



Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Health and
Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022–23

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

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About the committee

Establishing resolution

The Assembly established the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing on 2 December 2020.

The committee is responsible for the following areas:

- Community Services
- Families
- Health and health system
- Homelessness and housing services
- Justice health
- Mental health
- Prevention of domestic and family violence.

You can read the full establishing resolution [on our website](#).

Committee members

Ms Jo Clay MLA, Chair (from 5 December 2023)

Mr Johnathan Davis MLA, Chair (to 12 November 2023)

Mr James Milligan MLA, Deputy Chair

Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

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About this inquiry

The 2022–23 Annual Reports were presented in the Assembly on 24 October 2023. Clause 3 of the establishing resolution refers all calendar and financial year annual and financial reports to the relevant standing committee for inquiry and report by 9 April of the year after the presentation of the report to the Assembly pursuant to the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*.

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

Acronym or Abbreviation	Long form
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institution of Health and Welfare
CHS	Canberra Health Services
CSD	Community Services Directorate
DHR	Digital Health Record
GP	General Practitioner
Health	ACT Health Directorate
UC	University of Canberra

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that ACT Government consult with midwives about any operational problems in accessing Syntocinon and report how many orders have been signed by Obstetrics and Gynaecology Consultants for Syntocinon since July 2023.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the ACT Government report regularly on how many emergency room presentations arise from dental issues.

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends the ACT Government increase funding for safe havens and peer workers.

Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that the ACT Government consider whether it can locally support links between on-the-ground food rescue and second-hand and refurbished goods and the community services who need them.

Recommendation 5

The committee recommends the ACT Government provide clear information about whether and where it will rehome all 46 former public housing residents of East Lake.

1. Introduction

Presentation of 2022–23 annual and financial reports

- 1.1. Annual and financial reports for the Territory were tabled on 24 October 2023 in the ACT Legislative Assembly.¹ A collated list of annual and financial reports is available [online](#).²
- 1.2. During its inquiry, the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing (the committee) examined all or part of the annual and financial reports for 2022–23 for the following entities:
 - ACT Health Directorate (Health);
 - Canberra Health Services (CHS); and
 - Community Services Directorate (CSD).

Conduct of the inquiry

- 1.3. The committee held public hearings on 14, 15, 16 and 21 November 2023. At the hearings the committee heard from ACT Government Ministers and accompanying directorate officials.
- 1.4. Witnesses who appeared before the committee are listed at Appendix A. Transcripts and footage from the hearings are available on the Legislative Assembly website.

Questions Taken on Notice and Questions on Notice

- 1.5. A total of 106 questions were lodged during the inquiry, as follows:
 - 50 questions were taken on notice by Ministers and statutory office holders during the hearings. One was later determined to have been answered during the relevant hearing.
 - 56 questions on notice were submitted by members of the committee and visiting Members of the Assembly following the hearings.
- 1.6. A list of questions (including the date the question was asked, the intended recipient, and the subject of the question) is set out in Appendix B. Also included is the date on which a response was received.
- 1.7. Responses to questions on notice and questions taken on notice are also available on the committee's website.
- 1.8. A breakdown of witnesses who appeared at the public hearings by gender identity is given at Appendix C.

¹ ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings*, No 101, 24 October 2023, p 1466.

² CMTEDD, *Annual Reports*, 24 October 2023, https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/open_government/report/annual-reports (accessed 1 December 2023).

2. Health portfolio

- 2.1. The ACT Health Directorate (Health) provides the strategic direction and leadership of the ACT health system. It sets the policy and plans delivery of health services through a range of functions, including but not limited to:
- Engagement with other jurisdictions, including the Commonwealth, on health initiatives, whole of government policy, and funding;
 - Delivering a range of health prevention, promotion and protection services;
 - Administering the ACT Government’s legislative program on health matters; and
 - Planning and evaluating health system performance, workforce, infrastructure and training.³
- 2.2. Canberra Health Services (CHS) provides acute, subacute, primary and community-based health services to people across the ACT and surrounding Southern NSW Local Health District. It administers a range of publicly funded health facilities, programs and services, including but not limited to:
- Canberra Hospital, North Canberra Hospital, and the University of Canberra (UC) Hospital;
 - Six community health centres;
 - Five nurse-led walk-in centres; and
 - Community-based health services.⁴
- 2.3. Health and CHS officials appeared together across two days of public hearings for this inquiry.

Health and Health system

Matters considered

- 2.4. Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA appeared before the committee on 16 November 2023 in her capacity as Minister for Health. The following matters were discussed:
- a) Urology waitlists⁵
 - b) Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs) and permanent specialist staffing levels at CHS⁶
 - c) progress against the Canberra Hospital master plan⁷

³ ACT Health Directorate, *Annual Report 2022–23*, p 31.

