



ACT
Government

Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

**Inquiry into the Appropriation Bill
2023-2024 and Appropriation (Office
of the Legislative Assembly) Bill
2023-2024**

Government Response

Andrew Barr

Treasurer

August 2023

Introduction

The 2023-24 Budget was developed with a key focus of improving the personal wellbeing of Canberrans by investing in our public health and school systems, increasing affordable housing options, and supporting local businesses and industry. We bolstered our infrastructure plan with record-level investment as we recognise that to support our growing population, we must build the services required for future generations. We understand that cost of living pressures and high national inflation continues to affect many across the community, and as such, we have implemented local solutions and programs to support those in need.

Following the ACT Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024 – Inquiry into *Appropriation Bill 2023-2024* and *Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2023-2024* held between 17 July and 31 July 2023, the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024 released its [report](#)¹ on 18 August 2023, along with an Additional Comments paper prepared by Jo Clay MLA in her capacity as Deputy Chair of the Select Committee. The Government's consolidated responses to this Committee's recommendations are included below.

The Government wishes to acknowledge the role played by the Select Committee in scrutinising the Budget, and we have endeavoured to respond fully to the questions asked during the process.

The Select Estimates Committee engaged the services of Pegasus Economics in undertaking an independent and detailed study of the Territory's Budget. The Pegasus Report addressed a range of issues relating to technical assumptions of the Budget and its outcomes. On 18 July 2023, the Government provided a [response](#)² to the Chair of the Select Committee addressing the themes of interest raised in that report.

The Government thanks the Select Committee for its report, which has made 123 recommendations on issues that effectively span the full spectrum of government service delivery and financial management. In our response, the Government has:

- agreed to five recommendations;
- agreed in principle to 24 recommendations;
- agreed in part to four recommendations;
- acknowledged that 56 recommendations relate to an existing Government policy;
- noted 33 recommendations; and
- not agreed to one recommendation.

¹ Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024 Report: <https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees/committees/select-committee-on-estimates-2023-2024#tab2223415-6id>

² ACT Government Response to Pegasus Review: https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2256379/Government-Response-to-Pegasus-Review-of-ACT-Budget-2023-24.pdf-combine.pdf

The Government remains committed to being open and transparent in its budget papers and related documentation to ensure that our practices strengthen the integrity and accountability of the management of the Territory's public finances. The Government's full responses to the recommendations of the Select Committee are detailed in the following pages.

Response to Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government in future allow four weeks between the close of hearing dates for Estimates and the date that the Estimates Committee report is due to enable sufficient time for responses to QTONs and QONs to be taken into account.

Government response

Noted.

The establishment and conduct of Estimates Committees is outlined under chapter 20 of the ACT Legislative Assembly's [Standing Orders and Continuing Resolutions of the Assembly](#)³. Reporting arrangements, timeframes and responses are outlined under orders 218 and 254D. Consequently, this a matter for consideration by the Assembly.

Estimates timing is a matter for the Committee. Ministers will endeavour to answer questions quickly. Members can assist by lodging questions early. The Committee may consider reducing the timeframe for lodging questions on notice to allow the Committee more time to consider responses from Ministers.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase its investment in alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment services.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government continues to make significant investments in the alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) treatment sector.

In terms of core funding contracts and direct ATOD services across Government and non-Government services, annual spending has increased from \$20 million in 2018-19 to more than \$26 million in 2023-24 (30 per cent growth).

The 2022-23 Budget included a \$13 million investment in the ATOD sector, including support for methamphetamine treatment and residential rehabilitation services.

³ ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Orders:
https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0006/2160375/Standing-Orders-as-at-1-January-2023.docx

The 2023-24 Budget builds on the significant investments made in last year's Budget and every Budget since 2019-20, including the largest capital investment the ACT Government has made in residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation services.

The Government has allocated \$49 million over the next three years to deliver the Watson Health Precinct project to construct three new purpose-built health facilities:

- the ACT's first dedicated First Nations residential rehabilitation service;
- Ted Noffs AOD residential rehabilitation facility for young people; and
- the CatholicCare mental health residential facility for young people.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government release business cases for all major cycling path and road upgrades and new builds.

Government response

Noted.

Business cases are cabinet documents covered by budget and cabinet-in-confidence rules. The convention of Cabinet confidentiality is essential to enable full and frank discussions and decision making, and to ensure that the best commercial and procurement outcomes are achieved by the Territory.

All investments in roads and cycle paths are considered under the Capital Framework to a level of detail commensurate with the scale and nature of the proposed project.

The Government has historically released business cases for major projects at the appropriate time when it is judged to be in the public interest.

The costs (and in some circumstances, the benefits) associated with each project are commercially sensitive, at least until the project is contracted (or the benefits are realised) and potentially longer. It would only be prudent to consider releasing business cases once the Government is satisfied that the Territory's commercial interests have been protected.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide a mental health clinic for people with an intellectual disability on the southside of Canberra, in addition to the clinic in Gungahlin.

Government response

Noted.

The Government will consider the recommendation in planning for future mental health service delivery across the Territory.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publicly release the findings from the ACT Government Employee Survey (whole of ACT Government) within 3 months of the survey being undertaken.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The biannual staff survey results drive workforce policy initiatives. Relevant initiatives and associated survey results will be described in the State of the Service Report, which is published annually in October.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the National Capital Authority to upgrade City Hill.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government has asked the City Renewal Authority to consider options for a park on City Hill. The Government will work with the National Capital Authority on this project.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide support to the improvement of the Canberra to Sydney rail connection in order to improve services, in addition to increasing their advocacy in representations to the Commonwealth and NSW Governments on the issue.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government continues to work with NSW and Commonwealth governments on exploring opportunities to improve rail services between Canberra and Sydney. The ACT Government has previously contributed \$1 million funding for joint investigations with NSW Government and has most recently held discussions with the newly established Australian Government High Speed Rail Authority on supporting further investigations for the Canberra connection.

The recently announced National Capital Investment Framework provides an opportunity for the ACT to advocate to the Commonwealth and NSW governments for joint investment in business case development to progress improvements to the Canberra to Sydney rail connection.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider an independent review of gender budgeting and wellbeing indicators to determine if these are influencing budget priorities and expenditure in the way in which they were intended.

Government response

Noted.

The ACT is the first jurisdiction in Australia to incorporate a Wellbeing Framework explicitly in decision-making processes, and its application will continue to evolve and strengthen consistent with the broader embedding of the Framework.

The Wellbeing Framework will be continuously reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and identify opportunities for further enhancement. An independent review is not appropriate in relation to matters involving deliberations of the Cabinet and Ministers.

The ACT is contributing to work under the Women's Economic Outcomes workstream of the Council of Federal Financial Relations (CFFR) 2023 reform program, including through a nation-wide mapping exercise of gender responsive budgeting that will measure what has been implemented and is working, and through a report to CFFR in late 2024 on efforts undertaken to strengthen gender responsive budgeting practices.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide an update on the costings and planning of the electrification of ACT Government assets and release it publicly.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

Major Projects Canberra is running a centralised electrification program on behalf of all Directorates. Progress and planning will be reported as part of the Minister's Annual Report under the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2010*. The first stage of cost estimates and expected program of work remains as per the information provided in [QTON No. 155](#)⁴, Estimates 2023. Updates to the forward program of works and cost of this program will be provided as part of the Budget process.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to support the Sustainable Household Scheme.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government has committed \$280 million in loans capital to the Scheme since its inception. On current rates of loans approvals this will enable the scheme to continue through to February 2025. Ongoing support for the Sustainable Household Scheme will be subject to Government decision within the budget context.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government include electric cargo bikes and other zero emissions transport options in the Sustainable Household Scheme.

Government response

Noted.

The inclusion of electric cargo bikes and other zero emissions transport options in the Sustainable Household Scheme will be assessed against the below criteria:

- the proposed product should either reduce emissions, reduce energy costs, increase energy efficiency or achieve a combination of these outcomes;

⁴ QTON 155, Estimates 2023: https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2263925/155-QTON-Answer-MPC-EoGGA-Site-Cost-Estimates-Cain.pdf

- the loan should be able to be repaid through cost savings generated by the proposed product;
- a barrier to broad consumer adoption of the new product should be access to capital;
- increased sales of the proposed product would have economic benefits to the ACT such as supporting job creation; and
- the inclusion of the new product in the scheme does not create a risk to community or employee health and safety.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide a coordinated climate adaptation policy framework for all government agencies managing facilities including sports grounds and schools to ensure that our facilities remain usable as we move into a hotter climate.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

In 2021, the Government undertook an ACT climate change risk assessment to identify key climate risks and opportunities for government. Building on the outputs of this work a whole of government climate adaptation framework was developed and circulated to all directorates to assist in managing and planning for climate-related risks. Given the diversity of activities undertaken by ACT Government, the Framework will be reviewed and adapted over time to ensure it meets the varied needs of ACT Government directorates. Progress in climate adaptation will also be reported on for the first time at the end of this calendar year to Climate Action Subcommittee of Cabinet, ensuring the government has a mechanism to identify climate maturity of Directorates and priorities for adaptation.

To support capital projects, the Government has also developed climate guidance under the capital framework, to support project proponents to consider climate impacts, using the best available science, during the development of business cases.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct qualitative climate impact assessments on all major budget decisions and all major policy decisions, including those decisions that are not delivered by Major Projects Canberra.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

Under the ACT Government's Wellbeing Framework, all budget business cases and significant policy proposals are required to go through a Wellbeing Impact Assessment and this analysis is presented to Cabinet to inform Government decision making. The Environment and Climate domain under the Framework enables a qualitative assessment of climate impacts to be conducted for all relevant proposals.

In addition, the Government is implementing a trial of a Climate Impact Analysis (CIA) of proposed legislation during the remainder of the Tenth Legislative Assembly. The CIA will apply to all government Bills and Private Members Bills (at the discretion of Members), and involves a qualitative self-assessment of whether the proposed Bill will have a material impact on climate change, either positive or negative. The Office for Climate Action is currently developing appropriate guidance material to support consideration of climate impacts for future legislation policy approvals and Private Members Bills.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report which decisions are subject to a climate impact assessment in terms of emissions and adaption.

Government response

Noted.

Public reporting of Cabinet decision summaries and associated wellbeing impacts already occurs through Open Access Decision requirements under Section 23 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*. All decisions of Cabinet or a Cabinet subcommittee are subject to these open access information requirements. The summary of Cabinet decisions and their wellbeing impact assessments can be found here:

https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/inform/cabinet-decisions

Further work is underway across Government on valuing emissions reductions to better inform Government decision making on the impacts of climate action initiatives and other significant proposals. The Office for Climate Action, in partnership with all ACT Government directorates, is leading the development of an ACT Government Emissions Abatement Assessment Framework. The Framework will seek to deliver an emissions calculation tool and the guidance material necessary to support a more consistent, whole of government approach, to assessing the emission abatement potential of climate action initiatives and determining project costs, impacts and benefits.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider establishing an independent Gungahlin Arts.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government's [2023 Infrastructure Plan Update - Entertainment, Arts and Sport](#)⁵ commits to undertaking a needs analysis for arts centres at Gungahlin and Woden to inform future infrastructure development over the next five years. This will include consideration of opportunities to incorporate a dedicated arts space in the planning of the proposed Gungahlin community centre. Establishing an independent Gungahlin Arts will be considered in the context of this work.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to implement the International Engagement Strategy.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Office of International Engagement is charged by the Chief Minister to advocate the ACT's international interests as detailed in the International Engagement Strategy (IES), the ACT's guiding document for overseas economic development activities. The updated edition of the IES was published in December 2022, identifying 14 priority markets and 10 key areas of strength for international engagement. The ACT Government continues to implement the objectives set out in the IES through the Office of International Engagement's Trade and Export and Engagement programs.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to advocate for increased international and domestic flight connections.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

⁵ Infrastructure Plan – Entertainment, Arts and Sport:

https://www.builtforbr.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2245873/ACT-Infrastructure-Plan-Entertainment-Arts-Sports.pdf

The 2023-24 Budget provides \$750,000 to continue the work of supporting existing routes and development of business cases to attract new aviation services under the Aviation Development Fund.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expand the number of public housing dwellings.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government has committed to increasing the number of public housing dwellings. Additionally, Commonwealth Government programs, such as the Social Housing Accelerator, and the National Housing Accord, will further contribute to delivering this ongoing commitment.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to reduce the harms of manufactured stone in the community and consider a ban of manufactured stone.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The ACT Government continues to advocate for strong work health and safety reforms to address the risks of silicosis in the community.

Relevantly, it is noted that Safe Work Australia has been tasked with considering the prohibition on the use of engineered stone (manufactured stone) in Australia. Safe Work Australia is the national policy body for maintaining the nationally agreed model work health and safety laws as adopted in the ACT.

In February 2023, Work Health and Safety Ministers agreed that Safe Work Australia would undertake further analysis and consultation on the impacts of a prohibition on the use of engineered stone under the model Work Health and Safety laws. The outcome of this consultation work is anticipated to be provided to WHS Ministers by the end of 2023 and is expected to establish the agreed national response to the regulation of engineered stone.

The ACT Government will consider the agreed national outcome for implementation by the Territory in line with our obligations under the [Intergovernmental Agreement for Regulatory and Operational Reform in Occupational Health and Safety](#)⁶.

⁶ Intergovernmental Agreement: <https://federation.gov.au/about/agreements/intergovernmental-agreement-regulatory-and-operational-reform-occupational-health>

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expands the CIT Gungahlin footprint, offering more study options/courses to north-side residents in the next CIT Strategic Compass (strategic plan).

Government response

Noted.

The Government is supportive of increasing CIT courses in Gungahlin – subject to future Budget decisions. This will be dependent on market analysis and finding appropriate teaching spaces in Gungahlin for expansion.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expand fee-free TAFE.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

Proposals on the expansion of fee-free TAFE are being developed for consideration in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore further opportunities to reduce out-of-pocket costs experienced by TAFE students.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government is supportive of exploring further opportunities to reduce out-of-pocket costs for TAFE students, including apprentices and trainees including through extensions of the Fee Free TAFE program.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expand the AUSLAN course offering at CIT.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government provides training subsidies for AUSLAN courses for Registered Training Organisations with a Training Initiative Funding Agreement through the Skilled Capital program.

Following release of the report of the Inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan, all AUSLAN qualifications and the Diploma of Interpreting were added to the ACT Skills Needs List.

The Government agrees in principle to explore delivery of AUSLAN courses, noting this is demand-driven and dependent on appropriately qualified teachers. A careful viability assessment will be required when revisiting these options, noting the Government, through Skills Canberra, currently subsidises an Auslan training provider in Sydney.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to support an increase in the number of women in the construction industry including setting a target such as 10 percent for procurement.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government has been consulting with the construction industry on targets as part of the development of a Women in Construction Procurement Policy. The Government has not finalised specific targets at this time noting that women make up 25 per cent of the Australian construction workforce so 10 per cent would therefore be lower than currently employed nationally. The Government has been consulting on a range of more ambitious targets, across apprentices, trades, organisations and management and supervisory roles.

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to set targets for apprentices and women on major projects and publish how this is monitored through the duration of these projects and compliance with these targets.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government will continue to review targets and opportunities to report on progress for apprentices and women in major projects. These form part of Local Industry Participation Plans submitted by suppliers to which they are held accountable under contractual arrangements.

Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that CIT should work with EPSDD to undertake an audit of fossil fuel powered plant and equipment and develop a plan to replace these with zero-emissions alternatives when they reach end of life or by 2045 whichever is sooner.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

An audit of CIT gas assets has already been undertaken as part of the whole of government audit to inform the electrification of Government gas assets program.

Recommendation 27

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government clearly establish in legislation the role of the Government Procurement Board and its role in handling proposals brought forward by proponents.

Government response

Agreed.

The Government will provide a further response to this recommendation as part of its response to the Auditor-General's report.

Recommendation 28

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish a detailed membership list of the Government Procurement Board.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The current membership list of the Government Procurement Board is available on the Procurement ACT [website](#)⁷. The information includes a brief autobiography on each member.

