Legislative Assembly for the **Australian Capital Territory**

Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Minutes

Meeting 1

Date: Thursday, 11 December 2025

Time: 12.30 pm

Location: Kiribati Room

Type: Private meeting

Attendance

Members: Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)
Mr Ed Cocks MLA (Deputy Chair)
Ms Fiona Carrick MLA
Ms Caitlin Tough MLA

Secretariat: Dr David Monk, Secretary

1. Commencement

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting at 12.32 pm.

2. Conflicts of interest

2.1. No conflicts were declared.

3. Resolution of establishment

3.1. The Committee noted the resolution of establishment.

4. Standard resolutions

4.1. The Committee **resolved** [TOUGH] to adopt the following general resolutions:

- The Committee authorises the Secretary to write on its behalf to informally request supplementary documents or ask follow-up questions as part of an inquiry.
- Pursuant to Standing Order 241(d) the Committee authorises the Chair to provide public briefings on matters related to an inquiry. Party political comments are not permitted. The Chair will provide as much notice as possible of any engagement.
- The privilege statement providing for witness and committee privilege is to be incorporated at the beginning of the transcript for all Committee hearings.
- Pursuant to Standing Order 241, the Committee authorises for publication all Ministerial and Statutory Officer responses to questions taken on notice and questions on notice received, unless there is a request for confidentiality.

- The Committee authorises its members to nominate one or more employees in their office to access Committee documents.

5. Meeting arrangements

5.1. The Committee deliberated on a regular meeting time.

5.2. The Committee **resolved** [COCKS] to set its regular meeting time as 4 pm on non-sitting Tuesdays, commencing 20 January 2026.

6. Commencing the inquiry

6.1. The Committee noted the inquiry terms of reference in the resolution of establishment.

6.2. The Committee **resolved** [CLAY] that submissions for the inquiry close on 12 February 2026, and that public hearings be scheduled on the morning of Tuesday, 3 March 2026 and the afternoon of Thursday, 5 March 2026.

6.3. The Committee deliberated on the draft media release and agreed to delete the second paragraph and add text at the end of the fourth paragraph.

6.4. The Committee **resolved** [COCKS] to endorse the media release, as amended.

6.5. The Committee noted the value of issuing a media release a week before the closing date for submissions as a reminder.

6.6. The Committee considered the list of stakeholders provided by the secretariat, and suggested additions. The Committee also agreed that Members could make further suggestions after the meeting, which the secretariat would action.

6.7. The Committee noted the draft letters to the Commonwealth Treasurer and three other Commonwealth entities, inviting them to make a submission to the inquiry. The Committee **resolved** [TOUGH] to approve the Chair signing the letters.

6.8. The Committee asked that the secretariat follow up the letters to the Commonwealth requesting a submission to the inquiry after they have been sent.

7. Procurement of a specialist advisor

7.1. The Committee noted that the value of the procurement will be within the range of $25k to $500k, meaning that at least three written quotes must be sought. It also noted the four consultants proposed.

7.2. The Committee agreed to seek three additional quotes: the e61 Institute; Alan Kohler (journalist); and John Hawkins (academic).

7.3. The Secretary declared an interest in having previously studied with John Hawkins.

7.4. The Committee deliberated on the proposed reporting date of 27 February 2026 and agreed that this instead become the date for an interim report, with the final report due by 30 April 2026.

7.5. The Committee deliberated on the terms of reference for the specialist advisor. The Committee **resolved** [CLAY] that these be agreed via correspondence after the meeting.

7.6. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] that the Committee approve:

7.6.1. the secretariat obtaining seven quotes;

7.6.2. a quote date of 28 January 2026, an interim reporting date of 27 February 2026, and a final reporting date of 30 April 2026; and

7.6.3. a scoping meeting with the advisor at the start of the review and giving the reviewer the option of requesting later meetings.

7.7. The Committee **resolved** [CLAY] to approve the letter inviting the ACT Treasurer to make a submission to the inquiry on behalf of the Government, as well as requesting that the specialist advisor have access to ACT Government officials.