⁴ Canberra Health Services, *Annual Report 2022–23*, p 11.

⁵ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 78; 80.

⁶ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, p 78.

⁷ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 78–80.

- d) ACT Government acquisition of Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (now North Canberra Hospital)⁸
- e) access to homebirth medications in the ACT⁹
- f) progress against the ACT Government commitment to deliver new health centres in North Gungahlin, Inner South, South Tuggeranong, and West Belconnen¹⁰
- g) Commonwealth Government funding for an urgent-care clinic in Canberra¹¹
- h) Staffing levels, referral rates, and scope of practice of nurse-led walk-in centres¹²
- i) consultation on the Condor Health Hub¹³
- j) an update on the Watson health precinct¹⁴
- k) attraction and retention of General Practitioners (GPs) to the ACT¹⁵
- l) dental services provided by CHS¹⁶
- m) the Digital Health Record (DHR) project¹⁷
- n) construction of the new northside hospital¹⁸
- o) staff survey results for the Digital Solutions Division, ACT Health Directorate¹⁹
- p) therapy dogs²⁰
- q) the Canberra Hospital expansion plan, including construction of the new Critical Services Building²¹
- r) the 2023 CHS workforce culture survey²²
- s) activities to expand the scope of practice for pharmacists²³
- t) feasibility work undertaken against the ACT Labor 2020 election commitment of an elective surgery centre at UC Hospital²⁴
- u) access and affordability of surgical and medical abortions in the ACT²⁵

⁸ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 80–85; 114–115.

⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 85–86.

¹⁰ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 86–87.

¹¹ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 86–88; 90–91.

¹² *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 88–91; 92–93.

¹³ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 91–92.

¹⁴ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 93–94.

¹⁵ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 94–97.

¹⁶ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 97–98.

¹⁷ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 99–104.

¹⁸ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 104–105.

¹⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 105–107.

²⁰ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 107–108.

²¹ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 108–111.

²² *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 111–112.

²³ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 112–113.

²⁴ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 115–118.

²⁵ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 118–119.

- v) the early pregnancy service²⁶
- w) provision of gynae-oncology and maternal and child health services²⁷
- x) work to support the national climate change and health strategy announced by the Commonwealth Government²⁸
- y) radiotherapy equipment.²⁹

Key issue

Homebirths

2.5. The Centenary Hospital for Women and Children’s continuity midwifery program offers a publicly funded Homebirth Service to eligible women in the ACT.³⁰

2.6. During public hearings, the committee raised concerns regarding reports Members had received from midwives experiencing issues accessing Syntocinon for homebirths.³¹ Officials advised CHS was ‘reviewing maternity services’ access to continuity midwife models’ to help identify barriers that may drive women to deliver in a hospital setting.³²

2.7. In a response to a question taken on notice, the Minister advised:

...prior to 2022 midwives obtained signature on the Homebirth medication from an Obstetrics and Gynaecology Consultant during a collaborative clinic for women planning a homebirth. Some challenges were experienced with the process of signing the medication order following staffing changes in the collaborative clinic, however these have now been resolved. At no time were any women prevented from accessing homebirth due to unsigned medication orders or dispensing of medications.

2.8. The committee understands Syntocinon is part of the homebirth medication order set and can be dispensed to eligible patients after a midwife has obtained an Obstetrics and Gynaecology Consultant signature on the homebirth medication order form.³³

2.9. The Minister advised that:

Since July 2023, midwives can prescribe Syntocinon for the indication of ‘active management of the third stage’ under an approved Canberra Health Services medication standing order. Midwives must have the initial order signed by an Obstetrics and Gynaecology Consultant to enable dispensing from pharmacy. There have been no concerns reported in the past three months to November

²⁶ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 119–120.

²⁷ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 120–122.

²⁸ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 112–124.

²⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, pp 124–125.

³⁰ Canberra Health Services, *Homebirth*, <https://www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/before-during-and-after-your-care/having-a-baby/before-you-arrive/pregnancy-care-and-birthing-options/homebirth> (accessed 19 March 2023).

³¹ *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, p 85.

³² Dr Grant Howard, Chief Operating Officer, Canberra Health Services, *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, p 86.

³³ Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health, *answer to question on notice 2: Home birth limitations – Syntocinon prescriptions*, p 1.