Recommendation 29

The Committee recommends that the contract name is included as a field on the notifiable invoices register, to improve transparency of use of public funds.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

⁷ Procurement ACT – Government procurement board
https://www.procurement.act.gov.au/about/procurement_board

The Procurement Unique Identifier, which was rolled out late in the 2022-23 financial year, is the single reference point to identify a procurement throughout its lifecycle to end of contract. Procurement ACT has updated the Notifiable Contracts Register and the Notifiable Invoices Register to include the Procurement Unique Identifier in the relevant field.

Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends that whole-of-government or major projects should possess a 'single source of truth', accessible publicly and comprised by the most relevant information for disclosure, including all contracts, Procurement Unique Identifier (PUIs), timelines for deliverables and whether it is on schedule.

Government response

Agreed in part.

The Notifiable Contracts Register provides key information on contracts with a total estimated value of \$25,000 or more on the Procurement ACT [website](#)⁸. Further details of Whole of Government arrangements including term, suppliers and, where applicable, timeframes for the refresh of arrangements are also available on the Procurement ACT [website](#)⁹.

It is not administratively practical to provide real time contractual performance information on all major contracts as the project unfolds. Disclosing this information also has the potential to lead to unforeseen consequences such as contractual disputes.

Recommendation 31

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government have a proactive monitoring and auditing process for ensuring that contracts managed by other territory entities are provided and uploaded to the contract register.

Government response

Agreed in part.

In accordance with section 30(1) of the *Government Procurement Act 2001*, the responsible Territory entity for a notifiable contract must, within 21 days after the day the contract is made, enter the material mentioned in section 28 (1) for the contract in the register. On this basis, any

⁸ Procurement ACT – Notifiable Contracts Register

<https://www.procurement.act.gov.au/register/act-government-notifiable-invoices-register#:~:text=The%20Notifiable%20Invoices%20Register%2C%20in%20conjunction%20with%20the,goods%2C%20services%20or%20works%20provided%20to%20the%20Territory>

⁹ Procurement ACT – Whole of government contracts

<https://www.procurement.act.gov.au/supplying-to-act-government/find-opportunities-for-your-business/whole-of-government-contracts>

monitoring and auditing of compliance with this legislative requirement is more appropriate at the Territory entity level. Procurement ACT continues to advise and promote the legislative requirement in addition to providing support for notifying contracts. Guidance is also available through a Factsheet on the Procurement ACT [website](#)¹⁰. Procurement ACT will increase the frequency of its reminders to occur every month.

Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish and track all active supplier panels across ACT Directorates to the Procurement ACT website, including how many suppliers are on each panel, the data of refreshment or renewal of the panels, the purpose of the panel and the directorate it originates from.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Procurement ACT [website](#)¹¹ currently displays information on whole of government arrangements, including panels.

The information displayed includes the title, the description, the term, the suppliers, and if applicable, supplier opportunities, and how to apply. Procurement ACT will refresh this page in late August or early September 2023, and periodically thereafter, as information needs to be updated.

According to the notifiable contracts register, there are over 80 panel arrangements across the Territory, many of which are only used by one Territory entity only. As at August 2023, there are currently a total of 95 panel arrangements on the [Tenders ACT](#)¹² website.

Procurement ACT will work with the relevant territory entity to include the relevant information on the central page above, noting, that many of these will not be accessible to more than one Territory entity.

¹⁰ Procurement ACT – Reporting contracts and invoices:

https://www.procurement.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1686331/Manage-Reporting-contracts-and-invoices.pdf

¹¹ Procurement ACT – Whole of government contracts:

<https://www.procurement.act.gov.au/supplying-to-act-government/find-opportunities-for-your-business/whole-of-government-contracts>

¹² Tenders ACT contracts register:

<https://www.tenders.act.gov.au/contract/search?keywords=&title=&code=&tenderCode=&panelType=1&buyerId=&interjurisdictional=false&externalAgency=&supplierName=&supplierABN=&tenantWide=&procurementMethod=&socialProcurement=&type=&exemption=&exemptionReason=&awardedDateFrom=&awardedDateTo=&expiryDateFrom=&expiryDateTo=&confidentialText=&contractStatus=PUBLISHED&activeCertification=&tenantWide=&page=&preset=&browse=false&desc=true&orderBy=startDate>

Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish local industry participation plans for tenders over \$5 million.

Government response

Agreed in part.

The Government agrees that the relevant parts of the Local Industry Participation Plan (LIPP) that need to be performed under contract should be published as part of publishing the contract on the notifiable contracts register. Under the template modernisation project under the Procurement Reform Program, Procurement ACT will provide clear provisions to include the local industry participation plans in the suite of documents that form the contract.

Contractors will be required to support the monitoring and reporting process by fulfilling their contractual obligations to provide details on the outcomes achieved in the delivery of a contract. Failure of contractors to comply, in part or in whole, with the LIPP and the commitments in their Local IP Plans will be a factor that will be taken into account in the award of future contracts by the Government. Provision of Local IP Plan reports will be a condition for final payment on contracts. Any aspects of the Plan that does not need to be performed under contract form part of the tenderer's solution, and is not appropriate for publishing.

Recommendation 34

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct and table a detailed report of learnings drawn from the HRIMS (Human Resource Information Management System) Program and how these will inform the future development of the HR and payroll IT system.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government has already commissioned and published a review into the HRIMS project conducted by Geoff Leeper which provides learnings for future projects which can be found on the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development [website](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/2244828/Leeper-report-Positioning-for-Success-in-Complex-Implementations-May-2023.pdf)¹³. The report is being used to inform other ICT projects including the upgrade of existing HR and payroll solutions.

¹³ Positioning for Success in Complex Implementations Geoff Leeper report:
https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/2244828/Leeper-report-Positioning-for-Success-in-Complex-Implementations-May-2023.pdf

Recommendation 35

The Committee recommends that ACT Government implement and publish standard operating procedures (SOPs) in relation to data, information or analysis garnered through government marketing, advertising or communications, particularly using digital platforms.

Government response

Noted.

No personally identifiable information is garnered as part of Government advertising activities. Any data collected is aggregated and anonymised to protect the privacy of people. This is in compliance with the *Australian Privacy Act 1988* with a key focus on the protection of individuals and compliance with the law. The anonymised information such as how many people saw the ad, what media platform they saw it on, and what actions they took is used to measure the success of campaigns, track the performance of different ad platforms, and optimise campaigns for better results helping the Government efficiently reach Canberrans. The Government will explore the most appropriate method to ensure that Canberrans are aware of our approach to data collection.

Recommendation 36

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government have one electronic portal, website, or app, for community groups who wish to schedule, book, and pay for ACT Government spaces such as community halls, school facilities and other public venues.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

Bookable Government spaces are managed in a decentralised way, by several government agencies and private sector facility managers operating under contract. Implementing a centralised online booking system for all of these spaces would require a significant diversion of resources and changes to financial and contract arrangements. Given the complexity and high costs involved, our Government is not currently planning to implement a portfolio wide booking platform but will continue to consider the opportunities of improved booking systems.

Recommendation 37

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensures that the Kingston Arts Precinct has a dedicated space for artists in residence.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Kingston Arts Precinct will include ten residential apartments, consisting of 18 bedrooms with a mix of configurations to accommodate families, couples and individual artists, as well as a

communal lounge and kitchen area, for artists in residence. The apartments will be utilised by the founding organisations to develop or grow their existing residency programs.

Recommendation 38

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to investigate the expansion of portable long service leave.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

From early 2025, the Government will expand and extend the portable long service leave schemes to provide coverage for the hairdressing and beauty services industry and the accommodation and food services industry.

The Government is committed to ongoing monitoring and review of the portable schemes legislation, including the consideration of future reform proposals to expand the portable schemes that maximise equity of access to worker entitlements and enhance secure working arrangements for Territory workers.

Exploration of possible future expansions to other occupations/industries would give consideration to the nature and size of the any additional proposed sectors in balance with the administrative costs of the scheme and worker wellbeing.

In this regard, the 2022 proposed expansion consultation [paper](#)¹⁴ identified a number of possible sectors with aligned workforce mobility and industry characteristics including the rental, hiring and real estate services; administrative and support services; and retail trade industries.

