as well as accommodation, she was not seen as a priority for OneLink and was told to return to that state.[48]

2.87 Beryl Women Inc. indicated to the Committee that the interstate status of a client has never been a consideration before. When they queried as to if there was a new policy position in relation to interstate clients they were told there was not and as a consequence were unsure as to why this client had been declined support services in the ACT. They expressed their confusion to the Committee:

> This was a woman from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a woman from an African community. All the way through it there seemed to be—I will probably get shot down for saying this—a level of discrimination that was happening as well. She was just told flat out and we were told flat out that she was not going to get service from the ACT because ACT women were the priority. She had supports in place; she had a property in Victoria; she could go back there. However, she did not feel safe. Her own sense of safety was not considered in any decisions that were being made here.[49]
>
> There seemed to be this thing that the ACT was not going to be accommodating women from other states and territories. That seemed to change. That seemed to be the picture very quickly, because prior to that we had accommodated, through the service, two women, two white women, who had come from other states and territories. So it just did not make sense to us, which is where I was going with the level of discrimination.[50]

[48] Ms Robin Martin, *Transcript of Evidence,* 9 July 2020, p. 480.
[49] Ms Robin Martin, *Transcript of Evidence,* 9 July 2020, pp. 482-483.
[50] Ms Robin Martin, *Transcript of Evidence,* 9 July 2020, p. 483.

Recommendation 34

2.88 The Committee recommends that that the ACT Government undertake an investigation into the circumstances regarding the difficulties encountered in facilitating support and housing for a mother and her seven children from interstate, as outlined by Beryl Women Inc. in evidence given to the Committee.

FUTURE SCRUTINY

2.89 The Committee believes that it has played an important role in the ACT response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its establishment and operation has enabled on-going scrutiny of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the ACT community and the government response.

2.90 The Committee believes that the ongoing function of the Committee or its equivalent is essential for the duration of the COVID-19 Emergency.

Recommendation 35

2.91 The Committee recommends that the Select Committee for the COVID-19 Pandemic Response continue and, if necessary be re-established, for the length of the declared COVID Emergency.

2.92 Further to this, the Committee is of the view that post the COVID-19 Emergency a full review should be conducted of the ACT Government response to the pandemic.

Recommendation 36

2.93 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct a full review and assessment of the operation of the COVID-19 Emergency including, but not limited to, governance, decision making, preparedness, cross-border issues, intergovernmental co-operation, and lessons for the future.

COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

2.94 In conducting this inquiry the Committee has pioneered virtual meetings both for public hearings and private meetings. The Committee recognises that virtual public hearings, in particular, can be very useful for witnesses as they do not have to travel to attend the Assembly building and it allows flexibility for all participants. The

Committee is of the view that the advantages of virtual meetings will still be relevant after the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

Recommendation 37

2.95 The Committee recommends that future committees of the ACT Legislative Assembly adopt virtual meetings as a standard part of their operations.

2.96 The Committee has also noted the efficiencies of being able to table interim reports when inquiring into multifactorial matters, akin to this inquiry, particularly when they are unpredictable and encompass a number of portfolios.

Recommendation 38

2.97 The Committee recommends that future committees of the ACT Legislative Assembly consider providing interim reports so that there can be more timely Government responses.

Recommendation 39

2.98 The Committee recommends that future Assemblies of the ACT Legislative Assembly consider establishing specific committees for inquiries into matters that encompass extensive cross portfolio issues.

2.99 The Committee found that the utilisation of phone-based group messaging for internal communication during hearings and collaborative platforms for collating possible recommendations has been a notable efficiency throughout the inquiry.

Recommendation 40

2.100 The Committee recommends that future Assemblies of the ACT Legislative Assembly utilise electronic systems, such as collaborative platforms, to easily collate, and collaborate on written recommendations for reports.

Mr Alistair Coe MLA

Chair

26 August 2020

THE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr Alistair Coe MLA (Chair)

Ms Tara Cheyne MLA (Deputy Chair)

Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA

Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA

SECRETARIAT

Annemieke Jongsma	Committee Secretary (from July 2020)
Hamish Finlay	Committee Secretary (until July 2020)
Danton Leary	Assistant Committee Secretary
Frieda Scott	Research Support
Lydia Chung	Administrative Assistant
Dennis London	Technical Officer
Paul Crowley	Technical Officer

CONTACT INFORMATION

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APPENDIX A - WITNESSES

9 APRIL 2020

- Dr Emma Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, ACT Council of Social Service
- Mr Craig Wallace, Policy Manager, ACT Council of Social Service