2023 of midwives having difficulty getting homebirth medication orders signed to enable dispensing by pharmacy.³⁴

Committee comment

- 2.10. The committee welcomes the Minister’s advice that midwives can now prescribe Syntocinon after an initial order has been signed by an Obstetrics and Gynaecology Consultant and that Government has not received any reports of midwives having difficulty in getting these orders signed.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that ACT Government consult with midwives about any operational problems in accessing Syntocinon and report how many orders have been signed by Obstetrics and Gynaecology Consultants for Syntocinon since July 2023.

Dental services

- 2.11. In 2022–23, CHS provided dental services to 6,623 adults and 6,091 children, at a cost of \$11.807 million.³⁵
- 2.12. During the public hearing, the committee queried the lack of information in annual reports regarding dental services provided by CHS.³⁶ In response to a question taken on notice, the Minister advised ‘[i]nformation related to public dental services is reported nationally by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)’.³⁷
- 2.13. Data provided in the AIHW *Oral health and dental care in Australia* web report provides national data up to the 2021–22 financial year. Data for hospitalisations by state is available for ‘potentially preventable hospitalisations’ and ‘dental procedures requiring general anaesthetic.’ The report states there were 1,516 potentially preventable hospitalisations in the ACT in 2021–22 due to dental conditions.³⁸

Committee comment

- 2.14. In light of the data reported by the AIHW, the committee considers there would be benefit in providing visibility of the number of hospitalisations due to dental services, including emergency room presentations.

³⁴ Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health, *answer to question on notice 2: Home birth limitations – Syntocinon prescriptions*, pp 1–2.

³⁵ Mr Dave Pepper, Chief Executive Officer, CHS, *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, p 97; Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health, *answer to question taken on notice 5: Dental services – number of adults; answer to question taken on notice 6: Dental services – Youth numbers and budget*.

³⁶ Ms Jo Clay MLA, *Committee Hansard*, 16 November 2023, p 97.

³⁷ Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health, *answer to question on notice 8: Dental services provided by Canberra Health Services*

³⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing, *Oral health and dental care in Australia*, ‘Potentially preventable hospitalisations’, 21 November 2023, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/dental-oral-health/oral-health-and-dental-care-in-australia/contents/hospitalisations/potentially-preventable-hospitalisations> (accessed 19 March 2024).

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the ACT Government report regularly on how many emergency room presentations arise from dental issues.

Mental health and Justice health

Matters considered

- 2.15. Ms Emma Davidson MLA appeared before the committee on 21 November 2023 in her capacity as Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Justice Health. The following matters were discussed:
- a) the *Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing Work Plan*³⁹
 - b) Peer Support workers⁴⁰
 - c) Access Mental Health, PACER and HAART referrals⁴¹
 - d) patients absconding from care or being uncontactable during a period of leave from ACT mental health facilities⁴²
 - e) independent review of the Dhulwa Mental Health Unit⁴³
 - f) security incidents at Dhulwa Mental Health Unit⁴⁴
 - g) referrals to Winnunga Nimmityjah⁴⁵
 - h) actions in response to the *Healthy Prison Review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre 2022*⁴⁶
 - i) expansion of the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) Health Hub⁴⁷
 - j) support for people living with a disability and co-occurring mental health conditions.⁴⁸
 - k) support for the ACT mental health workforce and development of the *Mental Health Workforce Strategy 2023–2033*⁴⁹
 - l) services and support provided through the Safe Haven Belconnen⁵⁰

³⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2022, pp 127–131.

⁴⁰ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, p 130.

⁴¹ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, pp 131–134.

⁴² *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, pp 134–138; 150–153.

⁴³ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, pp 138–139.

⁴⁴ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, pp 139–141.

⁴⁵ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, p 142.

⁴⁶ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, pp 142–143.

⁴⁷ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, pp 143–144.

⁴⁸ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, p 144–146.

⁴⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2024, pp 146–153.

⁵⁰ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, pp 153–155.

- m) the independent review into a major incident at the Canberra Hospital Adult Mental Health Unit in 2022⁵¹

Key issues

Safe havens and peer workers

- 2.16. The ACT Government opened Safe Haven Belconnen in November 2021. The Safe Haven is staffed by a peer workforce and offers a non-clinical space for people experiencing emotional distress, mental health concerns, isolation or loneliness seeking connection and support.⁵²
- 2.17. The Minister spoke to the success of Safe Haven Belconnen, noting the service which utilises peer workers helps to divert people away from emergency departments and assists people to manage chronic mental health conditions.⁵³
- 2.18. Planning has commenced on a second Safe Haven to be located on the Canberra Hospital campus and will draw on lessons learned from the Safe Haven Belconnen program.⁵⁴ The ACT Government announced \$2.3 million over four years for a second Safe Haven in the 2023–24 ACT Budget.⁵⁵
- 2.19. The committee heard of the important role peer workers play in supporting a wide cross-section of the community through Safe Haven Belconnen:
- ...We are talking about a really diverse range of people who are accessing these services and finding that it is helping them. That really speaks to the value of having services with peer workers who themselves are representative of the diversity of people in our broader community who might need to access those things. That is a really good, positive sign.⁵⁶
- 2.20. The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing advised it was seeking to increase training and opportunities for peer workers in the ACT in line with the *Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing Work Plan 2023–2024*.⁵⁷

Committee comment

- 2.21. The committee recognises the benefits peer workers and non-clinical services such as Safe Haven offer to Canberrans experiencing mental health concerns and to the management of demand on emergency departments.

