

**Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services  
Annual and Financial Reports 2015-2016  
Questions on Notice / Questions Taken on Notice  
Public hearing of 1 March 2017**

<b>Type of Questions</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Hearing Date</b>	<b>Asked By</b>	<b>Directorate / Portfolio</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proof Transcript page no</b>	<b>Answer due date</b>	<b>Answer date</b>
QTON	1	1 March 2017	Dunne	Community Services	Breakdown of salary of Public Servants employed under Equal Remuneration Case	11	15 March	27 March
QTON	2	1 March 2017	Dunne	Community Services	Reconciliation of 0.34% Levy	11	15 March	5 April
QTON	3	1 March 2017	Le Couteur	Community Services	Number and type of organisations that received Business Development packages	16	15 March	21 March
QTON	4	1 March 2017	Pettersson	Community Services	Estimate of Attendance at Transport Expo	25	15 March	14 March
QTON	5	1 March 2017	Milligan	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs	Voting for the Elected Body 2014 – Votes compared to number of eligible voters	34	15 March	21 March
QTON	6	1 March 2017	Le Couteur	Multicultural Affairs	Number of Interpreter Scholarships available	44	15 March	21 March
QTON	7	1 March 2017	Kikkert	Multicultural Affairs	Theo Notaras Centre - Capacity to meet booking requirements	49	15 March	14 March
QTON	8	1 March 2017	Dunne	Disability, Children and Youth	Number of children accessing CDS, including wait times, breakdown of specific services accessed.	65	15 March	14 March

Type of Questions	No	Hearing Date	Asked By	Directorate / Portfolio	Subject	Proof Transcript page no	Answer due date	Answer date
QTON	9	1 March 2017	Dunne	Disability, Children and Youth	Where is the subset of number of Child Protection reports received and procedural appraisal that was substantiated and also the total number of children for whom the Director-General has parental responsibility? Once upon a time, sorry I have been doing this for too long, once upon a time they were broken down. There was a subset relating to Aboriginality. It seems to have changed and if there is a good reason for it to change—probably on notice at this stage—an explanation of why it has changed and if there is not a good reason why there is a change can you provide that breakdown to the committee?	p86	15 March	10 March
QTON	10	1 March 2017	Le Couteur	Housing	Provide discussion paper on the Review of Affordable Housing	99	15 March	17 March
QTON	11		Steel		How many housing organisations are actually funded that have a family violence focus by the commonwealth, not by the ACT government but by the commonwealth?	101	15 March	17 March
QTON	12	1 March 2017	Le Couteur	Women	Incorrect Women's Information Service date (page 61 – figure 6)	102	15 March	15 March
QTON	13	1 March 2017	Doszpot	Veterans and Seniors	What has been incorporated in the <i>Active Ageing Framework 2015-18</i> from the Older Persons Assembly	111	15 March	15 March
QTON	14	1 March 2017	Doszpot	Veterans and Seniors	Breakdown of Elder Abuse Prevention Line – type of calls	115	15 March	17 March



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KICKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETTERSSON MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 1**  
**1 MARCH 2017**

Asked by Vicki Dunne MLA:

In relation to Public Servants employed under the Equal Remuneration Case [Page 9-11]

Could you outline out of the somewhere between \$500,000 and \$600,000, depending on the year and then in those years what the salary level was for the public servant employed out of that?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

A reconciliation of revenue and total funds expended for 2012 - 2015 was provided to the Select Committee on Estimates 2015-16 on 1 July 2015 (QTON No. E15-32 refers) in response to a Question Taken On Notice (Attachment A) that identifies salaries and overheads of \$931,000 from 2012 – 2015:

- \$250,000 in 2012 – 2013
- \$363,000 in 2013 – 2014
- \$318,000 in 2014 – 2015

This expenditure was from the Community Sector Reform cost centre, which included revenue from the Community Sector Levy and ACT Government contributions.

During the 2012-13 to 2014-15 financial years the expenses of a Senior Executive 1.3 and Senior Officer Grade C were allocated to the Community Sector Reform Program cost centre.

Though it is not possible to attribute the levy income to expenditure on salaries, the income from the co-contribution levy funded the Senior Executive 1.3 position between 2012-13 to 2014-15 financial years. This position undertook the extensive community engagement activities and intergovernmental negotiations related to securing funding following the Equal Remuneration Order.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date: 23/3/17

By the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2015-16**

MR BRENDAN SMYTH MLA (CHAIR), MS MEEGAN FITZHARRIS MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), DR CHRIS BOURKE MLA, MS NICOLE LAWDER MLA

**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE  
DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Asked by Ms Meegan Fitzharris on 18 June 2015: Ms Sue Chapman took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 18 June 2015 [PAGE #532 (DRAFT)]]

In relation to: The Community Sector Reform Program

Empirical evidence of the benefit derived from the Community Sector Reform Program and a reconciliation of the money spent and its use?

Ms Yvette Berry: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The benefit from July 2012 to June 2015 from the community sector reform program has been assessed at approximately \$3,298,000. The remaining funds that have not been spent on initiatives and will be rolled over into 2015-2016 are \$157,212.

Attached is a reconciliation of the total funds expended by the Community Sector Reform Program between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 and a benefits realisation table for initiatives, and the savings generated for the Community Sector.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2015-16

Signature:

Date: 6/07/2015

By the Minister for Community Services Ms Yvette Berry MLA

## Community Sector Reform – Benefits Realisation Table

Initiative	Projected Full Annual Benefit	Actual Benefit 2013-2014	Actual Benefit 2014-2015	Projected Benefit 2015-2016	Projected Benefit 2016-2017
Concordance management of compliance standards	\$460,000	\$0	\$0	\$230,000	\$460,000
Change to Associations Incorporation Act 1991 Regs (Top threshold)	\$500,000	\$400,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Change to Associations Incorporation Act 1991 Regs (Bottom Threshold)	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
ACNC Harmonisation (Costs avoided)	\$336,772	\$0	\$0	\$336,772	\$336,772
Reduction in Reporting Costs Savings - Transfer to Grant Arrangements	\$376,009	\$0	\$188,004	\$376,009	\$376,009
Reduction in Reporting Costs Savings - Shift to Outcomes	\$150,000	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Change to annual financial reporting requirement	\$185,000	\$80,000	\$159,000	\$185,000	\$185,000
Changes to Prequalification based on review	\$370,000	\$0	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$0
Single Relationship manager System	\$101,000	\$0	\$101,000	\$101,000	\$101,000
Introduction of recurrent grants	\$670,000	\$0	\$335,000	\$670,000	\$670,000
Extension of SFA term + Option	\$750,000	\$0	\$0	\$750,000	\$750,000
GAFMI Benefit	\$690,000	\$490,000	\$200,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Annual Benefit</b>	<b>\$4,198,781</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$1,808,004</b>	<b>\$3,673,781</b>	<b>\$3,718,781</b>
Total Sector Funding (salaries)	\$100,000,000	\$103,000,000	\$106,090,000	\$109,272,700	\$112,550,881
Benefit as a % of Total Sector Funding	4.20%	0.78%	1.70%	3.36%	3.30%

## Reconciliation - Community Sector Reform and Equal Remuneration Case Implementation

### 2012-13 Reconciliation

<b>Income</b>	
Co-Contribution - Community Sector Reform Levy	\$449,000
Government Provided Income - ACT	\$261,977
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$710,977</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salaries & Overheads	\$250,000
ERO Consultation	\$25,311
Governance & Financial Module	\$20,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$295,311</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$415,666</b>

### 2013-14 Reconciliation

<b>Income</b>	
Rollover from prior year	\$415,666
Co-Contribution - Community Sector Reform Levy	\$474,844
Government Provided Income - ACT	\$271,522
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,162,032</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salaries & Overheads	\$363,000
Governance & Financial Module	\$440,000
Development & Delivery of Modules	\$165,000
Reducing Reporting Requirements	\$76,820
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$1,044,820</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$117,212</b>

### 2014-15 Reconciliation

<b>Income</b>	
Rollover from prior year	\$117,212
Co-Contribution - Community Sector Reform Levy	\$479,000
Government Provided Income - ACT	\$80,000
Additional Sector Development	\$230,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$906,212</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salaries & Overheads	\$318,000
Development & Delivery of Modules	\$230,000
BNG Compliance Tool	\$190,000
Outsource - SROI Training	\$11,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$749,000</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$157,212</b>

Table One – Reconciliation of the 0.34% Community Sector co-contribution.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 2**  
**1 MARCH 2017**

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Asked by Vicki Dunne MLA:

In relation to the money collected per year under the Community Sector Reform Levy [Page 9-11]

Can you provide to the committee an accounting of the amount of money collected per year under the community sector reform levy and how it was spent and whether there will be any residue at the end of this financial year?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The co-contribution levy for Community Sector Reform commenced in 2012 -13 and is equal to 0.34% of the total funding. A reconciliation of revenue and total funds expended for 2012 - 2015 was provided to the Select Committee on Estimates 2015-16 on 1 July 2015 (QTON No. E15-32 refers) in response to a Question Taken On Notice ([Attachment A](#)).

