



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: MR ED COCKS MLA

Addressed to: MR CHRIS STEEL MLA, TREASURER

In relation to: FORWARD EXPENDITURE

Hearing: 13 February 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 68, 69

Transcript provided: 20 February 2025

Answer Due: 27 February 2025

Mr Chris Steel MLA and Mr Russ Campbell, Acting Under Treasurer, Treasury, CMTEDD took on notice the following questions:

Mr Cocks: One of the ones that stood out—another one was Community Services Directorate. Its annual report shows, if I remember correctly, and I may be wrong, roughly a \$50 million overspend compared with the original budgeted amount. These seem to be fairly significant deviations.

Going to the question of trust in the budget process that Ms Carrick was going to earlier, were they any requests across the government to bring forward any expenditure from 2024-25 into 2023-24?

Mr Campbell: There may have, yes. I expect there probably would have been so we can take it on notice.

Mr Cocks: Well, what would be the justification for increasing an overspend in a year, so expending more than budgeted rather than having that in the budget for the planned year?

Mr Campbell: It may be because a project is delayed or something like that and you need to move the funding forward, or it may be that you tend to run a case of recruitment that has been delayed.

Mr Austin: So are you talking about pushing funding out into the next financial year?

Mr Cocks: No, bringing it to—

Mr Austin: Bringing it forward, yes.

Mr Cocks: So one of the—

Mr Steel: Early delivery of a project may be a reason, yes.

Mr Cocks: One of the things that was observed through the Rudd/Gillard period federally amongst public servants was a tendency to bring forward expenditure into a current year in order to make a

budget look better the following year. I am trying to find out has there been any request to bring forward any possible expenditure between years?

Mr Steel: To appropriate more than you had in your original appropriation?

Mr Cocks: To deal with the fact of an overspend in favour of a better looking budget?

Mr Steel: The result of the previous financial year is reported on as well so it is not really only getting—it is not really getting away from the fact that there has been, you know, the expenditure may be in a different financial year but—

Mr Cocks: It does make it look nicer, though.

Mr Steel: We can take the question on notice for those particular financial years that you are talking about.

CHRIS STEEL MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Requests to bring expenditure forward are considered as part of the Budget and Budget Review processes for individual projects and initiatives. It is important to note these requests do not create new appropriation and are offset by the reprofiling of other expenditure to future years.

These requests may also be facilitated through access to the capital works reserve under section 18E of the *Financial Management Act 1996*. No authorisations were made for access to the capital works reserve in 2023-24 or to date in 2024-25.

The following items were estimated to be brought forward from 2024-25 to 2023-24 as part of the 2023-24 Budget Review and 2024-25 Budget:

Project/Initiative	Amount \$'000	Agency	Type
Implementation of the Canberra Hospital Master Plan	9,072	ACTHD	Capital
Upgrading Lanyon Homestead	257	CFC	Capital
Expanding Pharmacy Services at The Canberra Hospital	500	CHS	Capital
Investing in public health care – Implementation and integration of a modern rostering system	258	CHS	Capital
Strengthening Cultural Integrity – Aboriginal Languages and Cultures in the Public School System	120	EDU	Recurrent
New and Expanded Schools – Future Planning	1,250	EDU	Capital
New and Expanded Schools – Upgrading and Increasing School Capacity	1,000	EDU	Capital
Improving Canberra's health infrastructure - Canberra Hospital Expansion	53,276	iCBR	Capital
Arts and culture – Canberra Theatre Centre expansion and redevelopment	1,102	iCBR	Capital
Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List	200	JACS	Recurrent
Better community infrastructure – Upgrades to Hawker District Playing Fields	200	TCCS	Capital

The following items are estimated to be brought forward to 2024-25 from subsequent financial years as part of the 2024-25 Budget Review:

Project/Initiative	Amount \$'000	Agency	Type
Acton Waterfront Park	2,870	CRA	Capital
Renewing Canberra's city precinct	344	CRA	Capital
Renewing Canberra's city heart	2,041	CRA	Capital

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Project/Initiative	Amount \$'000	Agency	Type
Woden Bus Depot Augmentation	6,000	TCO	Capital
Better transport infrastructure – Improving our bus network	9,000	TCO	Capital
Casey Community Recreation Park	400	TCCS	Capital
Molonglo Enabling Works	19,000	TCCS	Capital
Protecting Canberra's unique environment – Upgrading the stormwater network	1,500	TCCS	Capital
Better community infrastructure – Yerrabi district park upgrades	851	TCCS	Capital

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration

Signature:



By the Treasurer, Chris Steel MLA

Date:

3/3/25