



**Legislative Assembly for the  
Australian Capital Territory**

Standing Committee on Education and  
Community Inclusion

# **Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022**

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory  
Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

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Approved for publication

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Report 8  
10th Assembly  
April 2023



# About the committee

## Establishing resolution

The Assembly established the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion on 2 December 2020. The Committee is responsible for the following areas:

- Early Childhood Development
- Education
- Youth Affairs
- Skills
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
- Multicultural Affairs
- Disability
- Women (including the Office for Women)
- Seniors
- Veterans
- LGBTIQ+
- Sport and Recreation

You can read the full establishing resolution on the Assembly's website:

[Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021–2022 - ACT Legislative Assembly](#)

## Committee members

Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Chair)

Mr Johnathan Davis MLA (Deputy Chair)

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

## Secretariat

Dr Adele Chynoweth OAM, Committee Secretary

Ms Sophie Milne, Assistant Secretary (until 18 November 2022)

Mr Dikshes Patel, Administrative Assistant

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## About this inquiry

Pursuant to clause (3), the Resolution of Establishment for general-purpose standing committees of the 10th Assembly—the terms of reference for the Committee’s inquiry into referred Annual and Financial Reports 2021–2022 are as follows:

"(3) calendar and financial year annual and financial reports stand referred to the relevant standing committee for inquiry and report by 9 April of the year after the presentation of the report to the Assembly pursuant to the Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004; (amended 11 February 2021)".

Annual and Financial reports 2021–2022 of ACT Government agencies and entities can be accessed at: [Annual Reports - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate \(act.gov.au\)](https://act.gov.au/annual-reports)

# Acronyms

Acronym	Long form
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACTCOSS	ACT Council of Social Services Inc.
AFCP	Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-24
Auslan	Australian Sign Language
CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CAYPELS	Children and Young People Equipment Loan Scheme
CIT	Canberra Institute of Technology
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
CSD	Community Services Directorate
EPIC	Exhibition Park in Canberra
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MPC	Major Projects Canberra
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NGO	Non-government organisations/non-profit organisations
RTO	registered training organisation

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# Recommendations

## Recommendation 1

That the ACT Government ensure that programs designed for delivery at Child and Family Centres are consistently and equally available at all Centre locations.

## Recommendation 2

That the ACT Government provide public updates on the free-meal program in schools.

## Recommendation 3

That the ACT Government continue to invest in government schools.

## Recommendation 4

That the ACT Government support the professional development of educators.

## Recommendation 5

That the ACT Government, as a matter of priority, assist in the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing organisation.

## Recommendation 6

That the ACT Government continue to provide updates on its annual National Multicultural Festival.

## Recommendation 7

That the ACT Government continue to progress its work towards 'advanced' Welcoming City accreditation.

## Recommendation 8

That the ACT Government institute War Widows Day.

## Recommendation 9

That the ACT Government update the Assembly on progress with the action from the Age-Friendly City Plan of piloting a targeted campaign of local businesses to provide employment opportunities for older Canberrans.

## Recommendation 10

That the ACT Government update the Assembly on progress in reviewing the Seniors Card Program.

## Recommendation 11

That the Minister for Seniors and Veterans liaise with the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and advise the Assembly whether the Flexible Bus Service will remain free.

## Recommendation 12



That the ACT Government reintroduce certified Auslan courses through the Canberra Institute of Technology.

### **Recommendation 13**

That Skills Canberra include on the ACT Skills Need List:

- all certificate levels of Auslan
- Diploma of Interpreting (Auslan).



# 1. Introduction

## Presentation of Annual and Financial Reports 2021–2022

- 1.1. The *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004* (Annual Reports Act) provides that annual reports must be prepared by Directors-General, public sector bodies, territory entities and others. Annual reports must cover the operations of the relevant entity over the reporting year.<sup>1</sup> The Chief Minister must make directions setting the form and content of annual reports. The direction applicable to annual reports for the 2022 calendar year and 2021–22 financial year is the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Directions 2022*.
- 1.2. The Annual Reports Act requires the responsible Minister to present an annual report to the Assembly within 15 weeks after the end of the reporting year. Annual and financial reports for public entities were tabled in the Assembly between 12 October 2022<sup>2</sup> and 20 October 2022.<sup>3</sup> A collated list of annual and financial reports is available online.<sup>4</sup>
- 1.3. During its inquiry the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion (the Committee) examined all or part of the following annual and financial reports:
  - *Education Directorate Annual Report 2021–2022*.<sup>5</sup>
  - *Community Services Directorate Annual Report 2021–2022*.<sup>6</sup>
  - *Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate Annual Report 2021–2022*.<sup>7</sup>
- 1.4. In addition, the Committee also resolved to request the attendance of representatives from the Canberra Institute of Technology, which also published an annual report.

## Conduct of the inquiry

- 1.5. The Committee held public hearings on 31 October 2022 and 2, 3, 4, and 7 November 2022. At the hearings, the Committee heard from ACT Government Ministers, as well as officials and representatives of the public sector bodies set out in the table below.