A reconciliation of total revenue and funds expended under the Community Sector Reform Program for 2015 - 2017 is at [Attachment B](#).

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

**MRS KIKKERT:** Could you clarify it has ever been used to pay or help to pay for employment or employ a member of the ACT public service?

**Ms Sheehan:** Yes. The levy was used in the first three years to employ one public servant. That public servant was predominantly working on, first of all, the equal remuneration case, which provided that substantial benefit to organisations across nine years to increase salaries. And then after that, working on consulting with the sector on what were their priorities, what were the sector's priorities, for reform. So when we talk about, for example, red tape, it actually takes a person to do the consultation to find out what it is that the sector would like. If the sector are identifying different priorities, again, it takes an investment of resource.

The fortunate position we are in now is that, having identified that the main priority for the community services sector was to develop a 10-year industry strategy to give a 10-year forward view of where the sector would like to go, we do not actually need a public servant to do that consultation anymore. We have had a broad consultation process. We have used a consultancy. We have got the 10-year priorities and the joint community government reference group will settle those three plans. So, yes, initially there was a public servant employed. That was only in the first three years. In the second two years none of the funds went to public service salaries.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Thank you.

**MRS DUNNE:** Could I just follow up, Mr Chairman, if Mrs Kikkert's finished?

**MRS KIKKERT:** Yes, sure.

**MRS DUNNE:** Thanks. Ms Sheehan, you said that in the first instance the public servant was employed to work on the equal pay case.

**Ms Sheehan:** Yes.

**MRS DUNNE:** The equal pay case was handed down in 2009?

**Ms Sheehan:** No, 2012.

**MRS DUNNE:** The decision was made in 2012, or the implementation had to be made in 2012?

**Ms Sheehan:** I believe the decision was in 2012, Mrs Dunne, but with the minister's agreement I can check that.

**MRS DUNNE:** Sorry, I thought it was earlier than that, which is why I asked the question why was somebody working on the equal pay case if the decision had already been made. And also, could you outline out of the somewhere between \$500,000 and \$600,000, depending on the year and then in those years what the salary level was for the public servant employed out of that?

That is stuff to take on notice. But could I also go back to the issue of the point that you made where you said people did not have to find the money because essentially, "We didn't give it to them in the first place

to give up.” So the organisations budgeted for a certain amount of grant money which was reduced by 3.5 per cent.

**Ms Sheehan:** No, 0.34 per cent.

**MRS DUNNE:** Sorry, 0.35 per cent, yes. So they still had to find that money somewhere. They did not have to pay it back to the government, but it just did not come to them. So how did organisations, depending on their size, manage with less money? We have seen that many in the sector at the time were unhappy about it and continued to be unhappy about it.

**Ms Sheehan:** Yes.

**MRS DUNNE:** So how did the organisations manage or where did they go or what did they do to find the money that did not come to them because of the levy?

**Ms Sheehan:** Thank you for that question, Mrs Dunne. There were additional amounts that the ACT government paid the sector which, in fact, increased the funding for the sector over the years. The largest amount of funding there was, in fact, the payments under the equal remuneration order which enabled organisations over the nine years of phasing in of that order to actually pay increased salaries to staff.

At the time that amount of money over the nine years of implementation, I will have to find the part in the annual report, but I think it was about \$50 million over the nine years. I will look at that in a moment.

The second issue—and this is very important, because the ACT is the only place in Australia that does this—is that the ACT government applies a rate of indexation to its funding to the sector every year, and it is not just CPI; it is better than CPI. I am going to say it is CPI on steroids. It is the wage cost index approach where the composition of the indexation recognises the fact that in the community sector 80 per cent of costs actually come from wages. So in addition to paying the higher wages through the equal remuneration order—and those payments were made six monthly, I believe—the ACT government determines a rate of indexation which is based on 80 per cent wage costs and 20 per cent CPI. That is paid annually as well.

The additional money that came into the sector was that higher rate of indexation and the equal remuneration payments, which will go right through for the full nine years.

**MRS DUNNE:** Could I just ask on notice, that would be the easiest way to do this, for you to give to the committee an accounting of the amount of money collected per year under the community sector reform levy and how it was spent and whether there will be any residue at the end of this financial year?

**THE CHAIR:** That is something that you want to put on notice as a question?

**MRS DUNNE:** I am asking for that information, and I think it might be easier for the officials to take that away rather than try and scramble around here. I think it is information that is useful for us, and it might be easier for you to take it on notice rather than trying to answer it now.

**Ms Sheehan:** Thank you, Mrs Dunne. The previous Minister for Community Services had tabled in the Assembly an acquittal up to a point in time, so we can certainly provide that, and then we can do a reconciliation going forward.

**MRS DUNNE:** That would be great.

**Ms Sheehan:** What I would like to say, bearing in mind my earlier answer about some delays in allocating the last amount of workforce funds, because we have got \$1.2 million coming into disability workforce support, we do anticipate a rollover at this point because, of course, we have not had an opportunity to say

exactly where that money would go. But the minister has agreed that we would provide a reconciliation across the years for you.

**MRS DUNNE:** Wonderful, thank you.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2015-16**

MR BRENDAN SMYTH MLA (CHAIR), MS MEEGAN FITZHARRIS MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), DR CHRIS BOURKE MLA, MS NICOLE LAWDER MLA

**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE  
DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Asked by Ms Meegan Fitzharris on 18 June 2015: Ms Sue Chapman took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 18 June 2015 [PAGE #532 (DRAFT)]]

In relation to: The Community Sector Reform Program

Empirical evidence of the benefit derived from the Community Sector Reform Program and a reconciliation of the money spent and its use?

Ms Yvette Berry: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The benefit from July 2012 to June 2015 from the community sector reform program has been assessed at approximately \$3,298,000. The remaining funds that have not been spent on initiatives and will be rolled over into 2015-2016 are \$157,212.

Attached is a reconciliation of the total funds expended by the Community Sector Reform Program between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 and a benefits realisation table for initiatives, and the savings generated for the Community Sector.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2015-16

Signature:

Date: 01/07/2015

By the Minister for Community Services Ms Yvette Berry MLA



## Community Sector Reform – Benefits Realisation Table

Initiative	Projected Full Annual Benefit	Actual Benefit 2013-2014	Actual Benefit 2014-2015	Projected Benefit 2015-2016	Projected Benefit 2016-2017
Concordance management of compliance standards	\$460,000	\$0	\$0	\$230,000	\$460,000
Change to Associations Incorporation Act 1991 Regs (Top threshold)	\$500,000	\$400,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Change to Associations Incorporation Act 1991 Regs (Bottom Threshold)	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
ACNC Harmonisation (Costs avoided)	\$336,772	\$0	\$0	\$336,772	\$336,772
Reduction in Reporting Costs Savings - Transfer to Grant Arrangements	\$376,009	\$0	\$188,004	\$376,009	\$376,009
Reduction in Reporting Costs Savings - Shift to Outcomes	\$150,000	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Change to annual financial reporting requirement	\$185,000	\$80,000	\$159,000	\$185,000	\$185,000
Changes to Prequalification based on review	\$370,000	\$0	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$0
Single Relationship manager System	\$101,000	\$0	\$101,000	\$101,000	\$101,000
Introduction of recurrent grants	\$670,000	\$0	\$335,000	\$670,000	\$670,000
Extension of SFA term + Option	\$750,000	\$0	\$0	\$750,000	\$750,000
GAFMI Benefit	\$690,000	\$490,000	\$200,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Annual Benefit</b>	<b>\$4,198,781</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$1,808,004</b>	<b>\$3,673,781</b>	<b>\$3,718,781</b>
Total Sector Funding (salaries)	\$100,000,000	\$103,000,000	\$106,090,000	\$109,272,700	\$112,550,881
Benefit as a % of Total Sector Funding	4.20%	0.78%	1.70%	3.36%	3.30%