⁵¹ *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, pp 155–157.

⁵² Ms Emma Davidson MLA, *Media Release*, 'More support for Canberrans experiencing emotional distress', 26 November 2021.

⁵³ Emma Davidson MLA, Minister for Mental Health, *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, pp 154–155.

⁵⁴ Ms Emma Davidson MLA, Minister for Mental Health, *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, p 153.

⁵⁵ Mr Andrew Barr MLA and Ms Emma Davidson MLA, *Joint media release*, 'Building a stronger mental health system for Canberrans', 15 June 2023.

⁵⁶ Ms Emma Davidson MLA, Minister for Mental Health, *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, p 154.

⁵⁷ Dr Elizabeth Moore, Coordinator-General, Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2023, p 130.

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends the ACT Government increase funding for safe havens and peer workers.

3. Community Services Directorate

- 3.1. The Community Services Directorate (CSD) is responsible for delivering a wide range of human services functions in the ACT including multicultural affairs; children and child development; youth and family support services and policy; therapy services; disability policy and services; homelessness; and community services.⁵⁸
- 3.2. Officials appeared on two days of public hearings for this inquiry.

Families and Community services

Matters considered

- 3.3. Ms Emma Davidson MLA appeared before the committee on 14 November 2023 in her capacity as Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services. The following matters were discussed:
- a) Ministerial responsibilities and conduct⁵⁹
 - b) development of a social recovery framework for future emergency events⁶⁰
 - c) youth justice health programs and services following the raised age of criminal responsibility⁶¹
 - d) the Food Security Program⁶²
 - e) the *ACT Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2030*⁶³
 - f) implementation of the *Carers Recognition Act 2021* including the *ACT Carers Strategy 2018–2028*⁶⁴
 - g) design of the ACT volunteering strategy.⁶⁵
- 3.4. Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA appeared before the committee on 15 November 2023 in her capacity as Minister for Families and Community Services. The following matters were discussed:
- a) CSD responses to requests made under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*⁶⁶
 - b) the Child and Family Centre pilot in partnership with the Education Directorate⁶⁷
 - c) actions to implement external review processes for child protection decisions⁶⁸

⁵⁸ Community Services Directorate, *Annual Report 2022–23*, p 23.

⁵⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 14 November 2023, pp 1–6; 10–14;

⁶⁰ *Committee Hansard*, 14 November 2023, pp 6–8.

⁶¹ *Committee Hansard*, 14 November 2023, pp 8–10.

⁶² *Committee Hansard*, 14 November 2023, pp 10–16.

⁶³ *Committee Hansard*, 14 November 2023, pp 16–17.

⁶⁴ *Committee Hansard*, 14 November 2023, pp 17–21.

⁶⁵ *Committee Hansard*, 14 November 2023, pp 21–23.

⁶⁶ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 59–61.

⁶⁷ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 61–62.

⁶⁸ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 62–63.

- d) Child and Family Centre client satisfaction results⁶⁹
- e) the establishment of a new therapeutic support system to support raising of the minimum age of criminal responsibility⁷⁰
- f) review of the *Internal Review of Decisions Pilot*⁷¹
- g) the stage 2 review of *A Step Up for Our Kids*⁷²
- h) staffing vacancies and impacts on Child and Family Centre services⁷³
- i) support for foster and kinship carers, including the Carer Wellbeing Joint Committee⁷⁴
- j) support accessed at Ruby's House.⁷⁵

Key issues

Circular economy

- 3.5. The ACT *Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2030* sets out the high-level ambition and actions to progress the ACT's efforts to become a more circular economy.⁷⁶
- 3.6. Actions include consultation with business and industry peak bodies to reduce food waste.⁷⁷ When asked whether CSD would be involved in these discussions, the committee heard there are a couple of mechanisms of government which could offer opportunities for the directorate to work across government:

For example, the processes that are involved in the development of cabinet submissions mean that everybody who has an interest in those cabinet submissions would get to see and comment on those submissions as they are development and to advise or brief ministers prior to a discussion in either a cabinet subcommittee or the cabinet room itself. There are also a number of mechanisms that support the deliberations of cabinet. For example, the human services subcommittee...includes directors-general across all the human services streams. We often have discussions on issues like this to identify where portfolios overlap and where opportunities might exist for us to work together.⁷⁸

⁶⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 63–64; 74–76.