Recommendation 39

The Committee recommends the ACT Government include in CMTEDD annual reports all regulation changes achieved because of the Better Regulation Taskforce's findings split into Commonwealth Government led regulation changes and ACT Government led regulation changes.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

¹⁴ Portable Long Service Leave Expansion Consultation Paper – June 2022
https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/2013765/Portable-Long-Service-Leave-Expansion-Consultation-Paper-June-2022.pdf

The Better Regulation Taskforce will continue to report on its activities through the annual report including where regulatory frameworks are changed. This could include changes to legislation, regulation, process and practices as well as actions that improve information available to business.

Recommendation 40

The Committee recommends that the Education Minister update the Assembly quarterly on the current level of FTE teachers available for placement in classrooms across the ACT system.

Government response

Noted.

The Government reports on teacher numbers in ACT public schools at the end of each financial year through ACT Education Directorate Annual Report.

The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs tabled the Education Directorate Teacher and Attraction and Retention Plan 2023-2028 in February 2023, which outlined the number of teachers required to be employed in ACT public schools. In line with recommendation 2 of the Teacher Shortage Taskforce – Final Report, the Education Directorate provides twice yearly progress reports to the Australian Education Union on the number of additional teachers employed against these recruitment targets.

Recommendation 41

The Committee recommends that the Education Directorate publish annually a list of all facilities and maintenance work in ACT schools, including a complete list of the status of each project at the end of each year.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government provides an annual update of facilities and maintenance work completed in ACT public schools at the end of each financial year through the ACT Education Directorate Annual Report.

Recommendation 42

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government urgently address the significant challenge for the community to get ADHD assessments for children and young people, and autism assessments for young people over the age of 12.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government recognises the challenges and barriers that exist for obtaining assessment and diagnosis of ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). As in other jurisdictions, the ACT is experiencing acute workforce shortages across the health system. This includes a shortage of psychiatrists and other specialists required for assessment and diagnosis of ADHD and ASD in both the public and private sectors.

Recommendation 43

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore a best-practice vertical school model for the Molonglo College.

Government response

Noted.

The Government is considering a range of design options for the campus, to consider how the built form could make best use of the site, including maximising amenity and opportunities for the community to access school facilities, as well as timely delivery in response to enrolment demand.

Early design work also includes consideration of the constraints and opportunities of the site as well its urban context. The Government is mindful of community expectations that there be a range of land uses within the Molonglo Group Centre and its immediate surrounds, including access to urban open space and the active and passive recreational opportunities provided by the adjoining Molonglo River Reserve.

Recommendation 44

The Committee recommends that the ACT Education Directorate continue to expand their communications and materials to other languages and assess the efficacy and uptake of programs in CALD (Community and Linguistically Diverse) and ESL (English as a Second Language) communities.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Education Directorate will continue supporting Community and Linguistically Diverse and English as a Second Language families, including by translating targeted communications material based on community need.

Recommendation 45

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the residents of Woden and Molonglo Valley have access in the community (outside of the Canberra Hospital) to the Women's Legal Centre Health Justice Partnership Program.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Health Justice Partnership is available at any of the three Child and Family Centres located in Tuggeranong, Gungahlin, and West Belconnen, as well as the Canberra Hospital.

Recommendation 46

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government accelerate the action plans under the ACT Women's Plan so that they are formalised and made publicly available prior to the years specified for each consecutive plan.

Government response

Noted.

The Government endorses approaches to strategic and action planning that improves effectiveness and relevance within the Government and the ACT community. The Government will test approaches to developing and releasing the next ACT Women's Plan and supporting action plans to release as early as possible, while accommodating the benefit of leveraging the gender policy discussions that take place annually for International Women's Day (March). The Government also notes the importance of being responsive to current needs, events, and priorities.

Recommendation 47

The Committee recommends that the ACT Women's Budget Statement include analysis on how each budget initiative impacts women and girls in the ACT differently.

Government response

Noted.

All budget business cases are required to include a Wellbeing Impact Assessment, which asks drafters to identify if and how the proposal will impact the wellbeing of people from the eight specific groups identified in the ACT Wellbeing Framework, including across gender. Embedding the Wellbeing Framework in the design of policy, decision-making processes and implementation of Government policy ensures that there is a broad perspective and assessment underpinning each stage of the process – this explicitly includes a consideration of the impact of Government proposals through a gendered lens.

The Women's Budget Statement highlights new and continuing budget initiatives that have a significant impact on women and girls, with consideration given to intersectionality and intended/unintended consequences.

The ACT Government will continue its efforts to ensure gender is considered in policy development and budget processes, with ongoing work in this area including the development and promotion of supporting resources for directorates to assist in gender analysis and gender responsive budgeting processes, which is a deliverable under the *Second Action Plan of the ACT Women's Plan 2016-26*.

Recommendation 48

The Committee recommends that the Safer Families Levy be directly spent to offset funding for frontline community services that provide support to people who are at risk or are victims of domestic violence.

Government response

Noted.

The Government notes the majority of the initiatives offset by the Safer Families Levy are frontline services, including innovative pilots and programs. Some of these services are delivered by the non-government sector and others through frontline government services. These initiatives mostly bolster supports to victims of domestic and family violence, although one is also focused on providing a response for men who use violence.

Recommendation 49

The Committee recommends that domestic violence training for ACT public servants be part of government's core funding rather than offset by the Safer Families Levy.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

While domestic violence training for the ACT Public Service was previously funded through the Safer Families Levy, it is now expected that directorates will absorb ongoing training as part of core training requirements.

Recommendation 50

The Committee recommends that Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) should advise people of their review rights when CYPS decides not to appraise their report.

Government response

Noted.

Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) does not inform reporters of any review rights about whether a report is assessed or not at the time an individual makes a report as CYPS is required to assess every Child Concern Report. A reporter does not have rights to seek a review if CYPS does not progress a report to appraisal.

Chapter 25 of the *Children and Young Person Act 2008* classifies reporting and appraisal information as protected information, and prohibits the divulging of this information if it is not in exercise of a function of the Act. As a result, the Director-General cannot inform a reporter whether a report or appraisal has progressed through the intake process, therefore a reporter would be unable to make a complaint or request a review about the Director-General's decision to progress a report to assessment or appraisal.

The Community Services Directorate is undertaking a significant review of legislation, policy and practice that related to the provision of child protection and out of home care Services in the ACT. This includes changes to reporting, intake and assessment processes, as well as refinement of Internal Review of Decisions and introduction of External Merits Review processes. This issue will be considered as part of the broader reform program.

Recommendation 51

The Committee recommends that for child protection reports that are not appraised, CYPS record the types of abuse reported, whether family orders are in place, the reason the report was not appraised and any other key information so the directorate can monitor this to see if there's any pattern in reports lodged but not appraised.

Government response

Noted.

Child and Youth Protection Services is required to record and retain a range of information about child protection concerns related to children and young people. Information is collected at various stages within a family's involvement with CYPS including at initial intake. Initial intake captures details related to the subject child, their family and their concerns and is recorded on the Child and Youth Record Information System (CYRIS). Some assessments are closed at intake and would not provide the amount of detail requested with this recommendation. The intake details and outcomes are then used to support operational assessments of an individual family's needs and there are difficulties in extrapolating this for broader data analysis.

Further information is sourced and captured if an intake meets a threshold for further assessment and a child concern/protection report is generated. This further assessment would potentially capture the information requested through the recommendation however, as in the intake context, these reports are used to detail information relating to individual families and is primarily used by operational areas to support the families they work with. This recommendation will be considered as part of the broader reform program discussed in the response to Recommendation 50.

Recommendation 52

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assist the establishment of an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation to provide housing services.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government has a focus on working in partnership with all current and potential Aboriginal controlled community organisations to design and establish a comprehensive service system across all government programs including housing services.

Recommendation 53

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continues to support the National Multicultural Festival.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government is committed to delivering the annual National Multicultural Festival (NMF) which is Australia's largest celebration of cultural diversity. The Government is investing in the future of the festival by committing \$3.3 million over the next 2 years to deliver a festival with the same footprint as the 2023 NMF.

Recommendation 54

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish an annual report on services and programs that improve the lives of veterans in the ACT. This is in addition to grant program reports.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government reports on services and programs supporting veterans in the ACT each year in the Community Services Directorate's Annual Report.

Recommendation 55

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government immediately update the Legislative Assembly on the findings of the Commonwealth Government's review into compliance of the Ginninderry Joint Venture with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

This matter is currently under consideration by the Commonwealth Government and a response is not anticipated until November 2023. An update to the Assembly will be provided after the Government has received and considered the recommendations.

Recommendation 56

The Committee recommends that the City Renewal Authority (CRA) and the Suburban Land Agency (SLA) publish public reports after the development of sites they sold assessing them against the criteria that were set as part of the sale for increased transparency and scrutiny and ability for the public to see how they outcomes were achieved.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

SLA and CRA will include in annual reporting a summary of sites developed, assessed against appropriate criteria.

Recommendation 57

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish an online map of ACT playgrounds and school-related outdoor facilities for community benefit.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

ACT playground locations are published on the Parks ACT [website](#)¹⁵.

In addition, the location of play spaces is publicly available through the [DataACT Open Data Portal](#)¹⁶. This data is updated regularly to reflect assets within the TCCS Asset Management System.

¹⁵ Parks ACT find a park website:

https://www.parks.act.gov.au/find-a-park?queries_activities_query_posted=1&queries_activities_query=Play%20spaces

¹⁶ DataACT Open Data Portal:

<https://www.data.act.gov.au/dataset/Play-Grounds/qp7m-ztg4>

Recommendation 58

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fast tracks the planning and construction of a new Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre.

Government response

Noted.

While working expeditiously to plan and construct the new Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre, the Government must ensure effective consultation with community and interested stakeholders including the Ngunnawal people and other family groups and individuals, and compliance is maintained within effective project management approaches.

Recommendation 59

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop district strategies for non-urban areas of the ACT.

Government response

Noted.

Other districts may be considered in the future. Planning for non-urban areas will continue through other strategic planning and government policies including the ACT Planning Strategy.

Recommendation 60

The Committee recommends that the Suburban Land Agency should purchase and redevelop more existing urban-zoned land in order to deliver further infill development in line with targets.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The District Strategies indicate where growth could occur in the future. The documents also indicate implementation pathways including through pathway 11, 'Investigate an innovative approach to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment' which includes consideration of interventions such as amalgamation and re-assembly of some sites. This also refers to the need for clear governance and an 'urbanising agent'. This implementation pathway provides for consideration of a role of government in options that could include purchase and redevelopment. EPSDD will lead the implementation of the District Strategies and consideration of the indicative actions and pathways and will work across government (including with SLA where appropriate).

Recommendation 61

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government only count net new dwellings or additional dwellings when counting their 70/30 housing targets and should report on this data for each year since 2017-18.

Government response

Agreed in part.

This response refers to [QTON No. 22](#), Estimates 2023¹⁷.

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) monitors the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [data on Building Approvals](#)¹⁸ by Small Area, which includes data on building approvals (BA) by suburb on both Government released land and privately owned land. The suburb level breakdown is used to identify the percentage of new housing against the 70/30 housing targets, utilising the existing urban footprint as defined within the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018*.

This data provided by the ABS has not regularly provided statistics on demolitions where a single dwelling is replaced with another, nor where a single dwelling is replaced with multiple dwellings.

The Government will, as part of EPSDD's six monthly Land and Property report, look to include demolition numbers measured by development application (DA) for the same period and therefore better represent the net new dwellings count. It is noted however, that demolitions for the same period will not be exactly consistent with the addition of new dwellings due to the lag between a demolition DA and a new development BA.

EPSDD will commence this as part of the next Land and Property report, rather than revise figures for previous reports.

Recommendation 62

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish their methodology for the calculation of what is infill, what is greenfield and what is within Canberra's existing urban footprint for the purpose of Parliamentary and Governing Agreement targets.

Government response

Agreed.

¹⁷ QTON No. 22, Estimates 2023:

https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2259209/022-QTON-Answer-EPSDD-Publication-of-Housing-Development-Data-Clay.pdf

¹⁸ ABS data on building approvals:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/building-and-construction/building-approvals-australia/latest-release>

The [ACT Planning Strategy 2018](#)¹⁹ contains the definitions for the urban footprint, infill and greenfield on pages 107 and 108. The Government will publish the methodology in the Land and Property Report.

Recommendation 63

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government implement reforms to embedded networks in the ACT to protect consumers.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government agrees that consumers in embedded networks should be afforded the same protections as other consumers. The Government is currently considering the recommendations presented in the recent Review of Embedded Networks in the ACT and will provide a response by the end of the year.

Recommendation 64

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide more investment into the expansion of the GonaCon immunocontraceptive vaccine fertility treatment program for kangaroos as a non-lethal replacement of the culling of female kangaroos under the Kangaroo Management Program.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government has committed ongoing funding of over \$420,000 per year to incorporate fertility control into its kangaroo management program.

Treatment of female kangaroos with GonaCon Immunocontraceptive Vaccine has commenced at two sites and planning is underway to start a third site in 2024. Additional sites will be added progressively over future years.

The use of fertility control is expected to reduce the amount of kangaroo culling in ACT's urban nature reserves, but it will not completely replace it. Fertility control is currently not a feasible option in large, connected reserves, so culling will still be necessary in these areas. In addition, a small amount of culling may still be required at fertility control sites in some years to ensure the population remains at a sustainable size.

¹⁹ ACT Planning Strategy 2018: https://www.planning.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1285972/2018-ACT-Planning-Strategy.pdf

Recommendation 65

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure funding is sufficient for environmental protection, biodiversity management, and invasive species management to match demand and pressures imposed by climate change.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government recognises the wide range of threats and pressures on the environment from sources such as invasive plants and animals, human activity and climate change. If not addressed, these threats and pressures could result in biodiversity and environmental declines.

In the 2023-24 Budget, the Government invested \$5.8 million towards protecting, conserving and restoring Canberra's natural environment. This includes funding for a strategic review of the ACT's nature conservation arrangements, additional conservation officers, and rehabilitation of conservation areas.

Recommendation 66

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that investment is sufficient to the Environment Protection Authority and ensure that the penalties contained in various Acts which relate to environmental protection (such as the *Environment Protection Act 1997*, *Nature Conservation Act 2014*, and *Planning Act 2023*) are sufficient in addressing offences.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government is already working to strengthen environmental protections in the ACT, with additional funding for the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) provided through the 2022-23 Budget.

EPSDD and Access Canberra are also working collaboratively to support the development of a Strategic Environment Protection Framework (SEPF), that sets out a range of medium and longer terms objectives to further support this aim. In the 2022-23 Budget, funding was provided to progress the development of a SEPF.

As part of this work, further consideration will be given to ensure that the EPA continues to be appropriately resourced to protect and enhance the quality of the environment in the ACT and prevent risk of harms to human health. This work will include reviewing penalties provided in the *Environment Protection Act 1997* to ensure they continue to meet contemporary community expectations both as a specific and general deterrent.

Recommendation 67

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government re-classify ACT Government documentation to replace the terminology of 'wild dog' with 'dingo' to accurately reflect the genetic make-up of the ACT's population.

Government response

Noted.

It is preferable that research on the ACT's wild dog/dingo population continue before a decision made on changes to naming of wild dogs/dingoes. Changing the name without appropriate consideration and consultation may result in adverse consequences.

With the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* being reviewed in 2023-24, if a name change seemed prudent this would be the opportunity to ensure that management strategies could be aligned with any change.

Recommendation 68

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government urgently increase funding to address wombat mange in the ACT and work with stakeholders to investigate what improvements can be made to the wombat mange project.

Government response

Noted.

The Government continues to support and funding programs that support addressing wombat mange in the ACT.

The Government will continue to collaborate with key stakeholders through the wombat mange management working group. Wombat mange treatment will be undertaken by the government through trials of the remote delivery of Bravecto and continued support of community groups to treat mange using burrow flaps.

The Government will continue the mange monitoring program in collaboration with community groups, to better target mange treatment and to ensure decision making is guided by robust data.

Recommendation 69

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to progress its development of guidelines for developers on best-practice management for native burrowing animals on new development sites and make these guidelines publicly available.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government is progressing the development of guidelines for developers on best-practice management for native burrowing animals on new development sites. The Government expects to finalise and seek feedback on the draft by the end of 2023.