16 APRIL 2020

- Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Health
- Ms Bernadette McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Mr Dave Peffer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Mr Andrew Gay, Chief Finance Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Dr Imogen Mitchell, Director, Intensive Care Unit, Critical Care, Canberra Health Services
- Dr Sanjaya Senanayake, Senior Specialist in Infectious Diseases, Canberra Health Services
- Ms Karen Grace, Executive Director, Mental Health Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services, Canberra Health Services
- Mr Michael De'Ath, Director-General, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Kylie Jonasson, Deputy Director-General, Health System, Policy and Research, ACT Health Directorate
- Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Jacinta George, Executive Group Manager, Health System Planning and Evaluation, ACT Health Directorate
- Mr Michael Culhane, Executive Group Manager, Policy Partnerships and Programs, ACT Health Directorate
- Mr John Fletcher, Executive Group Manager, Corporate and Governance, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Kate Chambers, Chief Finance Officer, Strategic Finance, Corporate and Governance, ACT Health Directorate

17 APRIL 2020

- Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events, Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment
- Mr David Nicol, Under Treasurer
- Mr Stephen Miners, Deputy Under Treasurer - Economic, Budget and Industrial Relations
- Mr Faheem Khan, Senior Economic Adviser

23 APRIL 2020

- Mr Andrew Hannan, Chair, Community Housing Industry Association ACT Regional Committee
- Ms Michelle Tynan, Chief Executive Officer, Real Estate Institute ACT
- Ms Adina Cirson, Executive Director, Property Council ACT
- Mr Joel Dignam, Executive Director, Better Renting
- Dr John Boersig, Chief Executive Officer, Legal Aid ACT
- Mr Brice Hamack, Solicitor, Legal Aid ACT
- Mr Jeremy Halcrow, Chief Executive Officer, Anglicare NSW South, West and ACT
- Ms Sarah Murdoch, Executive Officer, St Johns Care

30 APRIL 2020

- Mr Archie Tsirimokos, Chair, Canberra Business Chamber
- Mr Graham Catt, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Business Chamber

1 MAY 2020

- Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Health
- Ms Bernadette McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Mr Dave Peffer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Ms Kylie Jonasson, A/g Director-General, ACT Health Directorate
- Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer, ACT Health Directorate
- Mr Michael Culhane, A/g Deputy Director-General, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Jacinta George, Executive Group Manager, Health System Planning and Evaluation, ACT Health Directorate
- Mr John Fletcher, Executive Group Manager, Corporate and Governance, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Kate Chambers, Chief Finance Officer, Strategic Finance, Corporate and Governance, ACT Health Directorate
- Mr Duncan Edghill, Chief Projects Officer, Major Projects Canberra

- Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events, Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment
- Mr David Nicol, Under Treasurer
- Mr Stephen Miners, Deputy Under Treasurer - Economic, Budget and Industrial Relations
- Ms Kareena Arthy, Deputy Director General, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

8 MAY 2020

- Mr Travis Gilbert, Chief Executive Officer, ACT Shelter Association
- Mr Richard Griffiths, Coordinator, Safe Shelter ACT
- Ms Nicole Wiggins, Director, UnitingCare Canberra City – Early Morning Centre
- Mr Charlie Faulder, Committee Member and Authorised Spokesperson, Tenants' Union ACT
- Mr Anthony Brierley, General Manager, Australian Hotels Association ACT
- Mr Wes Lambert, Chief Executive Officer, Restaurant and Catering Australia
- Mr Tom Green, Manager of Policy and Government, Restaurant and Catering Australia
- Mr Gwyn Rees, Chief Executive Officer, ClubsACT
- Ms Grace Flanagan, Organiser, United Workers Union
- Mr Gagandeep Singh, Member, United Workers Union
- Ms Lyndal Ryan, ACT Spokesperson, United Workers Union
- Mr Nishan Upasena, Member, United Workers Union
- Ms Sabrina Clarke, Member, United Workers Union
- Ms Veronica Paquibot, Member, United Workers Union
- Dr David Marshall, Chair, Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Forum and Canberra Region Tourism Leaders Advisory Forum
- Mr Michael Matthews, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Convention Bureau
- Dr Naomi Dale, President, National Capital Attractions Association
- Mr Noel Langdon, Founding Director and Secretary, Cultural Attractions of Australia

14 MAY 2020

- Ms Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Women
- Ms Katy Haire, Director General Education Directorate
- Mr David Matthews, A/g Deputy Director General Education Directorate
- Ms Deb Efthymiades, Deputy Director General System Policy and Reform Education Directorate
- Mr Ross Hawkins, Executive Group Manager, System Design and Delivery Education Directorate
- Mr Mark Huxley, Executive Group Manager, Emergency Incident Controller Education Directorate
- Mr Andrew Parkinson, Executive Group Manager, Business Services Education Directorate
- Ms Judith Hamilton, A/g Executive Group Manager School Improvement Education Directorate
- Ms Lynette Daly, Chief Finance Officer Education Directorate
- Ms Kate McMahon, Executive Branch Manager, Learning Wellbeing Policy and Design Education Directorate
- Ms Sam Seton, Executive Branch Manager, Student Engagement Education Directorate