8. Other business

8.1. Mr Cocks noted he would be on leave from mid-December to mid-January.

8.2. The Chair authorised the secretariat to use her electronic signature in correspondence, where necessary.

9. Next meeting

9.1. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for:

Date: Tuesday, 20 January 2026, unless otherwise agreed
Time: 4 pm
Location: Kiribati Room

10. Close

10.1. The Chair closed the meeting at 1.30 pm.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
13 January 2026

Minutes

Meeting 2

Date: Wednesday, 17 December 2025
Time: 11.00 am
Location: Kiribati Room
Type: Private meeting

Attendance

Members: Ms Caitlin Tough MLA

Secretariat: Dr David Monk, Secretary
Sophie Milne

1. Commencement

1.1. There being no quorum after 15 minutes, Ms Tough retired.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
13 January 2026

Legislative Assembly for the **Australian Capital Territory**

Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Minutes

Meeting 3

Date: Tuesday, 13 January 2026

Time: 4.00 pm

Location: Kiribati Room

Type: Private meeting

Attendance

Members: Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)

Ms Fiona Carrick MLA

Ms Caitlin Tough MLA (via Teams)

Secretariat: Dr David Monk, Secretary

Ms Sophie Milne

1. Commencement

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting at 4.04 pm.

2. Conflicts of interest

2.1. No new conflicts were declared.

3. Confirmation of minutes

3.1. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] to adopt the minutes of Meetings 1 and 2 – 11 and 17 December 2025.

4. Procurement of a specialist adviser

4.1. The Committee noted that one of the vendors invited to provide a quotation had made a query about the requirements.

4.2. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] to approve the addendum to the request for quotation, which would clarify the role of the specialist adviser.

4.3. The Committee agreed that it would be constructive to make a statement to the Assembly when practicable, providing an update on the procurement.

5. Inquiry

5.1. The Committee noted the inquiry milestones.

5.2. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] to receive and publish the following submission:

5.2.1. Submission 1: John Bell

5.3. The Committee noted the organisations and individuals that the secretariat has approached to invite submissions, as well as additional potential submitters that the secretariat will approach shortly.

5.4. The Committee agreed that the secretariat would advise the five federal ACT parliamentary representatives of the hearing dates and times and indicate that the Committee may wish to invite them to a public hearing.

5.5. The Committee deliberated on the financial transfers between NSW and the ACT in relation to health services. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] that the Chair invite the NSW Health Minister to provide a submission to the inquiry.

5.6. The Committee noted that the Commonwealth Grants Commission has previously provided an informative briefing to an Assembly committee about its work and **resolved** [TOUGH] that the Chair invite the Commission to provide this briefing to the Committee.

5.7. The Committee **resolved** [TOUGH] that the Chair invite the following Commonwealth entities to make a submission to the inquiry:

5.7.1. the Infrastructure Minister

5.7.2. Infrastructure Australia

5.7.3. the Parliamentary Budget Office

5.7.4. the Productivity Commission

5.7.5. the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

5.7.6. the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

5.8. The Committee noted that there is a Commonwealth Parliament Joint Standing Committee with responsibility for the National Capital, which may have an interest in the inquiry. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] that the Chair invite that Committee to make a submission to the inquiry, or any other comment.

5.9. The Committee noted the 2025 decision of the Fair Work Commission in relation to working conditions for doctors in ACT hospitals.

6. Other business

6.1. No further business was raised.

7. Next meeting

7.1. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for:

Date: Tuesday, 20 January 2026
Time: 4 pm
Location: Kiribati Room

8. Close

8.1. The Chair closed the meeting at 4.32 pm.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
28 January 2026

Minutes

Meeting 4

Date: Tuesday, 27 January 2026
Time: 4.00 pm
Location: Kiribati Room
Type: Private meeting

Attendance

Members: Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)
Mr Ed Cocks MLA (Deputy Chair)
Ms Fiona Carrick MLA
Ms Caitlin Tough MLA

Secretariat: Dr David Monk, Secretary
Ms Sophie Milne (via Teams)

1. Commencement

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting at 4.00 pm.

2. Conflicts of interest

2.1. No new conflicts were declared.

3. Confirmation of minutes

3.1. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] to adopt the minutes of Meeting 3 – 13 January 2026.

4. Procurement of a specialist adviser

4.1. The Secretary updated the Committee on the procurement.

4.2. The Committee noted that it had received a second query about the selection process.

4.3. The Committee **resolved** [CLAY] to approve the second addendum to the request for quotation, which clarified that additional vendor material beyond the first two pages would not be considered by the section panel.