Recommendation 70

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government commit more funding towards the Rabbit Control Program and consider other methods of rabbit control.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

Left unchecked, rabbits can cause significant damage to the ACT's landscape and reduce the values of sensitive conservation estates.

In the 2023-24 Budget, the Government invested \$5.8 million towards protecting, conserving and restoring Canberra's natural environment. This includes a \$300,000 boost towards rabbit control programs.

Recommendation 71

The Committee recommends that the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate finalise upgrades to the Heritage Council website and database this financial year.

Government response

Noted.

The Government provided funding in the 2023-24 Budget to progress a statement of requirements, undertake a market testing exercise and develop a budget business case.

Work is well underway and on track for ACT Heritage to deliver the 2023-24 business case commitments. However, statutory procurement requirements and timelines mean that works to implement the database and website upgrades would begin from July 2024.

Recommendation 72

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government implement a comprehensive property developer licencing scheme within this term of government.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government is working towards the introduction of legislation to the Legislative Assembly by the end of 2023.

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate has been progressing policy work on options for developer licensing and regulation to improve the accountability of property developers in the building and construction industry. A Developer Regulation Discussion Paper was prepared and released in December 2022 which included a range of issues and options. Community and industry consultation was undertaken in early 2023. A listening report was published in May 2023.

Recommendation 73

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government implement trades licensing as a matter of urgency.

Government response

Noted.

The Government is currently progressing a range of priority reforms to the ACT's building regulatory system. This includes the creation of a professional engineers registration scheme, property developer licensing, reviewing certification functions, and ongoing reforms to improve the existing regulatory settings. These reforms are aimed at improving building quality and safety, and accountability across the industry.

The Government will continue to assess the need and benefit of additional trade licence categories, including evaluating the efficacy of current reforms and the experience in other jurisdictions with extensive trade licensing schemes.

Recommendation 74

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that reforms of the Master Builders Fidelity Fund are comprehensive and address consumer advocates' concerns.

Government response

Agreed.

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) is currently undertaking a review of the regulatory settings for fidelity funds in the ACT. The review is being undertaken to make sure provisions are contemporary and fit for purpose. This work has included the development of an interim report which included draft findings and recommendations. EPSDD has and will continue to engage with a range of interested stakeholders including consumer advocates, insurance experts and building and construction industry representatives.

A final report will be provided to the Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction in the second half of 2023.

Recommendation 75

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish an expert team of publicly funded building certifiers within the ACT Public Service within this term of government.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate is currently undertaking policy work to develop options for Government consideration. This work includes input of external expertise to undertake an assessment of the ACT building surveyor/certification system and develop possible options, informed by consultation with industry and community stakeholders.

Recommendation 76

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to invest in new fire and ambulance stations in growing regions.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government will continue to ensure that Emergency Services Agency facilities, including fire and ambulance stations, are strategically located around Canberra to service the needs and expectations of the community. Future Investment will continue to be part of the normal government budget processes.

Recommendation 77

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to procure electric or hybrid vehicles, where appropriate, for emergency services.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government continuously seeks to improve its fleet as new technology emerges, for the benefit of its personnel, the community, and the environment. A comprehensive and robust evaluation of the current Hybrid Electric Fire Truck will be used to inform future decisions on the procurement of electric or hybrid vehicles for emergency services.

Recommendation 78

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake a review of JACS Directorate governance given issues identified with their oversight of the ESA.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government notes that the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has commenced a process to improve its procurement and associated record keeping compliance.

Recommendation 79

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expand its response to the ESA Executive Leadership Alignment Review to address the individual behavioural issues, governance and structural issues raised and take deliberate action to deal with these issues.

Government response

Noted.

Implementation of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate's response to the Review through a robust change program will address the issues identified, and will be enabled and assured through a Change Implementation Oversight Committee with an independent chair reporting to the Director-General.

Recommendation 80

The Committee recommends that an independent review be undertaken of the governance arrangements for JACS Directorate and ESA or that the next statutory review of the *Emergency Services Act 2004* be undertaken by an independent reviewer.

Government response

Noted.

Arrangements for the next statutory review of the *Emergency Act 2004* will be considered closer to 2025, the year in which the review is due.

Recommendation 81

The Committee recommends the Minister update the Assembly annually on police recruitment including how many sworn police officers have been employed, how many have left, and a progress update set against the stated goal of recruitment outlined in the Budget each year in the last sitting of the calendar year.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

Over the next five financial years, the Government will publish supplementary recruitment data in the ACT Policing Annual Report. This information will detail the number of sworn police officers employed, the number of sworn police officer separations from ACT Policing and a progress update against funding in the 2023-24 Budget to increase ACT Policing staffing levels by 126 full time equivalent positions.

Recommendation 82

The Committee recommends a full audit of police facilities and resources be conducted and tabled in the Assembly.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

An audit of police facilities will be undertaken as part of a Strategic Asset Management Plan which is due to be completed by June 2024. Tabling of information about police facilities in the Assembly is subject to security and operational considerations.

Recommendation 83

The Committee recommends that ACT Policing, EPSDD, TCCS and SLA should work collaboratively to determine the future of Winchester Police Station and a future City headquarters for ACT Policing and undertake early consultation and planning for the future of the current Winchester Police Station site in Belconnen.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government has provided funding for a feasibility study to be undertaken for a City Police Station and a new City Headquarters. This work is underway and will be led by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and ACT Policing with the support of other directorates as appropriate.

Recommendation 84

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government seek a solution and report back to the Assembly to the dangerous driving problem at the two specific sites in close proximity to the Uriarra township.

Government response

Noted.

ACT Policing is dedicated to assisting in the development of solutions to prevent dangerous driver behaviours in Canberra. ACT Policing conduct targeted operations to disrupt dangerous driving in all areas of the ACT and issue Infringements and Defect Notices, in addition to seizing vehicle when appropriate.

Commencing 1 August 2023, ACT Policing initiated a dedicated Road Policing Targeting Sergeant. Their first assignment is to work on ACT Policing's response to hooning and will include targeted operations across the ACT and its rural areas, and develop innovative measures to combat dangerous driving in cooperation with ACT Policing's key partners.

ACT Policing's Intelligence capability is working in consultation with Road Policing to develop an evidence-based approach aimed at dangerous driving. ACT Policing efforts will be ongoing and ACT Policing expect further police operations targeting this type of behaviour into the future.

Recommendation 85

The Committee recommends the government provide further resources to monitor and deal with traffic and dangerous driving offences.

Government response

Noted.

The relationship between the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the ACT Government for the provision of policing services to the ACT is long standing and contributes to Canberra being one of the safest places to live in Australia.

The AFP, through ACT Policing, provides a professional, innovative and effective policing service to the people of the ACT, contributing to a safe and just community for all.

In the 2023-24 budget the ACT Government unveiled an unprecedented commitment for ACT Policing by investing over \$107 million in the recruitment of an extra 126 ACT Policing personnel over the next five years. This represents the largest single investment ever made in ACT Policing.

In 2023-24, \$217.9 million has been provided to the AFP for the provision of policing services to the Australian Capital Territory.

ACT Government will continue to consider ACT Policing resource needs through the Budget process.

Access Canberra also monitors and deals with traffic and dangerous driving offences as delegates of the Road Transport Authority, Chief Police Officer and National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

In the 2023-24 budget the ACT Government has provided further funding for Access Canberra to support road safety initiatives and to reinforce the ACT Government's commitment to Vision Zero. In response to Coronial recommendations that support road safety and will help reduce road fatalities, resources have been provided to Access Canberra and the Fitness to Drive Clinic at the Canberra Hospital to introduce and administer periodic health assessments for heavy vehicle drivers.

In addition, funding has been provided to Access Canberra for the design of integrated digital services to connect health professionals undertaking health assessments to government in the future. These improvements will significantly improve efficiency and ensure vulnerable drivers, such as those with complex medical conditions or older workers, are assessed and processed in a timely manner.

Additional funding has been provided to Access Canberra to enhance customer experience and reinforce integrity by procuring updated systems that support traffic and parking enforcement to ensure the community is getting value for money from these systems. This work seeks to modernise our traffic and parking systems to meet best current practice and are fit for our future needs.