- Mr Martin Watson, Executive Group Manager Board of Senior Secondary Studies

22 MAY 2020

- Mr Ross Fox, Director, Catholic Education (Archdiocese of Goulburn and Canberra)
- Mr Timothy Elliott, School and Family Services Leader, Catholic Education (Archdiocese of Goulburn and Canberra)
- Mr Benjamin Duggan, Government Relations and Policy Advisor, Catholic Education (Archdiocese of Goulburn and Canberra)
- Ms Natalie Harper, People and Culture Leader, Catholic Education (Archdiocese of Goulburn and Canberra)
- Ms Jennifer Rickard, Executive Officer, Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools
- Mr Glenn Fowler, Secretary, Australian Education Union ACT
- Mr Andrew Wrigley, Director, Association of Independent Schools of the ACT
- Mrs Joanne Garrisson, Senior Manager Strategic Programs, Association of Independent Schools of the ACT
- Ms Kristy McGovern-Hooley, President, ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations

- Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events, Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment
- Mr David Nicol, Under Treasurer
- Mr Kim Salisbury, Revenue Commissioner
- Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer

28 MAY 2020

- Mr Gordon Ramsay MLA, Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts, Creative Industries and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services and Minister for Seniors and Veterans
- Ms Sam Tyler, Executive Branch Manager, artsACT
- Mr Ross Triffitt, Senior Director, EventsACT

- Ms Julie Dyson AM, Member, Childers Group
- Miss Alison Plevey, Member, Childers Group
- Ms Liz Lea, Member, Canberra Artists Action Group
- Ms Adelaide Rief, Member, Canberra Artists Action Group
- Mr Michael Sollis, Co-ordinator, Canberra Artists Action Group
- Mr Ian Mclean, Judge, Canberra Area Theatre Awards
- Ms Coralie Wood, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Area Theatre Awards
- Mr Daniel Ballantyne, Director, MusicACT
- Mr Martin Beaver, Owner, Beaver Galleries
- Mr Lance Fox, Owner, The Basement

- Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA, Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Corrections and Justice Health, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety and Minister for Mental Health
- Ms Meg Brighton, Deputy Director-General, Health Systems, Policy and Research, ACT Health Directorate
- Mr Michael Culhane, Executive Group Manager, Policy, Partnerships and Programs, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Karen Grace, Executive Director, Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol And Drug Services, Canberra Health Services
- Ms Kylie Jonasson, Director-General, Act Health Directorate
- Ms Bernadette Mcdonald, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Dr Elizabeth Moore, Coordinator-General Mental Health, Office for Mental Health, ACT Health Directorate
- Mr Jon Ord, Executive Branch Manager, Mental Health Policy Unit, Policy, Partnerships and Programs, ACT Health Directorate
- Mr Dave Peffer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Dr Denise Riordan, Chief Psychiatrist, ACT Health Directorate

5 JUNE 2020

- Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events, Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment
- Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Health
- Ms Meg Brighton, Deputy Director-General, Health Systems, Policy and Research, ACT Health Directorate
- Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Kylie Jonasson, Director-General, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Bernadette Mcdonald, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Mr Dave Peffer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services

11 JUNE 2020

- Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Urban Renewal
- Mr Ben Ponton, Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
- Dr Erin Brady, Deputy Director-General, Land Strategy and Environment, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

- Mr Geoffrey Rutledge, Deputy Director-General, Sustainability and the Built Environment, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
- Mr Brett Phillips, Executive Group Manager, Planning Delivery, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
- Mr George Cilliers, Director, Development Assessment, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
- Mr Ian Walker, Executive Group Manager, Environment, Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
- Mr Justin Foley, Executive Branch Manager, ACT Parks and Conservation, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

- Ms Suzanne Orr MLA, Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Disability, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety, Minister for Government Services and Procurement
- Ms Jo Wood, Director-General, Community Services Directorate
- Mr David Nicol, Under Treasurer, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
- Ms Anne-Maree Sabellico, Deputy Director-General, Community Services Directorate
- Mr Shaun Strachan, Deputy Under Treasurer, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
- Ms Jessica Summerall, Executive Branch Manager, Social and Community Inclusion, Community Services Directorate
- Mr Joseph Borgese, Executive Branch Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Community Service Directorate
- Mr Glenn Bain, Executive Group Manager, Procurement ACT, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
- Ms Amanda Charles, Senior Director, Office for Disability, Inclusion and Participation, Community Services Directorate