⁷⁰ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 64–67.

⁷¹ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 67–68.

⁷² *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, p 69.

⁷³ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 69–71.

⁷⁴ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 72–74.

⁷⁵ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, p 74.

⁷⁶ ACT Government, *Building Canberra's Circular Economy: ACT Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2030*, pp 6 and 12.

⁷⁷ ACT Government, *Building Canberra's Circular Economy: ACT Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2030*, pp 6 and 12.

⁷⁸ Ms Catherine Rule, Director-General, Community Services Directorate, *Committee Hansard*, 14 November 2023, p 17.

Committee comment

- 3.7. The committee considers greater collaboration across government directorates would provide opportunities to link waste reduction efforts under the circular economy strategy with community support organisations.

Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that the ACT Government consider whether it can locally support links between on-the-ground food rescue and second-hand and refurbished goods and the community services who need them.

Homelessness and Housing services

Matters considered

- 3.8. Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA and Ms Yvette Berry MLA appeared together before the committee on 15 November 2023 in their capacity as Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Housing and Suburban Development respectively.
- 3.9. Minister Vassarotti spoke to the following matters:
- a) the commissioning process for the provision of homelessness services in the ACT⁷⁹
 - b) complaints regarding disruptive and anti-social behaviour⁸⁰
 - c) support for homeless Canberrans and ACT Housing tenants during extreme weather events⁸¹
 - d) ACT Housing transfer applications⁸²
 - e) Support services available to men escaping domestic and family violence.⁸³
- 3.10. Minister Berry spoke to the following matters:
- a) repairs and maintenance undertaken by ACT Housing in 2022–23⁸⁴
 - b) an update on the external review of total facilities management⁸⁵
 - c) construction of new public housing dwellings⁸⁶
 - d) transition of government-run public housing properties to headleases with community housing providers in 2022–23⁸⁷

⁷⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 30–34.

⁸⁰ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 34–36.

⁸¹ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, p 40–42.

⁸² *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 42–44.

⁸³ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 48–49.

⁸⁴ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 27–29; 45–46.

⁸⁵ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 29–35.

⁸⁶ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 36–38.

⁸⁷ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, p 38.

- e) construction of public housing dwellings since 2017–18⁸⁸
- f) ensuring accessibility in public housing dwellings, including through the ACT Public Housing Renewal Program⁸⁹
- g) the waitlist for ACT Housing transfer applications⁹⁰
- h) the East Lake redevelopment⁹¹
- i) block utilisation and dwelling types for future ACT Housing properties.⁹²

Key issue

Public housing in East Lake

- 3.11. In 2004, the East Lake area of the Causeway was identified for possible future redevelopment as part of the *2004 Canberra Spatial Plan*.⁹³ Since then, the ACT Government has undertaken community consultation and planning and released its final place plan for the East Lake precinct in February 2024.⁹⁴
- 3.12. In February 2009, public housing residents at the Causeway were assured by the then Minister for Housing, Mr John Hargreaves MLA, that they would have the first offer of public housing accommodation in the redevelopment.⁹⁵
- 3.13. When asked whether public housing would be included in the East Lake redevelopment, Minister Berry advised the project had ‘changed from its initial aspiration’ due to complications regarding the electrical substation on one of the sites.⁹⁶ CSD advised the committee that it would contribute ‘in terms of what the places could be for public housing’ however the Suburban Land Agency was leading the redevelopment project.

Committee comment

- 3.14. Given the historical connection of public housing residents in the Causeway, the committee considers it is important to ensure sufficient public housing for those 46 former residents that wish to return to East Lake following completion of the redevelopment.

⁸⁸ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 38–39.

⁸⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 39–40.

⁹⁰ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, p 44.

⁹¹ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 44–45.

⁹² *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, p 47.

⁹³ ACT Government, Your Say Conversations, *East Lake Place Plan*, <https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/east-lake-place-plan> (accessed 19 March 2024).

⁹⁴ Mr Chris Steel MLA, Minister for Planning, *Media release*, ‘More than 1000 new homes a step closer with East Lake precinct’, 19 February 2024.

⁹⁵ Mr John Hargreaves MLA, Minister for Housing, *Media release*, ‘Housing assurance for public Causeway residents’, 19 February 2009.

⁹⁶ Ms Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, p 45.