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<sup>1</sup> A reporting year means a financial year or, if a period is stated in a diction under section 8 of the Annual Reports Act, the stated period.

<sup>2</sup> ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings*, No 61, 12 October 2022, p 839.

<sup>3</sup> ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings*, No 65, 20 October 2022, p 875.

<sup>4</sup> ACT Government, Chief Minister, Treasury, and Economic Development Directorate, *Annual Reports*, [https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open\\_government/report/annual-reports](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/report/annual-reports).

<sup>5</sup> ACT Government, Education Directorate, *Annual Report 2021–2022*, [https://www.education.act.gov.au/about-us/policies-and-publications/publications\\_a-z/annual-report](https://www.education.act.gov.au/about-us/policies-and-publications/publications_a-z/annual-report).

<sup>6</sup> ACT Government, Community Services Directorate, *Annual Report 2020–2021*, [Home - Community Services | Annual Report 2021-22 \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/home-community-services-annual-report-2021-22).

<sup>7</sup> ACT Government, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, *Annual Report 2021–2022*, <https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/functions/publications>.

Entity	Portfolio responsibility
<b>Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.</b>	ACT Government's central agency. Responsible for provision of strategic advice and support to the Chief Minister, the Directorate's Ministers and the Cabinet on policy, economic and financial matters, service delivery, whole of government issues and intergovernmental relations.
<b>Community Services Directorate</b>	Responsible for a wide range of human services functions in the ACT, including multicultural and community affairs; children and child development; youth and family support services and policy; therapy services; disability policy and services; homelessness; and community services.
<b>Education Directorate</b>	Responsible for the delivery of early childhood education and public primary, high school, and college education in the ACT. Contributes to the maintenance of standards in non-government schools and home education via accreditation and certification of senior secondary courses.
<b>Major Projects Canberra</b>	Responsible for managing all aspects of major projects invested in by the ACT Government. Established on 1 July 2019 to lead the procurement and delivery of the Territory's infrastructure program.
<b>Canberra Institute of Technology</b>	Largest publicly funded registered training organisation (RTO) in the ACT. Responsible for the delivery of vocational education and training (VET).

- 1.6. Witness who appeared at the hearings are listed in Appendix A. Transcripts and footage from the hearings are available on the Legislative Assembly website.

## Questions on notice and questions taken on notice

- 1.7. A total of 41 questions were lodged during the inquiry, as follows:
- 20 questions were taken on notice by Ministers and statutory office holders during the hearings. Some of these were later determined to have been answered during the relevant hearing.
  - 21 questions on notice were submitted by members of the Committee and visiting Members of the Assembly following the hearings.
- 1.8. A list of questions (including the date the question was asked, the intended recipient, and the subject of the question) is set out in Appendix B. Also included is the date on which a response was received. Where a response date is not listed, this indicates that a response was not received by the time this report was presented to the Assembly.

- 1.9. Responses to questions on notice and questions taken on notice are also available on the Committee's website.

## Acknowledgements

- 1.10. The Committee thanks everyone who participated in, or otherwise assisted, this inquiry. This includes the ACT Government Ministers, Directorate officials, and statutory officers. The Committee extends a special thanks to the Hansard and Broadcasting staff of the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

## 2. Education Directorate

### Matters considered

- 2.1. Ms Yvette Berry MLA appeared before the Committee in her capacity as Minister for Early Childhood Development and Minister for Education and Youth Affairs on Monday 31 October 2022. The following matters were considered:
- a) *Set up for Success*: an early Childhood Strategy for the ACT<sup>8</sup>
  - b) the recruitment and retention of early educators in the ACT<sup>9</sup>
  - c) the Child and Youth Reporting and Information System (CYRIS)<sup>10</sup>
  - d) the Children and Young People Equipment Scheme (CAYPELS)<sup>11</sup>
  - e) the Child Development Service<sup>12</sup>
  - f) Child and Family Centres<sup>13</sup>
  - g) the Circle of Security program<sup>14</sup>
  - h) enrolments at Tharwa pre-school<sup>15</sup>
  - i) progress of the building of new schools<sup>16</sup>
  - j) cost benefit analysis of maintaining old schools verses demolition and re-build<sup>17</sup>
  - k) Safe@School Task Force<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 1–7.

<sup>9</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp. 4–9.

<sup>10</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 12.

<sup>11</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 15–16; ACT Government, 'Equipment Loan Scheme', 9 July 2020, *Community Services*, [https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/childdevelopmentsservice/Children\\_and\\_Young\\_Peoples\\_Equipment\\_Loan\\_Service\\_CAYPELS](https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/childdevelopmentsservice/Children_and_Young_Peoples_Equipment_Loan_Service_CAYPELS).

<sup>12</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 12–13.

<sup>13</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 12–18.

<sup>14</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 18.

<sup>15</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 19.

<sup>16</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 20–25.

<sup>17</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 25–27.

<sup>18</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 28–31.

- l) permission for school students to attend organised, peaceful protests<sup>19</sup>
- m) analysis of educational outcomes<sup>20</sup>
- n) encouraging students to participate in vocational education and trades<sup>21</sup>
- o) high workload demands on teachers<sup>22</sup>
- p) Education Amendment Bill<sup>23</sup>
- q) Teacher Shortage Taskforce<sup>24</sup>
- r) Youth Advisory Council.