Finally, budget funding for implementing additional infringement capability within existing enforcement technologies (e.g. Mobile Device Detection Cameras and RegoACT) and resourcing for administration, policy and potential regulation amendment, and communications expenses has

been provided to Access Canberra and Transport Canberra and City Services. This additional funding will enhance road safety through expanding functionality and greater enforcement of dangerous driving behaviours.

Recommendation 86

The Committee recommends the ACT Government publish a statement on why the previous two attempts to introduce electronic monitoring failed and how effectively and how long electronic monitoring has been used in other jurisdictions.

Government response

Not agreed.

Electronic monitoring (EM) was phased out with home detention after a 2004 review found low referral, uptake, and completion rates of Home Detention Orders. The Government explored the use of EM in 2016-17 considering other jurisdictions and the evolving technology, but EM was not pursued due to a range of limiting factors, including technological limitations, potential service delivery and outcome issues, and resource implications.

The question of how effectively EM has been used in other jurisdictions will be considered as part of the work being undertaken to examine the feasibility of introducing EM in the ACT, but no standalone statement on the use of EM in other jurisdictions will be published.

Recommendation 87

The Committee recommends the ACT Government strongly consider the appointment of a Justice Reinvestment Coordinator-General.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Legislative Assembly commits the Government to considering the best administrative arrangements to provide a holistic and coordinated approach to justice reinvestment, and to social inclusion and equality. The Government will consider the merits of appointing of a Justice Reinvestment Coordinator-General in that context.

Recommendation 88

The Committee recommends the ACT Government create a timeline for the development, construction and completion of the Reintegration Centre and Precinct.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The 2023-24 Budget provides funding to develop an at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) masterplan to inform longer-term infrastructure requirements at the AMC including the Reintegration Precinct, site due diligence and a feasibility study.

Recommendation 89

The Committee recommends the ACT Government provide further details on planning for future development of the Alexander Maconochie Centre, including timeframes.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

Planning has commenced for the development of a masterplan to support future development opportunities at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), including timeframes.

The future development of the AMC will be undertaken in line with the objectives of the masterplan and Government budget processes.

Recommendation 90

The Committee recommends that, as part of the Alexander Maconochie Centre masterplan development, the ACT Government also consider expansion of the Alexander Maconochie Centre to include separated remandee and sentenced detainee accommodations.

Government response

Noted.

Planning has commenced for the development of a masterplan to support future development opportunities at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), including timeframes.

The future development of the AMC will be undertaken in line with the objectives of the masterplan and Government budget processes.

Recommendation 91

The Committee recommends the ACT Government reopen the detainee visitor cafe at the Alexander Maconochie Centre as a matter of priority.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government is already in the process of reopening the detainee visitor café at the Alexander Maconochie Centre as a matter of priority with the aim to reopen in November 2023.

Recommendation 92

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fund the ACT Retirement Village Residents Association to continue their advocacy.

Government response

Noted.

The Government actively seeks engagement with local peak-body entities to gain an understanding of their views regarding funding allocations within the context of the efficient allocation of government resources. A variety of mechanisms are available for entities to seek funding assistance, including grant allocations and/or participation in the Budget consultation process.

It should be acknowledged, however, that grant/funding recipients are selected on the basis of merit, and that the Government will always seek to obtain the best value for money and to maximise benefits for the community from any public monies invested.

Recommendation 93

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase the data collected and held by Access Canberra regarding retirement villages, including the establishment of a register of retirement villages.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government will consider whether further information on retirement villages can be made publicly available via the Access Canberra website, within the existing legal framework. Retirement villages are currently required to be registered with the government. Any changes to legislation requiring the collection of additional data would be subject to further decisions by Government.

Recommendation 94

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider establishing a retirement village ombudsman or similar.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

On 22 March 2023, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed a Resolution requiring the Government to investigate the establishment of a retirement villages ombudsman. The Government will report back to the Assembly on this matter by the last sitting day in September 2023, as required by the Resolution.

Recommendation 95

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continues to support the expansion of the Child Development Service.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The 2023-24 Budget includes \$2.676 million to redesign the Child Development Service (CDS) and the Children and Young Person Equipment Loan Scheme (CAYPELS) to create an integrated and collaborative service model within the Early Childhood Intervention system of care. This builds on recent Government actions in this area, including the \$7.2 million provided in the 2022-23 Budget Review to expand the CDS therapeutic early intervention services to address developmental vulnerability in children aged 24 to 36 months and funding in the 2021-22 Budget for a feasibility study to identify options for the future service delivery and infrastructure requirements for the CDS.

Recommendation 96

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government plan a school for Belconnen Town Centre to meet current and future needs of that population.

Government response

Noted.

The Government is monitoring population and enrolment growth in all regions including the Belconnen Town Centre, and planning for new and expanded schools where they are required to respond to demand in future.

Recommendation 97

The Committee recommends the ACT Government review their current strategies for reducing Staphylococcus Aureus Bacteraemia (SAB) in ACT public hospitals.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government regularly reviews data and monitors performance against policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure adherence to national and international best practice standards. A joint working group continues to assess, develop and implement processes to reduce the rate of health care associated staphylococcus aureus bloodstream infections.

Recommendation 98

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, as a matter of priority, release the first action plan for the ACT Mental Health Workforce Strategy.

Government response

Agreed.

Recommendation 99

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Transport and City Services provide a biannual statement to the ACT Legislative Assembly on the progress of waste facilities in the ACT, including FOGO, due to the ongoing delays and the negative impact these delays are having on the climate crisis.

Government response

Noted.

The two major waste facilities, the new Materials Recovery Facility and the ACT Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) processing facility, are both progressing to market. Subject to procurement and probity requirements, information on the current waste facilities can be provided to the ACT Legislative Assembly at a suitable time after the current procurement processes are complete.

Recommendation 100

The Committee recommends that the Government continue to upgrade Yerrabi Pond District Park to meet growing demand.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

Funding of \$3.271 million has been committed through the 2023-24 Budget to deliver the following works at Yerrabi over the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years:

- pathway lighting around select path networks surrounding Yerrabi Pond;
- construction of toilet and picnic facilities at Bizant Street;
- construction of car parking and picnic facilities at Phyllis Ashton Circuit and Strayleaf Crescent; and
- construction of toilet and picnic facilities at Wunderlich Street.

The 2023-24 initiative builds on feasibility and design funding of \$600,000 provided through the 2021-22 Budget, and \$300,000 for a variety of improvements funded through the 2019-20 Budget.

Recommendation 101

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government re-commit to delivering a fourth fully-electric bus depot on the northside of Canberra as soon as practicable, in order to grow the size of the bus fleet to deliver improved services to the growing city.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

In the 2022-23 Budget, the Government committed to delivering a fourth fully zero emissions bus depot, with feasibility and planning investigations underway to secure a suitable site in the northside of Canberra. The timing of this depot will be determined as part of the Zero Emissions Transition Plan Preferred Pathways update which is currently underway. The Government decided to fast-track electrification of the Tuggeranong Depot and other requirements in order to grow the bus fleet to deliver improved services to the growing city. This has meant that the timing of the fourth depot is not as critical as the three existing depots will cater for the transition of up to 300 zero-emission buses and the growth of the fleet in the short to medium term.

Recommendation 102

The Committee recommends that Transport Canberra move off the current interim bus timetable to the previous full services timetable and adopt improved weekend services by December 2023.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

Transport Canberra is currently developing a new network which will utilise all available resources to provide the optimum service delivery. This will see an increase in frequency when compared with the

current timetable. As the number of drivers continues to grow through extended and continuous recruitment, Transport Canberra will continue to expand service offerings, including on weekends.

Recommendation 103

The Committee recommends that future Transport Canberra 'Estimated Employment Levels' tables separately show bus drivers' FTE for the budget and forward estimates.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The number of bus operators is published in the Transport Canberra and City Services Annual Report.

Recommendation 104

The Committee recommends that future Transport Canberra Operations Accountability Indicators provide up-to-date information showing separate line items for the current number of public transport passenger vehicles in the Transport Canberra Operations fleet, such as electric buses, and the projected fleet size for these vehicles over forward estimates.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

Transport Canberra is moving to an accountability target involving delivery of zero emissions battery electric buses that will be tied to the planned delivery schedule for those buses and connected with the Transport Canberra Zero Emissions Transition Plan.