## Reconciliation - Community Sector Reform and Equal Remuneration Case Implementation

### 2012-13 Reconciliation

<b>Income</b>	
Co-Contribution - Community Sector Reform Levy	\$449,000
Government Provided Income - ACT	\$261,977
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$710,977</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salaries & Overheads	\$250,000
ERO Consultation	\$25,311
Governance & Financial Module	\$20,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$295,311</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$415,666</b>

### 2013-14 Reconciliation

<b>Income</b>	
Rollover from prior year	\$415,666
Co-Contribution - Community Sector Reform Levy	\$474,844
Government Provided Income - ACT	\$271,522
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,162,032</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salaries & Overheads	\$363,000
Governance & Financial Module	\$440,000
Development & Delivery of Modules	\$165,000
Reducing Reporting Requirements	\$76,820
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$1,044,820</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$117,212</b>

### 2014-15 Reconciliation

<b>Income</b>	
Rollover from prior year	\$117,212
Co-Contribution - Community Sector Reform Levy	\$479,000
Government Provided Income - ACT	\$80,000
Additional Sector Development	\$230,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$906,212</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salaries & Overheads	\$318,000
Development & Delivery of Modules	\$230,000
BNG Compliance Tool	\$190,000
Outsource - SROI Training	\$11,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$749,000</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$157,212</b>

Table One – Reconciliation of the 0.34% Community Sector co-contribution.

## Community Sector Reform Program

### 2015 – 16 Reconciliation

<b>Income</b>	
Rollover 2014 – 15	\$157,212
Co-Contribution – Community Sector Reform Levy	\$499,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$656,212</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Industry Strategy	
• ACTCOSS	\$90,796
• KPMG	\$89,434
Other Operational Costs	\$13,855
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$194,085</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$462,127</b>

### 2016 - 17

Rollover 2015 - 16	\$462,127
Co-Contribution 2016 – 17	\$284,261
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$746,388</b>

Note:

1. The amounts are GST exclusive.
2. Due to continued reduction in the Service Funding Agreements, an estimate of \$284,261 will be collected from the 0.34% Community Sector Levy for 2016-17.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA

### Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 3 1 MARCH 2017

Asked by Caroline Le Couteur MLA:

In relation to the number and type of organisations funded for red tape reductions [Page 16]

How many and what types of community sector organisations took advantage of the funded programs to reduce red tape?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

All community sector organisations contracted to the Directorate benefited from one or more of the red tape reduction initiatives. From 1 July 2013 ACT Government introduced changes to reporting requirements from twice to only once a year. This benefited 95 organisations in 2013-14, 102 organisations in 2014-15, 103 in 2015-16 and 68 in 2016-17. The decrease in the number of contracted organisations is due to the cessation of Disability ACT contracts. The types of organisations benefiting from this reduction in red tape range from small organisations with revenues under \$150,000 per year to larger entities.

Organisations funded by Community Services Directorate also benefitted from the following red tape reduction initiatives:

- Transferring service funding agreements to grants;
- Ending the Prequalification process for the community sector;
- Extending the terms of a number of contracts from three to five years;
- Introducing new streamlined relationship management; and
- Providing access to community organisations to a new online business tool; *Breaking New Ground*, to assist compliance and reduce reporting costs.

Regulatory reform, in consultation with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, resulted in changes in 2013 to the *Associations Incorporation Regulation 1991* that raised the thresholds that apply to the levels for annual financial auditing. These thresholds were reflected in Service Funding Agreements. The threshold had remained steady since 1992 and previously required high auditing costs for small and medium organisations.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

REMOVE BEFORE SENDING TO COMMITTEE

**MS LE COUTEUR:** You may take this question on notice: how many and what types of community sector organisations took advantage of the funded programs to reduce red tape? You said it was a joint community and government organisation reference group, which will allocate the money. Is it an equal number of community and government? How is the decision-making actually done given the clearly competing interests in that sort of decision? Is there a list of the organisations who are on it?

**Ms Sheehan:** Yes. The joint community government reference group, in fact, the members of the joint community government reference group I believe would be in the annual report—page 26 of the annual report.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Thank you.

**Ms Sheehan:** I also believe that there will be more community sector members of the joint community government reference group than government members because there is just one representative from each government department and representatives of all the peaks and some of the other key regionals.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Can you take the first part of my question on notice about the number and types of organisations who are funded for red tape reduction?

**Ms Sheehan:** Yes. Sorry, is the question how many organisations have benefited from the red tape reductions?

**MS LE COUTEUR:** How many and what types? Were they peaks, were they tiny? Were they whatever?

**Ms Sheehan:** Thank you.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KICKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETTERSSON MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 4**  
**1 MARCH 2017**

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Asked by Michael Pettersson MLA:

In relation to the estimate of attendance at the Seniors Transport Expo

How many people attended the Seniors Transport Expo?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The Seniors Transport Expo was held at the Kippax Library in West Belconnen. This was a targeted open event for the local community and attendance at the door was not recorded. However, 85 participants were surveyed during the event.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

**REMOVE BEFORE PROVIDING TO COMMITTEE**

**MRS KICKERT:** On page 51, the annual report notes that because transport was found to be a particular concern for older community members in the west Belconnen area, a seniors transport expo was held at the Kippax library to inform local seniors of transport options. In addition to telling these older community members what their current options are, was input sought from these participants regarding what their issues and unmet needs are?

**Ms Moore:** Yes, thank you. The transport expo was a great example of responding to what people had already told us were the issues. So people had told us that transport was an issue for seniors in that area, of knowing what was available. So the transport expo brought together a range of assists that could be provided to support seniors in the transport space, but we also had volunteers just meeting with individuals and talking to them about their issues more broadly. So that information was fed through the working group that had established the transport expo and used to inform their planning around what future events they would like to hold.

For example, I am aware that following that event they had another event focused on seniors health, and it was particularly around the use of electronic devices to support people in health. So that came from feedback through the transport expo, that people wanted to know more about that, so they were interested. So, yes, it was asked.

We did ask people how they found the transport expo itself, but we also had volunteers having just informal conversations with people about broader issues that they were interested in.

**MRS DUNNE:** Was there organised transport to the transport expo? It may sound flippant, but it was a question.

**Ms Moore:** It is a really good question. I am not aware that there was transport to the transport expo. It was held at the Kippax library, which is a very central point and does have transport available to that site. So there was not additional transport arranged, but certainly there was transport available.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** Can I just butt in there and add that there is a flexible bus service available for people to get to community events, older people and people with disability. But also since the transport seniors forum, the government has moved to make off peak travel free for seniors as well. So I don't know if that was specifically in response to some of the feedback, but certainly that has been an ongoing issue that we have responded to.

**MRS KICKERT:** Based on the feedback that you received, what actions will you be taking to provide that?

**Ms Moore:** For the transport?

**MRS KICKERT:** For the feedback that you received, are you doing any actions to meet those people's needs?

**Ms Moore:** The local services network themselves was something that we established, but we really set it up so that it would be sustainable for the community to own and deliver into the future. So they are certainly taking forward actions. And what I should say is in terms of transport, the issue was not so much that there was not transport options; it was that people did not know what those transport options were. That working group was taking forward some ideas coming from the transport expo but coming from other events that they had held as well around how do we get information to people in the community about what is available. But the local services network itself is really now at a point where the community is driving that work and taking it forward.

**MRS DUNNE:** Did you highlight any unmet needs in west Belconnen as a result of the transport expo?

**Ms Moore:** Not so much, no. I think that generally it was more about people not being aware of what was available. It was not always about public transport either; it was about active transport and knowing—and people did want to talk about footpaths and how they can inform government around any issues that they have. So it was about inviting advice on how can you have a say about things in your local community and how can you access services around transport, whether that is things like mobility scooters, for example, were discussed at the transport expo. So it was quite a broad expo; it was not just about how can we improve public transport or anything like that.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Did you talk about issues for people who find it difficult to walk to a bus stop, whether it is because their footpath is needing repair or because 400 metres is beyond them now? What can they do? There is the flexible bus, but there is not an awful lot of availability of the flexible bus, as far as I know, just from a social point of view. You are not going to be able to just go out.