5. Inquiry

5.1. The Committee noted the inquiry milestones.

5.2. The Committee noted the following correspondence and information:

5.2.1. advice from Infrastructure Australia that they will not provide a submission.

5.2.2. acknowledgement from the national NCET Committee

5.2.3. advice from the Mackinnon Institute about their own project into fiscal sustainability of state and territory governments, and their suggestion that the specialist adviser contact them

5.2.4. granting a submission extension to ACTCOSS of one week to 19 February 2026

5.2.5. agreement to brief the Committee from the Commonwealth Grants Commission, at its regular meeting time on 17 February 2026

5.2.6. advice from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) that they will not provide a submission but will brief the secretariat.

5.3. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] to have a briefing with the Commonwealth Grants Commission on 17 February 2026.

5.4. The Committee requested that the secretariat advise the Commonwealth Grants Commission that it may also wish to put written questions for response after the briefing.

5.5. The Committee requested that the secretariat approach the PBO to arrange a private briefing for the Committee, for example around the public hearings on 3 and 5 March 2026.

5.6. The Committee noted the reminder media release for submissions and **resolved** [COCKS] to adopt it for release on 5 February 2026.

5.7. The Committee requested that the secretariat publish the hearing dates of 3 and 5 March 2026 on the Assembly website.

6. Other business

6.1. The Committee requested the secretariat to update Members' meeting invitations.

6.2. The Committee requested the secretariat to distribute past inquiry reports into a Parliamentary Budget Office for the Assembly.

6.3. The Committee requested the secretariat to advise ministers and the Auditor-General of the proposed hearing dates.

7. Next meeting

7.1. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for:

Date: Tuesday, 10 February 2026
Time: 4 pm
Location: Kiribati Room

8. Close

8.1. The Chair closed the meeting at 4.36 pm.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
11 February 2026

Minutes

Meeting 5

Date:	Tuesday, 10 February 2026
Time:	4.00 pm
Location:	Kiribati Room
Type:	Private meeting

Attendance

Members:	Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)
	Mr Ed Cocks MLA (Deputy Chair)
	Ms Fiona Carrick MLA
	Ms Caitlin Tough MLA
Visitor:	Mr Saul Eslake, Specialist Advisor (via Teams)
Secretariat:	Ms Sophie Milne, Acting Secretary (via Teams)
	Ms Cherelyn Brearley

1. Commencement

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting at 4.03 pm.

2. Briefing with Specialist Advisor

2.1. The Secretary updated the Committee on the procurement with Mr Saul Eslake being selected.

2.2. Mr Eslake was admitted and he discussed his report with the Committee.

2.3. Mr Eslake withdrew.

3. Conflicts of interest

3.1. No new conflicts were declared.

4. Confirmation of minutes

4.1. The Committee **resolved** [COCKS] to adopt the minutes of Meeting 4 – 27 January 2026.

5. Inquiry

5.1. The Committee discussed the inquiry.

5.2. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] that the Committee receive and publish Submissions 2 to 4.

5.3. The Committee noted the following correspondence:

5.3.1. Advice from the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare that they will not provide a submission.

5.3.2. Advice from the Commonwealth NCET Committee that they will not provide a submission.

5.3.3. Advice from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority that they will not provide a submission.

5.4. The Committee **resolved** [COCKS] that the Chair write to the ministers for health and education to arrange access to officials if required by the Specialist Advisor, as per the attached drafts.

5.5. The Committee noted that it agreed that the secretariat would advise the five federal ACT parliamentary representatives of the hearing dates and times and indicate that the Committee may wish to invite them to a public hearing.

5.6. The Committee directed the Secretariat to contact Senator Gallagher and Senator Pocock to request a submission.

6. Other business

6.1. The Committee requested that the briefing with the Commonwealth Grants Commission be recorded and shared with Mr Eslake.

7. Next meeting

7.1. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for:

Date: Tuesday, 17 February 2026
Time: 4 pm
Location: Kiribati Room

8. Close

8.1. The Chair closed the meeting at 4.59 pm.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
17 February 2026

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Minutes

Meeting 6

Date: Tuesday, 17 February 2026
Time: 4.00 pm
Location: Kiribati Room
Type: Private meeting

Attendance

Members: Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)
Mr Ed Cocks MLA (Deputy Chair)
Ms Fiona Carrick MLA
Ms Caitlin Tough MLA

Secretariat: Dr David Monk, Secretary

1. Commencement

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting at 4.01 pm.