## Key issues

### Set Up for Success

- 2.2. Set up for Success is a program which targets vulnerable or disadvantaged three-year-old children. 569 children have been referred to the program.<sup>25</sup>
- 2.3. The program also focuses on educators in the sector and provides training in trauma-responsive theory and practice.<sup>26</sup>
- 2.4. The Set up for Success program also comprises coaching and mentoring for the early childhood workforce.

### Early Childhood Workforce

- 2.5. The Committee expressed concern at the exodus of early childhood educators, evident in analysis undertaken by the United Workers Union.<sup>27</sup>
- 2.6. The Minister explained that the Directorate supports the recruitment and retention of early educators in the ACT through its liaison with the University of Canberra. This work involves the creation of opportunities for those who work in early childhood: education and upskilling, so that members of this workforce are recognised as professionals. There is a scholarship program (\$25,000 per applicant) to enable these educators to complete their early childhood teaching degree.<sup>28</sup>

### Child Development Service

- 2.7. The Child Development Service offers assessment, referral information and linkages for children up to the age of six years in relation to developmental concerns. Families can

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<sup>19</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 32–34.

<sup>20</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 34–41.

<sup>21</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 41–44.

<sup>22</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 44–46.

<sup>23</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 47.

<sup>24</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 47–51.

<sup>25</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 4–9.

<sup>28</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 4.

contact the Service directly or attend one of the drop-in clinics for speech pathology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.<sup>29</sup>

- 2.8. The Committee heard about the Child and Youth Reporting and Information System (CYRIS) which is a dataset established throughout the ACT Community Services Directorate's Child Development Service and Child and Family Centres.<sup>30</sup>
- 2.9. CYRIS captures data concerning referrals, for example, when a child is referred to an autism assessment. However, questions were raised concerning the age level cut off for the attainment of this data, which is 12 years old.<sup>31</sup>
- 2.10. The 2012-22 target for hours of service provided to clients by the Child Development Service was 21,125. However, the Committee noted that only 16,944 hours of service was actually provided. Staff from the Community Services Directorate suggested that the service target was not reached as a result of COVID. In addition, staff were provided time to undertake training in a new client management system.<sup>32</sup>

## Child and Family Centres

- 2.11. Child and Family Centres, run by the Community Services Directorate, in Gunghalin, Tuggeranong and West Belconnen, provide support for parents, carers and families for children from -pre-birth to eight years of age.<sup>33</sup>
- 2.12. The Committee asked about the progress of its recommendation in the annual report hearings 2020 -2021, which advocated that the ACT Government review Child and Family Centre satisfaction ratings. Community Services Directorate staff noted that they have 'developed a new set of questions and a rating scale, and we are working to implement that throughout the centres now'.<sup>34</sup>
- 2.13. The Community Services Directorate promotes the services offered by Child and Family Centres through its NGO partners, community events, ACT Education and Health Directorates and through social media as part of Children's Week.
- 2.14. The Committee heard that the Circle of Security program, which enhances attachment between parents and children up to the age of ten years, is 'particularly highly subscribed'.<sup>35</sup>

### Recommendation 1

That the ACT Government ensure that programs designed for delivery at Child and Family Centres are consistently and equally available at all Centre locations.

<sup>29</sup> ACT Government, *Child Development*, <https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/childdevelopmentservice>.

<sup>30</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 12.

<sup>31</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 12.

<sup>32</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 13–14.

<sup>33</sup> ACT Government, 'Child and Family Centres', 3 May 2022, *Community Services*, <https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/children/childandfamilycentres>.

<sup>34</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 14–15.

<sup>35</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 18.

## Free-meal trial

- 2.15. The Committee heard that the implementation of free meals at five targeted schools has been delayed, due to COVID, until 2023.<sup>36</sup>
- 2.16. The provision of free meals will be administered through school canteens and also through out-of-school-hours care services and include breakfast.<sup>37</sup>

### Recommendation 2

That the ACT Government provide public updates on the free-meal program in schools.

## School expansions

- 2.17. The Committee heard that the building of two new schools: Kenny High School and Taylor High School, next to the Margaret Hendry School (primary), has commenced.<sup>38</sup>
- 2.18. The Education Directorate has already started to investigate a site for a new public college for year 11 and 12 students in Gungahlin. Until this new college is built, there are plans to expand the existing Gungahlin College with two transportable buildings and modifications to the and existing structure.<sup>39</sup>
- 2.19. The Committee also heard of the expansion to Charles Conder Primary School and building improvements to the senior campus of Wanniasa School in Tuggeranong.<sup>40</sup>

### Recommendation 3

That the ACT Government continue to invest in government schools.

### Recommendation 4

That the ACT Government support the professional development of educators.

## 3. Community Services Directorate

### Matters considered

- 3.1. Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA appeared before the Committee in her capacity as Minister for Families and Community Services on Wednesday 2 November 2022. The following matters were considered:

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<sup>36</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 31.

