



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

### SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

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

### ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

**MS LEANNE CASTLEY MLA:** To ask the Minister for Health

Ref: Health Services Planning and Policy

Hearing Date: 19/07/2023

In relation to: Theatre Utilisation and Clinic Room Availability

- 1) Can the Minister provide the Theatre Utilisation figures for Canberra Hospital in the format that is easily retrievable for each week since January 2023?
  - a. Can the Minister expand on why this information was not provided if it was easily retrievable in hospital huddles?
- 2) Can the Minister explain the types of rooms used in the ACT e.g. Theatres, Clinical rooms etc...
  - a. What types of procedures are performed in each type of room and,
  - b. How many rooms of each type does CHS and North Canberra Hospital and UC Hospital have?
- 3) Why is there no central view of clinic room availability?
  - a. When was this noted as an issue in CHS?
  - b. Has any work commenced to make a central register? If yes, when will this be complete?

**MINISTER STEPHEN-SMITH:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- 1) As outlined in the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-24 hearing of 20 July 2023 this information is not available in an easily retrievable format. While there are operational views of theatre activity, this is not in the form of a data report. In the context of the January 2011 Performance Audit Report from the ACT Auditor-General's Office titled *Waiting Lists for Elective Surgery and Medical Treatment* (the Report) the former Minister for Health provided multiple updates to the ACT Legislative Assembly regarding the improvements that had been made over a number of years to improve elective surgery performance. Further to the updates previously provided the following information may be pertinent:
  - 5.16 – Canberra Hospital has increased emergency theatre capacity on evenings and weekends in order to reduce the impact of emergency surgery on elective lists; and
  - 5.17 – Theatre lists that are vacated due to surgeon non-availability are reallocated either within the specialty, or to accommodate other urgent, emergency or inpatient surgery. Lists are not left unfilled or underutilised.

Mr Dave Pepper, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Canberra Health Services (CHS) spoke in the estimates hearing of 20 July 2023 about the hospital-wide huddle at CHS where activity and any relevant constraints in services are discussed. Mr Pepper advised that it is rare to have a report in huddle that the entire theatre complex is not running first thing in the morning, and that this would usually only be because of unplanned absences. This was used as an example of operational discussions that occur about theatre utilisation which allows CHS to understand theatre availability. Such reports are provided verbally to the daily huddle.

- 2) The types of rooms that are used for clinical purposes in hospitals in the ACT include those described in the Australasian Health Facilities Guidelines (AusHFG). The Standard Components describe types of rooms and their function, and can be accessed at:  
<https://www.healthfacilityguidelines.com.au/standard-components>

a. See above.

b.

|                                             | Canberra Hospital                                            | North Canberra Hospital (NCH) | University of Canberra Hospital |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Operating Theatres                          | 14 (includes ECT theatre which is separate to main theatres) | 7*                            | 0                               |
| Consult Rooms/Clinic Rooms                  | 162                                                          | 18                            | 22                              |
| Procedure Rooms – used for minor procedures | 2                                                            | 2                             | 0                               |
| Endoscopy rooms                             | 3                                                            | 2                             | 0                               |

\*NCH has 7 theatres when all are operational. Remediation work is continuing post fire and therefore not all theatres are currently in use.

- 3) Clinic rooms across CHS are not all managed centrally as they are located variously within different specialty facilities and areas both on and off the hospital campuses. These are managed within the specialty or division as rooms may need specific equipment or set-up to be appropriate for the specialty. On the Canberra Hospital campus, the Central Outpatients department houses outpatient clinics for many specialties and has oversight of all clinic rooms within that location, including current availability.

- a. This was noted as an issue during Operation Reboot (Outpatients) in 2021. The absence of a central view may have been identified in other contexts, but I am not able to say when this was first identified as a potential issue.
- b. This will be considered in the context of work being undertaken as part of the 2023-24 Budget commitment to increase Outpatient Clinic Appointments.

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

Signature:



Date:

15/8/23

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA