



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Chiaka Barry MLA

Addressed to: Mr Peter Muir, Chair, Official Visitors Board

In relation to: Transitions from criminal detention

Hearing: 11 February 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript p 73

Transcript provided: 14 February 2025

Answer Due: 21 February 2025, 05:00 PM

Mr Muir took on notice the following question(s):

MS BARRY: Thank you. Can I first start by saying that I was really pleased to read a very balanced report, and I commend you on the quality of that report. There are lots of things there that raises concerns but also gives us direction – there is also things that we need to focus on to fix the system.

My question is around suitability of accommodation for people exiting incarceration or detention, sorry, criminal detention and adult mental health units, as well. What changes, do you think, we would need to make in this area to I guess make the system work better and improve situations for individuals who would probably be – you know, that would have to use the system?

Mr Muir: Can we take the first part of that question, in relation to corrections, on notice?

MS BARRY: Sure.

Mr Muir: Because we had a corrections hearing the other morning – yesterday morning. So we will come back to you on the corrections part of that. The second part, I think my colleagues may have some views. So I will leave it to them.

[Mr Paul Wyles]: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

With regards to Mental Health, currently there are a range of Step up/Step down and transition programs which operate in the community. These generally do a very good job at providing for mental health consumers support, service coordination, therapeutic input and accommodation. These services tend to operate for short periods - 2 to 8 weeks. What is required for some mental health consumers is some longer accommodation and support. The current programs provide useful models to build a longer-term program on. Additionally, it would be good to consider some outreach to assist with support for mental health consumers in their own homes - this would also allow for intervention if the consumer needs more supports, assessment or admission to an inpatient facility.

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The aim here would be to reduce the cycling of some mental health consumers through AMHU by providing some outreach to help them in their own homes.

[Ms Clare Doube]: Further answer to the Member's question is as follows:

In relation to Corrections, there are limited housing options for many detainees when they leave AMC – which is part of wider challenges in relation to housing in the ACT. The Justice Housing program has limited places available but is not suitable for all. While our remit is focused on AMC rather than what occurs on release, we are aware of a number of examples where detainees are released and have precarious living arrangements. For others, housing may be a limiting factor when it comes to applying for bail. This points to the need for greater short-term and long-term affordable housing options (and other associated supports) for men and women leaving custody.

[Ms Vickie Quinn]: Further answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Furthermore, detainees can not go onto Housing ACT'S housing lists unless they are released and many on long term sentences have had to hand back their Housing ACT properties. Generally more transitionally Housing options need to be made available.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

Signature:



Date: 21/02/2025

By the Chair, Official Visitors Board, Peter Muir