**Ms Moore:** The format of the expo was stalls, information stalls that people could self-navigate to find information that was relevant to them. So it was not about talking to people about issues, but people were able to access information about things, as I said, about mobility scooters, for example. If you need support just to get from your house to a short distance, people were able to talk to somebody about footpaths and issues that they might have and get advice on how they can feed that back to ACT government for improvements, and they were able to talk to people about all sorts of public transport options as well.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** Ms Le Couteur, Ms Cheng has just reminded me that transport is one of the key themes in the active ageing strategy, but it might be better to direct those questions to Minister Ramsay when he is here as the Minister for Seniors.

**MR PETERSSON:** How many people attended the expo?

**Ms Moore:** I do not have that information on me now. I could find out for you. What I should say is that it would be an estimate because we did not count people at the door. It was an open event that people could attend as they wished and came in and left throughout the morning.

**MR PETERSSON:** That is quite okay.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 5**  
**1 MARCH 2017**

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Asked by James Milligan MLA:

In relation to the Elected Body elections, in 2014, there was 374 people who participated in the voting.  
[Page 34]

What percentage does the 374 people represent in relation to the total number of adults who are able to participate in the vote?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, there were 3,155 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified people in the ACT aged 18 and over in 2011. 18 years and over is the age qualification for the Elected Body electorate. Population projections are not as nuanced as Census data, but at most there were 3,961 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 and over in the ACT in 2014. This is approximately a 9% voter turnout. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body elections differ from the Assembly and National elections in that voting is non-compulsory.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

**THE CHAIR:** In relation to the elections, what is being done to increase the participation in the election?

**Ms Forester:** This will be the fourth election process that the elected body has undergone. Each year the numbers have gradually increased. Through my office we have ensured to go out and consult with community and let people know. At the last election we did have a marked increase in the number of voters. Not a huge increase, but we did have a marked increase in that. One of the things that we did through that period which we will be doing again this time round is lots of information going out through the networks, running a number of community forums and consultations prior to getting out to all of the relevant community organisations, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. We are advertising the fact that the elections are up and coming and eventually we will be putting out what is the role and responsibility of the elected body and what you as a candidate, if you are successful, will be responsible for. That will also go out, information through our housing newsletters, through the education system, through all the education newsletters. So we are doing quite a bit of a campaign. That is slowly just starting to ramp up. We started off with the Multicultural Festival where we were basically letting people know that this was an election year and to keep it on their radar.

**THE CHAIR:** James.

**MR MILLIGAN:** In 2014, according to the report, there was 374 people who participated in the voting. What percentage does that represent in relation to the total number of adults who are able to participate in the vote?

**Ms Forester:** I would have to take that on notice to get the exact numbers, but we do know at the time of vote the census indicated that there was just over 6,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identified in the ACT on the census. Of course, a lower percentage of those being of voting age, 18 plus, but we can get that exact number for you, Mr Milligan.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA

### **Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 6 1 MARCH 2017**

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Asked by Caroline Le Couteur MLA:

In relation to Community Interpreter Preparation Program (Annual Report page 66) [Page 44]

There were six participants and 17 completed. Is that the maximum number of scholarships available per year?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

In the 2015-16 Financial Year a total of 21 participants successfully completed the Community Interpreter Training Course, conducted and organised by CIT Training Solutions and the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum.

A total of 17 out of the 21 successful course participants have now applied for NAATI testing, with seven participants having sat the NAATI test, to date.

In 2014, the Office for Multicultural Affairs provided an undertaking to pay for the NAATI examination fees for those participants who successfully completed the Community Interpreter Training Course. This payment of examination fees was deemed a 'scholarship.' To date, a total of 56 participants have been reimbursed their NAATI examination fees.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Okay. This is possibly a minor issue, but I notice that instead of citizenship ceremonies—this is page 66—there is a slight increase of the number of citizenship ceremonies, but I was interested there was exactly the same number—31—for citizens from other states and territories. Is this a coincidence? Again, on the staple page in work experience, the support program, while I am really in favour of stability, is it a coincidence we have got the same number of participants—36 out of 40—as the previous year? I have got the pages here if you want to look.

**Ms Sheehan:** Thank you, Ms Le Couteur, for that question. Yes, it is a coincidence. Specifically, obviously with citizenship ceremonies it is the number of people that are approved, which is not within the control of the ACT government. However, the work experience and support program is an ACT government program and we do offer 40 places. It is usually oversubscribed and we do have a target, which is in our performance measures, of 80 per cent completion. Often—this is both a good and a bad thing—the good thing about completion of the program is that you gain a certificate III in administration as part of the training and you get those I think it is an eight-week placement in an ACT public service department. But most often the reason people do not complete that particular program is that they are offered a job either in the area that they are training in or somewhere else and this goes to the calibre of the program. So they get a job which is what we really want, but they just do not complete the program.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Continuing on on the same page but the community interpreter program, you have got there were six participants and 17 completed. Is that the maximum number of scholarships available per year? I am really aware that there is a shortage of interpreters available to the community I personally have an involvement where more interpreters would make life an awful lot easier.

**Ms Sheehan:** I am not able to answer that question about whether that was just the number of scholarships that were available. I would have to take that one on notice. But I would say that the ACT, as all jurisdictions are, is involved in the national authority and actively involved in the national authority. Certainly, the qualified interpreters is a really important issue and we are aware of that in many areas where people would prefer to not have a family member interpret on their behalf because of the way in which that can—it may make them reluctant to actually reveal what the issue is, particularly in the health area.

We certainly want to encourage the qualification, and that is why we have established the scholarship program.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KICKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 7**  
**1 MARCH 2017**

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Asked by Elizabeth Kikkert MLA:

In relation to the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre (Annual Report page 67)

During the 2015-16 financial year, how many times were booking requests turned down because the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre was at its capacity?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

We do not have a record of the number of booking requests turned down because the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre was at capacity. All bookings made at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre are given due consideration in accordance with the Centre Management Usage policy.

In the majority of cases, bookings can be accommodated.

On occasions when there are double bookings and an alternative date cannot be negotiated, the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs refers communities for use of other community facilities.

As with most booking systems, early booking usually results in booking requests being successful.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

REMOVE BEFORE PROVIDING TO COMMITTEE

**MRS KIKKERT:** Going back to the annual report, if that is okay, on page 67 of the annual report, it notes that parts of the Theo Notaris Multicultural Centre were hired out to various community organisations for a total of 786 bookings in the 2015-16 financial year. This equates to an average of more than two bookings per day seven days a week. During the year, how many times were booking requests turned down because the centre was at its capacity?

**Ms Khan:** I do not have that information.

**MRS KIKKERT:** That is okay.

**Ms Khan:** I will take that on notice, if that is okay.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Yes, that is fine, thank you. If the centre is struggling with the capacity, what plans have been discussed to guarantee that the ACT's growing multicultural communities will have access to suitable, affordable venues in the future?

**Ms Sheehan:** Thank you for that question. The first thing I would want to say is I do not think there is an evidence that the centre is struggling with its capacity. It is one of the tensions, is it not, in having a centre where you want to provide office accommodation for organisations but largely the offices are not—people are not there during the week because they are volunteer members and they are at their own jobs or at their own homes. So we try to strike that right balance between the use of space for administrative purposes and then the use of space for services such as the multicultural youth service, migrant and refugee service, which are located in the centre, and then the use of the centre for function spaces.

But in terms of accessibility of other community spaces owned by the ACT government, that is a very important issue that we are having a look at. And we take feedback from the community all the time about how welcoming and how accessible they find other community facilities owned by the ACT government. That is something that we really want to have a good look at and work with community organisations on.

The committee might be aware that the ACT government constructed a substantial amount of extra community space which opened in about 2008-09. That was the four community hubs, which are themed hubs around the ACT. It also constructed about four additional halls. Those hubs and halls are managed by community groups and we do work with those community groups on making sure that the facilities are accessible by people from the multicultural community.

But it is not just can they get a booking, but is it a welcoming space. That is something that we are working with community groups on.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** Just to build on what Ms Sheehan has said, as the annual report notes, there are a number of community associations that lease offices in the Theo Notaris centre, and these bookings throughout the year—which I agree, it is actually great to see the centre being so well utilised—but those do include meeting room bookings. So it would not be unusual for the meeting room to be booked, I imagine, a number of times in a given weekday because it got community associations with their offices but they will be sharing a meeting room space and booking that out through the day. Correct me if I am wrong.