Recommendation 5

The committee recommends the ACT Government provide clear information about whether and where it will rehome all 46 former public housing residents of East Lake.

Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Matters considered

- 3.15. Ms Yvette Berry MLA appeared before the committee on 15 November 2023 in her capacity as Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. The following matters were discussed:
- a) the Wraparound response program⁹⁷
 - b) funding provided under the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Grants program⁹⁸
 - c) the Australian Childhood Foundation therapeutic response pilot⁹⁹
 - d) the Room4Change program delivered by the Domestic Violence Crisis Service¹⁰⁰
 - e) development of the multidisciplinary centre in response to recommendation 3b of the *Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee report*¹⁰¹
 - f) the ACT Government response to the *We Don't Shoot our Wounded* report.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 50–51.

⁹⁸ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, p 52–53.

⁹⁹ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 53–54.

¹⁰⁰ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 54–56.

¹⁰¹ *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 56–57.

¹⁰² *Committee Hansard*, 15 November 2023, pp 57–58.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The committee thanks everyone who participated in, or otherwise assisted, this inquiry. This includes the ACT Government Ministers, directorate officials, and statutory officers. The committee wishes to extend its appreciation to the Hansard and Broadcasting teams of the ACT Legislative Assembly.
- 4.2. The committee makes 5 recommendations.

Ms Jo Clay MLA

Chair, Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

3 April 2024

Appendix A: Witnesses

14 November 2023

Ms Emma Davidson MLA, Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services

Community Services Directorate

- **Ms Catherine Rule**, Director General
- **Ms Jacinta Evans**, Executive Group Manager, Strategic Policy
- **Ms Anita Perkins**, Executive Group Manager, Communities
- **Ms Anna-Maree Sabellico**, Executive Group Manager, Children, Youth and Families
- **Mr Nick Stathis**, Executive Branch Manager, Office for Disability, Seniors and Veterans and Social Recovery, Committees

15 November 2023

Ms Yvette Berry MLA, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Families and Community Services

Community Services Directorate

- **Ms Catherine Rule**, Director General
- **Ms Jacinta Evans**, Executive Group Manager, Strategic Policy
- **Ms Anita Perkins**, Executive Group Manager, Communities
- **Ms Anna-Maree Sabellico**, Executive Group Manager, Children, Youth and Families
- **Ms Silvia Lopic**, Executive Group Manager (Deputy), Children, Youth and Families
- **Ms Kirsty Windeyer**, Coordinator General, Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Office
- **Mr Geoff Aigner**, Executive Branch Manager, Client Services Branch, Housing Assistance
- **Mr Ben Naughton**, Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure and Contracts, Housing Assistance
- **Ms Vasiliki Bogiatzis**, Executive Branch Manager, Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Office
- **Dr Louise Bassett**, Executive Branch Manager, Commissioning, Policy and Service Design, Strategic Policy
- **Ms Kate West**, Executive Branch Manager, Next Steps Reform and Strategy Implementation, Children, Youth and Families
- **Ms Min McIntyre**, Acting Executive Branch Manager, Housing and Homelessness Programs
- **Ms Mimy Chen**, Centre Manager, Support Services for Children, Communities

16 November 2023

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health

ACT Health Directorate

- **Ms Rebecca Cross**, Director-General
- **Ms Liz Lopa**, Deputy Director-General, Corporate, Communications and Delivery Division
- **Mr Holger Kaufmann**, Chief Information Officer
- **Dr Kerryn Coleman**, Chief Health Officer
- **Mr Michael Culhane**, Executive Group Manager, Policy, Partnerships and Programs

Canberra Health Services

- **Mr Dave Peffer**, Chief Executive Officer
- **Ms Janet Zagari**, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
- **Dr Grant Howard**, Chief Operating Officer

Major Projects Canberra

- **Ms Gillian Geraghty**, Chief Projects Officer
- **Mr Martin Little**, Deputy Chief Projects Officer

21 November 2023

Ms Emma Davidson MLA, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health

ACT Health Directorate

- **Dr Elizabeth Moore**, Coordinator-General, Mental Health and Wellbeing
- **Ms Cheryl Garratt**, Executive Branch Manager, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Division
- **Dr Dinesh Arya**, Chief Psychiatrist, Office of the Chief Psychiatrist

Canberra Health Services

- **Mr Dave Peffer**, Chief Executive Officer
- **Ms Katie McKenzie**, Executive Director, Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services

