

2023

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING –
REPORT 9 - INQUIRY INTO ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2021-22**

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

**Presented by
Mr Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister
July 2023**

Introduction

On 11 February 2021, the Legislative Assembly passed an amendment to the 2 December 2020 Resolution of Establishment (clause 3) referring the 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*.

The 2021-22 Annual and Financial Reports were reviewed by the relevant Standing Committees, and each Committee held hearings and reported separately.

The below Government Response addresses the recommendations which relate to the 2021-22 Annual and Financial Reports.

The following Annual and Financial Reports or sections of annual reports, were referred to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing (the Committee):

- ACT Health Directorate;
- Canberra Health Services; and
- Community Services Directorate.

Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing – Report 9 - Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-22

RECOMMENDATION	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (AGREED/AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE/NOTED/NOT AGREED)
Recommendation 1 The ACT Government collect data of nursing/midwife to patient ratios in schools and community centres.	NOTED Currently there are no locally or nationally recognised nurse to patient ratios for schools and community centres and therefore this data is not collected.
Recommendation 2 That the ACT Government assure ongoing funding for the Room4Change Program and seek ways to expand the Program so that it can help a greater segment of the community.	AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE The ACT Government acknowledges the importance of the Room4Change Program as a key intervention option for perpetrators of domestic and family violence within the ACT. It also acknowledges the need for further expansion of the program to ensure a wider scope of support and increase positive outcomes for perpetrators and victim/survivors. The ACT Government is committed to reviewing and improving its services responding to domestic and family violence where the support needs of victim/survivors is one of the core considerations. The recommendation is agreed in-principle, to ensure ongoing support for the community and a continuation of service provision to both perpetrators and victim/survivors of domestic and family violence. Notwithstanding the above considerations, the ACT Government is currently engaged in significant service reviews of the sector. Recommendations from these reviews will need to be considered regarding the application of future funding and the capacity and capability of organisations to adopt these recommendations. The ACT Government will continue to consider these recommendations and their potential implementation in due course subject to future budget considerations.

RECOMMENDATION	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (AGREED/AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE/NOTED/NOT AGREED)
Recommendation 3 The ACT Government conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of In-Reach Clinicians in providing the psychological support for patients following discharge from hospital for an eating disorder and whether further initiatives could be considered and introduced.	AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE There is significant reform that has occurred in the eating disorder pathway in the previous two years. This reform will continue with the introduction of the ACT Residential Treatment Centre for Eating Disorders in 2024. Following the opening of this centre, an evaluation of all initiatives, including whether any further services are required, will be undertaken.
Recommendation 4 The ACT Government establish a second residential facility located on the northside of Canberra to improve geographical access to support for young people who are at risk of homelessness.	NOTED The Safe and Connected Youth: Coordinated Service Response Program (Program) includes two complementary service elements, these are: • Early Preservation Outreach; and • Therapeutic Respite Accommodation and Post-Exit Outreach (Ruby's House Canberra). The Program commenced a phased transition to delivering the coordinated service response from 1 April 2022. Following a service establishment phase, Ruby's House Canberra started welcoming young people from 20 June 2022. The Program is in the service implementation phase, whereby service partners and other key stakeholders are taking an action-based learning approach to ensure the service model is implemented in a way that maintains its integrity and supports the ACT service system to respond to the needs of children, young people and their families who are experiencing family conflict and may be at risk of homelessness. An evaluation and monitoring framework has been embedded into daily operations, which will support future decision-making around whether another residential property is required. At this time, children, young people and their families are being supported through the coordinated service response and both the ACT Government and the Program delivery partners do not consider a second property based on the current model is needed.

RECOMMENDATION	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (AGREED/AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE/NOTED/NOT AGREED)
	Ruby's House Canberra is one of two components of the Program supporting children and young people aged 8 to 15 years who are experiencing family conflict and at risk of homelessness. The Program is tailored to meet the needs of children and young people as they present, and change over time. The Program aims to increase the number of supports available to children and young people aged 8 to 15 years of age; provide early support to families experiencing family conflict; and provide a safe and secure place for children and young people to stay while they are supported to improve their family functioning and ensuring family reunification is stable and early support is available. More information is available at: Safe & Connected Youth Program - Conflict Resolution Service (crs.org.au)
Recommendation 5 The ACT Government keep records of the number of vacant medical staff positions at Canberra Health Services and Calvary Hospital as well as the average time taken for vacant medical positions to be filled.	NOTED There is limited system infrastructure in place to record or report on the time taken to fill vacant positions across the ACT's health services. However, Canberra Health Services had done considerable work over recent years to improve recruitment processes and reduce the time to fill vacancies. Canberra Health Service can provide point in time reports on current medical vacancies.