**Ms Sheehan:** Not at all, no. That is exactly right, minister.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA

### **Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 8 1 MARCH 2017**

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Asked by Vicki Dunne MLA:

In relation to the Child Development Service [Page 65]

Can you provide the committee with some data on the number of children who access this program, and perhaps the average period of service/treatment? And where they are likely to receive it? Are they going to receive that through pre-school, through the family and community centres, or through schools? Breakdown of what the services are?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. 2,069 children and families accessed services through the Child Development Service during the 2016 calendar year.
2. Services are offered at the three Child and Family Centres, childcare centres, pre-schools, primary schools, through home visits and at the Holder centre. Outreach services are also offered for families who may not access these mainstream services. For example, allied health staff attend the Winnunga Nimmityjah and Gugan Gulwan mums and bubs groups.
3. Services offered through the Child Development Service include:
  - Speech pathology and physiotherapy drop-in clinics which run weekly across Canberra at the Child and Family Centres (West Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin) and at the Holder centre.
  - Services for very young children at risk of a developmental delay. Babies referred by the Health Directorate who are at high risk of developmental delays are seen by allied health professionals to address concerns relating to feeding, gross and fine-motor concerns.
  - Individual assessments (speech pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology and social work).
  - Multidisciplinary (allied health professionals and a medical officer) assessments are also offered for children where there are complex and varied concerns.

- Parent information sessions on topics such as “Is your toddler talking” (early language development), fine motor skills and sensory processing. Children of parents who cannot access parent information due to an identified vulnerability (social, financial) are offered a few individual sessions.
- Small group sessions (4-5 sessions) are provided to address developmental concerns such as early communication skills.
- Individual sessions (up to 5 sessions) are offered to support skill development such as stuttering and self-care skills.
- Multidisciplinary autism assessments are carried out for children up to 12 years of age.
- Developing kids groups for children 18 months to pre-school with delays in their development who are not eligible for services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. These playgroups run weekly in term time at the Child and Family Centres for families who may have difficulty accessing mainstream services due to a disadvantage or vulnerability.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

## REMOVE BEFORE PROVING TO COMMITTEE

**MRS DUNNE:** We are now sort of another six months into the operation. Can you provide the committee with some data on the number of children who access this program, and perhaps the average period of service, treatment, whatever the appropriate term is? And where they are likely to receive it? I mean, some—it probably depends on age. Are they going to receive that through pre-school, through the family and community centres, or through schools?

**Ms Jordaan:** If I may, I can give you some of the data now. So for the 2016 period, we saw 2,069 children through the Child Development Service. That is children between the ages of nought to six. I did not add earlier on that we also do see children between the ages of 7 and 8 that have not had a prior assessment by an allied health professional, and we also do autism assessments for children up to the age of 12. So that is all included in that cohort that I referenced, 2,069 children.

Of those children, a cohort, 299, were referred to the NDIA. So those children were assessed and evidence of disability was provided to that family. We do not determine eligibility, but we refer them on to the NDIA. The balance of 1,700 children all received a service through the Child Development Service. So I am not too sure if you want to know more about that?

**MRS DUNNE:** I would not mind getting some sort of breakdown of what the services are and also to get some sense of whether there is a perception of unmet need. Because anecdotally, again, as a member of parliament, you do get feedback that particular subgroups are not sort of having their needs met, et cetera. So does the department has any concept of whether there is an unmet need, and the extent of that?

**Ms Jordaan:** Would you like me to answer that now?

**MRS DUNNE:** Yes, if you can, yes.

**Ms Jordaan:** So I guess in terms of the supports that we provide, we are not a therapeutic support service, so the 1,700 children that we saw are children at risk of a developmental delay, and those children would receive services, parent information sessions, small group sessions, around demonstrating to families and working with children in small groups around the identified developmental delay as part of the whole package of also linking people in to the service system within the ACT, so child and family centres.

A lot of the work that we do is out of the child and family centre. And then I can just talk a little bit about some targeted work that we do, which is around identifying families with vulnerability, around either their socio-economic status or around any vulnerability that that family may have. So the child may not have a significant delay, but within the context of the issue that the child is in that context, there may be psychosocial issues for the family.

We have developed, with the educators that we have employed as well, we have developed small group work, which is known as the Developing Kids Group, which we run out of the child and family centres. Those are a play-based model, and it is run by an early educator, and the allied health staff consult to that group. And part of the aim is to work with that family, children of 18 months, right through to preschool, to support the family with supports. It is not intensive therapeutic supports, but it is about engaging that family with supports in the mainstream, and for some of them they are actually eligible for the NDIA, but because of perhaps mum's mental health or other psychosocial issues we are supporting them to transition.

And then of course those children with vulnerabilities to ensure that they do transition really well, so there is sort of a wrap-around service. There are many programs within the child and family centres that we link them into, and support them to transition into the preschool environment.

**MRS DUNNE:** Okay, I will ask a specific question. It seems that that sort of small group and sort of generalist, there is not direct clinical therapies provided as was the case with Therapy ACT. So for instance, that someone—a child might turn up at preschool and they might discover—the preschool teacher will pick up that they do not have very well developed, say, fine motor skills, or they might be behind in their speech. It might be a speech therapy issue or something like that.

If a child presents like that, and they clearly do not come into the—clearly do not qualify for the NDIA, how do we address those clinical therapeutic needs that might be six months or something like that that would get the child back up to where they should be?

**Ms Jordaan:** Yes. So in terms of that, it is about determining what that need is and what that gap in the development is, if I could put it that way. So we are aware that there is a new early childhood early intervention service partner that will be—funding will be provided through the NDIA for some of those what might be called “light touch” services. There is still some discussion around exactly what that will look like.

**MRS DUNNE:** But the directorate does not provide those services?

**Ms Jordaan:** The directorate does not provide services for children over six that have extensive therapeutic needs, but—

**MRS DUNNE:** Under six? No, no, but I am sort of thinking about an experience I had—

**Ms Jordaan:** A specific person? Yes.

**MRS DUNNE:** —taking a child to Therapy ACT because his fine motor skills were not up to scratch when he was four and having two or three interventions with some extended therapy and then homework, essentially—

**Ms Jordaan:** That is right.

**MRS DUNNE:** —which sort of got him on track. Do those services exist today as they did in the past?

**Ms Jordaan:** In terms of—depending on the—because that is quite relative, what that need was, but this Child Development Service will provide small group work like that for children up to the age of six where the developmental delay is not in excess of 12 months. So if there is just some mild delays around how to hold a pencil, things like that. There are also other mainstream services like the University of Canberra runs programs for that particular—if you are talking about that particular issue—

**MRS DUNNE:** Well, I was just using that as an example, but it might be speech therapy or it might be something where there is a mild delay, you need to get them up to speed sooner rather than later and those services were provided through Therapy ACT on a one on one basis, not in a small group basis, and do they still exist on a one on one basis provided through the directorate or do people need to go to a private provider?

**Ms Jordaan:** Up to the age of six I could say and if the developmental delay is not more than 12 months, the Child Development Service will provide that. I guess to answer your question around whether it is individual or in small group, that depends on the capacity of the parent. So if the parent has the capacity—so our continuation of service offer is related to what that family’s capacity is. If the family has the capacity to come in and to attend parent information sessions and do small group work we will do that, if they are not we are flexible and we are able to provide individual service.

**MRS DUNNE:** So you may actually go and visit a home?

**Ms Jordaan:** Yes, we visit homes, we visit preschools, we go into day care settings; we do a lot of health promotion as well, that is another function of the service. So it is getting out into childcare settings as well.

**MRS DUNNE:** Thank you.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 9**  
**1 MARCH 2017**

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Asked by Vicki Dunne MLA:

In relation to the Accountability Indicator (e) (Annual Report Page 363) *Number of child protection reports received and proceeding to appraisal that were substantiated* [Page 65]

Can you provide the subset of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in relation to (e) *number of Child Protection reports received and procedural appraisal that was substantiated* and provide an explanation of why it has changed and not broken down?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people were the subject of 152 of the 564 substantiations in 2015-16 (27%).

Indicator (e) has never been disaggregated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data is reported at the national level.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

REMOVE BEFORE SENDING TO COMMITTEE

**MRS KIKKERT:** I have a question. So the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the care of protective services is not reported in the main section of the annual report, either the number or the percentage. Can you explain this omission?