19 JUNE 2020

- Ms Lisa Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Carers ACT
- Ms Genevieve Bolton, Executive Director and Principal Solicitor, Canberra Community Law
- Ms Sophie Trevitt, Solicitor, Canberra Community Law

25 JUNE 2020

- Mr Archie Tsirimokos, Chair, Canberra Business Chamber
- Mr Graham Catt, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Business Chamber
- Mr Greg Weller, Executive Director, Housing Industry Association ACT
- Mr Michael Hopkins, Chief Executive Officer, Master Builders Association ACT
- Mr Anthony Brierley, General Manager, Australian Hotels Association ACT

- Mr Robert Altamore, People with Disabilities ACT
- Mr Craig Shannon, Executive Director, People with Disabilities ACT
- Mrs Kim Spinks, Director Housing and Community Engagement, OneLink
- Ms Clare Conway, Manager Housing Action Team, OneLink

3 JULY 2020

- Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Health
- Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer
- Ms Jacinta George, Executive Group Manager, Health System Planning and Evaluation, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Bernadette McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Mr Dave Peffer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services

- Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events, Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment
- Mr David Nicol, Under Treasurer
- Mr Kim Salisbury, Commissioner for ACT Revenue

9 JULY 2020

- Ms Claudia Maclean, Principal Solicitor, Women's Legal Centre ACT & Region
- Ms Bethany Hender, Head of Employment and Discrimination Practice, Women's Legal Centre ACT & Region
- Ms Cara Jacobs, Executive Director of Community Services, YWCA Canberra
- Ms Penny Pestano, Service Director, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
- Ms Marcia Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Women's Centre for Health Matters
- Dr Yvonne Luxford, Chief Executive Officer, Perinatal Wellbeing Centre
- Mx C Moore, Chief Executive Officer, Women with Disabilities ACT
- Ms Robyn Martin, Chief Executive Officer, Beryl Women Inc.

16 JULY 2020

- Ms Julie Tongs OAM, Chief Executive Officer, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Services
- Mr Glenn Keys AO, Founder and Executive Chair, Aspen Medical

24 JULY 2020

- Mrs Heidi Prowse, Chief Executive Officer, Mental Illness Education ACT Inc

- Ms Melissa Haley, Chief Executive Officer, Conflict Resolution Service

- Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Health
- Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer
- Ms Bernadette McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Mr Dave Peffer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Ms Cathie O'Neill, Executive Director, Cancer and Ambulatory Support, Canberra Health Services
- Dr Imogen Mitchell, Director, Intensive Care Unit, Critical Care, Canberra Health Services
- Mr Brendan Smyth, COVID-19 Local Business Commissioner

31 JULY 2020

- Mr Simon Viereck, Executive Officer, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT
- Ms Leith Felton-Taylor, Policy and Sector Development Manager, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT
- Ms Carrie Leeson, Chief Executive Officer, Lifeline ACT

14 AUGUST 2020

- Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Health
- Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer
- Ms Meg Brighton, A/Director-General, ACT Health Directorate
- Ms Bernadette McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services
- Ms Dave Peffer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services

21 AUGUST 2020

- Dr Justin Barker, Executive Director, Youth Coalition of the ACT

- Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events, Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment
- Mr David Nicol, Under Treasurer
- Mr Stephen Miners, Deputy Under Treasurer - Economic, Budget and Industrial Relations
- Ms Kareena Arthy, Deputy Director General, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
- Ms Rebecca Cross Coordinator-General, Whole of Government (Non-Health) Response to COVID-19

APPENDIX B – SUBMISSIONS

Submission Number	Submitter	Received
001	Name withheld	17 April 2020
002	Tenants' Union ACT	5 May 2020
003	James French	5 May 2020
004	Roger Morton	6 May 2020
005	Carolyn Morton	6 May 2020
006	People with Disabilities ACT	12 May 2020
007	Woden Community Service	12 May 2020
008	Garran Residents' Association	12 May 2020
009	United Workers Union	12 May 2020
010	ACT Human Rights Commission	19 May 2020
011	Name withheld	27 May 2020
012	Jon Glikson	27 May 2020
013	ANU Postgraduate and Research Students' Association	16 June 2020
014	ACT Council of Social Services	1 July 2020
015	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and Australian Society of Anaesthetists	21 July 2020
016	Name withheld	28 July 2020
016 (a)	Name withheld	28 July 2020
016 (b)	Name withheld	28 July 2020
016 (c)	Name withheld	28 July 2020