Recommendation 105

The Committee recommends that future Transport Canberra Operations Accountability Indicators include the number of bus passenger boardings as a separate indicator to that of the total figure for public transport passenger boardings.

Government response

Noted.

Bus patronage is captured as part of a wider network of both bus and light rail routes, and bus specific patronage will evolve and change in tandem with future light rail expansions and bus passenger boardings will not provide meaningful insights into the performance of the bus network (nor the wider public transport system) as part of a multi-modal public transport network.

The Government agrees to providing open and transparent patronage information pertaining to the Transport Canberra Integrated Public Transport Network of bus and light rail routes. Much of this data is currently available online from the Open Data ACT website (particularly boardings and

journeys by service type), and there may be opportunities to explore additional modal specific reporting for bus and light rail patronage.

Recommendation 106

The Committee recommends that, for major capital projects budgeted at over \$50 million, projects be re-evaluated for value for money where costs increase by more than 25 percent of the original budget and results of that re-evaluation be reported publicly.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

Projects are re-evaluated for value for money when additional funding is sought through the ACT budget process. Business cases are Cabinet documents covered by budget and cabinet-in-confidence rules and uplift in costs are reported in the budget.

Recommendation 107

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government deliver fully separated walking and cycling infrastructure on all major roads projects including all stages of the Monaro Highway Project in order to be compliant with Australian road standards for safe cycling infrastructure.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

It is an existing policy of our Government to develop strategic transport corridors using a multi-modal approach supporting active travel, including dedicated separated infrastructure, public transport, light and heavy vehicles where applicable based on corridor planning. Designs have been developed for a separated walking and cycling path along the Monaro Highway which will be delivered at the appropriate stage of the upgrade to ensure there is useable contiguous path.

Recommendation 108

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government complete the Gungahlin Transport Plan as a matter of priority.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government is currently planning to undertake consultation on a draft Gungahlin Transport Plan during the first quarter of 2024. Pending the outcomes of this consultation, the plan would be finalised by the end of the 2023-24 financial year.

Recommendation 109

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should develop and implement performance metrics for the planting of shrubs and ground cover.

Government response

Noted.

The priority for the ACT Government is to provide reporting on the progress towards 30 per cent canopy cover or tree canopy equivalents (green roofs, shrub beds, wetlands, rain gardens, etc) by 2045, as articulated through the Urban Forest Strategy.

Recommendation 110

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish online the quarterly revenue and expenditure of the canopy contribution fund once it is established.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Transport Canberra and City Services Annual Report will include revenue and expenditure associated with canopy contributions.

Recommendation 111

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate renewable burial options, such as human composting, during the development of Southern Memorial Park.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The development of Southern Memorial Park is being addressed over multiple stages. Supporting a human composting trial is not being addressed as part of Stage 1 of Southern Memorial Park. Stage 1 will include a natural burial area and ash scatter garden. Renewable and emerging burial technologies and options along with associated cultural, religious and community requirements will be examined as part of Stage 2.

Recommendation 112

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigates initiatives relating to recycling of soft plastics at waste facilities in the ACT.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government is participating in national work on soft plastic waste. In 2022, all Environment Ministers agreed to reform the regulation of packaging by 2025, to ensure that all packaging available in Australia is designed to be recovered, reused, recycled and reprocessed safely in line with circular economy principles. Our Government will investigate soft plastic recycling when there is sufficient processing capacity and markets in Australia to ensure the materials gathered are adequately reused. The tender for the new Materials Recovery Facility will be released soon and tenderers will be invited to provide innovative recycling solutions for the Government to consider all opportunities.

Recommendation 113

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government evaluate the effectiveness of the 'Recycle Right' campaign particularly in relation to the 'Keeping it Safe' message and investigate what improvements can be made to the campaign.

Government response

Agreed.

Waste and resource recovery community engagement has been reviewed. Moving forward, there will be a focus on going beyond the bin and using circular economy principles that provide co-benefits of decreased fire risk and keeping hazardous waste out of recycling streams and landfill.

Recommendation 114

The Committee recommends that the rapid response mowing team becomes a permanent part of the ACT mowing program.

Government response

Noted.

The Government has closely monitored the influence of La Nina on the weather patterns and rainfall projections to manage the mowing program around particularly high levels of rainfall over the past three years.

The rapid response mowing team will continue throughout 2023-24 to offer the best chance of meeting the service level standards for the community in the current climatic condition.

The most recent Bureau of Meteorology forecasts predict the possibility of an El Nino event bringing with it lower than average rainfall for eastern Australia. Any future extension will be considered as part of a future budget process.

Recommendation 115

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government release a preliminary business case for Light Rail Stage 2B as soon as practicable.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government will consider a Business Case for Light Rail Stage 2B (Stage 2B) once Commonwealth planning and approval processes are further progressed. This is primarily due to the complexity of the planned route for Stage 2B, which will run through National Capital area. Progressing Commonwealth planning and approval processes will include the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and early design. Both of these activities will be necessary to confirm final scope, costs and benefits to form a Business Case.

After the approvals are received, a Business Case for Stage 2B will be developed and procurement commenced. While cost estimates will be developed for the Business Case, the decision as to when to release them will depend on several factors including potential impacts on commercial negotiations and value for money for the Territory.

Recommendation 116

The Committee recommends that future ACT Budget papers contain a dedicated overview of all budget aspects of Light Rail Stages 2A and 2B and associated projects. This would include indicators on construction progress, budget and forward estimates' expenditure provisions and projections, and estimated completion dates for budgeted activities and procurements.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The ACT Budget Statements contain overviews of project components and appropriations, accountability indicators and physical completion dates for the Light Rail program of projects. The Infrastructure Program also provides information on the Light Rail budget and forward estimates for both new work and capital works in progress, and the ACT Contracts Register is updated as contracts are signed.

Recommendation 117

The Committee recommends that the ACT Legislative Assembly should undertake an audit of fossil fuel powered assets and prepare a zero-emissions transition plan which sees the Assembly achieve zero-emissions before 2045 in line with ACT Government commitments.

Government response

Noted.

This is a matter for consideration by the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

Recommendation 118

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure the ACT Integrity Commission has sufficient funding to meet its increased workload to allow it to complete investigations in a timely manner.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 119

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increases funding to the ACT Ombudsman to deal with the increase in FOI appeals.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government makes funding decisions as part of each budget process, with consideration of the broader fiscal strategy and other budget priorities.

Recommendation 120

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide sufficient funding to enable Legal Aid to offer independent children's lawyers to all children involved in domestic and family violence allegations.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government currently provides funding to Legal Aid ACT, totalling over \$17.9 million in 2023-24, to support the delivery of legal assistance and representation services. This includes funding to Legal Aid's Family Law Practice to support the engagement of Independent Children Lawyers in Care and Protection matters.

In addition, the Commonwealth Government, as part of its October 2022 Budget, announced funding for Legal Aid ACT for the expansion of the Lighthouse Project, which primarily focuses on matters in the family law system involving family violence, mental health, drug and alcohol misuse and child abuse and neglect. This funding is used to support Legal Aid to engage independent

children's lawyer services, in relation to matters under the *Family Law Act 1975*. The Government will continue to work with Legal Aid ACT to manage their resourcing needs.

Recommendation 121

The Committee recommends that all government directorates must respond to requests for information from the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment within 30 business days.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

All Government directorates continue to support the important work of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment through the provision of data and information as requested. However, there are occasions where these requests are complex and lengthy and need to be prioritised against competing government priorities.

Recommendation 122

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide more support for kinship carers in the ACT.

Government response

Existing Government Policy.

The Government is currently undergoing a request for proposal to establish a panel of providers to deliver a range of culturally safe services for children, young people, families and carers, including services for kinship care. This is a new approach that is intended to transform how the ACT Government works with community sector to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

Recommendation 123

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the Public Trustee and Guardian to implement any required changes to ensure the smooth operation of the Unclaimed Body Scheme.

Government response

Agreed in principle.

The Government will work with the Public Trustee and Guardian and other relevant agencies to identify and implement any required changes to the Scheme. Any changes requiring additional resources or legislative change will be subject to further decisions of government.