<sup>37</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 31–32.

<sup>38</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 20–21.

<sup>39</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, p 22.

<sup>40</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 31 October 2022, pp 24–25.



- a) the ACT Government's support of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations<sup>41</sup>
- b) the expansion of Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation in Wanniasa, ACT<sup>42</sup>
- c) the Healing and Reconciliation Fund<sup>43</sup>
- d) provision of secretariat support for the United Ngunnawal Elders Council from the ACT Government's Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs<sup>44</sup>
- e) the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs' support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart<sup>45</sup>
- f) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on the waiting list for public housing in the ACT<sup>46</sup>
- g) the notion of Aboriginal-controlled community housing organisations<sup>47</sup>
- h) Phase 2 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement, overseen by the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs<sup>48</sup>
- i) the ACT Government genealogy project<sup>49</sup>
- j) the Ngunnawal Language Centre<sup>50</sup>
- k) update of *Our Booris, Our Way*, a review of the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the ACT child protection system<sup>51</sup>
- l) the ACT Government's treaty process with the Ngunnawal people<sup>52</sup>
- m) cultural proficiency training for ACT Government employees<sup>53</sup>
- n) grants overseen by the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.<sup>54</sup>

3.2. Ms Tara Cheyne MLA appeared before the Committee in her capacity as Minister for Multicultural Affairs on Thursday 3 November 2022. The following matters were considered:

- a) ACT government support for evacuees from Afghanistan and Ukraine<sup>55</sup>
- b) 2023 National Multicultural Festival<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 53–54.

<sup>42</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 54–55.

<sup>43</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 55–57; pp 65–66.

<sup>44</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, p 57.

<sup>45</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, p 58.

<sup>46</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 58–60.

<sup>47</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 60–61.

<sup>48</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 61.

<sup>49</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 61–63.

<sup>50</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, p 63.

<sup>51</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, p 64.

<sup>52</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 64–65.

<sup>53</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 67–68.

<sup>54</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, p 68.

<sup>55</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 70–72.

<sup>56</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 72–74.

- c) construction of multicultural events venue at EPIC<sup>57</sup>
  - d) pay gap for CALD employees in the ACT public service<sup>58</sup>
  - e) Canberra as an accredited Welcoming City.<sup>59</sup>
- 3.3. Ms Emma Davidson MLA appeared before the Committee in her capacity as Minister for Disability on Friday 4 November 2022. The following matters were considered:
- a) the ACT Disability Strategy<sup>60</sup>
  - b) the ACT Government's partnership with NDIS<sup>61</sup>
  - c) the ACT Government's CAYPELS program<sup>62</sup>
  - d) Housing ACT's properties and access for people with a disability<sup>63</sup>
  - e) ACT public service employment of people with a disability<sup>64</sup>
  - f) the Disability Justice Strategy and the development of the second action plan<sup>65</sup>
  - g) post-COVID support of immunocompromised people<sup>66</sup>
  - h) the Disability Reference Group<sup>67</sup>
  - i) testing and diagnosis rates for autism in the ACT.<sup>68</sup>
- 3.4. Ms Emma Davidson MLA appeared before the Committee in her capacity as Minister for Veterans and Seniors on Friday 4 November 2022. The following matters were considered:
- a) War Widows Day<sup>69</sup>
  - b) the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide<sup>70</sup>
  - c) Age-Friendly City Plan 2020–24<sup>71</sup> including the Fitness to Drive Medical Clinic<sup>72</sup>
  - d) Ministerial Advisory Council for Veterans and their Families<sup>73</sup>
  - e) a wellbeing centre for veterans<sup>74</sup>

<sup>57</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 74–75.

<sup>58</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 75–77.

<sup>59</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 77–78.

<sup>60</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 79–87.

<sup>61</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 79–86.

<sup>62</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, p 84.

<sup>63</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 87–88.

<sup>64</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 88–90.

<sup>65</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 90–91.

<sup>66</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 91–93.

<sup>67</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 93–94.

<sup>68</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, p 94.

<sup>69</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, p 95.

<sup>70</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 95–97.

<sup>71</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 97–99.

<sup>72</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 98–99.

<sup>73</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 99–100.

<sup>74</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 100–102.

- f) review of the ACT Seniors Card program<sup>75</sup>
  - g) the Age-Friendly Suburbs Program<sup>76</sup>
  - h) people under the age of 65 who have a NDIS plan and are living in residential aged care<sup>77</sup>
  - i) helping Canberra to become a dementia-friendly city.<sup>78</sup>
- 3.5. Ms Yvette Berry MLA appeared before the Committee in her capacity as Minister for Women on Friday 4 November 2022. The following matters were considered:
- a) Update on the ACT Women's Plan 2016–26<sup>79</sup>
  - b) ACT Women's Safety Grants.<sup>80</sup>

## Key issues

### Housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- 3.6. The Committee heard that the ACT Government is examining 'the role of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in the community housing sector' as part of its contribution to the Closing the Gap agenda.<sup>81</sup>
- 3.7. The Committee, in noting 363 households on the waiting list for public housing, in which at least one household member identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, asked about the relationship between the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Housing ACT.<sup>82</sup>
- 3.8. The response to the above concerned the restructuring of the Community Services Directorate in order to place the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs within the strategic policy division, thus connecting a range of programs. The Directorate is focussed on opportunities for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to become community housing providers.<sup>83</sup> Accordingly, Local Aboriginal Corporation, Yedding Mura, has established a partnership with Community Housing Canberra.<sup>84</sup>
- 3.9. The Committee noted that the ACT did have an Aboriginal-controlled community housing organisation and asked what the ACT Government had done to acquire its housing stock and the number of properties that are needed for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The ACT Government is currently involved in discussions about this.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 102–103.