Appendix C: Questions on Notice and Questions Taken on Notice

Questions on Notice

No.	Date	Asked of	Subject	Response received
1	17/11/2023	Minister Vassarotti	Housing ACT	30/11/2023
2	17/11/2023	Minister Vassarotti	Homelessness	30/11/2023
3	17/11/2023	Minister Berry	Sale to tenant scheme (Housing ACT)	28/11/2023
4	17/11/2023	Minister Berry	Growing and Renewing Public Housing	06/12/2023
5	17/11/2023	Minister Berry	Social Housing number of properties	30/11/2023
6	17/11/2023	Minister Berry	Vacant Properties (Housing ACT)	28/11/2023
7	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	Review of FFT-Youth Justice (Youth Justice Policy and Services)	04/12/2023
8	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	New Strategy and Action Plan (Volunteering Statement and Policy)	04/12/2023
9	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	Failure to Complete Youth Justice Case Plans on Time (Youth Justice Policy and Services)	04/12/2023
10	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	Food Assistance Program (Community Recovery and Emergency Relief)	04/12/2023
11	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	Community Groups in Bimberi (Youth Justice Policy and Services)	04/12/2023
12	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	Responses to Spike in Youth Offending (Youth Justice Policy and Services)	04/12/2023
13	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	Further Action Plans (Carers Strategy and Policy)	04/12/2023
14	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	Responses to Increased Recidivism (Youth Justice Policy and Services)	04/12/2023
15	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	Adequacy of Existing Diversion Programs (Youth Justice Policy and Services)	04/12/2023
16	21/11/2023	Minister Davidson	Transitioning Youth Justice Services to ACCOs (Youth Justice Policy and Services)	04/12/2023
17	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Independent Sexual Violence Advisors	30/11/2023
18	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	National initiatives in the ACT	30/11/2023
19	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Face-to-face training for staff working in community facing roles by YWCA	30/11/2023

20	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Listen. Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal report recommendations	01/12/2023
21	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office (DFSVO)	13/12/2023
22	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Independent specialist services review	30/11/2023
23	21/11/2023	Minister Berry	We Don't Shoot Our Wounded report recommendations	30/11/2023
24	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Support for young people impacted by family or domestic violence	30/11/2023
25	21/11/2023	Minister Berry	Solid Ground pilot program by PCYC	30/11/2023
26	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Women's Health Matters victim survivor consultation model	30/11/2023
27	21/11/2023	Minister Berry	Support service for 5-12-year-olds and their mothers by the Australian Childhood Foundation	30/11/2023
28	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Domestic and family violence training for youth workers by Youth Coalition of the ACT	30/11/2023
29	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Training for sector partners by Stopping Family Violence	30/11/2023
30	21/11/2023	Minister Berry	Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Training	30/11/2023
31	21/11/2023	Minister Berry	Wraparound	30/11/2023
32	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Family Violence Safety Action Program and Perpetrator Response Advisor	30/11/2023
33	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Community based prevention of sexual violence activities by Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT	30/11/2023
34	21/11/2023	Minister Berry	Multidisciplinary Centre with specialist sexual violence responses and services	01/12/2023
35	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Health Justice Partnerships	30/11/2023
36	21/11/2023	Minister Berry	Men's behaviour change programs	30/11/2023
37	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group	30/11/2023
38	22/11/2023	Minister Berry	ACT Domestic and Family Violence Death Review	30/11/2023
39	22/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Next Steps First Action Plan (Children and Young People Protection Policy and Services)	30/11/2023
40	22/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	External Merits Review (Children and Young People Protection Policy and Services)	30/11/2023
41	22/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Internal Review Pilot (Children and Young People Protection Policy and Services)	04/12/2023

42	22/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Increasing Demand (Child and Family Centres)	29/11/2023
43	15/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Transitioning from out of home care for 18-21yr olds	29/11/2023
44	14/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Procurement (Health Directorate)	05/12/2023
45	15/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Nurse walk-in centres	05/12/2023
46	21/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Therapy Dogs	18/12/2023
47	16/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Yoga for Health Workers	05/12/2023
48	16/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	WHS Incidents	05/12/2023
49	20/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	DSD Budget (Digital Solutions Division)	19/12/2023
50	20/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	AETHER and RHAPSODY (Digital Solutions Division)	22/12/2023
51	21/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	NTT data server (Digital Solutions Division)	18/12/2023
52	21/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Travel by officials (Digital Solutions Division)	12/12/2023
53	21/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Staff Rosters	19/12/2023
54	21/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	IT Solutions (Digital Solutions Division)	12/12/2023
55	22/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	Lingo Project (Digital Solutions Division)	12/12/2023
56	22/11/2023	Minister Stephen-Smith	PiCS Replacement Project (Digital Solutions Division)	12/12/2023

