



ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Report No. 5 of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts - Inquiry into the Auditor- General's Report No. 5 of 2021: Management of Closed-Circuit Television Systems – Government Response

Presented by

Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Transport and City Services

INTRODUCTION

The ACT Government welcomes the Standing Committee's report No 5/2021 *Inquiry into the Auditor-General's Report No. 5 of 2021: Management of Closed-Circuit Television Systems* (the Report), which was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 8 February 2022.

In 2020, the Auditor-General commenced a performance audit which considered the effectiveness of the management of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) systems within the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) Public Safety CCTV network and by the Transport Canberra and City Services directorate (TCCS). The ACT Government agreed to five of the six recommendations and agreed in principle to one recommendation.

On 6 October 2021, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Standing Committee) resolved to inquire into the *Auditor-General Report, Management of Closed-Circuit Television Systems, Report No.5/2021* (the Audit Report). The ACT Government is pleased to have supported the Standing Committee inquiry through hearings conducted on 12 August 2021.

The Standing Committee inquiry to further examine the Audit Report concluded that:

- The Committee is of the view that the *Auditor-General's Report No. 5 of 2021: Management of Closed-Circuit Television Systems* has found deficiencies in the management of CCTV systems by the ACT Government. The Committee considers the audit to have been an important and worthwhile exercise which can serve as a basis for the ACT Government's proposed policy reforms. The Committee endorses the Auditor-General's recommendations.
- The Audit Report identified areas for improvement at an administrative level, to ensure that CCTV systems management complies with the relevant legislation and standards of best practice. Secondly, the Audit Report highlighted opportunities for trials and research which will allow for the implementation and operation of CCTV systems to be based on a more thorough understanding of their merits and effectiveness into the future.

The ACT Government welcomes the recommendations in the Report and agrees with three of the four recommendations, with one recommendation partially agreed.

OVERARCHING ACT GOVERNMENT COMMENTS

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring that the forthcoming CCTV Policy is subject to rigorous consultation across government and with key stakeholders, such as the Human Rights Commission, prior to being introduced. Whole of government consultation is underway and the CCTV Policy is due to be finalised by mid-2022.

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring that CCTV systems are operated with proper consideration of privacy and human rights through public privacy statements on the use, operation and disclosure of CCTV footage. The ACT Government will continue to implement measures to ensure that its use of CCTV is transparent and accountable.

The ACT Government uses CCTV to support public safety, asset security and business monitoring functions. CCTV plays an important role in supporting ACT Policing to deter and investigate crime and bring offenders to justice. CCTV is also used by the ACT Government to monitor its operations and protect its assets, as well as to support the safe delivery of major public events. The ACT Government continues to invest in CCTV technology to make Canberra a safer place and to support bringing those responsible for crime to justice.

In 2020, the ACT Government launched the *Strategic Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Plan 2020-2022* (the Plan). The Plan identified four priority areas and 18 strategic activities to support good governance in the operations of CCTV networks. Strong progress is being made against the activities listed in the Plan including:

- Annual reporting on the Public Safety CCTV Network published on the JACS website.
- Enhancing efficiency in the collection and storage of CCTV information using centralised CCTV networked video recorders.
- Hardware and software enhancements.
- Trialing the use of portable trailer-mounted CCTV capability to support event safety and management.

Together with the recommendations in the Audit Report, the findings and recommendations of the Report will be used to support the ACT Government in the ongoing management of CCTV systems in a robust, transparent, effective and efficient manner.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that, in relation to the CCTV policy proposed for 2021-2023, the ACT Government –

- a) If the proposed policy has come into effect – provide the date the policy came into effect to the Committee; or
- b) If the policy has not come into effect – set a date to finalise and bring the policy into effect so that the task may be done as a matter of priority.

Government position

Agreed

The proposed CCTV Policy has not yet come into effect. The policy is anticipated to be released in mid-2022.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that, in relation to the CCTV policy proposed for 2021-2023, the ACT Government –

- a) If it has consulted with the ACT Human Rights Commission on the policy – provide a copy of the Commission’s response to the Committee; or
- b) If it has not consulted with the ACT Human Rights Commission on the policy – consult with the Commission to ensure the policy is consistent with individual’s rights and to freedom of movement.

Government position

Agreed and completed

On 1 September 2021, the ACT Human Rights Commission provided written feedback on a draft of the CCTV Policy. This feedback has been considered and incorporated into the forthcoming CCTV Policy. The relevant correspondence is provided at [Attachment A](#).

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends the ACT Government ensure that the proposed new CCTV policy require all existing and future CCTV installations be justified and supported by a cost-benefit analysis including maintenance and whole of life costs.

Government position

Agreed in principle

The ACT Government agrees that new CCTV installations should require a cost-benefit analysis
The forthcoming CCTV Policy sets out that all new CCTV installations should include a cost-benefit analysis as part of a rigorous project proposal.

The ACT Government will conduct a cost-benefit analysis on the Public Safety CCTV Network
The ACT Government’s *Strategic Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Plan 2020-2022* included a commitment to undertake a cost-benefit assessment of the Public Safety CCTV Network. This work will commence in 2022.

The ACT Government does not agree to conduct a cost-benefit analysis on other existing CCTV installations

The implications and resources required to conduct a cost-benefit analysis on other existing CCTV installations would be prohibitive and would place significant pressure on operational areas. However, JACS and TCCS have agreed in response to the Audit Report to conduct an annual review of CCTV systems that includes the ongoing benefit of operating the system against the costs of ongoing maintenance.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government collect data on criminal offences and other public safety incidents in Glebe Park after the installation of the cameras, and report on the effectiveness of the CCTV system in increasing public safety in the park.

Government position

Agreed

JACS will work with ACT Policing to collect, analyse and compare relevant crime data from Glebe Park prior to and after the installation of cameras for the Public Safety CCTV Network.

This data will be reported in the next JACS Public Safety CCTV Network Annual Report which is published at justice.act.gov.au.



ACT
Government

Justice and Community Safety Directorate
Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

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