<sup>76</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 104–105.

<sup>77</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 106–107.

<sup>78</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 107–109.

<sup>79</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 110–114.

<sup>80</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 114–116.

<sup>81</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 53–54.

<sup>82</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, p 58.

<sup>83</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, p 59.

<sup>84</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, p 60.

<sup>85</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, p 61.

- 3.10. The Committee draws attention to the relevant findings of its 2021 inquiry into racial vilification:
- a) In 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represented 17 per cent of specialist homeless service clients.
  - b) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples report bias from public housing staff.<sup>86</sup>
- 3.11. The Committee also emphasises, evidence from its inquiry that demonstrates community support for a targeted Indigenous housing strategy:

This could result from liaison with existing Aboriginal-led organisations with the aim of seeking an expansion of their remit to include housing provision and/or whether a proportion of public housing stock could be transferred to a community-led organisation.<sup>87</sup>

### **Recommendation 5**

That the ACT Government, as a matter of priority, assist in the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing organisation.

## **2023 National Multicultural Festival**

- 3.12. The 2023 National Multicultural Festival will return 17-19 February 2023, having been postponed for two years due to the pandemic. The Festival will expand from Civic into Glebe Park.<sup>88</sup>
- 3.13. The Committee learned that the National Multicultural Festival Grants Program has doubled to \$180,000.
- 3.14. A Community Panel Reference Group has been established in order to ensure that the Festival is community-led. The City Renewal Authority has been working in partnership with the Festival.<sup>89</sup>

### **Recommendation 6**

That the ACT Government continue to provide updates on its annual National Multicultural Festival.

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<sup>86</sup> ACT Legislative Assembly: Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion, *Report of the Inquiry into Racial Vilification* (2022), p 11.

<sup>87</sup> ACT Legislative Assembly: Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion, *Report of the Inquiry into Racial Vilification* (2022), p 11.

<sup>88</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, p 72.

<sup>89</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, pp 73–74.

## Canberra as an accredited Welcoming City

- 3.15. The Committee notes that in November 2021, Canberra attained accreditation, in the ‘established’ category, as a Welcoming City.<sup>90</sup>
- 3.16. The ACT Government is currently completing, through an intergovernmental steering group, its assessment for the advanced level of accreditation for the categories of leadership, social and cultural inclusion and economic development.<sup>91</sup>

### Recommendation 7

That the ACT Government continue to progress its work towards ‘advanced’ Welcoming City accreditation.

## War Widows Day

- 3.17. The Committee noted that Queensland held their first War Widows Day on 19 October 2022. This is the birthday of Mrs Jessie Vasey who lost her husband Major-General George Vasey four months before the end of the Second World War.<sup>92</sup>
- 3.18. The NSW Government has designated 19 October as ‘War Widows Day’ to recognise war widows and widowers of members of the Australian Defence Force. On this day, war widows and widowers can attend a service at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park and be involved in other activities.<sup>93</sup>
- 3.19. The Minister for Veterans and Seniors, Ms Emma Davidson, told the Committee that she has written to war widows in the ACT to advise that she would be discussing the matter with her cabinet colleagues with a view to supporting the event in the ACT.<sup>94</sup>

### Recommendation 8

That the ACT Government institute War Widows Day.

## Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-24

- 3.20. At the time of the Community Services Directorate Annual Report 2021-22, the Age-Friendly City Plan 2020-24 (AFCP) had 33 actions. Their status was:
- 11 complete;
  - 19 in progress;

<sup>90</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, p 72.

<sup>91</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, p 72.

<sup>92</sup> Australian War Widows, Queensland, Media Release [Media Release - Australian War Widows QLD](#) (accessed 23 March 2023).

<sup>93</sup> NSW Government, Veteran’s Affairs, *War Widows Day* [War Widows Day · Office for Veterans Affairs \(nsw.gov.au\)](#) (accessed 23 March 2023).

<sup>94</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, p 95.

- two on hold; and
  - one not yet commenced.<sup>95</sup>
- 3.21. The actions include piloting a targeted campaign of local businesses to provide employment opportunities for older Canberrans. The pilot was on hold due to the ACT Government's prioritisation on supporting local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>96</sup>
- 3.22. The Committee heard that the Government was still planning to continue this action.<sup>97</sup>

### Recommendation 9

That the ACT Government update the Assembly on progress with the action from the Age-Friendly City Plan of piloting a targeted campaign of local businesses to provide employment opportunities for older Canberrans.

## ACT Seniors Card Program

- 3.23. The Committee heard that the ACT Government review of the ACT Seniors Card Program has been delayed slightly. The review was expected to be complete in March 2023.<sup>98</sup>
- 3.24. Permanent residents of Australia residing in the ACT aged 60 years or over who work fewer than 20 hours per week in paid employment can currently apply for an ACT Seniors Card. The review of the Seniors card was to occur between October 2022 and March 2023, including consultation with card holders, non-government organisations, businesses, and the Canberra community. A YourSay Conversations survey was open from 14 November 2022 to 6 February 2023.<sup>99</sup>

### Recommendation 10

That the ACT Government update the Assembly on progress in reviewing the Seniors Card Program.

## Flexible Bus Service

- 3.25. The Flexible Bus Service is available for eligible Canberra residents needing to travel between their home and local community locations such as hospitals, shopping centres, and medical centres. It uses wheelchair accessible minibuses. Eligibility is assessed on a case-by-case basis, with consideration for people:

<sup>95</sup> ACT Government, *Community Services Directorate Annual Report 2021-22*, p 48.

<sup>96</sup> ACT Government, *Age-Friendly City Plan – Status of Actions (Second Progress Report)*, Reporting period January 2021 to December 2021, pp 2–3.

<sup>97</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 3 November 2022, p 97.

<sup>98</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, p 102.

<sup>99</sup> ACT Government, *ACT Senior Card Program* [ACT Senior Card Program - Commissioning](#) (accessed 23 March 2023).

- aged 70 or older;
  - holding a Disability Pension Card having difficulty with mobility;
  - affected by a permanent or temporary disability that prevents them from accessing regular route services;
  - holding a Vision Impaired or Total and Permanently Incapacitated travel pass; and
  - holding a valid carers card.<sup>100</sup>
- 3.26. Holders of dual ACT Senior MyWayCards in the ACT are also able to use their cards to access free off-peak travel on Transport Canberra Services, with seniors aged 70 or over entitled to travel for free.<sup>101</sup>
- 3.27. The Committee considers that the Flexible Bus Service is an initiative that should remain free for those eligible to use it.

### Recommendation 11

That the Minister for Seniors and Veterans liaise with the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and advise the Assembly whether the Flexible Bus Service will remain free.

## 4. Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

### Matters Considered

- 4.1. Ms Yvette Berry MLA in her capacity as Minister for Sport appeared before the Committee on Monday 7 November 2023. The following matters were considered:
- a) new ice sports facility, Tuggeranong.<sup>102</sup>
  - b) new strategic plan for sports and recreation.<sup>103</sup>
  - c) expected duration of Civic pool.<sup>104</sup>
  - d) development plan for Throsby Home of Football.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup> ACT Government, Transport Canberra, *Flexible bus service* [Flexible bus service - Transport Canberra \(act.gov.au\)](https://act.gov.au) (accessed 23 March 2023).

<sup>101</sup> ACT Government, Transport Canberra, *MyWay for seniors*, [Get MyWay - Transport Canberra \(act.gov.au\)](https://act.gov.au) (accessed 23 March 2023).

<sup>102</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 118–121.

<sup>103</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 121–123.

<sup>104</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 123–124.

<sup>105</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2022, pp 124–126.

4.2. Mr Andrew Barr MLA in his capacity as Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism, appeared before the Committee on Monday 7 November 2023. The following matters were considered:

- a) the Capital of Equality grants program<sup>106</sup>
- b) Sydney World Pride 2023<sup>107</sup>
- c) the ACT LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council.<sup>108</sup>

## 5. Skills Directorate

### Matters Considered

5.1. Mr Chris Steel MLA in his capacity as Minister for Skills, appeared before the Committee on Monday 7 November 2023. The following matters were considered:

- a) Development of CIT campus, Woden<sup>109</sup>
- b) CIT Tuggeranong<sup>110</sup>
- c) the number of enrolments in Registered Training Organisations as part of the Australian Government JobTrainer Fund<sup>111</sup>
- d) ACT Skills Needs List<sup>112</sup>
- e) new and emerging course opportunities<sup>113</sup>
- f) Auslan courses at CIT<sup>114</sup>
- g) student and business satisfaction with CIT.<sup>115</sup>

### Key issues

#### Auslan courses at CIT

5.2. The Committee asked if there was an opportunity to reinstate Auslan courses at CIT and learned that CIT would need to liaise with Skills Canberra in order to determine the demand for Auslan in the ACT.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 127–131.

<sup>107</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 131.

<sup>108</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 131–133.

<sup>109</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 134–136.

<sup>110</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 136–137.

<sup>111</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 137–138; pp 142–144.

<sup>112</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 138–139.

<sup>113</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 139–142.

<sup>114</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 144–146.

<sup>115</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 2 November 2022, pp 146–147.

<sup>116</sup> *Committee Hansard*, 7 November 2022, p 145.