2. Briefing with the Commonwealth Grants Commission

2.1. The following representatives of the Commission were admitted:

2.1.1. Mr Nathan Williamson, Secretary

2.1.2. Ms Rose Verspaandonk, Assistant Secretary

2.1.3. Mr Michael Gardner, Assistant Secretary

2.1.4. Mr Peter Lock, Director

2.2. The meeting discussed the allocation of GST to the States and Territories.

2.3. The representatives of the Commission withdrew.

3. Conflicts of interest

3.1. No new conflicts were declared.

4. Confirmation of minutes

4.1. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] to adopt the minutes of Meeting 5 – 10 February 2026.

5. Inquiry

5.1. The Committee discussed the inquiry and noted the timelines.

5.2. The Committee discussed the recent country report for Australia published by the International Monetary Fund.

5.3. The Committee **resolved** [COCKS] that the Committee receive and publish the following submissions:

- 5.3.1. Submission 5: Kevin Cox (with attachments)
- 5.3.2. Submission 6: Mark Spain
- 5.3.3. Submission 7: ACT Government
- 5.3.4. Submission 8: Mental Health Carers Voice
- 5.3.5. Submission 9: Nikos Kalogeropoulos
- 5.3.6. Submission 10: Carers ACT
- 5.3.7. Submission 11: Productivity Commission
- 5.3.8. Submission 12: Bruce Paine
- 5.3.9. Submission 13: Commonwealth Grants Commission
- 5.3.10. Submission 14: CPSU
- 5.3.11. Submission 15: Peter Bradbury
- 5.3.12. Submission 16: Property Council of Australia
- 5.3.13. Submission 17: Professor Bodart-Bailey

5.4. The Committee noted that ACTCOSS had received an extension of the submission deadline to 19 February 2026. The Committee **resolved** [TOUGH] to receive and publish the submission from ACTCOSS, once delivered.

5.5. The Committee noted correspondence from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Budget Office of 12 February 2026 offering a private briefing on fiscal sustainability. The Committee agreed that a possible time for this would be shortly before the public hearing on 3 March 2026.

5.6. The Committee deliberated on the public hearing schedule. The Committee **resolved** [CLAY] to agree to the schedule out of session or, if such agreement is not possible, to have an additional meeting to resolve the matter.

5.7. The Committee noted the draft statement to be made under standing order 246A. The Committee **resolved** [TOUGH] to approve the statement as drafted.

5.8. The Committee **resolved** [CLAY] to publish a media release using the text of the 246A statement.

6. Other business

6.1. No matters were raised.

7. Next meeting

7.1. The next meeting of the Committee is a private briefing and public hearing scheduled for:

Date: Tuesday, 3 March 2026
Time: 8.30 am
Location: Prince Edward Island Room

8. Close

8.1. The Chair closed the meeting at 5.14 pm.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
27 February 2026

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Minutes

Meeting 7

Date:	Friday, 27 February 2026
Time:	4.00 pm
Location:	Kiribati Room
Type:	Private meeting

Attendance

Members:	Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)
	Mr Ed Cocks MLA (Deputy Chair)
	Ms Fiona Carrick MLA
	Ms Caitlin Tough MLA
Secretariat:	Dr David Monk, Secretary

1. Commencement

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting at 4.01 pm.

2. Briefing with the Specialist Advisor

2.1. The following were admitted:

2.1.1. Mr Saul Eslake, Director, Corinna Economic Advisory Pty Ltd

2.1.2. Ms Ratih Luhur, Director, In Economics Pty Ltd

2.2. Mr Eslake briefed the Committee on his interim report.

2.3. The meeting discussed possible topics for Mr Eslake's final report. The meeting agreed that Members would send such topics to Mr Eslake through the secretariat.

2.4. The meeting discussed how Mr Eslake might handle media queries. It was agreed that could give factual comment on an *ad hoc* basis.

2.5. Mr Eslake and Ms Luhur withdrew.

2.6. The Committee **resolved** [CLAY] to receive the interim report and publish it on Monday, 2 March 2026.

2.7. The Committee deliberated on how it might handle media inquiries. The Committee agreed to continue with its current arrangement of the Chair speaking on behalf of the Committee, giving prompt notice to members of the Committee of upcoming engagements, and not making partisan comments.