Submission Number	Submitter	Received
017	The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (yet to be published)	4 August 2020
018	Marathon Health	11 August 2020
019	Name withheld	18 August 2020
020	ACT Youth Advisory Council	18 August 2020
021	Advocacy for Inclusion	19 August 2020
022	Exercise and Sports Science Australia	21 August 2020
023	ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service	21 August 2020
024	Domestic Violence Crisis Centre	24 August 2020

APPENDIX C – QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE/ QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions taken on Notice 16 April 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
1	16/04/2020	Coe	Health	Temporary emergency department contractors	30/04/2020
2	16/04/2020	Dunne	Health	ICU capacity modelling	1/05/2020
3	16/04/2020	Cheyne	Health	Resources available for contract tracing	8/05/2020
4	16/04/2020	Pettersson	Health	Government accommodation self-isolation	20/05/2020

Questions taken on Notice 17 April 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
5	17/4/2020	Coe	Treasury	Modelling on the effect of the pandemic on possible decreases in unimproved land values	30/4/2020
6	17/4/2020	Dunne	Treasury	Access Canberra working arrangements	28/4/2020
7	17/4/2020	Dunne	Treasury	National partnership agreement	30/4/2020
8	17/4/2020	Dunne	Treasury	Dates of cabinet consideration of Aspen Medical pop-up emergency department	29/4/2020

Questions taken on Notice 1 May 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
9	1/05/2020	Dunne	Health	Complications related to COVID-19 -- Current thinking and long-term impact	19/05/2020
10	1/05/2020	Coe/Dunne	Health	Surge Centre	25/05/2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
11	1/05/2020	Dunne	Health	Surge Centre floor space	11/05/2020
12	1/05/2020	Dunne/Coe	Health	Number of Emergency Department patients	9/06/2020
13	1/05/2020	Coe	Health	Equipment for COVID-19 Surge Centre	12/06/2020
14	1/05/2020	Coe	Treasury	Businesses that have applied for commercial rates waivers (other than businesses of AUV of $2m)	21/05/2020
15	1/05/2020	Le Couteur	Treasury	Rates reductions due to rent reductions for occupancies	
16	1/05/2020	Coe	Treasury	Ventilator acquisition	14/05/2020
17	1/05/2020	Coe	Treasury	Relief on sewerage and other fixed costs for hotels	
18	1/05/2020	Cheyne	Treasury	Mediation services for residential landlords and tenants	20/05/2020

Questions taken on Notice 14 May 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
19	14/05/2020	Le Couteur	Treasury	WHS and liability for businesses/employers if patrons and/or clients contract COVID-19	27/05/2020
20	14/05/2020	Cheyne	Community Services	Canberra Food Relief Network and demand for food and essential items	27/05/2020
21	14/05/2020	Le Couteur	Community Services	Red Cross community service delivery	2/06/2020
22	14/05/2020	Le Couteur	Justice and Community Safety	Jobs for Canberrans initiative	22/05/2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
23	14/05/2020	Pettersson	Office of Coordinator-General	Comparable positions to Coordinator-General across other Australian jurisdictions	22/05/2020
24	14/05/2020	Coe	Education	Number of phone calls made to parents over ANZAC Day long weekend	
25	14/05/2020	Coe	Education	Summary of approaches being taken by colleges for the delivery of classes at the moment	2/06/2020

Questions taken on Notice 5 June 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
26	5/06/2020	Dunne	Chief Minister	AHPPC advice RE gaming venues	13/07/2020
27	5/06/2020	Le Couteur	Chief Minister	Poker machine buyback uptake	17/06/2020
28	5/06/2020	Le Couteur	Chief Minister	OH&S issues with WFH arrangements	24/06/2020
29	5/06/2020	Dunne	Chief Minister	WFH arrangements and security of government documents	1/07/2020
30	5/06/2020	Dunne	Minister for Health	Elective surgery and outpatient backlog	13/07/2020

Questions taken on Notice 11 June 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
31	11/06/2020	Dunne	Minister for Planning	Planning for Housing	29/06/2020
32	11/06/2020	Coe	Minister for Planning	Lease variation charge	6/07/2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
33	11/06/2020	Le Couteur	Minister for Disability and Community Service	Stimulus package funding	22/07/2020
34	11/06/2020	Le Couteur	Minister for Disability and Community Service	Stimulus allocation decision	22/07/2020
35	11/06/2020	Dunne	Minister for Disability and Community Service	Food bank quantity of stock	22/07/2020
36	11/06/2020	Cheyne	Minister for Disability and Community Service	Toilet paper supply lines	22/07/2020
37	11/06/2020	Dunne	Minister for Disability and Community Service	Mental health community organisation funding	22/07/2020

