



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING
Mr Johnathan Davis MLA (Chair), Mr James Milligan MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
20 October 2021

QToN No - 32

Asked by Mr Milligan on 20 October 2021: Minister Davidson on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript [20/10/21] [PAGE 31]]

In relation to:

Following the Release of the Report from the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs, Report 9, Report on Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT in August 2020;

- (a) how many of the 66 recommendations have now been completed?
- (b) What is the timeframe for completion of outstanding recommendations? And
- (c) What funding has been allocated under the current budget to enable completion of the recommendations?

Minister Davidson: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

- a) In the ACT Government Response to the Youth Inquiry, the ACT Government Agreed or Agree-in-Principle to 44 recommendations, noted 20 and did not agree to two. The recommendations range from those with clear deliverable and timeframes to those which are more general and do not as readily lend themselves to having a clear end date.

Of the 44 recommendation that were Agreed or Agreed-in-Principle, the ACT Government has completed 16. These are recommendations 1, 2, 15, 19, 20, 29, 32, 35, 41, 42, 48, 52, 60, 61, 62, and 64.

- b) Of the remaining 28 Agreed or Agree-in-Principle recommendations, work is currently progressing on all of them.

Six have been significantly progressed are expected to be completed by the end of this financial year. This includes recommendations 16, 21, 26, 39, 40, and 53.

A further ten are underway and expected to be completed within 2 to 3 years. This includes Recommendations 3, 28, 37, 38, 46, 49, 54, 56, 58, and 66.

The remaining 12 recommendations are being progressed but do not have an estimated timeframe because they will be adopted and integrated into business-as-usual activities as ongoing. This includes recommendations 5, 9, 12, 13, 23, 43, 44, 45, 55, 57, 59, and 63.

Details on the implementation of these recommendations is provided by ACT Directorates in their annual reports. The 2021-22 annual reports are expected to be tabled in December 2021.

- c) The ACT Government has committed to a wide range of investment to specifically support young people experiencing mental health difficulties and their families and to respond to recommendations of the Inquiry, across new and existing budget line items. Due to the wide-ranging nature and whole-of-government scope of the recommendations of the Youth Inquiry, there is no single line item for the implementation of the Youth Inquiry. Further this funding goes across multiple recommendations.

New Investments include:

- \$7.5 million in funding for youth mental health programs, including \$463,000 for the first year of phased implementation of the Moderated Online Social Therapy (MOST) program, operated by Orygen Digital. MOST is an evidence-based online support platform for young people aged 12 to 25. MOST provides a moderated online community that connects young people to a range of supports, including offering integrated face-to-face and digital care to young people across the diagnostic and severity spectrum of mental illness.
- \$851,000 to support the continued expanded operation of CatholicCare's Youth and Wellbeing Outreach program, to support the provision of multidisciplinary outreach services that support young people aged 12 to 25 years who are living with mental health concerns.
- \$169,000 for Parentline to provide more support for parents through phone referrals, counselling, face-to-face sessions and regular phone 'check-ins'.
- \$2.2 million in ongoing funding for a culturally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Program to deliver community-based suicide prevention, intervention, postvention and aftercare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.
- \$2.9 million for the establishment of a Paediatric Liaison and Navigation Service.
- \$803,000 for design work on the redevelopment of the Watson Health Precinct to deliver a world class community-led alcohol and other drug and mental health treatment precinct for those most in need. This includes \$300,000 in capital funding to support design work for the redevelopment of the Ted Noffs Foundation and CatholicCare facilities at the Watson Health Precinct and \$503,000 for Winnunga Nimmitjyah for initial design.
- \$360,000 for the implementation of the LGBTIQ+ scoping study recommendations.
- ongoing funding to continue and expand the Safe and Connected Youth Program to include therapeutic respite accommodation, building a coordinated service response.
- As part of the Investing in Public Education initiative the ACT Government is providing \$7.363 million in funding over four years to employ additional youth and social workers in schools to support teachers, students and families across ACT public schools.

These investments are in addition to the significant ongoing investment that the ACT Government is providing to youth mental health and to services addressed in the recommendations of the Youth Inquiry. These services are addressing the recommendations of the Youth Inquiry through their recurrent funding in 2021-22. Examples include funding the:

- Recurrent operation and management of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) division of Canberra Health Services;
- Recurrent operation and management of the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre;
- Recurrent operation and management of the Children and Youth Protection Service (CYPS);
- Recurrent provision of a range of mental health services for children and young people by non-government organisations, ranging from step-up step-down support like STEPS through to mental health education and promotion such as Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT);
- Operation of the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing;
- The development of an adolescent mental health inpatient unit through the expansion of the Centenary Hospital;
- Operation of the Police, Ambulance, Clinician and Emergency Response (PACER) Service;
- The ongoing work of the Expanding Public Health Services for Eating Disorders (EPHSED) project; and
- Employment of school psychologists and youth workers in schools.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature: *Emma Davidson*

Date: 9 November 2021

By the Minister for Mental Health, Emma Davidson