3. Conflicts of interest

3.1. No new conflicts were declared.

4. Confirmation of minutes

4.1. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] to adopt the minutes of Meeting 6 – 17 February 2026.

5. Inquiry

5.1. The Committee discussed the inquiry and noted the timelines.

5.2. The Committee noted the current public hearings schedule and that it did not include the Minister for Education and Early Childhood. The Committee agreed to hold a hearing with the Minister, including in their capacity as Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs.

5.3. The Committee noted the draft letters of invitation.

5.4. The Committee **resolved** [CARRICK] that the Committee adopt and publish the hearing schedule and authorise the Chair to sign the letters of invitation to the Chief Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Health and Mental Health, and the Auditor-General.

5.5. The Committee deliberated on the draft media release and amended it. The Committee **resolved** [COCKS] to adopt the media release for the hearings, as amended.

6. Other business

6.1. No matters were raised.

7. Next meeting

7.1. The next meeting of the Committee is a private briefing and public hearing scheduled for:

Date: Tuesday, 3 March 2026
Time: 8.30 am
Location: Prince Edward Island Room

8. Close

8.1. The Chair closed the meeting at 6.04 pm.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
10 March 2026

Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory
Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Minutes

Meeting 8

Date: Tuesday, 3 March 2026
Time: 8.30 am
Location: Prince Edward Island Room
Type: Public hearing and private meeting

Attendance

Members: Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)
Mr Ed Cocks MLA (Deputy Chair)
Ms Fiona Carrick MLA
Ms Caitlin Tough MLA

Secretariat: David Monk (Secretary)
Cherelyn Brealey (Assistant Secretary)
Jennifer Forest (Assistant Secretary)

1. Commencement

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting at 8.36 am.

2. Private briefing

2.1. The following representatives of the Commonwealth PBO were admitted via Webex:

2.1.1. John Clark, Assistant Parliamentary Budget Officer

2.1.2. Jazmine Smith, Director

2.2. The meeting discussed fiscal sustainability in the public sector.

2.3. Mr Clark and Ms Smith withdrew.

3. Public hearing

3.1. The following witnesses came to the table and were examined:

- Representatives for the ACT Council of Social Service:
  - Dr Devin Bowles, CEO, via Webex
  - Mr Jacob Priergaard, Senior Policy Advisor

- Representatives for the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT:
    - Ms Lisa Kelly, CEO
    - Ms Smera Naik, Policy Officer

3.2. Evidence completed, the witnesses withdrew.

4. Private meeting

4.1. The Committee noted secretariat advice that the Canberra Business Chamber had requested a submission extension, to which the Committee agreed.

4.2. The Chair adjourned proceedings at 10.07 am.

5. Public hearing

5.1. The Chair resumed proceedings at 10.32 am.

5.2. The following witness came to the table and was examined:

- Ms Ashlee Berry, ACT and Capital Region Executive Director, Property Council of Australia

5.3. Evidence completed, the witness withdrew.

5.4. The Chair adjourned proceedings between 11.02 and 11.15 am.

5.5. The following witnesses came to the table and were examined:

- Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister
    - Mr Russ Campbell, Under Treasurer, CMTEDD
    - Ms Gillian Geraghty, Director-General, Infrastructure Canberra

5.6. Evidence completed, the witnesses withdrew.

5.7. The following witness came to the table and was examined:

- Mr Colin Walters, Chair, Inner South Canberra Community Council

5.8. Evidence completed, the witness withdrew.

6. Private meeting

6.1. The Committee deliberated on the hearing.

6.2. The Committee noted correspondence from the Office of David Smith MP, declining to participate in the inquiry. The Secretariat is to provide advice on any response from Senator Gallagher and Alicia Payne MP.

6.3. The Committee noted secretariat discussions with the Office of Senator Pocock regarding his possibly attending a hearing.

6.4. The Committee deliberated on topics to be included in Saul Eslake's final report. The Committee **resolved** [CLAY] to send the following topics:

6.4.1. Payroll tax losses to the ACT due to high levels of Commonwealth employment and lags in population data. .

6.4.2. The key measures which Members could use to assess Budget performance to simplify scrutiny.

6.4.3. In making comparisons of educational outcomes across jurisdictions, whether the correct comparator for private school attendance might be the Greater Sydney or Greater Melbourne areas (Canberra is a largely metropolitan area, whereas other states have significant regional populations).