Questions Taken on Notice

No.	Date	Asked of	Subject	Response received
1	20/11/2023	CHS	Northside Hospital matrix	12/12/2023
2	20/11/2023	CHS	Home birth limitations – Syntocinon prescriptions	05/12/2023
3	20/11/2023	CHS	Nurse Practitioner consult cost	20/12/2023
4	20/11/2023	CHS	South Tuggeranong Health Centre engagement	27/11/2023
5	20/11/2023	CHS	Oral Health Services Adults	29/11/2023

6	20/11/2023	CHS	Dental services – Youth dental services	29/11/2023
7	20/11/2023	CHS	Oral dentures waitlist	30/11/2023
8	20/11/2023	CHS	Dental services provided by CHS	01/12/2023
9	20/11/2023	CHS	Digital Health Record Manager international working arrangements	29/11/2023
10	20/11/2023	CHS	Therapy Dogs	28/11/2023
11	20/11/2023	CHS	Gynaecology Oncology Services	30/11/2023
12	20/11/2023	CHS	Tongue-tie and breast-feeding programs	05/12/2023
13	20/11/2023	CHS	Speech pathology	30/11/2023
14	20/11/2023	CHS	Radiation incidents	27/11/2023
15	20/11/2023	CHS	New MRI machine	30/11/2023
16	20/11/2023	CHS	Radiotherapy treatments	30/11/2023
17	20/11/2023	CHS	Staff concerns ageing imaging equipment	01/12/2023
18	20/11/2023	CHS	Nurse Practitioner and General Practitioner Scope of Practice	10/01/2024
19	20/11/2023	CHS	WiFi Compatibility with Digital Health Record in Critical Services Building	28/11/2023
20	20/11/2023	CHS	Health Infrastructure Enabling Bill 2022	28/11/2023
21	20/11/2023	CSD	Freedom of Information requests	27/11/2023
22	20/11/2023	CSD	Child and Family Centre client satisfaction survey with referral	27/11/2023
23	20/11/2023	CSD	Internal Review of Child Protection Decisions Pilot – internal governance review body	27/11/2023
24	20/11/2023	CSD	Next Steps Strategy/Step Up for Our Kids – Evaluation Report	28/11/2023
25	20/11/2023	CSD	Child and Family Centre staffing vacancies	27/11/2023
26	20/11/2023	CSD	Ruby's House – Overnight accommodation	27/11/2023
27	20/11/2023	CSD	Ruby's House – Average overnight accommodation numbers	27/11/2023
28	20/11/2023	CSD	Ruby's House – safe return	27/11/2023
29	20/11/2023	CSD	Ruby's House – on-site support	27/11/2023
30	20/11/2023	CSD	Child and Family Centre Client Satisfaction Survey and data	27/11/2023
31	20/11/2023	CSD	Relocation exemptions under Growing Renewing Public Housing Program	28/11/2023
32	20/11/2023	CSD	Transition of public housing dwellings	28/11/2023
33	20/11/2023	CSD	Completion of 400 dwellings allocated since 2017-18	28/11/2023

34	20/11/2023	CSD	Replacements for demolished dwellings	28/11/2023
35	20/11/2023	CSD	Property condition complaints	28/11/2023
36	20/11/2023	CSD	Dual occupancy policy	28/11/2023
37	20/11/2023	CSD	Family Domestic and Sexual Violence Grants Program funding	28/11/2023
38	20/11/2023	CSD	Food relief - funding spent on freight costs	04/12/2023
39	20/11/2023	CSD	Food relief database	04/12/2023
40	23/11/2023	CHS	Mental health crisis support	01/12/2023
41	23/11/2023	CHS	Mental health crisis support	01/12/2023
42	23/11/2023	CHS	Patients absconding from care	05/01/2024
43	23/11/2023	CHS	Patients absconding from care	08/12/2023
44	23/11/2023	CHS	Mental Health Workforce Strategy Action Plan	04/12/2023
45	23/11/2023	CHS	Patients absconding from care	08/12/2023
46			Withdrawn	
47	23/11/2023	CHS	Legal advice	01/12/2023
48	23/11/2023	CHS	Dhulwa incident - August 2023	01/12/2023
49	24/11/2023	CHS	AMHU Internal Review	08/12/2023
50	24/11/2023	CHS	Mental health crisis support - triage process	08/12/2023

Appendix D: Gender distribution of witnesses

Beginning in April 2023, in response to an audit by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Committees are collecting information on the gender of witnesses. The aim is to determine whether committee inquiries are meeting the needs, and allowing the participation of, a range of genders in the community. Participation is voluntary and there are no set responses.

Gender indication	Total
Female	23
Male	9
Non-binary	0
Gender neutral	0
No data	0