Questions taken on Notice 3 July 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
38	3/07/2020	Dunne	Treasury	Homebuilder eligibility – newly released land for sale under price threshold for homebuilder	21/07/2020
39	3/07/2020	Coe	Treasury	Whether end of April operating statement was provided to the Chief Minister and on what date	20/07/2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
40	3/07/2019	Coe	Treasury	Costs of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Commonwealth's contribution to covering the costs	
41	3/07/2020	Coe	Treasury	Definition of 'commencement' in relation to the Lease Variation Charge remission and when work began on this	28/07/2020
42	3/07/2020	Dunne	Minister for Health	$30 million announcement breakdown	28/07/2020
43	3/07/2020	Dunne	Minister for Health	Scoping document summary	27/07/2020

Questions taken on Notice 24 July 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
44	24/07/2020	Dunne	Minister for Health	Staff at child and family centre at Kippax	
45	24/07/2020	Dunne	Minister for Health	COVID-19 spending and Commonwealth contribution	12/08/2020

Questions taken on Notice 28 May 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
46	28/05/2020	Dunne	Minister for Mental Health	Occupancy rates at mental health units and wait times at emergency	18/08/2020
47	28/05/2020	Dunne	Minister for Mental Health	COVID-19 specific funding	18/08/2020

Questions taken on Notice 14 August 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
48	14/08/2020	Coe	Minister for Health	Canberra Hospital 4th-quarter spending and budget	
49	14/08/2020	Le Couteur	Minister for Health	Graphical information outreach - success with CALD communities	

Questions taken on Notice 28 May 2020

No.	Hearing date	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
50	28/05/2020	Coe	Minister for Mental Health	Percentage of suicides where people had prior engagement with health services	25/08/2020

Questions on Notice 1 May 2020

No.	Date received	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
1	1/05/2020	Cheyne	Health	Use of masks	20/05/2020

Questions on Notice 8 May 2020

No.	Date received	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
2	8/05/2020	Dunne	Health	BreastScreen ACT	19/05/2020

Questions on Notice 11 May 2020

No.	Date received	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
3	11/05/2020	Cheyne	Australian Hotels Association	Booking system for clubs	19/05/2020

Questions on Notice 12 May 2020

No.	Date received	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
4	12/05/2020	Dunne	Health	Cancer screening	17/06/2020

Questions on Notice 26 May 2020

No.	Date received	Asked by	Directorate/ Portfolio	Subject	Answer date
5	26/05/2020	Dunne	Health	Hospital outpatient services	23/07/2020

APPENDIX D – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERIM REPORTS 1, 2 AND 3

INTERIM REPORT 1

Recommendation Number	Recommendation
1	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government prepare and publish a step-by-step process for easing restrictions in the Territory along the lines of the one prepared by the Northern Territory Government.
2	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government remove the current 100-property limit on the land tax concession scheme for landlords, who rent their properties through a community housing provider at an affordable rent to low and moderate income tenants, and make this scheme permanent.
3	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government contact all landlords and tenants that have had their email details recorded when a bond was lodged to inform them of the supports available for renters and landlords alike.
4	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government create and make available a standard terms and rights document for tenants and landlords to assist them in understanding changes due to COVID-19.
5	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish a tenant transfer system to allow for easier and more convenient change of tenants and retrieval of bonds for members of group houses.
6	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a framework for the repayment of any rental arrears accrued during the COVID-19 eviction moratorium.
7	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a plan to prohibit a lessor or grantor from seeking termination solely on the basis of rent arrears accrued during the period covered by the Residential Tenancies (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Declaration 2020.

Recommendation Number	Recommendation
8	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore a method for renters in fixed-term leases to terminate their tenancies during the COVID-19 emergency, such as by using the same mechanism available to people on periodic tenancies, i.e. by providing three weeks' notice.
9	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider providing financial mechanisms to assist community housing providers in expanding their property holdings to provide accommodation for people eligible for community housing.
10	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make all necessary representations to the Commonwealth to assist community service organisations to obtain COVID-19 funding.
11	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider establishing a small infrastructure grants program to assist community organisations who may need extra support to help deliver services in response to COVID-19.
12	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that disability service providers, aged care homes and similar service providers have adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect and reassure both clients and staff.
13	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide funding to enable service providers to shift to on-line delivery of services where possible.
14	The Committee recommends that OneLink expand its opening hours so that it is available later at night and on weekends.
15	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fund and participate in a Connections Week exercise at least twice a year to connect with rough sleepers and other people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness and understand who they are and their individual circumstances and needs.
16	The Committee recommends the ACT Government prioritise the city centre as the next location for a COVID-19 testing facility, if testing facilities are expanded.