- 5.3. The Committee also asked if CIT enacted a community services obligation to ensure its support of equity and inclusion. The Committee heard that CIT engages with a range of community groups.
- 5.4. The Committee asked how community members could approach CIT in order to inform the institutes of its course preferences. The Committee learned that relevant organisations could approach CIT's industry advisory groups. CIT would consider these preferences through consultation with Skills Canberra.
- 5.5. The Committee is concerned about CIT's dominant focus on an industry-centred mode of course decision-making as it may be symptomatic of a lack of understanding and acknowledgment of Auslan as an interpretative medium for all modes of human interaction and not for a specific industry, solely.
- 5.6. The Committee commends, to the ACT Government, its report of the inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan (2023)<sup>117</sup> and the associated evidence which demonstrates compelling evidence of a critical dearth of Auslan interpreters in the ACT.

### **Recommendation 12**

That the ACT Government reintroduce certified Auslan courses through the Canberra Institute of Technology.

### **Recommendation 13**

That Skills Canberra include on the ACT Skills Need List:

- all certificate levels of Auslan
- Diploma of Interpreting (Auslan).

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1. The Committee thanks Members of the Assembly and supporting officials who appeared at public hearings relating to the Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021–2022.

Michael Pettersson MLA  
Chair  
4 April 2023

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<sup>117</sup> Available at: <https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees/committees/eci/inquiry-into-access-to-services-and-information-in-auslan#tab2009657-5id>.



# Appendix A: Witnesses

31 October 2022

## Executive

- **Ms Yvette Berry MLA**, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women

## Education Directorate

- **Ms Katy Haire**, Director-General
- **Ms Jane Simmons**, Deputy Director-General
- **Ms Deb Efthymiades**, Deputy Director-General
- **Mr Ian Turnbull**, Chief Finance Officer
- **Ms Nicole Moore**, Executive Branch Manager, Strategic Policy
- **Ms Kate McMahon**, Executive Group Manager; Safe at Schools
- **Mr Sean Moysey**, Executive Branch Manager, Education and Care Regulation and Support
- **Mr Martin Watson**, Executive Director, Office of Board of Senior Secondary Studies
- **Ms Coralie McAlister**, Chief Executive Officer, ACT Teacher Quality Institute
- **Mr John Nakkan**, Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure and Capital Works
- **Mr Mark Huxley**, Executive Group Manager, School Improvement
- **Ms Kylie Scholten**, Executive Group Manager, Service Design and Delivery

## Community Services Directorate

- **Ms Catherine Rule**, Director-General
- **Ms Jo Wood**, Deputy Director-General
- **Ms Anita Perkins**, Executive Group Manager, Communities Division
- **Ms Christine Murray**, Executive Group Manager; Communities Division
- **Ms Jessica Summerrell**, Executive Branch Manager; Communities Division
- **Ms Jacinta Evans**, Executive Group Manager, Strategic Policy

2 November 2022

## Executive

- **Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA**, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health

## Community Services Directorate

- **Ms Catherine Rule**, Director-General

- **Ms Jo Wood**, Deputy Director-General
- **Ms Jacinta Evans**, Executive Group Manager, Strategic Policy
- **Ms Tamara Graham**, Executive Branch Manager, Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Strategic Policy

## 3 November 2022

### Executive

- **Ms Tara Cheyne MLA**, Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

### Community Services Directorate

- **Ms Catherine Rule**, Director-General
- **Ms Jo Wood**, Deputy Director-General
- **Ms Christine Murray**, Executive Branch Manager, Communities Division
- **Anita Perkins**, Executive Group Manager, Communities Division

## 4 November 2022

### Executive

- **Ms Emma Davison MLA**, Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health
- **Ms Yvette Berry MLA**, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women

### Community Services Directorate

- **Ms Catherine Rule**, Director-General
- **Ms Jo Wood**, Deputy Director-General
- **Ms Christine Murray**, Executive Branch Manager, Women, Youth and Multicultural Affairs
- **Ms Anita Perkins**, Executive Group Manager, Communities Division
- **Ms Ellen Dunne**, Executive Branch Manager, Disability, Seniors and Veterans, Communities Division
- **Ms Sally Gibson**, Executive Branch Manager, Regulation, Assurance and Quality
- **Tracey Harkness**, Senior Practitioner

## Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

- **Dr Damian West**, Deputy Director General & Secure Local Jobs Registrar
- **Janet Wilson**, Executive Branch Manager, ACTPS Centre for Leadership and Innovation

## 7 November 2022

### Executive

- **Mr Andrew Barr MLA**, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism
- **Ms Yvette Berry MLA**, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women
- **Mr Chris Steel MLA**, Minister for Transport and City Services, Minister for Skills, Special Minister of State

## Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

- **Mr Stuart Hocking PSM**, Under Treasurer, Treasury
- **Stephen Miners**, Deputy Under Treasurer, ERIPSS, Treasury
- **Kareena Arthy**, Deputy Director General, Economic Development
- **Michael Young**, Chair - ACT Building Construction Industry Training Fund Authority
- **Glenn Carter**, Chief Executive Officer - ACT Building Construction Industry Training Fund Authority
- **Ms Kate Starick**, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Strategy, Economic Development
- **Mr Graham Tanton**, Executive Group Manager, Property and Shared Services
- **Ms Rebecca Kelley**, Executive Branch Manager, Sport and Recreation
- **Belinda Hedley**, Executive Branch Manager, ACT Property Group, ERIPSS
- **Mr Daniel Bailey**, Executive Group Manager, Operations, Economic Development
- **Mark Harriott**, A/g Executive Branch Manager, Skills Canberra, Economic Development
- **Andre Diez De Aux**, Senior Director, Skills Policy and Strategy, Skills Canberra, Economic Development
- **Ms Leesa Croke**, Deputy Director-General, Policy and Cabinet.
- **Ms Wilhelmina Blount**, Executive Group Manager, Policy and Cabinet
- **Mr Andrew Mehrton**, Executive Branch Manager, Social Policy Branch, Policy and Cabinet

## Canberra Institute of Technology

- **Kate Lundy**, Chair, CIT Board
- **Ms Christine Robertson**, Interim Chief Executive Officer
- **Ms Josephine Andersen**, A/g Executive Director, Industry Engagement and Strategic Relations

- **Meghan Oldfield**, A/g Executive Director, Corporate Services, CIT
- **Craig Jordan**, Senior Financial Advisor, CIT

### Major Projects Canberra

- **Mr Duncan Edghill**, Chief Projects Officer
- **Mr Martin Little**, Deputy Chief Projects Officer
- **Ms Rebecca Power**, Projects Director

## Appendix B: Questions on notice and taken on notice

### Questions on notice

No.	Date	Asked by (MLA)	Asked of (Directorate/ Portfolio)	Subject	Response received
8	03/11/2022	Milligan	Education	Disability Education	07/12/2022
10	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	ACT Youth Week	22/11/2022
11	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Young Canberra Citizen of the Year Awards	18/11/2022
12	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Youth Advisory Council	18/11/2022
13	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Youth Engagement - Future Directions	18/11/2022
14	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Youth InterACT Scholarships	18/11/2022
15	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Autism Assessments	18/11/2022
16	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Child and Family Centre Case Management	18/11/2022
17	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Child and Family Centre Client Surveys	18/11/2022
18	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Child Development Service and Stakeholders	18/11/2022
19	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Childhood Development Service Capacity	18/11/2022
20	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Child Development Service Staffing	18/11/2022
21	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Health Justice Partnership in Child and Family Centres	18/11/2022
22	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Program Stats at Child and Family Centres	18/11/2022
23	03/11/2022	Kikkert	Community Services Directorate	Services at Child Development Service	18/11/2022
37	11/11/2022	Lee	Economic Development	CIT - CEO Leave	12/12/2022
38	08/11/2022	Lee	Economic Development	CIT - CEO Travel	14/12/2022

39	08/11/2022	Lee	Economic Development	CIT - staff surveys	14/12/2022
40	08/11/2022	Milligan	Economic Development	Major Projects Canberra - CIT Woden	11/12/2022
41	08/11/2022	Lee	Economic Development	University of Canberra - contractors	12/12/2022

## Questions taken on notice

No.	Date	Asked by (MLA)	Asked of (Directorate/Portfolio)	Subject	Response received
1	31/10/2022	Davis	Education	Child and family services in Tuggeranong	18/11/2022
2	31/10/2022	Davis	Education	Schools identified for lunch program trial	10/11/2022
3	31/10/2022	Davis	Education	Copy of policy for absent students and how is it communicated to parents	10/11/2022
4	31/10/2022	Hanson	Education	more details of above	10/11/2022
5	02/11/2022	Davis	CSD	Detail on reconciliation day activities	16/11/2022
6	02/11/2022	Lawder	CSD	Cultural competency training	17/11/2022
7	03/11/2022	Cain	CSD	APS, ACPS level for called staff members across CSD	09/11/2022
24	04/11/2022	Milligan	CSD	Funding for to groups for non-NDIS disability services	17/11/2022
25	04/11/2022	Lawder	CSD/Housing	Number of people with a disability on the public housing waitlist	17/11/2022
26	04/11/2022	Milligan	CSD	Levels of public servants with a disability in CSD	13/11/2022
27	04/11/2022	Lawder	CSD	Number of applications for the women's safety grant	15/11/2022
28	07/11/2022	Lawder	Economic Development	CIT students by postcode and their course	16/11/2022
29	07/11/2022	Lawder	Economic Development	Local businesses who have used the CIT space at Tuggeranong	16/11/2022
30	07/11/2022	Milligan	Economic Development	Training places attributed to RTOs or CIT	15/11/2022
31	07/11/2022	Lawder	Economic Development	Recycling courses	15/11/2022



32	07/11/2022	Pettersson	Economic Development	Auslan course demand	16/11/2022
33	07/11/2022	Pettersson	Economic Development	Rationale for CIT's offering of levels of Auslan	15/11/2022
34	07/11/2022	Pettersson	Economic Development	Identification of Auslan interpreter shortage	15/11/2022
35	07/11/2022	Lawder	Economic Development	Five-year trends in CIT satisfaction rates	15/11/2022
36	07/11/2022	Lawder	Economic Development	Attrition rates from Cert III to Cert IV	17/11/2022