



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

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

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA: To ask the Minister for Health

Ref: Budget Outlook, p. 314; Budget Statement C, p. 18

Hearing Date: 20/07/2023

In relation to: Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm - Residential Service Pilot

- (1) It was stated during the hearing that the pilot of a residential program at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm has not begun yet. When is the current expected launch date, and what factors have contributed to its delay?
- (2) It was stated during the hearing that, whilst the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm Advisory Board is currently 'paused', board members are still being engaged regarding the pilot of a residential program. What is the nature of this ongoing engagement, which board members does it involve, and when was the date of the last engagement with board members regarding the pilot?
- (3) It was stated during the hearing the independent review of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm Advisory Board began in March and was due to be complete in August. Who is conducting the review, and on which date was the contract signed?
- (4) In a 1 March 2023 email, members of the Advisory Board were told that the review should take '6-8 weeks once the contract is signed'. Why has the review lasted much longer than this?
- (5) When was the last time that board members were advised of the progress of this review, and what were they told?
- (6) What is the cost of the independent review of the Advisory Board? Where is that funding coming from?
- (7) How long after the review is complete do you expect the Advisory Board to resume formal meetings?
- (8) It was stated during the hearing that when a designated position at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm could not be filled, the position was changed to non-designated. What is this position? How many applications were received for the designated position before it was changed? How long was it advertised before it was changed? How many positions in total currently exist at the farm, and of these, how many are designated and how many are non-designated?
- (9) How many of the non-designated positions were originally designated but were later changed?

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

- (1) No date has been set for the start of the residential pilot. The residential pilot requires finalising the model and supporting the development of capacity, capability and workforce at the Farm – including engagement with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and other appropriate culturally safe service providers.
- (2) Prior to the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm Advisory Board (NBHFAB) being paused, it finalised the Healing Framework and provided extensive advice on the design of the pilot. The ACT Government continues to act in good faith on this advice to ensure continued progress. The whole of the NBHFAB has been updated in writing at key milestones, and verbally when contacting senior ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) staff. Members are welcome to engage with ACTHD about progress at any time.
- (3) The review is being undertaken by Pricewaterhouse Coopers Indigenous Consulting (PIC), a majority Indigenous owned, led and staffed consulting firm. The contract was signed on 1 May 2023. While initial negotiations started in February, the commencement of the review was delayed by significant Sorry Business in Community, which also impacted provider and staffing availability requiring commensurate contracting changes.
- (4) The review is currently experiencing a delay of approximately four weeks. This process is intended to engage deeply with NBHFAB members. Unfortunately, I am advised that the unavailability of members has been a significant cause of delays.
- (5) The last major update was provided in writing to the NBHFAB on 8 June 2023. The update provided details of NBHF Advisory Board Review, NBHF residential progress, and NBHF visits and promotion. In relation to the review, please see below the exact update provided.

“As you are aware Price Waterhouse Cooper Indigenous Consulting (PIC) has been engaged to undertake the NBHFAB review. The ability to provide highly experienced male and female First Nations consultants from outside of the ACT and Region, experience in similar work, and commitment to maintaining anonymity of individuals whilst delivering unbiased recommendations was central to their selection.

“First round conversations with Community and government stakeholders commenced on 8 May. As indicated in our earlier communications, the review is expected to be completed six to eight weeks from PIC starting these conversations. As such, a finish date of 19 June to 3 July is anticipated. The main thing that could push this timeline out is if PIC cannot get a hold of/speak with key stakeholders.”

- (6) The review contract is for \$97, 176 (GST inc) and has been funded internally by the ACT Health Directorate.
- (7) Careful consideration of the Review recommendations will guide action moving forward, including in what form and when the Advisory Board should resume.
- (8) Position P52140 was advertised as an identified position under *s42 of the Discrimination Act 1991*, through jobs.act.gov.au, Seek and Ethical Jobs from 4 to 18 March 2022. No applications were received. There are six positions occupied at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm as of 31 July 2023, four of which are designated as identified positions. The two positions that are not designated as identified positions are P52140 as noted above and a casual position that is being used temporarily to assist with bus transport.
- (9) P52140 is the only position at the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm that was designated as an identified position and has been redesignated as a non-identified position in order to

enable recruitment and ongoing service delivery. The position can be restored to identified status at a later time.

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

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Stephen-Smith', written over a horizontal line.

Date:

15/8/23

By the Minister for Health, Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA