



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Inspector of Custodial Services

In relation to: Healthy Prison Review recommendations

Hearing: 23 July 2026

Uncorrected Proof Transcript p 5

Transcript provided: 24 July 2026

Answer Due: 31 July 2026

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

MR EMERSON: Just a supplementary on that, if that is okay. On the recommendations that have been agreed or noted to be considered as part of future budget processes, but to the point just raised, perhaps have not been considered in this budget process, might you be able to provide on notice a list of those? I know you have got the recs on your website; that is amazing, thank you for that. So sorry to give you extra homework, but would that be possible? Anywhere you would look for, okay, this has been agreed, we are hoping this might come up in the budget, but have not been funded?

Mr Costello: Yes, certainly probably what we could provide is where the government response—it usually has an explanation to it—where that refers to some budget funding being required, we could provide that to the committee.

MR EMERSON: Like a kind of breakdown of those, that would be great.

Mr Costello: Yes, certainly.

Sean Costello, Deputy Custodial Inspector: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The Government indicated the implementation of the following recommendations made by the Custodial Inspector in the 2025 Healthy Prison Review were potentially subject to additional budget consideration:

Recommendation	Government Response.	Explanation of Government response
2. Within 18 months, the ACT Government, in implementing its recently released AMC drug strategy, work with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services and community stakeholders to respond to the findings of this review, particularly in relation to supply, demand and harm minimisation.	Agreed in Principle	ACTCS is developing an action plan to support the objectives of the AMC Drug and Blood-borne Virus Strategy. The action plan will: • continue to enhance detection and prevention of drugs entering the CTU and AMC including expansion to more rigorous searching and integrity measures for the AMC (findings 6, 9, 10, 12, rec 3) • policy and guidelines to support improved integrity reporting (findings 19, 23, rec 10) • health literacy programs for young, detained people and other detained people (finding 37, rec 16) • access to harm minimisation by detained people (finding 46) • improvements to purposeful activity offerings and approaches to encouraging engagement (finding 5, rec 30) • NRT, withdrawal experiences, access to Naloxone/JHS response (findings 11, 44, 45). The action plan will focus on the five pillars identified in the Strategy and will be developed within existing resources. Any proposed initiatives not achievable within the current funding envelope will be subject to future budget considerations
5. Within 18 months, in consultation with key stakeholders, including staff, unions and detained people, and subject to appropriate safeguards and appropriate lawful basis, ACT Corrective Services introduce body worn cameras to improve accountability of operational practices.	Noted	Legislative change would be required to support the introduction of body worn cameras, and this could take 12-18 months, including the Legislative Assembly process. Introduction of the cameras would also be subject to future budget considerations. Should legislative and budgetary requirements be agreed, ACTCS would undertake a full consultation process involving staff, unions, detained people and oversight agencies to plan and develop implementation of this technology

13. Within 6 months, ACT Corrective Services expand opportunities for women detained at the Alexander Maconochie Centre to access education, programs, employment and other meaningful activities, including significantly lowering the threshold for how many women must be enrolled for programs and education to run.	Agreed in Principle	ACTCS will explore options to expand opportunities for women detained at the Alexander Maconochie Centre to access education, programs, employment and other meaningful activities. ACTCS recognises the specialist nature of the Women's area and that purposeful activities and programs need to have a strong evidence base and gendered focus. Purposeful activities, including basic life skills, parenting skills and employment entry skills are being investigated. Since the Healthy Prison Review, work has progressed to improve the variety of programs available and being delivered for women. These range from Alcohol and Other Drug programs, increased access to education, criminogenic programs, life skills, parenting skills and self-management (conflict resolution, mindfulness, exercise and self understanding). Consideration has also been given to the minimum thresholds required for courses to run. ACTCS is also looking at successes in other jurisdictions, such as the WA Inspector of Custodial Services' review into Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison. ACTCS has commenced engagement with community organisations, such as First Steps Pregnancy, to provide specialist supports. Program planning must consider the demographics of this group and people's duration in custody. Work will also begin this year on the next ACT Women's Plan. ACTCS will consult stakeholders, including the Inspector, to put forward recommendations for actions to support women in the AMC and community corrections. Exploring options to expand opportunities for women will be undertaken within existing resources; however, any expansion of education, programs or employment may be subject to future budget processes.
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14. Within 18 months, ACT Corrective Services expand women's accommodation within the Women's Community Centre precinct in order to provide more flexibility in accommodating the different cohorts of women (e.g. women on protection, segregation, separate confinement orders).	Noted	Action on this recommendation is dependent on funding to support the next stages of the Master Infrastructure Plan and is subject to future budget considerations.
17. Within 6 months, ACT Corrective Services prioritise commitments made under its Disability Action and Inclusion Plan 2024–2026 as they specifically relate to detained people with neurodivergent conditions including screening tools, reasonable adjustments and other supports.	Current Government Policy	Work is underway on commitments under the Disability Action and Inclusion Plan 2024-2026 (DAIP), including those that specifically relate to detained people with neurodivergent conditions including screening tools, reasonable adjustments and other supports. The DAIP commits ACTCS to commence the following relevant agreed actions: • 2.5 – investigate the feasibility of quiet spaces for individuals experiencing heightened states • 3.2 – improve data capture on individuals with disability interacting with ACTCS • 3.4 – build a coordinated approach to implementing behaviour management plans for detainees with complex care needs • 4.3 – improve the accessibility of information developed by ACTCS. ACTCS' responses to these planned activities may be subject to future budget considerations
18. Within 18 months, the ACT Government publish a strategy for accommodating detained people with complex needs arising from health, disability, limited mobility, and advanced age that currently cannot be suitably accommodated at the Alexander Maconochie Centre.	Noted	ACTCS and MHJHADS are working together to identify suitable accommodation solutions for detained people with complex needs arising from health, disability, limited mobility, and advanced age. Should this work result in a strategy, the practical and legislative implications arising from this strategy are unlikely to be resolved within 18 months and would be subject to future budget considerations.

19. Within 6 months, the ACT Government consider the feasibility of including medical imaging facilities when developing the Alexander Maconochie Centre satellite health clinics.	Agreed - complete	Canberra Health Services and ACT Corrective Services have completed a preliminary analysis around the feasibility of medical imaging at the Alexander Maconochie Centre as part of the Alexander Maconochie Centre Master Plan process. Supported by ACT Corrective Services, Canberra Health Services provided some in-reach medical imaging (ultrasounds) at the Alexander Maconochie Centre as part of an intensive program in July 2025 and August 2025 that helped to reduce waiting times for this imaging test. However, ongoing service for ultrasound and other medical imaging tests such as x-rays would need to consider operational and infrastructure resourcing requirements as part of the Alexander Maconochie Centre satellite clinics business cases. A design consultant has been engaged to lead the infrastructure upgrade design works for the Alexander Maconochie Centre. The design work will in part consider upgrades to the Hume Health building with an aim to introduce specialist items such as space for additional medical imaging.
20. Within 18 months, Canberra Health Services expand the capacity of Aboriginal Liaison Officers to attend the Alexander Maconochie Centre and Bimberi Youth Justice Centre more regularly, including considering dedicated Justice Health Services Aboriginal Liaison Officer positions in order to provide more culturally appropriate health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at the Alexander Maconochie Centre and Bimberi Youth Justice Centre	Agreed in Principle	Expanding the capacity of Aboriginal Liaison Officers to attend the Alexander Maconochie Centre and Bimberi Youth Justice Centre more regularly, including considering dedicated Justice Health Services Aboriginal Liaison Officer positions will be considered in terms of current and future models of care for this service. Consideration of current and future models of care for this service will be undertaken within current resourcing. Any expansion of resources would be subject to future budget considerations.

21. Within 18 months, ACT Corrective Services assess whether the Supports and Intervention Unit is meeting its objectives to support detained people including their mental health needs and reasonable adjustments for disability; and ensure it is staffed appropriately, including the requisite number of psychologists for that service	Agreed in Principle	ACTCS will assess the SIU to determine whether it is meeting its objectives to support detained people. The assessment will take place once the Model of Care has been developed and implemented and the SIU staffing profile has been reviewed and revised. Any change to the staffing profile would be subject to future budget considerations.
23. Within 6 months, ACT Corrective Services work with the Canberra Institute of Technology to fund and deliver vocational education and training within the Alexander Maconochie Centre. This should include consideration of the role that private Registered Training Organisations may play, as well as consultation with detained people, business and industry experts to devise a strategic approach to offerings that provides pathways to employment.	Noted	A Memorandum of Agreement has been signed between ACTCS and CIT to provide the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Intensive Learning Pilot. ACTCS will continue to engage with CIT regarding vocational education and training (VET) within the AMC and other providers, such as NSW TAFE, who have experience providing VET in custodial environments. All contractual processes, regardless of eventual supplier, will require ACTCS to comply with ACT Government's competitive neutrality and procurement obligations. ACTCS plans to develop a strategic approach to offerings with a focus on providing pathways to employment. Implementing a comprehensive vocational education and training program within the AMC would be subject to future budget considerations
24. Within 18 months, the ACT Government finalise and fund the Alexander Maconochie Centre's strategic infrastructure plans including creating a multipurpose industry building as previously recommended.	Noted	Action on this recommendation is dependent on government supporting the next stages of the Master Infrastructure Plan and is subject to future budget considerations.