6.4.4. If within scope, any views on the quality of the reporting of expenses in the Budget papers (for example whether they give management insights).

6.5. The Committee noted that these topics were in addition to the topics raised at the initial scoping meeting with Mr Eslake.

6.6. The Committee agreed to consider any further topics at its meeting on 10 March 2026.

6.7. The Committee deliberated on the process for Mr Eslake to provide his final report. The secretariat is to confirm this with Mr Eslake, including whether the Committee will receive a draft report for comment.

6.8. The Committee noted secretariat advice that the Government's Assembly Coordination team had requested advice around whether the Government needed to respond to Mr Eslake's interim report, and that the secretariat had replied in the negative. The secretariat is to confirm with the Assembly Coordination team that the Government must respond to the Committee's interim report.

6.9. The Committee deliberated on further hearings. The secretariat is to request three dates and times from Minister Berry to facilitate her attendance for an hour as Minister for Education and Early Childhood and Minister for Homes, Homelessness and New Suburbs.

7. Next meeting

7.1. The next meeting of the Committee is a public hearing scheduled for:

Date: Thursday, 5 March 2026
Time: 12.30 pm
Location: Prince Edward Island Room

8. Close

8.1. The Chair closed the meeting at 12.36 pm.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
10 March 2026

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Minutes

Meeting 9

Date: Thursday, 5 March 2026
Time: 12.30 pm
Location: Prince Edward Island Room
Type: Public hearing

Attendance

Members: Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)
Mr Ed Cocks MLA (Deputy Chair)
Ms Fiona Carrick MLA
Ms Caitlin Tough MLA

Secretariat: David Monk (Secretary)
Jennifer Forest (Assistant Secretary)

1. Commencement

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting at 12.31 pm.

2. Public hearing

2.1. Mr Ajay Sharma PSM, Auditor-General for the ACT, came to the table and was examined.

2.2. Evidence completed, the witness withdrew.

2.3. The following witnesses came to the table and were examined:

- Representatives for the Productivity Commission:
  - Mr Peter Johnson, Assistant Commissioner, GST Distribution Inquiry
  - Ms Sook-Ling Yeow, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Commonwealth-State Reporting and Review

2.4. Evidence completed, the witnesses withdrew.

2.5. The Chair suspended proceedings at 1.33 pm and resumed them at 1.41 pm.

2.6. The following witnesses came to the table and were examined:

- Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health and Minister for Mental Health
- Representatives for Canberra Health Services:
    - Ms Janet Zagari, Chief Executive Officer
    - Ms Liz Lopa, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
- Representatives for the Health and Community Services Directorate:
    - Ms Robyn Hudson, Deputy Director-General
    - Ms Skye Jacobi, Executive Group Manager, Health System Innovation & Performance

2.7. Evidence completed, the witnesses withdrew.

2.8. The following witnesses came to the table and were examined:

- Representatives for the Community and Public Sector Union:
    - Ms Madeline Northam, ACT Regional Secretary
    - Mr Jordan Piggott, Lead Organiser ACT

2.9. Evidence completed, the witness withdrew.

2.10. The Chair suspended proceedings at 2.58 pm and resumed them at 3.15 pm.

2.11. Mr Nicholas Kalogeropoulos, Director of Molonglo Group Canberra, came to the table and was examined.

2.12. Evidence completed, the witness withdrew.

2.13. The following witnesses came to the table and were examined:

- Mr Paul Gibbs, Mental Health Policy Officer, Mental Health Carers Voice
- Ms Kamla Brisbane, Chief Strategy, Policy and Engagement Officer, Carers ACT

2.14. Evidence completed, the witnesses withdrew.

2.15. The following witnesses came to the table and were examined:

- Mr Chris Steel MLA, Treasurer
    - Mr Russ Campbell, Under Treasurer
    - Ms Michelle Dowdell, Deputy Under-Treasurer
    - Mr Patrick McAuliffe, Executive Branch Manager, Investments & Borrowings
    - Ms Natasha Bourke, Executive Branch Manager, Financial Reporting & Framework