**Mr De’Ath:** Unless someone else can? No, I do not think I can and we will have to take it on notice.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** Sorry, Mrs Kikkert, can you just point as to which part of the report you are—have you got a page number?

**MRS KIKKERT:** Well, it is not in the report.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** I know it is not in the report but which part you are, which section.

**MRS KIKKERT:** It would be between page 71 to 76 or between 123 and 124.

**Mr De’Ath:** Sorry, would you mind just repeating the question, please?

**MRS KIKKERT:** Sure. I can move on to the next one and then you can ask that.

**MRS DUNNE:** It seems to me there needs to be a table that says the number of children in the care and protection system with substantiated and then the breakdown by who were usually indigenous. There was usually a subset in relation to that.

**Mr De’Ath:** I think we have got if have we?

**Ms Pappas:** We do. It is page 363 is the page you are looking for.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Youth justice case plan is completed. You have got a target of 90 per cent but you have only made 69 per cent completed. What is happening with the young people whose youth justice plans are not completed? This is a significant underperformance and there have got to be some young people who are potentially very adversely affected by this.

**Mr De’Ath:** Ms Robinson will take that question, Ms Le Couteur.

**Ms Robinson:** Jodie Robinson, Director of Operations, Child and Youth Protection Services. I have read the statement. So during this reporting period there was a significant reform process that was underway in Child and Youth Protection Services which was the integration of both Care and Protection and Youth Justice. So what that materially means for a young person that is receiving a service from both Child Protection and Youth Justice is that they now have one case manager and there is a single case management approach to ensure that their holistic needs are met both across the Care and Protection continuum and the Youth Justice continuum. So it is fair to say that during this period of time there was decreases in productivity related to that indicator but it is important the count for that indicator. So it is really quite a specific account on that data.

What it is counting is that there was a case plan completed within six weeks of the sentencing of a particular young person. So it is quite common in the ACT. We actually have a case plan for young people from the moment that they are known to our service. So it is quite possible that they had a case plan prior to being sentenced and then it is common that as a young person is sentenced they literally walk from the Children’s Court down to our office. They are inducted into our service on the same and so the conversations are commencing with them during that day. And what we are doing over that six week

period is engaging with them, engaging with those critical carers in their lives, whether that is their family members, someone that they identify, foster carers and putting that care plan in place.

So it is a very specific count and I would not say it is reflective of the work that is actually happening in that period of time notwithstanding that it is critical that we continue to work to improve that.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** That all sounds great but what is happening to the 31 per cent who have fallen through the cracks or taking too long or what have you? what has happened to those kids?

**Ms Robinson:** So in relation to that 31 per cent what that is actually measuring is that within that six week period from the moment that they are sentenced the care plan for that period of time, from the moment of sentencing is not complete, but in actual fact it is highly likely that they have already got a care plan in place that may have been developed in the short time between them being charged or being known to our system and being sentenced and that we are engaging with them during that period of time. So it is an administrative issue for us that we have not completed their care time during that period but during that six week period we are actively engaged with them and in fact that starts from the moment that they are sentenced when they physically walk from the Children's Court down to our office and that care planning process commences.

**Mr De'Ath:** I think, Ms Le Couteur, this goes to part of the structure of the reporting and the reporting arrangements and I think we should pursue that following this.

**MRS DUNNE:** Could I go back to Mrs Kikkert's question? On page 353 we have numbers of reports requiring appraisal, number of projection reports that have been substantiated and the number of children in the care of the territory but there is no—that is not broken down by whether or not those children are indigenous.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** So (g) is a subset of (f).

**MRS DUNNE:** (g) is a subset with (f) but where is the subset of number of Child Protection reports received and procedural appraisal that was substantiated and also the total number of children for whom the Director-General has parental responsibility? Once upon a time, sorry I have been doing this for too long, once upon a time they were broken down. There was a subset relating to Aboriginality. It seems to have changed and if there is a good reason for it to change—probably on notice at this stage—an explanation of why it has changed and if there is not a good reason why there is a change can you provide that breakdown to the committee?

**Mr De'Ath:** I just came off from the former reporting format but I absolutely take your point and I understand the point you are making. I think two issues have been identified in terms of the reporting format of this annual report and we—

**MRS KIKKERT:** Yes. That is what I was curious about because it is not in the main page.

**Mr De'Ath:** Correct and we—

**MRS KIKKERT:** We knew it was at the back.

**Mr De'Ath:** We will be able to, I am sure, identify the information and take that on notice and also pick up on the reporting issues you have identified so thank you.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** I mean, it is clear that that data is available. It is reported in a number of other places in terms of the—

**MRS DUNNE:** Yes, I think it is in the ROGS data.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** ...(indistinct)... [3.20.24] and ROGS reports so—yes.

**Ms Pappas:** It is ROGS, and AIHW report on that data as well.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 10**  
**1 MARCH 2017**

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Asked by Caroline Le Couteur MLA:

In relation to the Review of the Affordable Housing Discussion paper.

Is the Affordable Housing Discussion Paper available anywhere?

Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The Affordable Housing Discussion Paper *Delivering more affordable housing in the ACT* is provided at [Attachment A](#).

The ACT Government Submission to the Affordable Housing Working Group was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 3 May 2016 and is provided at [Attachment B](#).

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Yvette Berry MLA

**2016**

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**ACT Government Submission to the  
Affordable Housing Working Group**

**Presented by  
Yvette Berry MLA  
Minister for Housing, Community Services  
and Social Inclusion**

In response to Assembly Resolution of 17 February 2016

**ACT GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION  
TO THE  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING WORKING GROUP**

**Introduction**

The ACT Government welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the deliberations of the Commonwealth-led Affordable Housing Working Group (the Working Group) as it seeks to identify potential financial and structural reform models to increase the national supply of affordable housing.

More broadly, the ACT welcomes the focus on improving housing affordability and recognises that housing is a fundamental human need and a critical building block and enabler for social and economic participation. Safe, secure and affordable housing provides a critical foundation for education and employment and is vital to individuals, families and communities realising their full potential and participating fully in community life.

Housing affordability is a national issue and it therefore demands a national response. To be successful this national response needs to clearly articulate the common challenges facing all jurisdictions, identify the programs and strategies already working in different jurisdictions and, importantly, understand those factors that distinguish jurisdictions and may require the development of tailored solutions.

The ACT Government would be interested in pursuing further multi-lateral and bi-lateral discussions with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions on the four policy options canvassed in the Working Group's Discussion Paper. A national approach will be vital to achieving the scale required to deliver effective affordable housing solutions and provide certainty for potential investment. We are keen to help shape and inform the design of any new national or regional strategies to address the challenge of housing affordability.

**ACT context**

The ACT is a city-state with unique status as the nation's capital. The ACT Government also fulfils the responsibilities and delivers the programs and services that, in other jurisdictions, are provided across both state/territory and local governments. As such, the ACT can be more agile and responsive than other jurisdictions and therefore presents as an ideal partner for developing and trialling alternative housing affordability strategies.

The ACT Government is keen to explore opportunities for greater partnership with the Commonwealth. We are already participating – alone amongst the states and territories – in the Commonwealth's Asset Recycling Initiative and this process is tied to a public housing renewal program that will see the replacement of 1,288 ageing public housing properties over the four year period 2015-2019.

Closer collaboration with other jurisdictions, most obviously with NSW through an approach geared to the broader Canberra region, also has the potential to deliver efficiencies and create new opportunities to more effectively tackle the challenge of housing affordability.

Nevertheless, the ACT's unique circumstances contribute to a number of factors that make the ACT housing market different to other jurisdictions, including higher average household incomes, different income profiles and higher costs of living.

In the ACT, households in the two lowest income quintiles (Q1 and Q2) earn up to approximately \$53,000 and \$95,000 per annum, respectively,<sup>1</sup> however many of these households still experience housing stress, paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs. This highlights the importance of considering local markets and socioeconomic indicators in initiatives to address housing affordability.