25. Within 6 months, ACT Corrective Services take steps to ensure that the Case Management Unit staff caseloads and managerial support are appropriate, mindful of the nature of detained people's needs and prevention of staff burnout. This should include consultation with staff, consideration of other jurisdictions, and appropriate funding for required number of case manager positions.	Agreed in Principle	ACTCS will review case management caseloads with a view to supporting staff and improving client outcomes. ACTCS has commenced work to review case management caseloads including governance and management approaches to improve client outcomes. New tools and guidance to support staff (developed in consultation with staff) have and are being developed, including: • Best Practice Guidelines (developed) • Psycho-social risk register (developed) • Revised position descriptions (underway) • Review of caseloads (underway). A 6-month trial commenced in mid-December 2025 to assess the effectiveness of the new tools and guidance, with several "spot audits" planned across the trial period to assess compliance on activities such as case plan completion and contact levels. Further changes may be made at the end of the six-month period based on feedback from staff and detained people. If it is identified that additional positions are required, this would be subject to future budget considerations.
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27. Within 6 months, ACT Corrective Services expand the suite of criminogenic and non-criminogenic programs at the Alexander Maconochie Centre to ensure all detained people, regardless of gender or legal status, have equitable access to programs that meet their assessed risks and needs. This should include sourcing and implementation of: • A high-intensity violence program for men assessed as high risk. • Full access to EQUIPS (or equivalent) programs for women to address diverse needs.	Noted	An HP/Psychologist (level 5) will be engaged for up to 12 months to assess the Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) criminogenic program options, undertake research into an evidence-based criminogenic program and the associated risk assessments. This will enable ACTCS to evaluate risk levels, develop a clear profile of clients, and provide evidence of what high-risk FDV programs are needed within ACTCS. Additionally, it is planned the position will investigate culturally appropriate FDV criminogenic programs, particularly relevant for First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) detained people. The Detainee Education, Industry and Rehabilitation (DEIR) Program Board has been established to provide unified direction for medium-term approaches and a longer term strategy on detainee educational and employment opportunities and procurement at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). Introducing additional programs requires a review of the current budget and may be subject to future budget considerations. It may also be subject to the limitations of the Alexander Maconochie Centre environment.
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28. Within 6 months, ACT Corrective Services increase the capacity for detained people to contact friends and family for free via computers, telephones and/or in-cell tablets.	Noted	This is contingent on the installation of Wi-Fi capability across the AMC, which is a critical prerequisite for enabling secure digital communication. Once the Wi-Fi installation is complete at AMC then it would take several years to rollout incell technology across AMC in a phased approach. Rollout of in-cell technology would be subject to future budget considerations to: • upgrade and expand infrastructure to ensure reliable and secure connectivity throughout the facility • procure secure devices, such as in-cell tablets and associated hardware, to provide detainees with controlled access • implement and maintain robust cybersecurity measures to protect against misuse, data breaches, and unauthorised access provide ongoing maintenance, system refresh, and technical support to ensure sustainability and operational integrity
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30. Within 18 months, the ACT Government fund and ACT Corrective Services implement a structured day with purposeful activity in the Alexander Maconochie Centre, as an overarching strategy to promote rehabilitation, reduce reoffending, improve the motivation and wellbeing of detained people, and reduce demand for illicit drugs.	Agreed in Principle	ACTCS will explore extended offerings of education, programs, employment and recreational activities. Despite the many challenges in providing full days of activity for detained people, given the constraints presented by the Alexander Maconochie Centre, ACTCS is committed to exploring an extended offering of education, programs, employment and recreational activities. ACTCS is considering a pilot type program in conjunction with the upcoming hail damage remediation program of works. This will engage up to 30 detained people in a variety of programs and activities over approximately four months. The experience will provide ACTCS with a much stronger understanding of the challenges and issues associated with using a structured day as well as the resources necessary to enable its effective operation. This will be undertaken within existing resources. The success of this work will depend on many factors, including work already committed to, the limitations of the Alexander Maconochie Centre environment, staffing requirements, increasing AMC detainee numbers and other challenges and may be subject to future budget considerations.
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Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates



Signature:

Date: 27/07/2026

By the ACT Custodial Inspector, Rebecca Minty