2.16. Evidence completed, the witnesses withdrew.

2.17. The Chair closed the public hearing.

3. Private meeting

3.1. The Committee deliberated on the hearing.

3.2. The Committee agreed to deliberate on its recommendations at its next meeting on 10 March 2026.

3.3. The secretariat is to follow up on the uncorrected proof transcript and distribute to Members as soon as possible.

4. Next meeting

4.1. The next meeting of the Committee is a private meeting scheduled for:

Date: Tuesday, 10 March 2026
Time: 4 pm
Location: Kiribati Room

5. Close

5.1. The Chair closed the meeting at 5.26 pm.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
10 March 2026

Minutes

Meeting 10

Date: Tuesday, 10 March 2026
Time: 4.00 pm
Location: Kiribati Room
Type: Private meeting

Attendance

Members: Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair)
Mr Ed Cocks MLA (Deputy Chair)
Ms Fiona Carrick MLA
Ms Caitlin Tough MLA

Secretariat: David Monk, Secretary
James Bunce
Jennifer Forest

1. Commencement

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting at 4.02 pm.

2. Conflicts of interest

2.1. No new conflicts were declared.

3. Confirmation of minutes

3.1. The Committee **resolved** [TOUGH] to adopt the minutes of Meetings 7 to 9 – 27 February 2026 and 3 and 5 March 2026.

4. Specialist advisor

4.1. The Committee noted the additional topics that the secretariat provided to Mr Eslake.

4.2. The Committee agreed that the secretariat request Mr Eslake to:

4.2.1. consider addressing the Government's use of the Headline Net Operating Balance in his report

4.2.2. include in his report an explanation of the difference between technical adjustments and policy decisions.

4.3. The Committee agreed that the secretariat forward to Mr Eslake the transcripts from the recent hearings.

4.4. The Committee noted Mr Eslake's advice that he will meet the Chief Minister on 16 March 2026. The Committee agreed that Mr Eslake could meet stakeholders as he saw fit.

5. Interim report

5.1. The Committee noted that the report is due Tuesday, 24 March 2026.

5.2. The Committee deliberated on proposed recommendations and findings submitted by the Members.

5.3. The Committee agreed on the following elements of the interim report:

- 5.3.1. A discussion of item a) in the Committee's terms of reference, including a finding about the ACT Government's financial position and trajectory.
- 5.3.2. Recommendations that the Government adopt the cash balance in its Budget reporting and make its fiscal strategy more specific.
- 5.3.3. A finding in relation to the cost effectiveness of services provided by the ACT Government.
- 5.3.4. A recommendation that the ACT Government provide a supplementary submission that addresses the evidence, the Auditor-General's report, and Mr Eslake's report in relation to items b) to g) in the Committee's terms of reference.
- 5.3.5. A finding that the Budget position is due to policy decisions.
- 5.3.6. A discussion of how the interim report fits within the inquiry process.
- 5.3.7. A discussion of the procurement of the specialist advisor.

5.4. The Committee noted it could supplement the interim report with a letter to the Chief Minister explaining the above in greater detail.

5.5. The Committee noted secretariate advice about the recognition of revenues from superannuation investments.

6. Inquiry administration

6.1. The Committee noted the inquiry timelines.

6.2. The Committee **resolved** [TOUGH] to receive and publish the following submissions:

- 6.2.1. Submission 19: Canberra Business Chamber
- 6.2.2. Submission 20: Mr Richard Scott.

6.3. The Committee deliberated on whether to make a public statement about the inquiry timelines. The Committee agreed to defer this item to a later date.

6.4. The Committee noted the status of interactions with the five federal parliamentary representatives of the ACT.

6.5. The Committee deliberated on future hearings and agreed to invite Minister Berry in relation to education and housing.

6.6. The Committee noted the following correspondence:

 6.6.1. From Gregor Manson, dated 3 March 2026, regarding bushfire management

 6.6.2. From Kevin Cox, dated 6 March 2026, regarding Fair Points Market for existing houses.

7. Other business

7.1. The Committee noted that it had today received a letter from the ACT Branch of the Australian Education Union and deferred this matter to the next meeting.

8. Next meeting

8.1. The next meeting of the Committee is a private meeting to consider the Chair's draft interim report scheduled for:

Date: Friday, 20 March 2026
Time: 10.30 am
Location: Kiribati Room

9. Close

9.1. The Chair closed the meeting at 5.14 pm.

Ms Jo Clay MLA
Chair
23 March 2026