From the early 2000s until 2010, house prices in the ACT grew rapidly, increasing by 51% for established houses and 42% for attached dwellings.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, approximately 13% of low-income workers in the ACT (or 27,500 individuals) in lower paid occupations in the private sector (including in the community, health, construction, retail and hospitality sectors) are experiencing housing stress.<sup>3</sup>

Average rents in the ACT have also grown substantially over the last decade, growing by 16% between September 2003 and March 2015.<sup>4</sup> The 2016 *Report on Government Services* (ROGS) showed that approximately 84% of the 11,888 ACT households in the private rental market receiving Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) are receiving the maximum rate of assistance, and yet over 50% are still in housing stress – the highest proportion in Australia. This statistic starkly demonstrates the limited impact of CRA in the ACT and the need to consider reform of Commonwealth housing assistance programs.

The ACT Government is committed to supporting low income households in housing stress through a range of supply and demand-side responses. Since 2010, average house prices (and rents since 2013) have stabilised,<sup>5</sup> due both to market factors and actions taken through the government's *Affordable Housing Action Plan* (the Plan). First introduced in 2007, the Plan accelerated the ACT's land release program and introduced significant planning and taxation reforms aimed at improving rental and purchasing affordability for low income households.

The ACT is leading the nation in taxation and planning reform. Actions under the Plan include a shift from transactional property taxes to a broader land tax approach, with land tax reduced on properties with average unimproved land values between \$75,000 and \$390,000. The progressive abolition of stamp duty – a reform Prime Minister Turnbull recently endorsed – is also proceeding.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Household Income and Wealth, Australia, 2013-14*, cat. no. 6523.0 released 16 December 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Residential Property Price Index, Eight Capital Cities*, December 2015, cat. no. 6416.0, released 22 March 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Housing and Homelessness Policy Consortium ACT, *Housing Affordability and the Labour Market in the ACT*, released February 2016, p. 18 and 37.

<sup>4</sup> Housing and Homelessness Policy Consortium ACT, *Housing Affordability and the Labour Market in the ACT*, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Housing and Homelessness Policy Consortium ACT, *Housing Affordability and the Labour Market in the ACT*, p. 13.

Additionally, the ACT Government's social housing system is effectively preventing housing stress for many households in Q1 and Q2. As of 30 June 2015, 22,096 people resided in public housing in the ACT in 10,611 tenancies, with nearly 99% of these households having incomes in the lowest two income quintiles, the highest level of all jurisdictions.<sup>6</sup> Over 95% of tenants were in receipt of a rental rebate which establishes their rent at no more than 25% of gross weekly income and, subsequently, only 0.1% of households in public housing and 0.4% of households in community housing were in housing stress.<sup>7</sup>

Social housing provides a vital safety net for households in greatest need, including people experiencing homelessness, escaping domestic and family violence or living in unhealthy situations. Nevertheless, despite this good progress, many Canberra individuals and families, particularly those who rely on the private rental market, are in housing stress and need further support.

The ACT Government has been proactive and responsive in seeking to address housing affordability in the ACT. The mix of supply and demand-side strategies already progressed has had some success and the government has successfully exercised the levers over which it has control. In reality, however, there are clear limits to what the ACT can do alone and many of the key determinants of housing affordability sit within the control of the Commonwealth – most notably, overall economic management, taxation and immigration policy. The ACT Government welcomes the national discussion which has emerged around housing affordability and around the need for coordinated policy settings across different jurisdictions.

### **The ACT's social housing portfolio in comparison to other jurisdictions**

The 2016 ROGS indicates that, in 2014-15, there were 321,627 public housing dwellings across Australia. The ACT's share of this total was 10,833 dwellings (3.37%). There were also 72,105 community housing dwellings nationally and, of these, 663 (0.92%) were in the ACT.

Overall, there were 403,767 social housing dwellings in Australia in 2014-15 and the ACT's share was 11,496 properties (2.85%). At 30 June 2015, Australia's population was 23,781,200 and the ACT population was 390,800 (1.64%).<sup>8</sup> The ACT's share of the total available social housing is therefore well ahead of the national average. Indeed, the ACT has 30 social housing dwellings for every 1,000 people against a national average of just 17 dwellings.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2016*, <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2016/housing-and-homelessness>.

<sup>7</sup> Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2016*.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, June 2015 quarter, cat. no. 3101.0, released 17 December 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Reform of Federation White Paper, *Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper No. 2*, Appendix B, released December 2014.

The profile of social housing in the ACT differs from that in other jurisdictions. The ACT has a greater share of public housing than the other states and territories with public housing being the predominant social housing form in the ACT, providing 94.23% of all social housing. This compares to a national average of 82.14% public housing. In 2013-14, 7.1% of all ACT households were public housing which is well above the national average of 4.4%.

Much of the ACT public housing stock is old with an average age of more than 29 years, making it the oldest property portfolio in Australia. Despite the age of the ACT's public housing, ROGS shows that it continues to enjoy high occupancy rates (98% for public housing) which were above the national average. Overall satisfaction rates are also high with ACT public housing tenants recording an 82% satisfaction rate when polled in 2015.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, the age of the ACT's public housing properties does contribute to higher recurrent operating costs per dwelling which average \$9,630. This is the third highest cost per jurisdiction (behind only the NT and WA) and compares to a national average of \$8,486 per dwelling. In response, the government is currently delivering a public housing renewal program which will replace some 1,288 dwellings or 11% of total public housing stock over a four year period (2015-2019).

### **The performance of the ACT's social housing sector in comparison to other jurisdictions**

The ACT leads all jurisdictions in delivering a highly targeted social housing system. The latest ROGS data shows that 96.7% of all new public housing tenancies were allocated to those in greatest need in 2014-15, against a national average of 73.7%. Indeed, only Queensland amongst the other states and territories had an allocation rate above 90%.

The situation is very similar for community housing where the ACT achieved a rate of 97.9%, compared to a national average of 73.4%. ACT community housing providers performed a minimum of 12 percentage points better than the best performers in the other states and territories which, once again, were in Queensland.

The ACT results are particularly pleasing as they show that both public and community housing providers are able to provide highly targeted services to those in greatest need. The results demonstrate the strength of a consistent across sector approach and show that public and community housing providers can collaborate effectively to achieve optimal outcomes for those in greatest need.

As at 30 June 2015, there were 2,320 applicants for ACT public housing on waiting lists.<sup>11</sup> While the government works on different levels to reduce this number and respond to the needs of those on the waiting lists, the size of our waiting lists compares favourably with other jurisdictions and indicates that, overall, the ACT is doing well in providing sustainable and affordable housing to those most in need.

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<sup>10</sup> ACT tenant satisfaction survey results for public and community housing, 2015, reported in Community Services Directorate, *Annual Report 2014-15*, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Community Services Directorate, *Annual Report 2014-15*, p. 103.

As a percentage of our housing stock, the ACT waiting lists represent about 21% of the public housing portfolio (see table below).<sup>12</sup> In a number of other states, the waiting lists represent more than half (and up to almost 70%) of public housing stock.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Dwellings</b>	<b>Waitlist</b>	<b>Waitlist as percent of stock</b>
ACT	10 833	2 320	21.4%
NSW	110 214	57 345	52.0%
VIC	64 404	34 464	53.5%
QLD	51 248	12 565	24.5%
WA	33 361	22 696	68.0%
SA	39 428	19 062	48.3%
TAS	7 234	2 587	35.8%
NT	4 905	2 950	60.1%
Australia	321 627	153 989	47.9%

Notwithstanding these more favourable comparisons, the ACT continues to face similar challenges to the other states and territories and unresolved housing affordability issues will continue to place demands on an increasingly targeted social housing system.

Despite the similar experiences of all states and territories, the circumstances of the ACT also differ in key respects – for example, the higher proportion of public housing in the ACT. It is important that these differences are acknowledged and understood when seeking to identify or design new financial and structural reform models that might help to increase the supply of affordable housing.

The ACT has an atypical housing market characterised by high average household incomes and housing costs – factors associated with Canberra's status as the nation's capital and our unique land tenure and land supply arrangements. This means that people earning low to moderate incomes in the ACT can experience particular stress in the private market.

Highlighting this fact is the reality that more than 50% of low income households in the private rental market are experiencing housing stress (paying more than 30% of their income in rent), despite receiving Commonwealth Rent Assistance.<sup>13</sup> The ACT Government is committed to continuing to help those in greatest need – and to working to ensure that the current national focus on housing affordability can give these efforts added momentum.

The highly targeted nature of the ACT public housing system, however, has resulted in a greater proportion of tenants receiving a rental rebate, and has led to a reduction in the revenue base of ACT public housing as the majority of tenants' sole or main source of income is Commonwealth Government pensions or benefits.