Recommendation Number	Recommendation
17	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report regularly to the Legislative Assembly, and the Garran community, on any alternative uses proposed for the pop-up Emergency Department while it is on Garran Oval.
18	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government prepare plans for the future use of the pop-up emergency building once it is removed from Garran Oval.
19	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government require that hospitality workers undertake hygiene training specific to COVID-19.
20	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government prepare rules for the reopening of cafes, restaurants and other venues such as provision of hand sanitiser, distancing between tables, and cleaning of premises.
21	The Committee recommends that specific and targeted information is provided to patrons to ensure that social distancing measures are adhered to and highlighting the responsibility of each and every person.
22	The Committee recommends the ACT Government continues to work with the hospitality and club sector on occupancy arrangements, informed by up to date health advice, particularly with a view to reopening venues and increasing employment in the sector.
23	The Committee recommends the ACT Government give consideration as to whether the national and cultural institutions in the ACT could have a relevant patron limit set for them, informed by up to date health advice, particularly with a view to aiding tourism.
24	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop and communicate the criteria and process for applying for commercial rates waivers due to COVID-19 pandemic impacts.

INTERIM REPORT 2

Recommendation Number	Recommendation
1	The Committee recommends the ACT Government direct that all delegated legislation made in response to COVID-19 (including notifiable instruments) include a statement of compatibility outlining whether and how the instrument is compatible with human rights.
2	The Committee recommends that where emergency measures are introduced by way of delegated legislation, they should be accompanied by a statement of compatibility with human rights.
3	The Committee recommends that delegated legislation made in response to COVID-19 be in the form of disallowable instruments, rather than notifiable instruments to ensure appropriate and adequate oversight by the Legislative Assembly.
4	The Committee recommends that ACT Policing make public all guidance or directions it has provided to officers to inform their enforcement of public health directions to enable assessment of whether such guidance is sufficient, updated and accurate while also establishing clear community expectations about compliance.
5	The Committee recommends that ACT Policing, ACT Health and Access Canberra publish weekly de-identified data about compliance activities taken under any public health emergency directions, including: ▪ the number of infringement notices or formal cautions issued; ▪ the number of compliance checks conducted; and ▪ basic socio-demographic indicators of affected individuals or businesses.
6	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government either: ▪ put in place additional controls and procedures to ensure that only approved employees or personnel may access data in the National COVIDSafe data store and may do so solely for the purpose of contact tracing; or ▪ if the ACT Government believes that data agreements signed with the Commonwealth containing rules governing their usage of COVID app data are legally enforceable, publicly release those agreements.

Recommendation Number	Recommendation
7	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that information is specifically adapted to help children and young people understand COVID-19, what is required of them and where they can access support if needed.
8	The Committee recommends that, to enable timely communication when there are exceptional circumstances, the Directorate suspends its usual protocol of not communicating with teachers and school staff out of normal work hours.
9	The Committee recommends that if there are further restrictions on face to face schooling that the ACT Government prioritise facilitating normal schooling for children with special needs.
10	The Committee recommends that further work be undertaken to support students with special needs, including those in learning support units or with an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), during shutdowns.
11	The Committee recommends that all school systems provide extra support to students who may have been left behind by the changes in education, and in particular those who were struggling before the emergency.
12	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake an independent review of the learning from home period so that improvements can be made for similar future situations. The scope should include but not be limited to: ▪ preparedness for remote learning; ▪ resources available for schools and families, including consideration of identification of vulnerable children and additional supports provided; ▪ communication with school communities and parents; and ▪ comparison of differences with the responses in other jurisdictions.
13	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake an independent longitudinal study to measure the impact of the COVID-19 response on children's education.

Recommendation Number	Recommendation
14	The Committee recommends that, wherever possible, students have access to their local school during any similar shutdowns.
15	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish the scope of the Coordinator-General's role.

INTERIM REPORT 3

Recommendation Number	Recommendation
1	The Committee recommends that the Minister for Mental Health report at each remaining sitting of the Ninth Assembly on the occupancy rate for acute mental health beds.
2	The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health at each remaining sitting of the Ninth Assembly, update the Assembly and the community on the backlog of elective surgery, including a breakdown by specialty and how the government intends to clear the backlog.
3	The Committee recommends that the Minister for Health at each remaining sitting of the Ninth Assembly, update the Assembly and the community on any backlog in access to specialty clinics and outpatient services, including a breakdown by specialty, and how the government intends to clear the backlog.
4	The Committee recommends that ACT health, in conjunction with health and disability organisations, provide information for GPs and other health workers about how to prevent infection with in-home workers and the importance of support for disabled people.
5	The Committee recommends that any further directions issued by the ACT Government be clearer about what aspects of a venue fall within the floor space that determines how many patrons can be in a space in a venue.