The ACT Government is keen to explore options in collaboration with the Commonwealth, states and territories, to deliver sustainable public housing and tackle housing affordability through coordinated and complementary actions.

<sup>12</sup> Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2016*.

<sup>13</sup> Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2016*, Table GA.28.

## **ACT Government actions to improve housing affordability in the ACT**

The ACT Government first implemented an Affordable Housing Action Plan (the Plan) in 2007. The Plan included 63 initiatives aimed at addressing issues across the entire housing continuum from home ownership to supported accommodation and emergency housing.

The Plan included eight key themes:

- allow the housing market to operate as efficiently as possible through ensuring a sufficient supply of land and stabilise house prices in a period of growth;
- maintain a planning and land release system that supports the delivery of an adequate supply of land and is responsive to changing demand;
- ensure competition in the market to deliver cost efficiencies;
- facilitate diversity in housing products and prices through the planning regime to deliver innovative, affordable house and land packages;
- facilitate growth in the community and not for profit housing sector and encourage shared equity;
- make efficient and effective use of public housing assets;
- support the delivery of adequate supplies of private rental properties to stabilise rental vacancy rates and prices; and
- encourage industry cooperation in demonstration villages and estates, through advisory processes and through the support of projects that complement the Government's affordable housing objectives.

Achievements under the first phase of the plan included:

- accelerating the land release program with more than 3,400 dwelling sites being released in 2007-08 which was, at the time, the largest residential land release program since self government;
- \$200 million in funding committed through the Building the Future program, primarily for infrastructure in new developments;
- the ACT being the first jurisdiction to introduce a compact housing code for blocks less than 250m<sup>2</sup> to help facilitate the availability of affordable house and land packages;
- an enhanced stamp duty concession scheme for eligible first home buyers, which allowed the deferred payment of stamp duty for up to five years and increased the stamp duty income threshold to \$120,000 per annum - these concessions were further enhanced in later iterations of the Plan;
- introduction of a Land Rent Scheme to allow eligible home buyers to rent (rather than purchase) the land component of their property;
- a requirement for 15% of all new residential estates to include affordable house and land packages for \$300,000 (at the time) or less – this requirement was subsequently increased to 20% of all new developments;

- the introduction of the *OwnPlace* program by the Land Development Agency which established a panel of builders who were able to construct affordable housing on compact blocks; and
- support for CHC Affordable Housing to deliver 500 new properties for affordable sale plus 500 additional properties to be made available for affordable rent over ten years.

Phase 2 of the Plan was released in 2009 and had a primary focus on tackling homelessness and providing accommodation for older persons. It added 21 new initiatives to the Plan under the following broad headings:

- intensive engagement with people becoming homeless;
- support for 'at risk' groups to maintain their housing;
- providing housing and support at critical points of need;
- a whole of government framework to respond to homelessness;
- increasing the supply and diversity of accommodation for older persons; and
- enabling ageing in place.

A third phase of the Plan was released in June 2012 and aimed particularly to improve rental affordability for households in the lower two income quintiles. A further 14 action areas were identified and sought to address four primary objectives:

- increasing the supply of rental accommodation;
- making better use of existing sites within Canberra;
- relieving blockages to affordable home purchases; and
- providing more short-term accommodation options.

Included in these action areas were a number of specific taxation reforms including:

- phasing out conveyance duties;
- reducing land tax for properties at the lower end of the private rental market; and
- retargeting the Home Buyer Concession Scheme to new dwellings and increasing the value and income thresholds.

Another major action under Phase 3 of the Plan was the replacement of a single affordable housing price threshold (\$337,000) with three thresholds linked to dwelling size. The change was made in consultation with industry and in response to concerns that the single threshold was driving an oversupply of small single-bedroom dwellings in the affordable housing market.

Overall the Plan includes 98 initiatives. Responsibility for each of the initiatives sits across different ACT Government directorates where the initiatives form part of the directorates' ongoing work programs and, where appropriate, are assessed and reported against through standard directorate processes. Three overarching progress reports on Plan's implementation have been compiled and a summary of actions is shown in the table below.

	<b>Implemented</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>	43	17	3	63
<b>Phase 2</b>	12	9	0	21
<b>Phase 3</b>	6	8	0	14
<b>Total</b>	61	34	3	98

### **Policy options at Federal and State/Territory levels which may help to more effectively address housing affordability**

As outlined above, the ACT has successfully implemented a range of policies that have helped to deliver greater numbers of affordable housing for purchase. These policies relate largely to the supply of Greenfield land and include the introduction of a Land Rent Scheme and a 20% affordable housing requirement for new residential developments.

There is also a range of concessions and financial incentives to assist first home buyers that are widely used across Australia.

The more difficult issue is delivering affordable rental accommodation. The ACT Government has attempted to attract large scale investment in residential accommodation that can be made available for affordable rental. However, as a small jurisdiction we have not been able to offer an adequate scale of investment to attract significant interest. Economies of scale are likely to present barriers to other smaller jurisdictions as well and lend to arguments for a national approach, or at least cross-jurisdictional collaboration, in this area.

It is clear that a new non-government source of funding is required if real progress is to be made in increasing the supply of affordable rental properties.

Therefore the ACT Government would advocate for a national approach to be adopted in developing policy options aimed at attracting investment in affordable rental properties. The government also sees advantages in developing one consistent national approach to affordable rental to reduce regulatory barriers and administrative burden.

The ACT Government has established a high-level Senior Officials group to oversee and direct local action to support this work. This group has responsibility for providing high level advice to government on strategies to improve housing affordability in the ACT. It will oversee consideration of the ACT's *Affordable Housing Action Plan* and the development of possible and preferred options for improving housing outcomes for target groups. In this regard, Q2 households have been identified as one group which is particularly vulnerable to housing stress in the private rental market.

The ACT Government is currently developing housing policy responses that will help to increase affordable home ownership, increase affordable rental housing and better target housing assistance. Recent data from the Property Council of Australia suggests that the ACT is the most affordable city in Australia,<sup>14</sup> indicating good progress against the first objective while the ACT's results detailed in the *2016 Report on Government Services* show considerable success against the third objective. Increasing affordable rental housing is a continuing challenge and the area of greatest and immediate need.

The ACT Government considers a focus on this area would deliver the greatest benefits for at-risk members of our community; those who are employed in low skilled work and earning low to middle incomes. This group does not present as a high priority for public or community housing but often struggles to sustain tenancies in the private rental market and frequently experiences housing stress, often at severe levels. Strategies are required now to help this cohort before households become dependent on government housing assistance.

The ACT Government looks forward to continuing to work with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions to address these important issues.

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<sup>14</sup> Packham, Rachael, 'ACT is the most affordable state or territory to buy property' <http://www.domain.com.au/news/act-is-the-most-affordable-state-or-territory-to-buy-property-20160308-gndman/>, 8 March 2016.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
CHRIS STEEL MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA,  
CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA, MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA

### **Inquiry into referred 2015–16 Annual and Financial Reports ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE NO. 11 1 MARCH 2017**

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Asked by Chris Steel MLA:

In relation to housing organisations funded by the Commonwealth with a family violence focus

How many housing organisations are actually funded that have a family violence focus by the Commonwealth?

Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The ACT Government has allocated around \$63 million for homelessness service delivery over the next three years. This comprises funding from the Commonwealth Government under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), matched funding from the ACT and Commonwealth Governments under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness 2015-17 (NPAH), and the ACT Government appropriation.

In 2016-17, \$19.6 million has been committed to the ACT Specialist Homelessness Sector for people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. All Specialist Homelessness Services provide support inclusive of those who are experiencing domestic and family violence (including \$4.6 million for young people aged between 15 and 24 years many of which experienced family breakdown or violence).

There are eight services which provide accommodation only to women and children including those escaping domestic violence valued at around \$4 million per annum. Two of these services, are exclusively funded to provide accommodation and case management to women and children in need of immediate safety due to escaping domestic violence.

In addition, homelessness funding of \$660,000 (2016-17) is provided from the both the NAHA and the ACT Government to non-accommodation services such as the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Canberra Rape Crisis Centre.

Given the focus of the programs on women, children and young people, any withdrawal of funding from the Commonwealth would disproportionately impact women and children escaping family and domestic violence.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

By the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Yvette Berry MLA