Recommendation Number	Recommendation
6	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider whether guidelines for venues are better contained within directions/determinations rather than existing separately.
7	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish the AHPPC advice that states that gaming venues should not open until stage 3.
8	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide some concession, such as rent relief for ACT Government premises, to the organisers of Live in Ya Lounge.
9	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government create a library of arts equipment for use by the arts sector.
10	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government create guidelines for managers and staff regarding working from home arrangements and transitional arrangements for return to office-based work.
11	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make it a priority to publish an action plan to support the ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy, as required by that strategy, and that that plan include: ▪ specific information for people with disabilities, families, carers and support workers so that people with disabilities can participate in society in accordance with social distancing rules; ▪ clear information to people with a disability and their carers about what the process is to access and acquire PPE; ▪ provision for an ACT COVID-19 Disability Hotline; and ▪ a way to operationalize the Territory role in the Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability.
12	The Committee recommends that the ACT government establish a small fund to be administered by CarersACT to provide effective respite for carers aimed at rebuilding their capacity following this extended period of stress.
13	The Committee recommends that the ACT government make representations to the Commonwealth supporting the conversion of NDIS advance payments for COVID-19 related expenses into a grant.

Recommendation Number	Recommendation
14	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government revise its clinical guidelines in order to reassure people with a disability that they will continue to have access to health care, including emergency and critical health care, on the basis of equality with others and based on objective and non-discriminatory clinical criteria.
15	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that any ethical decision-making framework is designed with close consultation and active involvement of people with a disability and their representative organisations.
16	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider and act on the recommendations in the letter from Legal Aid appended to this report.
17	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to lower and/or remove stamp duty where possible as a lever to encourage housing sales.
18	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to review how to make the DA process more efficient, without compromising planning outcomes.
19	The Committee recommends that the Minister for Planning and Land Management publish the number of lease variations issued in 2019-20 broken down by month and the value of revenue and waivers for these variations.
20	The Committee recommends that the Suburban Land Agency publish a list of all available residential blocks that would be suitable for purchase under the HomeBuilder program.
21	The Committee recommends that, given that the ACT Budget was delayed and there has not been a financial update since the March Quarter 2020 Consolidated Financial Report, the ACT Government publish the actual financial reports or estimated outcomes for the 2019-20 year in July.

APPENDIX E – RESOLUTION OF APPOINTMENT

On 2 April 2020 the ACT Legislative Assembly resolved that:

(1) select committee be appointed to consider and report to the Assembly on any matter relating to the ACT Government's health and financial response and any other matter relating to the COVID-19 Pandemic as it relates to the ACT;

(2) the Committee be composed of:

(a) two Members to be nominated by the Government;

(b) two Members to be nominated by the Opposition; and

(c) one Member to be nominated by the Greens;

to be notified in writing to the Speaker within two hours of this motion passing;

(3) an Opposition Member shall be elected chair of the Committee by the Committee;

(4) in conducting public hearings, the Committee shall be mindful of the Public Health Emergency declaration, including that:

(a) all efforts are made to minimise the time witnesses are required to be present by scheduling designated hearing times, advising in advance which witnesses the Committee wishes to call or topics that will be discussed, and other measures that minimise impact on essential government, business or organisational resources;

(b) where a public hearing is scheduled requiring Government ministers and/or officials:

(i) these are to be held no more than once per fortnight for a maximum of two hours, with no directorate to appear for more than an hour;

(ii)the Committee must advise of the directorates and officers required and the Committee's intended lines of inquiry no less than one week prior; and

(iii) hearings are not held at the same time as National Cabinet or a meeting of the ACT Government Cabinet;

(c) hearings are held virtually or via teleconference only; and

(d) the above provisions only apply during the Public Health Emergency declaration; and

(5) for the purposes of this Committee's operation, standing order 254D does not apply.

On 7 May 2020—at its meeting, the Assembly agreed the resolution be amended by omitting "paragraph (4)(b)(i)" and substituting by the following:

"(4)(b)(i) these are to be held no more than once a week for a maximum of two hours, with a minister or directorate to appear no more than once per fortnight for a maximum of one hour;"

On 18 June 2020—at its meeting, the Assembly agreed the resolution be amended by adding the following paragraph:

"(6) the Committee deliver its final report no later than 27 August 2020.".

On 27 August 2020—at its meeting, the Assembly agreed the resolution be amended.